

Educational Broadcasting and Local Languages in South East Nigeria: The Effectiveness in Safeguarding the Endangered Igbo Language

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.70905>

Received: 10 July 2023; Revised: 20 August 2023; Accepted: 28 August 2023; Published: 26 September 2023

ABSTRACT

The broadcast media use indigenous languages in presenting some programmes in south east Nigeria yet, the level of patronage of some of these languages by indigenes or inhabitants of the regions where these languages operate especially the Igbo indigenous language remains grossly low. Worrying also is the fact that UNESCO has enlisted the Igbo language as one of the Nigerian languages that is endangered. This study examines the use of educational broadcasting as a viable tool in safeguarding and developing the Igbo indigenous languages in south east Nigeria. The objectives of this study are to: determine the extent to which the broadcast media programmes on indigenous language have contributed in the awareness level of endangered language in southeast states Nigeria, find out if there are broadcast media programmes that educate the audience on how to speak, read and write the Igbo Language and ascertain other factors responsible for the poor usage of the Igbo language in the south east Nigeria. Survey research design was used with 379 copies of questionnaire as the major instrument of data collection. Two theories were used for the study; the development media and the Agenda setting theories. Enugu Metropolis was used as the case study. Data generated were analyzed using simple percentages and frequency distribution tables. Chi-square was used to test the hypothesis. Findings from the study are discussed within the context of much larger body of knowledge on educational broadcasting and the link with endangered Igbo language.

Key words: Educational, broadcasting, challenges, indigenous, Igbo, endangered and languages.

INTRODUCTION

Education means to embrace all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will' (Okafor, 1987) in (Aderibigbe, 2013, p. 53). It is equally defined as the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, beliefs, and habits. Thus, education involves the gradual development of an individual, a society and a whole nation at large. It embraces the enlargement of a man's understanding of himself and of the universe in which he exists. Going by these definitions, we can suffix that education, is a two way thing hence, for education to take place there must be two parties; the one that facilitates and makes it easy and the one that gains. On the other hand, education has become almost a culture in virtually every society be it developed or underdeveloped. If this is so, it then means that education equally entails learning of or about the culture of a people, its development and preservation. The global world is filled with diverse people with diverse culture and one of the basic elements of culture which helps to enhance the understanding of these different cultures is the language.

Language on the other hand is the universal index of a people's culture. It is the nitty gritty of the totality of the life of a people. Ani (2007, p. 9) believes strongly that, "the place of language in any human endeavour cannot be replaced with anything else and this is so because of the central nature of language in human history." Concisely, language has been defined by the Oxford advanced learners dictionary (2000, p. 664)

as, ‘the use by the humans as a system of sounds and words to communicate’. It went further to say that, ‘it is a particular style of speaking or writing’. Also, the Hamlyn Encyclopaedic World Dictionary (1979, p.839) defines language as, ‘communication by voice in the distinctly human manner, using arbitrary auditory symbols as used in a more or less uniform fashion by a number of people who are thus enabled to communicate intelligibly with one another.’ Invariably, every people, society or nation has its own local language which distinctly identifies it from the others and makes it a complete whole of its own.

Nigeria as a nation is made up of diverse people with different cultural beliefs and practices of which language is major. Each of these diverse cultures embraces a wide range of expression from traditional to modern which is in turn, passed on from one generation to another generation. These cultures as Bokova (2011, p. vii) puts it, “are constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity”. Nigeria has about 287 ethnic languages and out of these, only 3 are recognised as the major indigenous languages of the Nation. Amongst these three, one which is the Igbo language is facing serious threat of extinction come 2025 as observed by United Nations Economic and Social Organization (UNESCO). For the records, an endangered language according to UNESCO (2000) is, “a language that is at risk of falling out of use as its speakers die out or shift to speaking another language’. Consequently a language without any young speakers is seriously threatened by extinction. Today in our different homes, in the South East Nigeria, English language has become highly in use in every home and every crèche, nursery and primary schools. The Igbo language of the people has been replaced with English language and whosoever that excels in English language is highly praised (Achu, 2013, p. Xiv). Thus, Uwaechi (2016, p. 2) laments that; “English language is used today at all educational levels and for transacting all government businesses relegating Igbo and all local languages to the background”. Furthermore, Uwaechi emphasised that Igbo language is one of the mother tongues of a significant section of the Nigerian population and something very urgent needs to be done to ensure that this indigenous language is permanently secured and preserved.

In line with the growing demand for increase in knowledge, one of the broadcast media’s basic functions; education seems to have become on the increase both in Nigeria and in the global world. Thus, the broadcast media have been embraced as one of the fastest and major means to educate the widely dispersed audience available in most countries. Through the broadcast media, people acquire new knowledge, attitude and skills, thus enabling them to cope and face the challenges of life. This study therefore examines the effectiveness of educational broadcasting in educating the masses on how to read, write and speak the Igbo language and the need to sustain and safeguard the Igbo language in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

It has been established that the broadcast media employ the use of indigenous languages in presenting some of their programmes. Yet, there is low level of patronage by the primary owners of these languages especially the Igbo language. Also, the absence of absolute transfer of the language from adults to the younger ones puts the Igbo indigenous language at a degree two level of endangerment as classified by (UNESCO, EOLSS 6.20B.10.). Local language researchers like Uwaechi (2016, p. 2) laments that, “ Most primary and secondary schools do not offer Igbo language as a subject on their curriculum thereby setting the stage for the early and slow death of the language. Furthermore, he reveals that, ‘speaking “vernacular” in class at most secondary schools is a punishable offence.’ This glaringly indicates that the Igbo language is truly on the endangered list and if care is not taken may soon become extinct. Research findings from various scholars reveal that majority of children in primary schools particularly those from the South east Nigeria find it very difficult to speak Igbo language; their mother tongue and first language. This is inimical to national development as the gradual loss of this language will lead to the country losing a vital part of its culture. Thus, this study examines the use of educational broadcasting as an effective tool in safeguarding Igbo language both in oral and written aspect.

