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Linguistic hegemony and the minority languages battle for the Zimbabwean broadcasting space: A case of ZBC Television and National FM

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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe is a multi-cultural nation with diverse ethno-linguistic groups. The country's minority ethnic groups, however are under severe threat of extinction. The effective use of minority languages in the media, significantly contributes to efforts aimed at saving these languages. Drawing on the theory of Hegemony, the study focuses on linguistic hegemony and the representation of minority languages in the broadcasting media, using ZBC Television and National FM as case studies. The data was gathered using questionnaires, in-depth interviews and content analysis. This study argues that, minority languages have not been afforded adequate space, at both ZBC Television and National FM. The study therefore, advocates for the radical transformation of the entire minority language representation policies and programming structures at both broadcasting stations. It further proposes the establishment of community radio stations, as a long term solution to the under-representation of minority languages in the Zimbabwean broadcasting media.

Keywords: Minority Languages, Hegemony, Representation, Broadcasting

INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwean minority languages generally suffer from marginalisation, mainly due to the linguistic hegemony of Shona and Ndebele. According to Muzondidya and Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2008) Colonialism promoted Ndebele and Shona alongside English, as official languages. The two languages were also introduced in the curricula, while overlooking the need to also promote minority languages. The new constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) officially recognises sixteen languages. These are Chewa, Chibarwe, English, Kalanga, Khoisan, Nambya, Ndau, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, Sign language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa. In conformity with the new constitution, the use of minority languages is widely expected to be promoted in the media and other official channels of communication. This would also be consistent with,the African Charter on Broadcasting (2001) which emphasises the extension of broadcast services to minority communities. In addition, the People's Communication Charter (1999:Article 9) on Diversity of Languages states:

All people have the right to a diversity of languages. This includes the right to express themselves and have access to information in their own language, the right to use their own languages in educational institutions funded by the state and the right to have adequate provisions created for the use of minority languages where needed.

However, the general representation of minority languages in Zimbabwean media spaces is an antithesis to the ideals espoused above. It is against this background that, this study seeks to embark on a scholarly assessment of the representation of minority languages in the Zimbabwean broadcasting media, using

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Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) Television and National FM, as case studies. The primary questions being investigated in this study are: 1.To what extent are minority languages represented on ZBC Television and National FM? 2. What are the factors that influence this representation? 3. How does the representation impact on the promotion of minority languages in Zimbabwe?

There are a number of studies on the marginalisation of minority languages in Zimbabwe (Hachipola,1998;Magwa,2008;Nyika,2008;Maseko and Ndlovu,2015).However, what is lacking is robust academic research into the relationship between the media and the marginalisation of minority languages in Zimbabwe. This study therefore, shifts attention to the representation of minority languages by Zimbabwean broadcasters, as a way of bridging the aforementioned scholarly lacuna. The paper proceeds as follows: Contextual literature is given first. Thereafter the the theoretical perspective is laid, followed by the methodological approach. Lastly findings are presented and a conclusion is given to sum up the paper.

CONTEXTUAL LITERATURE

Minority Language Groups In Zimbabwe

Before delving into a discussion of minority language groups in Zimbabwe, it is critical to focus on the meaning of the term "minority languages". Though there is no generally accepted definition of the term "minority languages", the United Nations Human Rights system usually refers to minorities as, people belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic non—dominant groups (Pillay, 2012). According to Capotorti (1994) minority is a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members being nationals of the state possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population. They show it only implicitly and have a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions or language. As a result, international human rights law does not have an agreed definition of a minority language due to the problems in coming up with an all—encompassing definition of the term minority group. Nevertheless, a working definition for minority languages refers to them as languages spoken by a non-dominant group of people in a given country, regardless of their nationality. The application of the above—mentioned definition to Zimbabwe reveals that the population can also be distinguished on linguistic minority grounds based mainly on the existence of multilingual non-dominant groups, estimated to comprise ten percent of the country's population, ardent to preserve their languages and culture (Thodhlana, 1998).

Zimbabwe is characteristically a multi-lingual and multi-cultural nation which comprises of several ethno minority groups these include Nambya, Tonga, TjiKalanga, Venda, Doma, Xhosa, Dombe and Ndau (Ndhlovu, 2006). Chewa is a Bantu language spoken in the North Eastern parts of Zimbabwe. According to some estimates, it is the third most widely spoken indigenous language in the country after Shona and Ndebele (Ndhlovu, 2006). Some of the Zimbabwean minority languages include Shangani commonly known as Xitsonga and is spoken in the South Eastern parts of Zimbabwe. Sesotho is also a minority language in Zimbabwe and it is spoken widely in Matabeleland South province. Originally the natives of this language came from Lesotho and some from South Africa (Kadenge, 2010).

Linguistic Hegemony And The Marginalisation of Zimbabwean Minority Language Groups

Zimbabwe is characterised by micro social forms of language based exclusions among the diverse ethnolinguistic polities. The disregard for minority language groups such as the Kalanga and Nambya among others, marked the genesis of their marginalisation, whose repercussions still reverberate even to this day (Ndhlovu,2009). These exclusions manifest in a number of ways that include biased language use patterns in the public domain, negative perceptions and stereotypes about ethnol linguistic minorities and forced assimilation of minority language speakers into majority language groups (Ndhlovu, 2007). Consequently multi-layered ethno linguistic hegemonies are visible in Zimbabwean public spaces (Mpofu and

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Mutasa,2014). It has been noted that, the participation of minority language groups in national programmes has diminished as their languages have been kept on the margins of the linguistic market (Maseko & Dhlamini,2021). This state of affairs has been perpetuated through various discriminatory, exclusionary language practices and the subsequent subalternisation of the minority groups (Ndhlovu, 2009; Moyo, Mdlongwa & Ncube,2015). The fact that it took 33 years for post-independent Zimbabwe to officially recognise national indigenous languages other than Shona and Ndebele in the constitution, is ample testament to the marginalisation endured by these languages (Maseko & Dhlamini,2021).

