

GLOBALISATION AND LANGUAGE USE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INDIGENOUS NIGERIAN LANGUAGES ON BBC IGBO AND BBC YORUBA FACEBOOK PLATFORMS

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Abstract

The dominance of English in Nigeria is partly attributable to globalisation and the subsequent increase in electronic information and global connectedness, which portends the extinction of languages not used in increasing domains, such as the Internet. Research on African language use on the Internet is limited, with existing studies mostly focused on multi-modality and other semiotic resources, and little attention on how African languages feature and are impacted on social media. This study aims to determine the level of usage of Igbo and Yoruba on the Internet, specifically on social media platforms



of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). It adopts the frameworks of Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis and Internet Linguistics to analyse the online language behaviour of Igbo and Yoruba users of BBC Facebook platforms. Users' comments on selected news items posted between 2020 and 2022 constitute the data for the study. The study identifies the effect of the globalisation of language in the low level of usage of Igbo and Yoruba, in spite of the dedication of the BBC platforms to the languages, and their status as majority languages. The study recommends the use of indigenous languages in primary domains as well as in new domains such as the Internet.

Keywords: Globalisation, Domains, Internet, Social media.

1. Introduction

Language is an integral and indispensable part of human life and communication. It is natural to the human species and stands as the basic building block of every human society (Fishman, 1985). Thus, Denham and Lobeck (2013, as cited in Onuh, 2022, p. 12) note that “language is what makes us human.” The ability to use a language distinguishes humans from animals and enables humans to function in their various communities. The society is the platform on which language is used for communication and people socially interact with language primarily to “foster connectivity and relatedness among them” (Onuh, 2022, p. 12). In Nigeria, English is the inherited “official language” (Jowitt, 1991, 2019) and many functions are allocated to it. It is often “the only effective medium of communication between Nigerians from different linguistic backgrounds” (Bamgbose, 1971, p.36). This scenario has led to the dominance of English and the slow development of indigenous Nigerian languages.

Language is also one of the major triggers of globalisation, a social process that fosters interconnectedness making many borders and boundaries insignificant (Delhumeau, 2011). Globalisation has also made possible Computer-Mediated Communication, which has introduced a lot of changes to the use of language, enabling access to computer and Internet services (network) and facilitating global communication. One of the ways by which Computer-Mediated Communication is made possible is through the social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These

are interactive platforms on which people communicate across the globe via the Internet. Organisations like the British Broadcasting Corporation (henceforth, BBC) have, through social media, leveraged the benefit of technology to introduce news services in indigenous Nigerian languages. The Facebook platforms of the BBC allow users of its services in indigenous Nigerian languages to connect online.

However, not much seems to be known about the usage of indigenous Nigerian languages on social media platforms, even though the BBC broadcasts its news in Igbo, Hausa, Pidgin and Yoruba on its Facebook platforms. This study, therefore, investigates the use of Igbo and Yoruba on the BBC Facebook platforms, the effect of globalisation, and sociolinguistic issues that arise from language behaviour on the Facebook platforms.

2. Statement of the Problem

Language behaviour on social media has attracted research attention in sociolinguistics, and several studies have explored this area in relation to English language use. However, research on African language use on social media is limited at the moment, as existing studies have mostly focused on multi-modality and other semiotic resources, with little attention to how African languages feature and are impacted on social media. Some studies have dwelt on the use of Igbo and Yoruba language use for communication on social media, including Facebook. They have focused on such aspects as social networking on Facebook between Igbo speakers and their close relations (Unaegbu, 2018). The use of the Igbo language for communication among residents of the South-East of Nigeria (Chukwuma & Agbim, 2020), the impact of social media technology on the development of the Igbo language skills among university students (Onuh, 2022), the effectiveness of the BBC Igbo service in promoting the Igbo language (Nwammuo & Salawu, 2019), and undergraduates' use of e-discourse features in Facebook and WhatsApp messages (Akujobi & Eze, 2021). Similarly, Rauph and Ahmed (2017) and Yusuff et al., (2020) have investigated the use of the computer in sustaining the Yoruba language through a practical learning approach, and the influence of digital communication on the development of the Yoruba language.

The present study aims to determine the level of usage of two Nigerian languages on social media. It builds on the few scholarly studies on indigenous Nigerian language use on social media to explore the effect of globalisation on indigenous Nigerian language use. It seeks to identify and describe the usage of Igbo and Yoruba in comments on news on the BBC Igbo and BBC Yoruba



Facebook platforms with the aim to assess the capacity of Igbo and Yoruba to hold the space afforded them on the BBC Facebook platforms.