Objectives

In a broader view, this study seeks to advance studies on overcoming the challenges facing Igbo language in Nigeria using educational broadcasting but specifically, this study aims to:

1. Determine the extent to which the broadcast media programmes on indigenous language have contributed in the awareness level of endangered language in southeast states
2. Find out if there are broadcast media programmes that educate the audience on how to speak, read and write the Igbo
3. Ascertain other factors responsible for the poor usage of the Igbo language in the south east

Research Questions:

The research questions which will guide this study are as follows:

1. To what extent has the broadcast media programmes on indigenous languages contributed in the awareness level of endangered languages in southeast states Nigeria?
2. Are there broadcast media programmes that educate the audience on how to speak, read and write the Igbo Language?
3. What are other factors responsible for the poor usage of the Igbo language in the south east Nigeria?

Hypothesis

H01: The level of awareness of the respondents that Igbo Language is an endangered language is not significantly influenced by gender.

H02: The perception on the participation of broadcast media stations in South East Nigeria in promoting and safeguarding the Igbo language is not significantly influenced by the age of the respondents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review:

Simply put, educational broadcasting is the transmission of educational programmes through radio waves from a television or radio station or any other broadcast device, to the audience in different places both distant and near (Aderibigbe, 2013, p. 48). Educational broadcasting is not new in Nigeria; it is dated as far back as October 31, 1959, when Western Education Nigeria Television (WNTV) was established. Then, education was seen as one of the main reasons for introducing television and radio in Nigeria. According to Onabajo (2000, p. 15), 'time and facilities were made available to the then regional ministry of education which in turn directed its school broadcasting unit to produce series of educational broadcasts.' This was also done in other regions in the country.

Till date, and with the coming of privately owned broadcasting stations, a lot has been achieved through educational broadcasting in the country. It has been noted for its effectiveness in different types of education for instance, children's, adult and mass education. It is a vital tool in a nation's development process. In Nigeria, educational broadcasting has been used in mass education in the past for instance, currency change, Traffic change, National census, and in the recent awareness creation on the millennium development goals (MDGs), Ebola outbreak and prevention and education on the new election processes. Therefore, the issue of educational broadcasting as an effective tool for sustaining the Igbo indigenous language should be taken very serious.

The National education policy of Nigeria (1981, p. 97) clearly stipulates, that the first three years of the elementary education be in the mother tongue. The formulators of this policy clearly had in mind the fact

that children are the future of our tomorrow and that they have been made the rightful ones to receive the mantle of our cultural heritage hence, the reason for this impressive provision. However, what is obtainable in our primary schools is grossly contrary to this provision. Plainly, the primary school is the starting point of education for a Nigerian child regardless of the fact that there are proliferations of crèche nursery schools; and more so, it is not every child that gets the privilege to attend a crèche. Aderibigbe (2013, p. 48) confirms that 'Primary education as regards the 6-3-3-4 system of education is the elementary type of education for children between ages 6 to 11 years. This is the "foundation of education upon which all others are built". It therefore determines the success or failure of the whole system, (National Policy on Education, 1981, p. 97). For the purpose of this study our working definition of an Igbo Nigerian child will be as adopted by Aderibigbe (2013, p. 48) above, 'between the ages of 6 and 11 for broadcast purposes'.

Radio and television are the most powerful means of education man has ever developed. Expatriating more, Onabajo (2000, p. 61) maintains that, "there is a general acceptance to the fact that they can make a profoundly significant contribution to an improved quality of education for children, youths and adults". Hence, for the purpose of this study, the broadcast media will only be limited to radio and television which is very accessible to all, rich and poor, educated and uneducated. In this light, educational broadcasting is stalwart in education especially at the primary and secondary school level as this will assist teachers handling skill based courses which require detailed teaching and adequate practices before meaningful knowledge can be imparted to the large number of students waiting to acquire desired knowledge. Thus, In Nigeria, the broadcast media have continued to educate people both in formal and informal ways hence, educational broadcasting can comfortably satisfy the needs of children in need of education, adults in search of education, men and women in urban areas and rural areas.

From the foregoing, educational broadcasting has not been fully employed in preserving the endangered Igbo indigenous language of the south east Nigeria. Uwaechi (2016, p. 2) bewails that, "the picture is grim and worrisome" but, unfortunately, a lot of people and governments seem not bothered that most indigenous languages are either endangered or have gone extinct". The language of a people is like a precious stone that cannot be traded with anything more or less endangered or threatened by extinction. Thus, every community or group should endeavour to preserve its indigenous language as it gives the community its ultimate identity in time and space. Hence, Brenzinger (UNESCO EOLSS 6.20B.10.), stipulates that, "indigenous language is very prime to other disciplines, such as anthropology, archaeology, history and prehistory". Continuing he says, for regions in which no written historical accounts exist, languages becomes a source of eminent importance for the reconstruction of cultural history. Language comparison and reconstruction may provide insights into certain aspects of the history and prehistory of a region.

Empirical Review

Research findings reveal that the magnitude of challenges the Igbo language faces today is as a result of backlog of effects of world revolution which resulted in a lot of changes in the way of life of people and their societies. Indeed, Africa and invariably the Igbo society has been overrun by a world revolution and a new and speedy tune is playing from the cask of science and technology, mass media, schools, universities, cities and towns. It is a total change and one which affects all spheres of life including language of course (Mbiti, 1980, p. 2216). On the level of the whole society, this change has been described as 'detrribalization' (Mbiti, 1980, p.2216). This means that traditional life is deeply undermined, such that tribal identity is fading away since other identities are making claims on the individual and the community'. Hence the tribal identity of the Igbo society epitomized in our language cannot be allowed to be eroded by our laissez-faire approach towards the treasure bestowed on us by nature itself.

