Sociolinguistic situation of English in the electronic media establishments in Maiduguri

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Abstract

This paper discusses the use of English in the electronic media establishments in Maiduguri i.e. Radio Borno (RB), Borno Television (BTV) and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). Two of the media establishments: BR and BTV are state owned while NTA is Federal owned. The objectives of the media establishments, whether federal owned or state owned, are: (a) education, (b) enlightenment, (c) entertainment and (d) edification i.e. the 4 Es. The investigation reveals that English is used for all purposes i.e. 4Es, by the establishments except RB, which does not use English for E4. This is due to the fact that "state languages" are used for that purpose whose consumers constitute the non-elites. It is equally observed that the use of English is high in NTA with about 67.06% for all the Es in 4 quarters which determines the functions and communication range of English as one of the de facto national and official languages of the country i.e. Nigeria. The percentage of the use of English is low in BR with about 23.39% because the media establishment is owned by the State and efforts are made to reflect as many "State languages" as possible. Though BTV is also owned by the state, it has a high percentage of the use of English of about 44.10%. We also observe that the use of English is generally high for E2 and E3 in all the media establishments. This is with a view to moulding the opinion of the elites. For E1 and E2, generally, the use of English is low. This may be the fact that 'State languages" are preferred with a view to reaching the "grassroots". We can notice that in BR the "State languages" are exclusively used for E4.

1.0 Introduction.

This paper discusses the use of English in the electronic media establishments in Maiduguri i.e. Radio Borno (RB) Borno Television (BTV) and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). Two of the media establishments: BR and BTV are state owned while NTA is Federal owned. The objectives of the media establishments, whether federal owned or state owned, are: (a) education, (b) enlightenment, (c) entertainment and (d) edification i.e. the 4 Es. In order to attain these objectives, the electronic media establishments use some specific languages with a view to reaching as much as possible the "grassroots". Brann (1982) observes that over one hundred languages are used on the air in Nigeria. The number of languages used over the air varies from one state to another due to the ethno linguistic characteristics of each state. The so-called "State Languages" are always in symbiosis with English in each state due to the functions of English as the *de facto*

National/Official language and lingua franca in most of the Nigerian cities. In Maiduguri the Borno State Capital, the situation is not different as English is a strong lingua franca alongside strong lingua francas like Kanuri, the 'chief language' of the state, and Hausa etc. This is due to the ever-growing ethno linguistically heterogeneous nature of Maiduguri since its creation in 1907. The Broadcasting media establishments according to Brann (1983) are "essentially centralised service of Government". Thus, the government, in its zeal to reach the grassroots, makes use of English and other "local languages". Brann (1995:270) observes that "Borno State uses 23 languages 'natively' of which 13 are solely spoken in the State. Borno Radio Corporation gives primary attention to Bura, Fulfulde, Hausa, Kanuri, Marghi and Shuwa for its State News and substantial programmes; and uses secondarily Bade, Bole Ngamo, Ngizim, Karekare Waha and Mandara". The language use over the media takes into cognisance the ethno linguistic characteristics of its target audience.

For instance, Usman (forthcoming) identifies that about '15' languages are used for various programmes in what used to be called Borno-Radio Corporation (BRC), now Borno Radio (BR). Among these languages, 12 are spoken in the State. These languages are: Hausa, Kanuri, Guduf, Fulfulde, Babur, Shuwa, Marghi, Mandara, Joghode, Waha, Dera and English. The list of languages used presently over Borno Radio differs from the list identified by Brann (op. cit. 270) due to the ethnolinguistic complexity of the target audience. Though the Nigerian government through its 1979 constitution, implicitly or sometime explicitly reserves the right to individuals or group of individuals to be informed in their Mother Tongue (cf. Chapter 36.1 of 1979 Constitution), the linguistic situation seems to be different in the media establishments (especially the electronic media). This situation is warranted by the function and communicative range of certain languages. The 'so-called "State Languages" are dropped at one point in time due to the lack of adequate communicative range. This can be seen in the case of Karekare, Ngizim, Ngamo, Bole, Bade etc which are no more used in Borno Radio but English is always maintained due to its status as a strong lingua franca with adequate communicative range, used for "Vertical Communication", (cf. Heine (1979) in Brann (op.cit 49).

The Borno Broadcasting House as it was called dated back to 1954. It was used to broadcast news from Lagos and Kaduna. The news, then, was in 4 languages: Kanuri, Hausa, Fulfulde and English. That was until 1970 when the station got its first set of medium wave transmitter, which marked the beginning of local programmes and news and the use of autochthonous languages. In toto, thirteen (13) languages were used. The languages were Kanuri, Hausa, Fulfulde, Shuwa (Arabic), Babur, Marghi, Dera, Bade, Bole, Ngizim, Karekare, Guduf an English. Since then, more indigenous languages are being used for local news and programmes. The

corporation changed its name from the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) to Borno Radio Corporation (BRC). In addition to BRC, in 1983 the Borno State Television (BSTV) was established. In 1984, the two media established i.e. the BRC and BSTV merged to form what is called "Borno Radio and Television (BRTV)". The two media establishments, which are State, owned, function alongside another federal owned station called the "Nigerian Television Authority" (NTA), which was established in 1977. For the purpose of the 4Es, the use of English was/is maintained in the three (3) media establishments presently operating in the State. The use of languages varies from time to time so also the duration for each purpose(s). This paper intends to look into the use of English in these media establishments and quantify its uses for the 4Es etc.

