



Assessment of Indigenous Language for Journalism Training in South-South Nigeria: An Interdisciplinary Inquiry

***Daniel, P. U.**

Department of Mass Communication, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

***Corresponding author email:** progress.umor@iaue.edu.ng

Abstract

African journalism concerns African society, culture, and democratic activities within African states. Before the colonial era, information dissemination was through the oral tradition, exemplified by folklore, musicals, dance, parables, poetry, and other cultural activities. The activities above were carried out through indigenous languages by engaging the town crier, opinion leaders, and other individuals in the community. This paper, therefore, seeks to examine African indigenous languages in journalism practice and other related disciplines for the development of the African continent. The study anchors on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory and applies an amalgam of survey and library research designs to investigate the level of usage of indigenous languages in African countries, based on the United Nations training of African journalists, using multi-stage sampling techniques for data generation. The population was 13,723 higher institutions in Africa, with a sample of 375. The findings indicate that the English language is the language of journalism training and reporting in Africa. Some Africans don't appreciate their language due to globalization and research. The study recommended adopting one indigenous language as an official language for national development.

Keywords: African Journalism, Indigenous, Journalism, Cultural activities, Society

Introduction

When Africans were African, especially in rural communities, after long days of work, children would sit down with their fathers and sometimes with their mothers for daily storytelling. As the stories progressed, the traditional journalists or the community information minister, known as the town crier with his attention-getting devices (AGD), would call for everyone's attention and then disseminate information to the people. He would then move on and do the same until he had gone around the community. Revolutions have taken place, and in some areas the method of information dissemination within traditional communities has evolved. Presently, various forms of journalism involve all who engage in the activities of gathering, writing, editing, and disseminating items that are seen/credited as news through print, radio, television, or online content. These processes are carried out through interviews, event reporting, scripting, etc., and such reports address current issues that are analytical and verifiable. In the Western world, there are different views about the origin of journalism; to some scholars, it is believed that it started with newspapers (that view could stand if we look at it from the point of print). When Western Europeans made the first printing of newspapers, this became the hallmark and the beginning of the journalism practice. But in Africa, paper journalism started with the church for its evangelistic purposes, and it was amplified by the return of freed slaves who enhanced the development of journalism using the English language that they had acquired. In Africa, journalism was under the sponsorship of Sierra Leoneans and Liberians, and it marked the beginning of journalism practices in West Africa (Omego & Ochonogor, 2013). Journalism practices in Africa grew faster, especially in Nigeria and Ghana, as a result of Anglophone and Francophone powers, which were influenced by the presence of missionaries and the use of the media for the mobilisation for the actualisation of independence. In some societies, the indigenous language was not

accepted as the language of journalistic practices as such and faced marginalisation in the media space. Part of the issue was adaptation, a lack of wholesale acceptance, and a lack of appreciation from those in the media world based on language usage. Their intense criticism was that indigenous methods of information dissemination made extensive use of embellishments of words with proverbs, which they believed to digress from the foreign and acceptable news standards (Mensah & Da-Costa, 2022).

The growth of journalism practices during this period was described as reflecting the African and their colonial leaders' sense of progress and development. Newspaper readership was mainly for the colonialists themselves, and few educated literates in English, French, or any of the colonial languages, rather than for the masses. At that time, journalism practice and language usage were influenced to some extent by European or French influences, and there was no journalism education or training during the period of the colonial masters. The spoken word, which is more meaningful for interaction and communication in African society, reflects the values, norms, beliefs, and culture of the people, even as urbanisation and civilisation begin to take over almost everything about communication in rural communities. In some areas, beliefs and folklore of the cultural exchange are in the indigenous language, where individuals could memorise some amount of information and, in turn, pass it to their offspring using the indigenous language (Daniel, 2021). Studies have affirmed that the beginning of African journalism originated with the Christian missionaries, who understood that one of the ways to effectively diffuse their religious activities, teaching, and practices was through indigenous language communication strategies, thereby making the local language press a veritable tool for religious activities mobilisation, which later became a democratic mobilisation against colonialism, political agitation, and counteracting damaging propaganda that emanated from the newspapers established or influenced by the colonial (Salawu, 2016). Citing Alabi (2003), Omoloso and Abdulrauf-Salau (2014) affirmed that indigenous language journalism has been a tool used for the purpose of mobilisation and orientation of the people towards development and national goals.

