

## 7. RADIO LISTENERSHIP PATTERNS AND AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PREFERENCES: A STUDY OF SELECTED YORUBA RADIO PROGRAMMES

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### Abstract

Language plays a fundamental role in communication, culture, and identity, shaping public perception and interaction within society. In mass media, language choice influences audience engagement and fosters cultural connection. This study examines radio listenership patterns and language preferences in Ogun State, Nigeria, focusing on two Yoruba-language programmes: Yoruba Ladun on Eagle 102.5 FM and Yooba Dun on Splash 106.7 FM. Using a mixed-method approach—quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews—the study analyzed audience demographics, listenership habits, and motivations for language preference. Findings reveal a strong preference for Yoruba-language programmes over English-language alternatives, with cultural connection reported by 36.2% of respondents and ease of understanding by 34.2%. Young adults aged 18-30, who make up 58.1% of respondents, form the largest listener demographic. Both Yoruba Ladun and Yooba Dun enjoy high and consistent listenership, with 81.3% of respondents tuning in regularly. Audiences particularly appreciate segments on folklore, proverbs, and book readings, which reinforce cultural heritage. Interviews with key informants confirm these findings, emphasizing the programmes' success due to engaging, well-researched content. The study concludes that Yoruba-language radio programming thrives because of its cultural relevance and accessibility. To sustain this success, stations should conduct regular audience analyses, enhance content innovation, and expand culturally rich programming to preserve linguistic heritage.

**Keywords:** cultural preservation, indigenous radio broadcasting, language preference, radio programme, revitalization, Igbo radio

### Introduction

Language functions as an essential cornerstone of human communication, interwoven with culture and identity (Ugwuanyi, Adiewere, & Duru-Uremadu, 2021). It shapes perceptions and interpretations, playing a critical role in how individuals understand and engage with their environments. Within the mass media, language holds power in influencing public perceptions, framing social issues, and steering public discourse. Communication, therefore, is not just about conveying thoughts but involves a mutually understood medium between the sender and receiver.

The interconnectedness of language and humanity underscores its role in human existence and highlights its capacity to both structure thought and facilitate everyday interactions (Oyesomi, 2020). Historically, language has been central to human interactions, serving as the primary mode of communication for individuals worldwide. Both spoken and written language enable individuals to express emotions, intentions, and ideas. Various theories attempt to explain the origin of language, with some religious narratives attributing it to divine intervention, as seen in texts that describe

language's divine assignment to humanity. For example, according to religious texts, Adam was inspired by God to name creatures, initiating the use of language for categorisation and communication. This spiritual perspective suggests that the multiplicity of languages, as depicted in the Tower of Babel, reflects divine influence on human diversity (Olumuji, 2021).

Language's presence is as ancient as human civilisation itself. It is inseparable from human existence, as the history of humanity is inherently tied to linguistic development. Language operates as a social construct that underpins society's cohesion, enabling the transmission of cultural values across generations. This sociocultural dimension positions language as an indispensable component of social structures, facilitating interaction and reinforcing cultural identity (Emeka, 2018). In this regard, language serves as a conduit for social bonding, community engagement, and interpersonal understanding (Ugor, 2017).

The dynamic nature of language further underscores its role in preserving human relationships and fostering cultural continuity. Language carries the weight of culture, ideology, knowledge, and social norms, shaping community identities and customs. Language also functions as a system through which every communicative component derives its meaning within specific social contexts. These contexts and the intentions behind language use significantly influence how messages are crafted and understood, reflecting the communicator's goals and the audience's expectations (Olusanya, 2017).

Communication is fundamental to society, permeating every aspect of daily life and sustaining human connections. No society has ever existed without some form of communication, as it underlies all forms of human interaction, from domestic to commercial, religious to social. Language is vital in facilitating these interactions, bridging individuals through shared understanding. Communication becomes universal through language, occurring at all times and in all places, making language a central element in studying human environments and social dynamics (Jolayemi, 2019).

Globally, there has been a concerted effort to preserve indigenous languages, as they represent a vital link to cultural heritage and ethnic identity. In Nigeria, linguistic diversity reflects the complexity of its society, where English often serves as a unifying language amidst numerous indigenous tongues. However, efforts to document and revitalise endangered languages emphasise the need to retain cultural distinctiveness and heritage. This involves recording grammatical structures, vocabulary, and oral traditions, which provide a foundation for language preservation (Onyema, 2019).

Language revitalisation efforts, such as media broadcasts in indigenous languages, play a significant role in promoting societal cohesion. In Nigeria, for example, English is dominant due to historical and practical factors, yet indigenous languages like Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo retain regional significance. Broadcasting in local languages allows for greater inclusivity, especially for the less literate population, and fosters mutual understanding by breaking linguistic barriers. This preference for native languages underscores their relevance in promoting local identity, social harmony, and developmental communication (Adeyeye, 2021).

The radio medium in Nigeria illustrates the influence of language in media, as it remains one of the most accessible and widely consumed platforms. Indigenous language broadcasts on radio facilitate deeper cultural connections, allowing communities to engage with public discourse in familiar linguistic terms. By broadcasting in Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo, among other languages, radio enhances the transmission of cultural values and fosters political engagement, promoting democracy among diverse, underserved populations (Olorunisola, 2018). This linguistic diversity in broadcasting reflects the importance of language as a cultural asset and a vehicle for social integration.

Scholarly investigations have thoroughly analyzed the adverse effects of cultural and linguistic

imperialism facilitated by electronic mass media in Nigeria (Adesokan, 2017; Agbana, 2018; Oduah, 2018; Ali, 2019; Pate, 2021). Despite the substantial cultural significance of the Yoruba language, recent trends suggest an alarming reduction in its presence within Nigeria's radio broadcasting landscape. English has increasingly become the primary language in both communication and educational contexts, leading to the marginalization of Yoruba and other indigenous languages. Many radio programs are predominantly conducted in English, reinforcing its status and dominance within the media sector, thus contributing to the erosion of Yoruba representation in public broadcasting (Akanbi & Aladesanmi, 2017; Ojebode, 2018; Ben-Iheanacho, 2019). This linguistic shift, coupled with the residual effects of colonial influence, presents substantial challenges to sustaining Yoruba within the radio broadcasting industry.