Duru (2014, P. 47) in her research reveals that the problem facing the Igbo language is total neglect of the language all round. She sees this predicament as, 'the Igbo nations apparent descent into linguistic extinction,' which, if nothing is done decisively and urgently in the next 50 years, may lead to the death of the Igbo language. The in-depth perception of this perturbing issue and the need to proffer solution to it lead

Duru to the formation of an organisation known as the ‘Save Igbo from Extinction’ group (SIFE).

Achu (2013, p. 67) in his book *Igbo culture in disarray* maintains that, “the Igbo language is no longer handed on to the children and people now regard the Igbo values as debasing”. Also, “When we look at the Igbo culture today especially in the areas of language...we will discover that these aspects are almost going extinct (Achu, 2013, p. xi). He makes a clarion call for cultural revitalization and balance through the collective effort of “*Odenigbo*” (*all Igbo people*) in order to promote Igbology (the study of Igbo language culture and history) in today’s world.

Aitchison (1981) and McMahon (1994) in (Ore, 2005, p.5), stipulates that, ‘language death could be as a result of murder or suicide’. It is suicide when in contact situation languages with some degree of similarities eat each other up. The less prestigious language borrowing extensively from the more prestigious one and in the end the lower is submerged in the larger. Furthermore, it is language murder when by policy some speech communities are forced to adopt a major language, language of immediate environment. It does not matter if the murder is coerced or rewarded such that the victim embraces it. Ore (2005, p. 8) calls for an attempt to a revival of the moribund languages for the advantages of good representation of the lores and wisdom inherent in our local languages and identification for the original owners of this language.

In the light of the above, could it then be said that the Igbo indigenous language is gradually being murdered or facing some suicidal mission in line with the alarm raised by UNESCO? The prediction by UNESCO concerning the possible extinction of the Igbo language can be proven in respect to the nine core factors identified by UNESCO of which the language situation of endangered languages can be assessed. These factors chosen as indicators were itemised during an International Expert Meeting organized by UNESCO headquarters in Paris in March 2003. These include:

Degree of endangerment

1. Intergenerational language transmission
2. Absolute numbers of speakers
3. Proportion of speakers within the total population
4. Loss of existing language domains
5. Response to new domains and media
6. Material for language education and literacy

In expatiating on the above indicators, Brenzinger (in UNESCO EOLSS 6.20B.10.) further explains that:

Factors from (1) to (6) are applied to assess a language’s vitality and its state of endangerment. The most crucial single factor among them is (1), which determines the extent of language acquisition among the children within a community. It is obvious that a language without any young speakers is seriously threatened by extinction. The dynamics of the processes of a given language shift situation is intended to be captured by (1) to (5). The proportion of speakers within a community (3) reveals an important aspect of language vitality: is the minority language still an essential indicator for being regarded a member of the community or not? Can a person be a member of the community without speaking the heritage language?

From the foregoing, the most worrisome is the number 1 indicator above which has been explained as the most crucial factor which determines the extent of language acquisition among the children within a community obviously, implying that a language without any young speakers is seriously threatened by extinction. The big question especially for scholars who still believe that, ‘because the Igbos populate a vast land mass that the language should be included in the ‘Safe language group’ by UNESCO should have a rethink by answering this question. Is the Igbo language free from the indicators mentioned above? From (1) above we read Intergenerational language transmission as one of the indicators of endangered language and Brenzinger (1998) in (UNESCO EOLSS 6.20B.10.) throws more light to it and explains it as that, “which

determines the extent of language acquisition among the children within a community”. Also Haruna (2006, p.7) confirms this when he says that, “a language is endangered if the youngest speakers are young adults and there are no or very few child speakers”. Hence, there is no gainsaying reiterating the obvious. Uwaechi (2016, p.12) observes that; ‘English language is used today at all educational levels and for transacting all government businesses relegating Igbo and all local languages to the background’. Furthermore, he emphasises that Igbo language is one of the mother tongues of a significant section of the Nigerian population and something very urgent needs to be done to ensure that this indigenous language is permanently secured and preserved. The National Education Policy (1981, p. 97) of Nigeria attempted to forestall this when it states that, “For the reason of the educational well being of the child, the first three years of the elementary education be in the mother tongue or an alternative of the language of the immediate environment”. But, this policy has not been recognised by the primary education sector in Nigeria and with the proliferation of privately and religiously owned schools the case has become worse. However, Yusuf (2006, p.6) opposes this as he maintains that, “the language of immediate environment alternative in the language policy is a disservice to the minority language child since if the child is not already bilingual, he is being forced to switch to another language which may be Greek or Eskimo”.

In another vein, O’Neil (2006) believes that, “language evolves in response to changing historical and social conditions. Some language transformations typically occur in a generation or less”. This study concurs with the above assertion especially as he; O’Neil above gives instance that, ‘the slang words used by our parents were very likely different from those we use today’. Be that as it may, the fact remains that with the current wave of the tremendous rapid change in the media world and technological advancement, there will be cultural changes that invariable will influence the language. However, the change should not be that of extinction but rather that of development as this may result in gradual loss of identity which will not be good for the Nigerian nation. Hence, the Igbo language is fast losing its oral literary genre and seriously being threatened by extinction, serious measures therefore have to be taken to forestall it. Written aspect of the language must therefore be promoted as this is the only form of documentation for the Igbo language.

