



Research Article – Social Science

The Impact of FM Radio Broadcast in Local Dialect on Rural Community Development in Ghana

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Abstract

The paper set out a platform to investigate the impact of FM radio broadcast in local dialects on rural community development in the Tamale Metropolis of Northern Ghana. The study adopts survey design and also employs probability proportional techniques to select communities for the study. The main thrust of this paper is on the impact of local dialect on rural community development, preferences of development programmes and the community's participation in the production of radio programmes. Out of 400 questionnaires distributed, 392 was retrieved and analysed. From the results, it is established that local dialect broadcast on radio have an impact on development of rural communities. Also, it improves awareness and knowledge of solutions to community's development problems in education, agriculture, environment, culture, politics and religion. The paper compare target audience's preference for local dialect radio programmes to other similar content programmes that were not broadcast in local dialect. It concludes that radio broadcast in local dialect plays a pivotal role in bridging the communication gap between government and rural communities. It proved to be one of the effective mode of communication at the grass-root level. The study shows a positive role played by the indigenous dialect's radio programmes and recommends that rural development programmes on radio should be packaged in local language. Thus, enhances listenership, interest and positive desired behavioural change.

Key words: Impact, FM Radio Broadcast, Local Dialect, Rural Development, Ghana.

Introduction

Local dialects radio broadcast is an essential ingredient in the arena of development in national broadcasting system. The interest of this paper is the fact that radio broadcast in English does not inform the masses as a result of language barrier in the communities. The focus of this papers to enhance information dissemination to the masses through radio broadcast on local dialect.

Unlike Western and Asian countries who relied heavily on the native languages for broadcasting, African countries depend on foreign languages for

radio broadcast to the audiences. Though, the overwhelming majority of the population does not understand these languages due to low rate of education. The implication of these dependency practices has not been carefully examines. The consequences of the fallen indigenous local dialects in African countries by policy makers and media professionals have often been ignore. The failure has been criticised on strict government control and censorship, as well as lack of adequate resources and media professionals (Ansah, 1985; Bourgault, 1995).

Rural development as used in this context refers to the aims at improving the rural lives with participation of the rural communities themselves so as to meet the required need of rural people. The outsiders may not understand the rural setting, culture, language and other issues prevalent in

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the local communities. It behooves on the people themselves to participate in the sustainable development of their communities (Moseley, 2003; Ward and David, 2009).

Considering the proliferation of privately owned FM radio stations in Northern Ghana and its dependency on foreign languages to the neglects of local dialects for radio broadcast. The paper explores the impact of local dialect radio broadcast on the development of rural community, kind of development programmes broadcast and community participation on the production of radio programmes in the Tamale Metropolis of Northern Ghana.

Theoretical perspectives

This paper anchors on the diffusion of innovation theory. It is one of the modernization theories which has become the blueprint for development communication. Rogers' (1983) posits that the premise of innovations diffused over time according to individual's stages, having reviewed over 500 empirical studies in the early 1960s. He mentioned five stages through which an individual passes in the adoption of innovations. These includes: awareness, knowledge, interest, decision, and adoption/rejection. Population were divided in different groups according to their propensity to incorporate innovations and timing in actually adopting them.

Murthy (2007) citing Roger (1969) indicates, diffusion of information through interpersonal and mass communication channels has gained recognition since 1940s. Rogers (1962) states that, the sub-culture of the peasantry offers important psychological constraints on the incorporation of innovations, and consequently, development. His view on development reflects the transmission bias which finds its root in Lerner (1974) and Schramm (1964).

However, diverging from media-centrism and "magic bullet" theory of effects which underpins earlier analysis, Rogers' (1983) subsequent "diffusion" studies concludes that media have a great importance in increasing awareness, the interpersonal communication and personal sources are crucial in making decisions to adopt innovations. This revision incorporates the languages which the listener would comprehend to effect change.

Hornick (1988) observes that the effectiveness of the field workers in transmitting information of development in agricultural projects suggest

importance of interpersonal networks of innovation dissemination. Consequently, a triadic model was recommended. These includes change agents, beneficiaries, and communicators. According to Schramm (1964) and Lerner (1971), another important diffusion research which states that economics is not the motivating factor of diffusion innovation but communication, culture and language which indicates how communities adopts to changes. The positions of it suggest traditional integration model as an orientation process that focuses on the results of interventions, also to pay more attention to content, and addresses the cognitive dimensions. Many of these observations were integrated in the diffusion approach. By mid-1970 according to Rogers (1971), development communication shows significant changes that responds to criticisms.

