The Comparative Effects of Kiswahili Language Dubbing in Kenya

by

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Abstract

This study investigated the variation of thematic understanding and plot comprehension between an English film shown in English and a Kiswahili-dubbed version. Data were collected in Nairobi, Kenya from 22 men and 36 women and analyzed according to: theme, plot comprehension, character recognition, cultural perceptions, language preferences and synchronization. Four of the groups that viewed *The Hiding Place* in either English or Kiswahili had difficulty identifying the main plot points, location and historical placement. It is certain that educational level and exposure to western media increased the ability to perceive the themes. Both groups that viewed *Consequences* (produced in Zimbabwe and dubbed to Kiswahili) comprehended major plot points, character names and motivations more completely. This study also addresses other factors affecting comprehension, including: familiarity with the story, exposure to the media, exposure to western accents through work relationships and the effect of single viewing on comprehension.
Chapter One: The Problem

Introduction

Language dubbing or Automatic Dialogue Replacement (ADR) has been used by Hollywood extensively to make the films understandable to non-English speakers. For example, hundreds of recent releases of Hollywood films are dubbed from English into German, French and Italian. These are large secondary markets and mean a lot to the industry’s worldwide income. Few films produced in Italian, French or German are ever translated into English, and when they are, the only viewers are the so-called “art” film lovers (Durovicova, 1992).

As early as 1929, Mussolini decreed that all foreign language films be dubbed to Italian, a move which “led to the re-emergent Nationalist movement that would alter the European cultural and political landscape.” It was about this time that other quotas for the importation of American films were established—even the British limited the importation—a move led by BBC film critic G. A. Atkinson. Atkinson cited the corrosive nature of American films, their incompatibility with the British national culture and its insistence that all human values—romantic love, respect, patriotism—had a direct cash equivalent (Durovicova, 1992). As you can imagine, this engendered some unkind ripostes by the American press. Because of the low level of sound technology and the inability to create a separate soundtrack, the large Hollywood studios invested heavily in foreign language studio operations on their own lots (Wurtzler, 1992). About this time Paramount invested in a studio operation outside Paris. The main intent was the serial remake of previously released American films in as many as 14 languages. The studio used the same sets, same costumes and choreographers for each different
language with the obligatory unionized French extras in the background. Shooting took place on an assembly line basis, with multiple versions being available for release within days of each other. This phase of serial production lasted only a few years in the 1920s and was eclipsed as new techniques of separate soundtracks were introduced.

The Two-Thirds World Adapts

In the Two-Thirds World, the largest dubber of films is the Indian film industry. During a 1984 visit to India, personal contacts within the Bombay film industry noted that approximately 800, 35 mm and 70 mm feature films were released per year. This did not include films made for television distribution which was a small number at that time. A large portion of these films are made in the Hindi language (Chakravarty, 1993). Hindi is the official language in India and spoken by a majority of people in the North. Several visits in 1984-86 and to the large studios in Madras, however, verified that the majority of the films are produced in regional languages for local distribution. In many cases, these films were "dubbed" into Hindi and Bengali for the northern market. The total number of feature films had grown to 900 by late 1986. As early as the 1950s many of the popular southern Indian films were reportedly remade in Bombay in Hindi with a larger budget and name actors (Chakravarty, 1993). However, it is clear that dubbing in India is widely accepted. Meetings in 1994 with film industry contacts and NGO representatives in Bombay and New Delhi showed that the growing demand for programming for the burgeoning TV market (with only a reported 15 channels) was putting pressure on the existing program providers. In late 1995, the Hollywood of India or "Bollywood," started dubbing western films for the burgeoning demand for television programming (Chandra, 1995). An overnight dubbing industry grew to meet the intense
demand for Hindi language films. Films such as *Jurassic Park* and *Terminator* are now showing both theatrically and on television now reportedly offering up to 90 channels. The American soap *The Young and the Restless* is now being dubbed into Hindi, as well as the *Flintstones*, *Under Siege 2* and *Casper*. Chandra (1995) writes about what he terms “culture-crossing.” Should a Hindi-speaking Steven Seagal sound “deadpan cool” like the original, or should he imitate the thundering emotions of the Bollywood heroes? If a cow could speak, what would that sound be? The industry had to grapple with questions such as: How does one dub kisses? According to Chandra (1995), the dub artists of *The Young and the Restless* solved the steamy scenes by kissing their hands! Sources within the Indian film industry related that these dubbed American films were huge money makers!

Chandra (1995) also commented on the seeming inability to provide accurate translations into Hindi because of the longer word equivalents of that language. This is true also in Kiswahili where simple phrases are far too long for the lip movements. Therefore, the dubbing translator uses “dynamic equivalents” which may or may not provide an accurate translation of the original dialogue.

**Internal Market Forces**

One reason why India can afford to dub western films into several languages is the large internal market. This is apparent as one travels from one end of this huge continent to another and observes satellite receivers, villages wired for cable and entire towns which virtually cease operation to watch a favorite American sitcom. Interaction in 1996 with several independent producers from Bombay and Bangalore found that the 90 TV channels are desperately seeking product and the existing producers cannot fill
the demand. In fact, the major production houses need writers and one has opened up their own training facility—similar to the pattern of the American studios in the 1920s and 30s. According to a source in Bombay, this is a significant change from the practice of a major director arriving on the set without a script and turning out a major blockbuster! India’s fascination with all things western has created a ready market for foreign films, making dubbed films even more acceptable to the average Indian viewer (Chandra, 1995). Personal observation of the Indian TV and film industry since 1983 shows a huge growth in demand for product. In 1983 there were two national channels. In 1984 it grew to four, and in 1986, to 10 national and regional channels. By 1994 the number was increased to 15. In 1995 personal research reported up to 60 channels and Chandra (1995) states that there were 90 channels!

Africa’s Weak Market

Few Hollywood-produced narrative films have been dubbed into African languages. Observations of the marketplace and discussion with African producers only allows one conclusion—the market is simply very small financially. As a result, Francophone Africa receives French films and French-dubbed American films, Anglophone Africa receives English films, etc. (Gabriel, 1992). There was great interest in South Africa when Disney announced the dubbing of Lion King into the Zulu language of the “new” South Africa (Disney press release, date unknown).

Kilborn (1993) states that the larger and more economically powerful the country the more likely that dubbing will be done. When Disney eventually invested the huge amount of money necessary to dub Lion King into Zulu it was because Disney was counting on the emergent economy represented in the “new” South Africa. It is more
likely that the publicity factor figured into the bottom line, as opposed to direct increased income from Zulu theater goers. If Disney believed the market was big enough in South Africa, they would dub more of their titles. Personal research in South Africa has not located a source who can provide data on the dubbed version of *Lion King* and certainly have found no research on audience response or box office receipts.

The Religious Marketplace

By far the most dubbed film in the world today is the *Jesus Film*. According to Campus Crusade for Christ publications, it is now in 389 languages with 198 more in process. In Africa alone, the film is in more than 85 languages ranging from Kiswahili with a language base of 50 million to ones with only 100,000 understanding the language. The viewership of *Jesus Film* (850 million) has only recently dwarfed Cecil B. de Milles' classic, *King of Kings*, which has been subtitled into "two dozen languages, carried up the Ganges and the Congo by missionaries and seen by over half billion people!" (Loader, 1994 p. 9).

Prior to the *Jesus Film*, it was up to individual American Christian producers to dub their films. One film with a long period of appeal is *Suzanne*, a film made in French by Tri-Media Productions and dubbed into several languages. *Suzanne* is a film about a young woman in Cote D' Ivoire who commits her life to Christ. *Charm*, a film made in Kenya by Ken Anderson Films in 1984, is now in Kiswahili and French. *Charm* is a film about witchcraft in the story format of the early American Christian films, i.e., saved and singing hymns in the last five minutes—all problems solved!

Now, several major organizations have projects to dub existing films into other languages. These include the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Dayspring
Productions and Moody Institute of Science. To date, there have been no studies done on western films dubbed into African languages to determine how the viewers perceive the dubbed films.

Research Questions

The following research questions are explored in the present study:

1. Is there a difference in the way that viewers identify the theme in a film in original English and a Kiswahili-dubbed version?

2. Does Kiswahili language dubbing improve comprehension of that theme for Kiswahili speakers?

3. Do demographics and religious conviction influence the way viewers perceive the themes of a dubbed film?

4. Is there a significant increase in theme and plot comprehension by Africans of a film produced in Africa in English over the dubbed Kiswahili version of the Western film?
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

There has been little published research on the language dubbing of dramatic films. However, there are a couple of dissertations and a number of journal articles that deal with how dubbed films affect comprehension. A side issue, however, is the effect of Western filmic styles and the perceptions of the African audiences. Ukadike (1994) and others imply that the classical three-act film style may not be as important to African audiences as to western audiences. The fact is that few African stories come to a resolution—a necessity in the three-act structure. If African films are to be a true representation of African culture, then traditional filmic approaches do not necessarily need to be adopted by the African filmmaker or television producer. New styles and approaches must be developed that express the heart of traditional African culture. It may be difficult for African filmmakers to develop a truly African style as western films are held as the ultimate in style and quality. Contacts with the premier film training school (located in Nairobi), the Kenya Institute of Mass Communications (KIMC), found that the curriculum and choice of faculty is highly influenced by the multilateral financing. KIMC has had American, German, Swedish and Japanese technical support staff over the last 20 years.

Mitra (1993) discusses the issue of the signifying influence of television on culture and that it therefore reinforces existing cultural norms. Thus, western filmic styles and stories “signify” foreign cultural practices to the audience and, therefore, undermine the more traditional cultural practices.
The following are descriptions of the relevant literature directly related to the process of automatic dialogue replacement, related literature to specific African culture and media effects research.

Orality and Film Structure

Klem (1995) discusses at length the fact that Africans are not literature oriented. In his study in Yoruba-speaking Nigeria, he found that the Bible could be taught more effectively through the presentation of such information in an interactive, prose format methodology. When coupled with Yoruba songs, the learning increased. He states that one reason is that western literature-based approaches use a "foreign frame of reference" or "foreign frame of communication." He postulates that the receptors' culture is not taken into consideration and proposes a change in the way the scriptures are communicated, depending on the oral tradition approaches as opposed to a literature-based approach. Ong (1982) states that the study of primary orality helps us understand more thoroughly how writing has transformed human consciousness. Oral or preliterate individuals, for example, exhibit situational, rather than abstract classification thinking. When presented with a series of woodworking tools and a piece of lumber, a pre-literate, according to Ong (1982), will not think of the group in categorical terms (three tools, wood not a tool) but all associated to the wood. A literate person would see the tools as separate classified items. Objects and context are not separated in a preliterate culture while writing establishes a “context free” language or autonomous discourse.

Ong (1982) also discusses what he refers to as the “secondary orality” of television and film which “has striking resemblance to the old (primary orality of the
non-literate), in its fostering of communal sense, its concentration on the present moment and even its use of formulas” (p. 59).

Language and Cinema

Ukadike (1994) states that it has been difficult for African cinema to be truly "African." He writes about the language difficulty and how novelist Chinua Achebe (Nigeria) believes that English "must be altered to suit its new African home" and writes all of his popular novels in English (p. 202). Achebe believes that his “altering” of a colonial language allows the heart and soul of the African story to be expressed.

Kenyan novelist, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, on the other hand, advocates that literature for the African people must be written in African languages to be truly African. Both of these men, however, were educated in English and even today the school systems in Nigeria and Kenya (among others) use English as the medium of education. Personal research in Kenya and Nigeria found that it is common in these countries for a child to speak his mother tongue in the home, the regional trade language (Kiswahili for example) with his "agemates" and to start learning English at first grade! It is not until third grade that he learns to read the trade language (Kiswahili in Kenya and Tanzania and Hausa in Nigeria) and he may never learn to read in his mother tongue. This pattern is modified in the urban population centers as parents are more likely to speak English in the home, as opposed to the mother tongue. This practice of educating the "colonized" in the tongue of the colonial "oppressor" was common around the world and created a divisive influence between the tribes that kept the colonial power in control (Ukadike, 1994).
In the case of Kenya, the British developed its early relationships with the dominant Gikuyu. Many Kenyan officials were Gikuyu and controlled much of the lower level positions in government. The main uprising(s) that led to the freedom of Kenya in the early 1960s was led by Gikuyu Jomo Kenyatta who was kept in detention for a number of years. Kenyatta was also the first president of an independent Kenya. Had the British used the Gikuyu language as a medium of education it would have strengthened that tribe even more. On a more practical note on choosing a tribal language--most did not have a written language and it took a number of years for translations of the language--many done by the Bible translators. In recent years, there has been an increase in vernacular novels in Kenya. It is, however, for the most part not the young writers who are using vernacular!

Ong (1982) discusses the difference of literature versus the "primary orality" of the nonliterate. Literature, in Ong’s analysis, would struggle to express the true cultural belief systems. Oral presentation of these cultural traditions would only succeed because they are oral and not bound by the technology and reasoning of writing.

Film and Cultural Transcendence

Ukadike (1994) feels that film can transcend these barriers of language because of its use of audio and visual images simultaneously. One way, he advocates, is to inject African cinema with a dose of authenticity that will exploit the interlocking elements of the continent's cultural heritage. He talks about the dance, music, metaphor, and proverbs, which, when adapted to filmic codes, would produce film aesthetics that are African. Novelist Ousmene Sembane turned to film to disseminate his messages beyond conventional boundaries to a nonliterate, primarily rural audience.
Sembane (Ukadike, 1994) believes that visual image of film can transcend language barriers and produces his films using traditional cultural aesthetics and images to a primarily rural audience.

