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Beyond Subtitling and Dubbing: Localization, Cultural Positioning and Audience Engagement in the Transnational Circulation of Nigerian Streaming Media

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Abstract

Audiovisual translation scholarship on Nigerian streaming media has been organized almost entirely around a translation-accuracy paradigm, the question of whether a subtitle or dub correctly transfers a source utterance's meaning. That paradigm cannot explain a pattern visible across platform reviews, diaspora social media discussion, and the audiovisual translation reception literature itself: audiences routinely rate a localized text as good or bad on grounds that have little to do with lexical accuracy, whether a kinship term was rendered with the right register, whether a proverb was allowed to sound foreign or was smoothed into fluency, whether a platform bothered to localize a title's synopsis at all. This paper argues that these judgments are best understood as cultural positioning, acts through which a localized text and its surrounding paratext signal a stance toward Nigerian cultural material, respect, exoticization, assimilation, or erasure, and that positioning, not translation

accuracy alone, is what predicts audience engagement, sustained viewing, diasporic identification, and community discussion. Synthesizing translation studies, cultural proximity theory, and platform-circulation research, the paper builds a four-layer positioning framework spanning textual, paratextual, platform, and community levels, and maps six Nollywood content categories, contemporary urban drama, comedy, faith-based film, historical epic, music-driven content, and docudrama, onto the positioning strategies each typically receives and the engagement risks that follow. The paper closes with five falsifiable propositions distinguishing positioning effects from comprehension effects. Its central claim is that a Nigerian title can be translated correctly and positioned badly, and that audience engagement research on Nigerian streaming media has measured the wrong variable for too long.

Keywords: Cultural Positioning, Audience Engagement, Nollywood, Streaming Platforms, Domestication, Foreignization, Diaspora Audiences, Paratext

1. Introduction

Nigerian streaming media now circulates through platforms that were built for a global, not a Nigerian, audience, and the localization decisions those platforms and their vendors make, which language a title is subtitled or dubbed into, how a proverb or a kinship term is rendered, how a synopsis is written, are treated in most audiovisual translation scholarship as questions of accuracy: did the target text preserve the source meaning. This paper argues that accuracy is the wrong primary variable for understanding audience engagement with Nigerian streaming content, not because accuracy is unimportant but because it is insufficient. A subtitle can be lexically correct and still position Nollywood as a curiosity to be explained to an outsider, or as a cinema that assumes its viewer already belongs. That positioning, this paper argues, is what diaspora and international audiences respond to when they praise or criticize a localized Nigerian title, and it is largely invisible to a translation-accuracy framework.

The argument proceeds from a simple observation about the reception literature reviewed in section 2: audience judgments of localized audiovisual content cluster around authenticity, respect, and belonging at least as often as around comprehension. A viewer who says a dub sounds embarrassing is rarely reporting a mistranslation; a viewer who says a subtitle track made a film

feel foreign in a good way is rarely reporting superior lexical fidelity. These are positioning judgments, and the audiovisual translation field has the theoretical resources, Venuti's domestication and foreignization, Hall's encoding and decoding, Straubhaar's (1991) ^[69] cultural proximity, to formalize them, but has mostly deployed those resources to explain translation choices rather than to explain audience engagement outcomes directly.

This paper asks three questions. First, what distinguishes a cultural-positioning judgment from a translation-accuracy judgment in the audiovisual translation reception literature, and how much of that literature, once reread, is already reporting positioning effects under an accuracy label. Second, what framework would let researchers and platforms separate textual positioning, choices made in the subtitle or dub script itself, from paratextual, platform, and community positioning, choices made in synopsis writing, catalog placement, and diaspora-led informal circulation. Third, how does positioning strategy vary across the genre range Nigerian streaming content actually spans, from contemporary urban drama to faith-based film to historical epic, and does a single positioning strategy serve all of them equally well. The literature synthesis in this paper covers work available through December 2024.

The paper's scope is deliberately narrower than the comparative Nigeria-Francophone Africa question taken up elsewhere in this line of work. It stays inside the Nigerian case and asks a positioning question rather than a cross-market comparative question, on the reasoning that the positioning argument needs to be established on a single, well-documented case before it can support a comparative claim. It also stays a critical-theoretical and framework-building paper rather than an empirical one: the propositions in section 6 are stated to be tested, not results already obtained, and no audience data were collected for this paper. The contribution is threefold. First, the paper names and defines cultural positioning as a construct distinct from translation accuracy, and shows that a meaningful share of the existing reception literature already reports positioning effects without naming them as such. Second, it builds a four-layer framework, textual, paratextual, platform, and community positioning, that separates where a positioning signal originates, since a platform's failure to localize a synopsis is a different failure from a dubbing director's decision to flatten a character's accent, even though both can produce the same audience judgment of disrespect. Third, it maps six Nollywood content categories onto typical positioning practice and the specific engagement risk each combination creates, giving producers, platforms, and researchers a shared vocabulary that the accuracy paradigm does not supply.

A brief illustration motivates the distinction before the theoretical review develops it formally. Two subtitle tracks for the same proverb-laden scene can both pass a bilingual reviewer's accuracy check, one by translating the proverb literally with a short bracketed gloss, the other by substituting a semantically equivalent English idiom. Both are defensible translations. But a diaspora viewer fluent in the source language is likely to read the first as a text that trusts her to sit with unfamiliar imagery and the second as a text that has decided she needs the unfamiliar imagery removed. Nothing in a translation-accuracy audit captures that difference, because both renderings score as correct. This paper treats that difference as the object of study.

Scope requires an explicit statement. Nollywood is not one industry but several overlapping ones, an English-language urban-drama mainstream, Yoruba-, Igbo-, and Hausa-language production streams with their own domestic audiences and conventions, and a faith-based film sector that in places operates closer to ministry than to commercial cinema. This paper's positioning argument is built to apply across that range, but the content-category mapping in section 4 necessarily simplifies a more granular reality, and readers should treat the six categories there as analytically useful groupings rather than an exhaustive taxonomy of Nigerian screen production. The paper also does not claim positioning is the only variable that matters for engagement; production budget, star casting, marketing spend, and platform algorithm design all plausibly matter as well. The claim is narrower and, this paper argues, still underappreciated: that positioning is a variable current audiovisual translation research on Nigerian content has not measured separately from accuracy, and that separating it changes what the existing reception literature can be read as showing.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1 The translation-accuracy paradigm and what it explains

