

**Mass Media, Indigenous Language Broadcasting and
National Development:
A Study of Selected Broadcasting Stations in Calabar
Metropolis**

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Abstract

Nigeria is an example of a multilingual, pluralistic and multi-ethnic nation with over 500 indigenous languages (Emeka-Nwobia 2015; Awolabi & Dada, 2012). Like the mass media, language is a veritable tool for engendering national development through the promotion of indigenous culture, national identity, national pride and national unity. However, the preference for the use of English language as an official medium of expression and communication in the mass media and in different spheres of the society, over hundreds of other indigenous Nigerian languages, constitutes a threat to the development of indigenous languages. There is a dire need to reposition indigenous languages for national development; and the media cannot be left out. How then can the mass media stimulate national development through the use of indigenous languages? This question forms the basis of enquiry in this article. An analysis of programme schedules of the selected broadcasting outfits, qualitative interview with broadcast media experts and historical data

review constituted the main sources of data for the article. Findings revealed that media organisations in Nigeria have not taken advantage of harnessing indigenous languages as tools for national development.

Key Words: Mass Media, Indigenous Languages, Indigenous language broadcasting, Language Development and National Development.

Introduction

Nigeria is a multilingual nation having over 500 languages and dialects (Emeka-Nwobia 2015) and therefore making it a linguistically heterogeneous entity. However, only a handful of these languages have attained national, regional or state status while a greater percentage of them are local languages and dialects spoken only among a few individuals across the different minority groups. Even the so-called three national indigenous languages christened WAZOBIA (Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo) are yet to truly assume this status in practical terms. At present, they appear only to have attained regional status with Hausa holding sway in the north, Ibo in the south-east and Yoruba dominating the South-western linguistic anthology. English language still dominates the sphere of communication at all levels; and can be said to be Nigeria's truly national language, though it is not indigenous to her.

Being a multilingual entity, one of the challenges of language policy formulation in Nigeria had bothered greatly on the choice of language or languages to use at the national, regional and state levels as 'the official language of the people'. Even the speakers of the so-called national or regional languages only belong to a section of people or ethnic group and therefore making such languages to have little or no national or regional significance. This explains why English Language has taken

primacy over the myriad indigenous languages in the country as people find it very comfortable to communicate freely in it than in their native mother tongue. In both formal and informal settings, the use of English language as a medium of communication has become more preferred to the hundreds of indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria. Even after fifty six (56) years following Nigeria's independence from the colonial masters, English Language still remains the language of education, governance, commerce, judiciary and the language used in conducting legislative matters. Ogunmodimu (2015, p. 3) puts it this way:

Today, English has grown to become the official national language of Nigeria and continues to play important roles in the nation as the language of education, media, religion (especially the Pentecostal Christian faith), and the language of politics, governance and law. It is the language of the elites and also the first language for some Nigerians.

Salawu (2015, p. 6) partly attributes the dominance of foreign languages over indigenous languages in most developing countries to the people's colonial antecedence. He says: "Regrettably, in most developing nations, communication in indigenous languages has been adversely affected due to the fact of their colonization."

In most Nigerian universities where languages are taught in some departments, there is hardly such a thing as indigenous language teaching. At most, courses on indigenous languages are offered as electives; in which case, the course lecturer ends up having no student to teach. Rather, in departments like Languages and Linguistics, Language Studies or Modern Languages; the learning and speaking of at least one foreign language in addition to English language is made compulsory. For instance, in the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies in the University of Calabar, Introduction to Efik, Ejagam and Bekwara, which are the three major recognized languages in Cross River

State, are made optional; while in Modern Languages, the learning of French is made compulsory. Even final year projects must be written and defended in French.

The mass media are not exonerated from this linguistic tussle. The Nigerian mass media are predominated by foreign and colonial languages. Salawu (2015, p. 6) affirms that: “The media of mass communication are also caught in this web as they disseminate information mostly in the foreign languages. By and large, the print media seem more culpable as the electronic media do better in the use of native languages.” The media are veritable instruments for promoting national development as they highlight the rich cultural heritage of the people; transmit development information as well as promoting the linguistic endowment of the people. Unfortunately, the Nigerian mass media have not performed optimally in the area of promoting indigenous languages in their programming. The aim of this paper therefore is to examine how the use of indigenous language in the mass media can enhance language development in Nigeria and by extension, aid national development. Specifically, the article suggests some practical approaches to promote the development of indigenous languages in the mass media.

