

Indigenous Languages and Identity: A Socio-Linguistic Overview of Igbo Language

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Abstract

Language is the most pertinent information and communication, characteristics of all human beings. It is a powerful, as well as, a great instrument for cultural transmission and preservation. Communities in the world are made up of many languages and each of these languages is being used to identify one speech community or race. Indigenous language or autochthonous language is a language that is native to a region and spoken by indigenous people, often reduced to a status of a minority language. Igbo language is one of those indigenous languages used by Igbo for communication. Recently, the use of this language is diminishing as the Igbo people prefer to speak other languages like English or even French, in place of their mother tongue (Igbo language). This phenomenon has constituted a threat to Igbo language. Some of the effects of this language abandonment include loss of the people's identity, collapse of Igbo culture because they no longer use their language in rites and rituals. This paper is therefore aimed at highlighting the importance and effective use of Igbo language as a major form of Igbo identity by the Igbo. A lost language is a lost identity and that amounts to a lost race and generation. The paper sourced data from primary and secondary sources. A framework was formulated to direct research effort on the development and study of Igbo language, the relationship between Igbo language and culture, the importance of Igbo language as a major form of Igbo identity, the place of Igbo language in the minds of the present Igbo and factors militating against the growth of the language and finally recommendations were given.

Keywords: Indigenous Languages, Identity, Culture, Communication, Speech Community

Introduction

Language and its Role in Brief

According to Richard and Plat (1992:15), "language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication". Wilson (1986) views it from another angle. To him, language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbol by means of which a social group cooperates. The above definitions prominently point out that language is a system.

Language is the vehicle through which people's culture, norms, values and beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation for its perpetuation. It therefore remains a central factor in the determination of the overall status of a nation. It is an index of identity which serves as a repository of a people's culture, industry and exploits. In the Nigerian sociological environment, language

use has been pivotal in integrating the various socio-linguistic and socio-cultural or ethnic groups that make up the nation.

The same use of language has proved to be a key factor in ensuring social harmony amongst members of the same ethnic group and extension enhancing social stability and development. The most effective engine of people's culture is language. In other words, language is the indicator of history and self-identification (Solanke 2006). Nwadike (2004:5) as cited in Ogwudile (2019:54) "posits that it is the key to the heart of people. If we lose the key, we lose the people. If we treasure the key and keep it safe, it will unlock the door to wealth or affluence, thus bringing about national development." National development refers to the growth of the nation in terms of internal cohesion, integration, unity, economic well-being, mass participation in governments and educational growth (Aziza, 1998). The world is an embodiment of languages, and each of these languages is being used to identify one language group or race. The importance of Igbo language in achieving Igbo identity cannot be over emphasized. According to Yusuf (2014:898), "language is a nation's most important asset. There is no such thing as a nation without a common linguistic basis." The dominant inference to Yusuf's observation is that for national identity, integration, cohesion and development to thrive, there must be language capable and acceptable by all in the administration/running of a nation's affairs.

Eyisi (2000) notes that every conceivable human activity revolves around language. According to her; we use language to express love, hatred, anger, happiness, praise, satisfaction and dissatisfaction; to comment on the political, social, educational or economic situations in the country; to confirm or express religious beliefs; to comment on the weather and even to fill a vacuum when there is nothing else to do especially in the exchange of pleasantries. Human beings, therefore, are naturally endowed with the tendency to always talk, to use words, to employ language for a mutual social relationship with their fellow individuals and for the achievement of their daily objectives, for their well-being and for the well-being of their community. People get on well when their communication flow. The same way, if there is no proper communication, activities in a given community would definitely crumble. One wonders what the world would have been without language. Language lives and dwells with the people, and the perception of the real world is construed by the language habit of the people.