Audiovisual translation studies has built a rigorous account of what accuracy means under subtitling's character and reading-speed constraints and dubbing's isochrony constraint (Diaz Cintas & Remael, 2021) ^[23] (Pedersen, 2011) ^[57] (Chaume, 2012) ^[20]. Kruger's psycholinguistic account of how viewers process subtitled and dubbed dialogue, Taylor's multimodal approach treating image, sound, and text as one system, and Guillot's account of cross-cultural pragmatics in audiovisual translation all extend accuracy beyond the word to the pragmatic and multimodal level (Kruger, 2016) ^[45] (Taylor, 2016) ^[71] (Guillot, 2016) ^[29]. Assis Rosa's descriptive account of the field and Chaume's account of its methodological turns both document a discipline that has become steadily more precise about what counts as a faithful rendering (Assis Rosa, 2016) ^[5] (Chaume, 2018) ^[21]. None of this literature is wrong, and none of it is dispensable: a positioning framework without an accuracy foundation would have no way to distinguish a deliberate domesticating choice from a simple translation error. But accuracy, however precisely defined, answers a question audiences are not always asking. It cannot explain why two equally accurate renderings of the same scene, one that keeps a Yoruba honorific untranslated with a contextual cue and one that replaces it with a generic English title, can produce sharply different audience judgments about whether the text respects its own culture.

The accuracy paradigm's limits are not a failure of rigor within its own terms. Pedersen's norm-based account of subtitling and Diaz Cintas and Remael's account of subtitling concepts and practice both formalize accuracy under real production constraints with considerable precision (Pedersen, 2011) ^[57] (Diaz Cintas & Remael, 2021) ^[23], and Chaume's account of dubbing's isochrony constraint does the same for the dubbed mode (Chaume, 2012) ^[20]. The problem this paper identifies is scope, not rigor: these accounts were built to answer whether a target text is a defensible rendering of a source text, and a defensible rendering is compatible with more than one positioning stance. A framework adequate to accuracy is not

automatically adequate to engagement, and treating the two as a single continuum, where more accurate simply means more engaging, is the specific assumption this paper sets out to unsettle.

2.2 From equivalence to positioning

Venuti's domestication and foreignization distinction is the theoretical hinge this paper relies on, but it is read here as a positioning theory rather than only a translation-strategy taxonomy: a domesticating choice positions the source culture as needing to be made unremarkable for the target audience, and a foreignizing choice positions it as worth encountering on its own terms (Venuti, 1995) ^[75]. Katan's account of translators as cultural mediators adds that this positioning work is rarely all-or-nothing within a single text; a translator can foreignize a proverb while domesticating an honorific in the same scene, and the pattern of those choices across a text is itself a positioning signature (Katan, 2004) ^[40]. Bandia's account of postcolonial African translation goes further, arguing that translation in a postcolonial context is never a neutral technical act but carries reparative or, when done carelessly, further injurious weight, because the power asymmetry between source and target culture is already built into the encounter (Bandia, 2008) ^[8]. Applied to Nigerian streaming content distributed by platforms headquartered outside Africa, Bandia's argument implies that a positioning judgment is never purely aesthetic for the audience making it; it carries a history of who has had the power to define Nigerian cultural material for outside audiences, and localization choices either continue or interrupt that history.

Hall's encoding and decoding model supplies the audience-side mechanism. Hall argues that a text's preferred meaning is encoded by its producers but decoded by audiences through their own codes, producing dominant, negotiated, or oppositional readings (Hall, 1980) ^[30]. A positioning framework predicts that audiences decode a localized text's positioning signals, not only its propositional content, through this same active process: a diaspora viewer with strong Nigerian cultural competence may read a heavily domesticated dub as flattening, an oppositional reading, while a viewer with weaker competence may read the same dub as accessible, closer to a dominant or negotiated reading. Božović's comparative study of how culture is rendered across subtitling and dubbing corpora supports treating this as a real strategic split rather than a theoretical abstraction, finding that dubbing more often domesticates humor and idiom while subtitling more often preserves it with a compensating gloss (Božović, 2019) ^[12], a split with direct positioning consequences for Nigerian content depending on which mode a given platform commissions.

Positioning also helps explain a pattern that a pure accuracy account leaves puzzling: why the same translation strategy can be read as respectful in one title and as condescending in another. A glossed, footnote-style retention of a kinship term reads as respectful when the surrounding text signals that the filmmakers assumed a knowledgeable audience throughout, dense place-name reference, unexplained proverbs elsewhere in the same scene, but the identical glossing choice can read as condescending when it appears in an otherwise heavily explained, tourist-guide-register text, because the gloss then stands out as an isolated concession rather than part of a consistent stance. This is a claim about consistency across the textual layer, not about

any single item's transfer strategy, and it is one reason Table 3's proposed instruments should capture pattern-level positioning judgments, is this text consistently foreignizing or consistently domesticating, rather than only item-level accuracy scores that cannot detect inconsistency across a text.

2.3 Audience engagement beyond comprehension

A reread of the empirical reception literature through a positioning lens finds engagement effects reported under headings that name comprehension, preference, or quality perception but that, on inspection, describe something closer to positioning response. Kusecu-Ozbudak's Netflix subtitling audience study finds that viewers increasingly treat subtitling as the unmarked, respected default for platform content rather than a lesser compromise mode, a generational shift in status attached to a mode, not a change in comprehension rates (Kusecu-Ozbudak, 2021) ^[46]. Alfaify and Ramos Pinto's study of culturally dense subtitling into Arabic finds audience tolerance for foreignized cultural references higher than translators assume, which reads as a positioning finding, audiences reward being trusted with unfamiliar material, once it is separated from a pure comprehension question (Alfaify & Ramos Pinto, 2021) ^[1]. González Ruiz and Cruz García's review of dubbing's role in reception explicitly frames viewer response to dubbing as a question of what dubbing signals about a text's status, not only whether the dub is intelligible (González Ruiz & Cruz García, 2021) ^[27]. Raffi's study of Italian dubbing's effect on immersion and Romero-Fresco's eye-tracking study of how viewers make dubbing work both describe engagement outcomes, immersion and perceptual effort, that are downstream of positioning choices such as voice casting and register matching, not of lexical accuracy as such (Raffi, 2020) ^[60] (Romero-Fresco, 2020) ^[64]. Pavesi and Zamora's cross-cultural study of how swearing is handled in dubbing and Ameri, Khoshsaligheh, and Farid's survey of Persian dubbing preference both find that audiences hold strong, culturally specific expectations about what a dub is allowed to sound like, expectations that are positioning expectations dressed as quality judgments (Pavesi & Zamora, 2021) ^[56] (Ameri *et al.*, 2017) ^[4].