Statement of the Problem

Language has been regarded as potent tool for engendering national development. Apart from serving as a medium of communication and means of cultural identity among a group of people, language also serves development purposes. It is a conduit for disseminating development-related information and policies to the people. Nonetheless, the language in which a development message is disseminated is a very important aspect of the message treatment (Salawu, 2015, p. 4). Salawu argues that the indigenous language of any community is the best suited for the purpose of conveying any message, whatsoever, to the said

community.

However, the preference for English Language as the official medium of expression and communication in Nigeria, over hundreds of existing indigenous Nigerian languages, does not speak well of our national identity and pride as Nigerians. English language still dominates the sphere of communication at all levels and can be said to be Nigeria's truly national language or Lingua Franca. The National Language Policy on Education (NLPE) and the Nigerian Constitution also recognize the use of English language as the nation's Lingua Franca. Even the mass media cannot be absolved of this linguistic enslavement. The Nigerian mass media are predominated by foreign and colonial languages, especially the use of English Language. As veritable instruments for promoting national development, the media transmit development information as well as highlight and promote the rich cultural heritage and linguistic endowment of the people. Therefore, indigenous language broadcasting is very important for the purpose of information dissemination, social mobilisation and cultural promotion and survival.

It is also worrisome to note that a greater percentage of Nigerian languages do not have autography or written forms. This makes it difficult to learn or use them in formal setting. Such languages hardly have the potential to compete with other well developed languages to become languages of broadcasting in the mass media. This paper therefore argues that development efforts and/or mass media messages targeted at the people can only best be communicated to them in their mother tongue or indigenous languages.

Research Methodology

This study adopted different research approaches to enable the researchers thoroughly treat the subject matter. The main sources of data for the study included a review of existing secondary data on language use in the mass media, analysis of programme

schedules of the four selected broadcasting outfits and qualitative interview with key media practitioners in the chosen media organisations. Four broadcast stations in Calabar metropolis were selected for this study – NTA Channel 9, Calabar; Cross River Broadcasting Corporation (Television station); Paradise FM, 105.5 FM Calabar; and Canaan City FM 99.5 (Radio station), Calabar.

Eight (8) media practitioners were selected to constitute respondents to the interview questions. Two practitioners were selected from each of the broadcast stations. The respondents were drawn from the ranks of the General Manager, Directors of Programme and Indigenous Language Broadcasters. They were selected based on their perceived knowledge of the subject matter and wealth of experience. Data collected were analysed qualitatively using the descriptive analytical technique. Particularly for the programme schedule of the four broadcasting outfits, the qualitative content analysis method was used for the data analysis. For the purpose of clarity, only two content categories were selected. These included programmes aired in English language and those in the indigenous language of the people. The units of analysis considered were news programmes, entertainment, and development-oriented programmes across different sectors (education, agriculture, health, etc).

Theoretical Framework

Herbert Schiller's Cultural Imperialism theory formed the theoretical basis for this study. The theory explains how western media dominate media sphere around the world and the consequences of such dominance on national identity, culture, language and general lifestyle of the people. The Cultural Imperialism Theory or Media Imperialism Theory, as used in a narrow sense, was popularized by Herbert Schiller in 1973. According to Anaeto, Onabanjo and Osofiso (2008, p. 151), the

basic assumption of the theory is that: “Western nations dominate the media sphere around the world, which in turn has a powerful effect on the third world culture by imposing on them Western values and thereby destroying their native cultures.” McQuail (2010, p. 554) sees cultural imperialism “as the tendency of global industry exporters to dominate the media consumption in other smaller and poorer countries and in so doing impose their own cultural and other values on audience somewhere.” McQuail comments further that both implicitly and explicitly; cultural imperialism leads to dependency, loss of autonomy and decline in national and local cultures. Global media flows give rise to a state of cultural hegemony or synchronization, leading to a dominant form of culture that has no specific connection with real experience for most people (McQuail, 2010, p. 256).

