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**ДИСКУРСИВНЫЙ ТРЕНД
«ЗНАМЕНИТОСТИ С ОНКОЗАБОЛЕВАНИЯМИ»
КАК КОМПОНЕНТ ЗАРОЖДАЮЩЕГОСЯ ОНКОДИСКУРСА
В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ НИГЕРИИ[©]**

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Аннотация. В статье описывается развитие дискурсивного тренда «знаменитости с онкозаболеваниями» в англоязычной прессе Нигерии. Селебрити-рак представлен как новая дискурсивная практика, в рамках которой знаменитость делает публичное заявление о наличии онкозаболевания и делится опытом его переживания. Такая практика вписывается в более широкий контекст онкодискурса и рассматривается как эффективное средство повышения общей онкоосведомленности, онкограмотности и онконастороженности. Перечисленные социальные эффекты обладают особой ценностью в развивающихся странах, где онкодискурс находится на начальных стадиях формирования. Одной из таких стран является Нигерия, самое населенное государство Африки и шестая по численности населения страна в мире. В статье определяются основные черты культуры селебрити, изучается процесс ее формирования в современной Нигерии, рассматривается влияние селебрити на общество и та роль, которую они могут сыграть в популяризации медицинского знания и продвижении поведенческих паттернов, направленных на поддержание здоровья. В статье представлен анализ восьми статей из шести крупнейших нигерийских газет за 2024 г. Целью анализа было выявление основных характеристик этого дискурсивного тренда и оценка его образовательного потенциала.

Ключевые слова: онкодискурс; культура селебрити; знаменитости с онкозаболеваниями; дискурсивная практика; дискурсивный тренд; Нигерия.

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**The celebrity cancer trend as part of the emergent
cancer discourse in contemporary Nigeria[©]**

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Abstract. The paper traces the emergence of the celebrity cancer trend in Nigerian English-medium newspaper articles. Celebrity cancer is presented as a new discursive practice within which a celebrity makes a public disclosure of their cancer experience in the media. This practice is considered within the broader context of cancer discourse and is regarded as a potentially efficient means of raising public awareness of cancer, enhancing cancer literacy and heightening cancer vigilance. These effects are of particular value in developing countries where cancer discourse is underdeveloped, Nigeria being one of them. The paper identifies the main features of the contemporary celebrity culture, looks into its formation in modern Nigeria, considers the societal impact of celebrities and the role they can play in promoting correct health-seeking behaviors. It further analyzes eight articles from six major Nigerian newspapers dated 2024 to identify the main features of this discursive trend with a focus on their educational potential.

Keywords: cancer discourse; celebrity culture; celebrity cancer; discursive practice; discursive trend; Nigeria.

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Introduction

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death worldwide¹. Its toll, however, is the deadliest in developing countries, where prohibitively high mortality rates are accounted for not only by substandard medical care, but by lack of public cancer awareness. The situation is exacerbated by multiple taboos and superstitions surrounding cancer, which preclude timely presentation and adequate treatment seeking. In this situation, the formation of a robust public cancer discourse, which will facilitate dissemination of scientifically sound knowledge, dispel popular myths and enable people to share their experiences without fear of being ostracized, becomes a key determinant in raising cancer literacy and, in the long run, improving health outcomes. A particularly promising trend within cancer discourse consists in covering cancer experiences of

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¹ URL: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cancer>

celebrities who not only volunteer this disclosure, but use it to reach out to the public and convey a certain message to them.

The research objective of this paper is to trace the development of this discursive trend in Nigeria, the largest African country in terms of population¹, in which cancer discourse is in the initial stages of its formation. We begin by looking into the phenomenon of celebrity culture to identify its main features and consider its formation in Nigeria. We go on to pinpoint the role celebrities can play in the development of cancer discourse. Finally, we analyze newspaper articles which represent the emergent celebrity cancer trend in Nigeria.

