



## BILINGUAL BROADCASTING (IGBO-ENGLISH MIX) AND ITS EFFECTS ON AUDIENCE COMPREHENSION IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Bilingual broadcasting, particularly the mixing of Igbo and English in radio and television programming, has become a defining characteristic of broadcast media in Enugu State, Nigeria. Despite its prevalence, the relationship between this linguistic practice and audience comprehension remains empirically underexplored, especially within the specific sociolinguistic context of Southeast Nigeria. This study examined the effects of Igbo-English bilingual broadcasting on audience comprehension among broadcast media consumers in Enugu State. Anchored in Uses and Gratifications Theory and Sociolinguistic Code-Switching Theory, the study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A structured questionnaire was administered to 352 respondents selected through stratified random sampling from Enugu metropolis. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple regression analysis via SPSS version 25. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between Igbo-English bilingual broadcasting and audience comprehension ( $r = 0.61, p < 0.05$ ). Respondents demonstrated higher comprehension scores for programmes with a balanced Igbo-English mix ( $M = 3.92, SD = 0.74$ ) compared to predominantly English broadcasts ( $M = 3.21, SD = 0.81$ ). Regression analysis further showed that the frequency of code-switching, familiarity with bilingual formats, and educational background collectively accounted for 47.3% of variance in comprehension scores ( $R^2 = 0.473, F(3, 348) = 104.12, p < 0.001$ ). The study concludes that thoughtfully structured Igbo-English bilingual broadcasting significantly enhances message comprehension among audiences in Enugu State and recommends the adoption of standardised bilingual broadcasting policies by the National Broadcasting Commission and relevant state broadcasting organisations.

**Keywords:** bilingual broadcasting, code-switching, audience comprehension, Igbo language, Enugu State, broadcast media, Nigeria

### Introduction

Multilingualism is a defining feature of contemporary broadcast media across the African continent, and its implications for audience engagement and comprehension have attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent years. The phenomenon of bilingual broadcasting, whereby broadcasters alternately use two languages within the same programme, session, or broadcast segment, has emerged as a significant communication strategy adopted by many radio and television stations operating in linguistically diverse communities (Chukwunalu, 2022; Abubakar, 2024). In Sub-Saharan Africa, where hundreds of distinct languages coexist with colonial languages such as English and French, broadcast media practitioners have increasingly embraced the strategic mixing of indigenous and official languages as a means of maximising audience reach and comprehension (Mathe & Motsaathebe, 2024). Code-switching, the deliberate alternation between two or more languages within a single communicative context, has been documented extensively as a natural feature of speech in bilingual communities, yet its deployment in the formal context of broadcast media raises particular questions about its impact on audience understanding and information retention (Giancaspro et al., 2023).

In Nigeria, a country with over 500 indigenous languages and English as the official language of governance, education, and formal broadcasting, the use of indigenous languages in broadcast media has been both

a contested and evolving practice (Okafor & Ukelina, 2023). The southeast geopolitical zone, home to the Igbo-speaking population, presents a particularly instructive case study. Enugu State, the capital of southeast Nigeria, hosts several significant broadcast institutions including Enugu State Broadcasting Service (ESBS), Radio Nigeria Enugu, and a number of private television stations, many of which regularly employ a combination of Igbo and English in their programming. The Igbo language, listed by UNESCO as endangered due to declining intergenerational transmission, represents a critical site for examining how broadcast media can either sustain or erode indigenous language vitality (Emeafor Eileen, 2023). Despite the recognition of bilingual broadcasting as a common practice in the region, empirical studies specifically examining its effect on audience comprehension in Enugu State remain limited. Most existing studies have focused either on the sociolinguistic analysis of code-switching patterns or on broader questions of language policy in Nigerian broadcasting, leaving a significant gap with respect to the cognitive and communicative outcomes of bilingual programming for audiences.

