ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RADIO IN REVITALISING THE IGBO LANGUAGE AMONG YOUTHS IN ENUGU

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Article History	Abstract
  	Indigenous language preservation amongst younger generations remains critical in South-East Nigeria where Igbo faces declining usage. This study assesses the effectiveness of radio in revitalising the Igbo language amongst youths in Enugu. Using survey research design, 384 respondents comprising 150 radio personnel and 234 youths aged 18-35 were examined across major Enugu-based radio stations. Data collection utilised structured questionnaires and interviews, analysed using frequency distribution, percentages, mean scores and chi-square testing. Anchored on Uses and Gratifications Theory, findings revealed that radio programming reaches only 28% of target youth audiences (Mean=2.41, SD=1.02), with limited content appeal (Mean=2.38, SD=0.94) and inadequate youth-focused programming strategies (Mean=2.52, SD=1.08). Youth listenership for Igbo programmes averaged 15 minutes daily compared to 127 minutes for English content. Statistical testing (χ^2=156.34, df=4, p<0.001) confirmed that current radio approaches significantly fail to effectively engage youths in Igbo language revitalisation. However, 67% of respondents expressed willingness to engage with modernised Igbo radio content integrating music, social media and contemporary formats. The study recommends modernised programming formats, strategic scheduling during youth-accessible hours, digital platform integration and collaborative partnerships with youth influencers to enhance radio's effectiveness in Igbo language revitalisation amongst Enugu youths. ***Keywords:*** *Radio Effectiveness, Igbo Language Revitalisation, Youth Engagement, Indigenous Language Broadcasting, Enugu, Language Preservation.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In August 2024, Radio Nigeria Enugu launched "Igbo Gen-Z Voice," a weekly programme targeting young Igbo speakers aged 18-30. Despite significant promotional efforts and prime Saturday afternoon scheduling, listenership data revealed an average audience of only 3,200 youths from Enugu's estimated 400,000 young population. Three months later, the programme reduced from 60 minutes to 30 minutes due to low engagement. This scenario encapsulates the challenge confronting radio broadcasters attempting to use the medium for Igbo language revitalisation amongst youths in Enugu.

Radio broadcasting historically served as a powerful instrument for language preservation and cultural transmission. Since the establishment of Radio Nigeria Enugu in 1960, indigenous language broadcasting has been integral to the station's mandate. However, contemporary realities reveal a disconnect between radio's potential and its actual effectiveness in reaching and engaging younger

audiences with Igbo language content. Enugu metropolis hosts major stations including Radio Nigeria Enugu, Coal City FM, Urban Radio 94.5, Dream FM and Correct FM, each broadcasting varying amounts of Igbo language content. Yet audience research consistently demonstrates minimal youth engagement with such programming.

The crisis of Igbo language decline amongst youths is well documented. UNESCO's classification of Igbo as a vulnerable language reflects accelerating language shift towards English and Nigerian Pidgin, particularly amongst urban youths. Emeafor (2023) reports that only 34% of youths in South-East Nigeria can identify regular programmes dedicated to teaching proper Igbo, whilst Odinye and Odinye (2020) found that 73% of Igbo youths prefer interacting in English even amongst themselves. This generational language shift threatens not merely communication patterns but the transmission of cultural knowledge, traditional wisdom and collective identity embodied in the Igbo language.

Radio's role in language revitalisation remains theoretically compelling. The medium's accessibility, affordability and reach position it advantageously for indigenous language promotion. Unlike television requiring visual attention or print media demanding literacy, radio allows simultaneous engagement with other activities, potentially integrating language exposure into daily routines. Furthermore, radio's capacity for participatory programming through phone-ins, dedications and interactive segments theoretically enables active youth involvement. However, the question persists: is radio effectively leveraging these affordances to revitalise Igbo language usage amongst youths in Enugu?

Contemporary youth media consumption patterns present formidable challenges. Research indicates that individuals aged 18-35 spend an average of 6.4 hours daily on smartphones compared to merely 42 minutes on traditional radio (James et al., 2024). Social media platforms, streaming services and digital content dominate youth attention, relegating traditional broadcasting to peripheral status. Additionally, youth attitudes towards indigenous languages are shaped by perceptions of modernity, economic utility and social prestige. Speaking English is frequently associated with educational achievement and professional success, whilst Igbo may be perceived as provincial or limiting.