Perspectives on the contemporary celebrity culture

In contemporary scholarship, celebrity is defined in two different but mutually complementary ways. In the more abstract sense, “celebrity” is somewhat synonymous with “fame” and denotes a feature or personality trait that enables the individual to gain considerable public visibility. More commonly, however, this term is used in a concrete sense to refer to a “celebrated individual” [Marshall, 2014, p. 3], “a person whose name, image, lifestyle, and opinions carry cultural and economic worth” [Gitlin, 1997, p. 14].

The concept of celebrity is believed to be a profoundly western phenomenon, inseparably connected with the basic values of the Global North.

First and foremost, scholars tend to link celebrity to democracy. The transition from obscurity to the limelight is interpreted as the empowerment of ordinary people [Marshall, 2014, p. 7]. This empowerment consists in gaining the opportunity to actively participate in meaning-making, setting sociocultural agendas and trends, and thus fostering societal change. It is not surprising, therefore, that celebrity can be regarded as the “ideal representation of the triumph of the masses” [Ibid., p. 6].

Secondly, celebrity perfectly aligns with the traditional western individualism [Ibid., p. x], reinforcing it and even giving it a new dimension. Of particular note is the observation pertaining to the difference between the traditional “renown” and the modern “celebrity”. The former was based on accomplishments that were primarily associated with certain fields of activity rather than the people who made them and were measured by their value for the society [Inglis, 2010, p. 4]. The latter exclusively

¹ URL: <https://www.worldometers.info/population/countries-in-africa-by-population>

centers upon the individual, largely defocusing the community they belong to and the benefit they bring to the general public.

Another important link can be found between celebrity and consumerism, which is one of the key features of the modern western culture [Celebrity media effects ..., 2018]. Celebrities are first and foremost pacesetters that not only embody, but actively sell a certain (typically glamorous) lifestyle. Unlike their cultural predecessors, who enjoyed renown, celebrities do not typically produce tangible social benefits (discoveries and inventions, new art forms, progressive laws, etc.). According to S. Redmond, they are “dream factories” which “manufacture longings, desires, aspirations, and ambitions” [Redmond, 2013, p. 37], spurring the consumption of luxury items and services. Celebrities themselves may be regarded as commodities consumed by the general public [Celebrity Media Effects ..., 2018] and then discarded in favor of trendier cultural icons.

Finally, celebrity is inseparable from the new modes of communication, chief of them being digital media. One cannot but agree with the idea that “digital spaces generate celebrity” [Marwick, 2013, p. 16]. Easily accessible, increasingly popular and technologically diverse, they create perfect conditions for public visibility and significantly contribute to the evolution of the concept of celebrity.

In the modern world, celebrity has become a highly heterogeneous phenomenon. J. Monaco [Monaco, 1978, p. 10] identifies three types of celebrities based on the ways they achieve visibility. A hero is a celebrity that has done something truly outstanding in their field of activity (e.g. making a major socially resonant discovery or setting a remarkable sports record). In this case, public visibility is a by-product of activity rather than its main goal. A star is a celebrity whose public persona is far more important than anything they have ever achieved professionally. An important feature of a star is a deliberate effort to be present in the media by constantly fueling public interest. A quasar becomes famous accidentally without striving for visibility and enjoys a short period of intense public interest later falling into obscurity. In a much later work, Ch. Rojek suggested calling such accidental short-term celebrities “celetoids”, thus emphasizing their substandard, distinctly lower status. Among celetoids, he lists lottery-winners, stalkers and mistresses of public figures [Rojek, 2001, p. 21]. Largely sharing J. Monaco’s views, Ch. Rojek elaborates his classification with “ascribed celebrity” to refer to a situation when a person comes from a long line of publicly visible people and inherits the celebrity status from their predecessors. Among

them are members of the royal family and children of famous actors or singers [Rojek, 2004].

