

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY: A CASE OF IGBO LANGUAGE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Language is the most important information and communication characteristics of all the human beings. Language is power as well as a great instrument for cultural preservation. The world community is made up of many languages and each of these languages is being used to identify one speech community or race. Unfortunately, it has been observed that Igbo language is fast deteriorating as a means of communication among the Igbo. The Igbo have embraced foreign languages in place of their mother tongue (Igbo language). This paper is therefore aimed at highlighting the importance of Igbo language as a major form of Igbo identity. This study will immensely benefit students, researchers and Igbo society in general. 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: Language, Identity, Culture, Communication, Speech Communication

Introduction

Language is the most important information and communication characteristics of all human beings. Language is power as well as great weapon for cultural preservation. Only humans have spoken and written languages, and language is the key note of culture because without it, culture does not exist. It is the medium of language that conveys the socio-political, economic and religious thoughts from individual to individual, and from generation to generation. 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. In several societies of the world, political stability and projecting power beyond boundaries have been influenced and strengthened by the unity of language and culture. A clear instance is the language of the Jews (Hebrew), which has been the secret and root of the existence of the

Israelites, their power and influence at home and abroad. In Diaspora, a Jew remains a Jew, by the unity of language and culture which formed their identity. The Igbo can achieve same if they take their language seriously.

The Concept of Language

Language is power. Language is a weapon for cultural preservation. Only humans have spoken and written languages. Other animals can communicate through sounds, gestures, touch and smell, but the meanings of these signals are fixed, and their use is limited to the immediate environment and situation. Language on the other hand, does not consist of fixed signals. It consists of learned symbols or codes that represent something else. Gestures, facial expressions, drawings and numbers are symbols. Yet, the most useful and flexible symbols remain written or spoken words. These words express cultural values and norms. These words are power packs in decisions, policy, resolution and action. These words can be combined according to grammatical rules to express need, fear, vision, mission and security (Aja Akpuru-Aja, 2008:2)

Language is an important factor in human life. Bloch and Trager, describe language as "a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a group co-operates". Expanding the above citation, one can further say, that language is a system of structured arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which human beings make meaning and communicate with one another in a given community. Language is a system of rules in which sound, structure and meaning are integrated for communication.

Adebite (1992) as quoted in Udeze (2002: 114) sees language as "A human phenomenon that has form which can be described in terms of the units of sounds (Phonemes), words (morphemes), phrases, sentences and paragraphs... 'form' refers to the means by which sounds are connected with meaning in language".

Language has a context of meaning and shared experience within which it operates. It also has a context of situation because communication depends upon elements of shared experience between the parties communicating. The New Encyclopedia Britannica defines language as an arbitrary system of vocal symbols by means of which human kind as members of social group and participants in culture interact and communicate". The above stresses that language is a phenomenon that is produced by man's vocal system for communications.

Hornby (1999) defines language as "the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular country". Emenanjo (1996: 12) made an essential and more embracing definition of language.

N'ihì na mmadu bu anumanu osuu na anumanu okwuu, o ziputara n'uzo dabaziri amaa na okwu putara asusu n'asusu ndi uwa bukwa okwu ahu gosiri ahu anumanu a na-akpo ire... ma o bu onu, ma o bu olu (Igbo). Ihe ire, onu na olu na-eziputa n'ebe o di ukwu, dikwa ebube, ma e chemie ya, bu na asusu bi ihe e ji ire, onu na olu asu.

Na mbu na mbu, asusu bu ihe a na-asu asu. A na-edekari asusu mana odide asusu bu obia ebe asusu ya bu nwadiala.

The key message in the above citation says that:

Language, in the Igbo denotation and connotation, basically means 'The spoken' (asusu), even when it is written. Language is more of the word in speech that points physically to "ire" (tongue), 'onu' (mouth) and 'olu' (voice). These are biological elements which when used in Igbo, simply equate to language in the general realm of expression and understanding. Language is written, but writing of language is important, while speaking of language is indigenous.

Spoken language is learned as early as during the time of breastfeeding, but written language is learnt in the school. Because language is basically spoken, most Igbo know how to speak the language, without knowing how to write it.

According to Obinna (2002: 124)

The Igbo language qualifies as any other in the world to express fully and wholly all concepts, precepts, phenomena and value systems embedded in the natural environment, philosophical, and socio-cultural existential localization. It is a living, growing and expanding medium of communication which is capable of doing what any other one does.

All people and races have language and that is the vehicle that carries their various visions and world views along. Igbo language is one of the numerous languages spoken all over the world today.

The Igbo and Igbo Language: A Brief

The Igbo are the speakers of Igbo language. They today occupy the south eastern region of Nigeria, which comprises the state of Imo, Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, parts of Rivers, Delta and Cross River States. The above mentioned areas are where the Igbo are predominantly found, but they can be found even in their large numbers in all parts of the world.

Obinna, (2003: 124) asserts:

The Igbo race, as dynamic and expansive as they are, should have made a greater and better advantage of their "Ubiquitous" disposition. Where is it you go to without seeing the Igbo, not just being present but well settled and established and institutionalized? As a highly ingenious people, the Igbo love exploration and believe that Igbo land is too small to enable them actualize their full potentials. This is why they are found all over the country, indeed all

over the world, so much so that it has been said, if men live in the moon, the Igbo are there...

