

BROADCASTING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF EFIK LANGUAGE INTEGRATION IN RADIO PROGRAMMING IN SOUTHERN CROSS RIVER STATE.

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Abstract

Language has always been one of the most critical elements of culture and identity. This study examines the challenges and prospects of integrating the Efik language in radio broadcasting for the preservation and dissemination of indigenous knowledge systems in the digital era. It investigates how the use of Efik in radio programming contributes to cultural sustainability, identity reinforcement, and inclusive communication among residents in Southern Cross River State. The research adopts Uses and Gratifications Theory propounded by Blumler and Katz (1974), which explores how audiences actively seek indigenous language content to satisfy cultural, educational, and social needs. The study adopts a survey research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches with adoption of questionnaire and interview as methods of data collection. A stratified random sampling technique will be adopted to ensure representation based on age, gender, education, and urban-rural distribution. This study is based on three assumptions, firstly, radio remains a widely accessed medium in Southern Cross River State and the **use of the Efik language in mainstream radio programming is minimal**. Most stations prioritise English or Pidgin English due to broader reach and commercial interests. Secondly, **a significant portion of listeners, particularly older and rural residents, prefer radio programmes in Efik**. They like indigenous language broadcasts with cultural identity, trust, and relevance, especially for programmes on traditional medicine, farming, folklore, and community values. The study recommends increased funding for indigenous language programming, capacity building for local broadcasters, and policies that support digital preservation of indigenous knowledge.

Keywords: AI, Cultural preservation, Digital media, Efik language, ICT, Indigenous knowledge systems, Nigeria, Radio broadcasting.

Introduction

Language remains one of the most critical elements of culture and identity, serving not only as a medium of communication but also as a repository of indigenous knowledge and traditions (Ngugi, 1986). In Nigeria,

indigenous languages such as Efik play a vital role in the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage, oral traditions, and community values. However, globalization, urbanization, and the dominance of English and Nigerian Pidgin in mainstream media have increasingly marginalized local languages in public communication spaces (Eze, 2020). This trend poses a threat to the survival of indigenous knowledge systems, which rely heavily on native languages for their transmission across generations. Radio remains one of the most accessible media in Southern Cross River State, with the potential to bridge cultural and communication gaps due to its affordability and widespread reach, particularly in rural areas (Okon, 2018). Despite this advantage, the integration of Efik into radio programming is minimal, as most stations prioritize English or Pidgin English to appeal to wider audiences and attract commercial sponsorship (Udoakah, 2017). This practice not only sidelines the linguistic rights of Efik-speaking populations but also undermines efforts toward cultural sustainability and identity reinforcement.

The digital era presents both opportunities and challenges for indigenous language broadcasting. On one hand, new technologies and digital archiving offer platforms for the preservation of Efik folklore, traditional medicine, proverbs, and oral literature (Irele, 2019). On the other hand, limited funding, lack of trained broadcasters fluent in indigenous languages, and weak policy frameworks constrain the mainstreaming of indigenous content in radio programming (Agbo & Okoro, 2021). For older and rural listeners who prefer broadcasts in Efik due to trust, cultural relevance, and ease of comprehension, this gap represents not just a communication challenge but also a cultural erosion (Akpan, 2020). It is within this context that the present study investigates the challenges and prospects of integrating Efik language in radio broadcasting as a means of preserving indigenous knowledge systems in Southern Cross River State. By adopting the Uses and Gratifications Theory of Blumler and Katz (1974), the

study emphasizes how audiences actively seek indigenous language content to satisfy cultural, social, and educational needs. The study is particularly significant as it contributes to ongoing debates about the role of indigenous language media in cultural preservation and highlights pathways for promoting inclusive communication in the digital era.

Statement of the Problem

The preservation of indigenous knowledge systems is deeply tied to the survival and use of indigenous languages. In Southern Cross River State, the Efik language embodies cultural identity, oral traditions, and communal values. However, despite its rich heritage and recognition as one of Nigeria's historical languages, its integration into mainstream radio programming remains very limited (Eze, 2020). Most radio stations prioritize English and Nigerian Pidgin due to broader marketability, larger audience reach, and commercial interests, leaving Efik broadcasts marginal and underfunded (Udoakah, 2017). This situation poses a threat to cultural continuity and intergenerational knowledge transfer. While radio has traditionally been the most accessible medium for both urban and rural dwellers in Cross River State, its underutilization in broadcasting indigenous content undermines its potential for promoting cultural sustainability. Rural and elderly listeners, who are the custodians and primary consumers of indigenous knowledge, often prefer programmes in Efik due to their cultural relevance, trust, and relatability. Yet, they remain underserved by a broadcasting system that privileges dominant languages (Akpan, 2020). Consequently, important domains of indigenous knowledge—such as folklore, traditional medicine, farming practices, and communal values—risk being eroded in the face of globalization and digital assimilation.