In Nigeria for instance, western cultural lifestyles tend to dominate the people's way of life. Traces of westernization are evident in our daily lives beginning from the way we dress, the food we eat, as well as our music and language preferences. A typical Nigerian has the mentality that the western culture, including Western lifestyle and languages are superior to his or her indigenous tradition, culture and languages. This may partly be responsible for the dominance of English Language over hundreds of indigenous languages in Nigeria. The western culture came to dominate the culture of other nations of the world, courtesy of media portrayal. Western countries, given their technological and economic advantages, dominate the media sphere around the world. This makes it very easy for them to spread their culture globally.

The Nigerian mass media have consciously or unconsciously legitimized this trend by intensifying the use of foreign languages, especially English Language, and transmitting foreign cultures in their airwaves. Indigenous language broadcasting is relegated to the background. This development has grave consequences on national development. According to

Emeka-Nwobia (2015, p. 3), “a nation is best developed by the way the language that best portrays its ideology is used; that language serves as a medium of expression of the entity it represents.” This paper therefore argues that except something urgently is done to address the linguistic enslavement of indigenous languages to English Language in particular; Nigeria's quest for development will remain a mirage.

Language as a Tool for National Development

Languages are considered as means of expression and communication among a group of people. Thoughts, feelings, ideas, attitudes, culture, norms and beliefs are expressed and transmitted through language. Language functions as vehicles of interaction and an instrument of communication in the society. It is one of the major means used in identifying a people. According to Emeka-Nwobia (2015, p. 1) “Language is a conduit for transmission of people's culture, norms, ideas and beliefs. The repository of a people's identity and way of life is encapsulated in their language as well as transferred to other people and newer generations, via the means of language.”

Commenting specifically on the importance of indigenous language to a people, Olaoye, (2013, p. 2) avers that: “The most effective engine of a people's culture is their mother tongue. Indigenous languages are treasures of our culture and self-identity.” There is no gainsaying the fact that language can unite or divide a people. As a means of identity, people who speak the same tongue do naturally tend to coexist and interact intimately with one another; and language differences can also create unnecessary dissimilarity among people. By extension therefore, language can be used as a veritable instrument for stimulating national unity. National unity depends largely on mutual understanding of each others' language and culture, including interests (Olaoye, 2013, p. 3).

Thus, language is a potent instrument in engendering national development as all development efforts and policies are initiated, designed, disseminated and executed through language. According to Olaoye (2013, p. 6), “it is hardly possible to talk of national development without including the language with which the people formulate their thoughts, ideas and needs.” Put succinctly, the above assertion can be understood in two ways: first, the use of indigenous language in the formulation of development initiatives can aid the acceptability and adoption of such initiatives as the people are bound to understand and appreciate it better. Second, the extent of development of the language of a people is a clear indication of how developed they are. In line with this notion, Emeka-Nwobia (2015, p. 3) states that “a nation is best developed by the way the language that best portrays its ideology is used; that language serves as a medium of expression of the entity it represents.”

Therefore, development efforts in Nigeria may have been stalled or impeded in various ways largely due to the fact that language policy planners are yet to give indigenous languages the required pride of place in national discourse. Rather, they prime the use of English language over the hundreds of indigenous languages Nigeria prides herself with. Citing Agbedo (2000), Emeka-Nwobia (2015, p. 3) further avers that:

The essential strands of the argument point somewhat gloomily to the fact that Nigeria's timid language policy and the blind glorification of the English language by the ruling class have conspired to undermine the local languages and rob them of their utilitarian values in the important national development drive; the tenacious grip on the colonial master's

language has incarcerated the vast majority of the Nigerian population from participating in the overall national development in the country.

It has been observed that both the National Language Policy on Education and the Nigerian constitution recognize the use of English language as the nation's lingua franca. For instance, in the Language Policy on Education, English language is officially recognized as the major medium of instruction both at the intermediate and higher educational levels. Citing paragraph 15(4) of the *1981 National Policy on Education, as amended in 2001*, Awolabi and Dada (2012, p. 3) confirm this assertion. It states: “Government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the Mother Tongue or the language of the immediate community and at a later stage, English”. The policy encourages a trilingual educational setting in which the use of a child's mother tongue, English and at least one of the three national languages (Igbo, Hausa or Yoruba) are used as medium of instruction in schools.