Shona and Ndebele are "Killer Languages" which threaten the survival of other indigenous languages (Ndhlovu, 2009:37). The dominance of Shona and Ndebele stretches from the colonial times, when the two languages started to be recognised as languages of media and education as well as languages of upward socio-political and economic mobility (Ndhlovu,2007). The above assertion, reveals that Shona and Ndebele languages have enjoyed a privileged status, when compared to the rest of the indigenous languages in Zimbabwe. This point of view, is buttressed by the revelation that, these languages profited from government support in the form of funding for research activities and documentation (Ndhlovu,2009). This resulted in the fortunes of minority languages being indexically linked to those of their speakers. What this means is that, the symbolic and communicative statuses attached to languages often have a significant impact on the socioeconomic and political prospects of those who speak them (Tollefson., 1991, Penny cook 1994).

Although Shona and Ndebele languages appear to be on an equal footing, a careful analysis renders this to be a very uncritical representation of the relationship between the two languages. An examination of practices in official and unofficial spaces demonstrates that the two languages are involved in a turf war, one in which the Shona language has an upper hand (Ndhlovu,2009). It is clear that, the demographically superior and politically powerful Shona language has outmanoeuvred Ndebele and now occupies the top hierarchy of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe (Ndhlovu,2006;Ndhlovu,2009). In this scheme of things, Ndhlovu (2008:306) opines that Shona has counter hegemonically responded to the dominance of English by suppressing other indigenous languages, advancing that:

The Ndebele language in particular is at the mercy of the postcolonial Shonalisation wave that has seen the Shona language approximating the role of medium of expression for the entire Zimbabwean society.

The 'Shonalisation' of Zimbabwe is further captured by Ncube and Siziba (2017:828), who advance that, Shona has since been legitimated and naturalised 'as an equivalent of Zimbabwean-ness'. This is corroborated by Maseko and Dhlamini (2021) who argue that, the Shona language seems to be legitimised as the de-facto official language in the civil service and other functions of government. The same authors, also advance that, Shona hegemony does not only present itself in official public spaces, but it transcends almost every sphere of Zimbabwean life. Ndhlovu (2009) therefore concludes that Shona hegemony tends to present itself in the outright denial of space for other indigenous languages and hence borders on attempts at linguistic and cultural homogenisation.

Despite the fact that, language practices in official domains tend to be unfavourable to the Ndebele language, when compared to Shona, Ndebele appears to have more favourable status than the minority languages do (Maseko & Dhlamini, 2021). For example, the majority of schools in Matabeleland North and South, where a number of minority languages are spoken, offer Ndebele as a subject, regardless of the learners home language background. This demonstrates that although Ndebele appears to be oppressed by Shona, it also acts as an oppresser of the minority languages that are found in Matabeleland North and South provinces.

The ethno-linguistic inequality evident in the subordination of minority languages to the hegemonic dominance of Shona and Ndebele languages, as reflected by their preferential treatment in most official spaces has widened divisions among ethnic groups (Maseko & Dhlamini, 2021). The divisive and sensitive

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nature of Zimbabwean language politics, is buttressed by Mpofu and Salawu (2008) who advance that, in Zimbabwe, the exclusion and marginalisation of citizens on the basis of language and culture are emotive issues. This is worsened by the fact that, the people are rooted in smaller communities and their first loyalties are to the ethnic group and region, such that language differences and regionalism are serious problems that militate against national unity and are basic factors in ethnic conflict (Mpofu and Salawu,2008). In the same vein, Nyamnjoh (2005) advances that, for democracy to succeed in Africa, it must recognise the fact that most Africans are primarily patriotic to their home village to which state and country are secondary. It is therefore clear that, the unequal treatment of languages is anti-nationalism. As Maseko and Dhlamini (2021) argue, the language inequalities, have grave consequences for the morphing of the state on the basis of collective ideology of unity in diversity.

The imposition of a particular language on another ethnic group, is not merely divisive but often invites conflict or protest (Mpofu and Salawu,2018). The above argument is strongly corroborated by Maseko and Dhlamini (2021) who advance that,the elevation of one language at the expense of others in official spaces can lead to rebellion or even outright hatred. Therefore, linguistic inequalities, evidently defeat nation building goals. This validates the Ndlovu- Gatsheni (2008) assertion that, Zimbabwe has succeeded in 'state building' rather than 'nation building'. There is therefore, need for Zimbabwe to find ways to harmoniously integrate different ethnicities in the interests of the country's development and well being (Maseko and Dhlamini,2021).

There is significant existing body of literature acknowledging that attaining a homogenous national identity in Zimbabwe has remained elusive (Chiumbu, 2004; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). The media in Zimbabwe, are at the nexus of mediating these ethnic differences (Ndawana, 2019). It is therefore, vital to interrogate the role of the broadcasting in promoting the integration of different Zimbabwean ethnicities, including minority ones, as this study seeks to do.