From the foregoing, findings have revealed a serious gap in literature where there is dearth of researches on how the broadcast media can be used to revive and restore the waning Igbo indigenous language. It has been established that the broadcast media has the primary function of cultural transmission from one generation to the other and the basic tool for achieving this indispensable continuity of beliefs, norms and values is the use of language indigenous to the people of whom the programme is meant for; the target audience. Educational broadcasting can be fully employed to educate the people on how to read, write and speak the Igbo language following the school curriculum of both primary and secondary schools. Language is the highest form of expression of the culture of a people; it is their identity. Language excites and induces a sense of belonging among its speakers.

The use of local language on air is one of the ways broadcast stations adopt to attract and sustain its audience loyalty and then pass the required information to them as at when due. In line with the above, this study aims to fill the gap in study by examining how educational broadcasting can be effectively employed to overcome the challenges facing the Igbo languages in Nigeria and the south east to be precise.

The Igbos and the Igbo language.

The Igbo person is a free and responsible member of the Igbo society, capable of making decisions. They occupy the South Eastern part of Nigeria and majorly comprise of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. In Igbo society, moral values are highly placed. The highest decision making body is the *oha na eze* (village assembly) followed by the village elders and the *otu nze na ozu* (title holders) hence the saying *Igbo enwe eze* (Igbo has no king). The basic agent of socialization is the family hence traditional education (informal education) is used to position the child in the society prior to formal education. The core teachings include; good character development, respect for elders and to understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community.

Farming, *ite nkwu* (palm wine tapping) and *ichu nta* (hunting) are the original occupation of the people. Major festivals are *iri ji ofuu*, (new yam festival), *mmanwu* (masquerade) festival, *ichu aro* (New Year) and *igu aha* (child naming) ceremonies. Exchange of goods and services were done in any of the four market days that guides the market traditions, these include: *Eke, Oria Afor and Nkwo*. The traditional Igbo man is religious in nature; hence he begins anything he wants to do with prayers using his *ofo* (sacred stick) and *oji* (*kola nut*) he prays to *chukwuokike* (*God of creation*) for prosperity, progress and divine protection from his enemies, and with his *nkwu ocha* (palm wine) pours libation to his ancestor; a ritual that is performed every morning.

The Igbo language is the language of the Igbo man. It is rich in proverbs, idioms, symbols, wise sayings and world view expressions. Achu (2013, p. 68) explains that, "Before Igbo modern alphabet, there was an indigenous writing called *Nsibidi* which was used for communication among the people in order to facilitate business and other forms of interaction". *Nsibidi* was an indigenous development of Igbo creativity devoid of any foreign contribution. It is a symbolic communication of thought and ideas put in written form *Nsibidi* form of writing looked similar to hierographic form of writing developed by the ancient Egyptians (Achu, 2013, p. 69). Today the Igbo language has developed from *Nsibidi* to having a modern day alphabet: *a b c h d e f g g b g h g w h i i j k k p k w l m n n n w n y o o p r s s h t u u v w y z*, all to be credited to efforts of great Igbo language and culture scholars such as: Tony Ubesie, F.C Ogbalu, Prof. Emmanuel Obiechina, Prof. Donnatus Nwoga, Prof. Kenneth Dike, Prof. B.N. Okigbo, Prof. A.E. Afigbo, Prof. V.C Uchendu and Prof. B.O. Nwabueze. Studies in Igbo language should be taken further the lane and seriously so that the works of these renowned intellectuals will not be in vain.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It has been noted that the broadcast media can create awareness and induce change in attitude towards any particular cause especially as it concerns national development. Kogah (2007:143) believes that, the end of communication education is to educate people and build institutions that can assist and support society by systematic use of methods and technology for developing the society in the areas of health, agriculture...education. This goal he concludes has socio-cultural implication. In this light, Going by Folarines (2002) in (Emeafor, 2014, p. 91) tenets of the development media theory as it relates to this study, that the media should accept and carry out positive developmental task in line with nationally established policy... and secondly, that the media should accept and carry out the special development task of national integration socioeconomic modernisation, promotion of literacy and cultural creativity. The development media theory therefore, provides a standpoint for the promotion of literacy and cultural creativity on the topical issue of endangered language and ways to go about it.

The Agenda setting theory states that the media dictate what the people think about, not what the people think. Agenda- Setting theory is based on the fact that media set agenda through the particular news stories and other kinds of information selected for publication or airing as well as the prominence or importance attributed to such stories and information. Through this they also pre-determine what issues are regarded more important and which are less important in the society at any given time (Folarin, 2002, p.14). Agenda-setting theory is also based on the assumption that the media filter and shape reality and concentrate on some issues and subjects leading the public to perceive those issues as more important than others (Nwaolike, 2014, p.12). In most countries cultural issues are played out in the media as it is perceived to be important. Language which is an indigenous intangible cultural heritage is employed to attract viewership or listenership as the case may be and keep their loyalty; hence, the media can play a key agenda-setting role in sustaining the Igbo local languages.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design and content analysis were used in this study. These choices were made because

the methods were perceived as most suitable approaches to obtain the desired response and information needed in proffering solution to the issue at hand. The population for this study was derived from the three local government areas (LGAs) that make up Enugu metropolis. These include: Enugu East, Enugu South and Enugu North.

Enugu Metropolis is made up of three local government areas (LGA) was stratified according to the geographic placement of the local government with each local government serving as strata. The stratification is necessary because of the level of urbanization of the local governments which differs from one local government to the other. However, each local government is made up of streets with street numbers assigned to the buildings for easy identification. The local governments are Enugu East with a total of 227,119 buildings, Enugu North with 242,140 buildings and Enugu South with 198, 032 buildings. Therefore, there is a total of 667, 291 buildings comprising of residential houses, offices, stores, workshops, etc. within the metropolis.