1.1 Aims and objectives.

This paper is aimed at:

a) determining the use of English in the electronic media in the state i.e. BR, BTV and NTA.
b) computing the duration of the use of English (for the purposes of education, enlightenment, entertainment and edification i.e. the 4Es).
c) finding the percentage of the use of English in the three (3) media establishments.

The results obtained from this investigation are aimed at providing answers to the following question: How much English is used, where, for what purpose (s), and to whom in the state etc.

1.2 Methodology.

The data consist of the durations of the uses of English for the 4Es (education, enlightenment, entertainment and edification) for the 1997 period, which was divided into 4 quarters. Each quarter is 3 months or 90 days. The duration for each purpose, which is obtained in minutes (for convenience) per week and per quarter in the 3 electronic media in the state i.e. NTA, BR and BTV, is determined.

The total duration of NTA per week is 3 5 1 5 mns. Thus, the duration in a quarter is:

$$\frac{3515 \times 90}{7} = 4519 = 753.21 \text{ hours}$$

The percentage of the duration is obtained, thus:

$\frac{Tx \times 100}{45192}$ (where Tx =Total duration of the use of a language in a quarter)

The total duration of BR is 7980mns about 133 hours per week. Thus, the quarter duration is:

$\frac{7980 \times 90}{7}$ = 1026Oomns= a 1719 hours.

The percentage of the duration is obtained thus:

$\frac{Tx \times 100}{102600}$

The total duration of Borno Television is 3300 mns about 55 hours per week. Thus, the total duration in a quarter is:

$\frac{3300 \times 90}{7}$ = 42428 mns about 707.14 hours.

The percentage of the total duration of the use of a language is obtained thus:

$\frac{T \times 100}{42428}$

These strategies are used in determining the use of their languages i.e. English in the electronic media: BR, BTV and NTA found in Maiduguri.

2.0 Data presentation and analysis.

This section deals with the data presentation and analysis. The data consists of the use and durations of transmissions in English in the three (3) electronic media establishments in the state i.e. the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), the Borno Television (BR) and the Borno Radio (RB). The durations of transmissions are presented here in minutes for convenience. The stations are considered one after the other.

Borno Television (BTV).

This station is one of the two electronic media establishments owned by the state government. It is transmitting its programmes in five (5) languages: Kanuri, Hausa and English which are used for all the Es, Pidgin and Indian for only entertainment i.e. drama, films etc. The total duration of transmission of the station is about 3300mns/week about 55 hours/week. The total durations of the transmissions in English varies according to a) the quarter and b) the Es. This is reflected by the total duration of transmissions per week and per quarter. For instance, the total duration of the 3rd quarter is the highest with 21217 mns making about 353.61 hours/quarter; followed by the first quarter with 20056 mns about 334.26 hours/quarter; then the 2nd quarter with 1972 mns making about 328.68 hours/quarter; then finally the 4th quarter with 13885 mns making about 231. 41 hours/quarter. In the first quarter E2 has the highest duration of 689mns/week about 11.48 hours/week; followed by E3 which has 590 mns about 9.83 hours/week; then El 270mns/week about 4.5 hours/week; then lastly E4 with 90mns/week making about 1.5 hours/week. For the sake of illustration, we provide the following chart below:

Purpose		1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q
E1		270	180	150	165
E2		689	720	645	660
E3		590	518	825	135
E4		90	115	30	120
TOTAL	WEEK	1559	1533	1650"	1080
	QUARTER	20044	19710		13885
	PERCENTAGE (%)	47.24	46.45	50	32.72

Fig 1. Summary of durations of transmissions in English in BTV.
Keys: Q=Quarter, E1=Education, E2=Enlightenment, E3=Entertainment, E4=-Edification

The chart presented above reflects the fact that English is used for all the 4Es with difference in the length of transmission per week and per quarter. E2 and E3 have generally long durations. The use of English is substantially high in the 3rd quarter with 50%, followed by the first quarter, which has 47.24% then the 2nd, which has 46.45%. The percentage of the use of English decreases sharply to 32.72% in the 4th quarter. For the 3 quarters i.e. lst, 2nd and 3rd quarters, almost half of the

time on air is used in English. This sharp decrease in the 4th quarter reflects a high increase in the use of "local languages".