Martin-Barbero (1993) in his study of Latin American telenovelas (television novels or "soaps") states that he sees stories that are tied to strong oral narrative traditions which enable characters, authors and viewers to constantly exchange places. He states: “It is an exchange, a confusion between story and real life, between what the actor does and what happens to the spectator. It is a literary experience open to the reactions, desires and motivations of the public” (p. 43).

Ong (1982) states that television and film generate a strong group sense and that hearers of the spoken word are formed into a group or a true audience. Ong (1982) does not discuss media effects theories like parasocial interaction in regards to a nonliterate audience. It can, however, be assumed that the identification of the audience (hearers) with the characters (speakers) would be more likely to happen in television and film than it would in literature.

Rural vs. Urban Applications

It is clear from these authors and Sembane’s experience that African filmic style must adapt the historical oral traditions in order to communicate effectively, specially in light of the language barriers. However, Ukadike and Sembane are talking about using film to communicate to a rural audience. How does this adapting of traditional oral styles relate to a younger urbanized audience? A shortcoming to Ong (1982) in this current study is that he does not categorize rural versus urban population groups, nor the impact of popular culture on nonliterate. Urban youths in Africa are interested in
rap, in heavy metal, and in urban lifestyles. They are no longer part of the extended family structure in the village and are more affected by the problems of drugs, alcohol, unwanted pregnancy and AIDS.

The film, *Sabina’s Encounter*, was produced using a well-researched storyline about a barren woman. It was co-written by a Kenyan, Cameroonian and an American (me) after a series of focus groups consisting of men and woman from a variety of African countries. The results of these focus groups were reviewed in 16 African nations to validate the data. The main storyline has a basic pan-African plot which could take place in any country. One character, however, was a retired school headmaster who illustrated several points by the use of African proverbs. In general, urban youth and more educated older East Africans felt that there were too many proverbs in the film. This was not so among the rural audiences in East Africa. In West Africa there were no negative comments on the use of proverbs.

Three assumptions can be made from this finding: First, West African youth may be more open to the use of cultural proverbs. This was also evident in the interviews I did with West Africans in their early 30s. These men and women discussed the issues of witchcraft and the effects of the spirit world more readily and one even used a proverb or two in general discussion. In East Africa it is possible that the use of the proverb is not such a significant part of the daily speech patterns.

Second, East Africans may be more exposed to international programming formats due to more influence from the West. It is certain that the more moderate East African climate attracted more expatriates than muggy West Africa. In Nairobi alone there are 800 nonprofit organizations, as well as the United Nations Environment
Programs’ world headquarters. This results in more media exposure, improved schooling and opportunities for young people to be employed with these agencies.

Third, the nonrandom research sample in the study of Sabina’s Encounter may not have included a broad enough demographic sample.

If it is true that a young, urban audience would not identify with a filmic adaptation of traditional African oral culture, what images would they most identify with? What visual elements of their popular culture emulate some of the American rap artists and rasta musicians like the deceased Bob Marley? It is certainly not rural images that would serve to signify their cultural practices. Gathu (1995) found that youth in Kenya who identified with the rap and other adaptations of popular culture were actually attempting to identify with what they perceived as African roots.

Culture Codes and Viewer Disharmony

Delabasta (1989) discusses at length that verbal replacement of dialogue (synchronization) cannot be confused with the "codes" used to produce the film’s actual meaning. These include the verbal code (the geographical, temporal, stylistic dialects of a language), literary codes and theatrical codes (plot construction, etc.), moral codes, make-up codes, politeness codes and so forth. Ukadike and Sembane (1994) would agree with Delabasta (1989, p. 197) that a film "constitutes a complex sign" that includes both verbal and nonverbal signs at both the visual and acoustic levels. When the original language acoustic verbal sign is replaced with another language it constitutes an important semiotic constraint depending on the technical quality of the lip matching or "synchronization. Depending on the culture and exposure to dubbed films,
the audience notices the disharmonization between lip movements and the new language. This is not limited to lip movements, however.

Delabasta (1989) states that some of the body movements of the actors can be out of synchrony with the new language. Think, for instance, of the opposite gestures which different cultures use to accompany the words “yes” and “no.” I experienced this several years ago when I was traveling to India and living in the United States. The Indians use head nodding to denote agreement. It is, however, not an abrupt up and down movement of the chin, but rather a fluid wagging of the head from side to side. One wags his head to fit into Indian culture—upon returning to the states one does not wag his head in agreement. I had to force myself to stop wagging after I saw a friend tighten up his neck muscles to stop himself from emulating my head movements!

Delabasta (1989) provides a number of guidelines for judging the effectiveness of dubbed films that I have examined and adapted for this thesis:

1. Lip match: What effort will be made to match lip movements to the new language? Is the target culture accepting dubbed films because of past history or are films in general new to them? For example, it is common for the Jesus Film to be dubbed into languages that do not have any films in their language. In many of the smaller language versions of the film, a voiceover narration is used making no effort to match the lips with the new language.

2. Acting: How do the actors deliver their lines? Is there an attempt made by the dubbing actor to match the emotional intensity of the original delivery? Chandra (1995) touched on this when he stated that the Hindi dubbing industry questioned whether they should use a thundering voice (more cultural in Hindi films) as opposed to
replicating a flat delivery of the original American actor. This is essentially a cultural perspective. I was involved in the early 1980s in the dubbing of the *Jesus Film* into the Ethiopian language. All of it, from translation to voice replacement, was done in California. When the film was shown in Ethiopia itself, church leaders did not like the choice of the voice for Jesus, as well as part of the translation. Eventually, the film was redubbed in Addis Ababa and today all of the new translations of the *Jesus Film* are done within the culture of use.

3. Additions or reductions: Is anything added to the original text? In the dubbing of *The Hiding Place* into Kiswahili, the translator felt that the Kiswahili audience would not be familiar with the historical context of the story. Therefore, a narration was added at the start of the film that established the setting, time and history of the Nazi occupation of Holland. This was added even after one of the criteria for choosing the film in the first place was the fact that East African should be familiar with the Nazi occupation since they were active in Tanzania before and during World War II.

4. Target language: Were there regional variants of the new language to choose from and what criteria were used? This has an impact on understandability as well as an important hypothesis that linguistic usage on television has a major modeling impact on the linguistic norms of a speech community. When I was working in the Middle East on an entertainment-education TV series, we conducted a survey of what dialect of Arabic was preferred in the various countries. We found that although Egyptian films were widely accepted in the countries of the Gulf, it was not acceptable for educating their children. It is similar to an American child in Michigan having a teacher from the deep south. In the production of the resulting children’s series, we used what was
called “light classical Arabic” and attempted to avoid the regional inflection. The fact was that this first series was not as popular although adequate research was not done to find out why.

In another example, we decided to use a Tanzanian translator for a dubbing project targeted to both Kenya and Tanzania. This was because Kiswahili is taught as a first language in Tanzania and there is an attempt to expand the vocabulary. The Kenyans, on the other hand, speak a more colloquial version that is looked down upon by the Tanzanian much as if Americans would look down on a very proper Englishman. Since the dialogue director was a Kenyan, the translation was loosened to the so-called “coastal Kiswahili” that is more formal than the Kiswahili found in Nairobi, yet more colloquial than Tanzanian. It proved to be a good balance as the film is widely understood in both rural and urban Kenya and Kiswahili.

5. Target audience: Is the new translation targeted to a less sophisticated audience, or a mature, well-educated one?

Literary Translation

Mbangwana (1990), in his paper on literary translation, maintains that the literary translator must be able to analyze and interpret the context in which the literary text is embedded. The translator must "enter into the heart and mind of the author, relive his circumstances, re-feel what he felt, re-perceive what he perceived" (p. 321). This approach, used in the effective translation of film dialogue, indicates another very clear point: that synchronization is not "culture-isolated." The original message of the film and the visual presentation are visually very much a part of the originating culture. A very clear example would be a Parisian translating a film from Kenyan English to French.
for a rural Francophone Africa audience. Mbangwana writes that the translator could not accurately render the script into French unless he had "extra-linguistic" abilities.

Perceived Reality and Parasocial Interaction

One of the most critical issues to the dubbing of English films into African languages is perceived reality (Potter 1988) and parasocial interaction (Singhal, Obregon & Rogers, 1994). Potter (1988) found three dimensions in perceived reality:

1. Magic window: This is concerned with the degree to which the television viewer believes television content is an unaltered, accurate representation of actual life.
2. Instruction: This dimension addresses viewer’s feelings about television as an instructional aid that augments and expands direct experiences.
3. Identity: This focuses on the degree of similarity the viewer perceives between television characters and solutions, and the people and situations in real life (Potter, 1988).

It is clear from these three dimensions that the viewer will bring to the viewing arena his or her cultural perspectives, biases and experiences. The question is how an African reconciles these two dimensions. I will address them separately:

Cultural Adaptation

Magic window: It is quite probable that a rural African looks at a western film and agrees that what is on the television is an accurate representation of real life—but not necessarily theirs. Potter (1988) discusses what he refers to as active variables and that it should be expected that viewers who have had real-life contact with people and events will be most likely to realize the unreality of television. During 1987-88, a variety of American soaps were shown on Egyptian television. These included General Hospital and Falcon Crest. Contacts among nongovernmental agencies (NGO) based
in Cairo and informal research showed that the average Egyptian male believed that all western women were immoral. The stories shown on these soaps had no relationship to the lifestyle or attitude towards sex and consumerism of the average Egyptian. However, the viewer made a generalization internally which was inherently wrong. On one hand, the magic window allows people to understand a sense of reality from TV; on the other hand it may not necessarily have the ability to change the attitudes and belief structures of the viewer. Davis and Davis (1995), in their study of the effects of television on Moroccan youth, quote a Moroccan youth when he was comparing French films and Egyptian films: "(French films) allow you to see some of the world, while Egyptian ones only allow you to see inside the house" (p. 587).

Potter (1988) also states that the people who view the greatest amount of television have been reported to exhibit the highest level of perceived reality a finding that is corroborated by Gerbner's (1996) studies on Cultivation Theory.

Identity: Is it possible for a black African woman to feel close to a white western character on a television series? In an apparent contradiction, sources at the Christian Broadcasting Network reported that their family soap opera, Another Life, has been extremely popular on Nigerian television, running the 850 episodes a total of three seasons. Nigerian women interviewed from Jos, Nigeria “admit” to being addicted to the show and identifying strongly with the characters. Potter (1988) states that identity is not defined primarily in terms of the feeling of attractiveness of characters whom the viewer hopes to emulate. Rather it is defined as the extent in which the viewer is active in their lives. This is similar to parasocial interaction (Singhal, Obregon & Rogers, 1994)
in which the viewer identifies so strongly with the character he believes he knows him personally.

Thus, although not a part of this thesis, it appears that the more culturally dissimilar the viewer is from the culture presented in the dubbed film, the more difficult it will be for the viewer to understand the message of the film (Singhal & Svenkerud, 1994). In fact, significant misunderstandings may arise especially in dealing with religious communication. There are contradictions to this statement represented by the data on Another Life.

Cultural Identity

Gabriel (1982) discusses at length the aspect of cultural identity in African film from the political perspective in pre-Mandela South Africa. He states that African films must establish and reinforce African cultural values. Although he does not deal with the impact of foreign films on African culture, one realizes that it is certain that a western film would not reinforce African culture and belief systems, but serve to break down the uniqueness of that culture in light of the global perspective!

Tomaselli (1993), in a discussion of whether a black person is needed to direct a film about a black person (Malcolm X), writes that African-American director Spike Lee and white directors Jewison and Lumet (who ceded their rights to Lee) are “each speaking from their relative class, racial and cultural discourses” (p. 73). It is certain that an imported film will not speak from a relative class, racial and cultural discourse at all and serve to blur those distinctions.

Tomaselli’s perspective, however, may arise from the fact that many Africans consider American whites and African-Americans as culturally similar. Although he did
not discuss it in the paper, he may have felt that the story of Steve Biko in the film, *Cry Freedom*, would be better told by an African director, as opposed to Richard Attenborough.

Culturally-proximate Television

Singhal & Svenkerud (1994) addressed the question of what is “sharability” in pro-social television programming. They defined “cultural proximity” as “the active choice made by an audience to view international, national, or regional television programming.” They go on to say that: "Cultural proximity implies that audiences will prefer programming which is most proximate to their own culture, and which reinforces traditional identifies through the use of common signs and symbols, language, historical heritage, ethnicity, religion and other cultural elements as dress, gestures, body language, humor, music, etc." (p. 20).

Singhal & Svenkerud (1994) also discuss which genres may be more sharable by discussing the prosocial *telenovela*, drawing heavily from the Peruvian soap *Simplemente Maria* and the experience of Miquel Sabido and the Televisa "experience." Their article also drew heavily from *Oshin*, a popular Japanese serial which was shown in the culturally-proximate and (seemingly) culturally diverse setting as China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Australia, Belgium, Mexico, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Poland, Brunei, India, Vancouver and Toronto in Canada, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco in the United States. Their article does not discuss audience demographics or audience research in nearly all of the countries. The only research was done in Belgium which concluded that the apparent popularity was due to similarities between Belgium and Japanese culture of a century ago (the time period
when *Oshin* was set). Singhal & Svenkerud refer to this as a case of historic sharability (p. 25).

In their section on limitations and possible solutions, they point out that program sharability comes at a price. Because sharable programs may find it difficult to focus on the specific problems of a specific target audience, the programs run the risk of delivering a diffused message. In addition, these programs also run the risk of eroding the cultural identity of the audience.

