

An Evaluation of Media Use of Indigenous Languages in Cameroon

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Abstract

Indigenous languages are indispensable cultural legacies integral to human development. Hence individuals cannot develop educationally, politically, culturally, and socio-economically through interaction with information dissemination organs, which make use of indigenous languages such as the media. This research, therefore, attempts an evaluation of the effective use of indigenous languages on the audio-visual media in Cameroon, their usefulness to the population, and whether indigenous language training programmes and the editorial policy of the media houses are geared towards effective communication and indigenous language development respectively. Primary as well as secondary sources of data were employed for the study. The research implored a combination of survey and historical methods to elicit data from five audio-visual media houses in the North West Region which harbour the highest number of media organs. The audio-visual media include; Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV), Dan Broadcasting System (DBS), Hot Cocoa, Afrique Nouvelle and Abakwa F.M. Since this study adopted a combination of methods, two sampling techniques were used in selecting the samples for this work. The purposive sampling technique was used to get data from media workers and language policymakers. The respondents from the community were on the other hand-selected based on random sampling. In so doing, everybody was given a fair chance of being selected without discrimination and those selected represented the population under study. A major finding, which emanated from the study is the fact that even though audio-visual media makes use of indigenous languages, the media editorial policies do not.

Keywords: *Indigenous languages, media houses, Northwest, Cameroon*

Introduction

All languages in a multilingual setting, be it minor or major, foreign, exoglossic (consists of a nation where an important language, possibly an ex-colonial language is made the official language), or englossic (constitutes a nation where an indigenous language of the country is made the official language) and or indigenous, should be seen as important

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resources for all-round development of the country. A country may be fully exoglossic if none of the indigenous languages is used for national governance. Consequently, language policies need to respect and support the mutual existence of these languages irrespective of their socio-cultural, political, and economic strength. It should be noted that the language options of the audio-visual media are important tools for the development or under-development of languages. Based on this, the study sets out to evaluate the extent to which indigenous languages are used on the audio-visual media in Cameroon, as well as an explanation why there is the inadequate use of indigenous languages in the audio-visual media of Cameroon, it equally seeks to find out the efforts made by the government of Cameroon in making sure that the quota allocated for the use of Cameroonian indigenous languages in the audio-visual media is respected.

Linguistic and Historical Background of Mass Media in Cameroon

Cameroon is one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse countries in Africa, with over 280 languages, Ethnologue (2020). This situation poses a challenge to media houses to disseminate information in indigenous languages. Notwithstanding, there is a necessity to broadcast information in indigenous languages, not just to promote the languages or the culture, but also to pass across information to a large majority of the population who neither understand English nor French. Mass media in Cameroon is governed by law no 90/52 of 19th December 1990 relating to freedom of mass communication. This law falls under the class of laws referred to as "Liberty Laws" which were prepared in 1990 in order to guarantee basic human rights and civil liberties. Cameroon has witnessed a rapid and drastic growth in the mass media sector with the enactment of this law and its implementation. Unlike the lone state radio and television station (CRTV), which used to exist in the country at the time, Cameroon can now boast of about 200 thematic FM and Community radio stations and about 30 television channels (Tchiroma, 2017). Cameroon media includes print publications that are both public and privately owned, a public television station (CRTV) and privately owned channels, radio stations that are equally public and privately owned, and the internet.

The Prime Ministerial Decree of 2000 on Private Audio-Visual Communication Enterprises authorised the creation of both community and alternative media (Republic of Cameroon 2000a). As regards this decree, one public-service obligation imposed on private broadcasters is the requirement that 51 percent of daily radio air-time should be reserved for local production, while for television the quota is 30 percent. However, there has been no systematic study to find out if these quotas are respected by the private media. Private commercial radios broadcast in French and English, the main languages of commerce in the country. Like CRTV regional radios, community radios broadcast in French, English, and sometimes indigenous languages, depending on the region where they are based. Some stations, especially the private and community stations also broadcast in Pidgin English, which is a lingua franca in the English-speaking part of the country.

Review of Related Literature

This section reviews (conceptual, empirical, and theoretical) some vital works of scholars relating to our research and helps us ascertain the gap this research intends to fill. This helps in our understanding of our research objectives and our contribution to existing knowledge.

Language Policy in Cameroon

Previous studies carried out in this area have proven that language policies deal with decisions about the status and use of one or more languages in society. The policy may be overt, in this case, stating language rights in legal documents or covert, that is, without mentioning the rights of a language in any legal document (Rosendal 2008). Contrary to Rosendal's view of language policy, Danladi, (2013) understands language policy as a systematic attempt to resolve the communication problems of a community by studying the various dialects it uses and developing a variable policy concerning the collection and the use of different languages. The question as to whether Cameroon can really boast of a language policy remains a pertinent issue to be resolved.