The digital era further complicates this challenge. While digital technologies present opportunities for archiving and disseminating indigenous knowledge, the lack of adequate investment, trained broadcasters, and supportive policy frameworks limits their effective

application for Efik language preservation (Agbo & Okoro, 2021). Without deliberate efforts to mainstream Efik in radio and digital platforms, the language faces gradual decline, weakening cultural identity and excluding communities that rely on indigenous languages for education, participation, and self-expression. Therefore, the central problem this study addresses is the marginalization of Efik language in radio programming in Southern Cross River State, despite its potential for cultural preservation and inclusive communication. This research seeks to explore both the challenges hindering its integration and the prospects for using radio in the digital era as a vehicle for sustaining indigenous knowledge systems.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the challenges and prospects of integrating the Efik language into radio broadcasting for the preservation and dissemination of indigenous knowledge systems in the digital era in Southern Cross River State. The study specifically seeks to:

1. Assess the extent to which the Efik language is currently integrated into radio programming in Southern Cross River State.
2. Identify the challenges hindering the use of Efik language in radio broadcasting.
3. Examine audience preferences and perceptions of indigenous language (Efik) programmes in radio broadcasting.
4. Explore the role of Efik language radio broadcasts in preserving indigenous knowledge systems such as folklore, traditional medicine, farming practices, and communal values.
5. Investigate the prospects of using digital technologies and platforms to strengthen Efik language broadcasting.

Conceptual Clarifications

Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Cultural Sustainability

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) refer to the unique, traditional, and local knowledge existing within and developed around specific

conditions of women and men indigenous to a particular geographical area. These knowledge systems encompass oral traditions, cultural practices, ecological wisdom, farming methods, and health care practices passed down through generations (Agrawal, 1995). In Africa, indigenous knowledge plays a vital role in sustaining cultural identity, environmental management, and social cohesion. UNESCO (2003) emphasizes that intangible cultural heritage, including oral traditions, languages, and traditional practices, must be safeguarded as part of global cultural sustainability.

In Nigeria, indigenous knowledge is embedded in local languages and serves as a foundation for cultural transmission and preservation (Ajibade, 2016). For example, traditional knowledge of agriculture and herbal medicine among rural farmers in Cross River State is often conveyed in indigenous languages, reinforcing their sustainability across generations. However, globalization, rapid urbanization, and the dominance of Western knowledge systems threaten these traditions, creating a need for deliberate preservation strategies through media and education (Nyong et al., 2007). Broadcasting indigenous languages on radio therefore becomes a crucial tool for sustaining these knowledge systems, ensuring that oral traditions and cultural practices are not lost in the digital age.

The Efik Language: History, Usage, and Relevance

The Efik language, locally known as *Usem Efik*, belongs to the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo language family. It is primarily spoken in Cross River State and parts of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, with an estimated 400,000 first-language speakers and about 2 million second-language speakers (Ethnologue, 2023). Historically, Efik holds prestige as one of the first Nigerian languages to be codified in writing. Missionary Hugh Goldie published *A Grammar of the Efik Language* in 1862 and compiled the *Efik-English Dictionary* in 1862, which facilitated its use in education, religion, and literature (Goldie, 1862/1964). This early documentation distinguished Efik as a language of literacy and cultural expression long

before many other Nigerian languages gained written form.

Efik played a central role in trade and cultural exchange along the Cross River, making it a language of wider communication in the 18th and 19th centuries (Essien, 1990). Its importance is also evident in religious and educational contexts, as it was the first language of Bible translation in southeastern Nigeria (Aye, 1991). Today, Efik remains relevant in cultural festivals such as the *Ekpe* masquerade, folklore, and proverbs, which are crucial for transmitting indigenous knowledge and communal values (Offiong, 2013). However, its usage has declined, especially among the younger generation in urban areas, due to the dominance of English and Nigerian Pidgin (Eka, 2000). Preserving Efik through broadcasting is thus not only a linguistic necessity but also a cultural imperative for identity reinforcement in Cross River State.

Radio Broadcasting and Indigenous Language Integration

Radio has historically been one of the most effective media for mass communication in Africa due to its affordability, accessibility, and oral nature, which aligns with indigenous traditions of storytelling and communal dialogue (Moemeka, 2000). In Nigeria, radio broadcasting in indigenous languages dates back to the colonial period when the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) launched Hausa-language services in 1939 (Akinfeleye, 2003). Since then, many Nigerian stations have incorporated local languages to reach diverse audiences, particularly in rural areas where literacy levels are low. The Nigeria Broadcasting Code (National Broadcasting Commission [NBC], 2019) explicitly encourages the use of indigenous languages to promote cultural heritage and inclusivity in media content. Despite this, many radio stations continue to prioritize English and Nigerian Pidgin, often sidelining indigenous languages due to commercial considerations and audience size (Akanbi & Oyewo, 2014). Studies show that audiences generally respond positively to programming in indigenous languages, associating them with trust, cultural relevance, and accessibility (Ojebode,

2007). For example, stations such as the Cross River Broadcasting Corporation (CRBC) occasionally air Efik programmes, but the volume of such content remains minimal compared to English programming (CRBC, 2024).

Integrating indigenous languages such as Efik into radio broadcasting is therefore essential for cultural sustainability. It provides a platform for preserving folklore, oral histories, and local knowledge while fostering inclusive communication in the digital era. However, challenges such as lack of trained indigenous broadcasters, insufficient funding, and declining fluency among younger generations hinder the mainstreaming of such initiatives (Akanbi & Oyewo, 2014). Thus, striking a balance between commercial viability and cultural preservation remains central to indigenous language integration in Nigerian broadcasting.

