



## Language Use Among Igbo Cultural Associations in Lagos, State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines language use among Igbo cultural associations in Lagos state, with a view to identifying their language ideologies, language practices in their meetings and their language management strategies in their meetings. Spolsky's Family language Policy was used as guide. Out of the entire Igbo cultural associations in Lagos State, 25 Igbo cultural associations were purposively sampled. Information was collected through questionnaire and interviews. The result shows that members of Igbo cultural associations in Lagos State had a positive inclination towards Igbo as a language and as a people. In terms of language practice, they used only Igbo in their prayers, breaking of cola nut, and asking for assistance from the association. But, they used only English in writing of minutes, bye-laws, and meeting circular. However, they used code-switching involving Igbo and English during the session of matters arising. It was also found that, although they evinced an implicit language policy, their policy on language in their association was bilingual, involving only Igbo and English, and precluding any other native non-Igbo language. On the whole, although Igbo cultural associations in Lagos State had positive attitude and beliefs toward Igbo, they did not fully reflect it in actual practice during their meetings. It is recommended that Igbo cultural associations, irrespective of setting should endeavor to include the culture of writing all their documents in Igbo, as a deliberate means of safe-guarding the language. Additionally, they should have a monolingual policy in favor of Igbo in their meetings to ensure the vitality of the language in a wholly Igbo cultural setting.

## INTRODUCTION

Global migration patterns have ensured that, in contemporary times, cities and urban centers have become a mesh of different ethno linguistic groups. In Nigeria specifically, many cities are inhabited by different ethnic groups from other states, apart from those from the same state. One of the cities in Nigeria that has attracted most people from different ethnic divides is Lagos, the former capital of the federation. It is not an exaggeration to say that every ethnic group in Nigeria has representatives in Lagos State. The reason for this concentration of ethnic groups in Lagos is not far-fetched; in the days when Lagos was the capital of Nigeria, it was the centre of government and power, coupled with the fact that it was the epicenter of commerce.

One of the ethnic groups that has established its presence in Lagos, both in preindependence and post-independent Nigeria is the Igbo. Going by population, the Igbo is the third largest group the country, aside Hausa and Yoruba. In Lagos State, the Igbo are the largest migrant ethnic group and are nearly as dominant as the host community, Yoruba. All the five core Igbo States in the South-East namely Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi,

Enugu and Imo are well represented in Lagos, in addition to Igbo from the fringe states of Delta and Rivers States. The reason for their large population is connected to their natural predilection as traders. In Nigeria, Igbo are in control of trade and commerce and in Lagos, they are the major importers and manufacturers of goods. The attraction of Igbo to Lagos is partly due to the port, which they use to berth their imported goods from countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas. Precisely, all the major markets in Lagos such as Idumota, Alaba International, Trade Fair, are controlled by Igbo; lesser markets such as Ladipo, Tejuosho, Aspanda, Computer village Ikeja, etc are also in their control, including all the small relief markets that dot every council in the city. They deal in all sorts of trades including spare parts, computer wares, drugs, groceries, household items, building materials, printing accessories and paper, electrical, chemicals, auto industry and transport business, books and educational materials, sports equipments, fashion, etc. They also have a strong presence in the artisan world in such areas as mechanics, tailors, brick-layers, plumbers, carpenters or furniture makers, barbers, electricians, shoe makers, etc.

One of the outcomes of internal migration of the sort described here is the formation of cultural associations among groups in Lagos State. The Igbo in Lagos have umbrella associations, whose members include all Igbo irrespective of state of origin, and also state associations irrespective of clan, in addition to clannish cultural associations. The fact is that, there are as many Igbo associations in Lagos as there are clans in Igbo land. In Abia State, there are such cultural groups as Ngwa, Umuahia, Arochukwu, Ibeku, Uturu, Item, Abiriba, Ohafia groups, for example. Anambra has groups such as Onitsha, Awka, Ogidi, Alor, Igbo-Ukwu, Ihiala, ObodoUkwu, etc.