2.3 The Representation Of Ethnic Minority Groups In Zimbabwean Media Spaces

Muzondidya and Gatsheni (2014) postulate that, while post-independence Zimbabwe has made efforts to come up with policies that encourage the representation of minority groups in the media, there is still serious ethnic polarisation in the country. These efforts are echoed by Ndhlovu (2008) who asserts that the Broadcasting policy documents introduced in 2002 helped in promoting minority languages in Zimbabwe. This saw the minority language radio station, National FM, being introduced to broadcast in local indigenous languages. The Zimbabwe government in 2004 bestowed on National FM the mandate to cater for minority languages in an attempt to balance national interests (Ndawana, 2019). The station broadcasts in the following languages, Barwe, Chewa, Chikunda, Doma, Hwesa, Kalanga, Nambya, Khoisan, Ndau, Shangani, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Yao.It also broadcasts in Shona and Ndebele(Ndawana, 2019). Though the language usage in the broadcasting sector is far from ideal, the ethno-linguistic minorities represented on National FM can enjoy their right to identity and participate in national discourses (Maseko and Ndlovu,2013). The minority language promotional role of National FM is, however limited. For instance, of the 14 hours of broadcasting between 5am and midnight, minority languages are given approximately 4 hours 35 minutes broadcasting time. The other example, is that of Nhau/Indaba (Shona and Ndebele news) which is 20-25 minutes long, while four to five of the minority languages share the same amount of time. The above information, demonstrates that Shona and Ndebele enjoy a bias even on a station whose mandate is the promotion of minority languages (Maseko and Ndlovu, 2013). This is corroborated by Ndawana and Muromo (2012) who also established that the airtime allocated to minority languages on National FM is very minimal.

While the National FM broadcasting policy is commendable, the question of whether the radio station's programming reaches the target audience remains a great concern especially with regard to linguistic minorities. Most minority language speakers are found in remote parts of the country with limited





Frequency Modulation (FM), the bandwidth that Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) transmits its signal (Maseko and Ndlovu,2013). For instance the Tonga people deep in the Zambezi basin, the Nambya in Hwange, the Venda in Beitbridge and the Kalanga in Plumtree do not access ZBC broadcasting signals. This arguably prevents minority language speakers from being participants in minority language programming. A number of scholars concur that, audiences are supposed to be active in the production of minority language programmes (Camaroff, 1996; Chapman, Blench, Kranj-Berisav and Zakaria, 2003).

Zimbabwean television predominantly broadcasts in English.It also uses Ndebele and Shona, which are the only indigenous languages that have a presence on Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) (Maseko and Ndlovu, 2013). As a result, minority languages are left out of the country's important national issues (Ndhlovu, 2008). Since the state holds monopoly on television broadcasting in Zimbabwe, the failure to include minority languages on national television is reflective of the state's treatment of the same (Maseko and Ndlovu, 2013). This exclusion of minority languages from national television dates back to the early years of independence. As Magwa (2008) advances, after independence the government decided to ignore the media representation of minority languages and concentrated on the already dominant languages of Ndebele and Shona. The situation is however, not rosy for Ndebele and Shona, since both languages are used periodically on television. However, Shona enjoys prominence as compared to Ndebele (Maseko and Ndlovu, 2013). The obtaining situation is evidence of the hegemonic tendencies that Shona has over other indigenous languages (Ndlovu, 2008). Therefore, the implied superiority status of Shona juxtaposed to other indigenous languages is responsible for the greater visibility of Shona on Zimbabwe television than other languages (Maseko and Ndlovu, 2013).

The Shona and Ndebele linguistic hegemony extends to the print media sector, as the only indigenous language papers in Zimbabwe are Kwayedza (Shona) and Umthunywa (Ndebele). Both are published by Zimpapers, which is state owned (Maseko and Ndlovu, 2013). This lands credence to the assertion that, government run media outlets use only majority languages, excluding monolingual minority language speakers from accessing vital news and information (Mabika, 2014). Due to its exclusionary nature, Maseko and Ndlovu (2013) describe the Zimbabwean media as a culturally blind public sphere. The same authors, further posit that, the distribution of Umthunywa and Kwayedza also proves that only Shona and Ndebele identities are being projected by the media. The representation patterns stated in the foregoing assertions play a central role in shaping the identities of ethnic minority groups, since identity making is a political process that is mediated through imperatives of inclusion and exclusion (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013). Foucalt (1980) argues that representations are a game of power. Furthermore, the ethnic identities have serious implications on the value minority ethnic groups place on their ethnic groups as well as their sense of belonging, as well as inclusiveness (Verkuyten, 2008). In simple terms, language based marginalisation, breeds inferiority complex, among ethnic minority speakers and it also makes them feel that, they do not belong to the nation.

The literature cited in the foregoing paragraphs clearly demonstrates that, literature on the representation of minority languages in the Zimbabwean is still embryonic. There is enormous amount of research that has conducted on the state of minority languages Zimbabwe (Hachipola, 1998; Ndlovu, 2007; Magwa, 2008, Nyika, 2008) but these mainly focus on language planning and the education sector. There is very little research which focuses on the representation of minority languages in the media. Maseko and Ndlovu (2013) present a general overview of how minority languages are represented in the media but their study did not focus on any specific medium or any particular languages. The study conducted by Ndawana (2019) is more specific but it focuses on only one broadcasting station (National FM). This study therefore, fills the existing academic gap by embarking on an empirically driven study of the representation of minority languages on ZBC Television and National FM.

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THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Theory Of Hegemony

This study is grounded in the Gramscian theory of hegemony. The term "Hegemony" was most likely derived from the Greek *egemonia*, whose root is *egemon*, meaning "leader, ruler, often in the sense of a state other than his own" (Williams,1985:144). Since the 19th century, "hegemony" commonly has been used to indicate "political predominance, usually of one statte over another" (Williams,1985:144). The Oxford English Dictionary defines hegemony as "leadership, predominance, preponderance, especially in the leadership or predominant authority of one state of confederacy or union over others".

Subordinate groups tend to accept the ideas and values of the dominant group without physical or mental influence because they know no better or there are no other alternatives. (Ransome, 1992). From Gramsci's view, the bourgeoisie gained and maintained power due to economic domination and intellectual and moral leadership. Here, Gramsci introduced a new concept which he called hegemony. Hegemony is a set of ideas by means of which dominant groups strive to secure the consent of subordinate groups to their leadership (Ransome,1992). It occurs when dominant classes in society maintain their dominance, persuading the other classes of society to accept their moral, political and cultural values. This means that the majority in a population give consent to policies and ideologies implemented by those in power. One must not assume that this consent is always willing. Those in power may combine physical force or coercion with intellectual, moral and cultural persuasion (Ransome,1992). The dominant ideology is thus accepted, practiced and spread. Hegemony emerges out of social and class struggles and serves to shape and influence.