Many linguists have made comments in relation to what is referred to as 'Cameroon's Language Policy.' Research has, however, proven that there is indeed no practical aspect as regards the implementation of this policy. Simo Bobda's (2006a), 'Life in a Tower of Babel without a Language Policy' suggests that Cameroon has no language policy. He equally makes reference to the fact that 'in the absence of a language policy, the principle governing the use of language in a society is predictably that of 'survival of the fittest in which the population of speakers of any language, political strength of these speakers or their ethnic group, and prestige of various forms plays a vital role. Echu (2004) equally points out that "language policy in the country lacks clear-cut objectives and orientation. It does in no way sufficiently promote the indigenous language and it fails to guarantee the appropriate implementation of official bilingualism." It is worth noting that similar criticisms have been made by others like; Mbangwana (2004a), Ayafor (2005), and Anchimbe (2006a). What is commonly referred to as 'Cameroon Language Policy' is a series of documented decrees and laws in different sectors like Education, National Assembly, Military, and the media in which the two official languages, French and English are used, or decrees passed to define the place and status of the indigenous languages (Kouega, 2007a).

Contrary to the above views, there are, however, other scholars who believe that Cameroon has a language policy. Anchimbe (2006) holds the view that "the constitution and many other laws state clearly what the language policy in Cameroon is". Related to this, Tamanji (2008) believes that the bilingualism policy in Cameroon is a success story, which should be an example for a "mother tongue-based multilingual education programme in Cameroon". As Anchimbe (2013) notes, the correlation between French-English bilingualism is difficult to create and it is difficult to imagine that the same principles would work for indigenous languages, that is if at all they worked for the official bilingualism scheme. Nanfah (2006) equally makes assumptions as to the existence of a language policy in Cameroon but does not point out to any decrees or laws that stipulate some of the inequalities he describes. He, however, declares that "the expression Cameroon Language Policy operates at different levels", thereby, accepting the assumption that a language policy somehow exists.

Judging from the above, it is clear that there is no well-defined policy that incorporates in one way or the other, all the languages spoken in the country. As such, the French- English bilingualism is often taken for a supposed language policy for the country. As Anchimbe (2013) puts it, "it is in disregard of the fact that besides the French and English, there exist many other languages in Cameroon." Although it is not a must that all of these languages be written into policy, it is, however, unimaginable that the

indigenous languages are mentioned only in passing. As such, using the audio-visual media to disseminate indigenous language programmes often could be a strong force in developing and promoting our indigenous languages and at the same time, giving them equal status with other languages.

Government's Attitude towards the Use of Indigenous Languages

Two years after Cameroon gained independence that is in 1962, the government's focus was fully directed at increasing the number of literates in the colonial languages (English and French). This was successful with the aid of foreign bodies. A glaring example occurred after the Ebolowa Conference of 1962 during which UNESCO funded a nationwide literacy programme in English and French. The continues social stigma on indigenous languages in Cameroon as horrible, unattractive, and dangerous elements that can easily "call the rain" (Anchimbe, 2006) when spoken can only be wiped out if these languages are accorded national or source-of life functions. The fact that these languages are reduced to tools for in-house and inter-tribal communication, paints them as ethically inappropriate when spoken out of home and villages. Sometimes in local communities where the literacy rate in the official languages is low, indigenous languages are not used in such formal contexts as customary courts, hospitals, administrative units, and the media.

If no clear attempt is made to fully integrate the use of indigenous languages in the audio-visual media and other socio-economic aspects of the life of the immediate language community or of the entire nation, indigenous languages will continue to face high levels of endangerment and may as well be exposed to extinction. The neglect of the role indigenous languages play in socio-cultural, political, economic, educational, scientific, and technological development is a call for concern. This is, however, blamed on the multilingual nature of the country. Contrary to this view, Awonusi (2008) sees language development or empowerment programmes in the broadcast media as aspects that can turn around the fortunes of languages. Otherwise, both multilingualism and linguistic diversity should no longer serve as opportunities on which to base excuses for language under-development in multilingual settings. As such, the use of indigenous languages in the audio-visual media should be encouraged and viewed as language engineering efforts aimed at revitalizing languages feared to be going into extinction (Capo, 1990).

In Support of the above, Bodomo, Anderson, and Dzahene (2009) make comments to the fact that the National Media Policy of 2000 in Ghana, has brought about maintenance of multilingualism in the Ghanaian broadcast media and has equally resulted in the preparation of the Ghanaian child for effective functioning and there has equally been the inclusion of large population of the Ghanaians in both the communication and democratic process in the multilingual Ghanaian setting as well as the development of indigenous languages.