Against this backdrop, assessing radio's effectiveness in Igbo language revitalisation amongst youths becomes imperative. Such assessment must examine not only the quantity of Igbo programming but its quality, accessibility, appeal and actual impact on youth language attitudes and usage. Understanding where current approaches succeed or fail enables evidence-based recommendations for enhancing radio's contribution to language preservation. This research addresses this critical knowledge gap.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite constitutional recognition of indigenous languages and the proliferation of radio stations in Enugu, Igbo language usage amongst youths continues declining. Research indicates that only 12% of youths aged 18-35 regularly listen to Igbo language radio programmes, compared to 64% for English programmes (Ngene et al., 2021). Audience data from Enugu-based stations shows Igbo programme listeners are predominantly aged 45+, with minimal youth penetration.

Current radio programming approaches appear misaligned with youth preferences and consumption patterns. Traditional formats emphasising folklore, proverbs and cultural discussions fail to resonate with digitally-native youths seeking contemporary, fast-paced content. Scheduling practices relegate Igbo programmes to off-peak hours when youth listenership is minimal. Furthermore, inadequate integration with digital platforms limits reach amongst smartphone-dependent youths.

The consequences extend beyond broadcasting. Language shift amongst youths threatens intergenerational transmission, potentially rendering Igbo functionally obsolete within two generations. Cultural knowledge embedded in language risks erasure, whilst community cohesion dependent on linguistic solidarity weakens. Without understanding radio's effectiveness or ineffectiveness in addressing youth language decline, interventions remain speculative rather than evidence-based.

This study therefore systematically assesses radio's effectiveness in revitalising Igbo language amongst youths in Enugu, examining programming quality, accessibility, youth engagement levels and actual impact on language attitudes and usage.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective is to assess the effectiveness of radio in revitalising the Igbo language amongst youths in Enugu. Specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the extent to which current Igbo radio programming reaches and engages youth audiences in Enugu.

2. Assess youth attitudes towards Igbo language radio programmes and factors influencing their listening behaviour.

3. Evaluate the quality and appropriateness of Igbo radio content for youth audiences.

4. Investigate the relationship between radio exposure and youth Igbo language proficiency and usage patterns.

1.4 Research Questions

1. To what extent does current Igbo radio programming reach and engage youth audiences in Enugu?

2. What are youth attitudes towards Igbo language radio programmes and what factors influence their listening behaviour?

3. How appropriate is the quality of Igbo radio content for youth audiences?

4. What relationship exists between radio exposure and youth Igbo language proficiency and usage patterns?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

H_{01}: Current radio programming approaches do not significantly fail to reach and engage youth audiences in Igbo language revitalisation.

H_{11}: Current radio programming approaches significantly fail to reach and engage youth audiences in Igbo language revitalisation.

H_{02}: No significant relationship exists between radio exposure to Igbo content and youth language proficiency levels.

H_{12}: A significant positive relationship exists between radio exposure to Igbo content and youth language proficiency levels.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study provides empirical evidence informing radio programming strategies for youth engagement, policy development for language preservation initiatives and curriculum design for broadcaster training. Findings contribute to academic discourse on media effectiveness in language revitalisation whilst offering practical recommendations for enhancing radio's impact on youth language attitudes and usage.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study covers Enugu Metropolis radio stations broadcasting Igbo language content, examining the period January 2024 to December 2024. Focus is on youths aged 18-35 years, representing the demographic most affected by language shift whilst possessing capacity for language revitalisation.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Language revitalisation refers to deliberate, coordinated efforts to reverse language decline and restore indigenous languages to vigorous use within communities. Unlike mere preservation, which maintains languages in archival forms, revitalisation seeks active intergenerational transmission and expanded domains of language use (Danos & Turin, 2021). Radio's role in this process operates through several mechanisms: increasing language exposure, normalising indigenous language use, creating aspirational models of fluent speakers and providing accessible learning resources.

Radio effectiveness encompasses multiple dimensions beyond simple broadcast reach. Effective radio programming must demonstrate audience penetration (reaching target demographics), engagement quality (holding attention and prompting interaction), content appropriateness (matching audience needs and preferences) and measurable impact (influencing attitudes, knowledge or behaviour). For language revitalisation specifically, effectiveness requires not merely broadcasting in indigenous languages but strategically designing content that motivates language learning, usage and positive attitude formation amongst target audiences.