In his word, Sapir (1929; 234), succinctly opines that "... we see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do, because the language habit of our community predisposes certain choices of interpretation." Sapir – Whorf hypothesis draws a cursory link between language and culture (ethnicity), of which an individual or group represents the culture via linguistic resources. This is one of the pivotal roles of language. Language is one of the indispensable resources of man, necessary for his day to day transaction and activities. This situates language as a pivotal resource for meeting the communicative needs of the members of the society. Every human language is sophisticated and highly developed to meet the need of the community of speakers that use it (Stork and Windowson, 1974). In the words of Lewis quoted in Algeo, (1974)

The gift of language is the single human trait that marks us all, genetically setting us apart from the rest of life. Language is, like nest building or hive making, the universal and biologically specific activity of human beings. We engage on it communally, compulsively and automatically. We cannot be human without it; if we were to be separated from it, our minds would die as surely as bees lost from the hive.

Language makes us human; it is inseparable from the users (society). It does not exist in vacuum but lives in the lips of the speakers (language is used to meet one of the basic daily needs of the speakers). Language plays varied functions ranging from phatic communion, assertive, declaratives, commissive and referential functions. Of key interest in this paper is the referential role of language. A Language used for referential purpose is only meant to convey or pass on information.

The Conquest of Indigenous Languages in Nigeria

There are approximately more than 6,000 languages and dialects in the world and about 50% of them are threatened. Nigeria alone has about 500 languages and none of these has up to 80 percent of the population as its speakers. Three major Nigerian languages are Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. These languages have since lost their position even as a Mother Tongue (MT) to some Nigerians, especially to those born in the cities in the last 30 years and among children of inter-tribal marriages. The teaching of English Language entered a new phase with the introduction of colonial rule in the 19th century. Since then, the English Language became the medium of instruction of school programmes, administration and commerce. This marked the beginning of the decline of indigenous languages in Nigeria. Having lost social and economic privileges, indigenous languages in addition began to lose native speakers. According to Omolewa in Nwanyanwu (2017: 5) "... any meaningful discussion of the status of any language must take account not just of the teaching method or classroom situation but of prevalent socio-political and economic situation." One major constraint to the status of Nigerian languages is attitude. Attitudes are a set of beliefs, dispositions and human behaviour. The importance of attitude to the survival, decay or prominence of languages have been well acknowledged by Lewis (2009). He states that:

Any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take account of the attitudes of those likely to be affected. In the long run no policy will succeed which does not do one of three things: conform to expressed negative attitudes of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes of the disagreement...

Because of the role English has been playing in various Nigerian societies, Nigerians, especially the elite, have developed various attitudes towards English and the various indigenous languages. Among the elite, there is a rigid/patterned language behaviour, and some have come to believe, rather erroneously that intelligence or knowledge is synonymous with competence in English. Adekunle (1995:61) makes a strong case for indigenous languages when he remarks that "... the indigenous systems embody the much needed wisdom and knowledge needed for the scientific and technological resurgence of Africa."

Indigenous language–Igbo

Indigenous language or autochthonous language is a language that is native to a region and spoken by indigenous people, often reduced to a status of a minority language. Igbo language is one of those indigenous languages used by Igbo for communication.

We have seen that English language has a dominant status in Nigeria because of the various functions it performs. Nevertheless, the appreciation of the indigenous language (Igbo) will foster improvement in national identity, security, technology and even education. A focused plan on the

development and codification of the indigenous languages will bring about national unity and cultural awareness. Cultural awareness involves the cultivation on a national scale, of group identity and solidarity motivated by the need for national self determination in all its ramifications... These national ideas and values can only be propagated and inculcated through the indigenous languages. In fact, it will be a contradiction to try to inculcate these values through a foreign language... (Adekunle, 1995: 83).

Igbo Language is a cultural heritage, not just cultural but also an intellectual heritage. It conveys knowledge and local know-how, and is therefore, irreplaceable tool for sustainability. According to Fafunwa in Adekunle (1995: 61), in an article titled "Coping with the Advanced Technology" in the *Daily Times* of April 11, 1985, he lamented the lack of indigenous languages in national development plans. The consequence is the repeated and abysmal failure of such programmes. As he said: "We teach agriculture in English and Nigerian farmer's farm in Igbo, Hausa, Efik, Nupe, Kanuri etc." Nwanyanwu (2017) asserts that traditionally, education for sustainable development places the promotion of mother tongues/indigenous languages as a priority in its objectives with the fight against illiteracy.