3. Literature Review

This section reviews literature on the globalisation of language, Facebook, and the British Broadcasting Corporation.

The Globalisation of Language

There is an extensive body of literature on globalisation from different perspectives. The focus of this study is the globalisation of language. The lifeline of globalisation is language because it enables people to communicate across cultures and to think globally (Gvelesiani, 2011). Steger (2013, p. 88) has defined the globalisation of language as “a process by which some languages are increasingly used in international communication while others lose their prominence and even disappear for lack of speakers.” This means that as a consequence of globalisation, minority languages are at risk of disappearance, while the dominant languages take up the space. A language not used in increasing domains is destined to go into extinction.

In fact, all the languages of the world are facing the effect of the rise of technology, which has birthed a new domain of communication, namely the Internet domain. According to Crystal (2004, p. 5), the “Internet’s global scale and intensity of use is having an effect on language in general, and on individual languages in particular.” There are over 500 languages on the Internet and the possible presence of all languages on social media has made “everyone equal” (Crystal, 2000). Thus, one of the benefits of globalisation and the use of technology is that the Internet creates opportunity for the use of all languages in the world as communication assumes new dimensions. The Internet has limitless space to accommodate all the languages of the world and offers limitless opportunities for every language to thrive.

It has also been noted that globalisation is not only evolving, but it is also increasing, providing opportunities for languages and their cultures to spread and dominate on a global scale (Delhumeau, 2011). Thus, globalisation has given English prominence over other languages of the world. Fatai (2020) notes that English contributes 80% of the world’s electronic information, thus making it the dominant language of the Internet. Gvelesiani and Tvaltvdze (2014, p. 314) also opine that the place of English in today’s globalised world is such that “except English, no other languages dominate international business, academia, media, the Internet, and international air/sea traffic.” They note that

the dominant languages of the world are learnt by people of different nationalities in order to function effectively on a global scale, and that social interactions can only take place in the world's dominant languages. It has been noted that because of their lingua franca function, "English and French in particular have more non-native than native speakers" (Mufwene, 2002, p. 186). In Nigeria, the rising influence of the English language may be attributed to the roles of cable television, movies, books and computer software in the English language, and the copying of the fashion of the Western World by the youths (Igboanusi, 2003). This has affected the intergenerational mother-tongue transmission in the family domain, which is very crucial for language maintenance and an important factor in language shift.

In order to maintain intergenerational mother-tongue transmission in the family domain and to ensure the participation of indigenous Nigerian languages in increasing domains, the Internet domain must be explored adequately by native speakers. The evolving nature of globalisation provides the leverage needed by indigenous languages to dominate in the global space of the Internet. This study investigates the extent to which indigenous Nigerian languages have taken advantage of this state of affairs.

BBC Services in Nigerian Languages

The BBC is a British media outfit that carries out its activities mainly in the English language. Nigeria is one of the countries in which the BBC operates. According to Adejunmobi (1974), The BBC service in Nigeria began in Lagos as 'Empire Service' in 1932. Nwammuo and Salawu (2019) note that the BBC Hausa service has been in operation since March 13, 1957, while the BBC Pidgin service was established in 2017, and the BBC Igbo and BBC Yoruba services were established in 2018. In the same year, the BBC also began to operate Facebook platforms in these Nigerian languages (Igbo and Yoruba).

The BBC Facebook platforms are accessible to Nigerians who visit them to follow the news and interact by liking, sharing and commenting on news items. The social media interaction on these platforms and the language behaviour of their users are the focus of this study.

Facebook

Facebook, a global giant in social media, was developed in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. In 2021, the Facebook corporate name was changed to Meta in order to bring all of the company's apps and



technologies under a new company brand (Meta, 2021). The change in name has not affected the name “Facebook” as it still appears on the platform in all sign-ins and log-ins. Facebook is the leading social media platform in the world based on the number of active users, which is estimated at over 2.4 billion (Singh & Bagchi, 2020). It is an “intermediary between people and content circulating online” (Spyer, 2017, p. 36). This has enabled users to connect online (on the Internet) with friends, colleagues, family and/or people they do not know. That creates a community where people from different walks of life interact for different purposes. Facebook also allows for non-verbal communication because its users can communicate or express their views by using pictures and emojis (Walnfan & Davis, 2004).