Youth audiences, defined here as individuals aged 18-35, represent both the greatest challenge and opportunity for language revitalisation. This demographic experiences maximum exposure to globalising influences, English-language education and digital media, accelerating language shift. However, their capacity for language acquisition, influence on younger siblings and potential as future parents position them strategically for revitalisation efforts. Understanding youth media consumption patterns, motivations and preferences becomes essential for designing effective programming.

2.2 Igbo Language Context and Youth Language Shift

Igbo, spoken by approximately 30 million people across South-Eastern Nigeria, faces accelerating decline amongst younger generations despite its designation as one of Nigeria's three major languages. Obiorah (2025) documents that only 45% of urban Igbo children achieve fluency compared to 89% in rural areas, indicating rapid urban language shift. This decline results from multiple converging factors: English-medium education systems, parental preferences for English-speaking children, peer pressure favouring English usage and absence of economic incentives for Igbo proficiency.

Research by Odinye and Odinye (2020) found that 73% of Igbo youths prefer English for peer interactions, perceiving it as more prestigious and professionally advantageous. James et al. (2024) highlight educational and institutional barriers, noting insufficient support for Igbo language

teaching and limited opportunities for professional Igbo language use. This creates a vicious cycle: as fewer youths speak Igbo fluently, the language's social domains contract further, reinforcing perceptions of irrelevance.

However, emerging counter-trends suggest potential for revitalisation. The 2018 launch of BBC Igbo Service rekindled interest in quality Igbo journalism, demonstrating youth appetite for contemporary Igbo content when professionally produced (Obiorah, 2025). Social media platforms increasingly feature Igbo content, with youth-driven hashtags promoting language pride. Furthermore, policy initiatives such as Imo State's 2019 mandatory Igbo language requirement signal governmental recognition of the crisis.

2.3 Radio and Indigenous Language Revitalisation

Scholarly literature establishes radio's theoretical potential for language revitalisation whilst acknowledging practical limitations. Danos and Turin (2021) surveyed global indigenous language broadcasting initiatives, concluding that radio succeeds through comparative affordability, asynchronous consumption enabling repeated exposure and non-intrusive nature allowing multitasking. Their research identified successful cases amongst Navajo, Maori and Colombian indigenous communities where radio contributed measurably to language maintenance.

However, effectiveness depends critically on programming approaches. Rauf et al. (2023) studied Yoruba-language radio stations in Nigeria, finding that whilst 79% of audiences specifically sought indigenous content, challenges included limited funding, recruitment difficulties and technical constraints. Significantly, their research revealed that mere broadcasting in indigenous languages proved insufficient; content quality, presenter dynamism and contemporary relevance determined actual impact.

Patrick et al. (2022) examined Delta North radio broadcasting, identifying that revitalisation requires broadcasting culturally educating and language-reviving content rather than simple vernacular translation of mainstream programming. Their findings emphasised integrating indigenous knowledge systems, traditional communicative styles and community-relevant topics. For youth audiences specifically, this necessitates balancing cultural authenticity with contemporary formats and topics.

2.4 Youth Engagement and Media Consumption Patterns

Contemporary youth media consumption diverges dramatically from traditional patterns. Research consistently demonstrates that youths aged 18-35 allocate minimal time to conventional radio, preferring on-demand digital content, social media platforms and streaming services. Adeosun et al. (2025) note that smartphone penetration and internet access enable youths to curate personalised media diets, reducing exposure to broadcast content they perceive as irrelevant.

Attitudes towards indigenous language media amongst youths reflect broader language attitudes. Studies indicate that youths associate indigenous language media with older generations, traditional lifestyles and limited opportunities. However, research also reveals that these attitudes are malleable. When indigenous content adopts contemporary formats, integrates popular music, addresses relevant issues and leverages influential personalities, youth engagement increases substantially (Adeosun et al., 2025).

Successful youth-oriented indigenous language media share common characteristics: brevity matching shortened attention spans, interactivity enabling participation, digital integration facilitating access and shareability, contemporary music incorporation and discussion of issues youths consider relevant such as relationships, careers, technology and entertainment. Traditional radio formats emphasising lengthy discussions, folklore and formal language patterns consistently fail to engage younger audiences.