Cochran's formula for sample size estimation was used to obtain a sample of 384 buildings for the study. Proportional allocation was used to assign 131 buildings to Enugu East, 139 buildings to Enugu North and 114 buildings to Enugu South in proportion to the population of each local government. Since the streets are connected based on the street city plan, systematic sampling with sampling interval of 1737 buildings was used to locate the respondents. That means, every 1737th building was included in the sample. The list of streets and their street numbers was obtained from the Town Planning Office of each local government Secretariat.

The Cochran formula for sample size selection is given by

$$n = \frac{t^2 (p)(q)}{d^2}$$

where n = sample size, t = the abssica from the normal table at chosen level of significance which is 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, p = population proportion which is usually unknown and therefore, middle value of 0.5 is recommended, $q = 1 - p = 0.5$ and d = margin of error (level of precision) which is chosen to be 0.05 for this study to correspond with the level of significance.

Enugu metropolis was chosen to represent the entire region because of its central status to the development of the region. Enugu metropolis was the headquarter of the old Eastern region (presently South East region) of Nigeria and still retains the structures and status of the oldest city in the region. The metropolis accounts for people from all the five states in the South East region, who are mainly civil servants, business owners, company workers, private employees, entrepreneurs, artisans, etc., boast of the only international airport in the region and remains the safest and most serene city in the region.

Data Presentation, Analyses and Discussion of Findings

This segment shows the breakdown of data gathered in relation to the broadcast media and the Igbo endangered language in south east Nigeria. A total of 384 copies of the questionnaire were distributed but, 379 were recovered. This reduced the total from 384 to 379 and this no of respondents were considered a good number.

Table 1: Sex of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	177	47
Female	202	53
Total	379	100

From the above table, 177(47%) respondents were male while 202 (53%) respondents were female. This result shows that there were more female than male in this study.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

Age (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15-35	113	30
36-45	105	27
46-55	100	26
56-65	62	16
65-above	—	
Total	379	100

Table 2 above shows that 113(30%) respondents fall within 15-35 years, 105(27%) fall within 36-45 years while, 100 (26%) fall within the age categories of 46-55 years and 62(16%) were within 56-65 years bracket. This shows that majority of the respondents were within the prime age of good reasoning.

Table 3: Educational qualification of Respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary school	23.	6%
Secondary School	31	8
Higher Diploma/OND/NCE	141	37
University degree	171	45
No formal education	13	3
Total	379	100

In the above table, 23(6%) respondents has primary school education, 31(8%) has secondary school education while 141(37%) respondents has higher diploma education and 171(45%) respondents were university degree holders and 13(3%) had no formal education. This result indicates that majority of the respondents are educated members of the society who can make reliable contributors to the study.

Research Question1: *To what extent have the broadcast media programmes on indigenous languages contributed in the awareness level of endangered languages in South East states Nigeria?*

Table 4: Response on whether respondents patronize the broadcast media (radio & TV)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	235	62
No	99	26
Can't say	48	12
Total	379	100

In line with data in table 4 above, 235(62%) respondents said “Yes” that they patronize the broadcast media while 99(26%) respondents said “No” that they do not and 48 (12%) respondents could not say whether they do. This result shows that majority of the respondents were audience of the broadcast media who either watch TV or listen to the radio.

Table 5: Response on how often respondents patronize the broadcast media

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Often	107	28
Not often	55	15
Very often	155	40
Not very often	22	6
Not sure	40	11
Total	379	100

From the above table, 107 (28%) respondents indicate that they patronize the broadcast media often, 55(15%) said not often, 155 (40%) said very often. While, 22 (6%) respondents said not very often and 40(11%) were not sure how often they patronized the broadcast media. From the foregoing, a good number of the respondents more than half, 60% patronize the broadcast media to a high level (often 28% and very often 40%). This puts them in a good position to proffer answers to questions raised in this study.

Table 6: Response on whether the terms endangered language sound new to respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	68	18
No	265	70
Not Sure	46	12
Total	379	100

Table 6 shows that 68(18%) respondents maintain “yes” that the terms endangered language sound new to them while 265(70%) said “No” that the terms do not sound new to them with 46(12%) respondents not

being sure about the terms. Thus, since majority of the respondents said that the terms do not sound new to them, it means that people are conversant with the terms.

Table 7: Responses on awareness of Igbo Language as an endangered language as forecast by UNESCO.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	235	62
No	101	27
Not sure	43	11
Total	379	100

The above table analyses the awareness of the respondents on Igbo Language as an endangered language, 235(62%) respondents are aware that UNESCO has enlisted the Igbo Language in their endangered language list, 101 (27%) were not aware and 43(11%) were not sure. This result shows that majority of the respondents are aware that the Igbo language is an endangered Language.

Table 8: Response on the programme format respondents get most information on the endangered Igbo Language from.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
News	199	53
Documentary	—	—
Drama	47	12
Television Commercial	—	—
Jingles	67	18
Interviews	30	7
Discussions	36	10
Any other	—	—
Total	379	100

From the above table, 199 (53%) respondents confirm that they get most information about the endangered Igbo Language through news, none for documentary, while drama 47(12%), Television commercial none, jingles 67 (18%) interviews 30 (7%) discussions 36(10%) and none for any other. This shows that the media do not make use of in-depth analysis, documentaries, drama, discussions forums in airing programmes on Igbo endangered language and this implies that the audience cannot participate and hence there will not be complete understanding of the topical issue. Hence majority of the respondents get most information on Igbo endangered language through news and the broadcast media have not adequately utilized other formats in packaging programmes on endangered Igbo language in the South East Nigeria.

Table 9: Respondents opinion on whether the broadcast media have little or nothing to do in terms of endangered Igbo Language.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	28	7
Strongly Agree	34	10
Disagree	85	22

Strongly disagree	205	54
Not sure	27	7
Total	379	100

From the above table, 28(7%) respondents agree with the statement that the broadcast media has little or nothing to do in terms of endangered language, 34(10%) strongly agree while, 85 (22%) disagree and 205 (54%) strongly disagreed with the statement that the broadcast media has nothing to do with endangered languages and 27 (7%) respondents were not sure. This result shows that majority of the respondents understand the role of the media.