Clearly, the use of official language tends to exclude people from participation in matters concerning their communities. Although many people in Nigeria are bilingual, their knowledge of outside languages outside their ethnic domain is restricted. Inevitably, the use of official languages excludes many people from participating in national dialogue, with issues of security and politics. Nigerian indigenous languages have an important part to play in fostering the emergent cultural nationalism. Studying indigenous languages will offer us an understanding of ourselves as Nigerian people. Knowing ourselves will enable us to strengthen our national values and interests. This is because having a sound knowledge of our culture is an essential element for safe-guarding our national interest.

The point is that working knowledge of an indigenous language is an indispensable tool for national development and this will help Nigeria to better manage the numerous ethnic/religious crises facing the country. While there may be increasing interactions between Nigerians and people from other countries who speak the English language, there is few level of cultural exchange among Nigerians themselves, owing to the inability of most Nigerians to speak one or more of the indigenous languages. Even among the youth, it is difficult to find fluent speakers of indigenous languages among those between 12– 30 year- age brackets.

This has serious repercussions for sustainable national identity. Awoniyi (1981: 71) in Adebowale (2011:7) remarks that the Yoruba language, which appeared in print in 1819 and used in formal education could have played major roles in national development, had the policy makers encouraged its social, cultural and economic space. Over the years, the attitude of scholars and policy makers towards indigenous language Igbo in particular, has been lukewarm. This is surprising especially when Nigerian educational philosophy lays much emphasis on "The integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen... and geared towards self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity, economic, political, scientific and technological progress", (*National Policy on Education*, 2004, p 4). Adebowale (2011) calls for empowering the indigenous languages in the twenty- first century if Nigeria is to become relevant in the globalised world.

Relationship between Igbo Language and its Culture

The Igbo people are culturally homogeneous. They form a group which interact in patterned ways, shared beliefs, values, goals and norms, and have a feeling of membership. The rich Igbo cultural heritage is reflected in their proverbs, songs, music, dance, drama, paintings, drawings, marriage ceremonies, festivals, title takings, etc. Through the use of language, all these aspects of culture which bind the Igbo people are meaningful, expressible and operational. The Igbo language is a unifying factor of the Igbo culture and has proved an efficient and useful tool for the dissemination of the Igbo culture from generation to generation (Omego, 2007:168).

One of the basic characteristics of language is that it reflects the culture of its speakers. Language provides man a means of not only expressing himself but also transmitting his cultural heritage from generation to generation. The ability of humans to transmit culture through the medium of language is frequently exploited, most of the time unconsciously by every user of language.

Adekunle (1999: 242) in Igbokwe (2013:25) asserts that “in a mono-cultural and monolingual community, language devices are used in so many ways to express the various dimensions and intricate pattern of cultural realities”. This citation upholds that the cultural background of a people is so intermingled with language that people cannot fully understand and appreciate themselves without the common knowledge of their language. Elugbe (1991) as cited in Omego, (2004: 168) states: “...however language may have arisen, and however diversity may have arisen in the first place, it is obvious that language is part of the culture of every human society; language is a useful ingredient for a people’s survival.” What people know about their ancestors depends on the kind of language they preserved for them? Rich language vocabulary portrays rich culture.

Language is the prerequisite for the accumulation and transmission of other cultural traits. Language is not only a necessary condition for culture, it is itself part of culture. Language, thus constitutes the basis of a people’s personality and a people renouncing the use of language is doomed to stagnation and even to retrogression and disappear completely as a people (Sekou, 1978:32). Culture determines how members of a society think and feel. It directs their actions, outlook and language use. In Goertz’s (1973: 89) assertion:

Culture is network (transmitted historically) of meanings embedded in symbols, a system of ideas inherited and expressed in the form of symbols which people communicate, perpetuate and stretch their knowledge concerning their attitude towards life. Through language, the people’s culture is known.