The diminishing representation of Yoruba in radio broadcasting raises critical concerns, especially considering the impact of radio on language preference and cultural identity formation, particularly among younger audiences. Young Nigerians increasingly consume foreign-produced content that may undermine indigenous values, gradually detaching them from their linguistic and cultural roots. Additionally, the limited airtime dedicated to news, entertainment, and cultural programming in Yoruba further compounds this issue, diminishing cultural appreciation and weakening indigenous identity (Onyima, 2016; Oyetade, 2017; Obi, 2018; Talabi, 2018).

The preservation and revitalization of the Yoruba language are essential to safeguarding Nigeria's cultural diversity. Radio, with its extensive reach and influence, functions as a powerful medium for promoting indigenous languages and cultural narratives, positioning it uniquely to address this linguistic shift. To create effective revitalization strategies, however, a nuanced understanding of language preferences and listenership trends in culturally significant regions, is crucial. (Rauf *et al.*, 2023).

This research aims to investigate radio listenership patterns and language preferences through the lens of indigenous radio programming in Ogun State, Nigeria. By examining listeners' preferences for language and engagement with Yoruba-language content, this study seeks to outline effective approaches for enhancing the use of Yoruba in radio broadcasting, contributing to its preservation for future generations.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study examines radio listenership of Yoruba language through radio programmes by studying *Yoruba Ladun* on Eagle 102.5FM Ijebu-Ilese and *Yooba Dun* on Splash 106.7FM Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The objectives of this study are to:

- i. Identify demographics of listeners of indigenous Yoruba radio programmes;
- ii. Assess how listeners engage with different segments of the programmes in relation to their cultural experiences; and
- iii. Assess the listenership level of the selected indigenous Yoruba radio programmes (*Yoruba Ladun* on Eagle 102.5FM and *Yooba Dun* on Splash 106.7FM).

### **Indigenous Radio Programme**

Radio is a widely used medium of mass communication, possessing great potential for information dissemination, as its signals can reach almost the entire population. It is regarded as an important medium for primary education and has proven to be an effective means of transmitting and promoting cultural, moral, and community life, particularly due to its unique characteristics (Zhang, 2018). Radio accomplishes this through the diverse range of content (programmes) it offers for public consumption.

The nature of radio content is dynamic and uniquely tailored to the evolving needs of its target audience. This dynamism is what allows radio to function as a metaphorical audio magazine (Abuku, 2019). Consequently, a typical radio station offers content aimed at various distinct audience segments. Radio is an essential mass medium that benefits virtually every member of society. Kuewumi (2019) asserts that radio has transformed human communication and has become a central part of daily life, providing information, education, nurturing, and relaxation, while also revitalising and resuscitating its audience. This, he argues, makes radio a medium of mass communication that is constantly sought after by its dedicated listeners. Egbuchulam (2022) establishes that radio acts as a mobiliser and plays a significant role in the new world order of economy, technology, and politics.

Radio serves as a medium for projecting personality, allowing it to attract and retain an audience. It is an effective instrument for disseminating messages to a large number of people simultaneously, as it transcends the boundaries of space and time while also overcoming illiteracy barriers (Onabajo, 2018).

Egbuchulam (2022) confirms that radio has been a major communication tool for enhancing the quality of people's lives, delivering news, entertainment, and education directly to their doorsteps through its diverse programmes. The unique qualities of radio in content delivery have broadened its significant reach and impact, effortlessly providing a large number of people with access to socially relevant content on a daily basis (Chima, 2018).

Radio programmes cover a wide array of topics, including news, current affairs, music, drama, and educational supplements. Broadcasting continues to play a significant role in Nigeria's contemporary society, particularly in shaping public opinion, building consensus, setting public agendas, influencing political discourse, fostering cultural identity, and providing relief from the daily challenges and monotony faced by the audience (Ekanem, 2019).

Ajaegbu et al. (2017) highlight radio as an efficient medium for disseminating messages to large audiences simultaneously, as it transcends spatial boundaries and overcomes illiteracy barriers. Egbuchulam (2022) further supports this, noting that radio significantly improves people's quality of life by providing current news, entertainment, and education. He also concurs with Maina (2018), stating that despite advancements in online technology, radio retains the advantage of serving dispersed, isolated, and disadvantaged communities, thus reducing the barriers of illiteracy and physical distance. In many rural areas, radio is the most relatable mass medium for people, particularly because it is relatively inexpensive. This accessibility allows the majority of Africans, especially rural and uneducated populations, to receive broadcast information, education, and entertainment. Its mobility also ensures it is readily available whenever needed. As a result, radio stations can leverage this advantage to promote cultural heritage (Mohammed, 2019).

Indigenous language plays a significant role in societal transformation and development, as the stability of a community is reinforced through the transmission of indigenous languages and cultural values. Nwaolikpe (2018, p. 49) quotes Franz (2010), who observed that culture—defined as "the way of life of a people, their ideas, acts, and artifacts"—is a key determinant of whether a society develops rapidly or slowly. The cultural practices and lifestyles of citizens within a community are learned and passed down through generations, and the culture of any given society is dynamic. People learn and adopt new ideas, behaviours, and emerging trends, particularly through relevant media channels. Preserving every culture is vital, as it represents a society's distinct way of life (Ugboaja, 2018).

The role of radio in disseminating information and providing enlightenment is one of its most common functions. Like television, radio serves as a tool for fostering positive attitudinal change among its audience. As a form of electronic media, it contributes to development in both rural and urban areas by broadcasting issues relevant to development through various programmes. This allows individuals

to stay informed about events in and around their communities. Radio can effectively convey essential information regarding the attitudes, behaviours, knowledge, techniques, and skills expected of the public (Oduah, 2018). Given that radio permeates daily life, it can serve as the cornerstone for cultural campaigns within the country. Thus, radio is regarded as a purveyor of education and development. As a medium of mass communication, it helps to elevate the popular art forms of Nigerians, thereby enhancing Nigeria's cultural identity. Radio has a transformative impact on culture and society (Nwaolikpe, 2018).

