DECOLONIZATION OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE MEDIA PRACTICE IN GHANA: MYTH OR REALITY?

Eric OPOKU MENSAH
Ghana Institute of Journalism
Accra, Ghana
Email: eric.opokumensah@gij.edu.gh
ORCID No: 0000-0002-4178-6615
&
Caroline ABOAGYE DA-COSTA
Ghana Institute of Journalism
Accra, Ghana
Email: cadacosta@gij.edu.gh
ORCID No: 0000-0003-3380-5086

Abstract

The marginalization of Ghanaian indigenous languages from the media space ceased in the 1990s when the airwaves were liberalized. This was not only a ground-breaking experience for diversification but also a way of getting the majority of the population informed, especially through radio, which is a comparatively accessible medium. However, indigenous language use for radio news broadcasts has come under intense criticism for the extensive use of embellishments like proverbs, which are believed to digress from foreign and acceptable news standards. Using content analysis of Ghanaian media policy documents, sampled news recordings from selected private FM radio stations, and semi-structured interviews with selected news professionals, this paper argues that Ghanaian indigenous language communication forms include embellishments and their accurate use presupposes an immense understanding of the language. Hence, indigenous languages cannot be adapted and appreciated wholesomely in the media space if aspects of it are downplayed.

Keywords: Decolonization, Embellishments, Ghana, Indigenous Language Media

Introduction

Language is pivotal in identity formation, making it indispensable to preserve it along with the culture of any people. The colonization of African nations, including the Gold Coast, saw the introduction of a number of colonial indoctrinations, which were presented as the "one best way of being and doing" (NYAMNJOH 2005, 3). African broadcasting systems and media regulators have often adopted ex-colonial languages, principles and procedures wholeheartedly, failing to assess the implications on their languages and cultures entirely. In Ghana, indigenous language use is encouraged in broadcasting systems to ensure that the entire population is informed, thus reducing information and language exclusion. This is evident in all broadcasting regulatory documents (MINISTRY OF INFORMATION 2014; NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION 2009; NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION 2000). However, indigenizing local languages in the broadcasting space have been observed to be problematic since key aspects of the communication forms, such as the use of embellishments like proverbs, are discouraged or considered as deviating from the "accepted" colonial language format of language use, especially in the news, resulting in criticisms from academics, the media regulator, as well as media stakeholders (see ANTWI FORDJOUR 2016, 26; APENTENG 2016a; APENTENG 2016b; DAABU 2009; IREX 2010, 137; KUSEH 2014; KWAW 2010, 94; NYAMNJOH 2000, 75; NYAVOR 2010, 80-82; OWUSU 2012, 5; SAKZEESI 2015). This paper argues that there is a need to reflect on the values and uniqueness of Ghanaian indigenous languages and communication forms, as well as encourage their exclusive use on radio, if the indigenization drive advocated in the various normative policies will be made a reality.

Brief Historical Background of Radio Broadcasting in Ghana

An understanding of a country's "media landscape is lost without looking into the historical context from which it originates" (MILTON & FOURIE 2015, 1). This is because the media, at any point in time in a country, is considered as a key player in society, reflecting or mirroring its governance system at a particular time in history. Radio broadcasting in Ghana dates back to the colonial era, in what was formerly known as the Gold Coast. The first radio station, Station Zoy, was located in Accra. It was introduced in 1935 by the then governor of

the Gold Coast, Sir Arnold Hodson, and it was an extension of Empire Service in London. Transmission started on 31 July 1935 to mark the Silver Jubilee of King George V of the British Empire (ALHASSAN 2005, 211-212). Station Zoy was a wired relay station so access was limited. Transmission was strictly meant for about three hundred colonial residents and privileged native elites. Service transmission was subsequently extended to Kumasi, Sekondi Takoradi, Koforidua and Cape Coast. Radio broadcasting began expanding by 1939 (during World War II). The colonial administrators employed local personnel and indigenous languages for the indigenes to benefit from the radio programming content (ANSAH 1985, 6; BLANKSON 2005, 6). This resulted in the use of five Ghanaian languages, including Akan, Ewe, Hausa, Ga and Dagbani, by 1940 (BLANKSON 2005, 6). Subsequent developments at Station Zoy between 1946 and 1953 saw broadcast production and administration being handed to the Public Relations Department of the Colonial Government (ALHASSAN 2005, 213). In 1954, Station Zoy was renamed the 'Gold Coast Broadcasting Service (GCBS)', possibly to reflect the original name of Ghana, but it later became the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) after independence in 1957.

