

RADIO PROGRAMMES AND INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES' PROMOTION IN AKWA IBOM STATE

Udofe, Abasiemekeme G., Akpan, Church S. and Akarika, Daniel C.

*Department of Mass Communication
Akwa Ibom State University
abas.udofe@gmail.com*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.60787/aasd.vol2no2.57>

Abstract

This study investigates the extent to which radio programmes promotes Indigenous languages using selected radio stations operating in Akwa Ibom State. Perception theory and Development Media was adopted as a theoretical framework, while a survey of 384 respondents were drawn for the study using the Philip Mayer's sample size determinant-table from the population of 7,200,000 persons projected in 2023 by the United Nations-World Population Projection (UN-WPP, 2023). Findings revealed that audience depend on the media for information. It also reveals that Indigenous languages play a role in developing indigenous languages in the State by imparting practical words, expression and pronunciation on audience while also encouraging them to pass on the knowledge to their generations. The study recommended that; for the promotion of indigenous languages in Akwa Ibom State, all programmes being broadcast on radio stations in the State using English language should have their native language version of the programme. Also; more indigenous language personnel should be employed by radio stations in Akwa Ibom state to take over the broadcast of indigenous language programmes.

Keywords: Assessment, Audience, Communication, Indigenous Language, Radio.

Introduction

Communication is an essential aspect of human life and regarded as the basis for human interaction. Without communication humans would not be able to interact with one another. It enables the sharing of ideas, connection with family and friends among others. Evans (2021) described communication as the way of sharing and receiving information to various individuals through different of media. This message is sent to the receiver, who receives the message, and finally, interprets the message. It is commonly understood as the process of transmitting information between individuals using various methods as verbal, non-verbal or written means. Kendre (2021) added that to have a successful and effective communication, it is very important to know about the communication process which would always guide us towards realising effective communication. Cultural heritage is expressed through language in diverse ways, (Ekpo, Nkanta and Effiong, 2023). As stated in Willie, Daniel and Udousoro, (2024), "programmes on indigenous languages on media platforms cannot only help preserve them, but promote their use, foster national unity, peace and development".

Effective communication is one element of communication. It is one thing to convey a message and it is another thing to communicate the message effectively. That is why Devito (2023) explained that effective communication occurs when the receiver accurately understands the sender's message and can effectively respond to it. Akwa Ibom State is known for its linguistic diversity, with a multitude of indigenous languages spoken across the region. Preserving and promoting these languages is essential for maintaining cultural identity and heritage. According to Akpan and Senam (2019), there are dialectal groups in Akwa Ibom State such as Ibibio, Annang, Oron, Andoni, Ibeno, Eket, Okobo, Mbo, Iwerre and Efik. The Ibibio people form the largest ethnic group and their language is the most widespread.

As a powerful medium of communication, played a significant role in the preservation and promotion of indigenous languages in Akwa Ibom from generations to generations with the transmission of programmes in indigenous language spoken in different part of the State, which would further help the media to fulfill their obligation of promoting and preserving the culture of the State. Inegbe, (2020) pointed out here that radio jingles with indigenous language rouses the consciousness of the listening audience to programmes or the products and services advertised.

In recent years, concerns have been raised about the erosion of indigenous languages in Akwa Ibom State. Indigenous language does not only act as a way for a community to communicate and express cultural identity but also plays an important role in advancing development by transmitting information and policies related to progress and growth to the community. English and other more widely spoken languages, according to Ekpo, Enang, and Effiong, (2023), are becoming dominant, potentially endangering the rich linguistic heritage of the Akwa Ibom State.

The purpose of this study is to assess the experiences and perceptions of audience on the role of "AKBC 95.5 FM", "Tangio 102.7 FM" and "Redemption 101.5 FM" radios in the promotion of indigenous languages in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Objectives

1. Find out the extent of usage of indigenous languages in radio stations in Akwa Ibom State incorporate.
2. Examine audience assessment of radio stations in promoting indigenous languages Akwa Ibom state.