Speakers Attitude towards the Use of Indigenous Languages

As earlier seen, Mufwene (2003) pointed out that 'languages do not kill languages, speakers do'. When speakers give up their languages for what they consider prestigious, economically, and socially promising languages, they fall into attrition. As such, it is like 'having a population whose members refuse to produce offspring'. The reasons for this could be explained from different perspectives; the lack of teaching facilities, political or

ethnic conflict, and identity concealment, and above all the quest for economic and political survival (Anchimbe, 2006). As a result of the economic strength of other languages, many speakers would prefer to drift from their own languages to the languages they consider to be politically and economically stable. Looking at the lack of interest in giving economic and political power to our indigenous languages, most parents prefer to offer their children a broader knowledge on international opportunities through education in ex-colonial languages and laying emphasis on the fact that they should watch or listen to media stations which disseminate information mostly in the ex-colonial languages, (English and French). Chumbow (1996) from a psycholinguistic point of view proposes that the early use of indigenous languages in education has significant long-term benefits. As such, training a child at a very tender age to listen to or watch media stations that use indigenous languages would equally have significant long-term benefits. However, apart from the absence of international advantages of these languages, most parents are scared of their children learning an indigenous of another community.

Quoting (Adegbija, 1994, Gardner, 1985, Holmes & Harlow, 1991), Igboanusi & Wolf (2009), identify attitude as one of the important factors that impact language choice, use, coverage, shift, development, growth, and maintenance. It is necessary to note that such attitude is quite instrumental in measuring the role, use, and perception of the society in general towards efforts aimed at promoting indigenous languages used alongside foreign languages. These scholars have, however, condemned the negative attitude of the government, the broadcast media, and the native speakers towards indigenous language use. These attitudes reflect their support for foreign languages against the principle of egalitarian multilingualism. Even though research on language use and language development has mostly been centered on the academic domain, it has however revealed that the negative attitude inimical to the use, growth, development, maintenance, and sustenance of indigenous languages is mostly noticed among the native speakers.

The media occupies a very influential position in society. For this single reason, its practitioners should make their language usage conform to the rules laid down by the government. Anything different is likely to affect society negatively, either in the misinterpretation or misunderstanding of meaning (Omojuyibe, 2004). Judging from Oso's (2006) work, the mass media have probably become the most important social institution in the construction and circulation of meaning in any modern society. He further posits that, language and the way it is used in the mass media, structure our views of the world and that the use of language and the type of language used have ideological implications and they form part of the overarching structure of power and subordination in a particular society.

The mass media, given their vast powers of informing, educating, entertaining, mobilizing, and even fostering attitudinal change are believed to possess the ability to save languages from their apparent free fall. Despite this, the mass media in Cameroon, especially the audio-visual media have failed in this aspect. As such, it will be right to say that the audio-visual media in Cameroon fails to pay attention to the indigenous languages of the country, especially those faced with threats of extinction. As Senghor (1996) points out, insensitivity to a society's native language and cultural products is a consequence of the "erroneous view of broadcast that the public has a 'need for entertainment and pleasure' which can be met by airing more of foreign programs, broadcasting with foreign languages and in some cases, mimicking foreign accents." It is

important to note that the broadcast air time and space given to Cameroon's native languages both on the national and local media is at best, insignificant and insufficient. As earlier seen one of the public-service obligations imposed on private broadcasters is that 30 percent of audio-visual broadcast be used to disseminate information in indigenous languages, (Republic of Cameroon 2000a).

Though there have been a number of conferences and research works on the declining fortunes of these languages, there is virtually no significant work on how the mass media as a whole and in particular, the audio-visual media could be successfully deployed to rescue languages from their steady descent into the graveyard of the dead of languages.

Methodology

A combination of survey and historical designs were used to elicit the data for this work. The study carried out on the evaluation of audio-visual media house use of indigenous languages, used an accessible population of media houses with a focus on the audio-visual sector in the North West Region of Cameroon. These media houses include Cameroon Radio Television CRTV, Hot Cocoa, Abakwa F.M., Afrique Nouvelle, and Dan Broadcasting System (DBS). A sample size of 130 respondents was selected from the community without bias to ethnic group, gender, occupation, and educational level. In addition, 25 media practitioners were drawn from the audio-visual media sector and lastly, we equally had another sample size of 10 language policymakers from the delegation of Secondary Education. All in all, the study had a total of 165 respondents. The purposive sampling and probability sampling techniques were used for this work.