Enugu has groups such as Nsukka, Ezeagu, Bnugwu-Ezike, Obolo-Afo, Augwu, Ebonyi has groups such as Ubura, Edda, Abakaliki, etc. Imo has groups such as Owerri, Orlu, Okigue, Arondizuogu, Akokwa, Mbano, Mbaise,

Mbaitolu, Nkwere, etc. Each of these groups constitute sub groups that equally have cultural associations in Lagos. The reason for these multiple cultural associations is a matter of interest; due to the fact that they are migrants, they feel the need to associate and to fight for their social and political interests and welfare, and more importantly maintain their cultural heritage in a foreign setting. The mantra in these associations is usually to help one another as brethren; hence, if a member is in need, they approach the association for assistance. Such needs could be house rent matters with landlords, police cases

Involving all manner of crimes, school admission issues, or employment related matters. In Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, the Umuofia clan had an association called Umuofia Development Association that waded into challenges facing their members. Apart from solving problems they also celebrated their milestones such as births, marriage, deaths, promotion, title-taking, etc.

In terms of cultural maintenance, the Igbo in Lagos are inclined towards sustaining their culture despite their locale. There is a strong feeling among them to mark their ethnic identity through their culture. Hence, in these cultural associations, such customs as new yam festival, birth, death, breaking of cola nut, etc. are celebrated. A significant part of these cultural association's activities is language, the Igbo language as a vehicle of cultural transmission. Against the background of multi-ethnic Lagos where the default language for inter-ethnic interaction is the neutral English, with all its utilitarian status and adverse effect on indigenous languages, it is deemed important to investigate the place of language in the activities of Igbo cultural associations in Lagos. As a group comprising of people of varying academic qualifications (Educated, semi-literates, and illiterates), and people with various social and cultural influences, it is important to evaluate the means through which they interact, given that, they are cultural associations.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Migrants in a multilingual setting are usually constrained by socio-economic circumstances to abandon their indigenous languages and adopt the language of the host community or language of wider communication in the area. This has given rise to bilingual situations where migrants use their indigenous language and the major language in their new setting. Eventually, they use more of the new language and less of their indigenous tongues.

### **The Objectives of the Study**

The overall aim of this study is to examine language use among Igbo cultural Associations in Lagos State. The specific objectives are to :

1. Examine the ideological position of Igbo cultural Associations in Lagos State regarding their language;
2. Evaluate the language practice of Igbo cultural Associations in Lagos State during their meetings; and
3. Estimate language management strategies of Igbo cultural Associations in Lagos State during their meetings.

## **Research Questions**

Based on the stated objectives above, the study poses the following questions:

1. What are the beliefs of Igbo cultural Associations in Lagos State about their language?
2. What are the practical ways Igbo cultural Associations in Lagos State use language during their meetings?
3. What are the strategies adopted by Igbo cultural Associations in Lagos State to manage their language during their meetings?

## **Scope of the Study**

The study is limited to Igbo cultural Associations in Lagos State only, and not other Igbo cultural Associations elsewhere. The study is also restricted to language use in these cultural associations and not social and political matters in these associations. Although the study is limited to language use, it is not inclusive of other language issues such as language alternation and other discourse matters.

## **The Igbo Language**

Igbo language is one of the many languages spoken in Nigeria. The major languages in Nigeria are Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Igbo belongs to the Benue - Congo language group spoken in the South-Eastern area of Nigeria. It is predominantly spoken as a first language by over 20 million people in all of Imo, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Abia states and in some parts of Delta, Rivers, Benue and Akwa Ibom states (Emenanjo, 1987:17). Emenanjo in Essien (1991:129) posits that "Igbo is spoken as a second language by many neighbors of the Igbo in the Igbophone areas and elsewhere in Nigeria (such as the SabonGaris in the Northern parts of Nigeria) where Igbo presence is significant".

Igbo is one of Nigeria's three major languages and according to Government views and comments on the Findings and Recommendations of the Political Bureau (1987), one of Nigeria's national languages or lingua Franca. In the context of Nigerian languages, Igbo is a developed language. According to Emenanjo (1985: 27) "It has a stabilized orthography, large Corpus of written texts, a standardized written form and a sophisticated and dynamic metal language". Like all modern languages, Igbo has evolved a standard written variety different from the other regional varieties. Igbo is taught as a first language in all the tiers of education in the Igbo-speaking areas from primary school through to universities. Specifically, It is taught as a first degree course and for various forms of certificates and diplomas (along with education) in a number of Colleges of Education and universities at Owerri, Awka, Agbor, Nsugbe, Eha- Amufu, Okene and Obudu. Additionally, Igbo is offered as a first degree course, second degree course and PhD course in the Universities of Nigeria Nsukka, Lagos, Ibadan, Awka and other universities.