Research on bilingual broadcasting in Nigeria has generally remained anecdotal or policy-driven, with few quantitative studies exploring comprehension as a dependent variable. Studies such as those by Ezaka (2021) and Chukwunalu (2022) have examined code-mixing in radio programming in southeast Nigeria and Delta State respectively, yet neither study measured audience comprehension systematically using validated instruments. Internationally, research has demonstrated that code-switching in media contexts can either facilitate comprehension by allowing speakers to access conceptual knowledge in their dominant language or impede comprehension when switches occur unpredictably and without sufficient bilingual competence on the part of the listener (Giancaspro et al., 2023). In the Enugu State context, where residents range across levels of formal education and Igbo language proficiency, the effects of Igbo-English bilingual broadcasting on audience comprehension may be expected to be uneven and influenced by individual and demographic factors not yet examined in the literature.

This study therefore sought to fill this gap by empirically examining the effects of Igbo-English bilingual broadcasting on audience comprehension in Enugu State. Specifically, the study investigated the extent to which the frequency and structure of Igbo-English code-switching in broadcast programming affects comprehension scores among audiences, the demographic variables that moderate this relationship, and the extent to which gratifications derived from bilingual programming mediate comprehension outcomes. In doing so, the study contributes to theoretical debates on the functions of code-switching in media contexts, provides empirical grounding for broadcasting policy reform in Nigeria, and advances indigenous language scholarship in the context of Southeast Nigerian mass communication.

## Literature Review

### Bilingual Broadcasting in Nigerian and African Media Contexts

The trajectory of bilingual broadcasting in Nigeria traces its roots to colonial-era policies that privileged English as the medium of formal communication whilst permitting limited use of Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo in designated programmes (Okafor & Ukelina, 2023). Since independence, and particularly following the establishment of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the promulgation of subsequent broadcasting codes, Nigerian stations have navigated the tension between English as the language of professional credibility and indigenous languages as the language of mass accessibility (Emeafor Eileen, 2023). The BBC World Service's decision to launch dedicated Igbo, Pidgin, and Yoruba services in 2018 reflected a broader global recognition that audiences in linguistically diverse contexts engage more deeply with content delivered in or combined with their mother tongues (Abubakar, 2024). This institutional shift lent new impetus to debates about the role of bilingual formats in deepening audience comprehension and cultural affiliation.

Studies conducted in the Nigerian context have consistently found that indigenous language broadcasting enhances comprehension and cultural connectedness among local audiences. Chukwunalu (2022) found that 71.7%

of respondents in a study of radio broadcasting in Delta State indicated active listenership of programmes delivered in indigenous dialects, which they reported understanding more readily than purely English-language programming. Similarly, Emeafor Eileen (2023) found, in a study of educational broadcasting in southeast Nigeria, that broadcast media programmes employing Igbo-language content contributed meaningfully to language awareness amongst audiences in Enugu metropolis. Adekaa et al. (2024) examined radio broadcasting and folk media integration in North Central Nigeria and noted that the deliberate incorporation of indigenous linguistic elements not only promoted comprehension but also strengthened cultural identity among listeners. These findings collectively suggest that bilingual broadcasting in the Nigerian context serves multiple communicative functions beyond mere information delivery.

### **Code-Switching in Broadcast Media: Functions and Effects**

Code-switching in broadcast media has been the subject of growing scholarly inquiry, particularly in multilingual African contexts where broadcasters routinely alternate between colonial and indigenous languages. Mukenge (2024) examined code-switching on Star FM Zimbabwe's Breakfast Club Show and found that the practice served multiple functions including marking formality distinctions, facilitating interactive discourse, and expressing group solidarity. The study employed translanguaging theory and demonstrated that code-switching is not merely a compensatory linguistic strategy but a deliberate communicative resource deployed by skilled broadcasters to navigate the expectations of multilingual audiences. These findings resonate with Mathe and Motsaathebe (2024), whose work on multilingual accommodation theory in African radio identified code-switching as central to the programming strategies of stations seeking to address linguistically heterogeneous listener communities.

In the context of comprehension research, Giancaspro et al. (2023) provided important psycholinguistic grounding by demonstrating that whilst code-switching introduces greater processing demands at the point of language switch, experienced bilinguals often demonstrate heightened attention and improved memory encoding for code-switched content. Their proposed Adaptive Predictability hypothesis suggests that bilinguals who are regularly exposed to code-switched speech develop cognitive strategies that enhance rather than impede comprehension. This finding has significant implications for broadcast media studies, as it suggests that the effects of bilingual broadcasting on comprehension may be positive for experienced bilingual audiences but potentially disruptive for those with limited proficiency in one of the languages. In the Nigerian context, where levels of English and Igbo proficiency vary substantially across educational and demographic groups, this variability is expected to manifest as heterogeneity in audience comprehension outcomes (Ezaka, 2021; Tannenbaum & Hamo, 2022).