The research instruments used in this work include questionnaire, observation, and a review of documents. Three sets of questionnaires were designed; one for the community, which enabled us to elicit data on audience views towards the use of indigenous languages in the audio-visual media, another set was administered to language policymakers to find out the measures taken by the government to promote the use and development of national languages in the audio-visual media and the language policy that has been put in place regarding the use of national languages in the audio-visual media. The third set of questionnaires was equally addressed to the above-mentioned chosen audio-visual media stations. The observation was aided by the media house programmes that were gotten from the different station managers, indicating the various daily programme schedules for the five audio-visual stations that were chosen for the study. Data were analyzed using descriptive and statistical methods.

Data presentation and analysis

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by ethnic group

Community			Media Workers			Planners		
	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Chamba	1	0.9	Bafang	1	5.6	Ngemba	2	33.3
Bamileke	5	4.3	Chamba	2	11.1	Tikari	3	50.0
Bangolan	3	2.6	Widikum	1	5.6	Widikum	1	16.7
Kom	2	1.7	Bayangui	1	5.6	Total	6	100.0
Moghamo	8	7.0	Chomba	3	16.7			
Ngemba	8	7.0	Mbatu	1	5.6			
Ngwo	1	0.9	Ngemba	4	22.2			
Tikar	30	26.1	Pechap	1	5.6			
Noni	1	0.9	Pinyin	1	5.6			
Pinyin	2	1.7	Tikari	1	5.6			

Tikari	37	41.2		Non-response	2	11.1			
Non-response	17	14.8		Total	18	100.0			
Total	115	100.0							

Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by ethnic group. From the table, it is observable that the majority of the community members sampled are from the Tikari ethnic group (41.2%), followed by the Tikars (26.1%), and in the third position, we have the Ngembas (7%) and those from Moghamo (7%). It is important to highlight that the Bamilekes constituted a significant proportion (4.3%) of the sampled community members. For the media workers, the majority were from Ngemba and Chomba ethnic groups. The ethnic group Tikari registered the majority of policymakers or planners sampled.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to response rates of administered questionnaires

S/N	Respondents	% Response Rate	% No Response Rate	Total %
1	Community	88%	12%	100%
2	Media	72%	28%	100%
3	Planners	60%	40%	100%

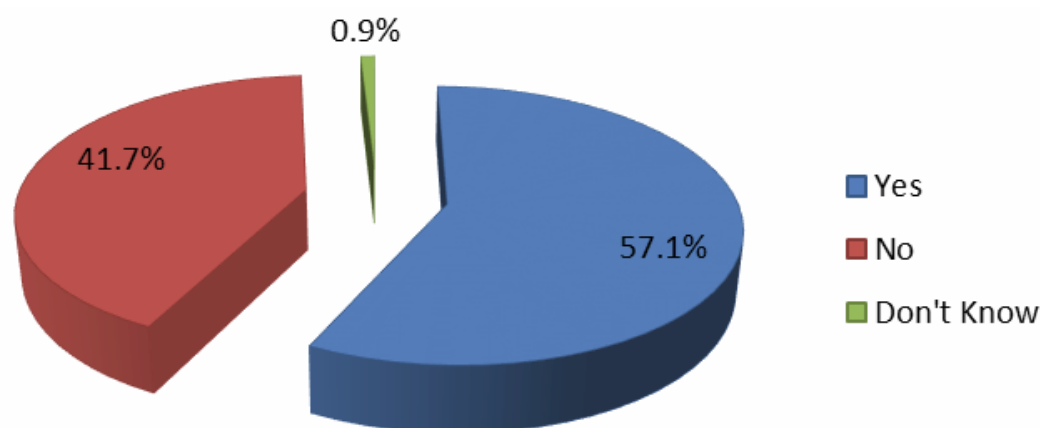
Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

As seen from the table above, the number of questionnaires that were administered to the community were 130, 115 were effectively filled or answered and the remaining 15 were wrongly filled and thus, did not meet the standard for the analysis. This gives us a response rate of 88%. For the media worker questionnaires, 25 were administered and 18 were effectively filled or answered and the remaining 7 were wrongly filled and thus did not meet the standard for the analysis. This gives us a response rate of 72%. For the language policy makers' questionnaires, 10 were administered and 6 were effectively filled or answered and the remaining 4 were wrongly filled and thus, did not meet the standard for the analysis. This gives us a response rate of 60%.

Table 3: Respondents' stance on the promotion of the use of indigenous languages by media houses

Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Yes	66	57.4
No	48	41.7
No response	1	.9
Total	115	100.0

Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021



Source: Designed by authors from field survey, July 2021

Figure 1: Respondents' stance on the promotion of the use of indigenous languages by media houses.

From figure 1 above, 57.1% of the respondents indicated that there were media houses that promote the use of indigenous languages, 41.7% of the respondents indicated that there were no media houses that promote the use of indigenous languages and 0.9% did not know. Those who stood for at least two represented 9% of the respondents and 40% of those who agreed that there are television programmes that promote the use of indigenous languages could not identify or indicate the media house(s).