Literature Review

Broadcasting according to Sean (2022), is the systematic delivery of information, instructional programming, and simultaneously received by a dispersed audience using hardware in form of audio, only (as in radio) or visual (as in television) or a combination of both. He added that, Broadcasting refers to sending message (s) to recipient(s), at the same time in computer networking, telecommunications, and information theory. In other words, broadcasting can be regarded as a high-level programme operation, such as broadcasting in the Message Passing Interface, or a low-level networking operation, such as broadcasting over internet.

According to Lasswell, (1960) as cited in Akpan, and Effiong, (2021), one purpose of the mass media is to transmit cultural heritage. This function may be performed, if African media are actively engaged in

the promotion of its languages, and hence, will set a good agenda for socio-cultural promotion of African reality. According to Effiong (2019) and Enang, Urujian and Udoka (2013), Nigeria is multi-tribal and multi-lingual in nature, with each tribe rooted in peculiar language, cultural norms and expectations of the people. To this end, media houses that promote local content can create a sense of cultural pride, foster social cohesion and promote the development of cultural industries. Radio stations in Akwa Ibom State, such as 'AKBC', 'Tangsi', 'Inspiration', 'Comfort', 'Planet', 'Redemption', 'Excel' established "phone-in-programmes" which in most cases use local dialects in transmission which to some extent, significantly boost and creates a sustainable environment for skills development amongst the teeming young broadcasters in our contemporary society, (Effiong, Ekanem and Ottong, 2023).

According to Salawu (2015), noted that the media that use indigenous languages are important for information, mobilisation and survival of language and culture. He is posited further, that the indigenous language of any community is best suited for conveying message(s), whatsoever, to the said community. To this end, Folabi, (2020), views indigenous language as the language that is native to a particular group of people and spoken by the indigenous people living in the locality. He further stated that it is a local means of communication between members of a people or community which contains within it the essence of considerable information and knowledge and wisdom of the people or community. Thus indigenous language is a well known and acceptable language of communication among people in a community.

By promoting local content, Willie, Daniel and Udousoro, (2024) observed that media houses operating in Akwa Ibom State have helps to develop and promote the local economy by creating a market for local products and services and also impacts on the security of the area. Akpan and Effiong (2021) noted further, that radio as medium of communication, have the power to reach a broad audience to promote cultural values, norms, and practices. In Nigeria, the promotion of indigenous languages and culture on radio has been an essential tool for national unity and cultural preservation. Inegbe, (2024), reiterated here that the media has a significant role in promoting indigenous language by broadcasting in subtitles or translations that can increase inclusivity and encourage dialogue across linguistic communities.

Theoretical Framework

This article has as its theoretical framework, Perception theory and Development Media theory. Perception theory propounded by Berelson and Steiner (1964), suggests that people's perceptions of the world are influenced by both their individual psychological characteristics and the social context in which they exist. (Gabriel et al 2021). This theory is important to this study because it explain how audience consumes and interpret broadcast messages. The various elements of perception as explained influence the way audience perceives indigenous languages and make decision on the action either positively or negatively.

Development media theory propounded by Dennis McQuail in 1987 posits that in developing nations, government can utilise mass media to support national objectives, particularly during periods of economic and social development requirements. The theory highlights the role of media, such as television, radio, and digital platforms, in fostering socio-economic development within a nation. It posits that media can serve as a powerful instrument for advancing a country's indigenous language positions. It posits that media, such as radio, television, and digital platforms, play a crucial role in promoting development goals, including preserving and promoting indigenous languages.

The theory is important to this research because it emphasises on using the media as a tool for cultural preservation, linguistic re-vitalisation and community empowerment. This approach involves creating content in indigenous languages, broadcasting it through various media channels, and engaging with local communities to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Thereby enabling indigenous communities to strengthen their languages, foster cultural pride, and facilitate communication and knowledge exchange within their communities.