Research question 2: Are there broadcast media programmes that educate the audience on how to speak, read and write the Igbo Language?

Table 10: Response on how often broadcast media stations in respondent’s state discuss Igbo Language as an endangered Language in their programmes.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Often	101	27
Not often	97	25
Very Often	56	15
Not very often	112	30
Not sure	13	3
Total	379	100

The table above shows that out of 379 respondents 101 (27%) claim that the broadcast media in their states often discuss Igbo Language as an endangered Language while, 97 (25%) said they do not often discuss it, 112 (30%) said they do not very often discuss it and 56 (15%) said they discuss it very often and 13(3%) were not sure. This shows the endangered Igbo language issue have not been given the prominence that it requires by the broadcast media.

Table 11: Response on if there is any program on radio or TV which specifically teaches the audience how to read, write or speak the Igbo Language.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	4
No	256	68
Not sure	108	28
Total	379	100

Table 11 reveals that 256 (68%) respondents said that there is no program on radio or TV in their states which teach the audience how to write, read or speak the Igbo Language while 15(4%) said yes that there is and 108 (28%) were not sure. This shows that the media do not hold the Igbo language in high regard thus they have not adequately projected in the minds of people in the south east Nigeria.

Table 12: Response on whether respondents have participated in any caller/phone-in program on broadcast media where the audience is allowed to air their views on endangered Igbo Language issue.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes		
No	287	75
Not Sure	92	24
Total	379	100

In table 12 above, 287 (75%) respondents reveal that they have not participated in any caller or phone in program where audience is allowed to air their views on the endangered Igbo Language while No respondent said ‘Yes’ and 92 (24%) respondents were not sure. This still confirms the above that the media in the south east have not really project the Igbo language.

Table 13: Response on whether respondents are satisfied with the extent broadcast media stations have addressed the endangered Igbo Language issue in their state.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	18	5
No	277	73
Not Sure	84	22
Total	379	100

From the above table, 18 (5%) respondents said Yes that they are satisfied with the extent broadcast media stations have addressed the endangered Igbo Language issue in their states while, 277 (73%) respondents said No that they are not satisfied and 84(22%) were not sure. This means that the media in the south east are lacking in their social responsibility role since the media is supposed to represent every aspect of our society and language is a major aspect of our culture.

Table 14: Respondents evaluation of the broadcast media stations in the Southeast in the campaign to safeguard the endangered Igbo Language.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent		
Good	36	9
Fair	179	47
Poor	108	29
Not sure	56	15
Total	379	100

In the above table 36(9%) respondents rate the performance of the media “good”, 179 (47%) give it fair while 108 (29%) rates it “poor”. 56(15%) respondents were not sure. This means that the broadcast media still has a lot to do as regards the endangered Igbo language because “fair” is not a creditable rating.

Research question three: *What are other factors responsible for the poor usage of the Igbo language in the south east Nigeria?*

Table 15: Response on other factors responsible for the poor usage of the Igbo language in the south east Nigeria?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of interest of the original owners	91	24
Lack of relevance to the speakers	30	8
Ignorance on the part of the owners	10	3
Lack of trained linguists	10	2.6
Urbanization	21	6
All of the above	217	57
None of the above	–	–
Total	379	100

In table 15 above, 91(24%) respondents said lack of interest is another factor responsible for the poor usage of Igbo language in the South East, 30(8%) said lack of relevance to the speakers, 10(3%) said ignorance, 10(2.6) also said lack of trained linguists, 21(6%) said urbanization, 217(57%) said all of the above while none was for none of the above. This result shows that the respondents do not have adequate knowledge about the challenges facing the endangered Igbo language in the South East Nigeria.

Content analysis of programme schedules of select broadcast media stations in the south east Nigeria

Table 16: Percentage comparison of daily occurrence of educational and other TV programmes in the south east stations.

S/N	Format Programme	NTA Awka		NTA Abakaliki		NTA Enugu		Enugu state broadcasting services	
		Freq	Per	Freq	Per	Freq	Per	Freq	Per
1	News	26	24.2%	27	26.5%	26	25.4%	18	24.6%
2	Religion	14	13%	13	12.7%	12	11.7%	13	17.8%
3	Health	6	5.6%	3	2.9%	3	2.9%	3	4.1%
4	Social	28	25.1%	26	25.4%	27	26.4%	15	20.5%
5	Entertainment	14	13%	15	14.1%	18	17.6%	11	15%
6	Educational(educational broadcasting On Igbo language)	6	5.6%	7	6.5%	6	6.5%	3	4%
7	Sports	2	1.8%	4	3.7%	3	2.9%	4	5.4%
8	Business	11	10.3%	7	6.5%	7	6.5%	6	8.2%
Total	=	107	100	102	100	102	100	73	100

As shown in table 16 above, percentage comparison of daily occurrence of educational programmes and other broadcast media programmes in the South East stations was made and result reveal that out of a maximum of 107 occurrences of different programmes aired on Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) stations in the South East, in NTA Awka station, only 6 (5.6%) were educational programmes, in NTA Abakaliki 7 (6.5%), NTA Enugu stations out of 102 occurrences, 6 representing 6.5% educational programmes, in Enugu state broadcasting services out of 73 occurrences 3 (4%) were educational programmes

Table 17: Percentage comparison of daily occurrence of educational and other Radio programmes in the south east stations.

