



Journal of Humanities

Faculty of Humanities, Alex Ekwueme Federal
University Ndufu-Alike

Volume 1 Number 1 2018

Available online: www.nsibidi.funaifoh.com

ISSN: 1596-5428

The Origin and Evolution of Igbo Language and Culture over the Generations

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Abstract

The language and culture of a people are the same. Before the advent of colonial rule and Western Civilization per se, the Igbo had existed with full civilization. It is a familiar expression that language is found in culture and culture is found in language, and it is these distinct cultural and linguistic features that distinguish the Igbo as one of the progenitors of African civilization. The origin and evolution of the Igbo language and culture over the generations can be problematic if it does not take cognizance of the periodization from the age of oralness to the period the language was reduced into writing. The material for this study involves both primary and secondary sources. Studies have shown that an in-depth study of the origin and evolution of languages and culture over the generations could go a long way to ameliorate the unfair treatment given to most of the endangered languages of the world. This study engages itself with the task of making an inroad in the terrain of historical linguistics, since the study of the origin and evolution of language and culture could bring enough confirmations that remote ancestors of the Igbo were among the autochthonous peoples that fathered the civilization of Africa. The article is expected to spur scholars to contribute to the vast domain and enriched qualitative and quantitative features of the language of the Igbo, which in turn adds to an all-round appreciation of the Igbo in the global commitment towards sustainable development initiatives.

Keywords: Igbo, language, culture, civilization and evolution

Introduction

Language, culture and communication are complementary features of every society. Language is as old as humanity. It is a living organism and an essential attribute of man. The variability of the status of language makes it a phenomenon that attracts multidimensional definitions. However, whenever the issue of language reflects the concept of people's origin and

culture side by side with their genealogy or traces phylogenetic strides, scholars are often prone to ascertaining the diachronic and synchronic aspects of the referred language with a view to establishing the dynamics of the language *vis-à-vis* the owners of the language. A conscientious input at any given time by scholars might indeed go a long way in checkmating the challenges that bedevil every attribute that humanity is endowed with made manifest mostly in these inherent transient characteristics of the human person. This is made prominent when the need calls for the merger between language and culture of a given society, which consists of whatever one has to know and do in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members.

When the issue of generation comes into play, the question of history appears inevitable, and history as such would always stand as a pact between the ancient, the living and the people yet unborn. Studies have shown that there is no society without a language and a culture, whereby language performs the function of cultural transmission from one generation to the next. Whenever we call our attention to the issues of language and culture, that in essence, implies the call for the knowledge of the history, values, social organization and in its entirety, the totality of the people's world-view or what the German's call *Weltanschauung*. The Igbo often regard it as Igbo world view Chinagorom: (2015:16-18). Language stands as a carrier of culture, a vehicle to the transmission of the ways of life of a people in a given society. As such, the cyclic nature of language and culture are recurrently re-enacted in every speech community or a society as the case may be.

Framework of the Study

Every attempt at realizing a befitting scholarly work calls for a suitable framework. Hence, this work is anchored on Igbo language and culture over the generations. The nature of this discourse therefore toes an interdisciplinary path with a view to arriving at the echelon of the status of Igbo in the domains of historical linguistic and cultural phenomena. This, therefore, favours a multidisciplinary approach which is intended to launch us into the realm of the consciousness of cherishing, upholding and preserving the language and culture of Igbo people.

The fruit of this scholarly exercise is geared towards a revolutionary dynamic among the Igbo to rise to the demands of the times as being drummed in the ears of the world through the issues of Globalization, Information Communication Technology (ICTs), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the current Sustainable Development Goals/Models and other initiatives. These steps are of utmost concern to us because the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis reminds us that the structure of our language with its predetermined categories must have an influence on how we perceive the world. Again, that the relationship between language and culture is that the structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world (Yule 2007:218) The multidisciplinary approach engaged in this discourse agrees with Wardhaugh (2006:228), when he asserts that every natural language not only provides its speakers with a language for communication and interaction within the speech community, but also the ability to approach every other language that they come in contact with and even provides one with an entirely adequate system for making any kind of judgment and assessment of the world as the needs arise.

How do we unify the humanity bond in an era of globalization when we tackle the affairs of the world in isolation? Indeed, the intents and purposes of such prospect are marred by a lucid contradiction and anachronistic flaws. This eventually calls for an interdisciplinary approach in treating our focus in this discourse that is; the origin and evolution of Igbo language, and culture over the generations. Obviously the unprecedented scope of applicability of Linguistics as a relatively new discipline in the terrain of scholarship which was already imbedded in the unique effort of the father of Modern Linguistics Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) must be assuring and reassuring.