**Mechanical Synchronization**

There is a large body of research in the mechanical aspects of dubbing or synchronization. Fordor (1969) comments that the chief requirement of satisfactory mechanical synchronization is a faithful and artistic rendering of the dialogue and the unification of the replacement sounds with the lip movements. He states that issues such as facial gestures, bodily movements and positions, pitch level, tempo, intensity, angles of the actor to the camera (in the original visuals) all mitigate against what Fordor calls “impeccable synchronization” (p. 69).

Fordor is only dealing with problems associated with the original visuals and accurate dubbing. For example, *The Hiding Place* was originally shot for wide screen theatrical presentation. When it was transferred down to video format, much of the wide screen dynamics were carried over. For example, one shoots for the wide screen with a different cinemagraphic composition. The viewer watches the wide screen with eye movements that are much closer to real life. The eye can wander across the 25-foot screen much as it wanders in a room full of people. The camera person can use a wider shot and he rarely composes a shot with an extreme close-up. In television,
extreme close-ups are far more common and as a result lip-matching is far more critical. *The Hiding Place*’s wide screen impact was retained when transferred to video format and the lip-matching was far easier than *Sabina’s Encounter*, which was shot in video format. The intense scenes were difficult to lip-match for this reason.

Constraints on Film Composition

From Fordor’s article and personal experience, it would be possible to develop a series of constraints or recommendations on composition for films designed for multi-language dubbing: (1) Compose shots without close-ups on the face if possible and if you do, use such close-ups as reaction shots. (2) Avoid angles that show the face in profile. A 45-degree angle is best as it avoids a close and direct look at the lips as the phrase is heard. (3) Attempt to establish a simpler style for dialogue. If a sentence can be started by a character on camera, then a producer can show a reaction shot or a cutaway at the end of the character’s phrase. This will allow languages with longer equivalent words to be dubbed more accurately.

Subtitled Instructional Programs

Bin Moktar (1994) compared three versions of an educational film to university students in Malaysia. The film’s topic was CPR methods and was originally produced in Spain. He tested four versions of the film: (1) subtitled into Malay with the natural Spanish audio, (2) subtitled without the natural audio, (3) dubbed or voiced into Malay with some level of lip synch, and (4) the original Spanish language version as a control.

The study found that translation methods did not contribute significantly to knowledge of the film’s content. Repeated viewing of the film improved comprehension, but was not consistent with all versions. The researcher also randomly assigned the
students to different viewing situations, either alone or in a group. In the group situation, the students had repeated viewing of the video, whereas in the single viewing situation the student only saw the video once and was tested. He determined that the two versions which resulted in better comprehension were "subtitled into Malay without the natural audio" and "dubbed or voiced into Malay with some level of lip synch."

Bin Moktar’s study is inadequate due to the variables used. He does not differentiate adequately between the single viewers and the multiple viewers. Multiple viewing can be assumed to improve comprehension in a video that depends on demonstration of CPR methods. His conclusions, although interesting, do not inform us about thematic differentiation in the two language versions.

Automatic Reading Behavior

As Bin Mokhtar (1994) discovered, there is ample literature in the area of subtitled television and automatic reading behavior. The D'Ydewalle et al. (1991) paper studied eye movements between visual images and the subtitles on the screen in Holland where knowledge of the English language is well established. The results established that the subjects found reading the Dutch subtitles more comfortable to follow the plot than listening to the dialogue.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

In this study, the author compared audience response of two Kiswahili language-dubbed films, i.e., *Consequences* and *The Hiding Place* with the English version of *The Hiding Place*.

*Consequences*

This film was made in Zimbabwe in 1987 by Media for Development Trust. It is an entertainment-education film, designed to communicate family planning methods in a dramatic setting. *Consequences* is a story of two high school students, apparently at the top of their class, who had sex in a moment of passion. The girl got pregnant and eventually they were ejected from school. Rita was sent to her grandmother’s house to have the baby—nearly dying in the process. Richard ran away. The film deals with the “consequences” of the rampant teen pregnancy rate across Africa. It was dubbed into Kiswahili in Tanzania in the early 1990s and is currently available in a wide variety of African languages. *Consequences* was written and produced primarily with an English-speaking Zimbabwean audience in mind. It contains a wide variety of cultural clues that would enable the audience to understand the message. Most people across Anglophone Africa strongly identify with the high school-age characters (Smith 1989) and the familiar setting. The use of school uniforms, school yards, and the actual shooting within classrooms added to the impact. The actors were well-directed and the dialogue was realistic to the target audience.
This film was produced in 1979 by Worldwide Pictures and is about the life of Corrie Ten Boom. *The Hiding Place* was dubbed into Kiswahili in late 1994 in Nairobi and was field tested in Tanzania in January 1995. *The Hiding Place* was produced for an American theatrical audience and was aired via sponsored showings that were commonly done by the Graham Association in those days. Ten Boom was a well-known speaker at the time and the story was realistic. It is a story about the Ten Boom family and how they built a small room to hide Jews as part of a Dutch underground. They were arrested by the Nazi’s and kept in Ravensbruck Concentration Camp until just before the end of the war. Corrie, the main protagonist, was the only member of her family who survived the camps. She was apparently released due to a clerical “error” just before all the women of her age were sent to the gas chamber.

*The Hiding Place* was chosen as the first film to be dubbed into Kiswahili by the Graham Association because of several reasons. First, the film had high historical value. It was thought that the film would be easily identified by east African viewers because they studied the Nazi era in school. In addition, Germans colonized part of Tanzania earlier in the century and there were German troops stationed there in the 1940s. Second, the film had high literary value. The story of the life of Corrie Ten Boom had been published in Kiswahili by Nairobi-based Evangel Publishing in the 1970s and was used in schools as an optional reader. It was also thought the film would demand a reprinting of the book. Third, the film had story appeal. It was felt by the Graham Association and their Kenyan advisors that this was the best story due to its appeal of a biographical story. Fourth, the film was familiar to the audience. The
English version of *The Hiding Place* had been in distribution for a number of years and people were familiar with it.

Overview of the Research Design

The purpose of this study was to investigate the variation of thematic understanding and plot comprehension between an English film shown in English and a Kiswahili-dubbed version. Would the Kiswahili version communicate the main themes of the film and more effectively to Kiswahili speakers? Do demographics and religious conviction have any influence on the way viewers perceive the main themes of the film? How would the data above compare to an African-produced film made in Zimbabwe and dubbed into Kiswahili?

The study was carried out in six sections in the city of Nairobi. These included three urban slums in Nairobi, Kenya. A slum is described as temporary structures constructed with corrugated iron sheet roofs and mud and wattle walls. Many times slum dwellers are squatters on either private or public land. Water is carried in "jerry cans" from as far as 200 meters away, sanitary facilities are poorly maintained pit latrines which overflow during the rainy season. The study was also carried out in three urban middle class housing complexes which are described as permanent structures constructed of concrete brick with indoor toilets, running water and electricity.

Because the writer was located in the USA, he prepared a 22-page focus group guide (Appendix Two) for the two Kenyan co-researchers Joe Asiba and Haggai Arap Sang. The groups were organized in each location by a known resident and conducted in a community center in the slums for security and electricity availability. In the middle
class groups, a private house was used. Demographic data was collected by the contact who set up the groups.

Each focus group saw one of the two films. The Mathari Valley slum and the urban middle class estate of Kararani viewed *The Hiding Place* in Kiswahili, a regional trade language. The slum of Kibera and the urban middle class estate of Buru Brur viewed *The Hiding Place* in the original English version. The slum of Kawangare and the estate of Kariobangi viewed *Consequences* in Kiswahili. In each case the group was shown the film, along with soft drinks and a typical Kenyan sweet. Each group only had opportunity to view the film once. Afterwards, the co-researchers conducted a focus group that was scheduled to last 45 minutes to an hour. The length of *The Hiding Place* (two hours) created problems in the lateness. Most wanted to leave early because of their fear of walking even short distances after dark due to potential muggings.

Because *Consequences* was produced in an African setting in English and dubbed into Kiswahili, it was used to test the fourth research question, to determine if there is a significant increase in theme and plot comprehension of a film produced in another African country over the dubbed version of the Western film.

There has been significant research done on the impact of *Consequences*. Showing the Kiswahili version under controlled circumstances in a focus group setting allowed the researcher to compare the results of the previous research that used the English language version and to compare the thematic comprehension of an African produced film to a western-produced film. *The Hiding Place* in Kiswahili and English
were shown to separate focus groups to compare the impact of the original English to the dubbed Kiswahili version.

Two socio-economic groups were interviewed, i.e. urban poor and urban middle class (see Table One).

Table One: Language vs. Film and Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban Poor</th>
<th>Urban Middle Class</th>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathari Valley</td>
<td>Kasarani</td>
<td><em>Hiding Place</em></td>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwangware</td>
<td>Kariobangi</td>
<td><em>Consequences</em></td>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kibera</td>
<td>Buru Buru</td>
<td><em>Hiding Place</em></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focus Groups

A focus group is a research approach made popular by the advertising agency. These agencies would gather together people (consumers) and "test" a product or a TV or radio commercial. The discussion that followed was used to gain insight into these people's attitudes. Questions were asked in an open-ended manner and the group would discuss it as a whole. Usually, people do not feel pressured to give a "correct" answer. This method was chosen because of the personal beliefs of the author and the cultural attitudes in Africa toward questionnaires.

The researcher designed a series of questions, using the "uncued" question format first with "cued" questions second. This was followed up with an "all things considered set" last. The goal was to, as closely as possible, follow the Africa mindset in discussion by starting with the general and eventually moving to the specific. A guide to conducting focus groups was prepared by the researcher (Appendix Two) and was
used to train the co-researcher (see notes on page 96 of Appendix Two regarding the
development of this guide and the separate bibliography on page 97).

The co-researcher audio taped, transcribed and translated each session in
Kenya. There were two reasons for using an open-ended question format rather than a
questionnaire. The first was that many of the informants did not have enough education
to understand a questionnaire and if the questionnaires were administered by the co-
researcher, it would be considered negative by the informant and might stimulate police
involvement. In addition, the groups have to be small to avoid the requirement of
having to get police permission to meet.

It turned out that the middle class group was more concerned about the research
and wanted to be paid. This problem did not arise in the slum groups. In addition,
people in all groups were nervous because of the research. This research was being
conducted on the year before the second multiparty elections and people were tense.

The researcher believes that this discussion group format allowed the informants
to formulate themes that are important to them as Africans. This also avoided the
inadvertent communication of what the western researcher believes to be important
thematic points in the films.

After transcribing and translation into English, the material was sent back to the
researcher for analysis. In addition, the Kenyan co-researcher listened to the tapes and
prepared his own analysis to the data. This was compared by the researcher.

The research was conducted by a Kenyan Kiswahili-speaking counterpart under
controlled circumstances. For the urban poor focus groups, small groups were
gathered in community centers in three large slums: Mathari Valley (250,000 residents),
Kibera (500,000 residents) and Kwangware (150,000 residents). In each case, the co-researcher’s contacts in those areas assured a random sample of Christians and non-Christians. A typical Kenyan snack was served after the film show with a planned discussion time of 45 minutes to an hour. It was originally planned to determine education and income level after the focus group discussion. This was resisted among the informants and only age, education, and occupation were collected in addition to “churched” and “unchurched” status.

Three groups of urban middle class informants were set up in middle class estates: Buru Buru Estate (75,000 residents), Kasarani (30,000 residents) and a middle class section of Kariobangi Estate (24,000 residents). The same format was followed.

The researcher expected that the groups in each estate are reasonably homogenous from estate to estate because of the random rural to urban migration present in present-day Kenyans. Instead of clustering in tribal situations, people from all tribes and occupations are brought together in slum housing. This decision was made based on anecdotal data from personal observation among these populations and informal discussions with area residents and development officials.

Analysis

Each focus group was analyzed according to the following six categories:

(1) Theme: What was the main point of the film? (2) Plot comprehension: Areas such as general knowledge of the films plot, location, timing, etc. (3) Character recognition: Did the informants recognize the main characters and can they name them? (4) Cultural perceptions: Was the film about a series of individuals or about an extended family (in the case of The Hiding Place)? How did the audience identify with the
situations of the characters? (5) Language preferences: What language do the informants prefer and in what context? Was there a problem in understanding either the dubbed version or the original film due to accents or pronunciation.

(6) Synchronization: Were there problems with lip-synching which caused the informant to lose concentration?

Demographics of Viewers

The Kenyan system of education is based on the British system through high school. For example, the Kenyans attend primary school though the 8th grade, “O” levels are completed in two years with many Kenyans stopping there. “A” levels would be roughly equal to the first two years of college with the student either leaving school at that time or entering university.
For ease of comprehension to the reader, I have "translated" the original terms used by the co-researcher to American terms.