Igbo is a tone language like many languages in Africa. Tones (also called contrastive pitch) are used to differentiate words that are written identically. For example, the same word in Igbo may have four different meanings

depending on its pitch. In tone languages, pitch is a property of words, but what is important is not absolute pitch but relative pitch. Igbo language makes use of two main tones and a neutral tone referred to as a step tone: the high tone pronounced with the tongue bent towards the roof of the mouth. The low tone produced with the tongue flat and low in the mouth and with the mouth a bit wider than for high tones. Considering the high and low tones, akwa can mean weeping (high-high tone), cloth (low-high), egg (low-high) or bridge (low-low).

Igbo language has various dialects; dialect is any non-standard variety of a language spoken by a group of people that is characterized by systematic differences from other varieties of the same language (Odo, 2006). It is projected that more than 300 dialects exist in Igbo language. There are people who believe that practically, every village has its own distinct dialect. The Igbo dialect situation has for long been seen as too vast and complex, as such defy serious systematic linguistic analysis.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In multicultural and multilingual societies, the choice of language or variety is very significant due to the fact that all languages are not appropriate for every setting. According to Romaine (2003:517). The fact that speakers select different languages or varieties for use in different situations show that not all languages/varieties are equal or regarded as equally appropriate or adequate for use in all speech events.

Romaine uses equal not to suggest that some languages are superior to others, but in the sense of status or prestige, which generally depend on use in the community. For instance, the language used by a professor in the university will definitely be different from the language they use when addressing their vulcanize, or buying fish in local market, for instance. Holmes (2008) opines that there are three social factors that affect language choice such as participants or interlocutors, setting or place, and topic of discussion, which are all summed up in the word domain' of language use. Factually, domain is popularized by the sociolinguist Joshua Fishman and is defined as an abstraction referring to a sphere of activity representing a combination of specific times, settings and role relationships (Romaine, 2003; Holmes, 1992). This implies that a typical family domain will be set in the home (place), involving members of the family (participants), and may be about a child's bed wetting behavior (topic) for instance. A typical school domain will be set in school (place), involving teachers and students (participants) and may be about exam malpractice (topic) for instance. These examples constitute typical cases where the components of a domain agree; there are atypical cases where the components of a domain do not correspond. For instance, participants may discuss a family topic in the school office and participants can also discuss school matters at home. Holmes (2008) see this exception as incongruent while the rule is congruent.

Holmes (2008: 25) avers that People may select a particular variety or code because it makes it easier to discuss a particular topic, regardless of where they are speaking. At home, people often discuss work or school, for instance,

using the language associated with those domains, rather than the language of the family domain. Holmes' view of the experience translates to the fact that domains are not sacrosanct but vulnerable to the need of participants. Consequent upon the idea of domains, several domains have been identified, including home, school, church, work, but according to Scotton-Myres (1993), in much of urban Africa, there are three major spheres of language use: home, neighborhood and work domains.

The study of immigrants' language choice is vital because it helps to show how much value they place on their heritage language, in contrast with the dominant languages around them. In the immigration context, it is the immigrants language, which is a minority, that is vulnerable to shift and eventual loss. According to Hoffman (1991: 180), "when a community does not maintain its language, but gradually adopts another one, we talk about language shift, while language maintenance refers to a situation where members of a community try to keep the language(s) they have always used". Language shift generally involves a decision to stop using one language in preference for another one, while language maintenance involves conscious efforts made by individuals or communities to preserve their native language and save it from loss (Holmes, 2008).

A number of factors are responsible for language shift or maintenance such as age, demography, marriage, value, but an outstanding and salient factor that plays a pivotal role in the survival or otherwise of immigrant languages is attitude. Ajzen (1988: 4) sees attitude as "a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution or event". The implication of this definition is that, attitude is a psychological construct, that has its roots in the mind of the individual and can be expressed through action or behavior; the action may be positive or negative, favorable or unfavorable (Gay, 2011). It follows that, in the context of language attitudes, a positive attitude towards a language translates into a positive behavior towards the language and a negative attitude towards a language translates to a negative behavior; positive behavior means that the individual uses the language they profess to approve of, while negative behavior means that the individual does not use the language they approve of. However, there are exceptions to this rule, because a positive mindset does not always lead to positive action, while a negative mindset does not always lead to negative action. This is what led Carson (2005. 32) to state that we can believe one thing, yet maintain a totally contradictory attitude. On the whole, attitude towards a language is usually reflected in use or non use, as the case may be. According to Lambert and Gardner, (1972) attitude has three components: cognition, affect and conation; the cognitive component involves the belief system of the individual about the object of the attitude. The affective component involves the emotions and feelings about the object of the attitude, and the conation component involves intentions and readiness for action towards the object of the attitude (Bohner 2001).