According to Gramsci, hegemony never disappears but is constantly changed. He describes two forms of social control. The first type is coercive control which is achieved through the use of direct force or threat of force (Simon,1992). The second type is consensual control which arises when individuals voluntarily adopt the worldview of the dominant group (Simon, 1992).

Gramsci was of the view that Social hegemony and political government are enforced historically in which the dominant group enjoys its position because of its function in the world of production and legally by state coercive power which enforces discipline on groups that do not consent (Gramsci,1971). This gives rise to a division of labor or specialization and to a whole hierarchy of qualifications.

Hegemony goes beyond culture which is the whole social process in which people define and shape their lives. It bases in ideology which is a system of meanings and values that expresses a particular class interest (Simon,1992). In order to create a class strong enough to have hegemony, one has to first instil a solid ideology based on specific interests that will dominate the rest of society, using the influence of capitalist relations.

Gramsci felt that in order to have hegemony, ideologies have to be instilled by certain people or leaders. Gramsci identified intellectuals as leaders in society. He identified two types of intellectuals. The first is traditional intellectuals who are people that regard themselves as independent of the dominant social group and are regarded as such by the majority of the population (Gramsci,1971). The second type is the organic intellectual. This is the group that grows organically with the ruling class, and is their thinking and organising element (Gramsci, 1971). They were produced by the educational system to perform a function for the dominant social group in society. It is through this group that the ruling class maintains its hegemony over the rest of society.

The political and practical implications of Gramsci's ideas were far-reaching because he warned of the limited possibilities of direct revolutionary struggle for control of the means of production; this 'war of

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attack' could only succeed with a prior 'war of position' in the form of struggle over ideas and beliefs, to create a new hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). This idea of a 'counter-hegemonic' struggle – advancing alternatives to dominant ideas of what is normal and legitimate, has had broad appeal in social and political movements. It has also contributed to the idea that 'knowledge' is a social construct that serves to legitimate social structures (Heywood 1994: 101).

In this study,the Gramscian theory of hegemony is employed as a tool for the analysing the representation of minority languages in the Zimbabwean broadcasting sector. This is done, taking into consideration that the Zimbabwean linguistic environment is characterised by what Mpofu and Salawu (2008) describe as "The hegemony of other ethno-linguistic representations and disenfranchisement of ethno-linguistic minorities". This is depicted by what Suarez (2002) calls daily forms of linguistic hegemony which comprise among others, language use in media institutions and social relationships that associate linguistic minorities with inferiority, low self-respect and belittlement. The Gramscian theory of hegemony relates power relations between dominant and minority groups, particularly the means by which, the dominant group secures its position (Suarez, 2002).

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The study made use of the mixed approach. This mixed approach was chosen because the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach complement each other, thereby increasing the depth of understanding a study can yield. According to Mason (2006) mixed methodology offers potential for generating new ways of understanding the complexities and contexts of social experience and for enhancing our capacities for social explanation and generalisation. The study was conducted in Bulawayo, the multi-lingual and multicultural, second largest city of Zimbabwe. It was conducted between May and October 2022. The data was gathered using questionnaires, which were administered to fourty (40) students at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), who constituted the ZBC general audience. From the fourty (40) questionnaires, thirty (30) were returned. These students were purposively chosen because they were deemed to be well informed individuals, who would provide meaningful information to the study. The researchers also administered questionnaires to thirty (30) minority language speakers. The study incorporated minority language speakers because it was deemed that, they would add value to the study by bringing the perspectives of those who are directly affected by the representation of minority languages in Zimbabwean broadcasting. The study used snowballing to identify minority language speakers in Bulawayo, starting with five (5) from the social circles of the researchers. These later, identified fifteen (15) more minority language speakers from their own circles, bringing the total number of minority language speakers, who responded to the questionnaire to twenty (20).

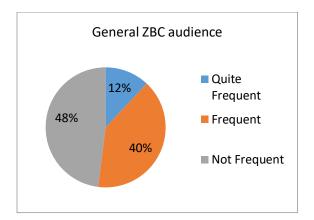
The study also gathered data through in-depth interviews with two (2)programme producers, one (1) from National FM and one (1) from ZBC Television.In addition, one (1) Key informant interviewee,a Media and Journalism studies Lecturer at a local University was interviewed. The researchers used purposive sampling in selecting the interviewees, particularly those who were deemed to be knowledgeable about the cultural arena or situation being studied (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The researchers also did content analysis, which involved systematically analysing the content of programmes broadcast on ZBC Television and National FM, as well the programme schedules of the two broadcasting stations.

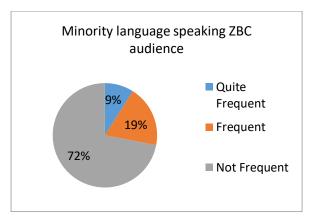
FINDINGS

The Frequency of Minority Language Programmes On ZBC Television And National FM.



Fig.1 Pie Charts showing respondents views on which statement best illustrates the frequency of minority language programmes on ZBC Television.