The above statement reveals that there is a binding string between language, culture and society. As the society moves its course, it drags language along. It serves as a base for cultural identity. Okeke (2000: 32) describes culture as: “The totality of values, habit and social behaviours, mode of life and belief system of a group of people, the language used by this people must possess these values”. Language and culture share symbiotic relationship. Language is as much a product of culture as culture is a product of language, for both are concerned with expression, communication and instruction within a given social structure. Each is a total reflection of the other. Language and culture are two sides of a coin and none is complete without the other. Their relationship, one to the other, and to the society to which they belong, is like that which exists between a tree and its

roots and branches. The society is the tree; the roots are the cultural expressions, while the branches and foliage represent the language of that society. “Without its foliage, all that remains of a tree are its stump and roots, and it does not take long after a tree is deprived of foliage, for that tree to die an unnatural death” (Acholonu, 2010:26).

Njemanze (2007: 26) opines: “Culture is about social behaviour, belief, values of a society. Culture is associated with language and customs of a particular group. Culture consists of the shared products of society, while society consists of peoples and their interaction within a community”. In his view, a society could therefore not exist without culture while culture needs to be maintained by the society. Language and culture are used concurrently everywhere. Language has societal relevance. It stands as the basis for social action, facilitates interpersonal and their ethnic cooperation. This makes language part of man and culture. The foregoing buttresses the fact that language and culture are in constant interaction. Fundamentally, culture influences the structure and use of language, and in turn language can influence cultural interpretations of reality. Language is the communication tool, as well as the documentary confirmation of culture.

Igbo Language as a Major Form of Igbo Identity

Identity means the characteristics, feelings or beliefs that distinguish people from others. Such common characteristics could be at the level of the individual, a group, a community or a nation. Igbo identity refers to those characteristics and beliefs which the Igbo have in common, and which bind them together as a people and distinguish them from others. The world is a culturally plural entity, a political aggregate with a wide range of life styles in its midst. This plural society is characterised by the co-existence in variety of distinct cultures, each ethnic group having its own heritage, its own body of traditions, values and views. Under this prevailing circumstance, the Igbo, who have been described as “ubiquitous” can only be identified by their language- Igbo.

Having commented on the relationship between Igbo language and Igbo culture, and in view of the fact that the Igbo can also be identified by their food, clothing, and other behaviours peculiar to them, it is noteworthy that these forms of identity fall under culture of the Igbo, and their culture can only be expressed through Igbo language. Igbo language is both a value system and a veritable identity of the people as evidenced in their culture and way of life. It is a great asset to the society and every single need of man in and outside the Igbo society depends on Igbo language. It is the vehicle for the transmission of Igbo culture, social norms, nuances, value systems and institutions which can be shared by more than one group. Obinna (2002:125) posits that “... without language, it is hardly conceivable how to make a clear difference between and among peoples, especially of the same geographical or racial configuration.” What essentially makes the Igbo what they are is definitely their language which expresses them and with which they express themselves. As we express ourselves through cultural manifestations, these cultural manifestations are expressed more clearly, vividly and permanently in the language mirror – vehicle (even if eminently orally). The Igbo language, just like any other language serves as our own mirror and stamp of identity for the Igbo nation. Igbo language brings out the inner-most of the Igboness of the Igbo. Okolo and Ezikeojiaku (1999: 48) assert that, “Language permeates our lives from birth to death.” It is the medium by which we establish and experience our most important human relationships. Language also serves as essential tool for conducting the most mundane transactions of our daily lives. Language is one of the fundamental primordial expressions of cultural differences. A spoken

language identifies and distinguishes a group of people that speak that language from other human races. Igbo language represents the culture of Igbo people as well as identify Igbo people.