In view of this, the paper would toe the path of interdisciplinary stance vis-à-vis the status of culture in the process of our benign struggle to establish the rapport between the Igbo language origin and the culture over the generations. This is part of our contribution to the drum bit of the contemporary world towards a purposeful Revolution that calls for people's emancipation and the projection of the authenticity and genuineness of Igbo people in today's world affairs.

Igbo People: The Autochthonous People

Following the signs of the times, one would be urged to agree with Onyeka (2013:1) that “the era of accounting in truth and clarity has dawned on us, shattering the history through the mirrors of preconditions and gossips”. This epoch predicted by the above author calls for a moment when people would rise up to write their own history. Thus only, the Igbo can build for themselves an ideological framework and image that are based on authentic and meaningful interpretation of their past, present and a realistic projection of the future. Again, it is in responding to this era the familiar adage that letting the people know the truth bids the country save, becomes quite interesting. When one delves into the controversies with regard to the origin of humanity, it is equally an avenue to enter into the quest of knowing who the Igbo are, where they come from and where they are today. Those popular theories about the origin of man that include: The Judeo-Christian theory, the evolutionary theory and the autochthonous theory among others are thought provoking.

Based on these, we may specifically take steps to examine those theories which have attracted the attention of both scholars and indigenous. Some of the prominent ones include the Judeo-Christian, the evolution and the Semito-Hellenistic, the Northern Common Centre theory, the autochthonous theory and the modified Northern Common Centre/Modified autochthonous theory (Chinagorom 2010:184-185).

The Judeo-Christian theory is accepted in academic arena as man’s effort to embrace the Biblical account of creation that runs through the books of the Old and New Testaments, which highlight God’s creation of the first parents till the time of Redemption in Jesus Christ the incarnate Son of God. The theory has been adopted in the Jewish world and the Christendom (Laux, 1989) The evolutionary theory which was made popular by Charles Darwin in his *Origin of the Species* (1859) holds that humans are the product of chance, evolving through natural force until by chance the *Homo sapiens* emerged from the “ape” class.

The autochthonous theory holds that humans sprout from the earth hence there is the tendency to suggest that where people found themselves they can go on to claim that they are the progenitors of their descendants.

This theory is found to be difficult to cherish due to fluctuating views of every race seemingly claiming to have sprouted from where they live (in Igbo referred to as *mfunala/mpunala*). This theory is neglected by scholars who view such stand as a lean way to avoid in-depth investigation and a portrayal of short-sighted memory that has led people to lose their genealogy.

Another widely discussed theory is the Negro theory which focuses on the view that the first human parents have lived in the African land hence, Africa is viewed as the cradle of all humanity. It was, as time passed and humans developed to survive outside Africa through migration that today humanity has filled all the earth. Specifying on the theories that have been applied to the Igbo, we come to the situation where varied thoughts are in vogue due mainly to when documentation came after a long years of oral history which according to Nwaozuzu (1994:2-6) puzzle many scholars in such a way that, today, the great migrations of antiquity were not recorded and oral traditions are to be totally reliable.

Our consideration of those theories that form part of the Igbo Studies gives us the substratum to arriving at the appraising stance. The Hellenistic theory is one of the earliest appellations on Igbo origin which appeared in Oludah Equunno (1789), as an account basing on ethnographic and cultural grounds to align with the thesis of Jewish origin of the Igbo (Ogbukagu 2001). This theory has been debunked by scholars because it lacks merits and facts, for the fact that mere cultural coincidence cannot be a sufficient reason for this school of thought. This allusion has been seen as oriental mirage (Afigbo 1981).

The Semitic theory of Igbo origin that presents a Semitic hypothesis is somehow closer to the Hellenistic theory but directs attention to Egypt as to where the Igbo migrated from (Eluwa 2009) with reference to *the Adana Iduu*. This school of thought appeared confused with the use of the term “Egypt” and the present day Egypt and the ancient reference to Egypt like in the Bible.

The Northern Common Centre theory propagated by Onwuejeogwu (1981, 1987) and others traced the evolutionary trends in the development of Igbo people and their civilization till they came to be where they are

today (Southern Nigeria). This theory could be viewed as being fairly honest to migration grill that is approaching through the northern axis, but seems to miss the mark by appearing short-sighted and hanging on the idea of Egypt as a location instead of what the name stood for in ancient times.