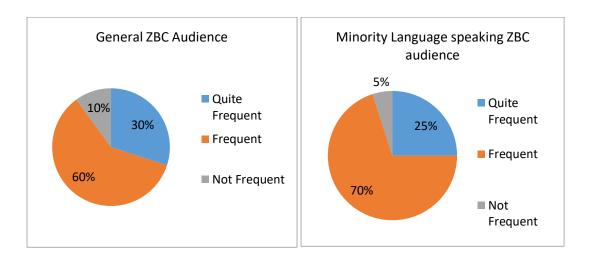




As Fig.1 above illustrates, 40% of the respondents from the general ZBC audience said that the programmes are frequent, 48% said they are not frequent while 12% indicated that the programming is quite frequent. On the other hand, 19% of the minority language ZBC speaking audience's response indicated that the programming was frequent, 72% said it was not frequent while 9% said it was quite frequent.

The responses depicted by the pie charts above, clearly show that the majority of respondents in both the general ZBC audience and minority language speaking ZBC audience categories feel that minority language programmes on ZBC television are not frequent. It is interesting to note that there are much more respondents (72%) from the minority language speaking audience category who feel that minority languages on ZBC are not frequent as compared to 48% in the general ZBC audience category. This can be attributed to that fact that minority language speakers are directly affected by the infrequency of minority language programme and strongly feel that minority languages on ZBC can be broadcast much more frequently than what it is happening currently.

Fig.2 Pie Charts showing respondents views on which statement best illustrates the frequency of minority language programmes on National FM



From the pie chart above 60% of the general ZBC audience said that the minority language programmes on National FM are frequent, 30% said the programming is quite frequent while 10% said it is not frequent.



Looking at the minority language ZBC audience 70% of the respondents said the programmes are frequent, 25% they said they are quite frequent while 5% response was they are not frequent.

The responses depicted by the pie charts above show that majority of the respondents in both the general ZBC General audience and minority language speaking ZBC audience categories feel that minority language programmes on National FM are frequent showing that National FM is trying by all means to fulfill its mandate of promoting all the national languages. The highest percentage (70 %) of the ZBC minority language speaking audience respondents, as the pie chart shows, are happy with the frequency National FM programming. The researcher also did a content analysis of National FM, which reveals that the station is indeed trying by all means to fulfill its mandate by promoting all the national languages, through programmes like Ngatimusaneni (Nambya programme), Kujuzyana (Tonga greetings show), Malonje (Chewa greetings). In all these programmes the listeners get to interact with the presenters using their language by sending in messages through phone calls and greeting their friends and relatives around the country. National FM also has programmes like Chaya kaNyimbo (Chewa musical programme), Zvavwelengana, Muyiimbi takwe n'onzi (Tonga musical shows), Ndaingepo (Ndau programme), Mamuka tjini (Kalanga musical programme). Besides entertainment shows National FM also broadcasts news in all the country's minority languages hence the highest percentage (60%) of general ZBC audience and 70 % from the ZBC minority language audience feel that National FM has frequent programmes in minority languages, hence the station is fulfilling its mandate of promoting the minority languages.

However,a content analysis of the National FM programming contradicted with the respondents to the questionnaire as it proved that Shona and Ndebele programmes are broadcast more frequently than minority language programmes. The ZBC programme schedule showed that Shona and Ndebele news dominated at National FM.This is sync with the findings of other researchers (Ndawana,2012;Ndawana and Muromo,2012,Mabika and Salawu,2014).

The Adequacy of Minority Language Programmes on ZBC

Fig.3 A graph showing the respondents responses to the question that sought their opinion on the notion that minority languages programmes on ZBC are inadequate

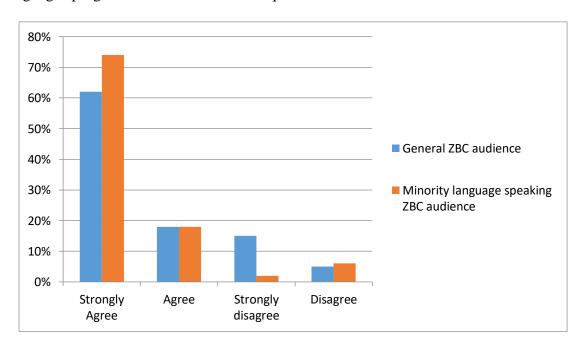


Fig.3 above shows that 62% of the ZBC general audience strongly agree that minority language programmes on ZBC are inadequate.18% agree, 15% strongly disagree while 5 % disagree that the minority

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language programmes on ZBC are inadequate.

Looking at the ZBC minority language speaking category 74% strongly agree, 18% agree, 2% strongly disagree and 6% disagree that minority language programmes on ZBC are inadequate.

The view that minority language programmes on ZBC are inadequate as opined by the majority respondents above, is buttressed by the ZBC TV producer who openly admitted that the minority language programmes on ZBC TV are inadequate. From the content analysis done by the researchers it was noticed that ZBC TV only has few minority languages programmes and these include minority language news bulletins which are broadcast for 15 minutes once a week. On the other hand, the Shona and Ndebele news bulletins are broadcast everyday. Other minority language programmes on ZBC TV include programmes like Alumbwe Leza (gospel show), Bhatuko lyaba Nambya (Nambya documentary), Imisobano yaba Tonga (Tonga documentary) and Zyanyongana a Tonga drama. Hence the majority respondents, as depicted by the graph above strongly agree that minority language programmes on ZBC TV are inadequate. On the contrary, the ZBC National FM programme producer argued that:

The minority language programmes on National FM are adequate, since as a station, we represent most of the country's languages and we will strive to do more, in that regard.

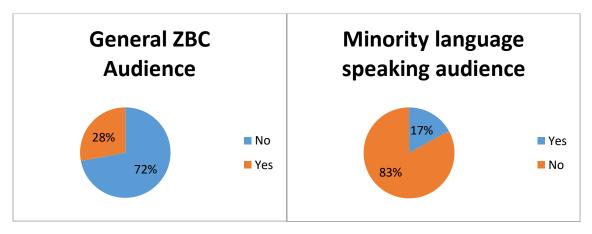
The key informant interviewee, on the other hand consolidated the view that minority language programmes on ZBC are not adequate. He argued that, despite the fact that, ZBC is playing a role in promoting minority languages, its role is far from being adequate. He further argued that:

ZBC TV has to ensure that minority language programmes are broadcast more frequently,in different genres. Whilst National FM broadcasts minority language programmes more frequently,i still feel the programmes are not adequate, the station has move towards being a 100% minority languages station, and do away with dominant languages, since these are adequately represented in other stations.