According to Akujobi and Eze (2021), the Internet is making a significant impact on language use and language change, including the introduction of a variety of languages on the Internet known as electronic discourse (e-discourse). E-discourse is a non-traditional form of communication used on Facebook, WhatsApp, E-mail and other forms of Internet chat. It differs from the traditional forms of language usage in its use of linguistic features such as shortenings, clippings, initial clippings, phonetic/non-conventional/non-standard spellings, word-letter replacements, word-number or digit substitution (logograms), word combinations (accent stylizations), and initialisms (Akujobi & Eze, 2021).

A statement issued by the BBC about its Facebook platforms in Igbo and Yoruba indicates that “the news services are part of the largest investment in the BBC World Service since the 1940s and are funded by the UK government” (*Premium Times*, 2018). There are about 413,997 followers of BBC Igbo on Facebook (BBC News Igbo) and about 774,484 followers on BBC Yoruba on Facebook (BBC News Yoruba) as of 30th November 2022. These figures increase by the day whenever a Facebook user clicks the ‘Like’ button on the BBC Igbo and BBC Yoruba pages. Thereafter, the user receives news on the BBC Facebook page and can comment, like or share. An important point to note is that news items are presented in Igbo or Yoruba on the platforms and are accompanied by pictures that depict the news. However, there is no restriction on the language a respondent can use in making comments on news items.

4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study combines Computer-mediated Discourse Analysis (Herring, 2004) and Internet Linguistics (Crystal, 2004). This combination enables the use of observation in studying online language behaviour.

Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) is an approach to researching online interactive behaviour that emerged in the 1980s (Herring, 2004). It is a language-focused methodology that aids the analysis of online language. CMDA acknowledges that interaction on the Internet takes place by discourse, i.e. verbal communication among individuals or groups. This happens when “participants interact employing verbal language, usually typed on a keyboard and read as text on a computer screen” (Fitzpatrick & Donnelly, 2010, p. 338). This interaction leaves a textual trace that provides accessibility to observe the words, thereby assisting researchers with empirical phenomena. Thus, verbal interactions on the Internet provide data on online behaviour that form the basis of empirical, textual observations. CMDA also allows for the comparison of two groups, the use of natural data that is “logged or culled from online archives by the researcher, rather than elicited experimentally” (Herring, 2004, p. 347). A sample is simply selected from the totality of the available data for analysis by the researcher.

Internet Linguistics (IL) is a theory advocated by Crystal (2004) to study new language forms that emanate from the use of the Internet and other media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Short Messaging Service (SMS), etc. It is the “scientific study of all manifestations of language in the electronic medium” (Crystal, 2011, p. 2). IL aims to explore the nature of the electronic medium and its effect on language use in the Internet global space, which provides users the opportunity to express their feelings. The framework provides the opportunity for the use of facial expressions and gestures in communication as research data. On the Facebook platform, facial expressions are represented with the use of emojis. IL is also used for comparative studies and studies on informality in the use of language. These features of IL are significant to this study.

5. Methodology

This study is a comparative study of the use of Igbo and Yoruba in respondents’ comments on BBC Igbo and BBC Yoruba Facebook pages. It is a qualitative (observational) approach which is unobstructive, therefore enabling the researchers to infer the attitudes of participants from their observed behaviour. In carrying out the comparison, this study uses news items on the same events, and the same number of respondents in order to create a balance.

The selected news items were on trending events between 2020 and 2022, namely the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria, the global COVID-19 pandemic and the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) final match. These events were covered on the BBC Igbo and BBC Yoruba Facebook pages



and comments were written by visitors to the page. A total of 1756 comments were accessed on the selected news items, out of which 50 comments on each of the three news items on each item were selected for analysis, giving a total of 300 responses. The selection was random; the first fifty comments on each news item were selected, with the exclusion of comments made with the use of emojis and pictures, since the study is text-based.

For the coding of the data, the letters *I* (for Igbo) and *Y* (for Yoruba) and the numbers 1 to 50 were used, and the letters *E*, *C*, and *A* were also used for ‘#EndSARS’, ‘COVID-19’ and ‘AFCON’, respectively. The outcome of the analysis was translated into simple percentages that clearly reflect the findings of the study as demonstrated in the subsequent sections.