Table 4: Opinions of the sampled community members on the use of indigenous language(s) in media programmes

	I prefer indigenous language programmes to official language (English or French) programmes on the audio-visual media			Both indigenous languages and official languages should be used in disseminating programmes on the audio-visual media	
	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Yes	58	50.4		104	90.4
No	57	49.6		11	9.6
Total	115	100.0		115	100.0
	Television stations in the Northwest Region use more of official languages than indigenous languages in their broadcast			Television stations in the Northwest Region allocate more time to indigenous language programmes than official language programmes	
	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Yes	104	90.4		6	5.2
No	11	9.6		109	94.8
Total	115	100.0		115	100.0

Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

Table 4 samples the opinions of community members on the use of indigenous language(s) in media programmes. The table shows 50.4% of respondents indicated that they prefer indigenous language programmes to official language programmes on the audio-visual, while 49.6% did not. We equally notice from the table that 90.4% of the respondents stood for the fact that both indigenous and official languages should be used in disseminating programmes on the audio-visual media, while 9.6% were of the opinion that both languages should not be used. The table also shows that television stations in the Northwest use more official languages than indigenous languages in their broadcast (90.4%), while 9.6% of the respondent disagreed with the fact that audio-visual stations in the Northwest Region do not use more official languages than indigenous languages in their broadcast. If up to 90.4% of the population indicated that audio-visual media station uses more official languages (English and French) in their broadcast, then this is proof that there is bias at the level of language usage by the audio-visual media.

Table 5: Aspects of indigenous language programmes that community members prefer over official language programmes

Language Programmes	Frequency	Percent
News	20	17.4
Magazine	3	2.6
Music	17	14.8
Request	2	1.7
Sports	9	7.8
All of the above (or at least 2)	51	44.3
None of the above	11	9.6
No response	2	1.7
Total	115	100.0

Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

Table 5 shows aspects of indigenous language programmes that community members prefer over official language programmes. The table presents a significant 44.3% for respondents who indicated that they prefer indigenous language programmes in all of the options that were stated in the questionnaire, (news, magazine, music, request, and sports). It should be noted that the 14.8% of the population who prefer music over all other programmes were respondents between the ages of 16-25 most of which were students. Here, it is clear that their choice could have been influenced by their age group and their occupation. However, going by the opinions of the majority, it is important for media workers to note that a few spices to their programmes, that is using an indigenous language in each of their programmes could be of great help to the audience.

Table 6: Cross tabulation of media houses and frequency of indigenous language usage in presenting programmes

		How often do you use an indigenous language in presenting your programmes in your media house?				Total
		Always	Rarely	Sometimes	Never	
Which media house do you work for?	CRTV	0	1	1	4	6
	DBS	1	0	0	0	1
	HOTCOCOA	1	1	3	0	5
	ABAKWA FM	0	2	3	0	5

	AFRIQUE NOUVELLE	0	0	0	1	1
Total		2	4	7	5	18

Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

Table 6 shows a cross-tabulation of audio-visual media houses and their frequency of indigenous language usage. It is evident from the table that most of the respondents from CRTV never use an indigenous language in the presentation of their programmes, while no respondent from the same media house uses an indigenous language always in presenting their programmes. The table equally shows that Abakwa and DBS registered the highest number of respondents who use an indigenous language(s) most often in the presentation of their programmes. Worthy of note is the fact that there was no respondent from Afrique Nouvelle who uses an indigenous language(s) to present any of their programmes. However, most of those who responded to Hot Cocoa use these language(s) at least once in the presentation of their programmes.

Table 7: Cross tabulation of media house and official language(s) used in presenting programmes

		Language(s) used in presenting programmes				Total
		English	English and French	Indigenous language	All the languages indicated	
Which media house do you work for?	CRTV	5	0	0	1	6
	DBS	0	0	0	1	1
	HOT COCOA	2	2	1	0	5
	ABAKWA	4	1	0	0	5
	AFRIQUE NOUVELLE	0	0	0	1	1
Total		11	3	1	3	18

Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

Table 7 presents a cross-tabulation of media houses and language(s) used in presenting programmes. From this table, it is essential to note that only one out of the 18 sampled media workers indicated that an indigenous language is used in presenting programmes. Importantly, only Hot Cocoa uses an indigenous language in presenting its programmes. Worthy of note is the fact that 5 out of the 6 respondents from CRTV, which is a national station stated that they use more of the English language in the presentation of their programmes, while only 1 respondent indicated that he uses an indigenous language in presenting programmes. Being a national station, it is endorsed with the responsibility of transmitting information to everybody irrespective of where they are located in the most suitable language. From this table, we could be tempted to conclude that there are very few audio-visual media stations in the Northwest Region that actually respect the 30% quota allocated for the use of indigenous languages. Looking at this, we could equally be tempted to believe that either these media houses are not aware of the importance of using indigenous languages or there are no strict measures taken against audio-visual media houses that fail to respect the quotas stipulated by language policymakers.