It is obvious that government's stance on the use of mother tongue as the first medium of instruction in the primary school is far from being tenable in Nigeria for now due to many factors. These, among others, include: first, most indigenous languages do not have autography and as such, they cannot be suitable for instruction in the educational setting. Second, most Nigerian parents, guardians and school management dispassionately abhor the use of a child's mother tongue as medium of instruction in schools. Such parents prefer to enrol their wards in schools where they will be taught in impeccable English accent. Also in such schools, the school authorities, as a rule, mete out punishment of different degrees to pupils who are caught communicating using their mother tongues within the school premises. All these factors, among others, have undermined the development of indigenous

languages at all educational levels in Nigeria.

More so, the Nigerian Constitution prioritizes the use of English as the official language of deliberation in the National and State Houses of Assemblies. This is enshrined in sections 55 and 97 of the 1999 Constitution. Section 55 states that: “The business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English and in Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made therefore” while Section 97 states: “The business of a House of Assembly shall be conducted in English, but the House may, in addition to English, conduct the business of the House in one or more other languages spoken in the state as the house may by resolution approve.”

Again in practice, the use of English language has always dominated deliberations in both the State and the National Assemblies. Therefore, such constitutional provisions can be said to exist more in principle than in practice.

Unfortunately, the scenario painted above sadly tells the current state of indigenous language use and its level of development in Nigeria. How then can Nigeria develop as a nation when we have deliberately chosen to understand ourselves in a foreign tongue rather than utilizing our native God-given tongues? According to Omotoyinbo (2015, p. 5) “How prestigious a language is, can be determined by its perceived socio-economic value, its status raising potential, perceived instrumentality, esteemed functions or roles in the nation, its numerical strength, political and economic power, the use of that language in official domains, and its educational value.”

As a result of the loss of our linguistic identity, we also seem to have lost our communal identity. While communicating in strange tongues, we sound more mechanical than being natural. Most times, it becomes very difficult to communicate intimately with one another. Even in unofficial matters and settings, we have made ourselves to appear very official to one another linguistically

speaking and as such, there is the gradual erosion of the culture of collectivism or communal living with which Nigerians and Africans as a whole once prided themselves with. Put succinctly, the love for foreign linguistic cultures has permeated every facet of our lives, and by this means, drowning our linguistic and cultural identities and sacrificing them on the altar of the 'almighty' English language. This is a high level of injustice perpetrated against oneself. We call this a 'Gruesome Linguistic Homicide.'

Salawu (2015, p. 4) makes this very strong assertion:

It does not matter the level of corrosion or corruption a native language has suffered as a result of the influence of a foreign language, the (native) language still remains the language that speaks in the idiom of the people. Without using the language of the people, development will only be communicated *at* the people; not *to* the people, and not *with* the people.

This assertion points specifically to communicating developmental initiatives using the native language of the people. It is very difficult for people to understand or adopt an initiative which objectives they find difficult to comprehend. They will rather support the ones they can easily relate with and communicating development initiatives in indigenous language can act as a plus to the overall success of the programme.

Promoting Indigenous Language Development through the Mass Media

The goal of this paper was to examine how the mass media, especially the broadcast media can be used to promote National Development through indigenous language broadcasting and programming. There are major connections between language, media and national development. The mass media for instance generate information on important events in the society to the

target social groups or actors in order to allow them participate in the day-to-day decisions that shape their lives. Other important roles of the media include mobilization of the people to participate in social and political activities as well as holding the government accountable to the people, thereby promoting transparency in governance. In the contemporary society of today, it is difficult to imagine a truly national development process without communication playing an essential part.

However, the mass media alone cannot fully drive national development effort. According to Akinfeleye (2008, p. 59), “the mass media do not solely contribute to national development, but other factors and forces operating simultaneously within the nation help to bring about the growth and development.” From the perspective of this article, indigenous language broadcasting has been identified as a key factor in promoting the development of the people's language and culture. After all, the targets of national development are the people or human development.