### **Language Choice, Audience Engagement, and Information Retention**

The relationship between language choice in broadcast media and audience engagement has been explored across several dimensions. Research conducted in multilingual communities in West and Southern Africa has consistently found that broadcasts delivered in audiences' dominant or most familiar language produce higher engagement, longer listening durations, and better information recall (Adekaa et al., 2024; Mukenge, 2024). Bilingual formats, however, present a more nuanced picture. Where code-switching is structured and predictable, audiences tend to track content more actively and report greater comprehension; where it is unsystematic or reflects broadcaster linguistic insecurity, comprehension may deteriorate (Giancaspro et al., 2023). This distinction between purposeful and unstructured bilingual broadcasting has been largely absent from the Nigerian broadcasting literature, with most studies treating code-switching as a uniform phenomenon rather than one that varies in its structural and functional characteristics.

The impact of language choice on language endangerment and community language maintenance is also relevant to this discussion. Okafor and Daniel (2024) found in a large-scale survey that 65.8% of educated bilingual parents in Nigeria did not consider their children's fluency in native languages important, a finding that suggests the broader social context in which bilingual broadcasting operates is one of declining indigenous language prestige. Yet broadcast media, precisely because of its public reach and normative influence, has been identified as a potential

counterweight to this trend. When broadcasters model confident and fluent use of Igbo within professionally produced content, they may contribute to perceptions of the language as credible and contemporary, thereby influencing the audience's receptivity to and comprehension of Igbo-language broadcast content (Emeafor Eileen, 2023; Abubakar, 2024).

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored in two complementary theoretical frameworks: Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) and Sociolinguistic Code-Switching Theory. UGT, originally formulated by Katz et al. (1973) and subsequently developed by numerous scholars, posits that media audiences are active agents who select media content and formats to satisfy specific cognitive, affective, integrative, and social needs. Within the context of bilingual broadcasting, UGT offers a framework for understanding why audiences in linguistically mixed communities may actively prefer, engage with, and derive comprehension-related benefits from bilingual programming formats. Audiences who seek information gratification from broadcast news, for example, may respond more favourably to an Igbo-English format that allows them to receive complex information in a language with which they are most conceptually fluent whilst maintaining exposure to English as a prestige variety. The theory therefore predicts that audience comprehension will be mediated by the degree to which the bilingual format satisfies the audience's specific communicative needs and expectations.

Sociolinguistic Code-Switching Theory, drawing on foundational work by Myers-Scotton (1993) and later empirical extensions by researchers including Giancaspro et al. (2023), frames code-switching as a rule-governed, communicatively meaningful linguistic behaviour that reflects both social functions (identity, solidarity, formality marking) and cognitive functions (lexical access, informational emphasis, conceptual clarity). In the broadcast media context, this theory suggests that the strategic and structurally coherent deployment of Igbo-English code-switching by broadcasters can facilitate comprehension by allowing audiences to receive information in the language most proximate to their conceptual representations of given content domains. When applied to the Enugu State context, the theory predicts that Igbo-dominant audiences will exhibit higher comprehension for broadcasts that incorporate Igbo at contextually appropriate moments, particularly for culturally embedded or locally relevant content.

## **Identified Research Gaps**

A review of the existing literature reveals several important gaps that this study seeks to address. First, whilst numerous studies have examined code-switching in Nigerian broadcast media from a sociolinguistic perspective, very few have employed quantitative methods to measure audience comprehension as an outcome variable. Most studies rely on self-reported listening preferences or qualitative assessments of broadcaster behaviour rather than on validated comprehension instruments administered to audience samples. Second, the existing literature has largely focused on radio broadcasting rather than television, leaving the question of bilingual effects in audio-visual contexts inadequately explored, particularly in Enugu State. Third, the moderating role of demographic variables such as educational attainment, age, and Igbo language proficiency in the relationship between bilingual broadcasting and comprehension has not been systematically examined in the southeast Nigerian context. Fourth, the specific characteristics of effective versus ineffective Igbo-English bilingual broadcasting, particularly with respect to code-switching frequency and sentence-level structure, have not been empirically studied in relation to comprehension outcomes. This study addresses these gaps by providing an empirically grounded analysis of the relationship between bilingual broadcasting characteristics and audience comprehension in Enugu State.