Table 8: Cross tabulation of media house and the use of official language(s) in presenting programmes

		Which official language would you prefer to use in the dissemination of your programmes?			Total
		English	French	Both languages	
Which media house do you work with?	CRTV	4	1	1	6
	DBS	0	0	1	1
	HOTCOCOA	0	0	5	5
	ABAKWA	3	0	2	5
	AFRIQUE NOUVELLE	0	1	0	1
Total		7	2	9	18

Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

Table 8 shows a cross-tabulation of audio-visual media stations and the official language they would prefer to use in presenting their programmes. It is evident that the majority of media workers indicated that they would prefer to use both languages, that is English and French to present their programmes. However, two respondents from CRTV and Afrique Nouvelle indicated that they would prefer to use only French in presenting their programmes, while 4 from CRTV and 3 respondents from Abakwa indicated only English as the language they would prefer to use in presenting their programmes.

Table 9: Cross tabulation of media house and preference of indigenous language(s) in presenting programmes

		Which indigenous language(s) would you prefer to use in your programmes?			Total
		Nkwen	Mankon	Others	
Which media house do you work for?	CRTV	1	1	3	5
	DBS	0	1	1	2
	HOT COCOA	0	3	2	5
	ABAKWA	1	1	3	5
	AFRIQUE NOUVELLE	1	0	0	1
Total		3	6	9	18

Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

Table 9 presents a cross-tabulation of the media houses and their preference for the indigenous language(s) in presenting the programmes. It is clear from this table that the majority of the sampled media houses will prefer to use the Mankon and Nkwen languages as opposed to other indigenous languages in the North West Region in presenting their programmes. Those who specified other indigenous languages different from the options provided on the questionnaire, to an extent, were influenced by their ethnic background as most of them would prefer using their indigenous languages other than that of another community. It is important to recall that the 2000 Decree on Private Audio-Visual Communication Enterprise makes mention of the use of Cameroonian indigenous languages in general and it does not state that media workers should use only their indigenous language.

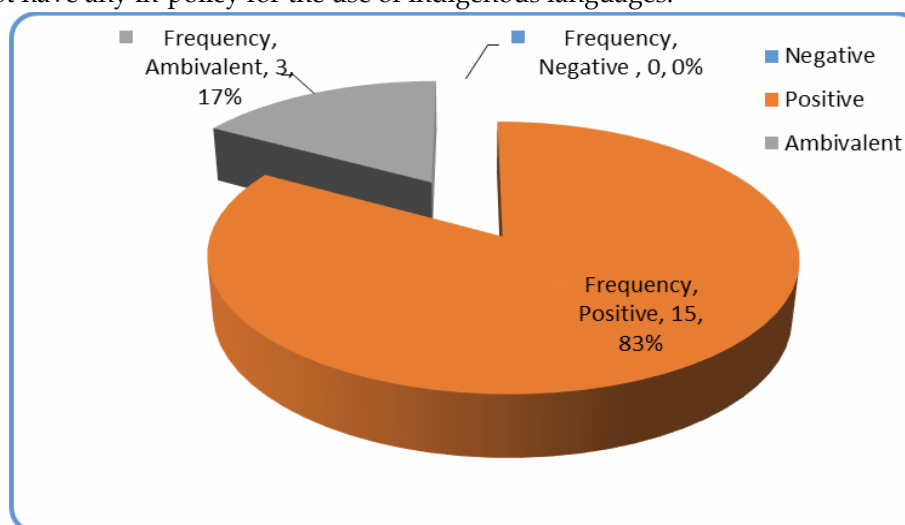
As such, when we go back to the views of media workers on the element of others specified as stated on the questionnaire, it is evident that their choice of indigenous language is biased. Policies are being put in place to govern the use of indigenous languages in audio-visual media. The researchers were also interested to find out if the audio-visual media in the North West Region have some internal policies that govern the use of indigenous languages in their stations. This is illustrated in the table10 below.