In contemporary scholarship, celebrity is presented as a highly controversial phenomenon. The main point of criticism is that nowadays celebrities typically get their status for who they are rather than for what they have achieved. As G. Turner points out, celebrity has become “a career in itself” [Turner, 2004, p. 8]. Success in this career implies a deliberate manufacturing of a certain type of identity, followed by its branding and marketing, which is why celebrity is often regarded as the epitome of inauthenticity [Celebrity media effects ..., 2018, p. 2]. Celebrities are also criticized for promoting the idea that a person’s worth is measured by how they look and what they possess, which generates lookism and statusism. Lack of a positive and productive societal impact is another important point. With the exception of “heroes”, celebrities are typically well-known just for their “well-knownness” [Boorstin, 1971, p. 58]. It is due to this fact that the very term “celebrity” is quickly acquiring a distinct derogatory tinge (*see* [Framing celebrity ..., 2006, p. 11]).

The emergence of celebrity culture in Nigeria

At first glance, it may seem that celebrity culture is alien to Nigeria since it stands in stark contrast to its traditional values. Chief among them are collectivism and tight community and family bonds [Odo, Onyishi, Onah, 2023]. However, modern Nigeria, like many other sub-Saharan post-colonial countries, is witnessing a major sociocultural shift due to major democratization and the growing influence of the western culture. This influence is mainly exercised through the global communication networks that provide intercultural transparency and efficiently “diffuse” western popular culture to much more traditional societies [Omenugha, Uzuegbunam, Ndlo, 2016, p. 204].

Readiness for cultural imports is explained by a number of factors. First of all, Africa seems unable to compete with a well-developed, diverse, and high-budget western entertainment industry widely presented in the global media. Secondly, there is a growing impetus to be integrated in the global sociocultural trends, particularly evident in the younger generation of Africans. Research shows that young people willingly embrace western values, lifestyles and behaviors (*see* [Ibid.]). However, concerns about the threat they pose to the traditional ways of life are ungrounded. Surveys reveal that instead of giving up traditional values,

young people prefer to integrate them into their new lifestyles maintaining that they find their indigenous culture and the western culture equally empowering. The culture that is emerging as a result of this integration is described as “hybridized”, “glocalized” or “transculturalized” [Omenugha, Uzuegbunam, Ndlo, 2016, p. 204].

This cultural transfer inevitably implies implantation of celebrity values and, consequently, the emergence of celebrity culture. Moreover, celebrity appears to be at the very heart of the new cultural formation. It is the perfect site for the negotiation and balancing of values and a reference point against which new identities are being shaped. A survey conducted in Nigeria revealed that almost 90 per cent of Nigerian youth experience a pronounced impact of the celebrity culture on their lives, demonstrate a remarkable knowledge of celebrities’ lives and model their own lifestyles after theirs [Ibid., p. 207].

It must be emphasized that celebrity culture is not only being implanted from the USA and Europe, bringing with it worship of western stars. It is actively developing within the Nigerian society, inspired both by the quick spread of social networks with their promise of quick fame associated with financial benefits and the growing cultural influence of the booming local film industry known as Nollywood.

Celebrity cancer as a new discursive trend

It has been noted that, regardless of their real sociocultural worth, celebrities are capable of fostering positive changes due to their “capacity to transform private affairs into public concerns” [Celebrity media effects ..., 2018, p. 17]. Among the most important of such concerns are health issues, cancer being chief of them.

Cancer has been described as a common disease which can affect uncommon people [Berman, Boguski, Tabatsky, 2016, p. vii]. However, by using the term “celebrity cancer” in this paper we do not merely admit the fact that celebrities may be afflicted by it. Neither do we imply that cancer behaves differently when it strikes well-known people. We introduce the term to refer to a discursive practice within which a celebrity volunteers to disclose their cancer to the general public through the media and shares their cancer experience.