Radio broadcasting survived in Ghana despite the volatile political history and successive post-independence governments' continued control of the media. The monopoly of GBC and the strict media rules continued until 1995, when under pressure from the masses, in the form of strikes and demonstrations, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government, under the leadership of Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, "reluctantly" authorized private broadcasting operations (BLANKSON 2005, 10). Though not a guarantee for total media freedom, the liberalization of the airwaves was highly anticipated and became operational in 1996 (NMC 2000, 8), opening the floodgates for private participation in broadcasting by organizations and wealthy individuals. I Boateng (2009, 164) argues that acting as a government 'mouthpiece,' GBC outlived its usefulness because the social, political and economic issues confronting the nation changed, thus, motivating the liberalization of broadcasting. People had become enlightened and eager for information. This drive brought in its wake changes in the democratization, pluralization and decentralization of economic and political decision-making. Additionally, people with interests in media

wanted Article 162[1] of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to be operationalized to allow freedom of expression. This era saw the emergence of FM stations like Groove FM, Radio Eye and Joy FM. However, they broadcast in English, taking after the colonial radio broadcasting system. Arguing that Asian and Western countries promoted their indigenous languages in radio broadcasting, Blankson (2005, 2, 11) observed that Sub-Saharan countries, including Ghana, relied extensively on ex-colonial languages. Boateng (2009, 163) affirms this trend, but Blankson (2005, 11) notes that upon public criticisms in Ghana, the trend began to change with the introduction of Peace FM and later Adom FM, Ogbonu FM and Happy FM, which broadcast solely in indigenous languages.

The radio broadcasting space in Ghana was thus transformed, making it vibrant and projecting Ghanaian culture to prominence. Indigenous language use on radio in Ghana has been encouraged by all governments. This is reflected in the various normative media documents developed by the different governments that have taken over the reins of political power. Today, there are a number of radio stations, like OTEC FM, Boss FM, Hello FM, Nhyira FM and Kessben FM, Oman FM and Neat FM, that only broadcast in local languages. Boateng (2009, 161) argues that of all Ghanaian languages, Akan is the most dominant language on the radio in Ghana. Noteworthy is the fact that notwithstanding the domination of the Akan language, GBC uses other indigenous languages prevalent in Ghana's various regions for their operations. From humble beginnings in 1996 with just a few private radio stations, the National Communications Authority (NCA) had issued broadcast licenses to 412 FM stations by the end of 2015, out of which 313 were on air (NCA 2015). Most of these FM stations broadcast in Akan and other indigenous languages prevalent in their regions of operation.

Media and Language Use
The centrality of language in every society, especially in multilingual

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[1] Article 162 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana outlines the rights and responsibilities of the Ghanaian media, while guaranteeing its freedom and independence.

continents like Africa, cannot be overemphasized. Africa is endowed with a myriad of languages, estimated by UNESCO to be 2,058, constituting about 30% of the world's languages (ROY-CAMPBELL 2006, 9). However, very few of these languages are used by the media, which is dominated by ex-colonial languages due to colonialism, Christian Evangelical missions and the adoption of ex-colonial languages as official languages by most African countries. Additionally, ex-colonial languages were seen to be well developed with wide communication.

The language of radio at its birth helped the colonialists to be abreast of happenings in their home countries. However, the majority of Africa's population, who could not understand these languages, were marginalized and could not experience the benefits of the media. Grace Nwagbara (2013, 153) revealed that language marginalization in the media was the most worrisome of all forms of media marginalization. This happens when people are deprived of their information needs because they do not understand the language of the broadcast. After World War II, however, radio programming in indigenous language dialects became not a matter of choice but an urgent necessity to reach out to the majority of the population and for them to understand the radio programmes. Much attention was given to this need, and so local personnel and indigenous languages were introduced to the national broadcaster, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (HEAD & KUGBLENU 1978; ANSAH 1985, 6; BOAFO 1989, 14; BLANKSON 2005, 6). This feat did not entirely eliminate the dominance of colonial languages in the media, especially because most national broadcasters took over colonial radio transmitting stations, and in so doing, the colonial mode of operation was maintained.

In the 1990s, liberal and democratic reforms on the continent of Africa saw the emergence of competitive, independent and pluralistic radio programming with a diversity of languages (BLANKSON 2005, 1-4). In Ghana, this new wave spiralled into the use of five indigenous languages on radio, including Twi, Ewe, Hausa, Ga and Dagbani. Broadcasting audiences applauded this because the literacy level at the time was low and access to the mass print media was limited. Over time, trends have changed and indigenous language FM stations are now in vogue. Many people, both literate and illiterate, now depend on the indigenous language radio as their main source of information.

The general accessibility of indigenous language radio has brought radio close to the people because they are able to identify with it. Abiodun Salawu (2006, 86) has argued that indigenous language media, especially radio, has become an efficient tool in popularising the use and learning of African languages. This has augmented their roles as avenues for development, teaching and the significance of preservation of indigenous languages and culture (KWAW 2010, 91; BLANKSON 2005, 11). Their importance makes it imperative for broadcasters to use indigenous languages to benefit the societies they serve.

