

American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (AJHSSR)

e-ISSN :2378-703X

Volume-5, Issue-5, pp-408-413

[www.ajhssr.com](http://www.ajhssr.com)

Research Paper

Open Access

## Influence of Radio Igbo Programs on the Sustainance of Igbo Language: A Study of Ozisa FM, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria.

<sup>1</sup>Nkwam-Uwaoma, Adeline PhD , <sup>2</sup>Ojiakor-Umenze, Ifeoma C PhD ,  
<sup>3</sup>Nwanekwu, Eustace C.

<sup>1,2,3</sup>*Department of Mass Communication, Imo State University, Owerri*

**ABSTRACT:** This study sought to investigate the influence of radio Igbo programmes on the sustainance of Igbo language using Ozisa FM, Owerri as a focal point. Agenda setting and language expectancy theories were used as the theoretical framework. The study adopted the survey method research design. Using the Taro Yamane sample size formula, a total of 399 respondents were sampled from the total population of 555,500 residents of Owerri metropolis. Questionnaire served as instrument of data collection. Findings revealed that at an average of 53% residents of Owerri has high level of knowledge on Igbo language based on their exposure to Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio. It was also revealed that an average of 61% of the respondents have positive perception on Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio. It was further revealed that an average of 57% respondents agreed that Ozisa FM Igbo language programmes influenced residents of Owerri positively. It was recommended that, owing to the level of knowledge as a result of exposure to Ozisa FM radio Igbo language programmes, Igbo people should engage in speaking Igbo language especially during conversation in order to keep transferring the knowledge from person to person. Ozisa FM radio station staff should be motivated and encouraged especially the content creators so as to keep producing quality content that can continuously hold the interest of people thereby induce positive perception among the people, and to also keep the station afloat.

**KEYWORDS:** *Radio programmes, Igbo Langauage, Ozisa FM, Owerri*

### I. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, there is an increasing concern about the decline and possible extinction of the Igbo language; a language that is native to the people of South-Eastern Nigeria (Onuzulike, 2014). It is based on this that Okpoko and Chukwu (2016) opined that language is widely regarded as a mark of ethnic identity and that any society that loses her language has as well lost her identity. Igbo language is widely known as one of the three major languages in Nigeria. It is the mode of communication by which all the people of Igbo extraction, especially those inhabiting the geopolitical areas of Ebonyi, Anambra, Abia, Imo and Enugu States interact by way of exchange of ideas, information, opinion and attitude (Didiugwu, 2008).

These days, the people from the Igbo extraction seem to relegate their language. Owing to this disturbing trend, Okpoko and Chukwuka (2016) maintain that Igbo language seems to have been worst hit by colonization, resulting in cultural imperialism. Indeed, Igbo people have gradually relegated their norms and values to the background in their increasing quest for those of the whites. No wonder many Igbo parents do not encourage their children to speak Igbo. Okpoko and Chukwuka (2016) argue further that this colonial mentality has eaten so deep into the speakers of this language that many of them who live in cities or abroad do not understand or speak Igbo language. This nonchalant attitude of the Igbos perhaps informed UNESCO to predict that the language will likely go into extinction in the next fifty (50) years (2003).

It is so disturbing that people, especially the Igbos, prefer to entertain themselves by watching western programmes, and because of that, they are gradually embracing western culture; they now imitate the **western's** way of life, their foods, modes of transport, music, and so on, without regard for the local culture. The Igbos are endowed with abundant rich cultural heritage that are within the diverse ethnic nationalities. Some of these cultural heritages are language, marriage rites, burial rites, birth rites, dressing, greeting, music, folklore, religion, and other tangible cultural monuments, natural sites and cultural landscapes. Some of these cultural practices are gradually fading away due to western cultural influence and therefore need to be revitalized (Nwegbu, 2011). The dominance of western products in the country poses a threat to the Igbo cultural identity.

It is these issues that propel the radio, as a mass medium, to carry out its function of cultural preservation. As the language of the Igbos is under serious threat, the radio assumes the duty of helping to sustain the culture through various indigenous Igbo programmes.