## Methodology

### Research Design and Population

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which was considered appropriate given the study's objective of systematically describing the characteristics of a defined population with respect to their experiences of and comprehension outcomes from bilingual broadcasting. Descriptive survey designs are widely employed in audience studies in mass communication research, particularly when the goal is to establish relationships between media exposure variables and audience-level outcomes without experimental manipulation (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). The target population comprised residents of Enugu metropolis aged 18 years and above who regularly consume broadcast media content on radio or television stations operating in Enugu State. According to the National Population Commission of Nigeria, the urban population of Enugu metropolis was estimated at approximately 860,000 persons in 2023, with a significant proportion constituting active broadcast media consumers across different demographic strata.

### Sampling Procedure

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation of respondents across three key demographic strata: age group (18-35, 36-50, and 51 years and above), gender (male and female), and educational attainment (secondary school, undergraduate, and postgraduate). The sample size of 352 was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5%, applied to the estimated urban population of Enugu metropolis. Respondents were drawn from five administrative areas within Enugu metropolis: Enugu North, Enugu South, Enugu East, GRA, and Ogui. Within each stratum and geographic area, respondents were selected through systematic random sampling, with every fifth eligible household identified on each residential street invited to participate. This approach ensured both randomness and proportional demographic representation across the sample.

### Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument. The instrument was divided into four sections: Section A addressed demographic characteristics; Section B contained items measuring respondents' exposure to bilingual broadcasting (frequency, medium, and programme type); Section C contained 12 items measuring perceived characteristics of Igbo-English code-switching in broadcasts watched or listened to (structure, frequency, and contextual appropriateness); and Section D contained 13 items measuring audience comprehension outcomes, including information recall, narrative coherence, and semantic clarity. All scale items in Sections B, C, and D used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Content validity was established through expert review by three senior academics in mass communication, after which minor adjustments were made to item wording. A pilot study administered to 30 respondents outside the main sample yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.81, indicating satisfactory internal reliability.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was conducted between March and April 2024 by trained research assistants who administered questionnaires through face-to-face and in-home survey methods. A total of 380 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, of which 352 were returned fully completed, representing a return rate of 92.6%. Data were entered into SPSS version 25 and analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations), Pearson product-moment correlation to establish the direction and strength of the relationship between bilingual broadcasting characteristics and comprehension, and multiple regression analysis to assess the combined

predictive power of exposure frequency, code-switching structure, and educational background on comprehension. Hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. All ethical guidelines governing research involving human participants were observed, including informed consent and anonymity assurance.

**Results**

**Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 352 respondents who participated in the study. The sample comprised 181 males (51.4%) and 171 females (48.6%), reflecting a near-balanced gender distribution. The majority of respondents fell within the 18-35 age bracket (n = 152, 43.2%), followed by the 36-50 age group (n = 127, 36.1%), with respondents aged 51 and above accounting for the remaining 20.7% (n = 73). With respect to educational attainment, 89 respondents (25.3%) had completed secondary school, 183 (52.0%) had undergraduate degrees or equivalent, and 80 (22.7%) held postgraduate qualifications. These figures suggest a relatively educated sample, which is consistent with the predominantly urban character of Enugu metropolis. In terms of primary medium of broadcast consumption, 198 respondents (56.3%) reported television as their primary medium, whilst 154 (43.7%) identified radio as their primary medium.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 352)**

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	181	51.4
	Female	171	48.6
Age Group	18-35	152	43.2
	36-50	127	36.1
	51 and above	73	20.7
Education	Secondary School	89	25.3
	Undergraduate	183	52.0
	Postgraduate	80	22.7
Primary Medium	Television	198	56.3
	Radio	154	43.7