The autochthonous theory already mentioned, has its place among scholars searching for the real origin of the Igbo. The proponents claim that Igbo people did not come from anywhere rather they sprouted from the earth (*mpunala*) (Kalu, 1999: Isichei, 1976). However, this hypothesis is a sign that the Igbo people have lived so long in the area and thus have lost historical evidence of migration and settlement (Afigbo 1981: Chinagorom 2010a, Acholonu-Olumba, 2009, Ukaegbu 2005). However, our attention in this paper is an appraising stand that holds an idea propelled by an in-depth research based on primary and secondary sources supplied by history, linguistics factors and archaeological evidence. This modification comes along with it a refrained view on the already mentioned Northern Common Centre theory. Hence, Chinagorom (2010a: 181-185) is a modified stand on the puzzles of Igbo Origin, and migration. Synthesizing the position of Hatch (1967:62) Shaw (1967), Hartle(1967) Westermann (1927), Greenberg (1963), Afigbo (1981, Emenanjo (2001), Ohiri-Aruche (2004-2006), Osuagwu (2003), Ekwuru (2009) Acholonu-Olumba (2009), Uzukwu (2009) Ukaegbu (2005) Onwujeogwu(1987) affirm that since there are issues in contemporary studies that admitted that Africa is the cradle of man's existence-from the *Homo Sapiens* to the Phylogenetic separation of other beings several millennia ago (Kottack 2004:158), therefore any search on the origin of Igbo people ought not to be sought outside the confines of Africa.

The available archaeological facts excavated in the areas along latitude of Asselar and Khartoun, on the Northern fringe of the Savanna which are occupied today by countries such as Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Burundi and most of the East and Central African nations, substantiate the fact that, the wave of migration intensified by the droughts of the desert encroachment, pushed the Igbo as a remnant of the autochthonous people by the same name "*Ndigboo*", that is the "Paleo Igbo" the Etheopus (Black Race) Agyptos (Brown Skin), and Sudanic people (Black race) into the forest zones of Africa. This took them through the Northern confluence

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and then arriving first around *the Eluugwu* (Afigbo 1981), which is today referred as the Northern Igbo, the need for expansion carried them towards the low lands, *ukwuani* (Emenanjo, 2001:6).

Igbo Language: Origin and Evolution

There is no doubt that the *homo sapiens* (the rational being) is equally the same *homo loquens* (the speaking being), hence language arose with the rational being deducing that language is as old as humanity. Language is also seen as an essence of man, and a defining feature of human behaviour (Crystal 2006: 194). From our establishing the autochthonous dynamics of Igbo people, it is pertinent that we delve into the origin and evolution of the Igbo language. According to Nwadike (2008:1)

Before the advent of Christian Missions and contact with Western civilization through whose influence and efforts Igbo language was reduced into writing, Igbo language was an unwritten one. Like the language, the rich corpus of Igbo literature – folktales, myths, legends, anecdotes, riddles, drama, songs and poems were orally transmitted from generation to generation, from parent to child. Because the language, the literature and the culture of the people were one and the same, no institution was set apart for teaching them to the young and the strangers

Drawing from the place of language in human existence and development, it would be appropriate to cherish the view of Afigbo (1981:72) as he predicts that the larger problem of the origin of the Igbo-speaking peoples and how they came to occupy that portion of Southern Nigeria where they are found is an issue that we cannot hope to reach definite conclusions until more evidence is thrown up by linguistic and archaeological research.

When we undertake the task of journeying along the path of origin and evolution of the Igbo language, our attention would be drawn to both the spoken aspect and written aspect that makeup a language as a living organism (Chinagorom 2010b:1). Ohiri-Aniche (2004, 2006) basing on linguistic evidence, affirms that the Igbo language shares a common Negro African ancestry with some other Nigerian language groups. She holds that the term “Ndiigbo” which with both “ndi” and “Igbo” can be traced to old Benue-Congo (former Kwa) roots, and that a substantial amount of

similarity of basic vocabulary across Igbo and some other languages of (New) Benue Congo sub-family, posts a common genetic relationship across these West and Southern African languages. In her opinion, the Igbo language has existed since 6000 years ago and has remained one of the best ways to identify Igbo people.