6. Analysis of Data

Language Use in Comments on the Igbo #EndSARS, COVID-19 and AFCON News Items

The use of language in comments on the Igbo #EndSARS news items indicates that out of fifty comments, 18 (or 36%) were in Igbo, while 25 (or 50%) were in English. In addition, 6 comments (or 12%) were code-switched in Igbo and English, while 1 comment (or 2%) was made in Pidgin. In other words, more than half of the respondents did not comment in Igbo, which was the language of communication on the platform. Out of the fifty comments selected on the Igbo COVID-19 news, 9 (i.e. 18%) of respondents commented in English, while comments in Igbo were 33 (i.e. 66%). Comments involving code-switching were 7 (i.e. 14%). The data on the AFCON news item indicate that 22 (or 44%) of the respondents commented in English, while 25 (or 50%) commented in Igbo.

The observed linguistic features of comments on the three news items include the use of e-discourse features, religious expressions and emotive expressions. They are detailed below.

i. E-discourse Features

E-discourse features were observed in the data on the #EndSARS Igbo news item. For example: 1-E-11: “if diz babe can come out to protest and u get mind u no come out u are

a wast then SARS”.

1-E-22: “Dis is really d spirit, we meuveeee”.

1-E-34: May God almighty blessed every hustler out there struggling to survive
in life INJ Amen”.

I-C-46: ‘Wuru wuru govt. ha na aga n’ulo eke nria ka ha na aga na govt, ebe govt si
Onye aputakwala ezi. Chaii Naija.’

I-A-9: ‘this mendy is a Lucky Champ! Ucl, super cup, Afcon and cwc loading.’

I-A-49: ‘Check the translation lol.’

The e-discourse features in the comments above are ‘diz’, ‘u’, ‘dis’, ‘d’, ‘INJ’, ‘ur’, ‘govt’, ‘ucl’, ‘cwc’, ‘lol’. They represent initialism, or initial clipping, or phonetic/non-conventional/non-standard spellings or the use of numbers. This goes to prove that e-discourse is a communication trend in the Internet domain. Its practice uses the English language.

ii. Religious Expressions

The religious beliefs of some of the respondents were brought to bear on the data. This observation is based on comments made in English on the #EndSARS Igbo news item, as seen in:

I-E-14: (‘... may God bless you. May God bless Nigeria.’)

I-E-16: (‘God with us.’)

I-E-18: (‘God bless all Nigerian youths,...’)

The above indicate that the Internet domain is deemed appropriate by users for religious expressions. These expressions were observed only in the #EndSARS comments of Igbo users.

iii. Emotive Expressions

Emotive expressions were also observed in some comments on the three news items namely: I-

E-11: (‘...u get mind u no come out u are wast then SARS’)

I-E-43: (‘Together we’re saying no to all their wicked acts’)

I-E-46: (‘#End EFCC who jailed yahoo boys but refused to jail politicians who looted our economy’).

I-C-9: ‘Fraud! Go through the banks so your activities could be audited...’

I-C-11: ‘Nigeria is such a drama queen.’

I-C-17: ‘Big scam.’

These expressions are generally feelings of perceived injustice in the country. It is instructive that the emotive expressions were made in English and not in Igbo, which is the language used in the two news items. However, on the AFCON news, there were no comments on the state of the nation or the frustrations of the people in the English comments.

Language Use in Comments on the Yoruba #EndSARS, COVID-19 and AFCON News Items

The use of language in comments on the Yoruba #EndSARS news item indicates that 3 respondents (i.e. 6%) commented in Yoruba, while 32 (or 64%) commented in English. In addition, 12 comments



(or 24%) were code-switched in Yoruba and English, while 3 (or 6%) were made in Pidgin. In comments on the Yoruba COVID-19 news, 24 (or 48%) of the comments were in Yoruba, while 15 (or 30%) comments were in English. No comment was made in Pidgin, while 11 (or 22%) comments were made using code-switching. On the AFCON news, 100% of the comments by respondents were made in English, and none in Yoruba.

The linguistic features observed in comments on the #EndSARS, COVID-19 and AFCON news by Yoruba users include:

i. E-discourse Features

For example:

Y-E-10: ‘Why are dey blocking the road. You guys are just stupid’

Y-E-12: ‘We r protesting until our voices are heard’

Y-C-1: “Not Abuja alone ooo,pls come to lagos and ogun state ooooo”.

Y-C-2: “BBC news u better stop all this nonsense fake news”.

Y-C-19: “419 people, y not using bvn”.