Table Two: Kenyan Educational Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Term</th>
<th>American Equivalent</th>
<th>Term Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Four-year degree</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A&quot; levels</td>
<td>One year college</td>
<td>Some college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;O&quot; levels</td>
<td>11th grade</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form Six</td>
<td>7 years of primary school</td>
<td>Some high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Level</td>
<td>1st Grade to 8th grade</td>
<td>According to grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religious Conviction

The terms in the original data collection were “saved” and “unchurched.” In Kenyan society, when one is “saved,” he or she is a member of a local church and does not exhibit behavior that is considered “non-Christian.” These behaviors include drinking beer, wine or hard liquor in any quantities, smoking, using drugs, adulterous relationships, wife beating, etc. I choose to use the term “churched” as opposed to the more emotive term of “saved.” The term “unchurched” was again chosen by the local contact and would indicate people who may or may not exhibit behaviors such as drinking, smoking, adulterous relationships, spouse beating, etc. It may be that the person simply does not attend church. Among the evangelical community there are terms like “get saved” bantered about if someone does something out of the ordinary. Such negative terms toward a person evolve on the “grapevine” from a substantiated or unsubstantiated rumor that one is drinking, smoking, having adulterous relationships, etc., even if one is not and this can be
truly negative. One is tempted to refer to themselves as a “saved” person even among those who appear to know the level of one’s religious conviction.
Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

Focus groups were conducted in six locations in Nairobi, Kenya. A total of 58 respondents viewed one of the films. 36 were men with an average of 29, 21 were women with an average of 29 with one additional woman age 61. 25 of the respondents fell into the “churched” category, while 33 fell into the “unchurched” category. A majority of 30 either completed high school or had some high school. 14 either completed college or had completed some college level study. 12 were only educated to the primary level, and two had no formal education at all.

The occupational spread was interesting. Of the group of 58, two were pastors, three were students, three were civil servants, four common laborers, five were housewives, nine were independant businesspeople, ten were professionals, 11 admitted to being unemployed, and eleven were in the clerk or semi-skilled worker category.

Summary by Research Question

Research Question No. One: Is there a difference in the way that viewers identify the theme in a film in the original English and a Kiswahili-dubbed version?

All of the groups except Kibera comprehended the main themes of both The Hiding Place and Consequences. Kibera seemed to have the most problems with the accent and language issue and this resulted in what the Kenyan co-researcher felt was "that they simply got all their information from the pictures."
Research Question No. Two: Does Kiswahili language dubbing improve comprehension of that theme for Kiswahili speakers?

All the groups except Kwangware and Kariobangi had difficulty identifying the main plot points, location and historic placement. The one exception was Buru Buru that had a higher level of education and media exposure. Kwangware and Kariobangi both viewed Consequences. Most of the groups knew who the main characters were. Except for Buru Buru, they had difficulty remembering the names.

Research Question No. Three: Do demographics and religious conviction influence the way viewers perceive the themes of a dubbed film?

It is obvious that higher education and western media exposure was associated with increased ability to perceive the themes. Nonetheless, it would be absolutely clear to state this from the data collected. It is less clear whether religious conviction was associated with increased ability to perceive the themes.

Research Question No. Four: Is there a significant increase in theme and plot comprehension by Africans of a film produced in Africa in English over the dubbed Kiswahili version of the Western film?

Both groups that viewed Consequences comprehended major plot points, character names and motivations more completely than The Hiding Place in either English or Kiswahili.

Summary Results by Analysis Categories

Theme. All of the groups except Kibera comprehended the main themes of both The Hiding Place and Consequences. Kibera seemed to have the most problem in the
accent and language issue and this resulted in what the co-researcher felt was that they simply got all their information from the pictures.

**Plot comprehension.** All the groups except Kwangware and Kariobangi had difficulty identifying the main plot points, location and historic placement. The one exception was Buru Buru that had a higher level of education and media exposure. Kwangware and Kariobangi both viewed Consequences.

**Character recognition.** Most of the groups knew who the main characters were. Except for Buru Buru, they had difficulty remembering the names.

**Cultural perceptions.** Each group who viewed The Hiding Place in either English or Kiswahili identified the fact that it was the Ten Boom family working to help the Jews. None of the groups identified an individual as the main protagonist. In all cases, however, the groups felt that the film was made in the West with English actors. This reduced the ability of the story to communicate the main theme or to be relevant to their personal lives.

**Language Preferences.** Out of the 53 people in the series of six focus groups, 29 preferred Kiswahili over English while 24 preferred English over Kiswahili for the viewing of the film. The ones who preferred English gave reasons that mostly related the fact that English had a broader vocabulary than Kiswahili. This group also felt that in the case of The Hiding Place that “white” people should not speak Kiswahili. Those who preferred Consequences in English seemed more concerned with the suitability of the dubbing actor for a specific part, speaking speed, etc.
**Synchronization.** Nearly all of the negative synchronization comments came from the dubbing of *Consequences* into Kiswahili. They revolved around selection of the actors, vocabulary used, delivery of the words, etc.

Each focus group was conducted as noted both in the original proposal and in the methodology chapter. The results for each focus group are delineated below:

**Specific Focus Group Data**

This will be presented in note form and not necessarily in complete sentences.

**Mathare Valley Research.** The focus group was conducted in a polytechnic classroom located in a sprawling urban slum in Nairobi. The co-researchers commented that only three admitted to owning television sets and this resulted in more informants attending and that many were Christians. However, the demographic details showed that five out of the nine considered themselves “churched,” while the other four were classified as “unchurched.” Five were men with an average age of 30 and the rest were women with an average age of 31. Two had a college education and the rest were educated with at least some high school. There were a lot of general comments regarding points that were really difficult to understand, like the handing out of the yellow stars which was not really explained. That there was an error on the music and effects tracks which confused matters further. It was felt that people understood the film because they were Christians. The Kiswahili version of *The Hiding Place* was shown.

**Category of Analysis**

**Theme:** Variously comprehended as a journey, brotherhood in faith, family concerned, Christian love, persecution.
**Plot comprehension:** Wide variation in dates, location. Identified specific items of comprehension.

**Character recognition:** Liked Corrie and her father best. Identified the Ten Boom family as the core characters.

**Cultural perceptions:** Comprehended that the film was about a family helping others.

**Language preferences:** It was about an even split with those liking Kiswahili over English. They liked the Kiswahili translation and lip sync. Kiswahili was better comprehended and communicated the message to them more effectively. Out of the group who preferred English the reasons given revolved around issues of translation, language adequacy to express more complex thoughts, inadequate lip sync, etc. The issue of mother tongue used in the home was brought up in this Mathare group. Only three responded. Of them, two used the mother tongue and one used mother tongue and Kiswahili in the home. No one admitted to using English in the home.

**Synchronization:** Very positive on the technical aspects of lip-sync in general although there was some negative comments also.

**Other categories:** This group was asked about TV ownership. Three out of nine admitted to having a set at home. Usually, residents of these slum areas are very closed mouthed about their possessions as this brings on robberies.

**Questions:** People were curious why Mr. Ten Boom carried a cat around and the co-researcher told them that English people like pets.

**Kasarani Research.** Conducted in a primary school classroom in a middle class urban housing complex, the group consisted of eight respondents. Five were
“unchurched” and the remaining three were “churched.” Six were men with an average age of 28 and two women with an average age of 26. Three were only educated up to the primary school level while the balance had at least some high school. The Kiswahili version of *The Hiding Place* was shown along with traditional Kenyan tea and cakes.

The two co-researchers noted in their summaries that the respondents had trouble understanding the context of the film and that there seemed to be a difference in how the respondents viewed a film, either for entertainment or to find out information. The respondents found it difficult to remember the names of the characters because they were foreign. In fact, the informants in this case were not familiar with the Nazi historical situation. They did not recognize that the main character was Corrie and that she was part of the Ten Boom family.

**Category of Analysis**

**Theme:** This group comprehended that faith and hope were primary.

**Plot comprehension:** Wide variation in dates expressed although they were convinced it was Germany.

**Character recognition:** Two out of nine identified the main character as a woman, but only one remembered her name.

**Cultural perceptions:** Thought the film was about a family and a community not a person.

**Language preferences:** Five informants (out of 10) preferred the original English. Much of the reasoning revolved around the quality of lip synching and dubbing actors. Felt that it was OK for the Kiswahili version because it was to educate the “masses.”
Synchronization: Preference to English because of the apparent lip-synch problems.

Note: Favorite TV show was identified as *The Bold and Beautiful*.

**Kwangware Research.** Conducted adjacent to a sprawling urban slum, this group viewed *Consequences*, the film produced in Zimbabwe and dubbed to Kiswahili in Tanzania. The group consisted of five women with an average age of 27 and five men with an average age of 30. Five were noted to be “unchurched” and five were identified as “churched.” Three were only educated to the primary school level, five to the high school level and two had a college education. The co-researchers felt that the response was much better than with *The Hiding Place*. Familiar names and story were cited and the “cast who looked like them” contributed. The environment where most of the film took place was familiar to the informants--“people didn’t have to strain their minds” as one co-researcher states. Most people of a lower educational level were able “to understand and follow.”

Category of Analysis

**Theme:** Avoid early involvement in sex and the consequences of it.

**Plot comprehension:** Picked out major plot points within the film.

**Character recognition:** Complete identification of characters. Knew names, sex, etc.

**Cultural perceptions:** Identification with the characters and situation.

**Language preferences:** A majority preferred Kiswahili over English because they had better comprehension. They did not like the dubbing due to actor matching.
Synchronization: Felt there was a lot of mismatching of lip movements which created a lose of concentration.

Kariobangi Research

Conducted in a large urban slum, the group consisted of seven men with an average age 26 and six women with an average age of 30 who viewed *Consequences* in Kiswahili. Three were educated at the primary level or below, one completed the 7th grade, five completed high school and three claimed a college education. Six were placed in the “unchurched” category and seven in the “churched” category. Again, the co-researchers felt that the response was much higher due to the close culture of the film. The audience followed the story line much closer, would laugh, point to the actors, give each other knowing glances, clap as a character collapses, etc.

Category of Analysis

**Theme:** Variousy understood as our children’s lives, marriage and bad consequences of sex before marriage. Understood main theme of film although some were confused as to why Rita’s mother sent her away.

**Plot comprehension.** Strong identification and understanding of the plot and location.

**Character recognition:** Felt Rita was sincere. Supported Richard going to apologize to Rita. Liked Rita’s Mom.

**Cultural receptions:** Identification of similar needs in their own situation.

**Language preferences:** Out of eight who responded to this, four understood the Kiswahili better and four felt it would be better in English. One person felt Kiswahili was
better if targeted to the parents of teens. Confusing statements like, “personally, I prefer English but Kiswahili is better for parents."

**Synchronization**: Lip synch was out. Spoke too fast (to fit Kiswahili words into English spaces). Actor who played headmaster spoke too softly. Felt there was a loss of translation: “Taste - from lack of enough vocabulary in Kiswahili.” “Should be reacted in Kiswahili.”

**The Kibera Research**: Conducted in a sprawling urban slum, the group consisted of four women with an average age of 32 and seven men with an average age of 30 who viewed *The Hiding Place* in English. Two had a college education, six completed high school, two the 7th grade and one the 5th grade. Five were deemed “churched” and seven were placed in the “unchurched” category. There were general comments again regarding difficult accents, names, hard to follow plot, "cultural strangeness."

**Category of Analysis**

**Theme**: Seemed pretty confused with the theme of the film. Possibly because of the specific question. However, they responded with comments like problems of Zaire (tribalism), “waiting for Jesus,” Israel (Jews in Egypt).

**Plot comprehension**: Several missed the dates by hundreds of years and identified the location as Israel, Germany, Holland. Most didn’t know.

**Character recognition**: Understood who the main characters were but when asked the name of the main character they could only identify that it was a woman. It was clear that they did not like the pastor much.
Cultural perceptions: Seemed to see the fact that it was a family against the antagonist, but seemed confused as to who it really was.

Language preferences: Nine of 12 people would have preferred Kiswahili but one thought that English people should not speak Kiswahili. They had difficulty with the pronunciation, speed and accent. Five of the 12 did not understand English well.

Synchronization: No comment.

Other categories: Very concerned with why the research was being conducted but it was acceptable when the reason was explained.

The Buru Buru Research. Conducted in an urban middle class housing complex outside Nairobi, the group consisted of one woman, age 61 and six men with an average age of 28 who viewed The Hiding Place in English. This group had the highest educational level with two completing high school, two with some college and three with college degrees. All were categorized as “unchurched.” Although this was the most difficult group to organize, it clearly understood the film more thoroughly than any of the other groups. They were more aware of the historical situation, the plot comprehension and according to the co-researchers, showed compassion for the plight of the characters more than any other group. This group was far more exposed to television and cinema than any other group.

Category of Analysis

Theme: Clearly understood the theme of the film which was demonstrated by responses such as: “how the Jews were hated by others”, “teach to love our enemies”, faith in God without fear.”
**Plot comprehension:** Understood the dates and locations, relationship to World War II, recognized the canals of Holland and even named the country.

**Character recognition:** Understood who the main characters were, admired Mr. Ten Boom for his courage and “stubborn ideas” and Corrie for her origination of the idea for the “hiding place” and her self-sacrifice.

**Cultural perceptions:** Clearly identified who the main characters were and the fact that it was about the Ten Boom family. They felt that the cultural setting of the film prevented the “message (from) coming out fully.” They felt that the film (in English) would not work well in the rural areas and that the rural illiterate people would only comprehend the torture but not the main theme of the film.

**Language preferences:** Five of the six would have preferred Kiswahili over English because “it is understood better.” It was unclear whether this was a personal preference or was related to the improved impact of the film on less educated viewers. One person preferred English better because the “translation wouldn’t always retain the meaning.”

**Synchronization:** Not available.
Chapter Five: Discussion

Implications of the Study

It was clear from the results that the viewers of either English or Kiswahili versions of *The Hiding Place* tended to assume that the story was for someone else. They did not identify personally with the character(s) in the story and made statements like, “it is a Mzungu (white man’s) problem.” There was no evidence of parasocial interaction with the western characters (Singhal, et al. 1994) or as Martin-Barbero (1993) refers to when he discusses the “exchange, a confusion between story and real life.”