Table 10: Cross tabulation of media house and in-house policy governing the use of Cameroonian indigenous languages

		Is there any in-house policy governing the use of Cameroonian indigenous languages in your station?			Total
		Yes	No	Neutral	
Which media house do you work for?	CRTV	2	2	1	5
	DBS	1	0	1	2
	HOT COCOA	1	1	3	5
	ABAKWA	2	1	2	5
	AFRIQUE NOUVELLE	0	1	0	1
Total		6	5	7	18

Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July, 2021

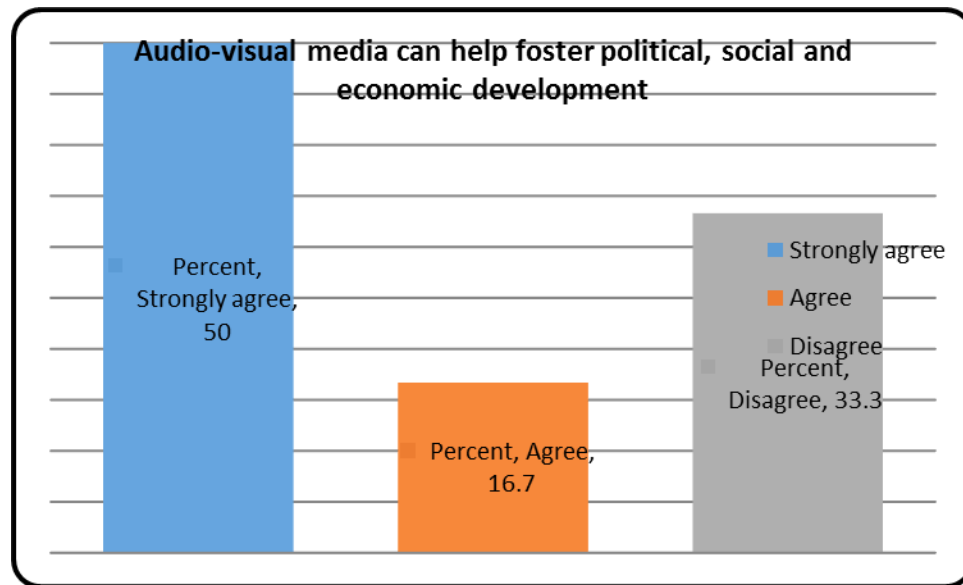
Table 10 provides a cross-tabulation of media houses and the setting up of an in-house policy governing the use of indigenous languages in their production. It is evident from the figures indicated on the table that most of the media houses have conflicting views on the existence of an in-policy in the media stations governing the use of indigenous languages in their station. However, DBS indicated that they do have an in-policy governing the use of indigenous languages, while Afrique Nouvelle indicated that they do not have any in-policy for the use of indigenous languages.



Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

Figure 2: Attitude of the audience towards the choice of language used in presenting programmes

Figure 2 samples opinions of media workers and the attitudes of their audience towards the choice of language use in presenting their programmes. According to the analysis, 83% of media workers indicated that the attitudes of their audience are positive. This could be judged by the feedback they often get from their audience. Equally, a percentage of 17% of respondents indicated that their audience has an ambivalent attitude towards the choice of language they use in presenting their programmes. However, table 8 above indicated that 90.4% of the community members would prefer programmes in both official and indigenous languages.



Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

Figure 3: The use of indigenous languages in fostering political, social and economic development

Figure 3 presents an analysis based on the views of language policymakers on the fact that the use of Cameroonian indigenous languages can help foster political, social, and economic development. From the figure, it is clear that the use of indigenous languages is a tool that can be used to promote political, social, and economic development in Cameroon as 50% of the respondents strongly agreed with this view. Strikingly enough, up to 33.3% of language policymakers who are supposed to systematically educate the population on the political, social, and economic importance of using our indigenous languages, disagreed with the fact that using Cameroonian indigenous languages can bring about political, social, and economic development.

Table 11: Language policy for indigenous language usage in audio-visual media

	Frequency	Percent
Policy for language use by the audio-visual media in Cameroon		
Agree	3	50.0
Disagree	3	50.0
Total	6	100.0
Language policy that places emphasis on indigenous language programmes on the audio-visual media		
Agree	2	33.3
Strongly disagree	3	50.0
Disagree	1	16.7
Total	6	100.0
The percentage allocated to indigenous language programmes on the audio-visual by language policy markers		
10 percent	2	33.3
20 percent	1	16.7
30 percent	2	33.3
No response	1	16.7
Total	6	100.0

Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

Table 11 brings out the language policy for indigenous language usage on the audio-visual media. The table shows that while 50% of the respondents agreed that there is a clear language policy for language use by the audio-visual media, another 50% of language policy makers disagreed to this same view. From the table, it is evident that there is no language policy that lays emphasis on indigenous language programmes on the audio-visual media as indicated by 50% of the respondents. However, a significant proportion of the respondents agreed that there is a language policy that lays emphasis on the use of indigenous languages on the audio-visual media. There is equally clear evidence that most language policy makers are not aware or are ignorant of the percentage allocated for the use of indigenous languages on the audio-visual media. This is seen in the 33.3% of the respondents who indicated 10% as being the percentage allocated for the use of indigenous languages on the audio-visual media, meanwhile, the 2000 Decree on Private Audio-Visual Communication Enterprise postulates 30%. It is evident that language policy makers have conflicting knowledge or ideas on the language policy relating to indigenous language use on the audio-visual media. The question one may be tempted to ask is; how are these language policies made and who are those who make these policies?