Brannon, Virkar, and Thompson's large-scale study of human dubbing practice, built to benchmark automatic dubbing systems, offers the clearest structural evidence for the positioning argument: professional dubbing teams sacrifice different amounts of source meaning for synchrony depending on genre and target-market convention, which means the same underlying accuracy standard is applied with different positioning latitude across content categories (Brannon *et al.*, 2023) ^[13]. Henrich's study of Kiswahili-dubbed television reception in Kenya reports comprehension gains from dubbing that were uneven across genre and mediated by prior source-language exposure, a finding this paper reads as early, if indirect, evidence that genre itself carries a positioning expectation independent of translation quality, a claim the content-category mapping in section 4 develops directly (Henrich, 2000) ^[33]. Moura's pilot study of how swearing is subtitled and the Iranian amateur-subtitling reception literature both show that audiences distinguish sharply between professional and amateur localization quality even when underlying translation choices are comparable (Moura, 2024) ^[54] (Khoshsaligheh *et al.*, 2019) ^[41] (Ameri & Khoshsaligheh, 2022) ^[3], evidence that

positioning judgments attach to the perceived source of a localization, not only to its text.

A further pattern worth isolating from the reception literature concerns amateur and informal localization specifically, since it bears directly on the community layer developed in section 3. Khoshsaligheh, Ameri, Khajepoor, and Shokoohmand's study of amateur subtitling in a dubbing-dominant market and Ameri and Khoshsaligheh's follow-up study of younger audiences both find that amateur subtitling is received not as a lesser substitute for professional localization but as a distinct genre with its own positioning conventions, often more foreignizing and more tolerant of visible translator commentary than professional subtitling allows (Khoshsaligheh *et al.*, 2019) ^[41] (Ameri & Khoshsaligheh, 2022) ^[3]. Casas-Tost's study of politeness in Chinese-English subtitling adds that politeness and register choices in subtitling are read by audiences as carrying social meaning about the relationship between source and target cultures, not merely as stylistic variation (Casas-Tost, 2013) ^[19], which is precisely the positioning reading this paper argues the field needs to make explicit rather than leave embedded in studies nominally about politeness or register.

A last cluster of reception studies concerns swearing and register, an unusually clear test case for the positioning argument because how strong language is handled carries obvious social meaning independent of whether the handling is lexically accurate. Moura's pilot reception study of subtitled swearing and Pavesi and Zamora's cross-cultural study of swearing in dubbing (Moura, 2024; Pavesi & Zamora, 2021) ^[54, 56] both find that audiences hold strong opinions about whether strong language should be softened, preserved, or omitted, opinions that map more closely onto a judgment about what kind of text this is meant to be, respectable family entertainment or gritty realism, than onto a judgment about translation correctness. Read through the positioning lens, softening strong language is a domesticating move that repositions a text's register for a broader or more conservative audience, and the audience reaction Moura and Pavesi and Zamora document is best read as a response to that repositioning, not to a translation error. This pattern has an evident, underexamined parallel in Nigerian content, where faith-based and mainstream-family-audience titles often already soften language relative to source dialogue for domestic release, a pre-existing domesticating layer that international platform localization then builds on top of rather than introduces from scratch.

2.4 Platform gatekeeping and the political economy of positioning

Positioning is not only a translator's choice; it is also a platform investment decision. Lobato's account of Netflix's territorial content strategy shows that dubbing investment tracks projected audience size per territory, which means a title's positioning treatment, full dub with matched paratext versus subtitle-only with minimal metadata, is set partly by a business forecast made before any translator is assigned (Lobato, 2019) ^[51]. Jenner's analysis of Netflix's reinvention of television treats localization spend the same way, as a strategic variable rather than a translation-studies variable (Jenner, 2018) ^[38]. Dovey's study of creative innovation in African internet television documents the production-side response, African producers and distributors adapting content and packaging to what platforms will invest in localizing (Dovey, 2018) ^[24]. Haynes's account of

Nollywood's genre development supplies the historical baseline against which this platform-era positioning shift should be read: the industry built its own domestic multilingual circulation and subtitling conventions before international platforms arrived, which means platform-era positioning decisions are made on top of an existing, self-generated positioning logic rather than on a blank slate (Haynes, 2016) ^[32]. Larkin's account of media infrastructure and urban culture in Nigeria reinforces the same point from the infrastructure side: Nigerian screen media's circulation has always depended on distribution infrastructures, market traders, video parlors, informal disc distribution, that platforms did not build and do not fully control, which limits how completely any single platform's positioning choices can define the text's reception (Larkin, 2008) ^[48].

The community layer also interacts with the parasocial dynamic discussed above in a way worth flagging before moving on. A performer with a strong individual fan following can anchor community formation around themselves rather than around the title's positioning quality, which means high community-layer engagement metrics for a given release may sometimes reflect performer-centered fandom rather than audience approval of how the release itself was positioned. Disentangling the two requires community-affiliation measures that ask what the engagement is actually organized around, the performer, the specific title, or the broader cultural material the title represents, rather than treating all community activity around a release as evidence that its positioning succeeded.

2.5 Community, fandom, and informal positioning

Positioning also happens outside any platform's or translator's control, in fan and community circulation. Lee's study of anime fansubbing and Spolidorio's study of Brazilian fan-subtitling communities both describe participatory localization communities that develop their own norms for how much foreignness to preserve, norms that frequently diverge from, and sometimes explicitly critique, professional localization practice (Lee, 2011) ^[49] (Spolidorio, 2017) ^[68]. Diaspora-led informal subtitling and clipping of Nollywood content for social media circulates alongside, and sometimes ahead of, official platform releases, and on the positioning argument this paper makes, informal circuits often perform the foreignizing, high-context-trust positioning that official platform localization avoids for a broader, less culturally competent audience. Bennett's study of hip hop's localization in Germany and Lin and Zhao's study of hip-hop localization in China both show that music genres carry positioning stakes through code choice and register that are managed as much by fan and scene communities as by any official localization industry (Bennett, 1999) ^[9] (Lin & Zhao, 2022) ^[50], a dynamic with an evident but understudied parallel in how Nigerian Afrobeats-adjacent soundtrack material is subtitled, left untranslated, or recontextualized across official and fan-circulated versions of the same title. Kim's account of how the British film industry restructured for a global audience and Zhou's study of brand advertising localization in the contemporary all-media environment both show that industrial and fan-level positioning logics can pull in different directions within the same content ecosystem (Kim, 2003) ^[42] (Zhou, 2023) ^[77], exactly the tension this paper argues Nigerian streaming content is currently navigating without a shared vocabulary for naming it.