2.5 Programming Strategies and Content Design

Effective indigenous language radio programming for youth requires strategic design addressing multiple dimensions. Content must balance language teaching functions with entertainment value, avoiding didactic approaches that alienate non-fluent youths. Scheduling must account for youth availability patterns, with digital platforms enabling on-demand access beyond broadcast times. Production quality must match youths' expectations formed through exposure to professionally-produced international content.

Ngene et al. (2021) identified scheduling as critically affecting listenership, with prime-time slots featuring English content whilst Igbo programmes aired during off-peak hours. This structural marginalisation signals institutional devaluation of indigenous languages, reinforcing youth perceptions of irrelevance. Their research demonstrated that when indigenous programmes received prime scheduling and promotional support, youth engagement increased significantly.

Integration with social media platforms emerges as essential for contemporary radio effectiveness. Youths expect multimedia engagement, content sharing capabilities and interactive participation opportunities. Radio stations successfully engaging youths combine broadcast programming with robust social media

presence, podcast availability, short video clips and interactive digital communities. This multiplatform approach extends reach beyond traditional broadcast audiences whilst creating communities of practice around language use.

3.0 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Empirical research on radio's effectiveness in indigenous language revitalisation presents mixed findings, revealing both potential and limitations. Emeafor's (2023) comprehensive study of 379 respondents in South-East Nigeria examined educational broadcasting's role in safeguarding endangered Igbo language. The research revealed that broadcast media contributed moderately to Igbo language awareness, with 61.2% of respondents acknowledging radio's role in language promotion. However, significant implementation gaps emerged, as only 34% could identify regular programmes dedicated to teaching proper Igbo. The study attributed language decline to parental neglect (78%), urbanisation (69%) and English-medium education systems (91%), suggesting that radio alone cannot reverse language shift without addressing broader socioeconomic factors. Emeafor's work highlights the distinction between radio's theoretical potential and actual implementation effectiveness, demonstrating that awareness creation differs substantially from behaviour change.

Building on this foundation, Rauf et al. (2023) investigated radio's effectiveness in promoting indigenous languages through Yoruba-language stations, surveying 172 respondents. Their findings demonstrated high listenership levels, with 79% specifically seeking indigenous content, confirming audience demand for quality vernacular programming. However, operational challenges significantly constrained effectiveness: limited funding affected 68% of stations, competition from English stations impacted 71%, recruitment difficulties troubled 63% and technical limitations affected 59%. These findings suggest that effectiveness depends not merely on programming intent but on resource availability enabling quality production. The research established that successful indigenous language broadcasting requires sustained institutional support, adequate funding mechanisms and professional capacity development.

Examining cultural orientation specifically, Ngene et al. (2021) studied indigenous radio programmes across three South-East states with 385 respondents, revealing that improper scheduling significantly affected listenership, with 72% of respondents noting this challenge. The research identified systemic marginalisation of indigenous programming through relegation to off-peak hours whilst prime-time featured English content. Major constraints included limited airtime allocation (76%), inadequate promotional efforts (69%), audience preferences for foreign content (64%) and insufficient funding (81%). Significantly, the study demonstrated that when indigenous programmes received strategic scheduling and institutional support, engagement levels increased markedly. This research underscores that effectiveness requires structural commitment rather than token programming.

International comparative research provides additional insights. Danos and Turin (2021) surveyed global indigenous language broadcasting initiatives, documenting success stories amongst Navajo, Maori and Colombian indigenous communities. Their research identified critical success factors: community ownership of broadcasting infrastructure, integration of indigenous epistemologies into content design, adequate funding enabling quality production and strategic use of digital platforms extending reach beyond traditional broadcasts. Significantly, successful initiatives combined broadcasting with community language programmes, educational curricula integration and policy support, suggesting that radio functions most effectively within comprehensive revitalisation ecosystems rather than as isolated interventions.

Recent research specifically addressing youth engagement reveals persistent challenges. James et al. (2024) documented educational and institutional barriers facing Igbo language development, noting that youths perceive limited professional utility in Igbo language proficiency. Their research established that institutional support structures, including educational policies, professional opportunities and media representation, critically shape youth language attitudes. When indigenous languages appear marginalised in prestigious domains such as higher education, corporate environments and professional media, youths rationally prioritise languages offering greater opportunities. This research suggests that radio effectiveness depends partly on broader societal valorisation of indigenous languages.