Indigenous Language Media and the Need for Indigenization

> …broadcasting, which often uses indigenous languages "…possesses the characteristic features of being traditional in the true sense of the world, so as to have strong indigenous linkages; producing messages with local flavor; avoiding all forms of colonial influences; utilizing appropriate indigenous materials and resources; and depicting the people's actual reality, their ideas, wisdom, tradition, arts and culture." (KUR 2011, 340-341)

Language is so symbolic that it is at the core of a society's identity formation (SCHOPFLIN 2000) and it defines social identities. It is easy to identify people with their spoken languages, especially their mother tongue since it is a language that no one exerts much effort to learn. For Africans, their way of thinking and understanding is portrayed and embedded in the language they use. Language is part of them and reveals who they actually are. Kwasi Wiredu (1992), for instance, identifies communicating in a language to mean 'thinking' in that language and so makes the assertion that Africans who 'think' in ex-colonial languages, like English, French or Portuguese, cannot properly communicate their indigenous philosophy or thought. Similarly, "African thought is ultimately rooted in African languages" (BRAND 2011, 179), reiterating the fact that, apart from mere communication, African languages hold the soul of the African people. This point is further supported by Nwagbara (2013, 156), who argues that language reflects the structures and ideologies of a group of people. This is in consonance with Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986, 4) who contends that "the choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a

people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment indeed and in relation to their entire universe". He, therefore, calls for a total transformation of the African mind to reflect what Africa has and to appeal to ourselves.

In Ghana, "a high premium is put on the correct use of language. People's views of a person are shaped by the way they perceive him to speak…A person may be judged as wise, intelligent, or dumb by the way he speaks" (SAAH 1986, 367). The ability to use embellishments as part of language expressions suggests a deep-rooted understanding of language, especially the Akan language and this finds its way into different contexts of language use and application. Saah (1986, 367) argues that "[a] person who is able to decorate his speech with such embellishments as proverbs, metaphors, and idioms is seen in the eyes of the elders as a wise or witty person. One who indulges in plain speech is considered ordinary". He adds that this is reflected in the Akan proverb that says "ɔba nyansafo wobu no bɛ, wɔnka no asɛm," meaning, "the wise child/person is spoken to in proverbs, not in plain language."

The media in any society is not very different from the society itself. Language is the foundation of mass communication and the central element of the media's activities (MPOFU & MUTASA 2014, 226). The most informative aspect of broadcast media is the news they broadcast. Pieter. J. Fourie (2001, 448) makes a significant linkage between the importance of news, as a source of information, and the role of language in society, noting that "the particular role of news in our lives is therefore inextricably linked to the general role that language plays in society". Listening to and receiving information in the form of radio news is better understood in indigenous languages than in other languages. Having used indigenous languages from infancy, it is easy to express oneself with even the simplest expressions and carry meaning in subtle ways on the part of the sender, to achieve the greatest understanding and satisfaction on the part of the receiver. People express themselves and understand communication content better in indigenous languages or mother tongues (SALAWU 2006, 88). According to Nwagbara (2013, 156), the best way to reach a media audience is to use languages they would understand and languages that they have a familiarity with the nuances, denotations and connotations. This reduces ambiguity on both ends. Countries that consider promoting their national identity and indigenous languages, do so, particularly,

through the media, thus, informing their people in a language they would comprehend.

However, the promotion of Ghana's indigenous culture and languages in the media has not gone on without a colonial trail. Media policy documents seem to be promoting indigenous language use in the media, but they also want the colonial "standard and procedures" of news gathering, processing, and broadcasting to be followed to the detriment of rich Ghanaian languages. The Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting (GLLB) (NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION 2009), which is a language-use document to guide indigenous language news broadcasting in Ghana, for instance, endears newscasters to follow foreign language news practices by avoiding the use of embellishments, which form a core part of Ghanaian language forms, in news broadcast. However, this has been difficult to follow by indigenous language news broadcasters, thus, becoming a source of concern for media regulators and media stakeholders in Ghana (see ANTWI FORDJOUR 2016, 26; APENTENG 2016a; APENTENG 2016b; DAABU 2009; IREX 2010, 137; KUSEH 2014; KWAW 2010, 94; NYAMNJOH 2000, 75; NYAVOR 2010, 80-82; OWUSU 2012, 5; SAKZEESI 2015). We fail to acknowledge the fact that colonial governments introduced their culture, language and media systems into colonized states, ensuring the colonized acknowledge the supremacy of the values of the colonizer. This developed into an inferiority complex among the colonized, especially Africans who began to underrate their culture and values and, instead, began to uphold and adopt the culture of colonial powers. It is necessary to "retrieve those cultural practices that the colonial regime had thought to erase or reject" (NAYAR 2013, 99), including their media systems just like in the Nigerian and Zimbabwean cases [see the NIGERIAN INDIGENIZATION MODEL (NBC Code, 2006) and the ZIMBABWEAN BROADCASTING SERVICES Act of 2001].