In the words of Aja-Akpuru Aja (2008: 3), “Language gives humans a history, language provides humans policy and strategies of self presentation”. He goes to say that in contest, when an animal dies, everything it has learned from experience perishes with it but for humans, language gives access to the social experience and accumulated knowledge of generations that have gone before, and projects into the future. Language is a strategic asset because, plans, whether blue prints, rolling plans, development plans, grand plans or national vision are both oral and written.

The above assertion applies to Igbo language. It is through Igbo language that the Igbo become cultured and thus fully human. It is the Igbo language that provides meaning and process to culture, norms and values of the Igbo. Emenanjo (1996:12) in his view about the importance of language as a form of identity, posits thus:

Without language spoken by humans which is understood by fellow humans, there is no big difference between man and other animals. Truly, language is one of the most outstanding identifying factors for which a tribe is recognised, used to divide people as well as separate people of the world.

The above citation also points to the fact that every language has where it is being spoken, the people that own it, as well as speak it as their mother-tongue. An Igbo is usually identified with speaking Igbo language as the first language. Akpaonye, (2007:43) states, “... people are identified by the language they speak, and so people who lose their language are consequently lost and lost forever.” This means that a lost language is a lost identity.

In several world societies, political stability and projection of power beyond national boundaries have been influenced and strengthened by the unity of language and culture. The common referent case is that of the Jews. The Hebrew language of the Jews remained the root and secret of the Israeli existence, power influence at home and abroad even in diaspora, a Jew remains a Jew by the unity of language and culture. The Israeli intelligence networks in coding and decoding information and intelligence data across the globe have exploited the apparent exclusiveness of the Hebrew language. The Jews are not separated by social distance or common trials and persecution, just as the Nazi Holocaust showed. Hebrew language works out advantages every where the Jews are found. It is so much so that Jews are found every where that matter in world politics such as in the USA, Russia, Pakistan, and Europe and many Asian societies. They even influence not only the politics and foreign policies of the host states, but media networks, by broadcasting in Jewish language.

In the accounts of Aja-Akpuru Aja, (2008: 5) in Igbokwe (2013);

One occasion that clearly identifies the power of spoken language was the 90 minutes rescue of the Jews held hostage at Entebbe in Uganda in 1976. The rescue operation authorized by the Israeli Prime Minister, Y. Rabin penetrated the rank and file of the Ugandan politics, intelligence and security. Having disguised as President Idi Amin and his escorts, the entry of hostage rescue team into hostage hall was described as historic and miraculous. On entry, they used the core Hebrew language and identified with the Jewish

victims. By instructing that standing Jews should sit or lie down immediately, they were able to identify and arrest the standing hostage takers, and eventually made a heroic exit by the Herculean aircraft back to Israel. It was a success more of language power than military might.

The above cited story also applies to the power of Igbo language, as a surest means of identifying the Igbo. The researcher received information about an even that took place in 1980, when an official driver was instructed to convey a 'Ghana-must-go' bag filled with money, to the head office of a company at Abuja. As a result of long distant journey from Owerri to Abuja, the journey stretched into the night and unfortunately, his car broke down near a police road block at Kogi State. When he approached the uniformed men and told them of his predicament, they discovered the bag containing money, and looked at themselves. They resorted to a language unknown to the traveler. This development induced tension on the traveler, who felt pressed. As he went near the bush to urinate, a passing vehicle flashed light on the uniformed man nearest to him, and there he discovered that his name tag bears an Igbo name. Then he approached him and said "Nwannaa, biko abụ m nwanne gi, ekwela ihe ojoo mee m. Ihe o bula mere m n'ebe a, obara m no gi n'isi. Meaning, my kins man, please I am your brother; don't allow any evil to befall me, whatever happens to me, my blood is on your head". This statement torched the identified Igbo uniformed man, and he quickly signaled their superior, who is also an Igbo man, in their station, telling him, that if he doesn't intervene quickly, that his colleagues had planned to kill the driver and carry his money. The superior officer didn't waste a second, and he appeared with a patrol van, and personally rescued the man, and towed his car to the station. The next day, he fixed his car and was given escort to his destination. Both officers of Igbo origin were duly rewarded for being their brother's keeper. This brief story is meant to highlight the power and advantage of Igbo language as a veritable means of identifying the Igbo. If the traveler didn't approach his kins man in Igbo language, he would have been killed, and his money lost. It is the writer's belief that there will be many similar stories of incidents where Igbo language played identifying and life saving roles on the Igbo. Having highlighted these invaluable roles of Igbo language as a primary source of Igbo identity, one is left with a worry: how do the Igbo people regard their language?

