

Indigenous Language News and the Marginalization of Some Ethnic Groups in the Nigerian Broadcast Media

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ABSTRACT There are more than 250 distinct ethnic groups and languages in Nigeria. Only a few of these languages are used in news presentation in the broadcast media. Such 'privileged' languages are those spoken by bigger ethnic groups. English, the official language of the country also dominates in media presentations. This trend has led to the marginalization of the languages spoken by smaller ethnic groups in the country. This paper surveys eight schools and four Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) stations in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River and Rivers States to ascertain how many indigenous languages are used in the broadcast media or taught in both primary and secondary schools. The study made use of two research methods that is, content analysis and survey. The content analysis was used to examine the programme schedules and content of the television stations while the survey was used to gather information from the schools. Findings indicate that the near absence of indigenous languages in the broadcast media, particularly those spoken in these four states can be traced to their non inclusion in the school curricula. This practice does not favour Nigerian Television Authority's news indigenization policy which stresses the need to promote news presentation in local languages. The goal is for majority of Nigerians to benefit from such presentations. The study recommends a more plural and diversified language use in the Nigerian broadcast media. Attention should be given particularly to those languages considered as minority.