This finding is in line with that of Ndhlovu (2004) who argues that, while the broadcast media is meant to cater for the formerly marginalised languages within Zimbabwe, most of the programmes are dominated by majority languages such as English, Shona and Ndebele, while minority languages are left out on the important issues of national interest.

The scheduling of minority language programmes ZBC Television and National FM

Fig. 4 Pie Chart showing responses to the question which sought to find out whether minority language programmes are broadcast at ideal times.



The above data clearly depicts that the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire are of the view that ZBC minority language programmes are not broadcast at ideal times at the two ZBC stations (ZBC Television and National FM) this is shown by the fact that 72 % of the general ZBC audience and the 83 % of the minority language speaking audience said the programmes are not broadcast at ideal times. 28 % of

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the general audience and 17% of the minority speaking audience said the programmes are broadcast at ideal times.

The views expressed by the ZBC Television programme producer were in tandem with those of the majority of respondents to the questionnaires, as he clearly admitted ZBC Television minority language programmes are not broadcast at the most ideal times. He argued that:

The station currently has a tight programming schedule, with a number of programmes competing for the prime time viewing slot. As a result, the majority of our minority language programmes are not broadcast at the most ideal times. We will try to broadcast some of the minority programmes during prime time viewing in future.

On the contrary the ZBC National FM programme producer emphatically stated that the station broadcasts the majority of its programmes at ideal times, since a number of minority language programmes such as news and entertainment programmes are broadcast during prime time viewing.

The content analysis clearly depicted that ZBC minority language programmes are broadcast during off peak periods, when the majority of viewers would be at work or still occupied by other chores. For instance the minority language news bulletins on ZBC Television are broadcast from 16.00hrs to 16.30hrs, minority language documentaries like Bhatuko lyaba Nambya (Nambya documentary) broadcast at 15.00hrs, Zyanyongana (Tonga drama) broadcast at 22.00hrs on ZBC TV when most people would be asleep. The content analysis further depicted that, National FM has some good programmes that are unfortunately broadcast, during off peak listening periods. For instance, programmes such as Chaya Kanyimbo (Chewa entertainment programme), Mayizela kene, Zyakalikupya (Tonga musical show), Zyavwelengana (Tonga entertainment programme), Buchilo (Nambya health programme), Unshaji wabanhukaji (Nambya women empowerment programme) could be better scheduled to accommodate more listeners. The content analysis results, however, depicted that a few National FM programmes are broadcast during prime time or peak periods and these include Kujuzyana, Marhungula, Ngatuyisaneni, Svautomi, Buchilo, Zyabuntusu, Zyabachikayintu an Ngalilo. However, the National FM Morning Show, which is the most popular programme on the station is presented by popular presenters, who mainly speak in Shona and Ndebele. During weekends news bulletins on ZBC Television and National FM are broadcast in Shona and there are no minority language news bulletins, hence preventing minority language news from reaching a greater audience. The key informant interviewee posited that:

The scheduling of minority language programmes by a broadcasting station reflects the importance that it attaches to those languages. The fact that, the majority of minority language programmes at ZBC do not fit into prime time viewing slot, shows that the broadcaster does not attach much importance to these minority languages.

Taking a leaf of the above cited line of argument, one can argue that ZBC National FM attaches more importance to minority language programmes than ZBC Television, since it broadcasts quite a number of minority language programmes during prime time or peak periods.

The Genres of Minority Language Programmes on ZBC Television and National FM

The information provided by programme producers in interviews generally depicted that the broadcaster has limited genres of minority language programming. The ZBC Television programme producer disclosed that, the station broadcasts minority language programmes in the following genres: News, talk shows, and documentaries. On the other hand, the ZBC National FM programme producer revealed that the station broadcasts minority language programmes in the following genres: Talk shows, informative/awareness programmes, entertainment shows and news.However,content analysis revealed that some minority





languages were broadcast in only one genre on National FM.For instance, Chikunda, Hwesa and Doma programmes were current affairs only. On ZBC Television minority language programing is mainly news. A few languages such as Tonga and Nambya have documentaries that are sometimes broadcast on the station.

From the above information, it is apparent that the genres of minority language programmings are generally limited, when compared to the genres that are used for the programmes of major languages namely Shona and Ndebele. A Content Analysis of ZBC Television and National FM programming revealed Shona and Ndebele programmes are broadcast in a wide variety of genres such as news, talk shows, advertisements, musical programmes, sports programmes, phone in programmes, current affairs programmes, soap operas etc. The information gathered from the above cited interviews and content analysis also depicts that ZBC National FM broadcasts in a variety of genres as compared to ZBC Television. The Key informant interviewee argued that, these limited minority language genres indicate that both ZBC Television and National FM are failing to adequately represent minority languages.

Table 1. A Content Analysis of the minority languages broadcast on ZBC TV and the genres used

Minority Language	Genre(s) Used
Tonga	News, documentaries
Nambya	News, documentaries
Kalanga	News
Sotho	News
Venda	News
Chewa	News
Ndau	News
Xhosa	News
Tsonga /Tshangani	News

The information contained in the above table clearly shows that ZBC Television minority programming lacks variety. This finding is buttressed by the key informant interviewee who advanced that:

When it comes to minority language programming on both ZBC Television and National FM,the focus seems to be on news and current affairs programmes. as much as it is vital to cater for the information needs of minority groups,i believe it also vital to have a variety of entertainment programmes such as musicals or films, which can contribute to the creation of a vibrant minority language arts sector in Zimbabwe.