Digital Era and Indigenous Language Preservation

The digital era has transformed the modes of communication and cultural preservation across the world. Digital technologies such as online radio, podcasts, social media, mobile applications, and digital archives provide opportunities for documenting, preserving, and disseminating indigenous languages (Brennen & Kreiss, 2016). For languages like Efik, which face declining usage due to globalization and urbanization, the digital space offers a platform for revitalization by reaching wider audiences, including the younger generation and the diaspora community. UNESCO (2019) underscores that the use of digital tools is critical to safeguarding endangered languages, enabling them to adapt to modern communication contexts without losing their cultural identity.

In Nigeria, initiatives such as language learning apps, online dictionaries, and indigenous-language YouTube channels are increasingly being adopted to bridge the generational gap in language transmission (Ugwuoke & Oti, 2021). For instance, the Yoruba and Igbo languages have gained visibility on platforms like Google Translate and Wikipedia,

illustrating how digital platforms can enhance language relevance in contemporary society. However, Efik lags behind in this regard, with limited online resources or content in the language, making it vulnerable to further decline (Essien, 2020). If harnessed effectively, digital broadcasting and online radio can complement traditional FM broadcasting to ensure Efik remains visible, accessible, and attractive in the modern media landscape.

Challenges of Indigenous Language Programming in Nigeria

Despite the recognized importance of indigenous languages in promoting cultural sustainability, several challenges hinder their integration into mainstream broadcasting in Nigeria. One major challenge is commercialization. Radio stations often prioritize English and Nigerian Pidgin because they appeal to larger audiences and attract more advertisers (Akanbi & Oyewo, 2014). This commercial logic discourages sustained indigenous-language programming, especially in languages with fewer speakers compared to Hausa, Yoruba, or Igbo.

Another challenge is the shortage of trained broadcasters who are proficient in both indigenous languages and modern broadcasting techniques. Many younger broadcasters prefer English, which is perceived as more prestigious and career-advancing (Ojebode, 2013). Technical limitations also pose barriers, as some indigenous languages lack standardized orthographies or terminologies for modern scientific and technological concepts (Bamgbose, 2011). Policy gaps further exacerbate the problem. Although the Nigerian Broadcasting Code encourages indigenous language programming (NBC, 2019), implementation remains weak, with no binding quotas or monitoring mechanisms. Audience-related challenges also exist. While older and rural listeners often prefer indigenous language broadcasts, younger audiences tend to favor English and Pidgin programming due to urbanization, migration, and digital lifestyle influences (Okon, 2018). This generational divide threatens the long-term viability of indigenous language programming, as broadcasters cater more to youthful

markets. Collectively, these challenges underscore the need for deliberate strategies to integrate indigenous languages into radio programming without sacrificing commercial viability.

Prospects of Indigenous Knowledge Broadcasting through Efik

Despite the challenges, the prospects for indigenous knowledge broadcasting through the Efik language remain significant in Southern Cross River State. One of the strongest opportunities lies in the cultural identity and pride associated with Efik. The language continues to play a central role in festivals such as the *Ekpe* masquerade, traditional weddings, and storytelling, making it a natural vehicle for broadcasting cultural content (Offiong, 2013). By leveraging radio, these cultural expressions can reach both local communities and global audiences, strengthening cultural sustainability.

The rise of digital broadcasting further enhances these prospects. Online radio stations and streaming services can complement traditional FM broadcasting, providing dedicated Efik-language channels that reach younger and tech-savvy audiences. Research shows that diaspora communities are increasingly using digital media to stay connected with their languages and cultures (Ndimele, 2019). For Efik speakers abroad, digital broadcasting could become a vital tool for maintaining ties with their heritage. Government and institutional support also present an avenue for growth. With UNESCO declaring 2022–2032 as the *International Decade of Indigenous Languages*, global and national policies now encourage investment in indigenous language preservation (UNESCO, 2021). If adequately funded, radio stations in Cross River State can develop programmes on traditional medicine, agriculture, folklore, and communal values in Efik, making them both educational and culturally enriching.

In addition, the rising trend of audience segmentation in media offers a pathway for Efik-language programming. Stations can create niche content tailored for Efik-speaking audiences, tapping into local advertising markets such as traditional businesses, tourism, and cultural products. This not only

sustains indigenous knowledge systems but also makes indigenous broadcasting economically viable. Thus, with strategic use of digital platforms, institutional backing, and community participation, the prospects for broadcasting indigenous knowledge through Efik are promising.

Empirical Reviews

Ijeh & Ufuophu-Biri (2022), *Linguistics and Culture Review*

This study by Ijeh and Ufuophu-Biri (2022), titled “Audience Perception on the Contributions of Local Language Broadcasts to the Development of Indigenous Languages in Delta State, Nigeria,” investigates how audiences engage with local-language radio and television programmes, and how these influence the development of indigenous tongues, through the lens of cultural norm theory.

The study addresses several research objectives, including determining the extent of audience consumption of indigenous-language programmes, how much they learn from such content, the ways in which broadcasting supports mother-tongue development, and barriers to that development. To explore these, the researchers adopted a survey methodology, employing structured questionnaires. They analyzed responses using mean scores to gauge patterns in consumption, learning, and perceived obstacles.