In the above examples, the expressions ‘dey’, ‘r’, ‘Govt’, ‘pls’, ‘u’, and ‘y’ are e-discourse features. The use of e-discourse in the comments above did not make the comments unintelligible; rather it reveals the extent of the acceptance of e-discourse in communication on the Internet. It is interesting to note that the Internet does not reject any form or variety of language used in communicating with people from different walks of life. With the presence of globalisation, language use has changed and is still changing as innovations in communicating intelligibly in a non-conventional way continue to evolve.

ii Religious Expressions

Religious expressions in English were observed in

Y-E-1(... pls continue in ur prayer...)

Y-E-9 (we Nigerian let fight for our sel God will help US)

Y-E-14 (we’re all fasting nd praying may God bless Nigerian...)

iii. Emotive Expressions

Similarly, there were comments expressing the frustrations of the respondents, such as:

Y-E-12 (we r protesting until our voices are heard)

Y-E-37 (... people they vex o this hungry are too much)

Y-E-40 (Nigeria jaga jaga you guys should keep it on)

Y-C-9 (how much of that is contaminated by the virus??),

Y-C-11 (... well done mr interity),

Y-C-17 (fraudulent government loaded with stupid leaders!..)

Respondents may have chosen to use English because of the agitation during the #EndSARS protest to make their plight known to the world.

7. Findings

This study makes the following findings:

i. Online Status of Indigenous Nigerian Languages

The fact that the viability of a language is heightened when the language is used on the Internet (Diki-Kidiri, 2008) is acknowledged in this study. The data indicate that whereas the BBC has given Igbo and Yoruba an online profile by presenting news items in the two languages, some of the users of the two platforms still made their comments in English. This suggests that the online status of these two indigenous Nigerian languages is low, while the English language generally has a high online status. The possible presence of all languages on social media has, according to Crystal (2000, p. 142), made “everyone equal.” Thus, the mere online presence of a language makes it fit for Computer-Mediated Communication. Unfortunately, most comments on the #EndSARS, COVID-19 and the AFCON news items were made in English rather than Igbo or Yoruba. Thus, the respondents assert the status of English as a global language and its dominance in the Nigerian linguistic situation.

ii. Language Attitudes

The data further suggest that the attitude of Igbo respondents on the BBC Facebook platform towards the Igbo language is ambivalent, while the attitude of the Yoruba respondents on the BBC Facebook platform towards the language tends to be negative. However, the respondents’ language attitudes may be contextual, as there are bilinguals who have a positive attitude towards their indigenous language but feel more comfortable using another language rather than their indigenous language in certain domains.

This study contends that the use of Igbo or Yoruba is required in the comments since the news items are presented in either of these languages. However, the respondents seem not to see their indigenous languages as totally fit for Computer-Mediated Communication and thus depict negative and ambivalent attitudes to their use in the Internet domain. It is also possible that the respondents lack or are inadequate in communication skills, such as writing skills, in these languages. This could



account for their negative or ambivalent attitude towards the languages. Thus, indigenous Nigerian languages remain subordinate to English in the computer-mediated environment; even on platforms dedicated to them, English still dominates.

iii. Language Endangerment

According to the UNESCO Ad-Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003), a language is in danger when its speakers either cease to use it or use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains and fail to pass it on from one generation to the next. Some Igbo and Yoruba users of the BBC Facebook platforms seem uneager to use the languages in the Internet domain, and since the Internet has been identified as a key factor in the spreading of Nigerian Pidgin (Akinremi, 2019), it can be inferred that other indigenous Nigerian languages can also benefit from an online presence, especially on social media. This is especially true for languages that have a status of being endangered, which is the status ascribed to Igbo and Yoruba, two of the three major languages of Nigeria (Azuonye, 2003; Fabunmi & Salawu, 2005; Fakoya, 2007).

Code-switching is preponderant in the data – in 32% of the comments on the BBC Igbo platform and in 46% of the comments on the BBC Yoruba platform. This should be a cause for concern in view of the reported effects of code-switching in the emergence of a mixed language (McConvell, 2008; McConvell & Meakins, 2005) and as a major factor in the endangerment of Igbo (Azuonye, 2003; Olekaibe & Onuegwunwoke, 2016).

iv. Emotive Language Use

Emotive language is the use of descriptive words like adjectives to express and evoke emotions and persuade the reader/listener of something. This study observed that respondents' comments in English may be an expression of their frustrations as shown in our analysis above, and that Computer-Mediated Communication is a tool for fighting perceived injustice. The fact that respondents were more comfortable expressing their emotions in English suggests that they are more proficient in English for emotive language use. In other words, they find better expressions in English than in the indigenous languages to express deep emotions, a situation this study describes as limiting the domain of usage of indigenous languages. This could also be a matter of habit. It is noteworthy that users assumed that the Internet was appropriate for the expression of their religious faith, as observed in the use of the