Radio acts as an opinion leader through its news commentary and editorials, reflecting societal issues through programmes like drama that present relevant topics in an engaging manner, fostering understanding and learning. It informs and educates listeners through discussion and documentary programmes, while providing entertainment through lighter formats such as musical shows, sports, comedy, and dance. Additionally, radio seeks to improve society through specialised programmes focused on agricultural business and related fields. Consequently, radio can effectively convey vital information about the latest techniques in agriculture, trends in agricultural extension services, and more, to rural dwellers (Salama, 2017).

As a powerful communication tool, radio broadcasting delivers political, economic, and social news to communities faster than other media. Nwuneli, as cited in Edwards (2018), contributes to this discussion by noting that radio brings stimulation into households, fostering competition within families and nurturing individuals who will positively contribute to development processes. This aligns with Wigwe's (2017) emphasis on grassroots development. As an agent of development, radio has significantly contributed to cultural advancement in Nigeria by presenting educational programmes that promote cultural development. Radio station programmes provide vital information and educate listeners, encouraging them to protect the public interest. Consequently, the masses learn from radio and rely on it for information, thereby reinforcing its relevance in cultural education and promotion (Nwaolikpe, 2018).

Radio broadcasting has contributed to the emergence of a mass culture characterised by cultural elements, symbols, knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, and norms that are transmitted and shared by a vast number of people in standardised ways (Irene & Victor, 2018). It plays a vital role in contemporary society, particularly in the preservation and transmission of indigenous languages, cultural values, and heritage for current and future generations. Ndolo (2019) observes that radio broadcasting serves multiple functions in people's lives; it educates, informs, and acts as a historical record, as well as a tool for preserving culture and its intrinsic value in the development of a society.

Utilising radio broadcasting to promote cultural preservation and transmission in Nigeria is feasible due to the media's technological orientation, which exerts a powerful influence on society. Adewale (2018) discusses the role of communication, noting the importance of disseminating cultural and artistic products to preserve past heritage, develop culture by broadening individual horizons, and stimulate imagination and creativity as a form of cultural promotion.

Without radio broadcasting, the promotion of indigenous languages and cultural transmission could be hindered, leading to a diminishment of social values and the overshadowing of dominant cultures and identities. As a key instrument for sharing ideas and a means of socialisation for both young and old, Uwaezuoke (2018) asserts that if we lose the elements that define us in this era of global integration, we risk losing our identity as a people and as a continent. Radio broadcasting is critical for the development and preservation of specific cultures, knowledge, and beliefs, acting as a powerful agent of socialisation. It has a profound influence on people's lives, worldviews, and behavioural outcomes. Adequate and purposeful radio (and mass media in general) coverage is essential for raising awareness of indigenous languages and cultural heritage, and for fostering the conservation of various

forms of cultural heritage to promote sustainable economic, social, and cultural development (Ifeagwazi, 2018).

Radio broadcasting serves as a reflection of society, encapsulating its culture, values, and norms. There exists a mutual relationship between radio broadcasting, indigenous languages, and culture, as culture can be disseminated through the medium of radio. Often, people's perceptions and understanding of culture are shaped primarily by their interactions with the media. The media play a crucial role in setting, selecting, and adapting individuals to the rules and regulations of society, as well as the behavioural patterns exhibited by others. Through the media, various cultures, norms, values, and lifestyles are brought to the public's attention (Obong & Ukpabio, 2022)

Thus, the media can be regarded as vital tools and channels for promoting indigenous languages and preserving Nigerian culture through the diverse programmes they disseminate. These programmes are instrumental in facilitating unity and fostering peaceful coexistence among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria (Onyeka, 2019).

### **Radio Listenership**

In rural areas and developing towns, majority of the population, particularly adults and young people, listen to the radio regularly. Interestingly, many listeners exhibit loyalty to their preferred stations and often remain tuned in for extended periods (Ismaila, 2018). Listeners engage with radio in a manner distinct from other media; in fact, ninety percent of them are typically engaged in other activities while listening, such as driving or carrying out household chores (Radio Advertising Bureau, 2018). Most individuals listen to the radio alone, and even when others are present, it rarely becomes a shared experience; instead, each listener has a personal encounter with the content that is not shared with others.

While most people desire to be heard, very few possess good listening skills. Individuals often spend more time assessing what is being said or mentally crafting their responses than actually listening (Sekouri, 2017). The scarcity of effective listeners suggests that those who possess this valuable skill enjoy certain advantages. Attentive listening enables individuals to learn more about others, their surroundings, and society as a whole, fostering awareness on various issues and enhancing one's knowledge base. By obtaining information, individuals gain insights into others, which can be beneficial both personally and professionally.

Active listening allows for clarification of the information being communicated and helps individuals interpret messages according to their understanding. It facilitates critical identification, absorption, and analysis of messages through an internal cognitive process. Furthermore, listening cultivates goodwill and strengthens relationships. Many relationships falter due to misunderstandings that arise from poor listening skills. By practising non-judgemental listening, relationships can be significantly improved. (Mălureanu & Enachi-Vasluianu, 2016; Tustonja et al., 2023; University of Edinburgh, 2024).

Listeners engage with radio for various reasons, including emotional support and to uplift their spirits through programming. These factors can largely influence listeners' attitudes towards the content they consume (Adamu, 2020). The existence of radio is contingent upon its audiences, as its survival relies on them. Radio programmes are designed with specific audiences in mind, and these audiences ultimately determine the meaning derived from any given programme. A radio station without an audience is inconceivable, as these audiences encompass diverse individuals differing in age, gender, economic status, education, religion, culture, race, and more (Ihechu, 2019).

These audience differences influence selection and exposure to radio content, resulting in varied

experiences among listeners. In Nigeria, for instance, there are over 400 radio stations (Mojekeh et al., 2019), predominantly in private ownership, which rely on audience patronage to remain viable. In essence, they depend on profits generated through repeat listeners and customer satisfaction to stay operational.