A vital dimension of language attitude phenomenon is that language attitudes just like attitudes themselves are not frozen but are variable, over time

(Hamers and Blanc 2000). For one reason of another, people change their attitude towards the object of the attitude, and the direction of change may be from favorable to unfavorable, or from unfavorable to favorable. However, there are conditions that can affect language attitude such as language background, proficiency, and cultural background of the individual (Hamers and Blanc 2000). Those who have a strong background in their native language may be more disposed to changing their attitude towards other languages, unlike those with weak background. Likewise, those with a high proficiency in their native language may change their attitude towards their native language, if they suddenly discover that another language is more effectual to their dreams and aspirations in life. Strong roots in the culture may necessitate resistance to other cultures and language while weak roots in a culture may be a reason for change of attitude in favor of another culture and its language. These changes are conditioned by language prestige and the prevailing socio-cultural circumstances, including aspects of ethnic and self identity (Gaw 2010).

### **Theoretical Framework-Family Language Policy (Flp)**

Curt Christiansen (2009:352) defines family language policy as "a deliberate attempt at practicing a particular language use pattern and particular literacy practices within home domains and among family members". The word "domain" popularized by the American Sociolinguist Joshua Fishman (1965) is used to describe the social context of an interaction: In the case of the family domain, the family members are apparently the main participants, the home is the setting and common topics would encompass everyday matters (Berardi-Wiltshire, 2017). It is posited that the home domain is the best place to acquire the heritage language (Rowland, 2014); therefore, in the absence of external stimulus like mother tongue education, the onus of ensuring maintenance of heritage language is on the family (Schwartz 2008). Due to its critical role in forming the child's linguistic environment (Schwartz, 2010) the family is the main domain for intergenerational transmission of heritage languages. According to Spolsky (2012:7) FLP focuses on the efforts of parents to "preserve heritage languages by modifying their children's language development". On the whole, FLP research seeks to understand why some children grow up to become either monolinguals or bilinguals and how this experience is connected to the ways in which parents promote a certain language at the expense of the other, or the way parents discourage children's use of a particular language (Curdt-Christiansen,2013).

As a result of its critical role in forming the child's linguistic environment (Schwartz, 2010), the family is considered the main domain for intergenerational transmission of heritage languages, as well as a very important domain for studying language policy. Fishman (1991:94) opines that, despite the fact the modern urban family has lost much of its socialization power, it is still "the most common and inescapable basis of mother tongue transmission, bonding, use and Stabilization ". He maintained that the most vital aspect of intergenerational language transfer is the use of the heritage

language at home because the family is critical for the maintenance of the home language (Fishman, 2000).

Schwartz (2010) suggests that there are several demographic, socio-cultural, and psychological factors that are found to be directly related to family background that could drive family language policy. They are one, family structure, particularly the role of older children in intergenerational L1 transmission. In some findings, the older children undermine the heritage language by bringing the majority language into the home, while some studies found them assisting the mother in preserving the heritage language. Two, parental education was found to affect heritage language maintenance or not. Three, the parent's acculturation to the host culture is seen as an important factor driving heritage language maintenance as the age of the migrants' arrival was found to correlate with linguistic habits and behavior.

Also cultural adaptation/identification with the host community and the country of origin are significant factors in the formation of FLP among immigrants. Finally, family cohesiveness and emotional relation points to the tendency among certain immigrants to psychologically alienate themselves from their (unpalatable) past by acquiring the host community language.

Ordinarily, language policy takes a top-down approach meaning that it stems from national or regional agencies to the citizenry, but it is bottom-top when it stems from the citizenry, such as individuals and families with each family influencing or directing language practice in its domain. However, FLP is not formed in a vacuum; it is influenced by top-down policies, such as government and community policies, educational institutional policies and also the defacto policies of the immediate environment (Kayam and Hirsch, 2013). On the whole, it is seen that the decision of parents on language choices in the family is not arbitrarily done but are contingent on a number of experiences some of which are socio-political, cultural, and historical.