As we noted earlier in this paper, language serves as vehicle of interaction and communication among a group of people. It also functions as a conduit for the transmission of people's culture, norms, ideas and beliefs. Communication expresses itself through language; and level of effectiveness of language use will determine the level of effectiveness of the communication activity. It has been argued by different scholars that the use of indigenous language in mass media message treatment can enhance the effectiveness of such messages. According to Salawu (2015, p. 4): “the media that use indigenous languages are important for the purpose of information, mobilisation and continuity; that is, survival of the language and culture.” Citing Nwuneli (1985), Salawu (2015, p. 4) further explains that “The language in which a development message is disseminated is a very important aspect of the message treatment. It is posited that the indigenous language of any community is the

best suited for the purpose of conveying any message, whatsoever, to the said community”.

In other words, people will more likely pay attention to mass media messages and programmes conveyed to the people using their mother tongue than when the same information is communicated in English or other foreign languages. For example, information or messages bordering on development or behaviour change issues would most probably benefit from such gesture. Before any development programmes can reach its target, it must first be communicated. This is called awareness creation or publicity. Peradventure they express doubts or develop the usual inertia that comes with accepting government policies and programme at the initial stage, the media can be used to clarify issues and win their supports for the new initiative.

It has been observed that in Nigeria, people are usually sceptical of government's policies and development initiatives, judging from their past experiences of unfulfilled government promises. They usually view such media campaigns as one of government's several propaganda strategies to gain cheap popularity or score more undeserving political marks. It is more likely that such misgivings would be reduced if the people get to hear the message in their native mother tongue. Citing Nwadike (2004), Olaoye (2013, p. 2) describes the use of indigenous languages “as the key to the heart of the people. If we lose the key, we lose the people. If we treasure the key and keep it safe, it will unlock the door to wealth or affluence.”

As message and information carriers, the mass media are important institutions and indispensable tools in the promotion of indigenous language development. Promoting indigenous language use through the mass media can be a way of preserving and encouraging the development of Nigeria's indigenous languages and dialects. However, it is quite disheartening, and sadly too, that the use of indigenous language in the Nigerian mass

media has been relegated to the background with English language taking the centre stage.

Given the case of the broadcast media for instance, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) broadcast mainly in English language. Apart from some selected sub-stations which run some of their programmes in the native language of the area they operate, the national stations broadcast mostly in English. According to the information gleaned from its website, the NTA has television stations across all the state capitals of the country; nine of which are tagged network centres (Ibadan, Jos, Enugu, Kaduna, Lagos, Benin, Makurdi, Maiduguri and Sokoto). Also, FRCN or Radio Nigeria operates 37 stations nationwide with Enugu, Ibadan, Kaduna, Lagos and Abuja serving as national stations. Currently, the corporation operates six zonal stations in Markurdi, Kaduna, Enugu, Yenogoa, Maiduguri and Ibadan. FRCN claims to broadcast in fifteen (15) languages, including English, to its diverse audience across the country. Its slogan - *Uplifting the People and Uniting the Nation* – should challenge the use of indigenous languages of the areas of operation.

However, it is ironical to think of 'uniting the nation' without taking into consideration the diverse linguistic diversity that characterizes the nation's history. Language is one major unifying factor of any people. It is a medium of expression, cultural transmission, means of identity and social mobilization, but as critical as the mass media are to the development of the nation, they have seriously downplayed the use of indigenous languages in their programming. It is therefore a great oversight to promote the use of foreign language (English) to the detriment of hundreds of Nigeria's languages. The mass media can promote the use of indigenous languages through their programming. Such programmes as news translation, entertainment, drama and documentary, news commentaries, and even commercials can be

used to promote the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of the Nigerian people. One way to develop as a nation is to promote our linguistic and cultural heritage and showcase them to the whole world. The mass media remain very indispensable in enforcing this agenda.

Assessing the Programme Schedule of Selected Broadcast Stations in Calabar Metropolis

In this section, we have reviewed the programme schedules of the four broadcasting outfits selected for the study. These included NTA Channel 9, Calabar; Cross River Broadcasting Corporation (CRBC Television); Paradise 105.5 FM, Calabar; and Canaan City 99.5 FM (Radio Nigeria), Calabar. Particular attention was given to programmes aired in indigenous languages or dialects and those that reflected the rich cultural heritage of the people.