Igbo Language in the Minds of the Igbo People

It has been observed that Igbo language is fast deteriorating and dying in our schools, markets, public places, business sectors and most annoying, at homes. No one seems to speak Igbo language any more, oblivious of the fact that Igbo language is one of the major forms of Igbo identity. In the words of Obinna (2002:30) as cited by Igbokwe (2013:11)

With a population that fluctuates between twenty and thirty million, and reaching out from Imo, Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi States and beyond, added to their very mobile (nomadic) nature that takes them all around the world, it remains intriguing that Hausa and Yoruba languages continue to assume a larger than life frame within and outside their domain, while the Igbo language continues to mark time or even regress... The Igbo race poses a language problem visa-vis their own language, most Igbo are experts in Yoruba, Hausa, Efik. Ishan and some other European Languages. However, they can hardly express themselves in the simplest version of Igbo at home, in the market, in the church and elsewhere.

The above assertion is true because majority of the Igbo are generally not good speakers of Igbo language, neither are they good writers, nor good readers of Igbo, and of course, hardly do they listen to Igbo language programmes on radio, nor view same on television. Nwadike (2002: 97) notes "The greatest problem that has faced Igbo from alltimes is the apathy of the Igbo man towards his language". Investigations made by Ejiofor, and Akponye, show that the Igbo people no longer speak their language freely, because of the influence of foreign language. Schools in Igbo land sparsely use Igbo as spoken and written language; rather English is used to teach even at kindergarten level. In most schools, English and French Languages are made compulsory, while Igbo language is completely neglected. In the classroom, Igbo speaking is a taboo, pupils who speak Igbo in classes are made to pay fines, or punished. Igbo is already a lost language in most Igbo families as most parents no longer speak nor teach children the language. Instead they beat and scold their children for speaking Igbo. In most cases, the Igbo hate or feel ashamed of speaking their mother tongue, whether in public or private places. Most of the Igbo cultural festivals are being moderated in English language. Igbo traditional rulers prefer speaking English language to visitors in their palaces. The National Universities Commission (1999-2000: 34) placed Igbo as "... the weakest of the three major languages in Nigeria, whether in usage or in the classroom among the higher institutions of learning, thus no university has a department of Igbo language in Nigeria." Meanwhile, there are not less than fifteen universities in Igbo language speaking states of Nigeria. All these instances, and more, (not mentioned in this paper) show the extent of neglect suffered by Igbo language in the hands of the Igbo.

Conclusion

The role of language in human society is indispensable. It provides means for social function, management and organization. Development is the sustainable economic, political, socio-culture and technological transformation of a society and language on the other hand provides the means of conveying the developmental paradigm to the society. Language therefore serves as a catalyst in national development. The use of indigenous languages is central to the holistic development of any nation. It is imperative to take the linguistic features into account in order to ensure full participation of all the citizenry in the developmental process. For this to happen, there is need for effective communication in indigenous languages. This is because the use of foreign languages will impede full participation of the citizenry especially at the grassroots level.

Apathy on the side of the Igbo have been the major contributory factor to the imminent extinction of Igbo language. The Igbo have lost the value of Igbo language both in cultural ceremonies and political game in Nigeria. The Igbo language is secondary to English language. The loose link between Igbo language and culture is compounded by their vested interest in reaching out to other ethnic groupings and nationalities, hence sacrificing their cultural identity (Igbo language) to other sub-cultural languages in order to become socially accepted and business relevant. On the contrary, other tribal groups who reside in Igbo land proudly hold their languages tenaciously, as an identity. The Igbo people play loser's game in Nigeria power struggle, because they do not value Igbo language as an Identity and as a unifying factor in the struggle for political power.