In the Kibera group, Sang and Asiba concluded that many of the respondents did not comprehend the dialogue, but “picked most of the information from what they saw.” Delabasta (1989) refers to the disharmony of the various “codes” used to produce the film’s actual meaning. If a group like Kibera received their total understanding of a film from only the visual images without the verbal, then there would be a disharmony of understanding between the original producer's meaning and the viewer's comprehension.

It was clear that each of the groups identified that *The Hiding Place* was about the Ten Boom family as opposed to individuals. Because *The Hiding Place* was not tested in a western audience it is not possible to know if a western audience would identify the main theme in the same way.

In the viewing of *Consequences*, there was evidence of parasocial interaction with the main characters of Rita and Richard. The story was referred to as “one made for Africa” and as appropriate to the Kenyan culture and that the film did have a
message for them and identified a clear need in their society. This may be what Gabriel (1982), Ukadike (1994) and Tomaselli (1993) all refer to as the reinforcement of African cultural values.

One interesting comment in the Kibera group was related to the Campus Crusade Jesus Film. The discussion related to the fact that the children responded well to the film, they even got emotionally involved. There are certainly reasons for such impact that include familiarity with the story, a closer cultural basis (culturally-proximate) and familiar names.

Issues Affecting Comprehension

It is clear from this study that it was not only language that affected comprehension. The other aspects included: (1) Familiarity with the story. However, even though the respondents seemed to comprehend parts of the story in the case of The Hiding Place, they were not sufficiently familiar with it to internalize the themes. This was not the case in Consequences where there was strong identification. (2) Exposure to the media. Viewers with higher exposure to the media (like the Buru Buru group) would be more likely to understand the main themes. (3) Exposure to western accents through work relationships. Viewers with higher exposure to western accents through work relationships may find it easier to understand western programming. (4) Single viewing restriction: Several comments were made by the informants that they needed to view The Hiding Place again to comprehend it better. Bin Moktar (1994) found that repeated viewings of the instructional program resulted in improved comprehension. Studies of serialized programs like Oshin (Singhal & Svenkerud, 1994), Simplemente Maria (Singhal et al., 1994) and others all show that
pro-social or entertainment-education programming result in comprehension of major themes and concepts. It may be that the use of this serialized format with the same characters shown episode after episode would result in improved comprehension even in English-language programs. It is also clear that no matter how well technically the dubbing is executed, there will be a possible inaccurate level of comprehension of a western film.

Recommendations

Considering this study, the available literature in African culture and cultural sharability of western programming, I would offer the following recommendations to organizations wishing to use television and film to reach African and other non-western cultures: (1) Produce programs within the target country using local writers and directors within the local language. Zimbabwe-produced Consequences was immediately identified as relevant to the Kenyan situation and the main themes seemed to be internalized. This was not true of The Hiding Place. (2) Utilize films made regionally for dubbing purposes. Consequences was produced in English and dubbed to Kiswahili. Although there were complaints with the quality of the dubbing, the main themes were easily identified and accepted. This is what Singhal & Svenkerud (1994) refer to as culturally-proximate programming. This is similar to the widespread acceptance of Sabina’s Encounter in Anglophone countries in Africa. (3) Use serialized programs. In the event that a decision is made to use imported programs to communicate a specific message, make a decision to use a serialized program format. This was most likely why Oshin was successful in crossing cultural boundaries (Japan and Belgium) even though these countries are not culturally-proximate.
Suggestions for Further Research

Due to the nature of this study, the findings were subject to several limitations. The following research is suggested: First, use informants from rural areas as well as urban. The informants selected for this study came from within specific population sectors within the city of Nairobi. In order to make broader generalizations, groups from rural areas would need to be organized. Second, test the Kiswahili version of *The Hiding Place* in Tanzania where Kiswahili is the predominant language of interaction. Because the majority of Kenyans are at least bilingual to some level (English/Kiswahili) and they decide to use the specific language depending on the circumstance, i.e., English for "business" type transactions and Kiswahili for "casual" conversation with a person of another tribe would be necessary to test the Kiswahili versions in Tanzania where Kiswahili is the major language. The testing of the Kiswahili versions in Nairobi skewed the results of the groups. Third, more in-depth interviewing of informants selected from the focus groups should be done to collect more detailed responses and some level of quantitative data collection should be done for additional data. Fourth, additional research of serialized western programming which is popular within Kenya should be carried out to determine if the same comprehension problems arise. Fifth, specific efforts should be made to determine the effect that western media is having on the popular culture of the so-called "Generation X" in Africa. These young men and women, aged 18 to 25 years, have the most potential to be influenced by the mass media flooding modern Africa. This is particularly salient as the under 25 year olds constitute 60-80% of Africa’s population. Finally, any further research into the area of media effects should utilize a mix of research methodologies. It is not acceptable to
simply conduct focus groups--even coupled with in-depth interviews. A researcher should be willing to commit himself or herself to multiple research methodologies.

It is recommended that further research be carried out in the following way. First, quantitative methodology should be undertaken to build a baseline of demographic, TV show preferences and viewing habits. Second, ethnographic techniques should be used on a longitudinal basis, to better understand how television is influencing the behavior of the subjects. Third, the use of focus groups coupled with in-depth interviews will allow the researcher to draw specific conclusions.
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Note: A specific bibliography related to the focus group process is at the end of Appendix Two.
Appendix One:

Focus Group Summaries with Co-researcher Comments
THE MATHARE RESEARCH
Language: Kiswahili • Film: THE HIDING PLACE
• Urban slum

Participant, age, education, occupation, churched/unchurched
Ms. Elizabeth Mbiku, 39, high school, civil servant, churched
Mr. Onyango, 40, college, accountant, churched
Ms. Wilfresha Wegulo, 30, high school, accounts clerk, unchurched
Mr. Jonathan Ngwae, 29, high school, brick mason, churched
Mr. Joseph Mwako, 25, high school, unemployed, churched
Mr. Aggrey Kere, 30, college, teacher/artist, unchurched
Ms. Kefa Nyagaka, 22, high school, student, unchurched
Mr. Mark Monda, 29, high school, clerk, unchurched
Ms. Agnes Mbuvi, n/a, high school, civil servant, churched

T Theme of the Film
R Faith fullness to God.
R Example of persecution of Jesus.
R Great love that God gave human especially the saved and the families.
R The journey on this world.
R To be more concerned about others.
R Loving and helping one another in this journey to Heaven.
R Brotherhood in faith.
R The family was concerned(shared) about the afflicted over endangering their lives. Hold Christian love.
R Family committed to the work of God against objections.
R Christian family with faith like Shaddrack Meshack and Abednego. Had great faith in God and prayed for other people not to suffer.
R The family felt more brotherly to the afflicted. Ten Boom was courageous to inform a soldier that he would open the doors to any that knocked on his door. (Needed to view the rest of the movie.)

FOLLOW-UP: What message does the film have for you?
T Have faith where you work.
T Be determined to continue the journey inspite of all obstacles.
T My stand is better than my words (Ten Boom).
T Connection of how Jesus came and accepted to die for our sins.
T God's love for us and for our salvation.
T In all you do have courage and determination, faith mostly and love.
T In the Christian life, don't expect things to be smooth all the way.
T Ten Boom was slapped but she continued on. My faith means taking risks for the others. Mr. Ten Boom declined the offer of release and stood by his faith.
T If you have decided to work for God be prepared at all times for anything that might arise suddenly.
**Most liked character.**

R The lady who asked for a Bible against all other (stressed with gestures).

R Didn't really judge but the lady who asked for milk for the baby.

R Ten Boom - because of helping the others.

R The old-man - because of his firm stand for his house which did most of the work. The daughter was faster than the mother.

**FOLLOW-UP: If she had not asked for the Bible would you still like her?**

R Yes. She was firm and didn't give in even after being slapped and arrested.

**Main characters**

R Ten Boom's family

**What year was the film about?**

R 1837-1937

R 2nd world war

R During the second world war

R After the second world war

**Location of story?**

A Holland

**English language preference**

R Five people

**FOLLOW-UP: Why English?**

R Because translation rubs the originality. e.g. preacher and translator say different things. e.g. Habari za asubuhi is not right for morning.

R The bicycle man didn't sound alarmed (original language should be maintained).

R Mouth movement doesn't sync with words.

R Kiswahili doesn't have enough vocabulary.

R Let surprises be portrayed and the circumstances.

R Translators cause limitation (would love to watch both languages).

R When they were running away they didn't part flow of words.

R When the soldier knocked he pronounced something, would love to hear it in English.

**Kiswahili language preference**

R Four people

**FOLLOW-UP: Why in Kiswahili?**
R  Translation and the lip sync was good. I understood what had happened (translation) I expected wrong mouth movements but got the true meaning.
R I understand Kiswahili better. I prefer Kiswahili.
R Kiswahili is much better for those who are not educated.

FOLLOW-UP: Is the Kiswahili understood?
R Simplified, but the one who matched the English version might notice the difference.
R Translators considered the theme and tried to maintain it.
R Kiswahili is understood by many and it was clear.
R Kiswahili can be understood by people from different regions.

T  Language usage at home?
R mother tongue 1
R mother tongue & Kiswahili 2
R all the above 1

T  Television ownership.
R Three people.

QUESTIONS FROM GROUP:

Q  Why did the old man carry a cat?
A  English people love pets

Co-Researcher Comments

SANG: My observation today is that considering the economic situation of the area, not many people have equipment of video and this is what generates more interest in watching a video and I would say they were more keen than the first group. They contributed very important points like that bit of originality being lost in translation or dubbing for that matter. Generally I would say that we ran out of time because of the length of the tape itself. Some were left even after the discussion to continue watching. As we speak now they are watching. That shows the interest is there. The names, some one called Ten Boom: Ten Bull. Again the idea foreign names is coming again and it might be better in future to use local names. People might get to know something. Something else I noticed in the tape during the part of issuing the yellow stars to they Jews, there was the speaker and the commentator speaking at the same time and it was not clear how that part was introduced.

ASIBA: I agree that today was quite different from Kasarani. People were more attentive and understood the whole thing. Today we had a lot of Christians which contributed something to their being attentive and pulling up the issue more so than in Kasarani where we had many of them not Christians. Today was quite interesting, quite
challenging and to see what good voice dubbing can do. What potential it had and what people can do and how they felt. They enjoyed. There was ease in the whole exercise which was quite encouraging.

THE KASARANI RESEARCH
Language: Kiswahili • Film: THE HIDING PLACE
• Urban middle class housing complex

Participants, age, education, occupation, churched/unchurched:
Mr. John Kangethe, 23, high school, driver, churched
Mr. David Sundwa, 23, high school, laborer, churched
Mr. Francis Kariuki, 25, 6th grade, painter, unchurched
Ms. Sofia Ndunge, 20, 7th grade, Nursery School teacher, unchurched
Mr. Martin Njoroge, 40, 7th grade, unemployed, unchurched
Ms. Winnie Nganga, 33, high school, housewife, churched
Mr. Micah Kamau, 29, high school, businessman, unchurched
Mr. Stephen Waweru, 27, high school, carpenter, unchurched

T Theme of the film
R To stand firm in Jesus
R Not to lose hope
R Stand in faith
R Endurance

FOLLOW-UP: If you were to tell some to come watch this film, what are the benefit would you tell him/her are there?
R How people suffer and persevere
R Endurance in time of hardship
R How Germans persecuted the Jews
R To be firm in faith

T Historical time
R 1945: 1940: around 1940: 1935
R During the time of Jesus
R During the 2nd world war

FOLLOW-UP If you were to teach about this film, would you know when?
R When the Germans were colonizing

T Location
R Germany

T Main character
R The one who was released (name forgotten)
R Ten Boom
FOLLOW-UP: Whom did you hate and why?
R The soldiers. Because they were harassing the prisoners

FOLLOW-UP Was the film on a community or a family?
R Community
R Family
R Family

T Language preference
R English
R English
R Kiswahili
R Kiswahili
R Kiswahili
R Kiswahili
R Kiswahili
R Kiswahili

FOLLOW-UP: Why in Kiswahili?
R Because it is easier
R I understand it more
R I understand it better
R Kiswahili is understandable. Its understood by many.

FOLLOW-UP: Was the Kiswahili understandable?
R Yes.

T Why in English?
R Kiswahili doesn't fit the English people

T What changes would you like to be done on the film?
R None
R The English to speak English
R Should have shown the dead.
R None
Co-researcher comments:

SANG: My observation is that some people don't really understand the context. They would rather watch the movie more than once, then they will be able to review the areas they did not understand; like the timing and the theme of the movie and the time of shooting and the people involved. After getting the questions they will now know what to look for. At times they will tend to watch it just for entertainment and not to seek information. So if they can be told what to look for in advance it might help. But at the same time, I hope this will not pre-empt the motive of having this people watch and getting their views. They could not remember the names because they are strange. If local names could be used. I would say it went on well.

ASIBA: I agree with Sang that people don't understand. It is even very strange that they do not know that the main character is Ten Boom and it is not one of them but all of them. I tend to think it is a difficult movie for them to understand and a bit too long because they did get bored and we had a problem just continuing them with them coming and going out. Next time choice of the movie dubbed should be also appropriate so that the locals could be able to understand. It is very rich on the Nazis/German image which some of us is not vast unless we go to school. It could be a good idea if they got a simpler script to do and some people can relate to that more easily.