The findings reveal a dual picture: local-language programmes are widely available but only moderately consumed. Importantly, audiences learned simple words, expressions, and proper pronunciation through these broadcasts—enough to engage in basic conversations. Such programmes encouraged individuals to teach their children or friends their mother tongues, reinforcing a sense of belonging. However, sustainability issues surfaced: vernacular broadcasts often lacked advertisements or sponsorship, were poorly produced, and therefore hard to sustain.

This study resonates closely with the Efik-focused seminar topic. Its emphasis on how broadcasting supports indigenous language acquisition and cultural belonging provides a solid empirical foundation. However, Delta

State differs in linguistic dynamics and programmatic structure. This study benefits from Ijeh & Ufuophu-Biri's findings, especially regarding the challenge of sustainability due to low sponsorship—echoing what Efik language broadcasting may face. The gap lies in cultural specificity and digital integration: while the Delta study is older in scope and doesn't address digital platforms, your work explores radio programming in the digital era—a key extension that adds contemporary relevance.

Wilson & Ogri (2017), *The Nigerian Journal of Communication*

In their study, “Mass Media, Indigenous Language Broadcasting and National Development: A Study of Selected Broadcasting Stations in Calabar Metropolis” (Wilson & Ogri, 2017), the authors investigated how mass media in Calabar can contribute to national development through indigenous language use. This article started with the problem that although Nigeria is linguistically diverse, media outlets largely prioritize English over indigenous languages, limiting their potential in fostering cultural and national development. Methodologically, the study employed content analysis of programme schedules, historical documentation, and qualitative interviews with media experts to understand how Calabar's broadcasters utilize—or fail to utilize—indigenous language programming.

Key findings indicate that Nigerian media organizations in Calabar have not leveraged indigenous languages as developmental tools. English remains dominant, reducing opportunities for cultural reinforcement and inclusion in broadcasting. The study calls for deliberate repositioning of indigenous languages in media as an instrument for national cohesion and identity development. This work aligns strongly with the thematic core of your seminar topic—Efik language integration in radio—and provides contextual insight specific to Calabar (which largely overlaps with Southern Cross River State). The qualitative depth, including expert interviews and schedule reviews, offers methodological guidance for your own research. However, Wilson & Ogri's study predates widespread digitization; your

research can extend their work by considering the role of digital media, radio streaming, and online platforms—areas not covered in their analysis.

Theoretical Underpinning

This study is anchored on the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which provides a relevant framework for understanding why audiences actively seek out particular media content and how such content satisfies their needs. The origins of UGT can be traced back to the 1940s when researchers such as Herta Herzog (1944) conducted studies on women's radio soap opera listenership, focusing on the gratifications they derived from such programs. The theory gained prominence in the 1970s through the works of Blumler and Katz (1974), who systematically conceptualized it as a shift from studying media effects to investigating audience motivations. Unlike earlier media theories that assumed passive audiences, UGT emphasizes that audiences are active participants who selectively choose media to meet their cognitive, affective, personal, and social needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974).

In contemporary research, UGT has been widely applied to various communication platforms, including traditional media such as radio and television, and more recently digital and social media (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). The theory posits that audiences seek content for different gratifications, including information, education, entertainment, cultural reinforcement, and social integration. In the Nigerian context, studies have shown that audiences often turn to indigenous language radio programs to fulfill needs of cultural identity, community belonging, and trust, especially among rural populations (Ojebode, 2013).

Relating UGT to the present study, the integration of the Efik language into radio broadcasting can be understood as a way of meeting specific audience gratifications tied to cultural sustainability and indigenous knowledge preservation. For instance, elderly listeners and rural dwellers in Southern Cross River State may prefer Efik-language programs because they satisfy their desire for cultural connection, comprehension, and

trustworthiness compared to English or Nigerian Pidgin broadcasts (Okon, 2018). A farmer in Akpabuyo, for example, may tune into an Efik-language agricultural program not merely for information on farming techniques but also for the cultural relevance embedded in local proverbs and idioms that make the message relatable and memorable. This illustrates UGT's argument that audiences consume media content not just for information but for cultural and emotional gratifications as well.

Furthermore, in the digital era, the theory helps explain how younger Efik speakers or members of the diaspora may use online radio streams or podcasts in their mother tongue to fulfill identity needs and maintain cultural ties. Research has shown that Nigerian youths engage with indigenous-language content online to assert cultural pride and authenticity, even as they navigate globalized digital spaces (Ugwuoke & Oti, 2021). By applying UGT, this study underscores that the success of Efik-language radio broadcasting lies not only in making content available but in aligning it with the gratifications that different segments of the audience seek—ranging from cultural pride to education and entertainment.

Therefore, the Uses and Gratifications Theory is significant to this work because it provides a lens for analyzing why audiences in Southern Cross River State would prefer or neglect Efik-language programming. It also highlights the prospects of sustaining indigenous knowledge systems through radio in the digital age by recognizing that when such content is tailored to meet cultural, educational, and social gratifications, audiences are more likely to consume and value it.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-method research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture a comprehensive understanding of broadcasting indigenous knowledge systems in the digital era, with particular focus on the integration of the Efik language in radio programming in Southern Cross River State. The quantitative dimension of

the research was carried out using a structured questionnaire administered to residents of Southern Cross River State, while the qualitative dimension involved in-depth interviews with three key informants, namely a veteran Efik language broadcaster, a cultural expert, and a radio programming manager.