S/N	Programme	Unity FM Ebonyi State		Cool City FM Enugu		Enugu State Broadcasting Services (ESBS)		Anambara state broadcasting service (ABS)	
		Freq	Per	Freq	Per	Freq	Per	Freq	Per
1	News	70	28%	56	26.50%	65	46%	70	28%
2	Religion	30	12.20%	50	23.60%	12	8.50%	11	7.60%
3	Health	16	6.50%	8	3.70%	3	2.10%	5	3.40%
4	Social	32	13.10%	36	17%	27	19.10%	15	10.40%
5	Entertainment	56	22.80%	15	7.10%	18	12.70%	19	13.20%
6	Educational(educational broadcasting on Igbo language)	12	4.80%	22	10.40%	6	4.20%	5	3.40%
7	Sports	12	4.80%	7	3.30%	3	2.10%	4	2.40%
8	Business	17	6.90%	17	8%	7	4.90%	14	9.70%
Total	=	245	100	211	100	141	100	143	100

As shown in table 17 above across the radio stations, out of the 245 programmes aired by Unity FM Ebonyi, 12 (4.8%) were educational programmes, Coal city FM had 22 (10%) out of 211 airings, ESBS 6 (4.2%) out of 141 and ABS had only 5 (3.4%) out of 143. This shows that adequate provision has not been made for educational slot where educational broadcasting for the endangered Igbo language could come in.

Table 18: Contingency table for gender and level of awareness.

Gender of respondents		Perception of media involvement in safeguarding Igbo language				Total
		Not sure	Poor	Fair	Good	
	Male	22	17	102	36	177
	Female	51	69	49	33	202
Total		73	86	151	69	379

Table 19: Contingency table for age and level of awareness.

Age of respondents		Perception of media involvement in safeguarding Igbo language				Total
		Not sure	Poor	Fair	Good	
	15 – 35 years	5	9	76	23	113
	36 – 45 years	22	22	44	17	105
	46 – 55 years	24	39	21	16	100
	56 – 65 years	22	16	10	13	61
Total		73	86	151	69	379

Pearson Chi-square = 86.045, df = 9, P-value = 0.000

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In line with the data gathered, presented and analysed, the following findings were revealed. It is evident that As regards research question one, majority of the respondents, 62% patronize the broadcast media, with 68% regular viewers/listeners hence, the terms endangered languages do not sound new to them since through broadcast media programmes they have become conversant with the terms. Also, majority of the respondents 62% are aware that UNESCO has enlisted the Igbo language as an endangered language. Thus, we can conclude that the broadcast media programmes have to an extent contributed in the awareness level of endangered language issues in the states in South East Nigeria. Furthermore, the fact that respondents 54% strongly disagreed and 22% disagreed with the statement that the media have little or nothing to do in terms of endangered language issue indicated that respondents 76% believe strongly that the media have an active role to play in endangered language issues. Therefore, since the media sets agenda on topical issues and in line with the development media theory which holds that the media should accept and carry out positive development task along nationally established policy, without prejudice to their traditional function of information, education and entertainment; and that the media should accept and help in carrying out the special development task of national integration, socio-economic modernization, promotion of literacy and cultural creativity, the broadcast media local language programme designers and linguists should engage more in collaborative ventures to give adequate attention in preserving our local languages to forestall their death and gradual extinction , even as Time magazine (1997:47) echoes that, “Language imminent demise is when its no longer spoken by children. It cuts the cords of linguistic transmission between generations and when the elders die, their language dies with them”.

The study provided a forum for respondents to disclose the predominant programme format which programme designers employ in designing most information on broadcast media programmes on endangered languages in the South East Nigeria. Findings also reveal that the predominant programme format is news 53%. News cast is ephemeral and does not give details about issues even when it is presented in local language because the timing is very short and comprehension of what is being said is sometime lost. Hence, broadcast media programmes on endangered languages should be presented through different programme formats such as drama, jingles, documentary, discussion forums and so on. Using these formats will enable effective transmission of messages such that all; both literate and the uneducated members of the society will be abreast of the topical issue. In line with the above, the rating results show that the broadcast media do not often discuss Igbo Language as an endangered Language as seen in the 25% not often and 30% not very often of the responses. This shows that the discussion level is to a very small extent. Hence, as confirmed by (68%) respondents, there is no specific programme on radio or TV stations in the states which teaches the audience how to write, read or speak the Igbo Language. This percentage distribution is very unsatisfactory and indicates that local language issues do not have equal percentage distribution with other programmes and as such does not receive the expected attention that will create enough awareness and

increase knowledge in respect to endangered issues and cultural language.

Visibly, results from the study indicate that the rate of discussion of endangered language issue by broadcast media stations in the South East is very low. This is evident by the record which shows that majority of the respondents 75% have not participated in any caller or phone-in programme where audience is allowed to air their views on the endangered Igbo Language issue. Also, the fact that some respondents singled out the options of other factors responsible for the poor usage of the Igbo language in the South East Nigeria as causal factors instead of the “all of the above option” indicates that there is gross lack of knowledge in cultural issues. This revelation is quite disturbing. However, 57% respondents were able to identify Ignorance, Lack of interest of the original owners, Lack of relevance to the speakers, Ignorance on the part of the owners of the language, Lack of trained linguists, and Urbanisation as other factors responsible for the poor usage of the Igbo language in the South East Nigeria. Thus, the extent to which broadcast media stations have addressed Igbo endangered language issues is quite unsatisfactory as confirmed by, 73% respondents.

In all, the performance of broadcast media stations in the South East in the educating the general public particularly children to reduce or prevent the loss or death of the Igbo language is graded “Fair” and this is not creditable considering the fact that the term “Fair” is a very poor rating. Therefore, since it has already been established that the media is fully involved in this topically issue, the chances that the Igbo language can be reverberate through educational broadcasting will make for easy transmission to the children and also root it firmly on the tongues of its original speakers and other well meaning Nigerians, foreigners and other lovers of Igbo language.