### **Dimensions of FLP**

Over the years, Spolsky's (2004) model of language policy has been widely used in the treatment of FLP (Kopeliovich, 2010, Schwartz, 2008) and will be adopted here. It is a three-component model of language policy consisting of language beliefs, language practices and language management. Spolky's (2007: 1) language management framework expansively focuses on language policy and postulates that "language policy is all about choices" and that a language policy theory should aim to account for "the choices made by individual speakers on the basis of rule-governed patterns recognized by the speech communities of which they are part". It is for the purpose of achieving this end that he proposes a three component model of language policy in a speech community: the community's language practice, the ideologies that influence such practices and language management techniques in the speech community. Implemented at the family level, this model presents a vital analytical abstraction for categorizing the complex relationship and practices that develop in the course of describing language dynamics at home (Revis, 2017).

Language ideologies include the beliefs people hold about the language(s) used in their environment, which may have an influence on their attitude towards the language(s). It is widely postulant that all choices regarding the use of language in the home are bound to be influenced by parent's belief about language coupled with the elements of the linguistic ecology of which the home is a part, and this is irrespective of the particular language policy operating in the home (Berardi-Wiltshire, 2017). Consequently, the role that language ideologies play in the choices made by bilingual or multilingual families have received a great deal of attention by FLP researchers (King and Fogle, 2006; Kirsch, 2012; Ó hifearnain, 2013.). Research have identified various ideologies that operate in some families. For instance, some parents might highly estimate their heritage language and regard it as major marker of ethnic identity which is to be passed on to the next generation (King and Fogle, 2006). In contrast, some parents might undervalue their heritage language due to its non-utilitarian status and as a result deem it unnecessary to be passed on to the children or might regard it as not useful due to its social and geographical restrictions (Schupbach, 2009). Other macro and micro factors that shape parental language ideologies include parents' socio-cultural and educational background (Kirsch, 2012), parents' personal experiences (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009), official policies on minority languages (Spolsky, 2012), the media (King and Fogle, 2006) etc.

In terms of micro factors, it is evident that parents' perceptions and practices have a great deal of influence on the attitude of children towards their heritage language as well as on their bilingual development (De Houwer, 2007; King and Fogle, 2008). In his research with 1899 families in Belgium, De Houwer (2007) illustrated that children's bilingualism was determined by parents' linguistic input. In the same vein, King (2001) found that children chose Spanish alone because their parents believe that using both languages at home will inhibit their children's learning. In terms of macro factors, Luykx (2005) found that the school mounted pressure on Quechua-speaking families in Bolivia to use Spanish only. Yagmur (2009) stated that in the Netherlands, teaching of immigrant languages at primary and secondary schools between 1974 and 2004 created positive attitudes towards the use of immigrant languages in immigrant families.

According to King et al, (2008), three main categories of parental ideologies capable of influencing language practices in bilingual families are, the choice of languages for specific purposes, code-switching and language attitudes. Language practice is used to refer to people's actual and observable language behavior (Revis, 2017) or according to Spolsky (2004:5) as "the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire". Spolsky's use of the word «habitual» is powerful as it suggests the language that is consistently used among all other options available. Spolsky (2004:9) further defines language practice as "the sum of the sound, word and grammatical choices that an individual speaker makes, sometimes consciously and sometimes less consciously, that make up the conventional unmarked pattern of a variety of language". The use of the terms "conscious" and "less conscious" are

related to overt and covert disposition of parents in a bilingual situation. In other words, family language practices refer to the patterns of language choice and preference in a family. Such choices may mean that in an immigrant setting, parents may use the heritage language alone, in interacting with children, or they may use it alongside the majority language (Kayam and Hirsch, 2012). In terms of consistency, several research have shown that children practice the languages laid down by parents up to a certain point in their social development.

Spolsky and Shohamy, (2000) illustrate that when children start to socialize outside the family, they tend to bring the mainstream language home, despite their parents disposition (also Caldas and Caron-Caldas, 2002), while some children resist the language practices of their parents (Fogle, 2013; Palviainen and Boyd, 2013). A point to underscore in this consideration is that language practice is not solely driven by parents; the children sometimes play a crucial part and upset the linguistic norms in the family. Language management refers to attempts to modify the existing language practices in the speech community.