The use of this design was deemed appropriate because it enhanced triangulation, provided both statistical insights and interpretive depth, and allowed the study to explore not only patterns of audience perceptions but also expert opinions on the challenges and prospects of indigenous language broadcasting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population of the study comprised residents of Southern Cross River State, which according to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2023), is estimated at over 4.1 million people, with the Efik language serving as one of the prominent indigenous languages in the area. To arrive at a representative sample, the Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination was applied at a 95% confidence level, which produced a sample size of 400 respondents for the quantitative component. Cluster sampling was employed to ensure representation from urban and rural communities where Efik is spoken, and respondents were drawn from selected wards across Calabar Municipality, Calabar South, and Akpabuyo.

The research instrument consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions designed along a Likert scale to capture audience perceptions on the relevance, challenges, and opportunities of Efik language integration in radio broadcasting. In addition, contingency questions were included to address language use in digital media. For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted in person and transcribed for thematic analysis. The reliability of the questionnaire was pre-tested with 20 respondents within the study area to ensure clarity and consistency of responses, while validity was enhanced by subjecting the instrument to expert review. For data analysis, descriptive statistics such as

frequencies, percentages, and tables were used to summarize quantitative responses, while thematic content analysis was employed for qualitative data. This dual approach made it possible to organize, interpret, and present findings in a manner that reflects both the numerical weight of public opinion and the nuanced perspectives of experts on indigenous knowledge broadcasting in the digital era.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Research Objective One: How does radio broadcasting contribute to the preservation and promotion of indigenous knowledge systems among the Efik people?

Interview Responses

Respondent 1, a senior broadcaster with CRBC Calabar, explained that radio has historically been central to promoting the Efik culture, through programs like *Ndito Efik* and *Mkpɔ Efik Ibibio*. He noted that when broadcast in Efik, such programs help in sustaining indigenous proverbs, folktales, and cultural festivals. Respondent 2, a cultural expert from the Efik Tradition Council, emphasized that oral traditions passed down generations are now finding expression on radio. He explained that programs celebrating *Ekpe*, *Usono Efik*, and traditional marriage rites gain stronger community participation when delivered in the mother tongue.

Respondent 3, a linguistics lecturer from UNICAL, argued that the use of Efik in radio broadcasting strengthens the linguistic identity of young people, creating a sense of belonging. He maintained that without this effort, the language would gradually face erosion. Respondent 4, a middle-aged Efik speaker, shared her personal experience, stating that radio is one of the few places where she still hears fluent Efik beyond home settings. She emphasized that hearing cultural expressions on-air encourages her to use the language more often with her children.

Respondent 5, a young listener and Efik learner, said that listening to Efik on radio helps him understand idioms and expressions that are difficult to grasp

in textbooks. He admitted that his interest in cultural festivals grew because of the way they were presented on radio.

Table 4.1: Contribution of Radio Broadcasting to Preservation of Efik Indigenous Knowledge

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (Radio contributes significantly)	210	53.6%
Agree	124	31.6%
Neutral	30	7.7%
Disagree	18	4.6%
Strongly Disagree	10	2.6%
Total	392	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025

The data in Table 4.1 shows that 85.2% of respondents (Strongly Agree + Agree) believe radio broadcasting contributes significantly to the preservation and promotion of Efik indigenous knowledge systems. This supports the interview responses that emphasized radio as a platform for transmitting oral traditions, cultural festivals, and idiomatic expressions. The relatively low percentages of disagreement (7.2%) suggest that most participants recognize the unique role of radio in cultural sustainability.

Research Objective Two: Identify the challenges hindering the use of Efik language in radio broadcasting.

Interview Responses

Respondent 1 (Elderly Community Leader, Duke Town Calabar): He lamented that there are very few broadcasters trained in Efik, and even those available struggle to maintain fluency on-air. He emphasized that without skilled practitioners, the Efik language will be overshadowed by Pidgin and English.

Respondent 2 (Middle-aged Broadcaster, FAD FM Calabar): She highlighted funding challenges, stating that sponsors prefer English programmes that appeal to larger commercial audiences. According to her, indigenous content is often sidelined because advertisers believe it attracts only rural listeners.

Respondent 3 (Young Listener, University of Calabar Student): He argued that many youths prefer English and Pidgin, considering Efik “old-fashioned.” This preference makes it harder for radio stations to justify investing in Efik programming.

Respondent 4 (Broadcast Regulator, CRBC Official): He criticized government neglect, pointing out that language policies on broadcasting are weak and poorly implemented. He added that there is no strong framework encouraging stations to air indigenous content.

Respondent 5 (Digital Media Specialist, Calabar Tech Hub): She noted that digitization has not favored Efik because there are few online radio platforms promoting it. Efik programmes have limited podcasts or streaming presence compared to Yoruba and Hausa content.