This discursive practice is gaining momentum nowadays (see [Nagornaya, 2023]). Its growing popularity can be explained by a number of factors. First and foremost, we are living “in the age of sharing” [John, 2017, p. 64] when people tend to reveal their most intimate secrets

and willingly give accounts of their most private experiences. Secondly, the very visibility that celebrities possess makes it highly problematic to conceal their health issues, especially when it comes to such a life-threatening problem as cancer. Medical records are often leaked to the media, which generates a great deal of speculation. That is why many celebrities prefer to volunteer their health information to preclude gossip. It has been noted that this type of public disclosure is a form of empowerment, since it enables the celebrity to take control of the narrative [Beck, Chapman, Simmons, 2015]. Thirdly, a celebrity may use their own health condition to make a social impact. They may deliberately resort to cancer activism and use their status to raise public awareness of the type of cancer they have. A particularly vivid example here is Angelina Jolie who turned her prophylactic double mastectomy into a public education campaign in 2013.

When assessing this trend, media scholars tend to believe that it may yield considerable social benefits. To begin with, celebrity cancer can largely contribute to a heightened cancer vigilance among the general public. Any disclosure of a cancer diagnosis by a celebrity generates “a very public and multi-faceted communicative firestorm” [Ibid., p. 6]. People discuss the cancer case and actively seek information about the disease. More importantly, the communicative firestorm results in taking preventive measures (giving up bad habits, changing the lifestyle, etc.) and opting for cancer screenings. The latter largely contributes to early detection, which is a key determinant in cancer survivorship [Do celebrity cancer ..., 2014]. Another important benefit is that celebrity cancer helps fight the stigma which still surrounds the disease. It initiates a wide public discussion that helps to dispel popular myths and helps to accept cancer as a biological, rather than a metaphysical, reality. Thus, celebrity cancer has the potential to reframe discourses of cancer, which, in the long run, leads to profound positive changes in the public consciousness.

Next, celebrity cancer has a considerable educational potential, especially for people who are afflicted with the same disease. Cancer stories can “serve as touchstones” both for the sick and their relatives [Berman, Boguski, Tabatsky, 2016, p. i]. They help them get adapted to the new reality, give valuable tips about what course of action to take, provide examples of efficient coping strategies. Moreover, they bring individual patients out of isolation enabling them to see cancer as a mutual, rather than a personal, foe [Beck, Chapman, Simmons, 2015], which at least partly relieves the burden of the disease and makes the

suffering more manageable. Another educational dimension of celebrity cancer is that even healthy people can use it as a teachable moment, “learning vicariously” [Bandura, 2001], modeling a situation that may happen in their own life and taking note of productive behavioral strategies.

It is noteworthy that celebrity cancer has a distinct political aspect. The cultural capital of celebrities enables them to launch cancer awareness campaigns, fight for better quality of cancer care, press for more investment into cancer research and even create a cancer lobby in the government. High efficiency of celebrity cancer activism is accounted for by the fact that they have first-hand experience of the issues they advocate for. According to J.G. Myrick, celebrities are also capable of encouraging “prosocial action” [Myrick, 2017, p. 1386], which means that they inspire people to provide all kinds of support to those afflicted with cancer, which, in its turn, contributes both to the destigmatization of the disease and to the creation of a more empathetic, inclusive society.

At the same time, scholars identify a number of ethical issues associated with celebrity cancer. Some think that this discursive trend satisfies the public’s morbid taste for voyeurism offering a glimpse into a very intimate and delicate situation. Others believe that the rise in celebrity cancer engenders the feeling of doom, as cancer begins to be perceived as inevitable. It incites fear and provokes excessive and dangerous health anxiety (*see* [Beck, Chapman, Simmons, 2015]). Another problem is that celebrity cancer can give disproportionately much visibility to certain kinds of cancer distorting the general picture and overshadowing more pressing oncological issues. Besides, by detailing their cancer experiences to the public, celebrities can inadvertently promote poorly accessible and exorbitantly expensive, while not necessarily essential, medical procedures. This situation may cause an undue demand for something medical professionals are unable to supply and, in the long run, lead to societal tension. Moreover, celebrities may even be suspected of having a vested interest in promoting certain medical products, such as genetic tests [Ibid.]. Finally, celebrities may publicize information which contradicts current medical protocols and is thus potentially harmful. For instance, they may be proponents of traditional healing that denies surgical or therapeutical intervention. These ideas may appeal to the public, and people might follow suit, refraining from seeking medical assistance and thus exacerbating their own condition. Despite all the above-mentioned criticism, celebrity cancer is generally

regarded as a positive trend, as it is expected to play a key role in raising cancer awareness.