According to Spolsky (2004:11) it is "the formulation and proclamation of an explicit plan or policy usually but not necessarily written in a formal document. Specifically family language management involves deliberate efforts to influence language practices and focuses on strategies adopted by parents to boost the maintenance of favored languages and the extinction of unwanted languages. Consequently, such language management strategies may contribute to ethnic language maintenance or not, depending on parental linguistic ideology.

Among the various management techniques adopted by families in bilingual contexts, Schwartz(2010) identifies two general tendencies. The first tendency relates to efforts to control aspects of the socio-linguistic environment by cultivating ties with the heritage language community within and outside the family. The second tendency relates to efforts to control the home language environment through the establishment of rituals, customs and traditions associated with the heritage language and culture. Some of these strategies include having regular contacts with other speakers of the heritage language (Borland, 2006), frequent visits to the country of origin (Pauwels, 2005), using printed materials and media in the heritage language (Borland,2006). In some cases, language management strategies also include, system of rewards and punishment for using specific languages in the home (Schwartz, 2010).

Three types of language management have been highlighted and they are explicit management, implicit management and *Laizzez-faire* management (Revis, 2017). Explicit management is seen as overt, verbal interventions demanding the use of a particular language (Spolsky, 2009). The strategy involves parents' telling their children the specific languages to use and the languages they should not use. It is a proactive means of ensuring the maintenance of the minority language in the immigrant family. On the contrary, implicit management is not based on verbal instructions, but on activities that are amenable to the maintenance of a particular language.

Such activities include book reading, story-telling and games in the language (Tamis – Lemanda and Rodriguez 2008). Although this is a reactive means of language maintenance, in some cases it has proved effective. In her study in Israel, Kopeliovich (2009) found that a father who attempted to introduce Russian to his children through literary activities such as reading poems and books in Russian achieved more than the mother's verbal directives to the children to speak Russian. Curdt-Christiansen (2013) uses laissez-faire policies to describe the disposition of parents who did not interfere with their children's language choice resulting in the tendency of the children to prefer the mainstream language rather than their heritage language. This is a free world situation where members of the family spoke whatever language that appealed to them, with the parents exerting no pressure on the children both verbally or activity-wise. In her study with Singaporean-Chinese families, Curdt-Christiansen (2013) found that mothers did not interfere with their children's choice of language while assisting them in home work and eventually the children spoke English.

It is essential to note that, although ideology influences practice and management, there is no lineal relationship between parents' beliefs and home language practice and management. Berardi-Wiltshire (2017) posits that research in family language policies has often shown mismatches or asymmetric between beliefs about one's heritage language and home language practices (King, 2000, Kopeliovich, 2010; Schwartz, 2008). For example, minority language families usually hold positive beliefs about their languages, but such beliefs do not always translate to heritage language maintenance. In some cases, such families have been absorbed by the mainstream language(s).

## METHODOLOGY

This study used a mixed method, incorporating qualitative and quantitative approaches. Both quantitative and qualitative methods ensure an in-depth analysis of data. The major concern of quantitative method is to capture a numeric description of trends, attitude or opinions of population by studying a sample of that population. It is from the sample results that the researcher generalizes or makes claims about the population. On the contrary, qualitative methods are concerned with the subjective opinion of participants, and not numeric. It involves a set of stories, event, personal experiences e.t.c. Patton (2002:22) observes that qualitative methods touch the cultural side of each society through giving image of its attitudes and beliefs". Qualitative methods provide detailed description of situations, events, people, interaction and observed behavior.

## Research Instrument

As a result of the mixed method employed in this study, the study used two research instruments in correspondence with qualitative and quantitative method; these were interview (qualitative) and the questionnaire (quantitative). Additionally, the personal experience of the researcher as a native Igbo speaker was also used but not the researcher's judgement. It is believed that answering

these questions will help to confirm what this research seeks to investigate and will also help to clarify the issues raised.

### **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was used in this study for reasons of gathering information on the dynamics of language use in the course of meetings in Igbo cultural associations across Lagos State. Close questions were used which means that options were provided for the participants, so that they can choose freely. According to Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003:8) this type of questionnaire provides "a number of pre-defined responses; this allows the researcher to hold some control over the response given". The researcher provides the respondents with the most important suggestions in order to help them in their selection. However, since they have been given these questions to test their opinions and attitudes, the focus is on short questions due to the sensitivity of the topic.