Brody's study of how niche community media serve LGBTQ+ audiences through bar culture and sports reception offers a methodological model for studying a small, identity-invested audience segment's engagement with community-specific media, directly transferable to studying Nigerian diaspora community engagement with informally circulated content (Brody, 2024) ^[14].

2.6 Parasocial engagement and the limits of the positioning construct

Horton and Wohl's classic account of para-social interaction describes the one-sided intimacy audiences develop with media performers, a felt closeness that persists even though the performer does not know the audience member exists (Horton & Wohl, 1956) ^[34]. Parasocial engagement is a useful boundary case for the positioning framework because it can operate partly independent of positioning quality: a viewer can develop a strong parasocial attachment to a Nigerian actor or presenter whose dialogue is poorly positioned, badly dubbed, flattened paratext, because the attachment is anchored to the performer's persona rather than to the text's cultural signaling. This paper treats parasocial attachment as a moderator rather than a component of the positioning construct itself: it can sustain engagement through a positioning failure for a time, which is one plausible explanation for why some poorly positioned content still retains an audience, but the reception literature reviewed above gives no reason to expect parasocial attachment to substitute indefinitely for the cultural identification and perceived-authenticity effects that positioning more directly governs. Distinguishing the two constructs matters for measurement: an engagement study that finds sustained viewership despite apparently poor positioning should test whether parasocial attachment to specific performers is doing the explanatory work before concluding that positioning does not matter for that content.

2.7 Media systems, regulation, and comparative grounding

A positioning framework also needs to account for the regulatory and comparative media-systems context in which Nigerian streaming content circulates. Silverstone's account of media regulation and media civics cautions against assuming a single, universal standard of media literacy against which positioning choices should be judged (Silverstone, 2004) ^[67]. Scannell's accounts of alternative media and of media events as moments of shared simultaneous viewing both supply vocabulary for the informal and platform-synchronized circulation channels through which Nigerian content reaches diaspora audiences (Scannell, 1980) ^[63] (Scannell, 1995) ^[66]. Caldwell's study of regionally produced alternative media and Hanke's study of media culture under a differently organized political economy both offer comparative cases showing how production culture and system structure, not translation choice alone, shape a text's relationship to a dominant media center (Caldwell, 2003) ^[17] (Hanke, 1990) ^[31]. Buckingham's study of children's reception of Disney content models how positioning is read differently across audience age and prior media literacy, a variable this paper's framework treats as a moderator of positioning effects (Buckingham, 1997) ^[16]. Grixti's study of Maltese youth negotiating global media, Reddi's account of media and culture in Indian society, and

Boellstorff and Horst's introduction to media and cultural change across the Pacific each model how a numerically smaller culture manages positioning pressure from larger media systems, directly analogous to Nigerian content's position within platforms built primarily for larger markets (Grixti, 2006) ^[28] (Reddi, 1989) ^[61] (Boellstorff & Horst, 2019) ^[11]. Bishop's study of Tibet's representation within global promotional culture and Fraser, Lee, and Tang's editorial call for region-specific media-culture scholarship both support this paper's underlying claim that positioning cannot be evaluated by a generic standard imported from elsewhere; it requires research built for the specific culture being positioned (Bishop, 2000) ^[10] (Fraser *et al.*, 2017) ^[25]. Two further literatures round out the theoretical base. Studies of automation and professional practice, automatic subtitling evaluation, post-edited subtitling quality models, cloud-based dubbing workflows, and student dubbing training, show that the localization industry's own quality standards remain oriented toward accuracy and efficiency rather than positioning (Karakanta, 2022) ^[39] (Koglin *et al.*, 2022) ^[43] (Rodríguez Fernández-Peña, 2023) ^[62] (Pujyanti, 2017) ^[59], which this paper reads as a gap the positioning framework is built to close rather than a competing account. Perego's methodological critique of cross-national audiovisual translation research, Nikolic and Bywood's field overview, Maestri's account of audiovisual translation in EU public communication, and studies of translator training, accessibility training, and professional register all describe a field whose methods were built primarily to assess accuracy and efficiency, with engagement and positioning treated as secondary outcomes at best (Perego, 2018) ^[58] (Nikolic & Bywood, 2021) ^[55] (Maestri, 2021) ^[52] (Tuominen & Silvester, 2021) ^[72] (Martins & Ferreira, 2019) ^[53] (Talaván, 2019) ^[70] (Valdez *et al.*, 2023) ^[73] (Korpi, 2021) ^[44] (Balan & Biletska, 2023) ^[7]. Studies of specific transfer categories, wordplay, dark humor, gendered address, phraseological units, and dubbing's editorial handling of transition markers and censorship, supply the granular evidence that positioning choices are made item-by-item within a single text rather than as one global strategy (Camilli, 2019) ^[18] (Bucaria, 2008) ^[15] (De Marco, 2016) ^[22] (Golda & Mężyk, 2021) ^[26] (Romero Fresco, 2012) ^[63] (Vetri, 2024) ^[76], which is why section 3's framework separates textual positioning from the paratextual, platform, and community layers rather than treating positioning as a single text-level score. Casas-Tost's study of politeness in Chinese-English subtitling, van der Weel's study of Australia's multilingual broadcaster SBS, La Trecchia's Italian dubbing case study, and Alrais and Almahasee's study of subtitling an Iraqi film into English round out the comparative evidence that positioning judgments recur across unrelated language pairs whenever a culturally dense source text meets an audience with mixed cultural competence (Casas-Tost, 2013) ^[19] (van der Weel, 1990) ^[74] (La Trecchia, 1998) ^[47] (Alrais & Almahasee, 2024) ^[2], and Baker's account of translation equivalence remains useful mainly for marking where a purely linguistic account of correctness stops explaining audience response and a positioning account has to begin (Baker, 2018) ^[6]. Isaac's studies of administrative French terminology across Francophone African states, while concerned with a different market than this paper's Nigerian focus, establish the general point that institutional and administrative register carries its own positioning stakes distinct from

conversational dialogue, a distinction this paper's docudrama category in section 4 draws on directly (Isaac, 2023) ^[36] (Isaac, 2024) ^[37].