THE KAWANGWARE RESEARCH
Language: Kiswahili • Film: CONSEQUENCES
• Urban slum

Participants, age, education, occupation, churched/unchurched:
Ms. Cleophas Lusega, 31, college, pastor, churched
Mr. Nicholas Machafu, 36, college, teacher, unchurched
Mr. Bernard Livwege, 26, high school, mechanic, churched
Mr. Vincent Shimenga, 34, some high school, tailor, churched
Mr. Maurice Induli, 26, some high school, unemployed, unchurched
Ms. Pamela Shimenga, 23, 7th grade, housewife, churched
Ms. Grace Mugoshi, 21, 8th grade, housewife, unemployed, unchurched
Ms. Berishepar Mbaisi, n/a, high school, housewife, churched
Mr. Archiuleus Kiwanuka, 28, high school, electrician, unchurched
Ms. Virginia Wacheke, 32, 7th grade, housewife, unchurched

T Theme
A warns about early involvement in sex, eg., Rita and Richard as students
A first things first. Finish school first, all other involvement will be there later.
A Richard and Margaret are students and we see them losing the grip of education and start on love life.
A Majuto (regrets) - premature involvement - the play within a play. Love caused it.
A Consequences of sex before marriage
A Lack of counseling kids as Rita’s mum regrets
A Rita’s early employment should also be seen as something to regret.
   She should have been left to suffer a bit. We see her becoming
   friends with a work mate and when Richard appears, she tends to forget
   about the workmate.
A Good teaching

FOLLOW-UP: What title would you have given this film?
A Majuto (consequences).
A Everything has its time. (Don’t rush.)
A Everything that has a beginning has an end.
A The dangers of sex before marriage.

FOLLOW-UP: Which people in the film face consequences?
A Rita’s mum because she did not warn her.
A Rita because she becomes pregnant before completing her education.
   She even has to leave school.
A Richard because everything doesn’t work out as he had planned.

T Main characters
A Rita, Richard, Albert, Rita’s mum, headmaster, Stella and drama teacher.

T Language preference
A Kiswahili to educate the masses, old and young.
A Prefer Kiswahili - 3
A Kiswahili for them that are not well educated.
A The job was well done. From English to Kiswahili. As for Kiswahili
   it doesn't need one to go to school.

FOLLOW-UP: How many would prefer it in English?
A Five people

FOLLOW-UP: Why in English?
A Lips/word mismatch wouldn't be there
A There is lack of originality in Kiswahili
A It would look more real
A It could be understood by many
A Like English more
A Understand it.
FOLLOW-UP: Did you understand what was going on (dubbing)?
A Lips were confusing (lip sync) and not right for the expression.
   e.g., where Stella is comforting Rita in class.
A Lips move longer than the speech. The speed is so different.

T What changes would you like on the film?
A Actors like Albert at times doesn't sound like he means what he says
A The film is fast.
A Shows women have a very strong weakness
A The bad example came from the bad (love) play. What they were
doing on the play in school is what they did later in real life.
A We find that regrets come after warnings. The warnings come much
   later after the mess. There were few in this case, Stella warns Rita
   and Albert warns Richard, but this is later. Even in school, they are
   not taught about all this love stories. If we would have had someone
giving warnings and later someone does not yield, then we would have
seen the consequences of not hiding warnings. You can not face
consequences without being warned, yes could face them but no one had
warned you before.

FOLLOW-UP: If the cast was white?
A Wouldn't be effective because of their already _______ culture. It
   is okay this way because it has been done in our environment and has
   more effects this way and it is more educating.
A Not many people like Westernized films.

T Which English TV Program is your favorite?
A The Bold and The Beautiful.

Co-Researcher Comments

SANG: In today's show, the response was quite good. As we had mentioned last time,
local name matter. Today familiar names were used compared to names like Ten
Boom: we had Richard, Rita, etc., and people were able to remember them and
recognize characters by such names. The cast had people who looked like them, so
they were able to identify with them. The school activities and the environment was like
the one around them. Just like what they have gone through. It was easy to catch and
understand although they had a problem with the lips and the words. They still feel that
there should be improvement on that area. That would draw back considering
translation and dubbing. Otherwise the message got across very well and, in fact, one
lady said she would wish her son would watch this and use it as a lesson for his life.

ASIBA: Today's show - locally done production is more effective. People are able to
identify as Sang said. People are able to identify with the characters. It is not foreign
and people don't have to struggle and strain their minds to be able to know, to
understand and follow what is going on as opposed to Hiding Place which had foreign
environment, the people talking were foreign. In a case like this if you are trying to reach the people, communicate something, I think this is a more effective way and more far away. It is a more sure way of getting to the people. More and more it was very different from the *Hiding Place* even the way we were able to relate to people that I assumed were of lower education standard, they were able to understand and follow. It was strange the way they commented on the tape. It is quite encouraging and challenging when we see something locally done. I mean using African setting can be able to communicate.

**THE KARIOBANGI RESEARCH**

Language: Kiswahili • Film: CONSEQUENCES

- Urban Slum

**Participants, age, education, occupation, churched/unchurched:**

- Mr. Daniel Okoth Owuoth, 26, primary education, Cobbler, churched
- Mr. Erick T. Oyugi, 22, high school, unemployed, churched
- Ms. Nguchiri Ndungu, 38, college, artist, churched
- Ms. Deborah Jnoki, 20, high school, unemployed, unchurched
- Ms. Irene Wambui, 25, high school, business woman, unchurched
- Mr. George Onyango, 24, high school, court clerk, churched
- Mr. Denis Musyoki, 20, college, student, churched
- Ms. Dorcas Wanjiru, 44, primary education, cleaner, unchurched
- Mr. Jacob Mucheni, 29, high school, machine assistant, unchurched
- Mr. Jeremiah Karanja, 15, none, hand cart puller, unchurched
- Ms. Margaret Gathirwa, 26, college, pastor, churched
- Ms. Jane Mugure, 25, n/a, unemployed, unchurched
- Mr. Douglas Macharia, 46, 7th grade, caretaker, churched

**T Theme**

- R Bad consequences of sex before marriage
- R Our children’s lives
- R Marriage

**FOLLOW-UP: Relevance of the video to Africa?**

- R How to relate to, afraid of, opposite sex.
- R Consequence that follow ignorance of sexual education
- R Youth to learn how life is at school and consequences of bad behavior (leaving school) and neither can help the other.
- R The parent learn not to send their children away after such mistake as this might result in worse acts, e.g., suicide.

**T Main characters**

- R Rita, Richard, Stella and headmaster.

**T Most liked characters**
R Rita - was sincere (human) her conscience is alive. Her decline to abort.
R Rita's Mom Didn't send Rita away. Her confession, her failure to instruct Rita (regret, owned up) (It is a lesson to us.)
R Richard - eventually went to Rita to apologize.
R Richard's friend - for his advice to Richard before "the act."

T Language preference
R Kiswahili - understand it better.
R Kiswahili - more would understand.
R English - detail of the language (more) wider vocabulary
R Kiswahili - I speak it.
R Both - to understand and translate.
R Kiswahili - also parents are a target group.
   (but to avoid youthful "sheng" language.
R English - personally I prefer English but Kiswahili is better for parents.
R English

FOLLOW-UP: How many would prefer it in English?
R 11 positive replies

FOLLOW-UP: How many would have understood better in English than in Kiswahili?
R 4 positive replies

FOLLOW-UP: How many would prefer it in Kiswahili?
R 3 positive replies

FOLLOW-UP: Is anything lost in the translation from English to Kiswahili?
R Taste - from lack of enough vocabulary in Kiswahili
R Loss of flow - breaks in between speech.
R Actors are faster - words slow and don't get enough impact.
R Should be re-enacted in Kiswahili instead of dubbing.

FOLLOW-UP: Did you have any problems and why?
R Mouth movement didn't match the voice pronunciation (mouth is ahead).
R Some spoke too fast.
R Class teacher's accent is fake, not real and not proportional to his status.
R Headmaster's voice was too soft. Richard was more bold than his (voice).
R Emotions should be evident in voices.

Co-Researcher Comments
**SANG:** The audience followed the proceedings keenly. They would laugh, point at the actors, sympathetic expressions knowing glances, exclamation (clap) as Rita collapses, also laughter as Richard narrates to Albert how it happened with Rita. In this place I found out that the people also did understand especially the theme of the movie and they came up with many suggestions. They actually came close to the title of the movie. I attribute this to the language used because it is in Swahili and the cast is what they can identify with. They can follow each character. The names were also familiar. When we asked them, they remembered so many and it was quite impressive. I would attribute the success in this area to the language and the cast. We had different people who came to watch, one is in the field of drama in his church. He was so curious, infact he almost became a disturbance by the sort of questions he was asking just on the sight but the rest were okay because they came from a wide rage of people.

**ASIBA:** It is really interesting when you see something that has been done by Africans and an African culture. The people were easily identified with. The people just got sucked into it. They emphasize with the characters. Like one lady when asked which character she liked, she said the mother of the main character. Why? Because she did not chase away the girl after she got pregnant. When you look at it from that level, you see that they are able to identify with the characters from a deep level. I said it would be interesting to dub African produce programs. Something that people are able to identify easy with. This was not really heavy cerebral type that they would not understand. This was a simple thing. Kariobangi being near one of the slum areas this is something they have seen; unwanted pregnancies, teen pregnancies. The use of Kiswahili seem to put them at ease. It was not like what I had seen in other areas that we went to. I looked and there was a kind of tension among people. It is a communicative ability. They did not understand English well. Kiswahili does help and the fact that the movie is in Kiswahili, none of them felt it had to be over high; as in they would have to have read a lot; gone to 'O' level or College. Like we had a 15 year old boy, (he was not meant to be there) but didn't contribute much but all through when you looked at him; he seemed to understand what was happening. He followed the issue and when we asked him questions he was able to contribute. This is a boy who has never been in school, he is 15 years, he was kind like a parking boy but he was able to contribute. I think it is interesting doing stuff in Kiswahili. Stuff that is culturally founded for them. Kiswahili really helps.
THE KIBERA RESEARCH
Language: English • Film: THE HIDING PLACE
• Urban slum

Participants, age, education, occupation, churched/unchurched:
Mr. Milton A. Utwolo, 24, college, unemployed, churched
Mr. Peter Maingi, 34, 5th grade, businessman, unchurched
Mr. Paul Kariuki, 31, high school, accountant, churched
Mr. Kamau Isaack, 30, 7th grade, businessman, churched
Ms. Jane Oluchiri, 46, college, nurse-project manager, churched
Ms. Emmah Wanjiku, 29, 7th grade, business woman, unchurched
Ms. Jane Wambui Muchiri, 27, high school, business woman, unchurched
Mr. George O. Osodo, 22, high school, unemployed, unchurched
Mr. Pausto Mutugi, 32, high school, business man, unchurched
Ms. Tabitha Mwigani, 25, high school, business woman, unchurched
Mr. Hesbou O. Osewe, 38, high school, social worker, churched

T Theme
R The Israel (Jews in Egypt)
R Problems; e.g., Zaire - tribalism
R Gentiles persecuting Jews
R Nazis persecuting Jews
R Waiting for Jesus (preparation not to be left behind)
R Expulsion of Jews from a certain country with persecution

FOLLOW-UP: What are the benefits of the film?
R Need to see the end of the film.
R How Jews were persecuted in a land of bondage.
R How end times shall be. Christians will suffer more.
R Day to day problems until Jesus comes back, e.g., pastor disagrees with the Ten
Booms, hence corruption.
R A Christian film. A family withstands tribulation and risks their own lives
R The life of a saved person.
R How Jews were persecuted (segregated) in the land they were in.
R How they had faith as much as to risk their lives.

FOLLOW-UP: What can make you tell someone not to watch the film?
R The environment is different from ours, hence irrelevant.
R The tribulations could discourage the unsaved from believing.
R The baby carried in a basket (irresponsible).
R Slapping of a lady (blood shed).
R Different culture from ours.
R Language - chaos; have no culture.
T Location
R I think Germany
R Holland - from the written text on the screen
R Land of the Jews
R Don't know
R Like Jews verses Palestines (Israel).

T Main characters
R Wilems; Author; Corrie Ten Boon's family; pastor.

FOLLOW-UP: Who was the main character?
R It was a woman

FOLLOW-UP: What was the difference between the pastor and The Ten Booms?
R Faith - the pastor didn't believe in their cause but state law.
R The Ten Booms trusted God to see them through.
R No difference.
R Didn't have faith.
R Didn't speak like a pastor.

T Language problem?
R Speed
R Pronunciation; people pronounce differently.
R Accent
R Didn't understand.

T Kiswahili preference
R Nine people

FOLLOW-UP: How many do not understand English well?
R Five people.

T English preference
R (No response)
R Any of the four languages that I understand.

FOLLOW-UP: How many had a problem with Kiswahili?
R None
R It is like a mother tongue.

FOLLOW-UP: Apart from pronunciation, what other problem?
R The way the English people speak Kiswahili.
Questions from the group
A Re-enact films with local (characters) cast. All people would understand more and identify with them.

Q- Why are you showing this film?
A It is a research we are doing, e.g., the Jesus film (different languages but the same characters).

Q Do you plan to translate more Christian films?
A Yes, we do.

Q Is your aim to preach?
A Yes, it is.

Co-Researcher Comments

SANG: I consider this side and the response we have heard, I would say the major problem was language. Like when we took the statistics about five people didn't understand English very well and there was this problem of accent. I agree with Mr. Asiba the way we pronounce things here is different. When we go to school and the teachers that teach us here are local people and their word is different from the way we heard it on this film. I am sure many of them didn't pick the conversation but picked most of the information from what they saw. The action. The other problem that we noticed from this language area is characters. The person who got the name Ten Boom and about that family was one lady Mrs. Murchiri. She was the only one who was able to come up with the characters. The others would refer to Corrie Ten Boom as that woman. It is also like the names were strange. They are not familiar. They compared the Jesus film that was translated into different languages and it was screened here and children responded very well. They even cried; they got emotionally involved. People are suggesting we have a film that has our own setting, environment and cast of local people. That would affect them more let alone the language.