Furthermore, Daniel (2025) noted that over time, indigenous languages have been a fundamental tool for mobilising people towards self-realisation and political activity, and a major instrument driving inclusiveness. The 1980 Yaounde Declaration, which urged African and African governments to start publishing in their indigenous languages, would have been the starting point for indigenous language use. This was believed to be the best tool, particularly, as most of the populations were not literate in the English language or the official language of the different countries that colonised them. Indigenous language media was the vehicle through which mass mobilisation was used to demand independence, but it was not used as the instrument for curriculum development, teaching, and learning in the formal education sector. If it had been used from that time, scholars believed that acceptance would have been achieved on a large scale. This is based on the theory that the popularisation of indigenous languages would have been generally accepted and should have fostered the unity of the people, thereby reducing the threat that the European language poses to African languages (Salawu, 2008), and that the language of African journalism training for media men would have been indigenous. Despite the marginal presence of indigenous languages in selected broadcast stations, the overwhelming dominance of English across media institutions of learning has continued to limit inclusivity, language and cultural preservation, and effective grassroots communication. Studies have shown that in an environment where the indigenous language is the language of communication in educational/training institutions, audiences consistently exhibit higher levels of comprehension, trust, participation, and message retention when information is disseminated in their native language. Therefore, with sustained institutional support for the use of indigenous language in our higher learning and other mediated channels, it will not only create a cultural imperative but also a strategic necessity for deepening democratic engagement, enhancing development communication, and fostering national cohesion.

Review of Related Literature

The diversity of African languages and languages of instruction reflects the identities of different colonial masters in Africa at that time. The official languages in African countries are shaped by government policies and directions, but in the broadcast media, language choice is based on audience relevance and availability, location, commercial viability, and ownership decisions (Pate, 2021). Salawu (2008) pointed out that indigenous languages are no longer alive in Africa because young Africans now admire foreign languages, associated with technology and modernity, which has led to indigenous languages being less valued, while foreign languages are now revered and accepted. This is based on the belief that the English language is strengthened by Western education, which has continued to be the language of curriculum development within the educational sector, governance, and the official language of communication in the day-to-day running of activities in almost all African states. Furthermore, elites in society among native speakers

miligate against the survival of African languages, reflecting attitudes towards them as a result of a lack of patronage for their indigenous language and the belief that it does not contribute to international communication development.

Plüddemann et al (2010) observed that the lack of flourishing of the indigenous language is based on the marginalization of the fact that the language of education at both schools and government at all levels of development is a reflection of the language of the colonial masters which colonized the African society, leading to deprivation of children from using their mother tongue as the language of instruction, as such resulting to cultural alienations, leading to lack of self-confidence and underachievement. This was a result of shifts in native-speaker language use, the language of communication, and the language of curriculum development and instruction. Furthermore, they noted that in some African states, indigenous-language-speaking teacher trainees were required to undergo trilingual training that reflected the imposition of the two official languages, while allowing only a minor role for their mother tongue. Similarly, Yallow et al (2021) noted that the use of English as the language of education has been internationalized, and there is a need for comparison in research. Adding that the world seeks a common language widely accepted for international education as a medium of instruction and learning. Furthermore, 26 out of the 54 countries in Africa use the English language as the language of education and communication, even those that were not colonized by the English-speaking nations. Ethiopia, a country without an English colonial legacy, has been using English in its higher education for close to seventy years; Rwanda and Gabon were traditionally francophone in their higher education systems but are changing to English; South Africa and Sudan have also opted to use English as their official language. Presently, proficiency in the English language is a contemporary necessity in the world of globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education, as its use will enhance academic performance, collaboration, and even access to research grants. Justifying Adebisi's (2016) position on education, instruction, and teaching education, Adebisi noted that education is teaching by explaining how something is done, while instruction is simply telling how something is done. Noting that the goal of teaching education is to facilitate mastery by giving the students the tools to eventually master the subject. However, the colonial education system had coloured the indigenous African language with the belief that Western was better, classifying native languages as pre-logical and pre-critical, disregarding the fact that difference does not always suggest inferiority. Furthermore, there are over 500 indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria and over 3,000 languages spoken across Africa. Noting that the main languages that are spoken in Africa are due to enslavement and colonization, and they are English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Arabic languages, as well as the language of instruction in their institutions and centers of learning. Lawson (2022) affirmed that the English language has become the first language for most young Africans, as they have little to no competence in their native language due to the adoption of English as the language of communication, instruction, and education. Adding that the evolution of the English language in Africa from second language status to first language position makes for the experience of temporary indirect or second-degree mother tongue transfer in the pronunciations of NE-L1 speakers. Furthermore, this has led to strong discrimination and the development of indigenous languages or even the death of these languages. Adedeji (2015) observed that English and French are the most widely spoken languages in Africa because these colonial languages are official and are reflected in the press, in training, and in reporting. For countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Liberia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, and Tanzania, English is the official language for communication, education, and the press. The colonial African language systematically excluded indigenous languages in governance at all levels, using the language of the colonial master for communication and evangelism (Plüddemann et al, 2010). Brock-Utne (2014) avers that the language for instruction in Africa is mainly foreign, while in some areas the children, parents, and teachers alike speak their African language outside the learning environment, thereby creating the problem of comprehension of what is taught against what is learned, thereby making teaching and learning difficult based on linguistic variables. Salawu (2008) also noted that the lack of usage of the indigenous language as the language of the press is a result of mass failure in grades at the WASC levels of examinations based on the issues associated with the teaching and learning of African languages, and at the higher institutions, there are presently no or few departments that offer indigenous language training. Furthermore, Mensah and Da-Costa (2022) noted that indigenous language usage in Africa is encouraged in broadcasting to ensure wider dissemination of information at specific times.