2.8 Positioning as a measurable construct

A skeptical reading of the argument so far would grant that positioning is a real phenomenon but doubt that it can be measured with the rigor the accuracy paradigm achieves, on the grounds that positioning sounds closer to interpretation than to data. This paper takes the opposite view: positioning is measurable precisely because it is not a single global judgment but a set of discrete, codable choices, which term was retained, which was substituted, how much paratext was written, how a title was algorithmically surfaced, that the four-layer framework in section 3 is built to separate and count. What positioning resists is not measurement but reduction to a single accuracy score, since two texts with identical accuracy scores can differ completely in the pattern of retention and substitution choices that produce their positioning profile. Karakanta's experimental work on automatic subtitling evaluation and Koglin and colleagues' post-edited subtitling quality model both show that even accuracy itself is increasingly measured through multi-dimensional models rather than a single pass or fail judgment (Karakanta, 2022) ^[39] (Koglin *et al.*, 2022) ^[43], which supports treating a multi-dimensional positioning profile as a natural methodological extension rather than a departure from how the field already measures quality.

The measurement challenge is therefore practical rather than conceptual: building coding schemes and audience instruments specific enough to Nigerian streaming content that they do not simply import assumptions from European-language-pair audiovisual translation research, where most existing quality and reception instruments were developed and validated. Perego's methodological critique of cross-national audiovisual translation research makes exactly this point about translated-instrument bias in a different context, and it applies with equal force to positioning instruments as to accuracy instruments (Perego, 2018) ^[58]. Section 5 proposes four candidate constructs on this basis, not as a finished instrument set but as a starting specification for the validation work a positioning research program would need to undertake before any quantitative claim about engagement could be made responsibly.

A further reason the measurement challenge is practical rather than conceptual is that the four layers are not equally costly to code. Textual positioning requires a source-and-target comparison a trained bilingual coder can perform directly from the script and subtitle or dubbing file. Paratextual and platform positioning require access to marketing copy and catalog metadata that a researcher without an industry or platform partnership may not be able to obtain systematically across a large sample, since this material is not always archived or made public in the way a released film or episode itself is. Community positioning is the most resource-intensive layer to code well, since it requires either a defensible sampling frame for an otherwise unbounded volume of social media and fan-subtitling activity or a partnership with a platform holding aggregate engagement data the researcher cannot independently verify. A research design that adopts the full four-layer framework should budget for this asymmetry rather than assuming each layer costs the same to operationalize.

3. A four-layer cultural-positioning framework

Table 1 states the framework's four layers. Textual positioning is set by the translator or dubbing director within the localized script itself. Paratextual positioning is set by whoever writes the synopsis, title translation, and marketing copy attached to the release. Platform positioning is set by catalog placement, thumbnail selection, and territory availability, decisions typically made without translator input. Community positioning is set outside any official channel, by diaspora social media discussion, fan subtitling, and informal circulation. The framework's purpose is diagnostic: an audience engagement problem attributed to bad translation may in fact originate in the paratextual or platform layer, and a fix aimed at the wrong layer will not resolve it.

Table 1: Four-layer cultural-positioning framework for Nigerian streaming media

Layer	Who sets it	Typical positioning signal	Engagement mechanism affected
Textual	Translator or dubbing director	Retention versus normalization of kinship terms, honorifics, proverbs, code-switching, and humor within the script.	Perceived authenticity and cultural identification.
Paratextual	Platform copywriter or marketing team	How fully a synopsis, title, and promotional description are localized or explained for the target audience.	Discoverability and initial willingness to watch.
Platform	Streaming platform catalog and recommendation systems	Territory availability, catalog placement, and algorithmic recommendation exposure.	Sustained viewing and repeat engagement.
Community	Diaspora audiences, fan subtitlers, and social media discussion	Informal circulation, fan commentary, and community-generated context that supplements or contests official localization.	Diasporic identification and community affiliation.

The layers interact, and the framework does not claim they are independent. A platform that under-invests in paratextual localization, layer two, can suppress engagement before a viewer ever reaches the textual localization, layer one, at all. A community that generates its own positioning context, layer four, can compensate for a platform's minimal paratextual investment, which is one reason diaspora audiences and international audiences with no diaspora community access frequently report different engagement levels with the same officially released title. Section 4 uses this four-layer structure to examine how positioning practice differs across content categories rather than treating Nigerian streaming content as a single undifferentiated corpus.

A worked example clarifies how the four layers can diverge within a single release. Consider a historical epic acquired by a major platform. At the textual layer, a skilled dubbing team may retain dynastic titles and place names with careful voice casting, a strongly foreignizing, high-trust positioning choice. At the paratextual layer, the same platform may issue a synopsis stripped of the historical and political

specificity that made the textual choice meaningful, reducing the description to a generic royal-intrigue logline, a domesticating, low-trust positioning choice made by a different team with no visibility into the textual layer's decisions. At the platform layer, the title may be placed in a broad international drama category rather than a category that would surface it to viewers already primed for its historical register, further diluting the textual layer's foreignizing work. At the community layer, diaspora viewers with the missing historical context may generate explanatory threads and clips that restore exactly the context the paratextual layer omitted. A single accuracy score for this release would capture none of this divergence, and an engagement researcher who observed only lukewarm aggregate viewership would have no way to know that the textual layer's careful, respectful work was undercut two layers up. This is the diagnostic case the framework is built to make legible.

A boundary statement clarifies what the framework leaves out. It does not model production-side positioning decisions made before a title is finished, casting choices, language of original shooting, or funding source, all of which plausibly shape a text's eventual positioning options but sit upstream of the localization process this paper examines. It also does not attempt to quantify how much positioning is enough, since the right positioning strategy for a given title plausibly depends on its intended audience and platform placement in ways a general framework cannot specify in advance. What the framework does claim is narrower and more defensible: that the four layers are analytically separable, that current practice frequently lets them diverge without anyone tracking the divergence, and that tracking it is a precondition for diagnosing why a given title's engagement did or did not match expectations.

3.1 Using the framework diagnostically

The framework's practical value is best shown by how it changes what counts as an adequate explanation for an engagement outcome. Under the accuracy paradigm, a title that underperforms with international audiences despite a technically sound subtitle track has no obvious next diagnostic step beyond auditing the translation again, since translation quality is the only variable the paradigm tracks. Under the positioning framework, the same

underperformance opens four distinct lines of inquiry corresponding to Table 1's four layers: was the textual layer's positioning strategy, foreignizing or domesticating, mismatched to the audience segment actually reached; did the paratextual layer under-describe the content in a way that suppressed initial uptake regardless of textual quality; did the platform layer fail to surface the title to viewers who would have responded to its positioning strategy; and did the community layer lack the informal context that similar titles received through diaspora circulation. Each line of inquiry points to a different actor and a different fix, textual layer to the localization vendor, paratextual and platform layers to the platform's own marketing and catalog teams, community layer to outreach and community partnership rather than to translation at all. A single accuracy audit cannot produce this differentiated diagnosis, which is the practical argument for adopting the four-layer structure even by readers who remain skeptical of the broader theoretical claims in section 2.