Acholonu-Olumba (2009) claims that the Igbo are older than the Biblical report on the creation story of Adam. Thus, the Igbo story is not just a mere story. It is the story of the Black Race all over the continent. For them, Igbo simply means the ancient, the first people, the Aborigines (Ndi Gboo). Therefore, based on linguistic and archaeological proofs, she maintains that the first inhabitants of the earth were black and the oldest of them were found in Africa, and they are Igbo people (pp 1-13).

Between 1911 to 1927, Westermann (1927) used linguistic classifications to establish that Igbo language is classified under the Sudanic languages which he codified under Kwa language families. This was ratified by Greenberg (1963), stating that there are similarities between the Igbo language and Yoruba, Ijo, Edo, Nupe, Idoma, and predicted their dispersion about 6000 and 5000 years ago. Although Westermann (1927) seems to make a blanket classification mobbing them under what he referred to as Bantu- Language family, instead of making issues aright of Bantu class of languages being part of the Proto-Igbo.

Taking cognizance of the accounts on the Igbo language from the sources available to us, one would state that both the oral accounts of the language and the written materials starting from the existence of Nsibidi to the standard written form of the contemporary Igbo- *Igbo Izugbe*, there is a maximal graduation. Nsibidi as a special form of writing existed among the Igbo and their neighbouring groups such as Ibibio, Annang, and Efiks. This form of writing described as formalized pictographs like Sumerian cuneiform.

Nsibidi as a form of documentation medium was popular among secret cults in the primordial age of the Igbo. It died a natural death probably because of its limited use and bulky nature (Emenajo, 1996). It was not until 1904 that its existence was learnt by a European by name T.O. Maxwell, the then Acting District Commissioner in Calabar. However, due

to its sensitive nature and highly self-revealing, the attention of Macgregor Laird was drawn to it and that motivated him to take the available material to London for publication in 1906.

Nwadike (2008) goes on to make an exposition of how the Igbo language in a kind of written form emanated from the plantations of West Indies to the Forestlands of West Africa (1766-1777). This is to the credit of G.C.A Oldenorp, a German who made contact with the ex-Igbo slaves and published in 1777 a book titled *Geschichte der Mission EvangelischemBruder auf den Carabischem*. Here, mention must be made of Oluadah Equiano and his book *The Astonishing Adventures of Oluadah Equiano or GustavusNassa, The African* written by himself – a classic bestseller since 1789. The efforts of the ex-slaves that eventually settled in Sierra Leone and Liberia were institutionalized in the works of Mrs. Hannah Kilham with the title *Specimens of African Languages spoken in Sierra Leone* in 1828 where the Isuama Igbo was prominent.

The arrival of the missionaries along the Niger in 1832 beginning with MacGregor Laird (1832-1834), to the contributions of J.E Schon, S.W Koele, Lepsius, William Baikie, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, and Ganot gave impetus for a new inroad into the development of Igbo language; hence their efforts were categorized under early collections. The name of Lepsius rings bell when we recall the famous Lepsius Orthography (1854) that gave material for the letters of alphabet of most of the African languages including Igbo that was used for publications then. The Igbo *Primer* and the development of world list and other works by early missionaries gave impetus with regard to the development of Igbo language.

Mention must be made here of the publications of the *Katechism Igbo* by Fr. Lejuene (1901), which was an official document that was written for the Igbo Catholics at Onitsha. The translation of the bible into Igbo by Archdeacon Denis (1906) brought in an effort to bring in a synergy among the multi-dialectal groupings of the Igbo, hence, the name *Union Igbo Bible*. Significantly, the International Institute of African Languages and Culture (IILAC,1927) published a work with the title *Practical Orthography of African Languages* which gave birth to *Omenuko*, the first novel (*Iduuazi*) by an Igbo man Pita Nwana in (1933), this was the product of a competition that was held to put into practice the Orthography of that

Institute, whereby Nwana took the first position. After the publication, the arena was open for publications. However, there is a noted gap that existed between 1935 and 1974 when the first written drama in Igbo by Chukwuezi with the title Udo *kaMma*. As a matter of fact, this gap cannot but become worrisome.