In recent years, the Nigerian society has begun to acknowledge the celebrities' potential for giving visibility to pressing health issues. A vivid example here is the engagement of celebrities in health education campaigns during the Covid-19 pandemic. Celebrity participation largely contributed to generating awareness, raising hygienic standards in public and personal domains, and opting for health-seeking behaviors [Popoola, 2021].

In comparison to Covid-19, cancer is a much more persistent health threat. It is also a much more conceptually and culturally complicated communicative issue. In the Nigerian context, its open public discussion is hampered by multiple misconceptions and superstitions surrounding the disease and the stigma attached to it. Cancer is widely perceived as a white man's disease [Cancer, culture and communication, 2004, p. 30], is often connected with witchcraft or ancestors' wrath [Omonzejele, 2008], and is regarded as incurable [Amzat, Razum, 2014]. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that Nigerians tend to rely on indigenous healing methods and reject official medical protocols [Cancer in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2017]. In this cultural and discursive context, celebrity cancer may play a crucial role in normalizing cancer as a disease, legitimizing it as a subject of public discussion, shaping a more scientifically sound view of cancer and helping people to make well-informed cancer-related decisions.

Recognizing the educational potential of celebrity cancer, media scholars have proposed a number of ideas about how to maximize it. A very clear strategy is presented in [Berman, Boguski, Tabatsky, 2016, p. 6]. It is supposed to be implemented in five steps: (1) using a celebrity's cancer story as an attention hook and as a starting point for discussing a particular type of cancer; (2) providing scientifically sound information about the type of cancer in question; (3) describing the recommended medical protocols; (4) providing anecdotal reports and interviews with specialists; (5) giving references to expert medical resources. The authors believe that the implementation of this strategy will largely enhance the social impact of celebrity cancer. The strategy may be especially useful in cultural contexts where the celebrity cancer trend is just emerging and journalists are seeking the optimal coverage pattern.

Material and methods

For the purpose of this research, we collected a sample of articles which feature celebrity cancer in Nigerian newspapers. The sample was compiled on the basis of digital versions of six major Nigerian newspapers: *the Leadership News*, *the Punch*, *the Pulse Nigeria*, *the Vanguard*, *the Legit* and *the BBC Nigeria Pidgin*. All of them are English-medium newspapers, the latter presenting the well-established Nigerian lingua franca – pidgin English. The search exclusively covered the year 2024, when the celebrity cancer trend was fueled by the global coverage of Kate Middleton’s cancer. The research was conducted in two stages. At the first stage, we amassed a sample of articles that mentioned celebrities in the cancer context ($n=28$) through the respective search enquiry. At the second stage, we reduced the sample manually by eliminating articles that did not meet the criteria of celebrity cancer as a distinct type of discursive practice. Among them were obituaries, articles about celebrity endorsed cancer campaigns, and articles that focused on celebrities’ relatives rather than themselves. We also excluded content that featured western celebrities (King Charles III, Kate Middleton) since our primary aim was to look into the ways local practices are being developed. The final sample came down to eight articles, all of which center upon a Nigerian celebrity who shares their cancer experience of their own accord. The small size of the sample does not diminish its research value for the following reasons: (a) celebrity cancer is a new discursive trend in Nigerian media which is still in the making; (b) cancer discourse in general, unlike its western counterpart, is underdeveloped; (c) the general cultural climate for cancer disclosures is not favorable; (d) the statistical probability of cancer hitting well-known people who are ready to be vocal about their condition is not high. It was predictable, therefore, that content of this kind would be rare.