ASIBA: This Focus group was different in the sense that seeing people watching it in English, it was not so different from the people who watched in Kiswahili because like the names of people; understanding of the location, where it was. You now realize that it is not only the dubbed version that has a problem, actually the The Hiding Place itself is culturally quite strange, the way the people were communal. Also in the sense that English itself was different even though it was what it was. It would be quite good to do our own production because this is too hard for the people.
THE BURU BURU RESEARCH
Language: English • Film: THE HIDING PLACE
• Urban Middle Class

Participant, age, education, occupation, churched/unchurched
Ms. Sabina Asiba, 61, college, businesswoman, unchurched
Mr. Chrispinus Ondeko, 23, some high school, student, unchurched
Mr. Paul Matheka, 29, college, aviation officer, unchurched
Mr. George Asiba, 40, college, artist, unchurched
Mr. Edgar Litunda, 23, high school, unemployed, unchurched
Mr. John B. Mutuku, 34, some college, unemployed, unchurched
Mr. Stanley Juma, 22, some college, unemployed, unchurched

T  Theme?
R  A hiding place, to hide Jews from Gentiles who harassed them.
R  Second world war movie Jews persecution
R  Jews suffering during 2nd world war
R  How the Jews were hated by others
R  Christian family that helped the Jews

FOLLOW-UP: What are your reasons for watching?
R  Create awareness to help people in need.
R  Teach to love even our enemies.
R  Empathy.
R  Teach compassion and love for the other person and society we are in.
R  Divisions, racial/tribal
R  Teach faith in God without fear.

FOLLOW-UP: If you were to tell someone not to watch this film, what would be your reasons?
R  Bad treatment of people by soldiers
R  Nothing to do with us
R  No reason
R  Conditioned prejudice- e.g., someone getting sick for smoking. Keeps people from smoking. Makes people hate Germans.
R  It is a Mzungu affair. It is about holocaust but not slavery.

T  Historical time
R  1940;  1945;  1940-1945;  1930-40;  1939-1940.
R  Because of second world war, onslaught by Nazi forces, harassment of Jews when Jews were suffering.
T Location
R Holland
R Netherlands
R Canada.
R Netherlands due to its mention and mode of transportation, canals and the English.

T Most like character (and why)
R The old man - his stand (courage) to open his door to all.
R The old man - his stubborn ideas and thoughts are stable.
R The lady - First daughter comes out strongly. Works tirelessly; she thought of the whole idea, even got exhausted.
R Each one of them for their different roles (difficult to pinpoint)
R Woman - daughter who was beaten and got sick (for others).

FOLLOW-UP: Which family was involved?
R Ten Boom's family.

T Kiswahili language preference
R Four people. It is clearer, reach people, cater for the illiterate who are many,
R Understood better
R There is a Kiswahili word for and English word.

T English language preference
R Communicate better, understood better, translation wouldn't always retain the meaning (impact intended).

T Cultural Relevance
R Setting (cultural) prevents the message coming out fully.
R People not concerned with names.
R Couldn't read the caption.

FOLLOW-UP: If screened up-country (rural areas), what would be the reaction?
R Illiteracy would be a handicap, they would look at the pictures and be sorrowful with the torture
R People want action (fighting)
R People would have mixed feelings
R Need a language they would understand and would identify with the setting.
**FOLLOW-UP: What if shown with no sound up-country?**

R The difference between your reaction and theirs.

R They would somehow understand like us.

R Language is not a problem

R We are exposed to more TVs., history etc. and would understand better. They will get the torture, but wouldn't understand the title.

**QUESTIONS FROM THE GROUP:**

Q Where was it shot?

A Billy Graham production of a true story - pain to empathize.

**Co-Researcher Comments**

**SANG:** The audience quite followed the goings on intently, with occasional consultation between two, acknowledging laughter when Mr. Ten Boom talked about the mouse and the cookie. Laughter when it is wondered what would happen if the professor should be asked to sing soprano (By Willem).

**Examples:**

- Relief when the "big clock" finally was allowed into the store by the Nazis with its cargo of bricks for the wall.
- Oho! in acknowledgment about the contents of the "big clock."
- Consultations again about the hiding procedure rehearsal.
- Audience consult about coded messages.
- Laughter when a guest vows never to be made to peel potatoes.
- Sounds of sympathy as soldiers arrive at the Ten Boom entrance with the guest who needed money.
- Comment about having watched the movie on TV.

I think this group is quite a good one compared to the others. They understand the movie and follow with intent and they didn't seem to have much trouble with the language and the accent. To me they understood the words, they heard and understood. They would even consult in some situations to see probably to know what accessibility to the electronic media - the cinemas, video and the TVs unlike the other groups we have been. I would also say this group is more aware because when time came for questions, one of them was asking the purpose, the intent of acting this movie and like he would have preferred if this movie was meant for the audience in Africa, he would have preferred one on slavery rather than the holocaust because he thinks this one has a taste of racism but I find that the group followed what was going on. They would link two scenes together. Like there would be a scene that would leave a loop somewhere and when that scene would be resumed and a conclusion drawn they would understand. They would put the two together. They would show signs of acknowledgment in agreement with something emotional signs like signs of sympathy e.g., when soldiers came to arrest Ten Boom.
ASIBA: I also tend to think it was understood. I do agree, education does have an effect especially when it comes to comprehension of what is happening. Education and the fact that this was a more sophisticated audience. So, it is easier for them to focus on what is happening. Any video or program whatever the case may be and it is done in English. It is good. What I tend to think is that the Kiswahili has a more effect. It is an effective language when it comes to communication. This people where educated and were aware of second world war. That way they were able to be a focus group as opposed to the other groups. They were intelligent and it was an interesting group. The discussion was very different from the others. As Sang had said, the names would help if they were local names. Names they would remember because when it comes to the Booms.
Appendix Two: Guide to Focus Groups

(prepared to train the co-researcher)
Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to introduce you to the methods and practice of focus group research for visual media. For information on the rationale for the creation of this guide and a bibliography on research techniques, please see the notes section at the end of this section. This booklet will help you to conduct the research entitled, “The Comparative Effects of Kiswahili Language Dubbing in Kenya.”

Although there is crossover to other forms of media, like radio, the author believes that TV and film producers have ignored, for the most part, proper research which would make present and future productions more effective. We will only deal with research as it relates to the reality of the Two Thirds World.

Throughout the booklet, I will use several terms which I see as interchangeable. The first is the use of film and video. The second is a set of terms used interchangeably is "one-third world" and "Two Thirds world." This always refers to the area outside of the so-called 'West', excluding the USA and Canada, Great Britain, western Europe and Japan. It is not considered a negative term, but geographically and culturally descriptive.

We will describe approaches and methodology of research that is best used in areas where the extended family is still a vital part of life. Where marriages are many times arranged and the superstitions of animistic religions still "stunt" the growth of religious beliefs.

Motivation for Research

Researchers have differing motivations for conducting research. The prime reason is to find out what the audience (or potential audience) is interested in seeing. What they feel strongly about. Many times, the motivations revolve around fundraising. Certainly with focus group methodology you will not get any sort of audience count. For instance, if the only reason you conduct postproduction research is to find out what percentage of the viewers were emotionally impacted by the film, then at the very least a more quantitative approach is necessary. If you wish to find out what sort of response you might receive if you transmitted the program on the national network, then focus groups are the best method.

Types of Research Methodology

This booklet will discuss a method of research called focus groups--part of a type of research called qualitative analysis. The three types of research formats that fall into qualitative analysis are: in-depth interviews, focus groups and community interviews.

In-depth Interviews

This is much like the name. The interviewer sits down with his interviewee and they talk for a period of time. Through interview techniques, the interviewer asks a number of questions that allow him to collect pertinent data. This is also called "key informant" interviewing. It puts the lowest stress on the interviewee.
Focus Groups
Focus Group (F/G) research was made popular by the advertising industry. The agencies would gather together groups of "consumers" and test a product, a commercial, etc. F/G can be used to gain insight into people's attitudes. Questions are asked in an open-ended manner, and the interviewer may get an answer he may not expect. The look on his face and his response will determine whether the interviewee’s next response is as honest.

F/G are used to allow the participants to discuss a topic among themselves with the interviewer stimulating the process. The premise is that free discussions generate fresh ideas and insights.

Community Interviews
Unlike F/Gs in community interviews the "investigator" asks questions, raises issues, and seeks responses from the participants. The primary interaction is between the investigator and the participants, not between the participants themselves.

Quantitative Research
This method of research will bring in a different type of result. It is a list of questions carefully developed by the researcher with either a yes/no response or a response, i.e., "The video you just viewed discussed the issue of barrenness. On a scale of 1-10 ......"

What you discover in quantitative research methodology are issues related to demographics, i.e., how a certain age group or sex felt about your film. The problem is that you can lead an interviewee in his or her response to your question because they may be more inclined to tell you what you wish to hear.

When do I conduct research?
There are three stages of the production process where research should take place. These are: preproduction, prerelease and postrelease research to improve our communication.

Preproduction Research
We do not have all the answers. Preproduction research is probably one of the most important parts of any media effort. Some years ago, the author (with a team) embarked on a project to produce a series of dramatic programs to help Africans understand religious beliefs in the light of the cultural pressures they faced. A focus group was gathered of media practitioners and pastors. The result was a list of 52 key issues they faced! The type of film we made was heavily influenced by that group--and it was not what we had planned to do! But we did what the national believers told us to do.

What we found from this focus group was the nature of the topic and the format of the film. It was up to the writing team--two Africans and one American--to develop the characters and scenario. This was again discussed with the same focus group, modified and then the final script was written--and again tested both with the focus group and then a panel of independent readers in several African countries!
Pre-Release Research

In modern Hollywood filmmaking, the industry tests several endings of a film to see which one is liked by the viewers. A misjudgment in this area can mean millions in lost revenue! Depending on the results, a film can be re-edited prior to release.

It is well worth the effort to gather together a focus group to see a VHS 'cut' prior to final confirmation. With a wise facilitator the producer can learn a lot about how his final film will be received and how the audience interpret his filmic interpretations of the script. He might be "right on" or way off.

Postrelease Research

Usually, this stage of research comes after the film has been in circulation for a period of time. It is certainly essential in the event that the producer is making a series. It is essential to know if the film is reaching the audience with the message you wished to communicate in the first place. It is also helpful to know how your characters impacted the viewers. Issues like: was the setting realistic; how was the costuming; what was the perceived theme; etc.

How will I get this information and what questions will I ask?

As foreign researchers, we very early in the process find a local counterpart facilitator in our target culture. This counterpart will become a co-researcher in the process. He or she will be essential to bridging the cultural distance between you and the stakeholders in the project. Certainly, you are at risk personally in the research process. But the national facilitator and the stakeholders are equally at risk—a fact that we foreigners ignore or downplay in our own minds.

With this booklet, sit down with your counterpart facilitators and discuss what type of information you wish to know from the focus groups. Share with him what you are planning to do with the information and that he will have access to a final report of the findings. Taking the principles found in this booklet, talk through with your counterpart how you wish the F/G approached and what question format is most effective among his people. It may be that he or she feels a certain questioning route is best. In Africa, most certainly the cultural pattern of starting with the general and moving to the specific should be followed.

How will I ask these questions?

How will I ask these questions without committing cultural problems that would affect my data? Listen to your counterpart researcher. He will not want to commit cultural errors and indeed it will be more difficult for them to do so.

The Researcher Role Redefined

As researchers, we must take the role of enabler, of trainer, of listener in the process of research design and implementation. This paradigm shift is as essential in research as it has been in international development. Nationals must own the projects we wish to implement because they participated in the process of decision making and implementation. We must ensure that the national counterpart "owns" the research project we want to undertake and especially the media project we intend to produce with the research! As such, the roles are enabler, trainer and listener.
Enabler

This relates to our position in the decision making process. We must listen, comprehend the answers and be willing to do what the counterpart says. If that means financing a soccer field instead of a well, so be it! To enable means to "provide with a means or opportunity, to make possible or to sanction." This is opposite of a dictatorial, I know what is right for you approach. As an enabler, we are partners in the process of development and research!

Trainer

The counterpart researcher may not have training in conducting a F/G. As such, your role becomes a trainer, a person who takes enough time to ensure that the person has an understanding of the process, you transfer the ability to facilitate the F/G to the counterpart. This is part of a process of skill transference that is so essential to modern development.

Listener

Part of all of this is your role as a listener. Make sure your counterpart understands that the results of the research will make a difference in the project--that you want to know the heart of his people!

Moderator Roles

Beginning the F/G Discussion

Beginnings are essential to breaking the ice in any meeting of people who don't know each other. As you know from personal experience, it is essential not to put people off when you first meet. Later in the booklet we have discussed problems arising from dress, gender and other specifics. However, it is essential that the moderator create a thoughtful, permissive atmosphere--providing the ground rules and set the tone of the discussion.

Much of the to the success or failure of the discussion can be attributed to the first 2-3 minutes. For example, too much formality can stifle your discussion, especially the interaction between the participants. Too much informality and humor can cause the participants not to take the discussion seriously.