Koch and Burkett (2006) examined how to make the role of African languages in higher education a reality. The study focused on how indigenous languages can be used as languages of instruction within the educational system. It noted that Africans rely heavily on English due to globalisation and empowerment. It found that alternative approaches can be used alongside indigenous languages, while the issues of bilingual and multilingual education can be addressed

over time. It concluded that the resources invested in the study of English can be redirected into a framework that supports the implementation of indigenous languages through systematic planning. It is recommended that this be done through the careful implementation of studies carried out within and outside African states. Tshabangu and Salawu (2021) noted that indigenous languages are neglected because most local languages lack scholarly interest, a trend shaped by the pressure of foreign languages and anxieties stemming from technological and economic challenges. Van Pinxteren (2022) observed that children speaking their indigenous language does not necessarily translate into effective teaching and learning in the classroom, pointing out that Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) are two distinct factors. This aligns with the views of Cordeur (2010), who argued that language is a key element in curriculum development, as regards how knowledge is conceived, constructed, and transmitted, and that the language of curriculum development is the basis of indigenous language development or setback.

Kaya et al (2016) affirmed that the marginalisation of African indigenous languages in African society is not only a problem of foreign dominance or the language of communication and curriculum development, but it is Africa itself; the discourse on socio-economic development tends to ignore the role of African indigenous languages and knowledge systems. But Viriri and Ndimande-Hlongwa (2023) have ascertained that presently in Zimbabwean State University there is a language policy with emphases that have created a paradigm shift in the educational system on the use of indigenous language, but this shift is specifically for those going for teaching practice. But. But Khohliso et al (2024) have averred that African languages have over time been marginalised and underrepresented in the education curriculum, national orientation, and unity of purpose in African society and globally. There is currently growing recognition of the significance of African languages in some African universities. This is based on the issues of language endangerment and serves as a means of preserving and promoting cultural heritage, facilitating communication, knowledge sharing, and transfer among diverse communities. Furthermore, they noted that using African languages can enhance the relevance and impact of academic research and facilitate greater community participation in educational programmes. In a study carried out by Provisio digital 2023, the language of communication and instructions in African countries was categorised as English having 23, with the following countries: Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Eritrea, Eswatini, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The French-speaking countries are 21, and they are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, and Togo. There are 13 Arabic-speaking countries, including Algeria, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sahrawi Republic (Western Sahara), Somalia, Sudan, and Tunisia. The Portuguese language is spoken in six (6) African countries: Angola, Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Swahili is spoken in four (4) African countries: Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Somali is spoken in two (2) African countries, namely Ethiopia and Somalia; Tamazight is spoken in two (2) African countries, namely Algeria and Morocco; and Tigrinya is spoken in two (2) African countries, namely Ethiopia and Eritrea. There are other languages spoken in some African countries that are recognised as national languages. siSwati/Swazi and other Southern African countries make use of languages 22, such as Burundi (Kirundi), Comoros (Shikomor), Eswatini (siSwati), Ethiopia (Afar, Amharic, Afaan Oromo), Lesotho (Sotho), Madagascar (Malagasy), Rwanda (Kinyarwandal, Seychelles (Seselwa), South Africa (Afrikaans, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, South African Sign Language, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu), Zimbabwe (Chewa, Chibarwe, Kalanga, Koisan, Nambya, Nda, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, Zimbabwean Sign Language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa).