Odinye and Odinye's (2020) evaluation of Igbo language communication patterns amongst 381 respondents in South-East Nigeria revealed alarming trends: Igbo language was declining rapidly as youths preferred English interactions even amongst themselves. The study found that whilst older generations maintained Igbo proficiency, intergenerational transmission was breaking down. Significantly, respondents acknowledged radio's potential role but noted that existing programming failed to attract youth interest due to antiquated formats, irrelevant content and poor production quality. The research recommended fundamental rethinking of programming approaches to

align with contemporary youth preferences whilst maintaining cultural authenticity.

Additional research by Patrick et al. (2022) on Delta North broadcasting identified that revitalisation effectiveness depended critically on broadcasting culturally educating and language-reviving content rather than simple vernacular programming. Their findings emphasised content design incorporating indigenous knowledge systems, contemporary issues relevant to youths and production quality matching expectations formed through exposure to professional international media. The research demonstrated that code-switching between English and indigenous languages, whilst sometimes criticised by purists, actually facilitated youth engagement by reducing linguistic barriers whilst gradually building proficiency.

Collectively, these empirical studies reveal several consistent themes. First, audience demand for quality indigenous content exists, challenging assumptions that language decline reflects lack of interest. Second, implementation quality critically determines effectiveness, with inadequate funding, poor scheduling and antiquated formats undermining potential impact. Third, radio functions most effectively as part of comprehensive revitalisation strategies including education, policy support and community mobilisation. Fourth, youth engagement requires contemporary formats, relevant content and integration with digital platforms. Finally, effectiveness measurement must encompass not merely broadcast statistics but actual impact on language attitudes, proficiency and usage patterns. These insights inform both theoretical understanding and practical recommendations for enhancing radio's contribution to Igbo language revitalisation amongst Enugu youths.

4.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is anchored on Uses and Gratifications Theory, originally developed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970s. The theory represents a paradigm shift from examining what media do to people towards understanding what people do with media. Unlike earlier models assuming passive audiences, Uses and Gratifications Theory posits that audiences actively select media content to satisfy specific needs and achieve particular gratifications.

The theory identifies five core assumptions. First, audiences are active participants consciously selecting media based on expected gratifications. Second, audience members are aware of their needs and can articulate reasons for media consumption. Third, media compete with other sources for need satisfaction. Fourth, people possess sufficient self-awareness to report their media motivations accurately. Fifth, value judgements about media content

should be suspended, focusing instead on audience perspectives (Katz et al., 1974; McQuail, 1987).

McQuail et al. (1972) categorised media gratifications into four primary types: diversion (escape from routine and emotional release), personal relationships (companionship and social utility), personal identity (self-reference and reality exploration) and surveillance (information seeking). These categories help explain why audiences choose specific content whilst rejecting alternatives. Applied to indigenous language broadcasting, the theory suggests youths will engage with Igbo radio content only when it satisfies their specific needs more effectively than competing media options.

For this research, Uses and Gratifications Theory provides analytical framework for understanding youth radio consumption patterns. If youths perceive Igbo radio programmes as failing to satisfy their needs for entertainment, information, social connection or identity formation, they will reject such content regardless of broadcasters' intentions. The theory explains why technically available programming may remain unused when gratifications sought exceed gratifications obtained. It also suggests that effectiveness requires aligning programming with youth-identified needs rather than broadcaster-assumed priorities.

The theory's application illuminates why traditional Igbo radio formats struggle with youth audiences. If programming emphasises cultural preservation (broadcaster motivation) whilst youths seek contemporary entertainment (audience motivation), misalignment occurs. Successful revitalisation requires identifying what gratifications youths seek from media consumption, then designing Igbo content delivering those gratifications whilst simultaneously building language exposure and proficiency. This theory thus provides both explanatory power for current ineffectiveness and prescriptive guidance for improvement strategies.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

This study adopted survey research design to assess radio effectiveness in Igbo language revitalisation amongst youths in Enugu. The design facilitated quantitative data collection through structured questionnaires whilst enabling qualitative insights through open-ended questions and interviews with key informants.

5.2 Population and Sample Size

The study population comprised two distinct groups: radio broadcasting personnel in Enugu-based stations with Igbo language programming, and youths aged 18-35 regularly resident in Enugu Metropolis. Using Taro Yamane's

formula at 95% confidence level with 5% margin of error, sample sizes of 150 broadcasting personnel and 234 youths were determined, totalling 384 respondents.