Media audiences are the recipients of mass media content, and every media message is crafted with the audience in mind. Ultimately, the audience serves as the final arbiter of any media message. The media exist to fulfil audience needs, which can vary widely. Recognising the significant role audiences play in society, Hasan (2018, p. 145) cautions that media must pay attention to their content consumers if they wish to succeed in the market, as "these audiences decide whether they can survive the pressures of the market or not."

Scholars have argued that audiences are essential in mass communication since media texts require audiences to realise their potential for meaning. Media products hold relevance to the extent that there are audiences available to consume them, much like production remains incomplete without consumers. Media audiences comprise numerous social groups, regardless of communication settings, and these groups are often homogeneous in composition (Hasan, 2018, p. 146).

#### **Historical background of *Yoruba Ladun* on Eagle 102.5FM, Ijebu-Ilese**

Eagle 102.5 FM, established on April 4, 2022, is a youth-driven radio station based in Ilese-Ijebu, Ogun State. Owned by Awodi Communications Limited, the station was strategically located to serve both urban and suburban communities across Ogun, Lagos, Oyo, Osun, and Ondo States. It offers a bilingual platform that blends quality music with intelligent conversation, featuring seasoned On-Air Personalities who engage a diverse audience while respecting local cultural nuances.

Eagle FM has positioned itself as a voice for justice, equity, progress, and development, with a commitment to fostering public discourse through dynamic debates on relevant issues. Its programming covers a wide range of topics, including news, business, entertainment, and sports, and reflects a deep understanding of youth culture, which the station defines not by age but by an interest in innovative cultural expression.

The station's apolitical stance and broad-based discussions have made it a popular choice among listeners, both locally and globally, with a digital reach extending to over 40 countries, including the UK, Canada, and the US (Eagle 102.5FM, n.d).

"*Yoruba Ladun*," airing on Eagle 102.5 FM Ijebu-Ilese, is a programme dedicated to revitalising and promoting Yoruba culture and traditions, aiming to rekindle their values and essence in contemporary society. The programme comes on air every Saturday between 6:45pm to 7:30pm with Miss Haneefa Bello as the presenter of the programme. The show features engaging segments, including riddles and their unraveling, storytelling of Yoruba folklore with moral lessons, and readings from ancient Yoruba storybooks rich in cultural and traditional significance.

Since its launch in 2022, "*Yooba Dun*" has successfully sparked interest and awareness in Yoruba culture, overcoming the indifference that once characterized people's attitudes towards these traditions. The programme's acceptance has been remarkable, with listeners eagerly tuning in and expressing disappointment whenever the show misses an episode.

#### **Historical background of *Yooba Dun* on Splash 106.7FM, Abeokuta**

Splash 106.7 FM, a sister station to Splash 105.5 FM in Ibadan, was launched by West Midland

Communication in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The station began transmission on December 25, 2019, twelve years after the debut of its parent station. Situated in Oke-Abetu, Abiola Way, Madojutimi, Abeokuta, Splash FM 106.7 is a privately owned commercial radio station dedicated to promoting positive values through quality programming (Oyo Insight, 2019).

The station offers a diverse range of content, including engaging talk shows, up-to-date news, global hit songs, trending entertainment stories, and more. By incorporating local and indigenous content into its programming, Splash FM 106.7 has successfully fostered a strong connection with the Abeokuta community, strengthening the bond between listeners and presenters (Splash FM 106.7 Abeokuta, n.d).

Splash FM 106.7 prides itself on its professional team of anchors, who consistently bring positive energy and enthusiasm to their work. The station has earned the trust of advertisers, making it a reliable platform for promoting products and services. Additionally, Splash 106.7 FM maintains an active presence on social media, offering engaging and quality content that resonates with its audience (Oyo Insight, 2019).

"*Yooba Dun*," is an indigenous programme on Splash 106.7 FM Abeokuta. The programme comes on air every Saturday between 11:30am to 12:30pm with Mrs Abimbola Akin-Olofintuyi as the presenter of the programme. The programme is designed to educate listeners on the importance of embracing and valuing Yoruba language and culture over foreign influences, particularly British culture. The programme features four segments: *Agbo Ile Imo*, focusing on Yoruba culture and tradition; *Ore Awo*, highlighting local delicacies; *Itan Dun*, celebrating Yoruba authors through book readings; and *Soo Laaya*, a question-and-answer segment that engages the audience.

Since its inception under Mrs Abimbola Akin-Olofintuyi in 2021, "*Yooba Dun*" has garnered significant success, with numerous testimonies from listeners who actively participate in the program. The show's high acceptance among the audience is evident, as they frequently call in to contribute and engage in the interactive segments.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Cultural Norms Theory introduced by McLuhan in 1964, was initially inspired by an event in 1962 when Minneapolis went without a newspaper, leading to observed decreases in crime rates. This indicated that media portrayals of crime—and, more broadly, social issues—can significantly impact societal behavior. Despite this, media often maintains its role as a societal watchdog, creating a sense of normalcy even in the absence of traditional coverage.

The Cultural Norms Theory posits that individuals shape their behaviors and perceptions based on how media presents certain issues and themes. Wogu (2008) avers that some themes are purposefully emphasized or portrayed in specific ways to influence people due to the pattern of their presentation.

This concept is particularly relevant to the decline in the use of the Yoruba language on radio, underscoring the need to investigate how radio programmes might influence indigenous language preferences and values. Thus, Cultural Norms Theory provides essential insight into the role of radio in sustaining the Yoruba language and its cultural relevance.

Mass media, especially radio, is a powerful medium for persuading audiences to adopt new behaviors, reinforcing critical cultural information, and fostering indigenous language use. Radio, by nature of its wide reach, portability, affordability, and ability to operate with alternative power sources, is accessible to diverse audiences, including rural communities. Biagi (2017) notes that our memory of



events that happened in the first half of the 20th century is directly tied to the radio. Research has shown that radio is highly effective in raising awareness, altering perceptions, and mobilizing social change. It is also uniquely suited to convey messages in indigenous languages, thus promoting language retention and cultural continuity.