By means of interview and review of the weekly programme schedules of the four selected stations, the researchers were able to obtain useful information about the operations of the stations. For instance, NTA Channel 9, Calabar runs a nineteen-hour shift from 5:00am to 12 midnight. About half of the programmes in the schedule were network programmes, transmitted live from the national headquarters in Abuja. In the schedule made available to the researcher (4th Quarter of 2016), all the programmes, both network and local programmes, were aired in English language, except for the NTA Channel 9 news translation in Efik, Ejagam and Bekwara. This usually comes up at 7:00pm. Efik, Ejagam and Bekwara are regarded as the three major languages in Cross River State, representing the three senatorial districts of the state. In the schedule under review, apart from the news translation, there was no other programme aired using any of the numerous local languages or dialects of the people.

Cross River State is known to be one of the states with the

highest number of languages in Nigeria, boasting of over fifty (50) languages across the 18 local government areas of the state (Ugot and Ogar, 2014, p. 3). Also, only a few programmes of the NTA (Channel 9) schedule reflect the cultural heritage of the people because most of them are national programmes. An example was *Heritage*, a 30-minute programme aired on Thursday beginning from 1:30pm. When asked about the reasons for the apparent neglect of indigenous language broadcasting in the station even though it is a state sub-station, the station management blamed the situation on lack of sponsorship. According to them, there was no budgetary provision for the production of such special programmes, so they usually depended on sponsors for financing.

At Canaan City 99.5 FM Calabar, the situation was a little different. Apart from the news translation in Efik and Yala, there were other programmes that were broadcast exclusively in Efik. Such programmes include: *Ini Efem ye mbubuni* (In the light mood), *Nneme ye nyin* (Let's discuss) and *Mme Ikwo nkong nkong uwem* (musical show). *Ini Efem ye mbubuni* is a magazine show in Efik that hits the air at 11:03am on Thursdays. It involves discussion section, drama presentation, ancient cuisine (how to prepare local delicacies), Efik musical display and phone in. *Nneme ye nyin* is purely a discussion programme; while *Mme Ikwo nkong nkong uwem* is a musical programme that plays Efik highlife music. There are also request programmes on Sunday and daily Pidgin English programmes.

Furthermore, the content programme schedule of Paradise FM, Calabar appeared to be similar to that of the other two stations discussed above in terms of the use of indigenous languages. English language also predominated with just a few programmes aired in native languages dotting the schedule. For instance, news translation is done in three indigenous languages of Efik, Ejagam and Bekwara. This comes up at 6:03pm from Monday to Friday. Other programmes aired in native dialects

include: *Ido ye Ndutim*, *Ebu Ejagham Ejre* and *Ebuana Ikot Abasi*. Also, news broadcast in *Pidgin English* from Monday to Friday at 2:00 pm. *Ido ye Ndutim* is a discussion programme in Efik language which touches on issues bordering on marriage, family life, promotion of cultural heritage, child upbringing, and the like. *Ebu Ejagham Ejre* is an Ejagam version of *Ido ye Ndutim*. Also, *Ebuana Ikot Abasi* is a Christian religious programme in Efik language.

At CRBC Television, all the programmes are run in English language except for news translations in Efik, Ejagam and Bekwara. Also in the programme schedule, there were a bit of cultural programmes built into a magazine entitled: *Good Morning Cross River*. The programme which runs from Monday to Saturday highlights critical issues in the area of Education, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Health and Entertainment. Particularly, the Friday edition centres on cultural and traditional events. There was no programme directly aimed at promoting the linguistic or cultural development of the people.

Discussion

Findings from the analysis of interview and the review of the programme schedule of the four broadcast stations selected for the study indicated that the Nigerian mass media are yet to take the issue of indigenous language broadcasting seriously. In line with the assertions of Salawu (2015) and Ogunmodimu (2015), English Language still dominates broadcasting in the mass media. A glance at the weekly schedule of the broadcasting outfits revealed that more than 90 percent of the programmes are aired in English language. Also, it was discovered that only a few indigenous languages, especially the three major languages in Cross River State are used intermittently for broadcast across the four stations. These include: Efik, Ejagam and Bekwara; although a fourth dialect, Yala, is also being used at Canaan City FM for news

translation. Moreover, forty (40) other languages are left out. When questioned as to why the stations deliberately chose to downplay the use of indigenous languages and the inclusion of some other programmes aimed at promoting the rich cultural heritage of the people in their programme schedules, the programme managers could only make excuses to cover up the lapses. They hinged their excuses on lack of sponsors and competent producers and presenters. And placing emphasis on profit-making motives, the stations could not afford to trade their limited airtime for “unprofitable programmes”, they alleged.