For broadcasting personnel, purposive sampling selected five major stations with substantial Igbo programming (Radio Nigeria Enugu, Coal City FM, Urban Radio 94.5, Dream FM and Correct FM). Stratified random sampling ensured representation across presenters, producers, content developers and management. For youth respondents, multistage sampling divided Enugu Metropolis into three zones, randomly selected two communities per zone, and employed systematic random sampling identifying youth households.

5.3 Instruments and Data Collection

Structured questionnaires contained demographic information, radio consumption patterns, attitudes towards Igbo programming and language proficiency self-assessments using 5-point Likert scales (5=Strongly Agree to 1=Strongly Disagree). In-depth interview guides structured conversations with 12 key informants including station managers, veteran presenters, youth leaders and language education specialists.

5.4 Validity and Reliability

Face and content validity were established through expert review by three mass communication and linguistics scholars. Reliability was confirmed through test-retest method with 30 respondents, yielding Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.84 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.88 for internal consistency.

5.5 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 26, employing descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (chi-square test, correlation analysis). Mean scores were interpreted as: 4.50-5.00 = Strongly Agree, 3.50-4.49 = Agree, 2.50-3.49 = Neutral, 1.50-2.49 = Disagree, 1.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagree. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis following established frameworks.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and non-maleficence. Ethical clearance was obtained from institutional review boards. All participants provided written informed consent. Questionnaires were anonymised with no personally identifying information collected.

6.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study achieved 92.4% response rate with 355 completed questionnaires (138 broadcasting personnel, 217 youths). Demographic analysis revealed balanced gender distribution (52% male, 48% female), with majority aged 21-30 (63%). Educational profiles showed 71% possessed tertiary education. Regarding Igbo proficiency, 43% self-assessed as fluent, 39% moderate and 18% basic, confirming language shift patterns.

Research Question One: To what extent does current Igbo radio programming reach and engage youth audiences in Enugu?

Findings revealed severely limited reach. Only 28% of youth respondents reported regular exposure to Igbo radio programmes, defined as listening at least once weekly (Mean=2.41, SD=1.02). Average daily listening time for Igbo content measured 15 minutes compared to 127 minutes for English programming. Broadcasting personnel acknowledged this failure, with 82% agreeing current approaches inadequately reach youth audiences (Mean=4.15, SD=0.73). Interview data revealed that Igbo programmes averaged 2,300 youth listeners compared to 45,000 for English equivalents on the same stations. Scheduling analysis showed 68% of Igbo content aired during off-peak hours (10am-2pm weekdays), when youth listenership is minimal due to school and work commitments. This confirmed research question one, demonstrating that current programming substantially fails to reach target youth audiences.

Research Question Two: What are youth attitudes towards Igbo language radio programmes and what factors influence their listening behaviour?

Youth attitudes proved predominantly negative, with only 23% expressing favourable views towards existing Igbo programmes. Key factors influencing behaviour included content relevance (cited by 78%), production quality (64%), scheduling convenience (71%) and social acceptability (52%). Respondents characterised current programming as "boring" (68%), "outdated" (74%) and "irrelevant to our lives" (81%). Conversely, 67% indicated willingness to engage with modernised Igbo content incorporating contemporary music, addressing relevant issues and available through digital platforms. Statistical analysis revealed significant associations between negative attitudes and poor programming quality (χ^2=89.23, p<0.001). These findings suggest that attitudes reflect programming inadequacies rather than inherent youth disinterest in Igbo language content.

Research Question Three: How appropriate is the quality of Igbo radio content for youth audiences?

Quality assessment revealed substantial deficiencies. Broadcasting personnel rated content appropriateness for youth at Mean=2.52 (SD=1.08), indicating disagreement that current content suits youth preferences. Specific

weaknesses included overemphasis on traditional folklore (identified by 76%), limited contemporary music integration (83%), formal language unsuitable for casual listening (69%) and minimal youth participation opportunities (87%). Production quality lagged international standards, with 72% of youth respondents noting poor audio quality, unprofessional presentation and inadequate preparation. However, stations demonstrated capacity for quality production in English programming, suggesting resource allocation rather than absolute capability constraints. Content analysis revealed less than 5% of Igbo programming addressed topics youths identified as relevant: technology, relationships, career development and entertainment trends.

Research Question Four: What relationship exists between radio exposure and youth Igbo language proficiency and usage patterns?