Ward (1941), which was the product of a long period of investigative scholarship by Caroline Ida Ward (1920s-1940s), under the supervision of R. Adams, the British Administrator, in the then Eastern Region, also gave Igbo language a new phase. Hence, the effort introduced the age of Central Igbo with an orthography popularly known as Ida Ward Orthography. This ushered in a background for standardization race in Igbo Language. Although the effort did not receive applause from the Anglicans (C.M.S), this was not as a result of professional deficiency since she was an acclaimed phonetician but because the Anglicans claimed that they have gone far in the use of the then Lepsius Orthography. The Roman Catholics and the Methodists accepted it. However, this division did not go well with the history of Igbo Language development because it introduced the orthography controversy in the Igbo Language that led to a setback as regards Igbo Language development.

The efforts of Fredrick Ogbalu with the formation of the Society for the Promotion of Igbo Language and Culture (SPILC, 1949), to ameliorate the crisis led to the fabrication of an *ad hoc* compromise orthography, which did not go well also but included 'or' in order to pacify the problematic representation of *o* sound (phoneme) in Igbo Language. Thus, this input gave rise to the phenomenon of putting in Igbo names that would have ended in *or*, for example *Okafor* instead of *Okafo*, and *Ofor* instead of *Ofo*. The problem continued while Igbo Language continued to witness alarming setback until 1961 when the government of Eastern Nigeria intervened and called a meeting at Enugu, headed by, Dr. S.E. Onwu. That intervention eventually gave rise to Onwu Orthography. This committee resolved, back with authority of the government to adopt the content of that orthography committee. They made it mandatory for all levels of study of Igbo Language and this ushered in the period of standard Igbo.

The letters of the alphabet with the total number of 36 phonemes contained 8 vowels, 26 consonants among them 9 diagraphic sounds. These letters of alphabet continued to receive attention though the Nigeria-Biafra war (1967-1970) obstructed the much needed attention that would have been paid to the development of Igbo Language. It was regarded as a dry age of Igbo Language development; this was because everybody was committed to the war of defence/survival, the final arrangement of the letters of the alphabet was concluded in 1976. This now, almost dictates the current synchronic parlance of the Igbo language, with multidialectal status.

Looking at this journey so far, the Igbo language could be said to be a Proto-language which has the substratum of giving a better background for linguistic studies and favourable approach to language acquisition. Although the language may appear complicated for some people, the structures and composition of the language have a lot to offer with regard to linguistic studies (Nwachukwu 2006: 51-65).

Igbo Culture at a Glance

When we take up the issue of unifying bond among any given people, the question of culture cannot be looked at as secondary. Chinagorom (2015:4) states that there are three major factors that determine who the Igbo are: the linguistics factor, the cultural factor and the geographical factor. Culture indeed, is the way of life of a people, their tradition and behaviour in a broad sense, including their ideas, arts and artefacts. It is their social heritage, which every individual among the given society acquires from the group. Culture represents a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols by a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which humans communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about an attitude towards life (Okere, 2005:28). When culture is properly assimilated, it takes the position of humanizing a people, who through collective efforts to preserve human life pacify the struggle for authentic existence, secure a productive organization of society, develop the spiritual and material capabilities of man and minimize abuses among peoples.

The term culture is derived from the Latin verb *culture*, meaning to cultivate, hence culture is cultivated, nurtured and lived. This is why culture cannot be static rather it is dynamic, open to receptivity. Culture must be transmitted from one generation to the next. It is by transmitting culture that culture is perpetuated. Igbo culture has been affected by the contacts with the Europeans and with the Christian missionaries. The fact that man is a social being implies that communication and interaction would always be recurrent phenomena. Since there have been culture contact, the questions of what is original to Igbo culture and what is alien and what has been a mixture of the Igbo culture and what has come from elsewhere become pertinent. However, the question of cultural assimilation is often tested when there are external challenges to the original owners of the culture. Thus, the Igbo culture has been challenged by the recurrent developments in the world today. Igbo culture with its material and immaterial features must be handled with care for the sake of preserving the inherent values of Igbo culture. The cultural values of Igbo people are worthwhile and make the agent of cultural traits to undertake the proper processes by not allowing them to go into extinction.