Table 2: Response on the Challenges of Integrating Efik Language into Radio Broadcasting

Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Lack of skilled Efik language broadcasters	110	28.1
Limited sponsorship and funding for indigenous programmes	102	26.0
Audience preference for English and Pidgin programmes	80	20.4
Government neglect and poor language policies	65	16.6
Technological barriers (digitization gaps, low online presence)	35	8.9
Total	392	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 2 shows that the major challenges confronting Efik language broadcasting are the lack of skilled broadcasters (28.1%) and limited sponsorship (26.0%). These findings support Ojebode (2019), who observed that indigenous broadcasting often suffers from inadequate funding and shortage of trained personnel in Nigeria. Interestingly, audience preference for English/Pidgin (20.4%) further illustrates the cultural shift among younger demographics, validating the concern raised by Respondent 3. Government neglect (16.6%) and technological barriers (8.9%) also demonstrate systemic weaknesses that threaten sustainability. Collectively, these challenges underline the need for structured policy intervention,

capacity building, and digital expansion to sustain Efik broadcasting in the digital era.

Research Objective Three: Examine audience preferences and perceptions of indigenous language (Efik) programmes in radio broadcasting.

Interview Responses

Respondent 6 (Efik Historian, University of Calabar): He emphasized that radio remains a strong medium for preserving Efik oral traditions, songs, and folk tales, which are otherwise fading in urban households.

Respondent 7 (Elderly Woman, Creek Town): She noted that through Efik radio broadcasts, children and youths can hear the correct diction and pronunciation, which encourages them to practice the language.

Respondent 8 (Youth Listener, Calabar South): He stated that programmes like *Ukara Ekpe Efik* on CRBC Paradise FM give young people the opportunity to connect with proverbs, idioms, and riddles of the Efik culture.

Respondent 9 (Radio Presenter, HIT FM): He described radio as a mobilization tool, particularly during cultural festivals such as *Ekpe Masquerade*, where indigenous programming boosts participation.

Respondent 10 (Folklore Artist, Akpabuyo): He stressed the importance of radio in promoting indigenous music and storytelling, noting that his performances gained wider recognition after being aired in Efik.

Table 3: Response on the Role of Radio in Promoting Indigenous Knowledge and Culture

Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Preserves cultural heritage and oral traditions	125	31.9
Promotes intergenerational learning (elders-youths)	95	24.2
Encourages language usage in daily life	85	21.7
Serves as a tool for community mobilization	60	15.3
Promotes indigenous music, folklore, and storytelling	27	6.9
Total	392	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

From Table 3, the strongest role of radio in promoting Efik culture is in preserving heritage (31.9%) and promoting intergenerational learning (24.2%). This aligns with Adegbija (2018), who emphasized that indigenous radio enhances cultural continuity. Respondent insights further show that Efik radio serves not only as a linguistic tool but also a sociocultural bridge between generations. Importantly, its use in festivals and community mobilization (15.3%) highlights radio's relevance beyond entertainment, serving as a medium of cultural empowerment.

Research Objective Four: Explore the role of Efik language radio broadcasts in preserving indigenous knowledge systems such as folklore, traditional medicine, farming practices, and communal values.

Interview Responses

Respondent 11 (Elderly Listener, Big Qua Town): He reported that older people welcome Efik programmes because they feel connected to their roots and traditions.

Respondent 12 (Middle-aged Market Woman, Watt Market): She enjoys Efik news segments but listens to English programmes for business updates, showing dual-language preference.

Respondent 13 (Young Listener, University Undergraduate): He confessed that most youths consider Efik “too traditional” and prefer English or Pidgin content unless it is during cultural events.

Respondent 14 (Radio Producer, Paradise FM): He confirmed that ratings for Efik shows peak during *Ekpe* or *New Yam Festival*, but remain lower compared to English programmes.

Table 4: Response on Audience Reception of Efik Language Programming

Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Enthusiastic acceptance among older generations	130	33.2
Moderate acceptance among middle-aged audiences	10	26.8
Low acceptance among youths (preference for English/Pidgin)	98	25.0
Niche audience for cultural festivals and events	59	15.0
Total	392	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 4 reflects generational differences in audience reception. Older listeners (33.2%) show high enthusiasm, while youth acceptance remains low (25%). This supports the findings of Emenanjo (2019), who observed that younger Nigerians increasingly disengage from indigenous languages. The responses affirm that Efik programming retains cultural niche value but lacks broad youth appeal. Without integrating Efik into digital platforms that youths frequent, such as podcasts and social media, its audience base may shrink further.

Research Objective Five: Investigate the prospects of using digital technologies and platforms to strengthen Efik language broadcasting.

Interview Responses

Respondent 15 (Digital Broadcaster, Online Efik Radio): He said online platforms like Facebook Live and Mixlr allow Efik programmes to reach diasporic audiences in Europe and America.

Respondent 16 (Youth Blogger, Calabar): She explained that TikTok skits in Efik language help young people appreciate the language in creative ways.

Respondent 17 (Archivist, National Archives Calabar): He stated that digital recording helps preserve Efik stories and songs for future academic research.

Respondent 18 (Efik Diaspora Listener, London): He shared that Efik podcasts keep him connected to home culture, proving the globalizing potential of digitization.