The Cultural Norms Theory, although developed decades ago, the theory remains highly relevant in contemporary society, where smartphones, social media, and digital platforms dominate daily communication. These technologies continue to function as vehicles through which cultural values and norms are reinforced, reshaped, and transmitted across generations. For this study on Yoruba radio programmes in Ogun State, the framework is particularly useful, as the broadcasts not only promote the Yoruba language but also foster cultural preservation and strengthen community engagement with indigenous practices (Olorunisola, 2019).

Even in the age of globalized media consumption, audiences are influenced by the cultural content they encounter, gradually aligning their language preferences and behaviors with the norms modeled in Yoruba-language radio programmes. Thus, Cultural Norms Theory remains a valuable lens for examining how media—whether through traditional radio or new digital platforms—serves as a powerful agent of social integration, attitudinal change, and the preservation of indigenous identity.

### **Radio Listenership and Language Preference**

Hassan (2018) demonstrates the significant role of media in promoting indigenous languages, particularly the Hausa language, through various programmes that enhanced listeners' understanding. Similarly, Dishu (2018) highlights the positive impact of indigenous language programming on language knowledge, although he recommended extending programme durations to allow sufficient time for audience engagement.

Contrastingly, Kalu (2018) conducted a quantitative study in South-South Nigeria and found that the poor content and inadequate airtime of indigenous language programmes failed to significantly enhance knowledge of local languages. These findings align with the cultural norms theory, emphasizing the media's capacity to shape perceptions and behaviors. Agbo (2019) also observes that FRCN's Igbo language programmes had not sufficiently promoted the Igbo language in South-East Nigeria. He recommended that media houses prioritize cultural promotion by dedicating more resources to indigenous language programming.

In line with Hassan (2019) and Dishu (2019), this study reinforces the popularity of indigenous programmes in fostering cultural values. For instance, programmes like "Ochichi–Obodo" gained traction in their regions due to their relevance to community development and governance issues. These findings suggest that media's agenda-setting role effectively draws attention to culturally resonant content, aligning with mass media's dual function of informing and entertaining.

However, studies also revealed several challenges, including a lack of indigenous radio staff, inadequate programme scheduling, insufficient sponsorship, inaccessible radio frequencies, and inconsistent power supply, which hinder the effectiveness of indigenous radio initiatives. These challenges, also noted by Kalu (2020), underscore the need for structural improvements to bolster the impact of indigenous language programming.

This study specifically addresses a gap in research on Yoruba-language radio programming by examining listenership patterns and language preferences in Ogun State. Programmes presented in Yoruba not only connect audiences to their cultural heritage but also provide easily understood and relatable content. This highlights the potential for Yoruba-language programming to contribute

significantly to cultural preservation, education, and entertainment.

This study emphasizes the critical role of indigenous language programmes in preserving cultural identity while addressing the challenges facing their implementation. There is a need for sustained efforts to refine content and ensure accessible, high-quality programming to maintain audience engagement and promote cultural values.

## Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-method research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

The survey method was utilized to collect numerical data from listeners of selected radio programmes. This approach enabled the measurement of variables such as listenership patterns, demographic profiles, and the perceived impact of the programmes on language revitalization. The survey provided a statistical overview which allowed for generalizations regarding the research phenomena. The target population for the survey consisted of listeners of two Yoruba radio programmes: *Yoruba Ladun* on Eagle 102.5FM in Ijebu-Ilese and *Yooba Dun* on Splash 106.7FM in Abeokuta. These programmes were selected based on their focus on the Yoruba language and their relevance to the research objectives. The study area encompassed two local government areas in Ogun State, Nigeria: Abeokuta South Local Government (with a population of 250,295) and Ijebu North East Local Government (with a population of 68,800), as recorded in the 2006 census. Together, these areas represent a combined population of 319,095 residents.

To determine the sample size for the survey, the Taro Yamane formula was employed:

Which is:  $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$

Where:  $n$  = Sample Size  
 $N$  = Population  
 $1$  = Constant  
 $e$  = Tolerable Error which is 0.055

$$n = \frac{319,095}{1 + 319,095(0.055)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{319,095}{1 + 319,095(0.003025)}$$

$$n = \frac{319,095}{1 + 965.3}$$

$$n = \frac{319,095}{966.3}$$

$$n = 330$$

This calculation yielded a sample size sufficient to ensure valid and representative results for the population under study. Although 330 as calculated should serve as sample size, 298 questionnaires which constitutes ninety percent (90%) of the sample size were filled and found usable for the study.

To complement the survey component, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants who possessed expert knowledge of the selected programmes. These informants comprised the programme producers or presenters from each radio station, resulting in a total of four participants.

The qualitative approach provided rich and contextual insights into programme content, production processes, and audience engagement, offering perspectives that could not be captured through the

survey alone.

Purposive sampling was employed for both the survey and interview components. For the survey, respondents were selected based on two criteria: (i) active listenership of the selected programmes and (ii) residence within the targeted local government areas. This ensured that participants had firsthand experience with the programmes and that the data collected was directly relevant to the study's objectives.