Anozie (2003: 19) explains,

The most recent census of (2001/2002) placed the population of the Igbo to about 16 million. The Igbo are usually dark in complexion, stoutly built with thick lips. The Igbo are usually tall and they speak Igbo language. Industry is one of their characteristics. They exhibit love and hospitality for visitors. The Igbo believe in being their brothers' keeper, and quickly respond to the cries of their brothers.

One believes that the Igbo perform outstandingly in any of their chosen career. Apart from trading, farming and other field of endeavour, another remarkable characteristics of the Igbo is academic pursuit.

Mode of dressing is another distinctive feature of the Igbo. Men normally put on their jumper, while women put on two pieces of wrapper, blouse and head tie.

Igbo language, according to Greenberg (1966), as quoted in Ume et al, (1989) "belongs to "Kwa" group of the Niger Khordafian language. The importance of Igbo language to the Igbo cannot be over emphasized. Igbo language is the symbol of identity and a medium of communication. Most of the cherished norms and behaviours are preserved in the language among other uses. G.C.A. Olderndorp started the learning of Igbo language in 1766, at West Indies.

Schon, produced the first Igbo orthography in 1852, while the current Igbo orthography, which is currently in use, was produced by Onwu, in 1961 (Anozie, 2003:63)

Relationship between Igbo Language and Igbo Culture

The Igbo people are culturally homogenous. 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 ages to ages. 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) asserts: "in a mono-cultural and monolingual community, language devices 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 trait. 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 citation 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 non 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. 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, it 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.

The Importance of 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 lifestyles in its midst. This plural society is characterized 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 language).

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.

According to Obinna (2002: 125)

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 (that is the Igbo), 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,

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. In contest, when an animal dies, everything it has learned from experience perishes with it. 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 citation 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. Talking about the importance of language as a form of identity, Emeanjo (1996: 12) asserts:

Ewepu asusu mmadu na-asu, ibe ya ana-aghota ya ma na-amatakwu ya nke oma, o dighi nnukwu ihe ndiiche di n'etiti mmadu na anumanu ndi ozo... N'ezie, asusu bu otu njirimara kachasi ibe ya e ji ama mba, e ji eke ndi mmadu ji ekerisi uwa na ndi uwa niile.

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 recognized, 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 that, "people are identified by the language they speak, and so people who lose their language are consequently lost and lost forever.

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 everywhere the Jews are found. It is so much so that Jews are found everywhere that matter in world politics such as in the USA, Russia, Pakistan, 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)

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 event 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 a bu m nwanne gi, ekwela ihe ojoo mee m. Ihe o bula mere m n'ebe a, obara m no gi n'isi. Meaning, my kinsman, 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 passenger 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 kinsman 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 regard their language?

The Place of Igbo Language in the Minds of the Present Igbo

It has been observed that Igbo language is fast deteriorating. In our schools, markets, public places, business sectors and most annoying at homes, no one seems to speak Igbo language anymore, oblivious of the fact that Igbo language is one of the major forms of Igbo identity. In the words of Obinna (2002: 30)

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 vis-à-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 writer shares the same views with the above citation, because majority of the Igbo are generally not (good) speakers of Igbo language, neither are they (good) writers of Igbo, 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 all times 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.

Akponye (2007: 37) reveals

The United Nations Organization (UNO) has conducted a research on the languages being spoken around the world today in order to determine their longevity. Shockingly, Igbo is listed as one of the languages that will become extinct in the next twenty five years because it is losing vibrancy and dynamism.

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 driving force behind this paper is to establish in practical terms that Igbo language is the major form of Igbo identity. There is also a remarkable synergy between language and culture, and other minor forms of Igbo identity, like clothing, food, names, etc are embedded in Igbo culture, but can only be expressed through Igbo language. Culture is language defined, because language is expressive of culture. The strength of a society is anchored on the unity of language.

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.

In the words of Governor Orji Uzor Kalu (2007:38)

Politically, Igbo land is in disarray. Of course, individually, Igbo men and women have attained political heights but have inflicted on themselves with a terrifying spectre of collapse of the elite consensus. With rupturing of a coherent language and culture, Igbo identity, social consciousness and political struggles would most likely be elusive until the Igbo rediscover that there is power and strength in the unity of language and culture. It is indeed the absence of language and cultural unity that has unwittingly robbed the Igbo people ideological and strategic intellectual substance in both Igbo pattern of politics and national politics too.

However, if the recommendations in this paper are duly considered and applied, Igbo language will stand tall among the various languages of the world. In view of the fact that the Igbo cannot exist without Igbo language, (because Igbo language identifies them) what can be done to rescue Igbo language from total obliteration?

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 unimaginably 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.

- 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 throughout his lifetime.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- Those at the head of government in Igbo speaking states should support the growth of Igbo language by offering scholarship for 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Media houses situated in Igbo speaking areas 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. News reporters as well as other journalists of Igbo origin should know how to speak and write Igbo language.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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 like 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 (xso) who will neither be counted as a bird nor rodent.

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