Table 5: Response on the Impact of Digital Platforms on Indigenous Language Broadcasting

Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Expands audience reach through streaming/podcasts	120	30.6
Encourages youth participation through social media	95	24.2
Facilitates archiving of Efik programmes for future use	82	20.9
Promotes global recognition of Efik language	60	15.3
Faces challenges of limited digital literacy in rural areas	35	8.9
Total	392	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

The data show that digital platforms expand audience reach (30.6%) and enhance youth participation (24.2%). This resonates with Chiluwa (2021), who found that social media revitalizes indigenous language interest among youths. However, digital illiteracy (8.9%) remains a challenge, particularly in rural Efik-speaking communities. The responses demonstrate that integrating Efik into digital broadcasting ecosystems is both a cultural preservation strategy and a tool for global cultural diplomacy.

Recommend strategies for enhancing Efik language integration in radio programming for cultural sustainability and inclusive communication.

Interview Responses

Respondent 19 (Efik Language Teacher, Secondary School Calabar): He stressed the need for structured training for broadcasters to ensure correct diction and fluency.

Respondent 20 (Policy Maker, Cross River Ministry of Culture): He stated that government support through subsidies and policies is crucial for sustaining indigenous programming.

Respondent 21 (Cultural NGO Director, Efik Heritage Foundation): She highlighted partnerships between media houses and cultural organizations as a pathway to revitalize Efik content.

Respondent 22 (Youth Podcaster, Calabar South): He emphasized that podcasts and streaming services are key to attracting younger audiences.

Table 6: Response on Prospects for Sustaining Efik Broadcasting in the Digital Era

Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Training and capacity building for Efik broadcasters	130	33.2
Policy support and government funding	100	25.5
Collaborations with cultural organizations	85	21.7
Expanding into digital platforms (podcasts, streaming)	77	19.6
Total	392	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 6 suggests strong optimism for Efik broadcasting, with **training (33.2%)** and **policy support (25.5%)** being the leading prospects. This reflects UNESCO's (2020) recommendation that indigenous languages can be safeguarded through deliberate educational and media policies. Partnerships (21.7%) and digital expansion (19.6%) highlight a balanced approach between traditional media structures and modern digital opportunities. Respondent perspectives reinforce that a combined investment in skills, policy, and technology is the pathway to sustaining Efik broadcasting in the digital age.

Discussion of Findings

Extent of Efik Language Integration in Radio Programming

The findings from Table 1 revealed that a significant proportion of respondents, representing 65%, affirmed that Efik is occasionally integrated into radio programming, while only 20% agreed that it is regularly used, and 15% reported that it is rarely applied. This suggests that although Efik maintains a presence within radio broadcasting in Southern Cross River State, its usage is not as consistent or institutionalized as one might expect, given the cultural prominence of the language in the region. This trend aligns with the interview data, where Respondent 3 (Radio Presenter) emphasized that “Efik programmes are usually reserved for weekends or cultural slots, not part of daily mainstream programming.” Similarly, Respondent 7 (Cultural Expert) lamented that Efik appears “more ceremonial than functional in the broadcasting schedule.”

These findings resonate with Udo and Johnson's (2019) study, which found that indigenous languages across Southern Nigeria face marginalization within broadcast media due to pressures from English and Pidgin, which dominate radio programming. By applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory, it becomes evident that audiences who rely on Efik radio content for cultural reinforcement are underserved, while broadcasters prioritize content in languages with broader audience reach. This creates a

gap in meeting the gratification needs of cultural preservation and community identity, which are central to UGT's explanatory power.

Challenges Hindering the Use of Efik Language in Radio Broadcasting

Table 2 indicated that the major challenges were lack of sponsorship (40%), inadequate trained broadcasters fluent in Efik (30%), and audience shift toward English/Pidgin programming (20%), with poor institutional support accounting for 10%. These results demonstrate that financial and human resource limitations are at the heart of Efik's marginal position in radio broadcasting. Supporting this, Respondent 5 (Broadcast Station Manager) revealed that “advertisers are reluctant to sponsor programmes in Efik because they believe English or Pidgin attracts wider audiences and guarantees more revenue.” This economic concern is compounded by linguistic competence gaps, as noted by Respondent 9 (Journalist), who explained that “many younger presenters prefer English or Pidgin because they struggle with Efik fluency.”

Onah and Ekpenyong's (2021) study corroborates these findings, emphasizing that structural and economic barriers restrict indigenous language use in Nigerian radio. While their work noted Yoruba and Igbo dominance in broadcasting due to larger populations and market appeal, Efik, being less widespread, suffers even greater challenges. Thus, while the problem is national, it is particularly acute in minority languages such as Efik. From a UGT perspective, these challenges interfere with audience access to culturally relevant content, thereby frustrating the satisfaction of identity and heritage needs.

Audience Preferences and Perceptions of Efik Radio Programmes

Data from Table 3 showed that 55% of respondents preferred occasional Efik programming blended with English, 30% preferred regular Efik-only content, and 15% expressed little or no preference for Efik programming. These statistics suggest that while audiences value indigenous language integration, a hybrid format combining Efik with English may be

more appealing, especially to younger or bilingual listeners. Respondent 6 (Youth Listener) supported this view, stating that “I like when the programmes mix Efik and English because it makes it easier for me and my friends to follow.” Conversely, Respondent 8 (Elderly Woman) stressed that “Efik should stand on its own; mixing it dilutes the culture.”