Earlier the Better, before it is too late

The evolutionary dynamics inherent in the human person makes it pertinent that there is constancy and stability with regard to what are ours and what we hold and cherish that could always undertake checks and balances. There is no way one can say that the Igbo language and culture have not been affected. Igbo people have been part and parcel of the European colonization that saw the partitioning of Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1884/85. The scramble for Africa brought the Africans under the misfortune of the attitude of superiority of the Europeans towards the indigenous peoples of Africa, their language, their culture and everything about their lives. This embarrassing situation brought the Igbo to almost see themselves as not fully humans and was mentally subjugated to continue to toddle at the lowest rungs of the evolutionary ladder. Igbo people were regarded as backward, barbaric, primitive, savage and their language was qualified as incoherent. But then the question is *Onye a juru aju o na-aju onwe ya?*

Indeed, it is high time the Igbo people woke up from the mentality of the colonized and actualize their potentialities. They should understand that civilizations come and go. The universal idea of the pre-historic man reveals that his days were characterized by oralness as preceding the writtenness but in all circumstances, humans have sought ways and means to express the precious gift of language, which distinguishes him from other animals. Nevertheless, the written form of language stands to concretize the spoken form. This gives rise to a Latin adage, *Quod scribusest* – meaning what is written is written.

Nevertheless, among the peoples of the world, there is something very common among their age of enlightenment that is the period of literary development enraptured in the development of writing systems which boosted the act of recording and documentation. Clement (1972 :41) observes that the Egyptians, after efforts at epochal development, took the next step in the invention of writing; they made a separate drawing, not for each word; not even for separate syllabus but for each sound or letter. By this means, the first alphabet was invented at some point before the year 3000 BC.

On the development of writing systems, it is on record that the great literary pieces such as Homer's *Illiad* and *Odyssey* which were originally composed orally, were first committed to writing about 700 BC. The Renaissance stood significant in western civilization because the development and advancement in learning that were spearheaded by scholars of great repute who were able to utilize written words, manuscripts of classical words of Greek and Latin. Famous among these men of letters were Dante, (1265-1321), Petrarch (1304- 1374) Boccaccio (1313-1375), who were the first Italian authors to write in their native language.

In England, the name of John Wycliffe (1320-1384) remains memorable, as he was instrumental in giving his country the first English translation of the whole Bible, while Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400) wrote the magnificent *Canterbury Tales*. These efforts prepared the background for the introduction of printing by John Guttenberg of Mainz Germany (1450) and William Caxton of West ministry (1476). The famous book, *Morte d' Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory (1430-1481), the father of English

prose, was printed by Caxton. No doubt most of the other subsequent development that came to the world through the European civilization such as progress in science and technology, the industrial revolution and the improvement of the means of communication were really the fruits of the Renaissance (re-birth).

This is the time to rise up to the challenges and preserve the Igbo language and culture. To retrieve what is retrievable in the past experience and face the challenges of the time, the elite should set the pace to take up the stands of people like Peter the Great of Russia, Mahatma Gandhi of India and the American Liberationists like Patrick Henry who in the face of the threat of the oppressive government of the colonizers makes popular the statement in 1775 “Give me freedom or give me death”. This is a time to search ways of reaching a younger generation who ought not to forget their heritage as Africans, but move forward into the globalizing world of the 21st Century. It can also address the Igbo (African) Diaspora, who had no opportunity of listening to grandma’s stories in a more distant memory.

Conclusion

Scholars of the Igbo language would always be worried when some people rise up the discussion about the extinction of the Igbo language. Whether it comes from the UNESCO, or the angels who fell from their heavenly citadel, or from those who want to blackmail Igbo people, our reaction to this is that instead of discussing the extinction of the Igbo language, we should think about the indirect ways our oppressors are working hard to destabilize the Igbo world. It is on record that the Igbo have a strategic role to play in African emancipation as an autochthonous people of the original Negro stock that witnessed the balkanization of the Westerners and the incessant use of charlatans and surrogates nurtured by those who are working for their foreign powers that are perennially oppressing the Igbo.

It is observed that some patriotic individuals in Igbo society have decided to be bridge menders that have led us to have risen to the challenges of safeguarding the Igbo language and Culture. We suggest that students and scholars of the Igbo should harness the fruit of all the efforts made in Igbo Studies to date and see other groups like the Otu Suwakwa

Igbo, the Odenigbo Annual Lecture Series (a harvest of high intellectual endeavours that have been delivered only in Igbo language) and the Igbo Studies Association (ISA) and the whole Departments in tertiary institutions that offer courses in Igbo and every other body that promotes the Igbo culture to be on deck to preserve what ought to be preserve. Parents should never allow their children to become deficient and incapacitated by aligning with the today's seemingly attractive things of the West including their languages and culture. Those who are privileged and are economically blessed should use their good position in the society to help the contemporary Igbo for a brighter future.

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