The mass media are regarded as an instrument that can be used to propagate development in culture because they awaken and stimulate the individual's consciousness as it concerns culture. According to Okunna (1999), the mass media disseminate cultural and artistic products for the purpose of preserving the past heritage of the people. They transmit various societal norms and values from one generation to another through some indigenous programmes.

Culture and communication are inseparable. As Cooper et al (2007) as cited in Iheanacho (2014) explain, "Cultural norms and the media are inextricably linked". Culture is made up of beliefs, values and norms and, these make up important variables that cement cultures. The media transmit cultural norms and values to their audiences. This is one process of socialization, which helps to unify a country and community of nations. Culture is the world made meaningful; and it is socially constructed and maintained through communication (Baran, 2012). Thus, mass communication contributes to the creation and maintenance of culture. The mass media are not only cultural promoters, but also serve as a corpus of interacting fronts for global cultural integration. Certainly, the radio plays a dominant role in the creation and transportation of culture(s) to different parts of the world. As cultural norms and values of others are being transmitted to media audiences, people grow in social adaptation abilities. Therefore, the media role of cultural transmission is an effective educational tool for relaying cultural knowledge to the masses.

Over the years, the Igbo language has come under serious threat that made UNESCO in 2003 to predict that the language would likely go into extinction in 50 years from then (2003). Based on this worrisome prediction, Onuzulike (2014), posits that the continuous decline and possible extinction of Igbo language should draw the consciousness of the Igbo race. The negligence of Igbo language has become so bad that even parents in recent time seem to encourage their children not to speak Igbo language.

Regardless of the outcry by stakeholders, the issue keeps reverberating. The question is, could it be that the radio especially Ozisa FM as a mass medium is not carrying out its cultural preservation functions effectively nor do they fail to adequately sensitize the Igbo people of the danger of losing their language to extinction in no distant time?

To address the concern, this paper raised the following question using Ozisa FM as a focal point:

1. To what extent are Owerri residents exposed to Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio?
2. What is the knowledge level of residents of Owerri based on their exposure to Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio?
3. What is the perception of Owerri residents on Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio?
4. What is the influence of Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio on the residents of Owerri?

The study centered on how Ozisa FM radio uses her programmes in the sustenance of Igbo language among Owerri residents. It investigated the extent of exposure, level of knowledge and perception of the programmes aired by Ozisa FM radio. The study was restricted to the study of residents of Owerri metropolis consisting of Owerri West, Owerri North and Owerri Municipal Councils. Ozisa FM, 96.1 Owerri; is one of the community radios in Imo State amidst thirteen other radio stations in existence. This radio station, powered by Ozisa foundation, got her license from the NBC in November, 2019 and began her official transmission on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2019 with educative, entertainment, informative, programmes that are most times transmitted in Igbo language. This station is the only radio in Eastern Nigeria that bears a native Igbo name; "Ozisa", which means a dissemination or a harbinger of news. Following the appointment of Ray Nzeruogu as the director, the radio with a difference dominated the air waves with 60% of her programmes transmitted in the native language, which provides listeners, according to Sterling et al. (2007) with the voice with which to respond to programming and to create programming content. Thus, listeners are able to have keen interest in tuning to "96.1 FM" and be able to contribute and express themselves freely in some burning issues.

## II. Empirical Review

Ali Zahedi, A, Ghoolizadeh, A and Sadeghi, S (2013) studied the role of the radio voice of the town took place in the promotion of a culture in Kuwait. Using the survey design, findings revealed that the average City sound radio plays crucial role in the promotion of culture of citizens in Kuwait by way of encouraging citizen to embrace their indigenous culture. It is relevant because it entails promoting and sustaining culture among the citizens of Kuwait through the radio medium.

*Igbokwe* (2013) examined the importance of Igbo language as a major form of Igbo identity. The survey research method was adopted to guide the study. Findings revealed that one major ways of identifying the Igbos is through their language. Findings also showed that few people appreciate the beauty of Igbo language and further findings revealed that some parents play significant part in killing the Igbo culture by not speaking it to their children. This research has its relevance on the reasons why the igbo language culture is deteriorating.