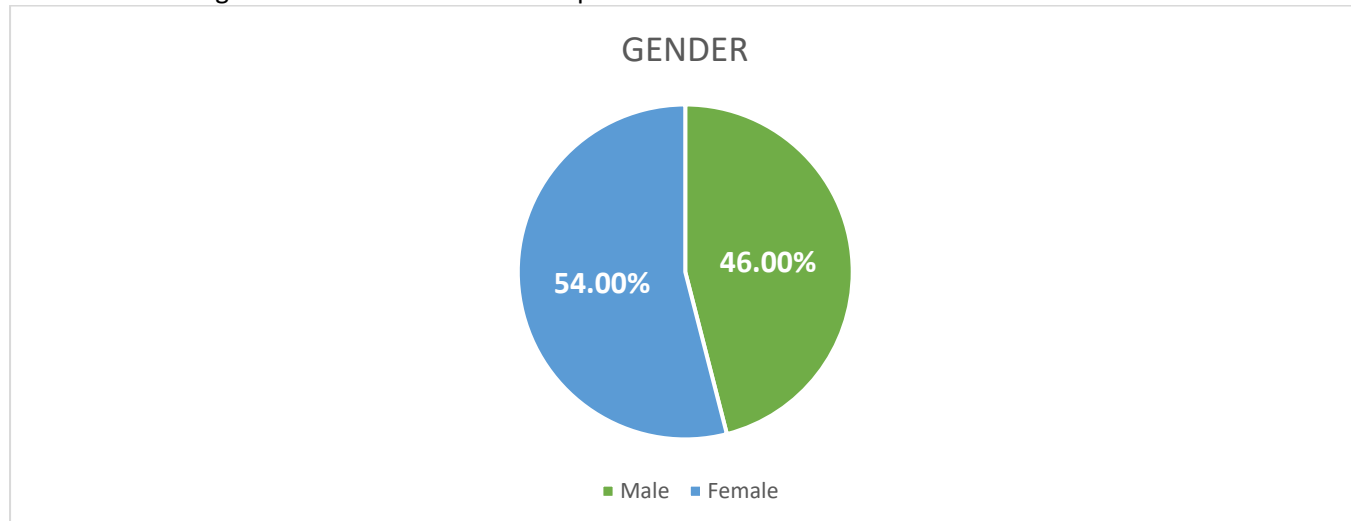
The researchers collaborated with programme presenters and station managers, who assisted in identifying potential participants. Eligible respondents were invited to join a WhatsApp group, where they received a Google Forms link to complete the questionnaire. This method streamlined data collection and guaranteed that the respondents were genuine listeners. In addition, printed copies of the questionnaire were distributed to reach participants with limited internet access. The questionnaire was also disseminated through WhatsApp group of the programmes' fan clubs, thereby ensuring direct access to active listeners.

For the interview component, key informants were purposively selected on the basis of their professional roles and expertise in the production and presentation of the programmes. Their insights were crucial for understanding programme segments and their role in Yoruba language revitalization.

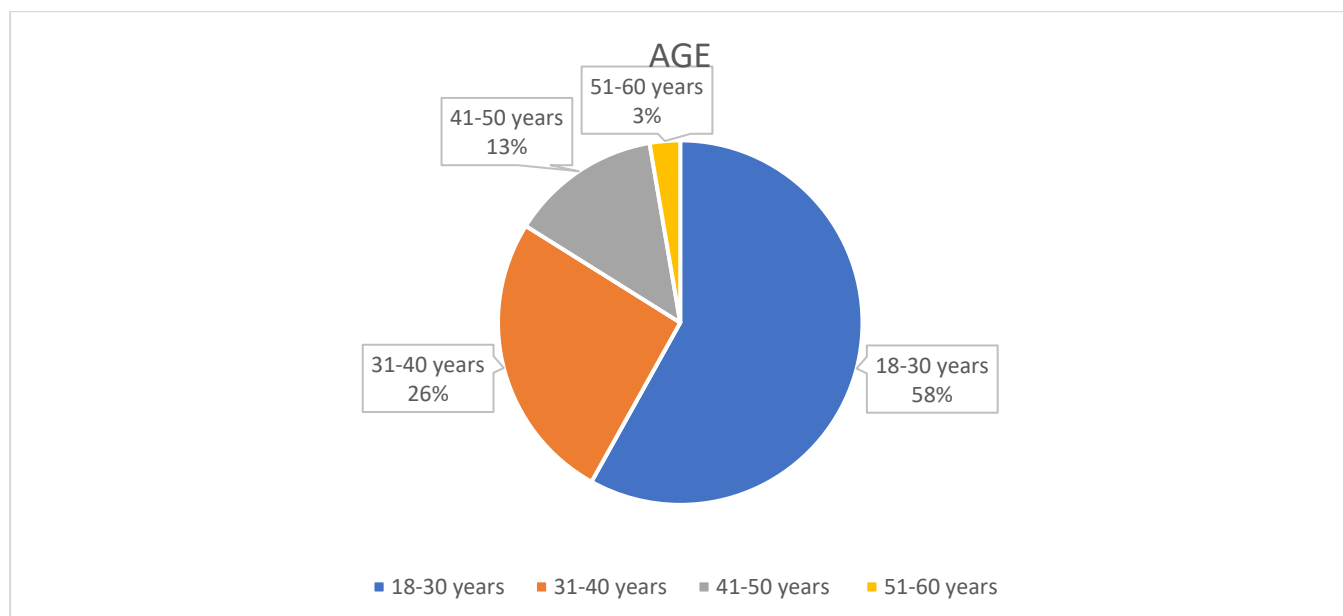
The interviews were conducted through a combination of face-to-face and virtual sessions, and all responses were audio-recorded with consent for subsequent analysis.

## Result and Discussion

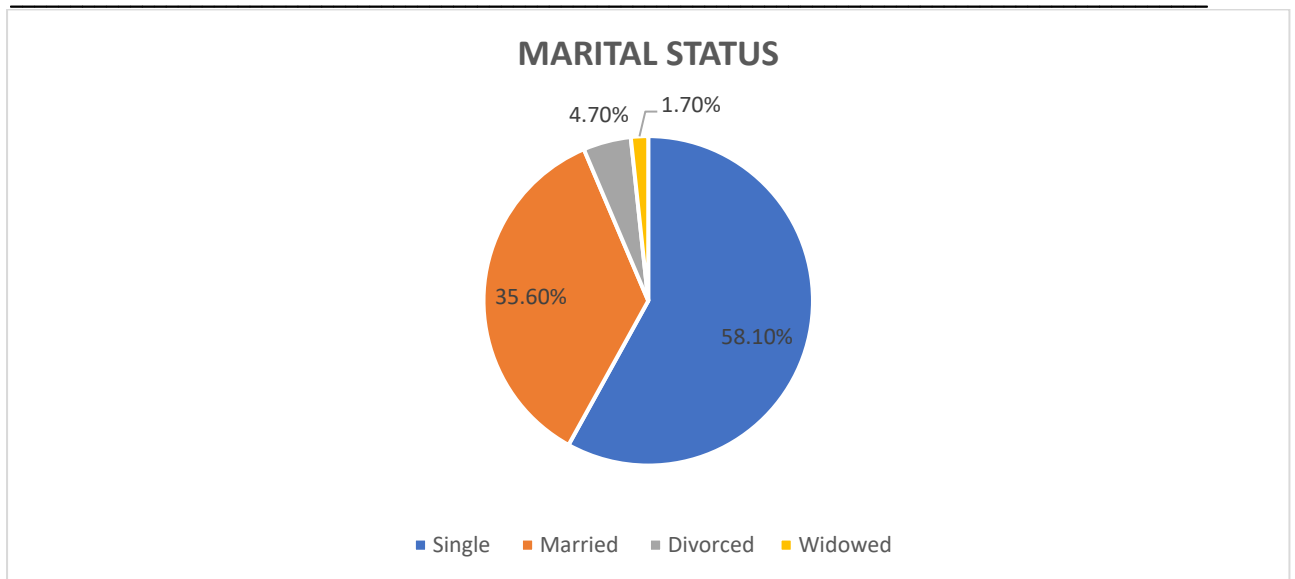
Data were collected through the use of questionnaire and interview guide. As a result, the listeners of the selected Yoruba programmes in Abeokuta South Local Government and Ijebu North East Local Government in Ogun State were selected as respondents.