Embellishments are part of Ghanaian languages and communication forms. Ghanaians have been socialized into it and it is naturally applied and used whenever the language is spoken and should thus be encouraged for the intended purpose. Even in health education programmes and strategy development, a study by Riley (1994) to assess the potential of Ghanaian communication forms found out that many customs and traditions of the indigenous people in Ghana were very effective, with proverbs forming an integral part and widely

understood by the people. The study concluded that many of the Ghanaian communication forms offer immense potential for adaptation to healthcare communication, and this is highly embraced by the indigenes because they are familiar with them. Ghanaian communication forms applied in different spheres provide significant impact, and so this paper argues that instead of expressing opposition to media practitioners using the embellishments, they should rather be guided and trained in the best use of these embellishments to project Ghanaian languages and culture.

Some Africans have sought to promote a Western agenda, often side-lining Afrocentric values such as humanity and creativity; this often happens in issues regarding their culture. Nyamnjoh (2005) argued that Africa had a unique pre-colonial journalism practice, which was eroded by colonialism. Terje Skjerdal (2012, 639) analyzed about 29 African journalism normative models proposed since the 1960s and grouped them under three major streams namely: journalism for social change; communal journalism; and journalism based on oral discourse. These models include advocacy journalism, *Ujamaa* journalism, Afrocentric journalism, citizen journalism, Azmari-based journalism and *Dagu*-based journalism. The impact of journalism practices based on pre-colonial African values was greater than those of modern African journalism practices, which have been indoctrinated or diluted by colonialism (NYAMNJOH, 2005). It is, therefore, imperative for Africans to reconsider the useful tenets of pre-colonial African journalism practices such as humanity, oral discourse and creativity, and revisit them. Bernardine Mfumbusa (2008, 141-142) observes "the abandonment of African traditional norms and values as [a] source of functional and credibility problems affecting the media… Hence, a return to the African ethical roots is touted as a solution to media performance problems".

Unpacking the Construct of "Indigenization"
The concept of 'indigenization' or 'indigenous' is rooted in the Latin word *indigena,* which means "a native". Indigenization can be viewed as a way or process of adapting a concept to suit a local environment by adopting native characteristics, like cultural values so that it can fit into the environment and be accepted by the local people as their own. Conceptually, indigenization is "the increase of local participation in or ownership of their resources or established entities, [and] one of the

most popular measures of economically empowering previously disadvantaged" (WILSON 1990, 20). Indigenization should be viewed as a process, rather than an event or static entity.

In recent times, indigenization has been captured or constructed as a reversal, decolonial or transformative process of undoing the effects of colonialism in Africa and other colonized countries. Colonial rulers not only conquered nations by relying on military and economic power but also through the domination over forms of cultural representations and misrepresentations. The Euro-Western "enterprise of deculturation" (FANON 1967) succeeded in brainwashing the colonized, especially blacks, as perceived sub-humans and the Euro-Westerners as super-humans. As a wake-up call of the need to revisit black and African values, Fanon (2004, 2) contends that "there is an urgent need to thoroughly challenge the colonial situation" through decolonization. This process of indigenization has been defined by Fanon (2004, 44) as "violence" when he writes that "the colonized man liberates himself in and through violence".

Indigenization is regarded as a redress and reconstruction strategy for former colonies, enabling post-colonial governments to correct past imbalances of racially biased social and economic policies (WILSON 1990). Colonialization, undoubtedly, altered histories by imposing the culture, innovation and technology of the colonialists on the colonized. The "captive mind", as developed by the sociologist Syed Hussein Alatas (2004), refers to an uncritical imitation of Euro-Western intellectual ideas. It, therefore, proves that continuing with the colonial vision suggests that the colonized man is still a captive of the colonial powers. The purpose of indigenization is to reclaim people's patriotic commitment and national pride through a decolonization process.

Theoretical Approach: Postcolonial Indigenous Research
Scientific and social science research are argued to have originated outside Africa, therefore linking them to colonialism and imperialism. The debate to decolonize research has been a subject of discussion in recent times among indigenous researchers (PORSANGER 2004). Bagele Chilisa (2012, 46) argues that:

> [A]n anticolonial critique framework, using critical theory, postcolonial discourses, and critical race-based theories, is challenging every discipline to assess how knowledge

> production and theories of the past and the present have been
> shaped by ideas and power relations of imperialism,
> colonialism, neo-colonialism, globalization and racism.

Indigenous people, sometimes referred to as the "colonized Other" (CHILISA 2012), were forced to sacrifice their languages and culture to adopt colonial languages, culture and the generally accepted worldview. This made indigenous people adopt Euro-Western philosophies, including research about their own environment. Such adaptation has put indigenous cultures and languages at risk.