Table 12: Language policy for language usage on the audio-visual media

	Frequency	Percent
Sanctions against media houses that fail to respect the above percentage		
Agree	1	16.6%
Disagree	3	50.0%
Neutral	2	33.4%
Total	6	100.0%

Measures taken by the government to ensure that the above percentage is respected by the audio-visual media houses		
Agree	1	16.7%
Strongly disagree	1	16.7%
Disagree	1	16.7%
Neutral	3	50.0%
Total	6	100.0%

Source: Compiled by authors from field survey, July 2021

Table 12 equally indicates language policy for language usage on the audio-visual media. The table shows that a significant 50% of the respondents indicated that there are no sanctions against media houses that fail to respect the 30% quota, while only 16% of the respondents who were language policymakers were of the view that sanctions are being meted against audio-visual media houses that fail to allocate the 30% of their broadcast time to indigenous language production. We equally notice from the percentages indicated on the table that up to 50% of language policymakers stated that they do not know if there are any measures taken by the government to ensure that the above quota is respected by audio-visual media houses in their production, while a less significant 16.7% agreed that measures are being taken by the government, another 16.7% strongly disagreed that there are no measures taken by the government to ensure the implementation of this quota by the audio-visual media. From this, we are bound to think that those audio-visual media, who fail to respect this quota, do so because the government has not yet put in place sanctions on those who do not respect these quotas.

Discussions of findings

From this study, media policies put in place do not strongly correlate with the massive use of indigenous languages in Cameroon. For instance, an important part of indigenous language is indigenous journalism, editorial critique, guidelines, and commentary could be found on television and in magazines, newspapers, websites, social networks, and indigenous blogs. Through these media outlets, readers and viewers all over Cameroon can learn their indigenous languages, making them very accessible even to other indigenous communities. Furthermore, analysis on media house and language use in presenting programmes on the five media houses selected; CRTV, DBS, Hot Cocoa, Abakwa FM, and Afrique Nouvelle, indicated that, out of the total number of respondents from media houses, 38.9% of the respondents indicated that they preferred to use English in their media houses in the dissemination of their programmes, 11.1% of the respondents were for the French language and 50% of the respondents were for both English and French languages.

Results revealed that 16.7% of the respondents indicated that they will prefer Nkwen language as an indigenous language to use in their programmes, 33.3% of the respondents indicated that they will use Mankon language as an indigenous language as a preference in their programmes and 50% indicated that they will use other languages in the presentation of their programmes. The reasons for this could be explained from different perspectives; the lack of teaching facilities, political or ethnic conflict, and identity concealment, and above all the quest for economic and political survival (Anchimbe 2006).

As a result of the economic strength of other languages, many speakers would prefer to drift from their own languages to the languages they consider to be politically and economically stable. Looking at the lack of interest in giving economic and political power to our indigenous languages, most parents prefer to offer their children a broader knowledge on international opportunities through education in ex-colonial languages and laying emphasis on the fact that they should watch or listen to media stations, which disseminate information mostly in the ex-colonial languages, (English and French). From this study, media workers fall victim to the official language they prefer to use in the dissemination of their programmes and equally in the preference of indigenous language use in their programmes. Their education either in English or French as media workers is weak in correlation to indigenous language mastery in their programmes on the media.

Conclusion

The attitudes of the government, its audio-visual media, and the society at large, to a reasonable extent, are positive towards the use of indigenous languages on the audio-visual media and by extension, cultures since language are the carrier of culture. However, faced with a lot of problems to be able to communicate in these languages, most media workers avoid using it in presenting their programmes even though they recognize the fact that they have a role to play in the use, promotion, maintenance, and development especially in an era where indigenous languages are said to be into extinction due to the neglect and under-use of these languages. Their awareness of the importance of using these languages, though little efforts are made to ensure that they are used equally happens to be in an era-tagged information age wherein, everybody is expected to be carried along in the local and global market of information sharing. Therefore, research in this area has become an indispensable aspect that should always be examined and invested by the broadcast media, corporate organisations, and the academic world. This is so given the fact that the broadcast media aside from education, have become key players in the use, promotion, sustenance, maintenance, and development of indigenous languages.

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