As Hornik (1989) points out, one of the most powerful critiques of diffusion theories came from the dependency paradigm which is originally developed in Latin America. Dependency analysis is been informed by Marxist and critical theories according to which the problems of third world reflects the general dynamics of capitalist development. Development problems responds to the unequal distribution of resources created by the global expansion of western capitalism.

Against modernisation theories, dependency theorists according to Hornik (1989), argue that the problems of underdevelopment are not internal to third world countries but were determined by external factors and the way former colonies integrates into the world economy. He indicates that Third world countries are politically and culturally dependent on the west, particularly on the United States, besides external problems. He observes that internal structures are responsible for the problems of underdevelopment. His study concludes that innovations programmes are usual adopted with the so called individuals from higher socio-economic strata living in cities rather than rural poor populations.

Mody (1991), Servaes (1996), and White (1994) argue, development theories are non-traditional approach since local people were seldom involved the instruments of development interventions, they basically conceive the local communities as passive receivers of decisions made outside their

communities, and in many cases, instrumented ill-conceived plans to achieve development.

McKee (1999) states that development communication require sensitivity of dialect to cultural diversity and specific context which were often ignored by modernisation theories, accounts for problems and failures of many projects. Modern projects undermined the importance of local knowledge and the consequences of lack of interaction in the local languages. They were rather ask to change time-old practices on the basis of a foreign form of knowledge that dismisses the local tradition of “true” knowledge. Thus, participatory theory of development communication isto inform, motivate, and train rural population mainly at the grassroots levels in the local dialect to effect change.

Agunga, (1997) states that communication is a process of creating and stimulating understanding for development rather than information transmission. Communication is the articulation of social relations among people. Communities should not be forced to adopt new practices no matter how beneficial it is, in the eyes of the agencies and governments. Instead, community’s need to be encouraged to participate rather than adopt new practices based on information. He challenged the value judgment in early development theories that viewed agricultural and health practices in the third world as backwards and therefore, an obstacles to modernisation.

Methodology

The study resorted to survey research design and was conducted in the Tamale Metropolis from December, 2015-March, 2016. It employs probability proportional sampling to size techniques to select the communities. Murthy (1967) points out that probability proportional to size ('PPS') is the selection of probability for each set of element proportional to its size measure, up to a maximum of one. These communities includes Tamale Central, Jena, Yong, Dungu and Parishe. Given that the populations size of 223, 252 in the Metropolis, using the formula $n = \frac{C^2}{e}$, where ‘n’ is sample size, ‘C’ corresponds to population coefficient of variation and ‘e’ corresponds to the relative standard error, When C=1 and e=0.05 with reliability of 0.745. Thus, the sample size is equal

to 400 and the maximum permissible area is 5% at a confidence level of 95%. Out of 400 questionnaire, 392 was retrieved and analysed.

Study area

Tamale Metropolis is strategically located at central part of Northern Ghana. It shares common boundaries with Sagnarigu District, Mion District, East Gonja District, and Central Gonja District of Northern Regions of Ghana. The metropolis comprises of 116 Communities and out of these, (35%) Communities are urban, (13%) being peri-urban and (52%) are rural in nature. The Metropolis has a total population of 223,252. The proportion of the population living in the rural areas is 80.8% as against 19.2% living in urban areas (PHCR, 2010).

The Metropolis have a diverse ethnic groups and the traditional occupants are Dagombas which constitutes more than 80%. Besides Dagombas as traditionally occupants, there are Gonjas, Mamprusis, Nanumbas, Konkombas, Akan, Ewes, Hausa and others minority ethnic groups in the Metropolis. This composition of vast ethnic groups are important for inter-tribal co-operation which is required for peace and development in the Metropolis (TMMTDP, 2014).

Results and Discussion

The result of the study indicates in the main thrust which includes the impact of local dialect on community development, kind of development programmes and the respondents’ participation in the production of radio programmes as follows.