Radio Borno (RB)

As said earlier, this station is also owned by the state government. It uses 15 languages: Hausa, Kanuri, Marghi, Guduf, Fulfulde, Babur, Shuwa, Mandara, Dera, Joghode, Waha and English. French and German are used exclusively for E3 and Arabic exclusively for E4. The total duration of transmissions in a week is 102600 mns about 1710 hours/week. Here, in this media establishment, unlike the previous i.e. BTV, English is not used for E4. This is due to the fact that the station uses local languages for E 4 whose consumers are predominantly Islamic and non-elites. The duration of English is generally high for E2 because of the Network programmes from the Headquarters in Abuja, which are hooked up, meant of course for the elites. E1 and E3 have almost the same length of transmissions. For the sake of illustration, we provide the chart below:

Purposes		1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q
E1		340	350	340	445
E2		1245	1858	1220	1101
E3		320	330	290	230
E4					
TOTAL	WEEK	1905	1938	1850	1776
	QUARTER	24492	24917	23785	22834
	PERCENTAGE (%)	23.87	24.28	23.18	22.25

Fig 2: Summary of durations of transmissions in English in RB

From the chart presented above, we can observe that the use of English for E2 is generally high while the durations of El and E3 are almost the same. The total durations of the lst and 3rd quarters are 24492mns about 408.2 hours/quarter and 23.785 mns about 396.4 hours/quarters respectively. The total duration thus decreases in the 4th quarter with 22.834 mns about 380.56 hours /quarter. The highest percentage is reflected in the 2nd quarter with about 24.28 %; then followed by the first quarter with 23.87%; then 3rd quarter, with 23.18%; and lastly the 4th quarter with 22.45%. Comparatively the use of English is low in RB. This is due to the fact

that (a) English is used for only 3Es and (b) there are many more local languages used alongside English in the media establishment.

Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)

The Federal Government owns this electronic media unlike the two others above. In this media establishment, English is used for all the 4Es. This is due to the fact that English is one of the *de facto* national and official languages; as well most of the programmes run by this media are hooked up to the Headquarters in Abuja. The programmes hooked up are mostly related to E2 and E3, which justify the long duration of the two Es. For instance, we can observe that E2 has up to 1,320mns/week about 22 hours/week in the 4th quarter while E3 has up to 1,140 mns/week in the 2nd quarter, which is about 19 hours/week. The duration of E3 dropped to 642 mns, which is about 10.7 hours/week in the 4th quarter. The duration of E2 is generally long in the 4 quarters. The duration of E4 is generally short in all the 4 quarters with about 30mns/week = 0.5 hours/week. This is due too to the fact that people of the Christian faith constitute a minority in this state. Thus matters related to E4 are rather aired in "State languages". The longest duration for E1 is also generally short. The longest duration is reflected in the 4th quarter with about 285mns = 4.75 hours/week which is the total duration of the use of English per week. The total duration of the use of English per quarter, is generally long compared to the other media establishments i.e. BTV and RB. This is due to the function and high communication range of the language.

The first quarter has the longest duration of 31,242 mns/quarter making about 520.7 hours/quarter; followed by the 2nd quarter with 30,985 mns/quarter making about 516.4 hours/quarter; then the 3rd quarter with 29,700mns/quarter about 495 hours/quarter; and lastly the 4th quarter with 29,314mns/quarter about 488.56 hours/quarter. Here, we can observe that though the use of English is generally high it decreased from Ist quarter to the 4th quarter. It can be noticed that more than half of the time the station is on the air, English is used. For the sake of illustration, we provide the summary of durations of the 4Es in a chart below.

Purpose	1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q
E1	180	150	20	285
E2	1090	1090	1080	1320
E3.	1130	1140	100	645
E4	30	30	30	30

TOTAL	WEEK	2430	2410	2310	2280
	QUARTER	31242	30985	29700	29314
	PERCENTAGE (%)	69.13	68.53	65.71	64.86

Fig. 3 Summary of durations of transmission in English

From the chart presented above, we observe that the highest percentage of the use of English is reflected in the lst quarter with about 69.13% ; followed by the 2nd with 68.53 %; then 3rd with 65.71% and the 4th quarter with 64.86%. It can be observed that the percentage of use of English is also decreasing.

3. 0 Summary and conclusion.

The investigation reveals that English is used for all purposes i.e. 4Es, except RB, which does not use English for E4. This is due to the fact that "state languages" are used for that purpose whose consumers constitute the non-elites. It is equally observed that the use of English is high in NTA with about 67.06% for all the Es in the 4 quarters which determines the functions and communication range of English as one of the *de facto* national and official languages of the country i.e. Nigeria. The percentage of the use of English is low in BR with about 23.39% because the media establishment is owned by the state and efforts are made to reflect as many "state languages" as possible. Though BTV is also owned by the state, it has a high percentage of the use of English of about 44.10%. We also observe that the use of English is generally high for E2 and E3 in all the media establishments. This is with a view to moulding the opinion of the elites. For El and E2 generally the use of English is low. This may be for the fact that 'State languages" are preferred with a view to reaching the "grassroots". We can notice that in BR the "state languages" are exclusively used for E4.

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