While responding to the question on the issue of the dearth of indigenous language broadcasting in the Nigerian mass media, the General Manager of Canaan City FM, Calabar, Mr. Malachy Ukpong, affirmed that the challenge is not peculiar to Cross River State alone, but it is a national issue. According to him, the issue of indigenous language broadcasting is yet to be taken seriously in Nigeria. He confided, however, in the researchers that there are some FRCN stations in northern and south-western part of the country that broadcast programmes exclusively in local dialects. He also noted that at Radio Nigeria, there was a proposed policy document on the establishment of language stations across the length and breadth of the country, which is still awaiting implementation. Mr. Ukpong suggested strongly that one practical way to address the issue of indigenous language broadcasting in Nigeria is the setting up of community radio across the length and breadth of Nigeria. He therefore advocated for the establishment of community radio stations in selected communities in Nigeria in order to carry the people along in the daily happenings in the country. The programme content of such stations should be generated by the people in their native languages.

Even national programmes and policies pertaining to creating awareness on development issues as well as attitude and behaviour change, can be relayed in indigenous languages. This

will bring government closer to the people and it will enable the people participate actively in the development of their immediate communities. Such community broadcast stations will also give wider recognition to the indigenous peoples' native dialects.

Conclusion

The focus of this article was to examine the extent to which the Nigerian mass media utilize the indigenous languages in their programming as well as suggest ways of promoting the development of Nigeria's indigenous languages with the mass media leading in the vanguard of the indigenous language development mantra. In order to effectively assess the extent of indigenous language use in the Nigerian mass media, the authors reviewed the programme schedule of four broadcasting media outfits in Calabar, Cross River State for the third quarter of 2016. Also, key media executives in the selected stations were contacted and interviewed to ascertain the import of indigenous language broadcasting to indigenous language development and by extension to national development. Findings revealed that the Nigerian mass media have not adequately utilized the numerous Nigeria indigenous languages in their programming. The use of English language still dominates broadcasting as only an insignificant percentage of the programmes in the schedule of the selected stations were aired in the native dialect of the people. This is quite disheartening and highly appalling! The authors conclude that except media owners and experts in Nigeria take the issue of indigenous language broadcasting seriously, the Nigerian indigenous languages will continue to suffer in the domineering hands of English language promoters.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings therefore, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. To accord our indigenous languages the pride of place they deserve, the existing language policies in Nigeria, including constitutional provision on language use in conducting government business, which favour the use of English language, must be reviewed. It is high time Nigeria began to put together an official language policy that will adequately address the issue of our linguistic enslavement to English language. This language policy should clearly spell out at least three indigenous languages that will be recognized as national official languages. Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba can still retain their national status, but the learning and speaking of these languages should be encouraged. For instance, the new language policy on education should encourage the teaching and use of the three indigenous languages at all levels of education and at least one language each should be identified, developed and used as official language in each geographical zone of the federation, state and local government area. Such language policy should also be adopted for the nation's mass media system.
2. It is high time that the clamour for the setting up of indigenous language broadcasting stations and community radio/TV stations across the length and breadth of the country became a reality. In addition to the current broadcasting policy which favours the establishment of public and commercial broadcasting stations, a third sub-sector – community broadcasting – should be created. This is the suggestion of most of the broadcasters interviewed. They observed that the existing arrangement favours the government and the private sectors to the detriment of common Nigerians. While public broadcasting serves the need of the government, the

commercial broadcasting sectors serve the profit-making motives of the owners. The people are entirely left out. The proposed community radio/TV station will encourage community participation because its programme content would be generated by the people and broadcast in their native dialects.

3. Finally, language experts and professional bodies like Linguistics Association of Nigeria (LAN) and language departments of various tertiary institutions in Nigeria should take the business of indigenous language development seriously. One way to do this is to aggressively promote the development of orthographies for selected, if not all, Nigerian indigenous languages. This will make the learning and use of such languages possible at various levels, including the mass media and it will protect them from going into extinction.

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