Table 1. Listener’s Ability to Speak English

Ability to speak English	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	120	30.6
No	272	69.4
Total	392	100.0

Table 1, shows that out of 392 respondents, 69.40% cannot speak English. Only 30.6% could speak English. That is 272 respondents out of 392 could not speak English while only 120 respondents out of 392 respondents speaks English. This may mean that radio programmes in English would have 30.6% active listeners and 69.4% are left out. This reveals that majority of respondents sampled were illiterates as envisaged by Ghana demographic survey (2010).

Table 2. Distribution of Listener’s Ability to Speak English by Community

Ability to Speak English		Community					Total
		Tle central	Jena	Young	Dungu	Parishe	
Yes	N	69	12	12	13	14	120
	%	(57.5)	(10.0)	(10.0)	(10.8)	(11.7)	(100)
No	N	131	38	38	32	33	272
	%	(48.2)	(14.0)	(14.0)	(11.8)	(12.1)	(100)
Total	N	200	50	50	45	47	392
	%	(51.0)	(12.8)	(12.8)	(11.5)	(12.0)	(100)

Table 2, shows community distribution of respondents’ ability to speak English. It indicates that out of 120 respondents who could speak English, 57.5% reside in Tamale central. Jena and Yong has the least of respondents (10%) who could speak English. While 10.8% of respondents in Dungu who could speak English and 11.7% in Parishe. Majority of respondents that is, 69.4% could not speak English, 48.2% respondents reside in Tamale, 14% each reside in Jena and Yong respectively. Of these, 11.8% while 12.1% lived in Dungu and Parishe respectively. In both categories, Tamale Central had the majority which is 50% and the rest are almost evenly spread among Jena, Yong, Parishe and Dungu. Blankson (2005) argues that the broadcasting system should allow for mass participation to address the deficiencies in the local dialects in Africa in general and Ghana in particular. Thus, majority of respondents who could speak and those who could not speak were from Tamale Central. This is not surprising given that Tamale Central has highest number of respondents among the sampled communities in the metropolis which reflects on the heterogeneity of the features of its residence.

Table 3. Local dialect spoken

Local Dialect	Frequency	Percentage
Dagbani	365	93.1
Gonja	11	2.8
Mampruli	6	1.5
Akan	10	2.6
Total	392	100.0

Table 3, shows local dialect spoken in all five communities understudy. Of all 392 respondents, 93.1% speak Dagbani and the remaining 6.9% speak Gonja 2.8%, Mampruli 1.5%, and Akan 2.8%. Thus majority of respondents spoke Dagbani which is understandable given that the sampled communities are dominated by the Dagomba community whose dialect is Dagbani. This implies radio programmes in Dagbani are patronised than programmes in Gonja, Mampruli, and Akan in the Metropolis. As Valente *et al.* (1994) concludes, audience incorporate languages introduced behavioural change since the local dialect contributes to recall, comprehension and agreements. Thus, confirms that local dialects had an impact on respondents’ changed behavior since listening radio in their local languages had better understanding than English.

Table 4. Local dialect spoken by Community

Local dialect		Community					Total
		Tle central	Jena	Young	Dungu	Parishe	
Dagbani	N	181	45	50	44	45	365
	%	(49.6)	(12.3)	(13.7)	(12.1)	(12.3)	(100)
Gonja	N	9	2	0	0	0	11
	%	(81.8)	(18.2)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(100)
Mampruli	N	4	1	0	0	1	6
	%	(66.7)	(16.7)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(16.7)	(100)
Akan	N	6	2	0	1	1	10
	%	(60.0)	(20.0)	(0.0)	(10.0)	(10.0)	(100)
Total	N	200	50	50	45	47	392
	%	(51.0)	(12.8)	(12.8)	(11.5)	(12.0)	(100)