Again, Oguji (2012) examined Anambra Broadcasting Service television Channel 24 Awka and Channel 27 Awada and their effort to promote Igbo language and culture, using the mixed method research design. The study revealed that the stations run 9 Igbo programmes. The findings also showed that 57% and 40% of the respondents, watched Igbo programmes on ABS television Channels 24 and 27 occasionally and regularly, but 3% of them never did. Furthermore, 58% of them agreed that these programmes were meant specifically to promote Igbo language and culture, while 42% disagreed, 29% of the respondents further noted that they gained knowledge from the programmes, 21% claimed to have improved their spoken Igbo, 14% their mode of dressing and only. Findings also revealed that 80% of the respondents said that Igbo programmes on ABS television Channels 24 and 27 suit their cultural needs. Ninety one percent (91%) of the respondents said that the Igbo programmes influenced them positively. The findings revealed that the television is an effective instrument for the promotion of Igbo language and culture. This study is relevance to this present study due to the fact that it television medium is involved in the promotion of the Igbo language culture.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on agenda setting theory and language expectancy theory.

#### **Agenda Setting Theory**

The study was pegged on agenda setting theory based on the fact that, the media help to “put pictures in our heads” (Lippmann 1922 as cited in Asemah, et al, 2017). In other words, they have the power to set the agenda and raise issues of public importance such as the decline of the Igbo language. McCombs and Shaw (1972) as cited in Wogu (2008) noted that members of the “audience not only learn about public issues through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the mass media place upon it.”

Agenda setting theory advocates that audiences not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media, they also learn about how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the mass media place on it. The relevance of this theory to this study is based on the premise that through the medium of radio, the Igbo people will awaken to think about the imminent danger of losing the Igbo language to extinction if measures are not taken to preserve the language culture.

#### **Language Expectancy Theory**

Language expectancy theory is a formalized model about radio message strategies to cause attitude and behaviour change, especially the Igbo language. This theory assumes that language is a rule-governed system and people develop expectations concerning the language or message strategies employed by others (radio media) in persuasive attempts (Burgoon, 1995). Expectations are a function of cultural and sociological norms and preferences arising from cultural values and societal standards or ideals for competent communication.

Language expectancy theory assumes that changes in the direction desired by an actor occur when positive violations of expectancies occur. Positive violations occur (a) when the enacted behavior is better or more preferred than that which was expected in the situation. Change occurs because enacted behaviour is outside the bandwidth in a positive direction, and such behavior prompts attitude or behavioral change (Burgoon, 1995).

The relevance of this theory to this study is the fact that people are expected to appreciate language as part of their cultural values. Radio broadcasting in its role as agent of change can cause positive attitudinal change towards the Igbo language.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

This study was designed using the survey approach while close –ended questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The population of the study are residents in Owerri metropolis which comprises of Owerri North, Owerri West and Owerri Municipal Councils with a population of 555,500 according to City population, (2016). Applying the Taro Yamani’s formula, the sample size of 399 with the confidence level of 95% 0.5 error limit was arrived at.

Multistage sampling technique was used to select the representatives of the sample. The first stage, Owerri which is in cluster is already divided into three namely, Owerri North, Owerri West and Owerri Municipal. In the second stage two communities from each local government area will be purposively selected base on some criteria such as high level of literacy, high media exposure; they are, Orji, Uratta, Umuguma, Ihiagwa, Umuoyima, and Umuororonjo in that order. In stage three, having six communities, the researcher distributed the questionnaire proportionately to the communities that is  $399/6 = 67$ . Therefore, the researchers gave 67 copies of questionnaire to respondents purposively. The data collected was presented and analyzed using simple percentages and frequency tables.