The above statement is buttressed by Dziva and Dube (2000) who advanced that the inclusion of minority languages will make the dominant language speakers eager to learn about minority languages and culture. Hence having a variety of genres on radio and television will help promote minority languages.

Commercial Interests and Minority Language Programming

The study established that, commercial interests play a significant role in influencing the nature of minority language programming on ZBC Television and National FM.

The key informant interviewee aptly summed the implications of commercial interests on minority language programming on ZBC Television and National FM. He advanced that:



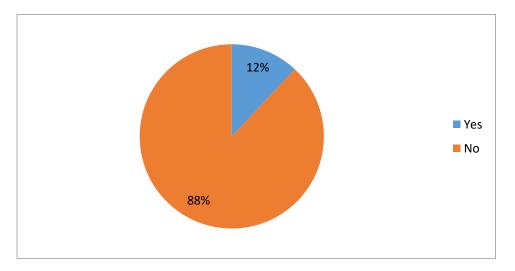
The issue of commercial interests plays a vital role in influencing minority language programming for both ZBC Television and National FM.It is pertinent to point out that ZBC is operating in a difficult environment, characterised by dwindling licence fees revenue, leading to increased reliance on advertising revenue. as a result both stations tend to prefer entertainment programming in dominant languages, so as to attract advertisers.

The producers of both ZBC Television and National FM disclosed that, due to lack of funding their stations like other public service broadcasters have gone commercial, hence they get the bulk of their revenue through advertisements.

However, this commercial route, evidently has negative implications for the coverage of minority languages.Due high number of Shona and Ndebele speakers Zimbabwe the (Hachipola, 1998; Ndlovu, 2009), the majority of business people prefer to advertise during Shona and Ndebele programmes, since they tend to have the highest listenership or viewership. The researchers noted that most of the advertisements on ZBC Television were broadcast in Shona, Ndebele and English, while on National FM, they were in Shona and Ndebele. This demonstrates the influence of funding on media production as advanced by scholars like Mosco (2008), McQuail (2010) and Graham (2010) who concur that, funding and control patterns have traceable consequences on the range of discourses and images that appear in the mass media.

Broadcasting Transmission Challenges And The Reception Of Minority Language Programmes

Fig 5: A Pie chart showing minority language speakers responses to the question which sought to find out whether ZBC signals reach their areas of origin /rural homes.



As shown above,12% of the respondents showed that ZBC signals reach their areas of origin/ rural homes while 88% have no access to ZBC signals. The statistics above clearly show that the majority of minority language speakers, who responded to the questionnaire,do not access ZBC radio /television services when they are at their rural homes, as the signals do not reach their areas of origin /rural homes.

The key informant interviewee cited the failure of ZBC signals to reach minority language speaking areas, as one of the greatest hindrances to ZBC's minority language promotion role. He posited that:

The bulk of minority language speakers are located in remote areas that are close to the country's borders and in most cases have no access to ZBC radio or television signals. These areas include Binga, Hwange, Victoria Falls, Plumtree, Kariba, Chipinge, among others. It therefore, becomes very impractical to expect minority language speakers from these areas to derive any tangible benefits from minority language programming.

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The foregoing assertion is in tandem with that of Ndhlovu (2008) who opines that the situation of less representation of minority languages in the media sector is further aggravated by lack of radio and television transmission in dominated areas of Zimbabwe, especially those from the border lying districts of Beitbridge (Venda) and Plumtree (Kalanga) who expressed their concerns over poor or no television and radio transmission in their respective areas (Ndhlovu, 2008).

Lack of finances as a hindrance to effective minority language programming.

The study further established that, the government is failing to fund public service broadcasters such ZBC Television and National FM. This lack of funding has seriously compromised minority language broadcasting on both stations. The National FM producer summed up this state of affairs, as follows:

One of the greatest hindrances to effective minority language programming is shortage of finances, due to lack of government funding. We therefore, fail to mobilise adequate financial resources to reach out to all the minority linguistic groups that we represent as a station.

The ZBC Television programme producer also cited lack of adequate financial resources as a major hindrance to the broadcasting of quality minority language programmes. He revealed that, due to lack of financial resources the station is not able to have correspondents who can give them news stories that can ensure adequate coverage minority language groups. He further bemoaned the lack of transport to travel to remote areas such as Binga to get material that can be used to produce minority language programmes.

Media Ethnic Power Dynamics And Their Impact On Minority Language Representation At ZBC Television and National FM

The researcher took an interest in the ethnicity of people who hold key positions at ZBC, with the conviction that the ethnicity of decision makers in the broadcaster has a bearing on their attitude towards minority language programming. As Cottle (2003:16) argues:

.... If we want to better understand the forces that contribute to the under-representation of ethnic minorities within the media workforce, as well as their misrepresentation in terms of media portrayal, we have to grapple with the complexities at work.

Therefore, the interviewees were asked to state their ethnicity and the following was established: The ZBC National FM producer is Tonga, the ZBC Television producer at Montrose studios, is Ndebele. The interesting conclusion these researchers arrived at is that ZBC National FM, which has a programme producer who belongs to one of the ethnic minority groups plays a more prominent role in promoting minority languages when compared to the ZBC Television programme producer who is from one of the major ethnic groups. In an interview, the ZBC National FM Producer disclosed that ZBC key decision making positions are dominated by majority language speakers (97%) whereas minority language speakers constitute only 3% of those in the overall ZBC leadership structure. This scenario is strongly buttressed by the key informant interviewee who argued that:

The ethnic power dynamics that are inherent in the broadcasting sector have a significant bearing on the minority language promotion of ZBC.It is clear that ethnic minority groups are not adequately represented in the state broadcasters echolons of power and this explains the resultant sidelining of minority languages, since the decision makers belong to the dominant ethnic groups and therefore lack, the impetus to genuinely push for better representation of minority languages in the programming structures of ZBC Television and National FM.