Research Methodology

This study adopted the survey research method. The population for this study was residents of Akwa Ibom State. According to the [National Population Commission (NPC) and United Nations-World Population Projection (2023) stood at 7,200,000 as at the period of this study, thus, the population for the study was 7,200,000. Philip Meyer’s (1979) sample size determinant table to select the sample size. Since the population of the study was 7,200,000, Meyers sample size determinant table suggest the sample size of 384 to be used for this study.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

A total of three hundred and eighty four (384) copies of questionnaires were administered, out of which three hundred and sixty four (364) were filled and returned. Accounting for 94.8 percent return rate and mortality rate of 5.2%.

Table 1.0: Extent to which radio programmes in Akwa Ibom State incorporate indigenous languages

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	278	76.37
Disagree	86	23.63
Total	364	100%

Table 1.0 showed that majority of respondents accounting as 76.37% agreed that radio stations in Akwa Ibom State have successfully incorporated indigenous language programmes in their contents. This research question revealed in table 4.7 that majority of respondents agreed that radio programmes in AKBC radio 90.5 FM, Tangsio 102.7 FM and Redemption 101.5 FM incorporate indigenous languages despite the popularity of English language in our society, radio have fulfilled their purpose of information dissemination in various languages. It has also succeeded in helping language and cultural development as well as promotion.

One of the functions of radio by Apuke (2017) is cultural transmission which entails the transfer of a nation's social legacy across generations. It is seen here that radio serves as a means of conserving historical heritage or cultural elements, spanning ethnic groups, nations and successive generations, with the aim of fostering and unifying cultures.

Table 1.1: Response on if radio help in promoting indigenous languages among different age groups

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
--------	-----------	----------------

Promotes unity in Diversity	70	19.23%
Promotes our Culture	60	16.49%
Promotes Akwa Ibom State Native Languages	88	24.17%
Makes me learn my local Language and other spoken languages in the State	96	26.37%
None of the above	50	16.74%
Total	364	100%

Table 4.10 showed that majority of the respondents which was 96 represented as 26.37% said that radio has helped in promoting indigenous languages among different age groups through which they learn their native languages, 88 respondents representing 24.17% said that it has helped in the promotion of Akwa Ibom state native languages, 70 respondents of 19.23% said that it promotes unity in diversity, 60 (16.49%) respondents said that it helps in promoting our culture and 50 respondents representing 16.74% responded to none of the above.

Findings revealed in table 4.10 that “AKBC radio 90.5 FM”, “Tangsio 102.7 FM” and “Redemption 101.5 FM” have helped in promoting indigenous languages among different age groups in diverse ways. It brings about unity, promotes the culture of the state, it brings about cultural identity by identifying the people of Akwa Ibom state with other tribes and has also enabled audience learn about their native languages alongside other languages. It also revealed that majority of the respondents which was 96 represented as 26.37% said that radio has helped in promoting indigenous languages among different age groups through which they learn their native languages.

Conclusion

It is obvious from the study that radio is one of the most accessible medium of communication because it is less to purchase in price and portable to carry around. So, it can be used for language promotion in Akwa Ibom State. Radio stations in the state have tried to balance up between the production of programmes in indigenous languages and carrying the audience along.

For the promotion and preservation of our language and culture, more collaboration and strategies is needed from audience, state and federal governments in order to promote and maintain indigenous languages from generation to generation.

Recommendations

1. For the promotion of indigenous languages in Akwa Ibom state, all programmes broadcast on radio stations in the State using English language should have their native language version of the programme.
2. More indigenous language personels should be employed by radio stations in Akwa Ibom State to take over the broadcast of indigenous language programmes.