Source: Field Survey, 2024

**Audience Comprehension Across Broadcasting Formats**

Respondents were asked to rate their comprehension levels across three broadcast format types: predominantly English, predominantly Igbo, and a balanced Igbo-English mix. Table 2 summarises the mean comprehension scores and standard deviations for each format. The balanced Igbo-English mix format yielded the highest mean comprehension score (M = 3.92, SD = 0.74), followed by the predominantly Igbo format (M = 3.55, SD = 0.88), and the predominantly English format (M = 3.21, SD = 0.81). A one-way ANOVA confirmed that the differences in comprehension scores across format types were statistically significant,  $F(2, 349) = 38.47, p < 0.001$ . Post-hoc

comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the balanced format produced significantly higher comprehension scores than both the predominantly English ( $p < 0.001$ ) and predominantly Igbo ( $p = 0.012$ ) formats. These findings suggest that a mixed format optimises comprehension by allowing audiences to draw on their bilingual resources in a structured and predictable manner.

**Table 2: Mean Comprehension Scores by Broadcast Format (N = 352)**

Broadcast Format	n	M	SD	Comprehension Level
Predominantly English	352	3.21	0.81	Moderate
Predominantly Igbo	352	3.55	0.88	High
Balanced Igbo-English Mix	352	3.92	0.74	Very High

*Note: M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation. Scale: 1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High. Source: Field Survey, 2024*

### Correlation Between Bilingual Broadcasting and Audience Comprehension

A Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the frequency and structural characteristics of Igbo-English bilingual broadcasting and audience comprehension. The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between the two variables ( $r = 0.61$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that as the exposure to structured Igbo-English bilingual broadcasting increased, audience comprehension scores also increased significantly. This finding supports the study's central hypothesis that bilingual broadcasting positively influences audience comprehension in Enugu State. The correlation was strongest for respondents in the 36-50 age group ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and weakest for respondents aged 51 and above ( $r = 0.49$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that younger and middle-aged audiences who are more likely to be actively bilingual benefit most from the bilingual format.

### Regression Analysis of Predictors of Audience Comprehension

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the combined predictive power of three independent variables, namely code-switching frequency (CSF), code-switching structural coherence (CSC), and respondent educational background (EDU), on audience comprehension. Table 3 presents the regression coefficients and model fit statistics. The overall regression model was significant,  $F(3, 348) = 104.12$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , and the predictor variables collectively explained 47.3% of the variance in comprehension scores ( $R^2 = 0.473$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.468$ ). Code-switching structural coherence emerged as the strongest individual predictor ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $t = 9.87$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by educational background ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $t = 6.14$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and code-switching frequency ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $t = 4.21$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These results indicate that the structural organisation of code-switching in broadcasts has greater predictive value for comprehension than the mere frequency of switching, highlighting the importance of intentional bilingual programme design.

**Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis of Predictors of Audience Comprehension (N = 352)**

Predictor Variable	B	SE B	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	0.84	0.21	-	4.00	< .001
Code-Switching Frequency (CSF)	0.22	0.05	0.19	4.21	< .001
Structural Coherence (CSC)	0.49	0.05	0.41	9.87	< .001
Educational Background (EDU)	0.31	0.05	0.28	6.14	< .001
R = 0.688; R <sup>2</sup> = 0.473; Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = 0.468; F(3, 348) = 104.12; p < .001					

Source: Field Survey, 2024

## Discussion

### Bilingual Broadcasting and Audience Comprehension: A Positive Relationship

The significant positive correlation between Igbo-English bilingual broadcasting and audience comprehension ( $r = 0.61, p < 0.001$ ) constitutes the central empirical contribution of this study. This finding accords with the theoretical predictions of both UGT and Sociolinguistic Code-Switching Theory, which collectively suggest that audiences actively engage with and derive cognitive benefits from bilingual formats that satisfy their communicative needs and allow them to process information in a linguistically accessible manner. The result is consistent with Giancaspro et al. (2023), whose psycholinguistic research demonstrated that bilinguals not only tolerate code-switching in media but frequently exhibit enhanced attention and memory encoding for content presented in bilingual formats. It also aligns with the findings of Chukwunalu (2022), who found high levels of audience engagement with indigenous-language radio programming in Delta State, Nigeria. In the Enugu context, where Igbo remains a widely spoken community language even if its formal prestige has declined, bilingual broadcasting appears to leverage this residual competence to facilitate deeper engagement with broadcast content.