Since indigenous people have a unique way of understanding themselves, Euro-Western research methodologies are often difficult to apply in their context to reveal such uniqueness. Indigenous people argue "about centring our concepts and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (SMITH 1999, 39). Molefi Kete Asante (1987, 168) asserts that the hallowed concepts and methods applied in Euro-Western thoughts and frameworks cannot, and have not, been able to explain issues that pertain to indigenous people, and, therefore, cannot claim universality. Chilisa (2012, 47) argues that "Euro-Western-based research methodologies fail to capture the experiences of these colonized Others". The concept of "the captive mind" describes how Western research paradigms have been uncritically imitated in scientific intellectual enterprises, which then signals the need for a renaissance in research that would be suitably applicable to indigenous people.

Relatively new to paradigm debates, the indigenous paradigm, is fast claiming space as a fifth research paradigm, alongside positivists, post positivists, critical theorists and constructivists, which have Western inclinations (CHILISA 2015). Fundamental to the other four Western research paradigms is the view that knowledge is an individual reality. Wilson (2001, 177) advocates that an indigenous research paradigm is an "epistemology where relationships are more important than reality". Indigenous research paradigms hold the belief that knowledge is relational and "shared with all of creation" (WILSON 2001, 176). The ontology or nature of social reality, epistemology, axiology or ethics and value systems as well as methodology are all cosmologically based on relational foundations, indicating the connectedness and interdependence of all things in the universe

(CHILISA 2015).   The indigenous research paradigm, especially emanating from Africa, is deeply embedded in cultural values, which promote wholeness, community involvement and harmony.

In applying this paradigm to this study, it is evident that issues of language and culture pertaining to indigenous people are best addressed through the indigenous research paradigms, specifically because of context. Indigenous people understand their situation and environment and can, therefore, undertake relevant research by applying friendly tools that enhance the community and add to the existing knowledge base. Chilisa (2012, 47) emphasizes that "the basic component of any country's knowledge system is its indigenous knowledge". Chilisa (2012, 58) talks about the need to use the language of historically oppressed groups to construct new theories, concepts, techniques, methodologies and analysis procedures across disciplines.

Indigenization considers indigenous methodologies, like storytelling and proverbs, but is dependent on decolonizing and third-space methodologies by combining some elements of the Euro-Western paradigm methodologies. Qualitative data collection methodologies, like interviews, structured questions and other theory and culture-based questionnaires, can be applied (KOVACH, 2009). Smith (1999, 15), however, notes that "particular methods within indigenous methodology have to be chosen in respect to indigenous ethics, explicitly outlined goals of research and the considered impact of the outcomes of research on the particular indigenous people."

Methodology
This study employed qualitative methodologies in achieving its objectives in consonance with the post-colonial indigenous research paradigm. Creswell (1998, 15) defines qualitative research as "an enquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem". He adds that "the researcher builds a complex holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants and conducts the study in a natural setting" (CRESWELL 1998, 249). Qualitative researchers argue that reality is socially constructed and so it is paramount to get close to the object under study to experience the subjective dimensions of the phenomenon. The qualitative research paradigm gives the researcher the opportunity to use all available resources and techniques, which may not be numerical or quantitative in nature. The methods applied in this

study were tri-fold. First, the study employed content analysis of Ghanaian media policy documents on their position and the place and use of indigenous Ghanaian languages in the media. Analyzing the contents of the normative policies employed thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a form of pattern recognition within data, which makes use of emerging themes as categories for analysis. This is done through careful reading and re-reading of the data (BOWEN 2009, 32). There was a general overview of the position of the National Media Policy (NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION 2000) and Broadcasting Standards (NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION 2001), with detailed discussions on the Broadcasting Bill (MINISTRY OF INFORMATION 2014) and the Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting (NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION 2009). The researchers first skimmed through the pages of the policy documents to familiarize themselves with the contents. After a second reading, general ideas that emerged set the coding process in motion with the generation of captivating ideas and patterns. Coding was a way to align the data, by bringing together related ideas to make meaning of the information available. These codes, in the form of initial ideas and patterns, were noted and written down as the data was being studied. Patterns that repeated themselves were merged into categories of related codes or ideas. In doing so, some details could not be overlooked and so these set the tone for the generation of themes and sub-themes through a spotlight coding process.