Test of Hypotheses

Analysis of Hypotheses and Summary of Results

The two hypotheses were analyzed using the Chi-square measure of association.

Hypothesis One

The respondents’ perception of the participation of broadcast media stations in South East Nigeria in promoting and safeguarding the Igbo language is not significantly influenced by the gender of the respondents.

The Chi-square value for hypothesis one is 60.309 with p-value of 0.000 at 3 degrees of freedom. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$) at which the hypothesis was tested, the null hypothesis is rejected, which implies that gender has significant influence on the respondents’ perception of Southeast broadcast media stations’ participation in promoting and safeguarding the Igbo language. A quick look at the frequency counts in Table 1 reveals that proportion of males who feel that the media stations are doing at least fairly in safeguarding the Igbo language is 0.78 while that of males who feel the same way is 0.41. These results clearly show that most of the male respondents perceive that the broadcast media stations in Southeast are doing fairly well in safeguarding the Igbo language while most of the female respondents have contrary perception. This disparity could be attributed to the fact that the mothers (female respondents) has upper hand in children upbringing and therefore make greater use of the language in raising the children.

Hypothesis Two

The perception on the participation of broadcast media stations in South East Nigeria in promoting and safeguarding the Igbo language is not significantly influenced by the age of the respondents.

The Chi-square value in Table 2 is 86.045 with p-value of 0.000 at 9 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis was rejected since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$). Hence, age is an influencing factor on how the respondents perceive the participation of the broadcast media houses on safeguarding the Igbo language in Southeast; Nigeria. This is obvious from the frequency counts of the

respondents by age bracket. The proportion of respondents from 15 to 45 years who perceive that the broadcast media houses are at least doing well in safeguarding the Igbo language is 0.73 while the proportion of the respondents from 46 years and above who perceive that the media stations in the Southeast are doing fairly well is 0.37. It is obvious that the elderly generation is not impressed with the efforts of the media houses in safeguarding the Igbo language. The younger generation thinks otherwise. However, in my opinion, the elderly generation knows better.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, the Igbo language has not been adequately projected by the broadcast media in the South East Nigeria thus, the media are lacking in their social responsibility role of representing all aspects of the society. Also effective use of different programme formats such as in-depth analysis, documentaries, drama, discussions forums in airing programmes on the endangered Igbo language issue have not been fully adopted by the broadcast media. This does not augur well for the Igbo language since the audience cannot participate and be carried along on issues bordering on safe guard of the Igbo language.

Language is an integral part of culture. Once it is sequestered from culture, the folk media and the culture becomes lost. All Cultures are built on profoundly embedded sets of values, norms, assumptions and beliefs and these are majorly expressed through the language. Hence, Language like all living things, depend on their environment to survive and when a language is no longer spoken , it's like pinning a dead butterfly On a board , you have interrupted the chain of life'' (Time Magazine 1997:46-47). Thus, every society or people should endeavour to preserve and sustain their languages. Toeing the Agenda setting and development media theories which are the premise of this study, the media should redouble their effort as regards the function of promotion of literacy and cultural creativity, thus broadcast media programme designers on Language and cultural issues should engage more in awareness campaigns and educating programmes that specifically teach the linguistics of Igbo language to ensure the safeguard of the Igbo language. This study recommends that further research should be carried out to ascertain the level of campaign by the broadcast media programmes in overcoming the challenges facing Igbo language in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings above, the following recommendations were made:

1. The broadcast media whose sole function is to set agenda on topical issues in line with National issues should come up with constant educational programmes that will continuously create awareness, increase knowledge, sensitize and remind viewers of the Igbo language They should specifically come up with programmes that teach the audience how to speak, read and write the Igbo language. This programme should be a 30 minutes programme that will be on broadcast at least two times a week.
2. The government should create scholarship programmes for educational broadcasters and primary school teachers who are willing to be trained as trainees in Igbo This is because mastery of the Igbo language will go a long way to enhance the process of imparting it to the younger ones in the classroom or via the broadcast media.
3. The government should upgrade the position given to Igbo language to that of English and mathematics such that before a student qualifies for university education, the person must make an 'A' or 'B' in Igbo
4. Recently, the National institute on culture orientation (NICO) organized a 16 weeks weekend programme on Nigerian indigenous languages in their zonal office in Enugu This programme according to them will accord the participants the benefits of understanding other people's culture and can even save life. Other culture agencies and NGOs should emulate such and join hands in developing and building the Igbo language.
5. The parents have a lot of role to play because they are the custodian of the future. Hence, they must

discard the view that mastery of English language means that their children are intelligent and remember that Igbo language is their children's first language and can save life in some cases and ensure that they do their best to impart this precious mother tongues to their children.

6. There should be live shows where speaker competence can be The telecommunication industries like MTN, GLO, and AIRTEL can buy in on this as part of their social responsibility project. Older speakers of the Igbo language, Umuada and age grade who are well rooted in the use of proverbs, idioms should be employed in the course of the program.
7. Igbo music festivals should be organised annually, this will comprise poetry, singing and storytelling as this will forestall Azuonye's (2002, p. 15) prediction that, only very few monolingual adult deep dialect speakers in remote villages are sufficiently well versed in proverb usage the absence of new recruits into the traditional processes of apprenticeship and training for these roles, it is only a matter of time before the oral literary genres, of Igbo in all its vitality will disappear for good".
8. Igbo language literally club should be established in both primary and secondary Through this forum, essay competitions in Igbo language can be organised and literary prizes can be given to the best performing students with consolation prizes to all who participated.
9. There are other Nigerian languages that may be facing threats of extinction; these languages should also be studied to forestall such

Convincingly, in the words of Azuonye (2002, p.20), for all the afore listed recommendations to be achievable and fruitful in any language rescue, there must first of all be, "some form of consensus that the effort itself is desirable".

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