Table 4 shows the distribution of local dialect spoken according to community of residence. The results indicates that out of 200 respondents in Tamale Central, 181 of them speak Dagbani. Of all respondents who speak Dagbani (365) and 49.6% reside in Tamale central, 12.3% in Jena, 12.1% in Dungu. While 12.3% in Parishe and 13.7% in Yong. All respondents in Yong speak only Dagbani. Also aside one respondent who speaks Akan, all respondents in Dungu speak Dagbani. In Parishe, only two respondents speaking Akan and Mampruli, all respondents speak Dagbani. However, Tamale Central is the only place where other dialects besides Dagbani were most common than other places. It shows that 181 respondents in Tamale Central speak Dagbani, nine respondents speak Gonja, four respondents speaks Mampruli while six respondents speaks Akan. Hence, radio programmes in Dabgani have the highest patronage than all the other languages. Anyadik, Olemadi and Odoemelam (2015) argue that intervention broadcast policies for development should package radio programmes in local languages of the target group. This integration will enhance listenership, interest and positive behavioural change. From the table, it meant that, the remaining respondents who were not very good speakers of the local dialect lived in Tamale Central which can be attributed to its metropolitan setting and hence could be a place of residence for people who are not indigenes of the area.

Table 5. Participation in the Production of Radio Programmes

Involved in ratio	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	9.7
No	354	90.3
Total	392	100.00

Table 5, indicates respondents involvement in the production of radio programmes. Out of 392 respondents 90.3% do not participate in the production of radio programmes. While only 9.7% participates in the production of radio programmes. This therefore indicates that majority of respondents have never been involved in the production of radio programmes. Contrary Freire's (1970) assertion that communication should be dialogue and participatory which prioritises cultural identity, trust and indigenous languages. Given that majority of respondents listened to radio in the local dialect

could mean that communities were more involved in the production of radio programmes. Thus, helps better contributes towards community development.

Table 6. Preference of Development programmes Broadcast-Multiple Response

Development programmes	Responses N	Percentage
Agriculture	195	17.3
Environment	137	12.1
Entertainment	83	7.4
Culture	110	9.8
Education	249	22.1
Health	112	9.9
Religion	19	1.7
Politics	133	11.8
Music	90	8.0
Total	1128	100.0

Table 6, shows a multiple response of development programmes broadcast by radio stations in the Metropolis using a dichotomy group tabulated at value one. While percentages and totals are based on the number of responses. The data reveals that educative programmes appears to be the most development radio programmes scoring 22.1% and occurring in 63.5% of cases. Agricultural programmes are rated second with 17.3% and occurring in 49.7% of cases. This is followed by environmental programmes which are rated 12.1% and occurring in 34.9%. Radio programme which are listened by few respondents is religious related programmes which is only 1.7% and occurring in 4.8% of cases. The results shows most development programmes by respondents' order of importance. That is, educational, agriculture, environment, health, politics, religious, culture, entertainment and music. Beltran (1976) indicates that though, mass media plays a role in the development of rural communities, nonetheless, it has often been ignored, only a small percentage of programmes were devoted to issues on development. Thus given that Northern region is noted for farming and issues of drought, it is not surprising that music and religious programmes were last two in terms of development programmes by respondents.

The results also reveals preferences of radio programme's distribution between the communities by residence. It shows that 48.2% respondents who reside in Tamale Central, 13.3% respondents in Jena, 12.8% respondents in Yong, while 13.3% respondents in Dungu and 12.3% in Parishe prefer agricultural programmes as shown in table 7.

Table 7. Development programmes Broadcast and community Cross tabulation

Kind of Programmes	Listened	Community					Total
		Tle central	Jena	Young	Dungu	Parishe	
Agriculture	N (%)	94 (48.2)	26 (13.3)	25 (12.8)	26 (13.3)	24 (12.3)	195
Environment	N (%)	61 (44.5)	21 (15.3)	20 (14.6)	16 (11.7)	19 (13.9)	137
Entertainment	N (%)	40 (48.2)	11 (13.3)	11 (13.3)	11 (13.3)	10 (12.0)	83
Culture	N (%)	55 (50.0)	16 (14.5)	13 (11.8)	17 (15.5)	9 (8.2)	110
Education	N (%)	135 (54.2)	28 (11.2)	32 (12.9)	25 (10.0)	29 (11.6)	249
Health	N (%)	50 (44.6)	18 (16.1)	17 (15.2)	17 (15.2)	10 (8.9)	112
Religion	N (%)	9 (47.4)	3 (15.8)	3 (15.8)	2 (10.5)	2 (10.5)	19
Politics	N (%)	56 (42.1)	17 (12.8)	20 (15.0)	11 (8.3)	29 (21.8)	133
Music	N (%)	35 (38.9)	11 (12.2)	20 (22.2)	12 (13.3)	12 (13.3)	90
Total	N	200	50	50	45	47	392

Further, 54.2% respondents in Tamale Central, 11.2% respondents in Jena, 12.9% respondents in Yong, while 10% respondents in Dungu and 11.6% in Parishe prefer environmental programmes. In addition 48.2% respondents in tamale central, 13.3% respondents in Jena, 13.3% in Yong, 13.3% in Dungu and 12% respondents in Parishe prefers agricultural programmes. Also 44.5% respondents in Tamale Central, 15.3% respondent in Jena, 14.6% in Yong, 11.7% respondents in Dungu and 13.9% in Parishe prefers educational programmes.