Having finalized the sample, we analyzed it from a discursive standpoint. We considered the types of celebrity and the way they are presented as social actors. We further looked at the way cancer is described to establish the degree of explicitness (the concrete diagnosis, the degree to which medical terminology is used, etc.). Then we identified the goal that the celebrities claim to pursue in their cancer disclosure and analyzed the messages they convey to the public. We also paid attention to how the educational potential of celebrity cancer is realized tracing the presence of the discursive techniques proposed in [Berman, Boguski, Tabatsky, 2016, p. 6] and outlined in the previous section. We

also tried to reveal patterns in celebrity cancer coverage to assess the consistency of the new discursive practice.

Representation of celebrity cancer in Nigerian newspapers: results and discussion

Among the celebrities presented in our sample are a politician, a businessman, a singer, a writer, an actress, and a religious leader, which is largely consistent with the makeup of the celebrity landscape worldwide. There is some overlap between the newspapers in their choice of the celebrity they write about. Politician Doyin Okupe features in *the Leadership News* and *the Pulse Nigeria*, and businessman Farooq Oreagba is presented in *the Punch* and *the Vanguard*.

In line with the respective western practices, the name of the cancer sufferer is typically given in the headline serving as an attention hook. Cf.: *Doyin Okupe recounts cancer battle, newfound life as evangelist of Christ*. The one exception is the headline in *the Punch*, which identifies the celebrity through the source of their current fame, rather than by the name. Cf.: *Cancer changed my view about life, says man who stole show at Ojude Oba festival*. In terms of Social Actor Analysis [van Leeuwen, 1996], five headlines in the sample provide examples of simple nominations giving names of celebrities, cf.: *God saved me, Oritsejafor recounts recovery from aggressive cancer*. Nomination might be indicative of a high, “household name” celebrity status. Two headlines rely on classification, referring the celebrities to certain fields of social activity, cf.: *Actress Tope Osoba Opens Up on Battle with Cancer in Touching Video, Calls for Financial Aid*. One headline, which was mentioned above as an exception, identifies the celebrity situationally, with nomination and affiliation provided in the sub-head (*The Managing Director of NG Clearing and former Member of the Derivatives Product Advisory Committee of the Nigerian Stock Exchange, Farooq Oreagba <...>*).

As for the types of cancer, six articles mention them explicitly. Most of them avoid giving too much medical detail merely providing a generic name of cancer based on its localization (e.g. *prostate cancer*, *skin cancer*, *breast cancer*). In one case, we have a more terminological, albeit not nosologically detailed, nomination: *multiple myeloma*. Lack of terminological detail is justified as the articles are targeted at a wide, medically illiterate audience, and scientific precision may alienate it. One article quotes the featured celebrity as confessing to having “aggres-

sive cancer” without specifying the type, and further referring to it as a “debilitating illness” (*the Punch*). The Ojude Oba festival star merely announces the fact of having cancer without supplying any details. This discursive strategy is controversial, as it is both a missed educational opportunity and a potential cause for speculations.

Of particular interest is the goal of the public disclosure as presented by the celebrities. One celebrity from our sample pursues a purely pragmatic goal: the actress featured by *the Legit* explicitly asks for financial aid in her “battle with cancer”. Unfortunately, this article is the most revealing of the cancer situation in Nigeria, where the cost of treatment is exorbitant and cancer care in general is substandard (see [Osaro, 2016]). In the other seven articles, the goal of disclosure is presented as idealistic. All of them convey a very distinct idea of a mission that celebrities take upon themselves to raise cancer awareness. In four articles, celebrities offer encouragement to cancer patients, outlining the advantages that they can gain from this experience. Among them are reconsideration of life priorities, living life to the fullest and making a powerful impact on the society (Farooq Oreagba in *the Punch*). Four articles (*the Leadership News*, *the Punch*, *the BBC Nigerian Pidgin*, *the Pulse Nigeria*) carry a very distinct religious message describing the positive role Christian faith can play in dealing with cancer. This message is the clearest in *the Leadership News* and *the Pulse Nigeria* articles about Doyin Okupe, a politician, who has chosen the life of an ordained evangelist as a result of his cancer experience. The religious motif in celebrity cancer is not exactly uncommon in the West, however, in the Nigerian context it is perhaps more revealing as it reflects the traditional reliance on the supernatural with a rather limited faith in medical interventions. Only one article, which claims to offer a message of hope (*the BBC Nigerian Pidgin*), focuses on the benefits of timely presentation and early detection without mentioning divine intervention. This article most explicitly confronts the traditional African cancer fatalism placing the maxim “Cancer no be death sentence” in its headline.