Diffusion of Innovation

The diffusion of innovation was first studied by the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde in the late 19th century, and by German and Austrian anthropologists and geographers such as Friedrich Ratzel and Leo Frobenius. The concept was later refined and applied across multiple disciplines. As a theory that seeks to explain how (how it came about, etc.), why (why this or why now, why do you think we need it, etc.), and at what rate new ideas and technologies spread (the level of acceptance by society), Okpoko (2010) observed that it is the process by which an innovation is communicated over time among the participants in a social system.

An innovation is an idea, behaviour, or object perceived as new by its audience. As such, the introduction of foreign languages in Africa by colonial masters, alongside innovations in foreign trade and relationships, religion, and

development, utilised English as the channel of communication. The timing of these innovations was well suited to them. Daniel (2017) affirms that for a new idea, product, or innovation to be diffused, there must be awareness of the innovation, an interest stage, an evaluation stage, and a trial and adoption stage. For English to be accepted as a language of communication, instruction, and curriculum development, other innovations were introduced, such as religion and trade. To ensure communication and understanding among all parties, both the foreigners and the African states, English was adopted. This aligns with Rogers' amendment of the theory, which outlines the following processes: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation stage.

This could be seen in line with the acceptance and use of the foreign language introduced by the colonial master as the language for education, governance, and communication. Adopting a foreign language was an innovation, based on the belief that it would either increase or decrease the likelihood of the society generating a new product, idea, concept, or new way by the members of the society within a given environment. As we know, this development suggests that the colonial master's language was interpersonal and that it had opinions to inform and influence the way individuals judge these language innovations.

Journalism and information gathering have been major sources of public information flow and key elements in the globalisation of activities across the world and the African continent, showcasing the richness of its cultural heritage and activities, economics, political structures, development, and, in general, presenting Africa to the world. However, the purpose of the early local-language newspapers in the colonial era in Africa was to express nationalism among the people. Today, with the use of social media, personal computers, and the accessibility of broadband, individuals can now access the world, even with language apps like a language translator. Despite the presence of mediated systems to help with the diversity of Africa's languages, few media publications are published in the indigenous languages in the areas of operation. There are few centres in Africa that use the indigenous language in their day-to-day training but only broadcast in the native languages. These centres are focused primarily on supporting African journalists to tell stories that showcase African diversity and creativity.

Only a few broadcast media give specific time slots for programmes to be aired in local languages, due to government policies and directives; even then, there are significant gaps in the hours allocated to indigenous language broadcasting across the various news stations. Could it be that the lack of indigenous language training in institutional centres/usage or in curriculum development or as the language of national communication is the result of non-inclusiveness in the use of indigenous languages in the media stations in Nigeria? Against this backdrop, this study assesses the extent of indigenous language use in African journalism training and its effects on other disciplines of study in Africa.

This study aims to examine the dominance of indigenous languages in African journalism training and other teaching and learning situations within Africa and higher institutions of journalism training. The specific objectives are:

1. Determine the languages used for training in higher institutions and centres for media studies in South-South Nigeria
2. Evaluate the level of usage of indigenous languages in South-South Nigeria journalism training and reporting
3. The constraints for the use of Indigenous languages in the training of South-South Nigeria journalism

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What languages are used for training in higher institutions and centres for media studies in South-South Nigeria?
2. To what extent are indigenous languages used in journalism training and media reporting in South-South Nigeria?
3. What are the major constraints affecting the use of indigenous languages in journalism training in South-South Nigeria?