Recommendations

It is a given fact that the continued decline of the Igbo language, if left unchecked, will lead to complete loss of the language which imaginably means loss of the people who own it. To that

effect, the following recommendations should be considered and put into practice, as a way of safeguarding the main form of Igbo identity.

1. Igbo parents and care-givers should use Igbo language in bringing up Igbo children, knowing full well that whatever training a child receives early in life carries the child through out his lifetime.
2. All the schools in Igbo speaking states should ensure that Igbo language is taught in their schools. They should provide adequate space for it in their time-table, while Igbo language teachers should shun shyness in their discipline, and teach the subject with utmost dedication. Teachers should desist from punishing those children who speak Igbo language in their classroom.
3. Students on their own part should have interest in the speaking, reading, writing and study of Igbo language. They should stop making jest of those who have interest in the study of the language. Those who intend choosing Igbo language as a course of study should do that with dedication, hoping to make something good out of it, and not just offering the course, just for formality sake or a matter of convenience.
4. Igbo sons and daughters in both state and national assembly should help in making those legislations that will favour the growth of Igbo language. The state legislators should use Igbo language during the house sittings. Also their dressing, or attire, should depict Igboness, especially for those Igbo who are at the national assembly.
5. Those at the head of government in Igbo speaking states should support the growth of Igbo language by offering scholarship to Igbo language students and teachers. They should form the habit of using Igbo language in making speeches, especially in the gatherings dominated by the Igbo. Most importantly, they should consider a round peg in a round hole, while appointing officers that will head the government ministries or departments in charge of Igbo language and culture.
6. Igbo traditional rulers are the mirror with which the Igbo and their culture are seen by the other world communities. To this end, Igbo traditional rulers (though literate), should imbibe the culture of speaking to their visitors in Igbo language. They should engage the services of Igbo language interpreters, in the case of when they host non Igbo visitors in their palaces. With the respect and regard which everybody has for them, Ndi Eze can influence the government of their various states on policy issues that will promote Igbo language and culture.
7. Igbo religious leaders and priests should give their sermons in Igbo language, where their congregation is made up of Igbo speakers. Instead of speaking in English and interpreting in Igbo language, they should do their preaching in Igbo language, and interpret in English, assuming there is need for that.
8. Media houses situated in Igbo speaking states should create programmes in Igbo language, as well as give more time to those Igbo programmes. The music and video clips should be dominated by Igbo language. Programme presenters should take pride in appearing in Igbo cultural attire. Newsreporters as well as other journalists of Igbo origin should know how to speak and write Igbo language.
9. Authors and publishers of Igbo origin should be patriotic enough to write and publish their books in Igbo language. They should go further by adapting books written in other languages into Igbo language.
10. Igbo musicians and music producers should compose and produce music and movies more in Igbo language than other languages. It is the writer's view that those music and movies produced in Igbo language are more meaningful, as well as retain long-term values, than those produced out of the desire to imitate foreigners.

11. The Igbo in general, should have a rethink concerning their careless attitude towards Igbo language. The Igbo should not support those political aspirants who cannot address their people in Igbo language. It is obvious that you can't give people any good representation, when you neither understand nor speak their language. It is shameful that most Igbo indigenes go into the rural communities during their political campaigns, only to blow English grammar to the rural dwellers when about 80% of them do not understand what they speak.

12. Igbo in diaspora should imbibe the culture of speaking Igbo language to their family. They should also use Igbo language as a medium of communication in their social gatherings. They should instill the spirit of Igboness in their children; through the type of stories they will be told, as well as ensure that those children are once in a while allowed to visit their roots. The Igbo in diaspora should know that no matter how well they think they can speak foreign languages, there is no way they can speak better than the original owners of the language, neither will such foreign language form their identity, rather they have placed themselves in place of the proverbial bat (xss) who will neither be counted as a bird nor rodent.

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