### **IV. RESULTS**

#### **Research Question One: To what extent is Owerri residents exposed to Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio?**

To answer this question, items No. 1, 2, 3, 4 on the questionnaire were analyzed. 100% respondents have radio sets while 360 respondents representing 5% listen to Ozisa FM. This implies that majority of the respondents

listen to Ozisa FM. On frequency of listenership to Igbo programmes, data revealed that 63% of respondents listen to programmes packaged with Igbo language. This means that majority of the respondents listen to programmes packaged with Igbo language in Ozisa FM radio. To answer the first research question, an average of 81.5% Owerri residents to a very large extent are exposed to Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio.

**Research Question Two: What is the knowledge level of residents of Owerri based on their exposure to Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio?**

Analysis of data showed that 68% of the respondents strongly agreed that Ozisa FM encourages them to speak Igbo language. This implies that Ozisa FM encourages the majority of the respondents to speak Igbo language. Also, 53% of the respondents agreed that the interactive nature of some Ozisa FM Igbo programmes has helped them in knowing the essence of Igbo language. This means that the interactive nature of some Ozisa FM Igbo programmes has helped respondents in knowing the essence of Igbo language.

Again, 51% of the respondents affirmed that they know Igbo folktale as a result of their exposure to Igbo programmes on Ozisa FM. This implies that majority of the respondents know Igbo folktales as a result of their exposure to Igbo programmes on Ozisa FM. Thus, 38% representing 145 of the respondents have very high rate of knowledge on Igbo language based on their exposure to Ozisa FM Igbo programmes. This means that the majority of the respondents have very high rate of knowledge on Igbo language based on their exposure to Ozisa FM Igbo programmes.

**Research Question Three: What is the perception of Owerri residents on Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio?**

Data revealed that (193) 51% of respondents think Ozisa FM radio has been able to help revive the Igbo language culture through its programmes. This implies that Ozisa FM radio has been able to help revive the Igbo language culture through its programmes.

Again, (280) 74% of the respondents strongly agreed that Ozisa FM radio programmes can help in sustaining Igbo language and culture. This means that Ozisa FM radio programmes can help in sustaining Igbo language and culture.

In the same vein, (202) 53% of the respondents strongly agreed that Ozisa FM radio is doing enough in their efforts in promoting the Igbo language culture. This implies that Ozisa FM radio is doing enough in their efforts in promoting the Igbo language culture. This is supported by 66% of the respondents who agreed that the duration allotted to Igbo language programmes in Ozisa FM radio can help in sustaining Igbo language and culture. This means that the duration allotted to Igbo language programmes in Ozisa FM radio can help in sustaining Igbo language and culture. On the average, 61% of the respondents have positive perception on Igbo language programmes in Ozisa FM radio.

**Research Question Four: What is the influence of Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio on residents of Owerri?**

Analysis of data revealed that 39% of the respondents confirmed that Ozisa FM encourages them by way of reward when they speak Igbo language in answering questions during programmes. This means that Ozisa FM encourages them by way of reward when they speak Igbo language in answering questions during programmes. Also, 46% of the respondents strongly agreed that Ozisa FM radio advice parents/guardians to teach their wards Igbo language through their programmes. This implies that Ozisa FM radio advice parents/guardians to teach their wards Igbo language through their programmes.

Furthermore, (250) 66% of the respondents agreed that since their exposure to Ozisa FM Igbo language programmes they speak Igbo more often. This implies that exposure to Ozisa FM radio Igbo language programmes makes respondents speak Igbo more often. Hence, 53% of the respondents can tell Igbo folktale as a result of their exposure to Ozisa FM radio programmes.

In the same vein, (231) 61% of the respondents strongly agreed that exposure of Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio has raised their orientation of not allowing Igbo language go into extinction, while 57% respondents agreed that Ozisa FM radio Igbo language programmes influenced residents of Owerri positively.