Methodology

The study used the survey research method. The population was 13,415. This figure was derived from the estimated list of Journalism training institutions in the South-South, as 45. Each journalism training centre has at least 13 lecturers/instructors, giving an estimated total of 585. With an estimated enrolment of not less than 153 candidates per

centre, multiplied by 45 centres in the South-South, this yields 6,885. The total number of media professionals in Nigeria is 5945 (njj.org.ng). Therefore, the population is 13,415. Using Philip Meyer's sampling determinant, the sample size is 381. The stratified random sampling technique was used to collect data from students, journalists/editors, and media trainers within the South-South. A well-structured questionnaire was used on a modified Likert scale, and to determine respondents' decisions on each questionnaire item, the decision rule adopted was 2.5.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of samples

S/No	Options	n	%
1	Students	183	48
2	Media Professionals	105	28
3	Lectures/Instructors	93	24
	Total	381	100

Source: Fieldwork 2025

Table 2: Languages used for training in higher institutions and centres for media studies in South-South Nigeria

S/No	Language Used	n	%
1	English Language only	305	80.1
2	English & Pidgin English	40	10.5
3	Bilingual (English & Indigenous Language)	27	7.1
4	Indigenous Language only	9	2.3
	Total	381	100

Table 2 shows that the overwhelming majority of respondents, 305 (80.1%), reported that English language only is used for journalism training in their institutions and centres in South-South Nigeria, while a mere 9 (2.3%) reported that an indigenous language alone is used. This confirms, at the level of language choice, the historical trajectory traced in the literature review from missionary-introduced English-medium press to present-day institutional practice.

Table 3: Indigenous languages used in journalism training and media reporting in South – South Nigeria

S/No	Statement	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Mean	Decision
1	Indigenous language is used as a medium of instruction in my institution.	18	42	140	181	1.73	Disagreed
2	Indigenous language is used for practical journalism assignments (interviews, reports, scripts).	25	55	150	151	1.88	Disagreed
3	My institution offers a distinct course/module on indigenous language journalism.	10	20	130	221	1.52	Disagreed
4	Media reports/publications in indigenous languages are common within my area of training.	30	60	145	146	1.93	Disagreed
5	I have received training that emphasizes indigenous language reporting skills.	22	48	155	156	1.83	Disagreed

Table 3 indicated that all five items on the extent of indigenous language usage recorded mean scores below the 2.5 benchmark, ranging from 1.52 to 1.93, yielding a grand mean of 1.78. Table further shows that all the respondents disagree, on every item measured, that indigenous languages are meaningfully used in their training or reporting environment. The lowest-scoring item, whether institutions offer a distinct course/module on indigenous language journalism (mean = 1.52), indicates that curriculum-level integration is the weakest link of all, more absent even than incidental indigenous-language use in assignments (1.88) or area-based reporting (1.93).

Table 4: Major constraints affecting the use of indigenous languages in journalism training in South-South Nigeria

S/No	Statement	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Mean	Decision
1	Lack of a standardized orthography for many indigenous languages is a major constraint.	190	140	35	16	3.32	Agreed
2	Absence of adequate teaching and learning materials in indigenous languages hinders training.	205	130	30	16	3.38	Agreed
3	An inadequate number of qualified indigenous-language instructors constrains training.	180	150	33	18	3.29	Agreed
4	Negative attitude of students/trainees toward indigenous languages discourages their use.	150	160	45	26	3.14	Agreed
5	Lack of institutional and government policy support constrains indigenous language use in training.	210	125	30	16	3.39	Agreed
6	The perception that an indigenous language limits international relevance/career mobility discourages its use.	140	155	55	31	3.06	Agreed

Table 4.4 indicated that all six constraint items recorded mean scores above the 2.5 benchmark, ranging from 3.06 to 3.39, with a grand mean of 3.26. The respondents agreed that all six factors tested are genuine constraints, but ranked them unevenly. The constraints are predominantly structural and policy-driven resourcing, materials, personnel, and regulation, rather than a matter of individual or attitudinal resistance among trainees and trainers.