This spotlight coding was focused on points that would help answer the research question. These processes led to the generation of four themes and thirteen sub-themes for the GLLB and two themes and four sub-themes for the Broadcasting Bill. Secondly, the study sampled and recorded a one-month week-day news of two prominent FM stations in the Ashanti Region of Ghana – Hello FM and Nhyira FM. These FM stations were chosen because they have been rated high in various audience-based ratings with their peak listening time being the news time (BUSINESS GHANA 2017; GEOPOLL 2017a; 2017b; GHANAWEB 2018). The Ashanti Region was also sampled out of the 16 regions of Ghana because the Akan (Twi) language which is the most dominant language on Ghanaian radio is indigenous to this region. Boateng (2009, 161) argues that of all Ghanaian languages, Akan is the most dominant language on the radio in Ghana and it has assumed national significance. The Akan language, which is indigenous to about

47.5% of the Ghanaian population (GHANA STATISTICAL SERVICE 2012, 5) is spoken widely by both indigenes and non-indigenes across Ghana (DZAMESHIE 1988, 21). The aim of recording the news was to assess the frequency of the use of linguistic and literary devices in the news. To this end, the researchers prepared a self-made coding sheet to capture the date and time of the news, the types of linguistic devices and the frequency of their use.

Finally, the study conducted a one-month observation of news activities in Hello FM and conducted semi-structured interviews with the News Editor, Head of Newscast, Head of News Report and the Head of News Research of Hello FM to understand their difficulties and the way forward. Daily observations made were recorded on an observation sheet developed by the researchers. Findings were summarized and used as part of the analysis. Semi-structured interview sessions were audio-tape recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were sent to the interviewees for confirmation and to ensure factual accuracy. Using, thematic analysis, a process similar to what was used for the media documents as described above was applied in coding the findings from the semi-structured interviews.

Findings and Discussions
Promotion of indigenous language use in the broadcasting media
Ghana is a country with diverse languages, and the characteristic of language as an element of culture that makes for easy identification (SCHOPFLIN 2000) makes it imperative to preserve it. Thus, the government of Ghana stresses that irrespective of the medium of information, the culture and languages of Ghana should be paramount. All media policies, Acts, Standards and Guidelines acknowledge this and, as such, focus on promoting and preserving the national identity, culture and languages of Ghana. Both the national and commercial broadcasters are encouraged to use the indigenous languages prevalent in their regions to increase participation and reduce the exclusion of people marginalized by their inability to understand English and other languages of broadcast. The cosmopolitan nature of our communities has paved the way for inter-cultural and inter-tribal associations, which are to be encouraged and well bonded. Additionally, though efforts at increasing the literacy level in Ghana have been improved, a large section of the Ghanaian public is still not literate. The 2010 population

and housing census in Ghana revealed a staggering 23.4% of the population above three years had never been to school and were not literate (GHANA STATISTICAL SERVICE 2012, 7-8). This figure indicates that the illiteracy rate in Ghana was still significant, and, therefore, fosters the need to promote the use of indigenous languages in the media to meet the information and entertainment need of all sects of the population.

Document analysis in this study revealed that the sub-sections of Article 4 of the Broadcasting Bill, which are also reiterated in the other media policy documents, for instance, state that broadcasting shall:

> (b) offer education, information and entertainment to the society in its diversity;
> (c) safeguard, strengthen and enrich the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of the society;
> (d) promote (ii) national identity, culture and languages of the country.

Article 12 provides specific instruction to the national broadcasters on its expected functions to:

> (b) Promote a sense of national identity that reflects and recognizes the cultural diversity and multilingual character of this country.

> (a)(i) provide a wide range of programming that informs, educates, entertains and serves the people and takes into account the gender, age, ethnic, cultural, ideological, religious and other diversities of society;

In a bid to achieve this, the GLLB (NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION 2009) operationalizes the Broadcasting Bill by providing practical guidelines as follows:

> 2.2 Broadcasting stations should ensure at all times that their reporters, news readers and presenters speak and write the local language in which they broadcast with high proficiency. It is not enough for a broadcaster to be able to speak the

language. He/she should be able to write it. This will help the broadcaster understand the nuances of the language and to present it with sensitivity and intellectual confidence.

2.3.4 As far as practicable, local language news must be gathered and presented in the language intended for broadcasting.

2.5.1: As much as possible translators must endeavour to avoid literal translations, unless such a translation makes sense. The translator must think of what ideas in the source language sought to convey and express the idea in the target language without embellishment.

Section 2.5.2: Where the ideas being conveyed cannot be expressed clearly in the target language, the translator may paraphrase it. In other words, he/she may translate by explaining the idea.

Section 2.5.4: News translators must master the most common expressions and have them at their fingertips.

2.6.2 Language expresses the culture of a people. Translators must therefore learn about the culture, festivals, history, traditions, and economic activities of native speakers of the target language.

The unanimous promotion of Ghanaian culture and languages in policy documents notwithstanding, the GLLB (NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION 2009) seems to portray a double-faced and ambiguous status. While promoting Ghanaian languages and indigenization in one perspective, it seems to be curtailing the full potential and applicability of Ghanaian languages in another, by imposing constraints on the mode of language use in the media. It recommends the adaptation of colonial processes, which have been portrayed as the "one best way of being and doing" media/radio broadcasts (NYAMNJOH 2005, 3).