The framework also clarifies a failure mode specific to well-resourced, prestige-positioned titles. A high-budget release that receives full textual, paratextual, and platform investment can still underperform on community-layer engagement if the content itself, or its marketing, signals that it was made primarily for an international festival or awards audience rather than for the Nigerian and diaspora audience whose community affiliation this paper treats as a distinct outcome. Positioning, in other words, is not simply a matter of investment level; a lavishly positioned title aimed at the wrong imagined audience can still fail the specific engagement outcomes this paper's framework is built to track, which is a finding a pure investment-tracking metric, dollars spent on localization, would miss entirely.

4. Positioning strategies across Nollywood content categories

Nigerian streaming content spans genres whose source material differs in how much culturally specific content it carries and how much of that content platforms and translators currently attempt to position rather than merely translate. Table 2 maps six recurring categories against typical current positioning practice and the engagement risk that follows when positioning is treated as equivalent to translation accuracy.

Table 2: Positioning practice and engagement risk across Nollywood content categories

Content category	Typical current positioning practice	Primary engagement risk
Contemporary urban drama	Textual layer usually domesticated for comprehension; paratextual layer often minimal, generic synopsis language.	Audiences familiar with the setting perceive flattening; audiences unfamiliar with it receive too little context to engage fully.
Comedy	Humor substituted functionally, often losing culturally specific comic mechanisms noted in the wordplay and dark-humor literature.	Perceived loss of the source's comic specificity even when a substitute joke lands with the target audience.
Faith-based film	Religious and spiritual references frequently either retained without explanation or substituted with a generic secular equivalent.	Substitution reads as erasure to audiences for whom the spiritual register is central to the narrative's meaning.
Historical epic	Political, dynastic, and place-name references usually retained with minimal gloss, assuming shared regional knowledge.	International audiences without that shared knowledge disengage from a narrative that assumes context it does not supply.
Music-driven content	Song lyrics and diegetic music typically left untranslated regardless of dialogue localization mode.	Mixed-mode text (localized dialogue, untranslated music) can read as inconsistent positioning rather than a deliberate choice.
Docudrama and true-crime adjacent content	Administrative and institutional terminology often generalized or translated without local calibration.	Mismatched institutional terminology reduces perceived credibility of factual or quasi-factual content specifically.

Two categories deserve further comment. Faith-based film is textually dense with spiritual and religious reference in a way that most European-language-pair audiovisual translation research, built on largely secular commercial cinema, has not had to theorize in depth, which is one reason this paper treats it as its own category rather than folding it into general cultural-specific-item handling. Docudrama and true-crime-adjacent content carries the administrative and institutional terminology problem Isaac's studies of Francophone African administrative French document for a related but distinct market, and the same underlying issue, generic translation failing to capture jurisdiction-specific institutional vocabulary, applies to Nigerian federal, state, and traditional-authority terminology in this content category (Isaac, 2023) ^[36] (Isaac, 2024) ^[37].

Comedy and faith-based film make an instructive contrast because they fail in structurally different ways under the same accuracy-first workflow. Comedy's failure mode is substitutive: a joke built on a specific Yoruba or Pidgin pun is replaced with an English joke that lands with the target audience but shares nothing with the source joke's mechanism, a strategy Camilli's and Bucaria's studies of wordplay and dark humor in audiovisual translation both document as the default professional response to untranslatable comic material (Camilli, 2019) ^[18] (Bucaria, 2008) ^[15]. The substitution can succeed as comedy while still failing as positioning, since the audience never encounters the source culture's actual comic sensibility, only a target-culture joke wearing the scene's costume. Faith-based film's failure mode is closer to omission: a spiritual register that structures the narrative's stakes, deliverance, covenant, generational curse, is either translated with flattening literalism that drains it of religious weight or quietly secularized, a pattern this paper's positioning framework predicts will produce a larger gap between comprehension and perceived authenticity than comedy's substitution failure does, because the audience most invested in the spiritual register is also the audience most likely to notice its absence. Proposition 3 in section 6 states this comparison as a testable claim.

Historical epic and music-driven content make a second instructive contrast, this time about how much of the source's positioning-relevant material survives localization by default rather than by deliberate choice. A historical epic's political and dynastic references survive in the dialogue whether or not a translator does anything special with them, since they are woven into the plot itself; the positioning risk lies in the audience's prior knowledge, not in the transfer act. Music-driven content behaves oppositely: song lyrics are, as Table 2 notes, typically left untranslated by default regardless of how the surrounding dialogue is localized, which means the positioning choice is made passively, by whoever decided the localization workflow would not extend to song content, rather than actively by a translator weighing options. Bennett's and Lin and Zhao's studies of hip-hop localization both suggest this passive default is not culturally neutral: leaving music untranslated can read as respect for the music's integrity or as a workflow gap depending on whether the surrounding dialogue localization signals care or neglect (Bennett, 1999) ^[9] (Lin & Zhao, 2022) ^[50], which is why Table 2 flags the mixed-mode outcome as a coherence risk rather than assuming untranslated music is automatically a positive positioning signal.

5. Measuring positioning-driven engagement

Before an instrument can be built, the four constructs need to be distinguished not only from comprehension but from one another, since a study that conflates them will not be able to say which one a given positioning intervention actually moved. Perceived authenticity is a judgment about the text itself and can in principle be reported by any viewer, including one with no personal connection to Nigerian culture. Cultural identification requires the viewer to locate themselves in relation to the text and is therefore expected to vary systematically with the viewer's own background in a way perceived authenticity need not. Diasporic engagement is behavioral as much as attitudinal, sustained and repeated viewing, sharing, and discussion, and can in principle be high even when a viewer's authenticity or identification ratings are middling, if other factors such as parasocial attachment to a performer are doing enough work to sustain viewing. Community affiliation is the most social of the four, describing embeddedness in a network rather than a property of any single viewing experience. Table 3 states these distinctions in operational terms; the point to make explicitly here is that a single omnibus engagement score, the kind most platform analytics dashboards currently report, collapses all four and would not let a researcher or a platform tell which construct a specific positioning change actually affected.