Discussion

Languages Used for Training

The finding that English is used almost exclusively (80.1%) for journalism training in South-South Nigeria, with indigenous-language-only training statistically negligible (2.3%), confirms the historical trajectory traced in the literature review. It aligns with Adedeji (2015), who observed that English and French remain the most widely spoken languages in Africa precisely because they are the official languages reflected in the press, both in training and in reporting. It also reinforces Yallow et al. (2021), who noted that English has become internationalised as the language of education, with the majority of African countries, Nigeria included, using it as the language of instruction regardless of colonial history. Read against the Diffusion of Innovation Theory anchoring this study, English was, historically, the innovation introduced by the colonial masters and adopted through the stages of knowledge, persuasion, decision, and implementation; the present finding shows that this adoption has become so deeply confirmed and routinised that the indigenous language now occupies the position English once held a marginal, largely unadopted alternative.

Extent of Indigenous Language Usage

The finding that indigenous language usage falls below the 2.5 benchmark on every item measured (grand mean = 1.78), most severely in curriculum-level provision (mean = 1.52), supports Plüddemann et al. (2010), who observed that the language of education at both schools and government reflects the language of the colonial masters, depriving learners of their mother tongue as a language of instruction and leading to cultural alienation. It also corroborates Salawu (2008), who argued that indigenous languages are no longer “alive” in Africa because young Africans admire the foreign language and the modernity associated with it, leaving the indigenous language without patronage, even where it is not formally excluded. The uniformly low means across instruction, assignments, coursework, area reporting, and personal training experience indicate that this is not a gap in one part of the training pipeline but an absence that runs through the entire pipeline, consistent with Tshabangu and Salawu’s (2021) observation that indigenous languages are neglected partly because they attract little scholarly or curricular investment in the first place.

Constraints to Indigenous Language Usage

The finding that all six constraint items were agreed upon (grand mean = 3.26), led by lack of policy support (3.39) and absence of teaching/learning materials (3.38), supports Koch and Burkett (2006), who found that resources historically directed toward English instruction could equally be redirected toward a systematic framework for indigenous language implementation, provided planning and institutional will exist. It also aligns with Brock-Utne (2014), who observed that the foreign language of instruction in Africa creates comprehension difficulties rooted in linguistic and structural variables rather than personal resistance, and with Khohliso et al. (2024), who noted that African languages remain marginalised and underrepresented in the education curriculum despite growing recognition

of their value. That attitudinal constraints (3.14 and 3.06) ranked lowest among the six factors is a notable departure from the tone of some of the literature reviewed (e.g., Salawu, 2008, on elite disdain for indigenous languages): in this study's data, the barrier is less about willingness and more about the missing orthographies, materials, personnel, and policy mandates needed to act on that willingness a distinction with direct implications for where intervention should be targeted.

Conclusion

This study set out to assess the level of indigenous language use in journalism training in South-South Nigeria and to identify the constraints that militate against it. The evidence gathered confirms that English remains the entrenched language of journalism education and practice, a position reinforced by colonial history, globalisation pressures, and the absence of institutional infrastructure to support indigenous-language instruction. While indigenous languages historically served as Africa's original vehicle for disseminating information through the town crier, folklore, and oral tradition, this heritage has not been institutionalised in the formal journalism training curriculum. The persistence of this gap is not primarily a matter of individual resistance but of structural neglect: missing orthographies, missing materials, missing trained personnel, and missing policy. Unless these structural gaps are deliberately addressed, indigenous languages will continue to be marginalised in African journalism training, undermining the very cultural preservation, grassroots communication, and democratic inclusiveness that the indigenous language press once championed during the anti-colonial struggle.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Strengthen Indigenous Language Integration in Journalism Education: Journalism training institutions should fully integrate indigenous language studies into mass communication curricula, while government regulatory bodies (NUC, NBTE, etc.) establish policies that require indigenous language competence in journalism education. Universities, language boards, and relevant agencies should also develop standardized orthographies, teaching materials, and train qualified instructors.
2. Reform Media and Broadcasting Policies: Government and media regulatory agencies, particularly the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), should promote the use of indigenous languages by expanding mandatory indigenous-language programming and encouraging their use in journalism. Consideration should also be given to adopting at least one indigenous language as an official language to strengthen national development and media communication.
3. Promote Positive Attitudes Toward Indigenous Languages: Media organizations, journalism professional bodies, and educational institutions should implement sustained advocacy and sensitization programmes to reposition indigenous languages as valuable tools for professional journalism, cultural preservation, and inclusive national development

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