Correlation analysis revealed weak positive relationship between Igbo radio exposure and language proficiency ($r=0.31$, $p<0.05$), suggesting limited impact under current programming approaches. Youths with regular Igbo radio exposure demonstrated marginally higher proficiency (Mean=3.24, SD=0.89) compared to non-listeners (Mean=2.87, SD=1.03), but differences remained statistically modest. More significantly, no meaningful relationship emerged between radio exposure and daily Igbo language usage patterns ($r=0.18$, $p>0.05$). Interview data revealed that whilst radio provided passive exposure, it rarely motivated active language use in peer interactions or digital communications. These findings suggest that current programming builds limited receptive competence without fostering productive language use essential for revitalisation.

Hypothesis Testing:

H_{01}: Current radio programming approaches do not significantly fail to reach and engage youth audiences in Igbo language revitalisation.

Chi-square testing comparing expected versus observed reach patterns yielded $\chi^2=156.34$, df=4, $p<0.001$, substantially exceeding critical value (9.488). This confirms statistically significant failure to reach and engage youth audiences effectively. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted: Current radio programming approaches significantly fail to reach and engage youth audiences in Igbo language revitalisation.

H_{02}: No significant relationship exists between radio exposure to Igbo content and youth language proficiency levels.

Correlation analysis revealed weak but statistically significant positive relationship ($r=0.31$, $p<0.05$),

indicating that whilst exposure correlates with proficiency, the relationship remains modest. The null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that radio exposure relates to language proficiency, albeit weakly under current programming approaches. This suggests potential for enhancement through improved programming quality.

Overall findings demonstrate that radio's effectiveness in Igbo language revitalisation amongst Enugu youths remains severely constrained by programming inadequacies, structural marginalisation through scheduling practices and failure to integrate with youth media consumption patterns. However, expressed willingness to engage with modernised content suggests that effectiveness could improve substantially through strategic programming reforms aligned with youth preferences and contemporary media landscapes.

7.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary of Findings

This study assessed radio effectiveness in revitalising Igbo language amongst youths in Enugu through survey research involving 355 respondents. Key findings aligned with the four research objectives are:

1 Reach and Engagement: Current Igbo radio programming reaches only 28% of target youth audiences, with average daily listening time of 15 minutes compared to 127 minutes for English content. Scheduling practices relegating 68% of Igbo programmes to off-peak hours substantially limit youth access. Statistical testing ($\chi^2=156.34$, $p<0.001$) confirmed significant failure to reach and engage youth audiences effectively.

2 Youth Attitudes: Youth attitudes towards existing Igbo programming proved predominantly negative (77%), influenced by content irrelevance (78%), poor production quality (64%), inconvenient scheduling (71%) and perceived social unacceptability (52%). However, 67% expressed willingness to engage with modernised Igbo content incorporating contemporary formats, music and relevant topics, suggesting that attitudes reflect programming inadequacies rather than inherent disinterest.

3 Content Quality and Appropriateness: Broadcasting personnel rated content appropriateness for youth at Mean=2.52, indicating substantial deficiencies. Specific weaknesses included overemphasis on traditional folklore (76%), limited contemporary music integration (83%), formal language patterns (69%) and minimal youth participation opportunities (87%). Less than 5% of Igbo programming addressed topics youths identified as relevant.

4 Radio Exposure and Language Proficiency:
Correlation analysis revealed weak positive relationship between radio exposure and language proficiency ($r=0.31$, $p<0.05$), suggesting limited impact under current approaches. Significantly, no meaningful relationship emerged between radio exposure and active language usage patterns ($r=0.18$, $p>0.05$), indicating that current programming builds limited receptive competence without fostering productive language use essential for revitalisation.

7.2 Conclusion

This research demonstrates that radio's effectiveness in revitalising Igbo language amongst Enugu youths remains severely constrained under current programming approaches. Low reach (28%), negative youth attitudes (77%), poor content appropriateness (Mean=2.52) and weak impact on language proficiency ($r=0.31$) confirm substantial failure to achieve revitalisation objectives. Statistical evidence establishes that current approaches significantly fail to engage youth audiences effectively ($\chi^2=156.34$, $p<0.001$).

However, findings simultaneously reveal considerable potential for improvement. Youth willingness to engage with modernised content (67%), demonstrated demand for indigenous language media amongst broader populations and success stories from reformed programming initiatives suggest that effectiveness can improve substantially through strategic reforms. Required changes span multiple dimensions: scheduling reforms ensuring youth accessibility, content modernisation aligning with contemporary preferences, production quality enhancement matching professional standards and digital platform integration reflecting youth media consumption patterns.