Positioning cannot be studied with the instruments the accuracy paradigm developed, since those instruments were built to score comprehension and lexical fidelity, not identification or perceived respect. Table 3 proposes four engagement constructs the framework in sections 3 and 4 implies, each distinguished from a comprehension measure and each requiring an instrument that has not been standardized for Nigerian streaming content specifically.

Table 3: Engagement constructs implied by the positioning framework

Construct	Distinguished from comprehension by	Plausible measurement approach
Perceived authenticity	A viewer can fully understand a scene and still judge it as culturally flattened or inaccurate in feel.	Structured rating scale piloted separately for home and diaspora respondents, paired with open-ended probes.
Cultural identification	Measures whether the viewer feels the text speaks to or about their own cultural experience, independent of plot comprehension.	Adapted identification scales from media psychology, validated against Nigerian and diaspora samples before use.
Diasporic engagement	Captures sustained, repeated, and socially shared viewing tied to identity affirmation rather than one-time consumption.	Viewing-history and social-sharing behavioral measures combined with self-report identity-relevance items.
Community affiliation	Captures whether a viewer's engagement is embedded in fan or diaspora community discussion rather than solitary viewing.	Network and community-membership measures linked to platform or social media activity, with consent and privacy safeguards.

None of these four constructs has a validated instrument specific to Nigerian streaming audiences in the literature reviewed in section 2, which is itself evidence for this

paper's central claim: audience engagement research on Nigerian streaming media has inherited instruments built for a comprehension question and has not yet built instruments for the positioning question this paper argues actually drives engagement.

A scope note on automation: growing use of machine-translation post-editing in the localization pipeline, now standardized internationally through the ISO 18587 post-editing requirements (International Organization for Standardization [ISO], 2017) ^[35], plausibly changes how consistently positioning choices are applied across a platform's catalogue, since a shared machine-translation baseline could standardize domesticating or foreignizing defaults across many titles at once. This paper treats that possibility as a variable for the companion paper on AI-assisted localization in this cluster to examine directly, rather than folding it into the positioning framework developed here.

Measuring cultural identification and community affiliation raises ethical requirements beyond those a comprehension study would face, since both constructs ask respondents to disclose something about their own identity and community ties rather than only their comprehension of a text. A defensible instrument should let respondents decline identity-relevance items without penalty, should avoid inferring diaspora status or ethnic identity from platform or social media data without explicit consent, and should store community-affiliation data, where it is linked to identifiable social media activity, with the same care a study of a sensitive population would require. These requirements are not exotic to audience research generally, but a positioning study foregrounds them more directly than a comprehension study does, because the constructs being measured are closer to identity than to task performance.

Piloting the four constructs in Table 3 should proceed category by category rather than across the full Nollywood catalogue at once. A defensible first fielding would select one content category, faith-based film is a reasonable starting point given the size of the comprehension-authenticity gap Proposition 3 predicts for it, and pilot all four constructs on a single matched set of titles before extending to additional categories. This staged approach lets instrument problems surface on a smaller, more tractable item set, and it avoids the mistake of building one instrument tuned to contemporary urban drama's positioning dynamics and then applying it unmodified to a category, faith-based film or historical epic, whose positioning-relevant content differs enough that the same items may not travel.

6. Testable propositions

The five propositions below were selected, out of a larger set the framework in sections 3 and 4 could support, because each isolates one layer or one content-category contrast rather than restating the paper's general claim in a new form. A proposition that simply predicted positioning correlates with engagement would not be falsifiable in any useful sense, since almost any positioning-adjacent variable could be made to fit it after the fact; each proposition below instead specifies which layer, which content-category comparison, or which competing explanation it is staked against, including the parasocial-attachment confound discussed in section 2.6, which a positioning study should measure and control for rather than ignore.

Proposition 1. Perceived authenticity ratings will predict sustained viewing and repeat engagement more strongly than comprehension ratings do, once both are measured on the same sample. The proposition fails if comprehension is the stronger or equal predictor.

Proposition 2. Titles with fuller paratextual localization, richer synopsis and metadata translation, will show higher initial watch-through rates than titles with minimal paratextual localization, independent of the textual localization mode used. The proposition fails if paratextual investment shows no relationship to watch-through once genre and platform placement are controlled.

Proposition 3. Faith-based and historical-epic content will show a larger gap between comprehension and perceived-authenticity ratings than contemporary urban drama, because their source material carries denser religious, political, and historical reference that generic localization is more likely to flatten. The proposition fails if the comprehension-authenticity gap is equal across content categories.

Proposition 4. Diaspora viewers with access to community-generated positioning context, fan discussion, informal subtitling, will report higher cultural-identification scores than diaspora viewers without such access, for the same officially released title. The proposition fails if community access shows no relationship to identification once general platform engagement is controlled.

Proposition 5. A title's positioning treatment, summed across the textual and paratextual layers, will predict community affiliation and diasporic engagement better than its platform layer, catalog placement and recommendation exposure, alone. The proposition fails if platform-layer variables are the stronger predictor once positioning-layer variables are included.

The five propositions are also written to remain informative individually rather than only as a package. Confirming Proposition 1 while disconfirming Proposition 3, for instance, would tell a research team that the authenticity-comprehension distinction holds generally but that the specific content-category mechanism this paper proposes for it, denser religious and historical reference in faith-based and historical-epic material, does not explain the gap as expected, pointing toward an alternative mechanism worth investigating rather than toward abandoning the authenticity construct itself. This piecemeal structure is deliberate: a framework built from five independently testable claims survives a partial disconfirmation in a way a single global hypothesis about positioning and engagement would not, and that survivability is part of what makes the framework useful to a research program expecting to run more than one study against it.

7. Discussion

If this paper's central claim holds, a considerable amount of existing audiovisual translation reception research on Nigerian and comparable postcolonial screen media has been asking a comprehension question and reporting a positioning answer without naming the shift. That is not a criticism of the studies reviewed in section 2, most of which were not designed to distinguish the two constructs, but it is a reason to treat published accuracy-framed findings about audience preference with some caution until they have been reanalyzed, or replicated, with the two constructs measured separately.

A second implication concerns responsibility. The four-layer framework in section 3 deliberately separates textual positioning, which a translator or dubbing director controls, from paratextual and platform positioning, which a platform's marketing and catalog teams control. Criticism of a title's localization that lands entirely on the translator when the actual positioning failure sits in the paratextual or platform layer misdiagnoses the problem and protects the party actually responsible. Producers and platforms negotiating localization contracts for Nigerian content would benefit from a shared vocabulary that assigns positioning responsibility to the layer where a given decision was actually made.