**Discussion of Findings**

**The extent Owerri residents are exposed to Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio.**

From the analysis of data it was revealed that an average of 81.5% Owerri residents to a very large extent are exposed to Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio. It is quite obvious from the statistics that a good number of people listen to Ozisa FM Igbo language programmes. Supporting the findings, Oguji (2012) in his study, revealed that the variety of Igbo programmes aired on Abia broadcasting Service to meet the broadcasting needs of people motivated a lot of them to be exposed to their station. Contrary to this findings, Okpoko and Chukwuka (2016), in their study argued that the reason that can be attributed for the low exposure of people in Enugu to Nigerian television Authority (NTA) is lack of sponsorship, poor creativity in promoting the Igbo language culture among others. The findings of this study further supported by the agenda setting theory that serves as one of the theoretical spine of this work. When people are largely exposed to the radio media they are

likely to think in the line the radio media wants. The knowledge level of residents of Owerri based on their exposure to Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio is averagely commendable.

#### **The knowledge level of residents of Owerri based on their exposure to Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio.**

Communicating findings from data analyzed, it was revealed that at an average of 53% residents of Owerri has high level of knowledge on Igbo language based on their exposure to Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio. This finding conforms to that of Oguji (2012) findings where he asserted that respondents gained considerable knowledge from their exposure to Igbo programmes broadcast on television. Though, Simon and Ndoma (2016) findings disagree with this finding. In their study, they revealed that media that are supposed to duly rouse the peoples to their culture and the effect of the transformation of these culture, have simply abandoned their role in doing so. Rather they have resorted to attrition and westernization at the detriment of local culture. Also, Igbokwe (2013), in his findings noted that parents play significant part in killing the Igbo culture by not speaking it to their children there by denying them the privilege of the knowledge of the Igbo language. The finding of this study is supported by the language expectancy theory. This theory assumes that language is a rule-governed system and people develop expectations concerning the language or message strategies employed by others in persuasive attempts.

#### **The Perception of Owerri Residents on Igbo Language Programmes on Ozisa FM Radio**

From the analysis of data, it was revealed that an average of 61% of the respondents have positive perception on Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio. From the statistics, it is glaring that Owerri people think Ozisa FM radio are making serious efforts through their Igbo language programmes to promote and sustain the Igbo language culture. In line with the findings, Simon and Ndoma (2016) asserted that people have the perception that the media have the responsibility of transforming their adverse cultures respectively. Also in consonance with this study findings, Zahedi, Ghoolizadeh and Sadeghi (2013) findings revealed that people have the perception that city sound radio should play crucial role in the promotion of culture.

From the tested hypothesis at the value of 57.09 which is above the critical value of 7.81 at 0.005 degree of freedom further strengthen the finding that Owerri residents have positive perception on Igbo language programmes aired on Ozisa FM radio.

#### **The Influence of Ozisa FM radio Igbo Language Programmes on Residents of Owerri.**

Communicating findings, it was revealed that an average of 57% respondents agreed that Ozisa FM Igbo language programmes influenced residents of Owerri positively. Corroborating this finding, Oguji (2012) in his study, observed that Igbo language programmes on ABS channel contribute significantly in improving the spoken Igbo of those who watch the station. However, Igbokwe (2013), in his findings noted that few people appreciate the beauty of Igbo language and Onuzulike (2014) findings equally revealed that Igbo parents appear to have less rituality as a result, they tend not to teach their children Igbo language. Also supporting the findings of this study Zahedi, Ghoolizadeh and Sadeghi (2013), asserted in their findings that radio indigenous programmes in Kuwait have contributed in encouraging its citizens in embracing their indigenous culture. This finding supports the principle of agenda setting theory, when the people are influenced by the radio programmes they are likely to think and do things the media advocated.

The implication of these findings is that constant exposure to Ozisa FM Igbo language programmes will allow one to be influenced positively towards the Igbo language culture.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

It is quite obvious that the Igbo language is seriously under threat of extinction as parents in some home hardly speak Igbo language to their children in order for them to learn. This problem has raised concerns and hence propelled mass media organizations such as Ozisa FM radio to help in promoting and sustaining the Igbo language culture through its programmes. Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore safe to conclude that Ozisa FM radio is making enough concerted efforts through its programmes to encourage people from the Igbo extraction to see the need in preserving Igbo language culture because it's their identity. In doing so through their Igbo programmes, they have succeeded in getting more people exposed and influenced by the Igbo language and as such improve their knowledge on the Igbo language culture. Having analysed data collected, the researchers can conclude that the perception of Owerri residents on Igbo language programmes is dependent on their exposure to Ozisa FM Igbo language programmes. And Owerri residents are influenced positively by Igbo language programmes on Ozisa FM radio.