Moving on to the educational potential of celebrity cancer in Africa, we can say that newspapers are just starting to explore it. Two of the articles in the sample can be regarded as educational. Describing the cancer case of the Nigerian religious leader Ayo Oritsejafor, *the Punch* provides basic information about the nature of cancer referring to the World Health Organization in order to give it more conceptual weight. Surprisingly, this scientifically sound description follows the paragraph which highlights the role of faith and thus presents a rather metaphysical

view of cancer. This example is a perfect illustration of African medical pluralism, a mindset that accommodates “diverse healing modalities” [African medical pluralism, 2017, p. 1] and paradoxically combines traditional healing methods, religious practices and biomedical advances.

However, a much more illustrative example of celebrity cancer with an educational angle is the article from *the BBC Nigerian Pidgin* “How Banky W skin cancer journey take waka as e finally declare victory”. It starts with recounting the cancer experience of the famous Nigerian singer, alternating the third- and first-person narrative modes to give the story more depth and credibility. The article goes on to present a scientific view of cancer in three thematically organized and logically linked paragraphs: Wetin be skin cancer? (the paragraph explains the causes of skin cancer, lists its types pointing out the most malicious ones; identifies relative cancer risks for men and women); Diagnosis of skin cancer (the paragraph contains just one sentence urging the readers to consult a specialist if they detect any changes in their skin); and Treatment for skin cancer (the paragraph lists the main medical protocols and explains their purpose). It appears that the article more or less follows the pattern recommended in [Berman, Boguski, Tabatsky, 2016, p. 6] and turns the celebrity cancer case into a teachable moment. The educational potential of the article is further enhanced by the fact that it is provided in Nigerian pidgin English, the language variety understood by all Nigerians regardless of their ethnic and educational background and used in everyday communication.

Of certain educational relevance are *the Leadership News* article about Doyin Okupe and *the Punch* article about Farooq Oreagba, both of which mention the cancer treatment the celebrities underwent. Considering wide-spread skepticism regarding official western medical protocols, every positive reference to chemotherapy or radiotherapy made by influential people might contribute to promoting advanced forms of cancer treatment, which is certainly a social benefit.

The comparison of the articles in our small sample does not reveal pronounced structural consistency in the representation of celebrity cancer. There does not seem to be a template that journalists follow, which can be explained by the novelty of this discursive practice.

Conclusion

Celebrity cancer is becoming an increasingly visible discursive trend within the contemporary cancer discourse worldwide. The growing popularity of celebrity culture and its increasing impact on developing countries has contributed to the adoption of the celebrity cancer trend by non-western media. This trend can be regarded as a positive one as it largely contributes to raising cancer awareness, discarding popular stereotypes surrounding cancer, fighting stigma attached to it and encouraging efficient health-seeking behaviors. Moreover, celebrity cancer may become an important factor in forming, shaping and developing public cancer discourse, which is a means of empowering people and improving health outcomes. To further enhance the impact of celebrity cancer, it is crucial to use its educational potential, using the celebrity's story as a starting point and providing the public with scientifically sound and comprehensible information about the nature of cancer, its detection, treatment and prevention.

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