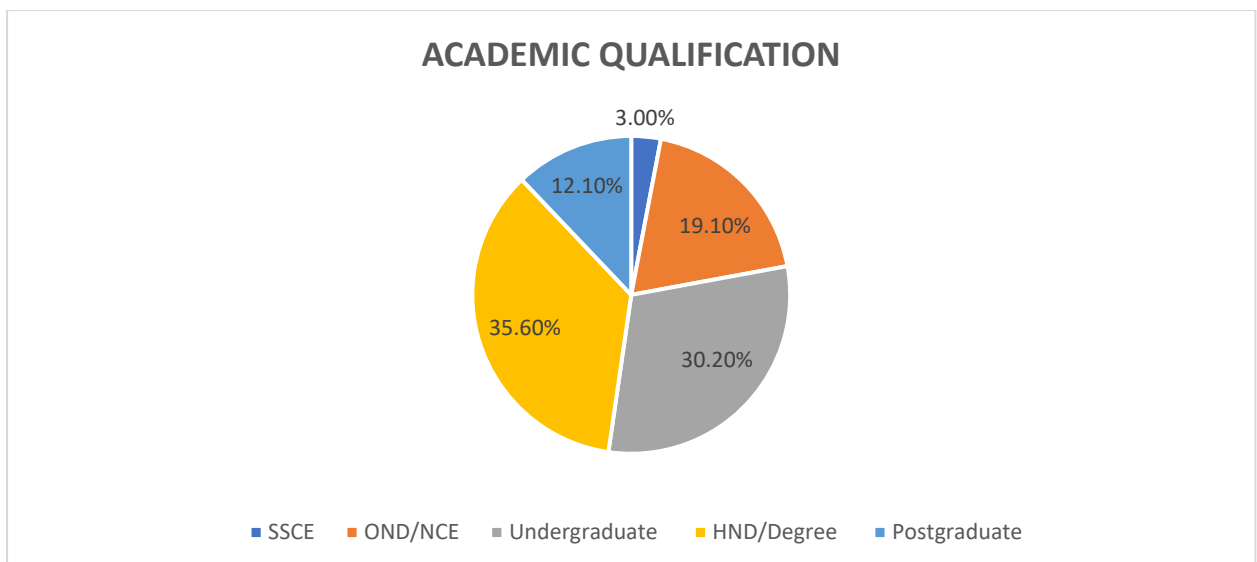
**Figure 1: Respondents Gender**  
*Field Survey, 2024*



**Figure 2: Respondents Age**  
*Field Survey, 2024*



**Figure 3: Respondents Marital Status**  
*Field Survey, 2024*



**Figure 4: Respondents Academic qualification**  
*Field Survey, 2024*

The analysis of demographic information of the respondents in the figures above begins with gender status. The figure representation shows, the female respondents (female = 54%) are slightly higher than the male respondents (male = 46%).

Similarly, the figure 2 shows that majority of the respondents are between 18 and 30 years (58.1%). This is followed by the group that is between 31 and 40 years (25.8%) and those who are between 41 and 50 years (13.4%). The last group is between 51 and 60 years (2.7%).

In a similar vein, the marital status of the respondents in figure 3 shows majority of them are single (58.1%). Those who are married are followed but they are less than 40%. Another group of divorced respondents is 4.7% while the widowed account for the remaining 1.7%.

In terms of their academic qualification, the representation in figure 4 shows that the respondents are well read as 35.6% have acquired HND or a degree while another group of 30.2% are still in higher institutions. Similarly, 12.1% of them have gone further to acquire postgraduate education. Of the remaining 22%, while 19.1% possess OND/NCE certificate, only 3% possess secondary school certificate of education.

**Table 1: Programme language preference on radio by listeners**

Programme language preference	Frequency	Percent (%)
Purely Yoruba	115	38.6
Purely English	38	12.8
More Yoruba and less English	117	39.3
Less Yoruba and more English	28	9.4
Total	298	100.0%

*Field Survey, 2024*

Table 1 presents the programme language the listeners prefer on radio. As the table shows, radio listeners in Ogun State prefer Yoruba language programme more than English language programme. As such, while about 38.6% prefer purely Yoruba programme, another group of 39.3% prefer more Yoruba language and less English language.

**Table 2: Reason for programme language preference**

Reasons for language preference	Frequency	Percent (%)
I find it easier to understand	102	34.2
I am more proficient in the language	56	18.8
It connects more to my culture and heritage	108	36.2
The language is clearer and more precise	32	10.7
Total	298	100.0%

*Field Survey, 2024*

As table 2 shows, the respondents mention two main reasons why they prefer in Yoruba language

programme on radio. The reasons are (1) it connects them more to their culture and heritage (36.2%) and (2) they find such programme easier to understand (34.2%). Other sundry reasons include proficiency in the language (18.8%) and the clarity and precision of the programme.

In responding the research objective, which examines the radio programme language preference, it has been established that Yoruba language programme is preferred by radio listeners in Ogun State more than English language programme. This is due to the fact that Yoruba programme connects them (listeners) more to their culture and heritage and such programme is easy to understand.