Reference

- Akpan, U. & Senam, N.(2019). Language Diversity and Inclusion of Linguistic Minorities in Programme Contents of Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation (AKBC), Nigeria. *Research Journal of Mass Communication and Information Technology* 5 (1), 233-240.
- Akpan, C., and Effiong, U., (2021). Communication and Social Inclusion Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *International Journal of African Language and Media Studies*, 1(1), pp: 60-75.
- Apuke, O.(2017). *Introduction to Radio Production*. Department of Mass communication. Taraba State University, Jalingo. LAP. LAMBART Publishing.
- Devito, J. (2022). The Concept Of Communication In Joseph Devito's Essentials Of Human Communication. Available at https://www.cram.com/essay/The-Concept-Of-Communication-In-Joseph-Devitos/PKP2CJUHLCCXXQ#google_vignette. Accessed 18th November, 2023.
- Effiong, U., Ekanem, A., and Ottong, I. (2023). Inclusive Education and Sustainable Learning Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (Pwds) in Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Nigeria. (2024). In Book of Readings: Modo, I. V. O., Mboho, Kingdom Sunday, Udoh, Ekaette Raphael & Effiong, Umo Umoh. *Academic Practitioners' Research for Sustainable Development Goals in Africa*. pp: 1-14.
- Effiong, U. U. (2019). Cultural Dynamics of Burial Rites in Annang Traditional Society. *AWOROM: Annañ Studies Journal*, 1(1), 92-102.
- Ekpo, N., Enang, Edenowo T., and Effiong, U. U. (2023). Sociological and Anthropological Culture of the Anaang Language of Ikot Ekpene Variety in Akwa Ibom State: From The viewpoint of Lexico-Structural Ambiguity. *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice*, 12(3), pp:73-90.
- Ekpo, N., Nkanta, N.C., and Effiong, U.U.(2023). Traditional Songs and Cultural Development of Anaañ People: A Case Study of Anaañ Women's Play Songs. In Book of Readings: Modo, I. V. O., Mboho, Kingdom Sunday, Udoh, Ekaette Raphael & Effiong, Umo Umoh. *Academic Practitioners' Research for Sustainable Development Goals in Africa*. pp: 66-74.
- E. T. Enang, V. Urudzian and S. Udoka (2013). Selected Aspects of Syntax of Educated Nigerian English. *Academic Discourse: An International Journal*, 6(1), 207-225.
- Evans, C. (2021). What is Communication? - Definition & Importance. Study.com. Available at <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-communication-definition-importance.html>. Accessed on 1 August, 2023.
- Falobi, F. (2020). *Emerging Trends in Indigenous Language Media, Communication, Gender, and Health*. Yaba College of Technology, Nigeria.
- Gabriel, T Odeba, B. & Agaku, T. (2021). *Audience perception of Tvc News Coverage of Buhari's War against Corruption in Nigeria*. Department of Mass Communication, Bingham University, Karu Nasarawa State. 3(7), 45-53.www.ajmrd.com.

- Inegbe, M. S.(2020). A Stylistic Use of Language in Selected Nigerian Media Advertising. *International Review of Humanities Studies*, 5(1), pp: 122-131.
- Inegbe, M. S. (2024). Nigerian Politicians and Language Use During Political Campaigns: A Study of Select Speeches. *International Review of Humanities Studies* 9 (1), pp: 213 -222.
<https://doi.org/10.7454/irhs.v9i1.1283>
- Kendre, P. (2021). Importance of Communication and Its Process. Available at <https://law.dypvp.edu.in/blogs/importance-of-communication-and-its-process>. Accessed on 1 August, 2023.
- Sean, P. (2022). Broadcasting: An Overview. Department of Communication, Journalism and Marketing, Massey University, New Zealand. *Journal of Mass Communication & Journalism*. 12 (1). 440.
- Salawu, A. (2015). Language, Culture, Media and National Development. Retrieved from http://dspace.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/14452/Salawu_M.pdf?sequence=1
- Willie, C. E., Daniel, U. S., and Udousoro, T. E. (2024). Proliferation of Media Houses and the Promotion of Local Contents and Employment Generation in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *AKSU Annals of Sustainable Development*, 2 (1), pp: 194-204.