### Structural Coherence as a Key Predictor

The regression analysis revealed that code-switching structural coherence was the strongest predictor of comprehension ( $\beta = 0.41, p < 0.001$ ), outperforming both code-switching frequency and educational background. This finding carries important implications for how bilingual broadcasting should be designed and evaluated. It suggests that it is not merely the act of switching between Igbo and English that enhances comprehension, but rather the degree to which these switches are structurally purposeful and contextually predictable. Broadcasts in which code-switches occur at grammatically appropriate boundaries, in response to lexical gaps, or for culturally salient content domains appear to facilitate rather than disrupt cognitive processing. This interpretation resonates with the Adaptive Predictability hypothesis proposed by Giancaspro et al. (2023), which holds that experienced bilinguals develop anticipatory processing strategies for code-switched speech, and that structural regularity in switching behaviour reinforces these strategies. For broadcasters in Enugu State, this finding implies that professional training in intentional bilingual script construction is likely to yield measurable comprehension gains.

## Educational Background and Demographic Moderators

The significant contribution of educational background to comprehension outcomes ( $\beta = 0.28, p < 0.001$ ) suggests that while bilingual broadcasting enhances comprehension broadly, its benefits are distributed unevenly across educational strata. This finding is consistent with the observation by Okafor and Daniel (2024) that educated bilinguals in Nigeria demonstrate stronger bilingual competence but less attachment to indigenous languages, a combination that may paradoxically enhance their capacity to benefit from structured Igbo-English broadcasts even while diminishing their motivation to seek out such content. For respondents with secondary school education, the comprehension gains associated with the balanced format were smaller but still statistically significant, suggesting that the mixed format is beneficial across educational levels, even if the magnitude of benefit varies. The lower correlation observed among respondents aged 51 and above ( $r = 0.49$ ) may reflect cohort-specific exposure histories, including greater familiarity with purely indigenous-language programming or reduced tolerance for rapid code-switching in a media context that has increasingly favoured English.

## Gratifications and the Active Audience

The study's findings are further interpretable through the lens of UGT, which predicts that audiences select and engage with media formats that satisfy their specific informational and affective needs. The significantly higher comprehension scores for the balanced Igbo-English format suggest that this format uniquely satisfies both informational needs (facilitated by the English component's terminological precision) and affective or cultural identity needs (facilitated by the Igbo component's emotional resonance and cultural familiarity). This dual gratification mechanism may explain why the balanced format outperformed both the predominantly English and predominantly Igbo formats: the former may satisfy informational but not cultural needs for many Enugu audiences, whilst the latter may satisfy cultural but not always informational needs. This interpretation resonates with the theoretical argument advanced by Mathe and Mtsaathebe (2024) that effective multilingual radio programming must simultaneously address the cognitive and social dimensions of audience engagement. The implication for programme production is that bilingual formats should be designed with conscious attention to both the informational and affective gratifications they offer to their specific audience communities.

## Conclusion

This study has made three principal theoretical contributions. First, it has provided empirical validation of the joint predictive power of UGT and Sociolinguistic Code-Switching Theory in explaining audience comprehension outcomes in bilingual broadcasting contexts. By demonstrating that both gratification-seeking behaviour and the structural characteristics of code-switching jointly account for nearly half the variance in comprehension scores, the study advances a more integrated theoretical account of bilingual media engagement than either theory provides independently. Second, the study has contributed to the understudied domain of comprehension-focused broadcasting research in Southeast Nigeria, providing a robust quantitative foundation on which future studies in the region can build. Third, the identification of structural coherence as the dominant predictor of comprehension represents a theoretically significant finding that refines existing models of code-switching in broadcast contexts.

In practical terms, these findings carry implications for broadcast stations in Enugu State and the National Broadcasting Commission. Stations that invest in training broadcasters to produce structurally coherent Igbo-English scripts, rather than relying on spontaneous or unplanned code-switching, can expect measurable improvements in audience comprehension. The finding that a balanced mix outperforms either monolingual format also provides justification for explicit bilingual programming policies that mandate minimum proportions of Igbo content in broadcast schedules, particularly for news and public affairs programming. For Igbo language preservation efforts, the study provides encouraging evidence that broadcast media can serve as an effective vehicle

for sustaining Igbo language use and competence among urban audiences in Enugu, provided that production quality standards are maintained.