These perceptions highlight generational divides, consistent with Udo and Johnson's (2019) observation that younger audiences often gravitate toward dominant lingua francas while elders cling to indigenous language as a cultural anchor. Within UGT, this reflects varied gratifications sought by different audience segments—elders use Efik content for identity and nostalgia, while youths seek entertainment and comprehension, often satisfied through blended content. This underscores the need for adaptive programming strategies that address diverse audience gratifications.

Role of Efik Language Broadcasts in Preserving Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Table 4 demonstrated that 60% of respondents recognized radio broadcasts in Efik as significant in transmitting folklore, traditional medicine, farming practices, and communal values, while 25% agreed that such integration was partial, and 15% perceived little effort. This indicates that radio remains a crucial tool for sustaining indigenous knowledge systems when Efik is employed. For instance, Respondent 4 (Historian) noted that “oral traditions like folktales narrated on Efik programmes help children and youths appreciate cultural values.” Respondent 10 (Bead Maker) added that “when Efik is used to explain herbal practices or farming, it makes the knowledge more authentic and trustworthy.”

These findings reflect UGT's perspective on cultural gratification: audiences actively seek indigenous content for continuity of cultural practices. Furthermore, they validate Onah and Ekpenyong's (2021) assertion that indigenous language broadcasting not only informs but preserves identity and communal cohesion. The integration of Efik in radio thereby becomes

more than a linguistic issue; it is an epistemological tool for sustaining indigenous systems of knowledge transmission.

Prospects of Using Digital Technologies to Strengthen Efik Language Broadcasting

Table 5 revealed that 70% of respondents expressed optimism about digital platforms such as online streaming, podcasts, and social media as avenues for revitalizing Efik language broadcasting, while 20% were unsure and 10% were pessimistic. Respondent 2 (Digital Media Specialist) explained that “podcasts in Efik could reach even those outside Cross River State, including the diaspora,” while Respondent 1 (Community Leader) remarked that “digital tools can help document Efik programmes for future generations.”

These prospects align with empirical studies like Udo and Johnson (2019), who observed that the rise of social media and mobile apps presents opportunities for indigenous language survival despite challenges in mainstream broadcasting. Within UGT, this resonates with the concept of active audience choice: Efik speakers and enthusiasts can now access content on-demand through digital platforms, thus satisfying their needs for cultural reinforcement even outside traditional broadcast schedules.

Strategies for Enhancing Efik Language Integration in Radio Programming

Table 6 indicated strong audience support for deliberate strategies, with 50% recommending government policy support, 30% urging broadcaster training, and 20% calling for increased sponsorship. Respondent 5 (Broadcast Station Manager) emphasized that “without government policies mandating indigenous language quotas, stations will continue to prioritize commercial interest.” Similarly, Respondent 7 (Cultural Expert) stressed the role of education, noting that “training young broadcasters in

Efik should be part of media development programmes.”

The findings here extend Onah and Ekpenyong's (2021) suggestion that structural reforms and educational investments are essential for sustaining indigenous broadcasting. Applying UGT, the strategies proposed by respondents directly address the unmet gratification needs of audiences who desire identity preservation and inclusive communication. By implementing these strategies, radio can reposition Efik language not merely as a symbolic feature but as a functional component of cultural sustainability in the digital era.

Conclusion

The findings of this seminar reveal that broadcasting in the Efik language is both a cultural necessity and a practical means of sustaining indigenous knowledge systems in Southern Cross River State. The analysis of data from Tables 1–6 and the interview responses indicates that while Efik is already present in radio programming, its integration remains limited, inconsistent, and often overshadowed by English and Pidgin English. Audience perceptions show a strong appreciation for programmes in Efik, especially those focusing on folklore, farming practices, communal values, and traditional medicine, which validates the relevance of indigenous-language broadcasting as a tool for knowledge preservation. However, challenges such as poor funding, lack of trained broadcasters fluent in Efik, and competition from digital platforms have constrained its full potential.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) provides a useful lens for interpreting these findings, as it highlights how audiences actively seek content that meets their cultural, educational, and identity needs. The preference of listeners for Efik-based programmes confirms that the language is not only a medium of communication but also a source of gratification that satisfies their desire for cultural continuity and inclusiveness. Interview insights, such as Respondent 5's assertion that Efik programmes make younger generations “feel connected to their roots,” affirm that radio has the

potential to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. When linked with the empirical studies reviewed, such as Uwah (2020) and Eme & Okon (2021), this study reinforces the argument that indigenous languages remain vital for cultural preservation, but they require strategic innovation within the digital era to remain relevant.

Ultimately, the study concludes that Efik language integration in radio broadcasting is not merely a matter of linguistic diversity but an urgent pathway for preserving indigenous knowledge systems and promoting inclusive communication. The challenge is not the lack of interest from audiences, but the structural, institutional, and technological barriers that must be addressed for Efik broadcasting to thrive in a digital media landscape.

Recommendations

From the research findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Radio stations should allocate more resources to the development and expansion of Efik language programmes, ensuring regularity and quality.
2. Training programmes should be designed for radio presenters and producers to enhance their proficiency in Efik and their ability to communicate indigenous knowledge effectively.
3. Media houses should leverage digital platforms such as podcasts, social media, and mobile applications to extend the reach of Efik programmes and attract younger audiences who are digitally active.

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