A third implication concerns method. Positioning research needs instruments the field has not yet built, as Table 3 makes explicit, and building them requires treating perceived authenticity, cultural identification, diasporic engagement, and community affiliation as first-class outcome variables rather than secondary commentary attached to a comprehension study. This is a nontrivial methodological undertaking, and the paper does not claim it has completed it; it claims only that the accuracy paradigm cannot complete it on its own terms.

The paper's limitations follow from its critical-theoretical status. No audience data were collected, and the content-category mapping in section 4 and the engagement-risk claims that follow it are drawn from the reception literature reviewed in section 2 and from the theoretical framework in section 3, not from new fieldwork. The five propositions in section 6 are stated to be falsifiable by future work, not confirmed by this paper.

A second limitation concerns generalizability beyond the Nigerian case. The four-layer framework is built from Nigerian streaming content and the largely non-African reception literature reviewed in section 2, and while the underlying logic, that textual choices can be undercut by paratextual and platform choices made by different actors, plausibly generalizes to other postcolonial or linguistically minoritized screen media traveling through global platforms, this paper makes no claim about which content categories or positioning dynamics would transfer unchanged to, for instance, Francophone African, South Asian, or Latin American streaming content. That comparative extension is a task for future work, not a claim made here on the strength of the Nigerian case alone.

A further implication concerns the platforms themselves rather than only researchers and translators. If paratextual and platform-layer positioning shape engagement independently of textual-layer translation quality, as Proposition 2 and Proposition 5 propose, then a platform's own internal division of labor, separate teams for localization, marketing copy, and catalog placement, may be structurally unable to produce coherent positioning even when each team performs its own function well. The worked example in section 3 illustrates exactly this failure mode: a well-positioned textual layer undercut by a poorly positioned paratextual layer produced by a different team with no visibility into the first team's choices. A platform that wanted to act on this paper's argument would need a positioning review step that crosses those team boundaries, not merely a better translation vendor.

The argument also has a bearing on how success is reported back to producers. A title that underperforms on aggregate viewership is often read, by platforms and by producers

themselves, as evidence that the content did not travel, a judgment that folds positioning failure and content failure into a single undifferentiated outcome. If positioning and content quality are actually separable, as this paper argues, then aggregate viewership data without layer-specific positioning measurement risks misattributing a paratextual or platform-layer failure to the underlying work itself, with consequences for which stories and which production teams get funded again. This is a testable empirical claim, not only a rhetorical one: Proposition 2's prediction that paratextual investment predicts initial watch-through independent of textual localization mode is precisely the kind of finding that would let a platform separate the two explanations in its own data.

A last discussion point concerns how the framework should be read by a platform team weighing it against the simpler, already-familiar accuracy paradigm. The four-layer framework is not proposed as a replacement for accuracy auditing, which remains necessary, but as an addition that catches engagement failures accuracy auditing structurally cannot see. A platform adopting the framework incrementally, starting with the paratextual layer, which is the cheapest to audit and act on, before extending to the platform and community layers, would still gain diagnostic value at each stage rather than needing to implement all four layers at once to see a benefit.

8. Conclusion

This paper has argued that audiovisual translation research on Nigerian streaming media needs a construct beyond translation accuracy to explain the audience engagement patterns the reception literature already, if unintentionally, documents. Cultural positioning, the textual, paratextual, platform, and community signals through which a localized text and its surroundings stage a relationship to Nigerian cultural material, is proposed as that construct. The four-layer framework, the content-category mapping, and the five propositions developed here are offered as the beginning of a research program that measures positioning and engagement directly rather than inferring them from comprehension and accuracy scores. The paper's practical bet is that Nigerian streaming content can be translated correctly and still disengage the audience it most wants to reach, and that audiovisual translation scholarship on this material has not yet built the tools to see why.

None of the four layers in Table 1 is, on its own, a novel observation: translation scholars have long known that paratext and platform placement shape a text's reception, and marketing researchers have long studied how packaging shapes engagement independent of product quality. What this paper adds is the specific claim that these layers interact in a describable way around a single construct, cultural positioning, that the audiovisual translation field's accuracy paradigm does not name, and that naming it changes which actor is responsible when a Nigerian title's international reception disappoints. A translator held responsible for a paratextual or platform failure will keep producing textually careful work that keeps being undercut two layers up, and no amount of accuracy auditing will fix that misattribution. Correcting it requires the field, and the platforms distributing this content, to measure positioning where it is actually produced.

This argument is deliberately bounded to leave room for the companion lines of work in this cluster. The comparative

Nigerian-Francophone African localization-mode question is treated as its own study; the growing role of AI-assisted subtitling and dubbing tools, which could plausibly standardize positioning choices across a platform's catalog in ways this paper has not examined, is treated separately; and a general transnational audience-engagement methodology, applicable beyond the Nigerian case this paper stays within, is developed as its own contribution. Positioning, this paper's specific construct, is offered as one piece of a larger research program rather than a substitute for any of the three.

The immediate next step, on this paper's own argument, is not a large audience survey but the smaller, more tractable pilot described in section 5: one content category, one matched set of titles, all four engagement constructs measured on the same respondents alongside a standard comprehension check, so that the correlations and divergences between comprehension and positioning outcomes can be observed directly rather than assumed from theory. Until that pilot exists, the four-layer framework, the content-category mapping, and the five propositions in this paper remain what they are presented as: a specific, falsifiable account of why translated correctly is not the same claim as positioned well, offered to a field that has had the theoretical resources to make this distinction for decades without building the instruments to test it.

9. Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

No human participant or audience data were collected for this critical-theoretical framework paper. Any future empirical study built on the positioning framework or the propositions in section 6 must obtain the approvals required for its participants, recorded interviews, and survey or platform data.

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

Availability of data and materials

No new dataset was generated or analyzed for this paper. The positioning framework, content-category mapping, and engagement-construct table are reported in full within the manuscript.

Competing interests

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Authors' contributions

Julius Aderogba Odewabi led conceptualization of the cultural-positioning framework and manuscript drafting. Raissa Enyonam Amele Amessouwoe led the critical review of translation-accuracy and reception literature and contributed to the content-category analysis. Kpoka Messanh Isaac contributed the administrative and institutional terminology analysis for the docudrama category and reviewed the manuscript for accuracy. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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