Based on the findings the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Given that great percentage of people are exposed to Ozisa FM radio Igbo language programmes, more creative efforts should be put in the Igbo content so as to be able to sustain the high level of listenership to Igbo language programmes.

2. Owing to the level of knowledge as a result of exposure to Ozisa FM radio Igbo language programmes, Igbo people should engage in speaking Igbo language especially during conversation in order to keep transferring the knowledge from person to person.
3. Ozisa FM radio station staff should be motivated and encouraged especially the content creators so as to keep producing quality content that can continuously hold the interest of people thereby induce positive perception among the people.
4. Given the fact that Ozisa FM radio Igbo language programmes influence residents of Owerri positively it is therefore necessary for the station to keep advocating for the frequent use of Igbo language in order to prevent it from going into extinction.

#### REFERENCES

- [1]. Ali, Z.A, Ghoolizadeh, A & Sadeghi, S (2013) Defining Role of the Radio of Town in Promotion of a Culture of Citizenship. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 2(10), 55-62.
- [2]. Asemah, E.S., Nwammuo, A.N. & Nkwam-Uwaoma, A.O.A .(2017). *Theories and Models of Communication*. Jos: University Press.
- [3]. Baran, S. J. (2012). *Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture*, Seventh Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc
- [4]. Burgoon, J.K (1995) Cross- Cultural & Intercultural Applications of Expectancy Violations Theory in Wiseman R.L (ed), *Intercultural Communication Theory (International and Intercultural Communication Annual*. Vol 19, pp 194-214. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- [5]. Igbokwe, B.N. (2013) Language and Identity: A Case of Igbo Language, Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Management Review (INJODEMAR)* 8(1), June 2013
- [6]. Iheanacho, N.N. (2014). Media Role in Cultural Education, Acculturation and Diffusion: An Ambivalence of Plausibility and Dysfunctional Trajectories. *The Crab: Journal of Theatre and Media Arts* (Number 9/June 2014, 93-110)
- [7]. Nwegbu M; Eze C& Asogwa B (2011) Globalization of Cultural Heritage: Issues, Impacts and Investable Challenges for Nigeria. *Library Philosophy & Practice* (e-journal) at <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphil/prac>
- [8]. Oguji, G. C. (2012). *Promoting Igbo Cultural Heritage: An Audience Evaluation of ABS Television Channels 24 & 27 Programming in Anambra State*.
- [9]. Okpoko, C. C. & Chukwuka, I. J. (2016) *Promoting the Igbo Language on Television: An appraisal of NTA Enugu*. UNN-FAJH Vol. 5, Nos. 1 & 2, Sept., 2016
- [10]. Okunna, C.S. (1999). *Introduction to Mass Communication*. Enugu: New Generation Books
- [11]. Onuzulike, U (2014) Discussing the Igbo Language on the Igbo Internet Radio: Explicating Ethnolinguistic Vitality. *Journal of African Media Studies* · September 2014 DOI: 10.1386/jams.6.3.285\_1
- [12]. Simon, R. O & Ndoma, B.E (2016) Nigerian Media and Indigenous Cultures Transformation: The Journey So Far. *Journal of Mass Communication & Journalism* Available at DOI: 10.4172/2165-7912.1000317
- [13]. Sterling S; Obrien J & Bennett J (2007) Advancement through Interactive Information Systems. *Frontiers*, Vol 11 Issue 2
- [14]. UNESCO (2003) *Approaches to Development Communication*. Paris.
- [15]. Wogu, J. (2008). *Theories of Mass Communication*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press.