Moderators with experience in many group situations will tell you that groups are unpredictable: one group will be exciting and dynamic and the next might be restrained and cautious. These differences can be expected. However, the moderator must approach each group in the research project series basically the same way.
It is suggested that the same basic pattern for introducing the group discussion should include:

1. The welcome
2. Overview of topic
3. Ground rules
4. First question

For example

Good evening and welcome to this discussion tonight. Thanks for taking time to watch the film, and enjoy some roasted meat with us afterward while we talk about how you feel about the film. My name is ______ from (province) and we are interested in how Kenyans like the translation of The Hiding Place in Swahili. The purpose of what we team from this and other groups will be to help us know how we can create films and videos that you enjoy watching. You were invited tonight because we feel that you are the type of people who will speak their minds in the discussion we will share together afterwards.

This study is being sponsored by _____________ here in Nairobi. We would like to ask you back together in a couple of months to review the information we collected from all sorts of people. We want to know that we are reporting the gist of what you feel about the film. So, in the event you want to return for a short meeting to hear about the results and enjoy a meal together, my colleague will pass out a card with a couple of questions on it after the meeting tonight. I would like to emphasize that there are no right & wrong answers here. Your comments are important. In order to help the discussion along, we have these name tags. Please write the name you feel most comfortable with on these labels.

We will start the film now. It is 2 hours long. If at any time you wish to use the toilet, it is (directions). There are sodas and cakes on the table. My colleague, (name) will assist you.

Show the film. Place the food out right at the end.

Now, please feel free to get some food and as we do, Ask first question

Keys to successful moderation
• Anticipate the flow of discussion

Since any group discussion is unpredictable, it is important to think through what you are trying to learn about a specific film and consider where that discussion might lead. This will prepare you for such deviations. For example, a focus group about a film might lead to a series of questions about how the film was made, or the lifestyle of a certain actor if it was locally produced. If this happens, you might want to be ready to counteract that tangent by counteracting with a statement like, "You must remember that we are seeing (actor’s name) playing a role. So, although we know his lifestyle is not as good as it should be, for the purpose of this discussion it is not important. " A statement of this type should bring the discussion back on track.
• Allow differing points of view

You may have said that this is important, but people are not speaking out. Sometimes you just sense by body language that a participant has something different to say, but is restrained by something. Encourage them again!

• Essential techniques

In any conversation a person needs to be concerned with how much one talks. It is easy to dominate the conversation and most novice moderators commit this sin.

Five-second pause. This is most often used after a participant comment. It can prompt additional points of views or agreement with the previous point. If also forces you as a moderator to not changing the topic too quickly. Practice it on friends and family to see how effective it can be.

The Probe. This is a request for additional information when people make vague comments or multiple meanings like "I agree." Examples of probe questions are:

Would you explain further?
Would you give us an example of what you mean?
Is there anything else?
Please describe what you mean?
I don't understand.

It may be important to use the probe early in the discussion to communicate the need for more precision in responses.

• Responding to participant statements

It is essential the moderator clearly respond to statements by participants. Sometimes response mechanisms are unconscious.

Head Nodding. One unconscious response is the head nod. This can be helpful if used sparingly and consciously, such as eliciting additional comments from a participant who wishes to talk. But the head nod also signals agreement in some cultures. As such, a head nod signaling agreement may elicit additional comments of the same type, sometimes reinforcing a certain perspective and stifling opposite point of view.

Short Verbal Responses. Depending on our culture, we may have been conditioned to provide short verbal statements to signal acceptance or in some cases simply acknowledge that we heard a statement. Most are acceptable in a focus group setting, i.e. "OK," "yes," or "Uh," "huh." These are value neutral expressions. Responses to avoid are ones which indicate accuracy or agreement. These include, "correct," "that's good," or "excellent."

• Types of Participants

Focus groups bring together a wide variety of personality types. Sometimes specific types of personalities create problems for the moderator. For example:

The Expert. This type of person can inhibit free discussion within a group. They may have considerable experience with the subject under discussion, may have political/social "clout," and may be an elder in the community or an opinion leader. If
you have this type of person in your group, underscore in the introductory comments that all opinions are important.

**Dominant Talkers.** Often it is this person who thinks they are knowledgeable on the subject but simply have opinions. You can seat this type of person next to you and may be able to exert some level of control by body language or nonverbal clues. Examples of this might be avoiding eye contact with the dominant talker and appearing bored with their statement. In some cases, you may have to simply say, "Thank you for that comment, does anyone feel differently?"

**Shy Respondents.** This person seemingly has much to say, but is unwilling to say it due to shyness. Attempt to place them directly across from you and maximize eye contact which can encourage them to speak up. If all else fails, ask a direct question.

**Rambling Respondents.** This type of person drones on and on and usually never gets to the point. Discontinuing eye contact with the "rambler" after 20-30 seconds can help. Look at your papers, at other participants, look bored, at your watch, etc. As soon as the "rambler" stops or takes a breath, be ready to fire off another question to divert them. In the remaining discussion avoid making eye contact with them to reduce the potential of another "ramble."

**Assistant Moderator's Guide**

The role of the assistant moderator is very important. While the moderator concentrates on keeping the conversation moving, the assistant moderator takes comprehensive notes, keeps the tape recorder going, maintains the setting, i.e. lights, sounds, refreshments, and responds to unexpected interruptions. In addition, the assistant moderator notes the participant's body language throughout. Here is a checklist for the assistant moderator:

1. **Equipment**
   - Ensure that it works and is complete
   - Tape recorder, microphone and extension cord
   - Batteries an/or extension cord
   - Blank tapes
   - Name tags (if used)
   - Marking pens
   - Duct tape to hide the cords
   - Visuals or handouts

2. **Refreshments**
   - Obtain refreshments and set them up in the room. They could be light, i.e., soda and cakes or a traditional meal like roast meat.

3. **Arrange the room**
   - Rearrange the chairs and table so everyone can see each other. You will have visited the site in advance and will know exactly what to expect.

4. **Set up the equipment and verify that it is working properly**
If you are holding the group in an area where there may be power problems, those batteries will be even more important as well as lanterns.

5. Welcome the participants as they arrive
   Many will have known you as you will have done some of the follow-up on the recruitment process. Your cordial greeting will make them at ease in the process.

6. Sit in the designated location
   This is outside the circle, opposite the moderator and close to the door. If someone arrives after the session begins, meet him at the door, take him or her outside the room and give them a short briefing as to what has happened and the current topic of discussion. Then bring the late participant inside the room and show them where to sit.

7. Take notes throughout the discussion.
   Be attentive to the following areas of concern:
   - Well said quotes. Capture word for word as much of the sentence as possible. Listen for sentences or phrases that are express a point of view. Attribute it to the speaker. Keep your observations separate. (Use quotation marks for what the participant says and parentheses for your observations.)
   - Note nonverbal activity. Watch for head nods, physical excitement, eye contact between participants and other clues that would indicate level of agreement, support or interest.
   - Make a sketch of the seating arrangement and note the names of the speakers.

8. Monitor recording equipment
   Occasionally glance at the recorder to ensure the tape is rolling. Time the start of the tape so you know when to turn over the tape. Do not use an alarm which may distract. Attempt to work with the recording equipment without drawing attention to yourself or (most importantly) the equipment. Label the cassette.

9. Do not participate in the discussion
   You talk only if invited by the moderator. Control your nonverbal actions no matter how strongly you feel about the issue.

10. Ask questions when and if invited
    After the discussion, the moderator may ask you to ask questions of amplification or clarification.

11. Oral summary
    The moderator may ask you to give a 2-3 minute summary of the points brought up in the discussion. Do not attribute comments to any participant, use a remark like, "and then it was mentioned" to avoid this. Invite participants to offer additions or corrections to the summary.

12. Debrief the moderator
Be ready to discuss the session with the moderator directly afterward.

13. Read and provide feedback on the analysis

Problems of Conducting Focus Groups in the 3rd World

The major problems with conducting focus groups in the Two Thirds world revolve around:

- Approval
- Distance between interviewer and focus group
- Bias
- Environment
- Sample selection

1. Approval

In most developing countries, individual freedoms are greatly restricted. In Kenya, you are supposed to get a permit to meet with more than 10 others unless it is an established church or civic group. This is ignored in many cases, but can be used as an excuse to close you down if your motivation for being together appears to threaten those in power.

Many times this can be gotten around by getting approval of the local authority. In the case of the Kenyan setting, this is the Chief. The Chief is an appointed position and very powerful. Researchers should use an intermediary like a pastor or man. In any case, although you can mitigate the problems, a reason can always be "created" by someone to stop you from conducting research.

Example: In the mid-'80s, the government sponsored a family planning TV soap opera in Kenya called Tushariani. It was very popular and followed some of formats developed by the Indian soap, Hum Log. When Tushariani was on, a very large percentage of Kenya was watching it. Unfortunately, it was the special project of the vice-president and when he fell from grace, so did the program.

As a researcher interested in producing TV shows and films, it would be very worthwhile to see why the show was so popular. However, official support would most likely have been denied until last year when the VP died. And even so, a thorough analysis of Tushariani itself would most likely have to be done at an informal level anyway until the current president is defeated. This certainly is an example for each of us NOT to attach our projects to politicians because while it may be useful while he was in power, those who go up, will most surely go down and your project may go down also!

2. Distance between interviewer and focus group (F/G)

This can manifest itself in various ways:

- **Attitude of superiority** - the interviewer thinks he is better than the F/G; attitude of inferiority - the F/G is older, richer, wiser than the interviewer. For example, using a student to conduct the interview.
- **Language** - the interviewer uses terms unfamiliar to the F/G. This could be scientific language or slang. OR, if the F/G consists of slum youth, the non-use of slang!
• **Dress** - Essential that the interviewer dress like the F/G. Not "up" or "down"!

• **Tribe** - It is important that you appreciate tribal issues. For instance, don't send a Hutu to interview a Tutsi!

### 3. Interviewer Bias

One of the problems of conducting F/Gs is the issue of the introduction of bias. This can be introduced in a number of ways:

**Interviewer** - It is essential that the interviewer be unbiased at all times. Bias can be introduced by the interviewer's unconscious response to something a F/G member might say.

*Example:* For instance, suppose you are sampling a group of young women on birth control attitudes. Your interviewer is a matron who has a deep-set judgmental attitude toward young women who have sex early. The attitude could seep into how the F/G was conducted and the young women would be less open.

*Solution:* Thoroughly interview your interviewer. In the example given above, you might undercover her attitudes and with that understanding you might make sure that the interviewer guards against letting her beliefs affect the F/G. Or, you may decide to get another interviewer!

**Designer** - It is always problematic that the designer (or researcher) has something he/she wants to prove. Research is rarely done in a vacuum! The designer/researcher can interject bias in the way he/she constructs the question, how they state it, etc.

**Analysis** - Certainly, this is a significant level where bias can be interjected, especially if the results of the F/Gs do not match up with what the researcher wanted to learn.

### 4. Environment

There are all sorts of inter-related issues related to environment. The goal is to select a place to conduct the F/G where the participants are comfortable and somewhat secluded. For instance, you might want to avoid a church for a group of slum dwellers who might sleep with prostitutes. Use a location where they might come, i.e. a community center or something similar. Don't overdue the noise seclusion issue if the participants are used to a noisy environment. For instance, if you wish to talk about African parenting methods, it might be better to have a location where the kids are allowed to run free (you might learn more by observation in this case!).

### 5. Sample selection

You must have some sort of representative sample who you are researching. Here are several options:

**Census** - Choose by general population percentages: Take the known formal or informal census statistics and make sure your group consists of roughly the same.

**By target group** - If your research is related to a specific demographic group, use a representative sample, i.e., if women, have 100% women, split up into the age
demographics. That is, in Kenya, 50 - 55% of the population are women; 80% of the population are under the age of 27. More interestingly, 50% of the total population are under the age of 15! And, a large percentage have their first sexual encounter under the age of 14.

**Question:** How would you select the participants of a F/G dealing with birth control and virginity? Statistics show that a large percentage of girls in Kenya have their first sexual experience prior to 14 years of age.

**Solution:** Although there is no easy answer in this case, you might select representatives from the 13 - 15 year old age range. How would you conduct your F/G? Do you want to find out simply the attitudes of young girls? Is your intention to make a film on teen pregnancy from a Christian perspective? If so, you have to avoid communicating your bias in the group itself otherwise it will affect the results. Leave your sermon out.
Notes on Appendix Two: Focus Group Guide

The philosophy behind the creation of this booklet was developed after over 14 years of working cross-culturally in India, Egypt and Africa. One of the major issues is that much of the aid that is given, much of the education provided, many of the entertainment-education TV programs produced, are done “to” the people and not “with” them. Although "participatory development" is a byword on World Bank projects, many of the aid contractor consultants and core staff do not really believe in it.

White (1994) heavily influenced my orientation in her "Participatory Communication" edited volume. I saw that if we were to really understand what people in Africa believed we would have to understand where we fit in as a western researcher - thus the sections on seeing ourselves as an enabler and co-researcher. This is not an exhaustive guide to media research, but the following bibliography will help direct the reader to a more complete comprehension.
Bibliography


Appendix Three:

Original Demographic Data
## RESEARCH INFO.

**Author:** Dan Henrich  
**Address:** 1308 Greylyn Rd., Virginia Beach, VA

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Appendix Four:

Distribution of Demographic Data by Focus Group
Distribution of Demographic Data by Focus Group

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Appendix Five:

Focus Group Seating Diagrams
Mathare Valley Diagram

(polytechnic classroom)
Kwangware Diagram

(private home)
Kibera Diagram
(church medical clinic)
Buru Buru Diagram

(private home)