The data also indicates that the educational programme category which being the most preferred radio development programmes had 54.2% of its listener's preference reside in Tamale Central and the remains were almost evenly distributed among the rest of the communities. Besides, the results indicates that 48.2% respondents who prefer agricultural programmes reside in Tamale central and the remaining respondents are distributed among Jena, Yong, Parishe and Dungu. Environmental programmes also has 60% listeners residing in Tamale central and the remaining respondents are distributed fairly among Jena, Yong and Parishe except in Dungu where 4.1% respondent value has a more significant variation from the rest. While 4.8% respondents who prefers religious programmes, 2.2% reside in Tamale Central and the remaining 2.5% were distributed between Jena and Yong, and between Dungu and

Parishe. As Rogers (1969) points out reasons preference of a particular programme, the greater similarity between a source and the receiver, communication is likelihood to have a good result. Majority of respondents affirms that tailoring programmes to meet the rural needs are the main reasons which accounts for popular programmes among the stations in the Tamale metropolis of northern Ghana.

Given that the most preferred development programmes by respondents in terms of community of residence, the results indicates that respondents in Tamale Central mostly prefer educational programmes, Jena prefer health programmes, Yong mostly prefer Cultural programmes, while Dungu prefer music and Parishe prefer political programmes.

Conclusion

It is not surprising that Ghana, unlike other parts of Africa is highly competitive in terms of radio broadcasting with diverse programmes and choices of radio channels than it has been before. Radio broadcasting is rather more of a civic awareness and political discourse. This has become a platform for socio-political integration and national development. Radio in Ghana on a more critical note, however becomes a grounds for corroding indigenous languages and culture. Thus, successfully domesticates English and Western cultures as radio broadcast content. Blankson (2005)

indicates that local dialect and culture expresses the identity and should not be overlooked by media policy makers. The data reveals that majority of respondents (69.40%) prefer radio broadcast in their local dialect. Only 30.6% can understand radio programmes in English. This means that radio programmes in English would have less listeners as against those who listened to radio in local dialect. This shows that majority of respondents sampled were illiterates as envisaged by Ghana demographic survey (2010). The study also indicates that radio programmes in Dabgani have more patronage than all the other languages.

The study shows that while 9.7% participates in radio programmes, 90.3% were left out due to language barrier as most radio stations broadcast in English language instead of local dialect to the community. Freire's (1970) points out that communication should rather be prioritised on cultural identity, trust and indigenous languages to enhance involvement of communities in radio programme for better contribution towards community development.

The data further reveals, educational programmes appear to be the most development oriented radio programmes, agricultural programmes rated second while environmental, health, politics, cultural programmes rated as the third most priority. From the data, religious and music are the list preferred programmes by respondents.

It is not clear as to whether Ghana broadcasting policy would achieve the desired impact on rural development if it continues with its tightly bonded to colonial master's dialect of broadcast. As Mazuri (1996) indicates that no African country would be able to achieve the level of economic power by excessive dependence on foreign languages and culture.

Recommendations

The paper recommends that growth of indigenous culture and the use of local languages should be the obligation of both private and public broadcasters to promote the culture and language of the societies within which they operate so as to achieve the impact on community development.

The paper also recommends that a democratic reform of broadcast systems towards commercial radio should develop deliberate policies to promote

local dialects and indigenous culture of the society. Also, broadcasters and policy makers should take a clue from the Asian countries where language and cultures have been successfully preserved.

The study recommends that more time be allocated to programmes considered to be development oriented to the community such as agriculture, health, education, culture. This programmes would attract more participation to enhance the desired impact on the development of rural communities if radio programmes are broadcast in their local dialects.

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