The path forward requires recognising that radio effectiveness depends not merely on broadcasting in Igbo but strategically designing content delivering gratifications youths seek whilst simultaneously building language exposure and proficiency. This necessitates paradigm shift from viewing indigenous programming as cultural preservation duty towards understanding it as dynamic engagement with youth audiences whose preferences, whilst different from older generations, remain legitimate and addressable.

What remains at stake extends beyond broadcasting viability. Igbo language revitalisation amongst youths determines whether the language survives as living, evolving means of communication or ossifies into archaic cultural relic. Radio, when effectively deployed within comprehensive revitalisation strategies, can contribute meaningfully to this outcome. However, effectiveness requires moving beyond token programming towards genuine institutional commitment, adequate resource allocation and willingness to innovate boldly. The evidence presented here provides foundation for such transformation, but actualisation depends on stakeholders' resolve to prioritise indigenous language vitality over commercial expediency or programming inertia.

Notwithstanding these contributions, the study acknowledges certain limitations. The geographic scope, restricted to Enugu Metropolis, limits generalisability to other South-East Nigerian contexts. Reliance on self-reported data introduces potential social desirability bias, whilst the cross-sectional design captures a snapshot rather than longitudinal language development trajectories. Limited access to proprietary audience data also constrained the depth of reach analysis.

7.3 Recommendations

Based on findings aligned with the four research objectives, this study advances the following recommendations:

1 Enhancing Reach and Engagement: Stations should implement strategic scheduling reforms placing minimum 40% of Igbo content during youth-accessible hours (6-9am, 5-8pm weekdays; 10am-4pm weekends). Digital platform integration is essential, with podcast availability, social media presence and streaming options enabling on-demand access beyond broadcast times. Promotional campaigns leveraging youth influencers and social media marketing should highlight modernised content. Partnership with educational institutions can facilitate structured listening programmes whilst public-private partnerships should fund youth-focused Igbo programming development.

2 Improving Youth Attitudes: Programming must incorporate contemporary Igbo music prominently, including Igbo highlife, hip-hop and Afrobeats with Igbo lyrics. Content should address topics youths identify as relevant: relationships, careers, technology, entertainment and social issues. Presenters should include dynamic young personalities serving as aspirational language models. Interactive segments enabling youth participation through phone-ins, social media engagement and studio visits create ownership feelings. Promotional efforts should rebrand Igbo radio as contemporary and relevant rather than traditional and nostalgic.

3 Enhancing Content Quality: Production quality must match standards youths expect from professional international media, requiring equipment modernisation and staff training. Content development should balance cultural authenticity with contemporary formats, avoiding exclusively folkloric or didactic approaches. Language usage should incorporate colloquial Igbo familiar to youths whilst gradually introducing standard forms. Youth advisory boards should guide content development ensuring relevance. Collaborative content creation involving youth producers, musicians and influencers brings fresh perspectives whilst building investment in programming success.

4 Strengthening Language Impact: Programming should progress from passive exposure towards active usage encouragement through interactive challenges, social media hashtag campaigns and listener competitions rewarding Igbo language use. Integration with formal education systems creates structured learning pathways complementing casual exposure. Community language initiatives coordinated with radio programming provide offline practice opportunities. Regular assessment of

language impact beyond listenership statistics, including proficiency tracking and usage pattern monitoring, enables evidence-based refinement. Radio should position itself within comprehensive revitalisation ecosystems including education, policy advocacy and community mobilisation rather than operating as isolated intervention.

7.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Future research should examine: (1) Longitudinal studies tracking language development amongst youths exposed to reformed programming over extended periods; (2) Comparative effectiveness studies examining radio versus digital media platforms for youth language revitalisation; (3) Economic analysis determining optimal funding models for sustainable youth-focused indigenous programming; (4) Cross-regional studies comparing effectiveness across different Nigerian linguistic contexts; (5) Experimental research testing specific programming innovations and their impact on youth language attitudes and usage.

Declarations

Ethical clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions.

So and so conceived the study, including the design, so and so collated the data, and so and so handled the analysis and interpretation, while so and so the initial manuscript. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

Availability of data and materials.

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

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