English language in religious expressions in respondents’ comments. This indicates the dominance of English in the religious domain.

v. Pidgin Usage

Pidgin is a contact language used as lingua franca by people of different linguistic backgrounds in Nigeria According to Okafor (2022, p. 2), Pidgin is “widely used for communication in urban areas by the literate and illiterate, as well as individuals of many ethnic groups.” Pidgin is not limited to a particular category of people, rather it serves as a communication tool for virtually everybody. Pidgin was observed in the comments of both Igbo and Yoruba respondents. Pidgin is used in informal situations like social media, as indicated in the study.

vi. Effects of Multilingualism and Globalisation on the Online Use of Indigenous Nigerian Languages

The study data revealed the effect of the combined forces of multilingualism and globalisation on the use of indigenous Nigerian languages on the Internet. This is discussed with the statistics in the Table below.

Table 1: Summary of Language Use in Facebook Comments

News Item	Total Responses	Total Analysed Responses	Responses in Igbo	Responses in Yoruba	Responses in English	Responses in Pidgin	Code-switched Responses	Total Comments
#EndSARS	695	100	18	3	57	4	18	100
COVID-19	721	100	33	24	24	1	18	100
AFCON Finals	340	100	25	-	72	-	3	100
Total	1756	300	76	27	153	5	39	300

The table above reflects the combined effects of multilingualism and globalisation on the use of Igbo and Yoruba. In a multilingual society, there is constant competition between languages as individuals



make choices on the language to use in given situations and domains. The table reveals that there are competing languages on the BBC Igbo and BBC Yoruba Facebook platforms. The competition is between four languages/varieties (Igbo/Yoruba, English, Pidgin and code-switched language) on platforms that are each dedicated to one indigenous Nigerian language – Igbo or Yoruba. The statistics on the table reflect the challenges posed by the dominant global language (English) to indigenous languages such as Igbo and Yoruba. English is clearly the dominant language of use on the BBC Igbo and BBC Yoruba Facebook platforms.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study indicate that the English language has a higher level of usage than the indigenous languages in the Internet domain due to its global status. However, the establishment of BBC Igbo and BBC Yoruba platforms on Facebook in 2018 indicates that all languages can be accommodated on the Internet. The Internet has been shown to enhance the vitality and status of languages. In fact, the viability of a language is boosted by its use in cyberspace, and a language not used in increasing domains, such as the Internet, is destined to go into extinction. That explains why trends in existing language domains and response to new domains and media are among the nine language vitality factors outlined by UNESCO.

Igbo and Yoruba have experienced language shift or domain loss, as reported severally in the literature (e.g. (Azuonye, 2003; Odinye & Odinye, 2010; Omoniyi, 2012). It has also been reported that in Nigerian society, some indigenous Nigerian languages have ceased to be the “mother tongue” of some people who are expected to use them (Kuju, 1999). On the Internet, they compete with languages that are firmly rooted in that domain. The tendency in language shift is that dominant languages drive non-dominant or under-privileged languages to extinction. This is the negative effect of globalisation, and it is played out on the BBC Igbo and BBC Yoruba Facebook platforms where the presence of Igbo and Yoruba on the Internet has not stopped the dominance of English. Sometimes, when these indigenous languages are used on the platforms, they are used with code-switching as established in this study. It is therefore obvious that language maintenance efforts for Igbo and Yoruba would need to aim at enhancing the use of these languages in all domains and pitching the preferences of their users in their favour in new domains such as the Internet.

The study recommends that families and communities should encourage Igbo and Yoruba speakers to use their indigenous languages at home with family and friends. These two domains are

the last bastions in the continuation of indigenous languages and culture. They also provide the foundation for indigenous languages to be used in other domains, including new domains like the Internet. Government policy on language use in education should systematically redress the current preference of Nigerian youths to use the language of instruction in the education system (English) in all domains of language use. It is heartening that a National Language Policy which stipulates that instruction in the first six years of learning (primary school) will henceforth be in indigenous languages (Federal Republic of Nigeria. *National Language Policy*, 2022). This move will likely ensure that Nigerian children, and subsequently youths, acquire the needed communication skills in indigenous languages and use them in all domains, including the Internet.

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