In light of the above assertion, the under-representation of ethnic minority languages on ZBC Television and

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National FM is a reflection of the manner in which, the management of these stations view these languages. As Sausse (1992) advances, having a negative attitude towards a certain language is a significant factor, that influences the representation of minority languages in Zimbabwe. This attitude develops on the basis of political issues in which a speech community finds itself in.

The Minority Language Promotional Role of ZBC Television and National FM

Fig.6 Pie Charts showing respondents opinions on whether the nature of minority language programming on ZBC generally promotes minority languages.

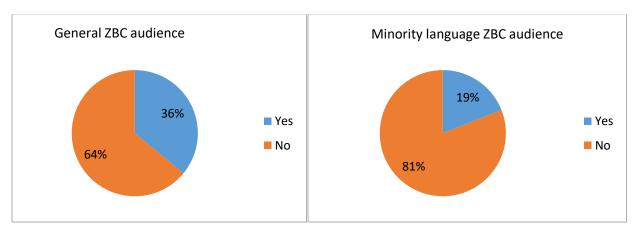


Fig.6 above shows that 36% of the ZBC general audience are of the opinion that the nature of minority language programming on ZBC promotes minority languages, while the majority which adds up to 64% believe that the nature of minority language programmes on ZBC does not promote minority languages. 19% of the respondents from the minority language speaking ZBC audience are of the opinion that minority language programming on ZBC promotes minority languages and 81% are of the opinion that minority language programming on ZBC does not promote minority languages.

The above data clearly reveals that both the ZBC general audience and the minority language speaking audience are of the opinion that ZBC minority language programming does not promote minority languages. In explaining their answers, the majority of respondents who held the above stated opinion, argued that ZBC minority language programming was not significant enough to promote minority languages. On the other hand a significant number of those who were of the opinion that ZBC minority language programming promotes minority languages explained that National FM and ZBC Television have a number of programmes that promote minority languages.

The views of both producers were however, contrary to those of the majority of respondents to questionnaires. The ZBC Television producer argued that, ZBC Television, as a national broadcaster is trying its best to promote minority languages, unlike other media outlets which are not doing anything. In the same vein the ZBC National FM producer advanced that:

As National FM we play the greatest role in promoting minority languages in Zimbabwe, as clearly evidenced by the fact that, we broadcast in almost all the country's minority languages, with the exception of a few languages like San, which we will soon incorporate into our programming.

However, the views of the Key Informant Interviewee were, divergent to those of the ZBC producers cited above. He opined that:

Broadcasting in a variety of minority languages is good but it does not necessarily result in the promotion of minority languages.Let me clearly state that,real and effective language promotion depends on the depth and potency of the media content,not the number of minority languages a station broadcasts. In other words,language promotion depends on the quality not quantity of minority language programmes.The

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current programming on both ZBC Television and National FM is too shallow,to have any significant bearing on minority language promotion.

The content analysis done by the researchers shows that ZBC is not doing justice to the minority languages especially ZBC Television which broadcasts only a few minority language programmes among them weekly news bulletins, whereby each language gets only a few minutes ,once a week. The minority language news bulletins, also tend to broadcast stale news from the previous bulletins, which most would have accessed on dominant language news bulletins in English, Shona and Ndebele . The time allocated to minority language bulletins is not the same like that of the majority languages. Looking at National FM, of course the radio station is trying but a particular minority language only goes on air, if the presenter of that particular language is at work, which means, if the presenter is off for the whole week, that particular language will not be heard on National FM. Most of the programmes on both stations are not interactive and do not allow minority language speakers to participate in the broadcasting of content that is meant for them. One can also give an example of a gospel programme that plays on ZBC Television, entitled Alumbwe Leza which is a Tonga term, meaning praise the Lord. The programme is presented in minority languages but the songs that play on that particular show are all Ndebele and Shona, which leaves one wondering, whether there are no songs from the minority linguistic groups. Content analysis of National FM reveals that, Shona and Ndebele is still predominantly spoken in some of the so called minority language programmes. It also reveals that, the programming is not good enough to have a significant impact on minority language speakers and even the distribution of air play on programmes is not done equally among the minority languages, as some minority languages are broadcast more frequently, as compared to others.

CONCLUSION

The effective use minority languages in the Zimbabwean media has the potential of revitalising them and making them as visible as Shona and Ndebele. This study examined the representation of minority languages by ZBC Television and National FM. The study concludes that the two broadcasting stations have not afforded minority languages adequate broadcasting space. Although National FM covers minority languages better than ZBC Television, both broadcasting stations are failing to adequately represent minority languages. Minority language programming on both stations is characterised by infrequency, limited genres and poor scheduling. It was established that, there are a number of factors that hinder ZBC Television and National FM from adequately representing minority languages. One of these, is lack of government funding, which has forced the two public service broadcasters to pursue commercial interests, at the expense of minority language representation. The other hindrances include, the failure of ZBC radio and television signals to reach areas inhabitated by the bulk of minority language speakers, as well as underrepresentation of minority language speakers in key broadcasting media positions. This study therefore, proposes that, the entire minority language broadcasting policies and programming structures at both ZBC Television and National FM, should be radically transformed, so as to give birth to well researched, informative, educative and entertaining programmes. The study further proposes the establishment of community radio stations, as a long lasting solution to the under-representation of minority languages in the media. However, the nation should not be content, with the mere creation of community radio stations but also ensure their capacitation, so that they become viable and vibrant minority language based radio stations.

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