This finding is consistent with Hassan (2018), whose research demonstrated that the media have played a significant role in promoting the Hausa language in the region. Respondents reported that they had acquired a better understanding of the Hausa language through various media programmes.

Similarly, these findings are supported by Dishu (2018), who discovered that a considerable number of participants were exposed to indigenous language programmes in the media, which improved their language knowledge. However, Dishu also highlighted the necessity for longer programme durations to provide the audience with sufficient time to learn.

The finding also correspond with studies by Oyetade (2020) and Adeyeye (2021), who both highlighted the substantial impact of media in promoting indigenous languages and cultural values. These scholars argue that radio programmes in local languages create platforms for the public to reconnect with their linguistic heritage, foster pride in their cultural identity, and ensure the transmission of these languages to future generations.

However, the finding of this study contradict Kalu (2020), which found that indigenous programmes have not significantly contributed to the knowledge of indigenous languages in the South-South geopolitical zone where their study was conducted.

Another research objective examines the listenership level of *Yoruba Ladun* on Eagle 102.5FM and *Yooba Dun* on Splash 106.7FM. Tables 3 and 4 below present the answers given.

**Table 3: Listenership level of *Yoruba Ladun* on Eagle 102.5 FM and *Yooba Dun* on Splash 106.7 FM**

Selected Yoruba radio programmes	Frequency	Percent (%)
<i>Yoruba Ladun</i> on Eagle 102.5 FM	152	51.0
<i>Yooba Dun</i> on Splash 106.7 FM	146	49.0
Total	298	100.0%

*Field Survey, 2024*

Table 3 presents the listenership level of *Yoruba Ladun* on Eagle 102.5 FM and *Yooba Dun* on Splash 106.7 FM, the two programmes under examination. As the table shows, both *Yoruba Ladun* (51.0%) and *Yooba Dun* (49%) enjoy almost equal listenership in Ogun State as only two points separate them.

**Table 4: Level of listenership of *Yoruba Ladun* and *Yooba Dun***

Level of listenership	Frequency	Percent (%)
Always	100	33.6
Often	142	47.7
Rarely	56	18.8
Total	298	100.0%

*Field Survey, 2024*

Furthermore, the respondents were to state the level of listenership of *Yoruba Ladun* on Eagle 102.5 FM and *Yooba Dun* on Splash 106.7 FM. As table 4 shows, majority of them either listen to the programmes always (33.6%) or often (47.7%). Less than 20% of them say they rarely listen to the programmes.

Response to the listenership level of the selected indigenous Yoruba radio programmes (*Yoruba Ladun* on Eagle 102.5 FM and *Yooba Dun* on Splash 106.7 FM), tables 3 and 4 have established that both *Yoruba Ladun* and *Yooba Dun* radio programmes enjoy high listenership among radio listeners in Ogun State and they do so regularly.

Since their inception, these programmes have been “*highly accepted because listeners always phone in to contribute and participate in the question-and-answer segment*” (Interviewee 1). Additionally, “*The programme is well accepted. It has a large following*” (Interviewee 2). Similarly, the acceptance has been remarkable, as “*people now can’t do without listening to the show, as indicated by the way they keep calling to inquire if the show misses an episode*” (Interviewee 3).

This finding aligns with Agbo (2019), which reveals that participants in the study were more exposed to the programme *Ochichi-Obodo* on Dream FM than any other programme. Similarly, Kevin (2022) shows that listeners of Motsweding FM were highly dedicated to the station’s indigenous programmes because they provided a platform to establish and maintain their identity. Additionally, Hassan (2019) and Dishu (2019) notes that participants were highly exposed to indigenous programmes due to their popularity in their regions.

It was found that both *Yoruba Ladun* and *Yooba Dun* radio programmes enjoy high listenership among radio listeners in Ogun State and they do so regularly. The development and airing of *Yoruba Ladun* and *Yooba Dun* on Splash FM and Eagle FM respective is due largely to painstaking efforts and research carried out by the management and the presenters of the programmes which led them to identify issues that may attract and retain the interest of listeners in not only the programmes but in the stations.

## Conclusion

The study has established that Yoruba-language programming has become the preferred choice among radio listeners in Ogun State, surpassing English-language programmes in popularity among Yoruba audiences. This preference is closely tied to the richness of the content provided, which resonates deeply with listeners by reinforcing cultural identity and heritage. The programmes’ use of accessible, culturally embedded language further enhances comprehension and engagement. Findings also revealed that *Yoruba Ladun* and *Yooba Dun* enjoy consistently high listenership, owing



to the deliberate and research-driven efforts of programme producers and station managers. Their ability to design content that aligns with listeners' cultural realities has ensured not only the success of the programmes but also the credibility of the broadcasting stations themselves.

Beyond the immediate context of Ogun State, this study underscores the critical role of indigenous language broadcasting in fostering cultural preservation and strengthening communal ties. In an era where globalization and digital media often privilege dominant languages, the sustained popularity of Yoruba-language radio suggests an enduring need for indigenous programming as a counterbalance to cultural erosion. Broadcasting, therefore, emerges not only as a medium of entertainment and information but also as a powerful tool for the revitalization and development of indigenous languages.

This study points toward broader implications for language and media studies, particularly across Africa and other multilingual societies worldwide. The Nigerian experience demonstrates that when local languages are given space in mainstream media, they can thrive, sustain cultural knowledge, and remain relevant in modern communication ecosystems. This suggests that indigenous-language programming is not merely a local necessity but a global imperative for safeguarding linguistic diversity, promoting inclusive communication, and fostering cultural resilience in an increasingly interconnected world.

### Recommendations

The study recommends that:

- i. Radio stations and programme producers should conduct a demographic analysis of listeners across their coverage area. This analysis will help radio stations tailor their content to better reflect and resonate with the diverse cultural and social dynamics of their audience.
- ii. Other radio stations adopt similar programming to attract and retain culturally engaged audiences, given the popularity and cultural impact of Yoruba language programmes in Ogun State.
- iii. Splash FM, Eagle FM, and other stations must avoid complacency, continuously enhancing the programmes to sustain appeal and outpace competitors. Ongoing innovation is essential to retain loyal listeners and attract new audiences in a competitive market.

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