In sub-section 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and section 2.4 the following recommendations are provided:

2.3.1 Local language news must (like foreign language news) be systematically gathered, analyzed, written, edited and presented. Spontaneous presentation or translation of news is not permitted in broadcasting.

2.3.2 Spontaneous composition and performance are creative elements in oral literature… It is not suitable for news bulletins.

2.4 Local language news must be subjected to the news production process in full (writing, editing, proofreading, etc.) to ensure that the final product is an accurate and authoritative representation of the meaning intended for broadcasting.

While this may seem like ensuring standardization, we should not lose sight of the fact that not all Ghanaian languages have been developed with exhaustive vocabulary and so some Ghanaian languages do not have written forms (OPOKU-AMANKWAH 2009; OWU-EWIE 2006). In this case, their use in news broadcasts can only be oratory. Additionally, English language words were code-switched (FLAMENBAUM 2014) into news that is supposed to be rendered in a local language, as evidenced in the findings from the sampled news recordings below.

Evidence of Embellishments Making their way into Radio News Broadcasts
Findings from the forty news bulletins recorded from the two FM stations over a one-month period indicated that news gathered, processed and presented by two indigenous language FM stations were not lengthy, but highly interspersed with linguistic and literary devices, and not a single news bulletin aired without them. The findings are summarized in Table 1:

				Average length of embellishments used in news	Percentage of average duration of embellishments

			bulletins over study period	used in news bulletins over study period
Longest news duration over study period	30 minutes and 16 seconds	28 linguistic and literary devices used	6 minutes and 11 seconds	20.43%
Shortest news duration over study period	20 minutes and 5 seconds	10 linguistic and literary devices used		30.79%

Table 1: summary of findings from news recordings

From Table 1, it is observed that the shortest news duration over the study period was 20 minutes and 5 seconds, while the longest duration was 30 minutes and 16 seconds. The longer the duration of the news, the higher the number of linguistic and literary devices used. On average the linguistic devices covered significant portions of the news time, covering an average of 6 minutes and 11 seconds, which was 30.79% of the shortest news duration and 20.43 of the longest news duration.

The findings indicated that five main types of linguistic and literary devices were used. These were proverbs, wise sayings, anecdotes, exaggeration and humour. As shown in Figure 1 below, the newscasters used 38 elements of humour, 48 elements of exaggeration, 22 anecdotes, 102 proverbs and 126 wise sayings.
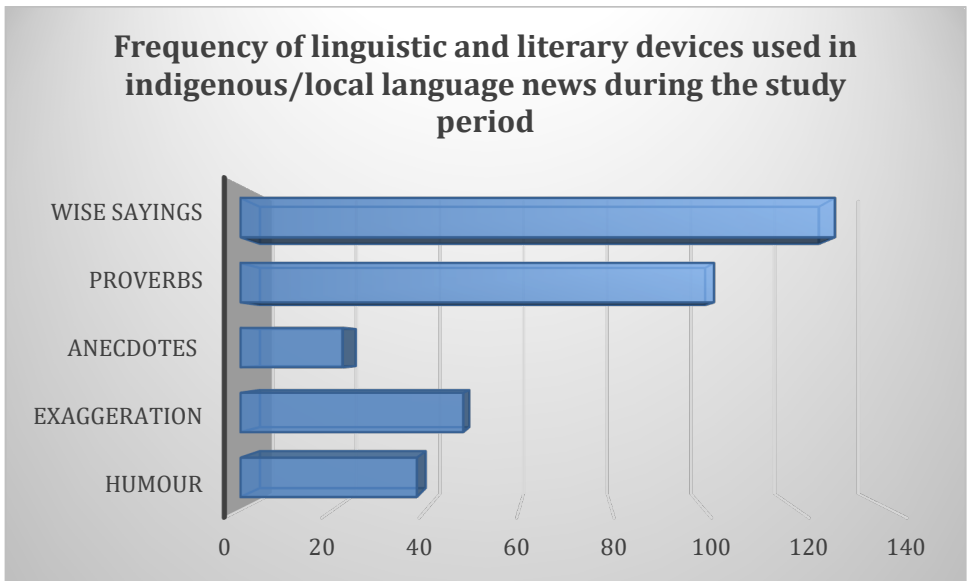
Frequency of linguistic and literary devices used in indigenous/local language news during the study period

Device	Frequency
WISE SAYINGS	(≈125)
PROVERBS	(≈100)
ANECDOTES	(≈26)
EXAGGERATION	(≈50)
HUMOUR	(≈43)

Figure 1: frequency of linguistic and literary devices used in news bulletins

Observation of news practices and interviews with media practitioners revealed the knowledge and creativity exhibited by local language news broadcasters during the news process. The one-month observation in the newsroom of Hello FM revealed that newscasters came into the newsroom about thirty minutes before news time. They went through the news scripts, prepared and written in the English language by the editorial team, but were able to understand the content and rendered the news in the Akan language with expertise. Additionally, because the news scripts were not read during the news time but news stories presented after careful reading and understanding of the script, the news flowed without back-and-forth reference to the news script.