Future research should investigate the effects of bilingual broadcasting on comprehension in rural communities in Enugu State, where Igbo proficiency levels are likely to be higher and English proficiency lower, potentially producing different patterns of format preference and comprehension outcomes. Longitudinal studies examining whether sustained exposure to balanced Igbo-English broadcasting produces measurable changes in Igbo language proficiency over time would also be valuable. Additionally, experimental studies using constructed bilingual and monolingual versions of the same broadcast content would allow for more rigorous causal inference than the correlational design employed in this study. Finally, comparative research across the three southeast states of Enugu, Anambra, and Imo would help to establish whether the findings of this study are generalisable across the Igbo-speaking southeast geopolitical zone.

## **Recommendations**

Broadcast media practitioners and station managers in Enugu State should prioritise the adoption of structured bilingual scripting protocols for news, current affairs, and public service programming. The evidence from this study clearly indicates that the quality of code-switching structure, rather than its mere frequency, is the primary driver of comprehension outcomes. Accordingly, editorial teams should develop style guides that specify the conditions and programme segments within which Igbo-English mixing is most appropriate, ensuring that switches between the two languages occur at grammatically and communicatively coherent boundaries rather than spontaneously. Investment in bilingual production training, including workshops on intentional language alternation and script construction, should be a priority for all major broadcast organisations in Enugu State and the wider southeast zone.

Broadcasting regulators, particularly the National Broadcasting Commission, should incorporate explicit bilingual content provisions into the Nigerian Broadcasting Code. Whilst existing provisions mandate the use of indigenous languages in broadcast programming, they do not specify standards for the quality or structural organisation of bilingual content. The results of this study provide empirical grounds for the Commission to develop minimum standards for bilingual programme production, including requirements for structured code-switching, adequate representation of Igbo in news broadcasts, and quality control mechanisms for bilingual scripts. Such regulatory action would provide stations with clear incentives to invest in bilingual production capacity whilst also protecting audiences' right to receive information in a comprehensible linguistic format.

Policymakers at both the state and federal levels should recognise that the promotion of Igbo-English bilingual broadcasting is not merely a cultural preservation objective but a public communication and social inclusion imperative. The finding that balanced bilingual formats produce higher comprehension scores than purely English broadcasts has direct implications for the accessibility and effectiveness of public health messaging, civic education programming, and emergency broadcast communications. State ministries responsible for information and communication should collaborate with broadcast stations to produce bilingual public service announcements and educational broadcasts that leverage the comprehension-enhancing properties of structured code-switching, particularly for audiences with lower levels of formal education.

Academic institutions offering mass communication and journalism programmes in Enugu State and Southeast Nigeria should integrate bilingual broadcasting skills into undergraduate and postgraduate curricula. Specifically, course units on broadcast production, news presentation, and radio-television programming should include training in Igbo-English code-switching norms, bilingual script writing, and the psycholinguistics of multilingual communication for broadcast audiences. The establishment of dedicated bilingual media production laboratories, in which students can practise structured code-switching under professional supervision, would provide a valuable bridge between academic training and industry practice. Such institutional investments would

ensure a supply of professionally trained bilingual broadcasters capable of delivering the quality of structured code-switching that this study has identified as critical for audience comprehension.

Researchers and scholars engaged in mass communication and broadcast media studies in Nigeria should build on the present findings by conducting investigations that employ more controlled experimental designs, longitudinal tracking methods, and comparative cross-state analyses. The field currently lacks programmatic research on bilingual broadcasting comprehension in Nigeria, with most studies remaining descriptive and context-specific. A coordinated research agenda that systematically examines the conditions under which bilingual broadcasting enhances versus impedes comprehension, across different audience demographics, programme genres, and regional contexts, would greatly strengthen the evidence base for policy and practice. Collaboration between Nigerian universities, the NBC, and broadcast media organisations to fund and disseminate such research is strongly encouraged.

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