The acme of the whole news process rendered in the local language is that irrespective of the news story being presented and the vast array of literary and linguistic devices available in the Akan language, newscasters were able to use a selection that not only suited the story being presented and give it the needed spice, but they also used it with precision.

There were instances where the Ghanaian folklore and story-telling characteristics were introduced into the indigenous language news to give it the typical Ghanaian traditional 'flavour'. Sometimes,

newscasters sang various songs, sometimes creatively made up at the point of news presentation. These songs were often found to be in the context of the news story and so emphasized the meaning and understanding of the stories. Such an incident was recorded in one news bulletin during the study period when a newscaster sang a made-up song to show that one activist of the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP), who was vocal during political campaigns in the run-up to the 2016 general elections in Ghana, had not been given a ministerial position in the NPP government. This practice held similarities to findings by Jemima Opare-Henaku (2016, 65-66) in the newsroom of Adom FM, also a local language FM station in Accra. These are some of the practices adopted by newscasters to make their news appeal to their target audiences who are often non-elites and appreciate the information given in such contexts because they easily identify with it.

These embellishments and typically local renditions of news stories made the information rich and reduced the number of words used to describe events and contents of the news as evidenced in the interview extract below:

> Much as we don't use embellishments too often, the Akan language is such that, when you want to describe an activity, you need so many words, unlike the English language. These proverbs and embellishments help summarise the information because they have detailed meanings and can be used in different instances. The meanings can often be deduced from the context within which it is used. [HELLO FM 2018, N.P.]

This was also evidenced in the news recordings when in one instance a decision taken and implemented without consultative engagement resulted in a negative impact on members of a community. Haven presented the highlights of the story, the newscaster that day used the proverb "*tiri korɔ wɔ hɔ yi ɛnnkɔ agyina, baako nso werɛ duru a ebu*" (translated as: two heads are better than one/ it takes more than one person to think through an issue and make a decision) to summarise the news story. In another instance, an action taken by a school to construct a wall around its campus was observed as a precautionary measure against encroachment and misuse of its resources by community members. The newscaster used the proverb "*wɔnnhwɛ akɔm ɛmma wɔn*

ti mpo", (translated as: they will not be overtaken by events) to avoid lengthy explanations.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Much as this study does not in any way condemn the efforts of media regulators in achieving the required professionalism in the media space in Ghana, it contends that the use of indigenous or local language communication forms should be fully encouraged. This is because just like a river flows by finding its way about, language is fluid and will fulfil itself wherever it is used. It will be difficult for local language broadcasters to effectively use Ghanaian indigenous languages, which are built on folklore, on the radio without introducing other components or forms of the language - like embellishments - into the news.

Many Ghanaian local languages do not have written forms but as the paper indicates, most radio stations that broadcast in the local language do so in the Akan language, which is well developed in all faculties of expression. Most Ghanaian journalists were socialized into the Akan language and so do not have difficulties in speaking it. The difficulty arises in journalists' ability to write in the Akan language. Thus, efforts should be made to train journalists in the writing of the Akan language, most especially for the purposes of relaying the news. It is expected that this will help develop the literary competence of journalists in writing the local language and also further develop its learning power and competencies among the populace. This is because, as observed by Salawu (2006, 86), indigenous language media, especially radio, is an efficient tool for popularising the use and learning of African languages. This is further augmented by their roles as avenues for development, teaching and the preservation of indigenous languages and culture, making it imperative for broadcasters to use indigenous languages to the benefit of the societies they serve (KWAW 2010, 91; BLANKSON 2005, 11). Strengthening the proper use of indigenous languages can further the decolonization drive and free the minds of Ghanaians to think through the lens of their indigenous languages.

Additionally, efforts channelled into developing indigenous languages for use on radio and other areas of the media should be encouraged. This is to ensure that the regulator's admonishment that indigenous language broadcast media in Ghana should operate in the indigenous language(s) prevalent in the regions they find themselves in

could be implemented (NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION 2009). The current situation poses a challenge because only nine out of the over 70 languages spoken in Ghana have written forms (OPOKU-AMANKWA 2009, 122) and as such have been developed with essential vocabulary (though not exhaustive). This agenda should be pushed further by resourcing the Bureau of Ghana Languages and other government agencies responsible for language development to extend their activities to other languages. This will reduce the code-switching of local languages with the English language on the radio (FLAMENBAUM, 2014) when appropriate vocabularies are not found.

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