### **Interview**

Interview is an interpersonal and face-to-face conversation. Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal (2006:75) explain that "interviews provide a method of data collection that involves presenting oral-verbal stimuli and collecting the oral-verbal response". Interview plays a substantial role as a tool in qualitative analysis and measurement since it can be a source of rich data. Interview helps the researcher to get answers to questions clearly. Interview is more appropriate to gain access to people's life, their opinions and emotions.

Consequently, the questionnaire was designed to investigate the frequency of use of Igbo among members of Igbo cultural associations. The interview was used to seek the subjective opinion of the respondents on issues that the questionnaire could not elicit an answer. Such issues include reasons behind the choice of one language instead of another and factors behind certain language behavior. The interview was included to know more about the attitudes and views of Igbo speakers towards their native language, as well as their opinions towards the use of other languages expressions. Thus, our secondary aim of using interviews is to aid the questionnaire with more explanations and suggestions.

### **Study Population**

The first step in obtaining a sample is to define the population. This means identifying characteristics which members of the universe have in common and which will identify each unit as being a member of a particular group. According to Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal (2006: 201), "the population selected or what they call the target population should be able to answer the research questions" In line with this, Hartas (2010: 67) affirms that "researchers are not interested in the size of the population, but in the characteristics of those who are chosen for the study" if the population is defined we should describe the type of sample. Thus sampling involves decisions about which people, events, behavior or social processes are selected and/or observed. Therefore a sample is a selection of a subgroup of the population we intend to study.

Martas goes on to explain that the group, which is selected, is called a representative of the sample, displaying the characteristics and attributes that are typical of the population. It is not possible to reach all the Igbo cultural associations in Lagos State, as it is assumed that all Igbo cultural groups have their own separate associations, different from others. The number of such cultural associations is therefore indeterminate, which necessitates the need to take a sample from the number for research purposes. In this study, our target population comprises Igbo who live in Lagos State and belong to their cultural associations. In order to collect a representative sample, the study targeted to use Igbo cultural associations from the main Igbo States in Nigeria which include Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. On the whole, five (5) cultural associations were selected from each Igbo State in Lagos State, making a total of twenty-five Igbo cultural associations. The number is limited to five for every state for due to time constraints and challenges posed by limited financial resources. In each cultural association, the questionnaire is administered to one person who is a member of the executive in the association.

Such a person may be the chairman, assistant chairman, secretary, assistant secretary, financial secretary, treasurer, etc. The reason why the questionnaire distribution is limited to a core member is to avoid repetition because it is believed that the core executive member has adequate knowledge of events in the association. Kothari (2004: 63) notes that once the researcher selects the sample, the next step is choosing informants or representative from the whole population.

### **Sampling Technique**

There are various sampling techniques used to select the population of a study. Mettenberg and Hand (2008) state, that sampling is the process of selecting a sample of subjects from a target population to conduct a research. There are two types of sampling: Probability, and non- probability samples. This study will make use of the non-probability sampling approach due to its benefits. Some non-probability sampling approaches include snowball sampling and purposive sampling techniques.

The approach used to select the sample was the purposive and snow-ball sampling techniques; the purposive sampling method requires that the researcher will search for the right people who qualify to provide the needed information. Unlike random sampling that is akin to a blind recruitment of participants in a study, the purposive approach is a deliberate attempt to search for participants that are apt for the research. It is more timeconsuming because the right participants may not be available or may be indisposed for the research. However, it provides more validity and reliability for the data gathered. This approach was adopted due to the need to gather information from Igbo natives in Lagos State who actually belong to their cultural associations. Snow ball sampling was also adopted whereby the researcher sought the assistance of respondents who knew how to locate Igbo from other Igbo States who belong to their cultural associations. The two sampling techniques helped to gather the actual population needed for the study.

## RESULTS

The study is founded on the observation that, there are numerous cultural associations in Lagos State, Nigeria by different ethnic groups. Among these associations are the Igbo group that are numerically dominant in Lagos. It was recognized that, the Igbo do not have a homogenous cultural association in Lagos State; rather, they have numerous units of cultural associations in relation to their dialectal areas. Thus, among the Igbo from Anambra State for instance, there are so many cultural associations from various areas of the state speaking different dialects of Igbo, all of which are mutually intelligible. Out of the innumerable number of these Igbo cultural associations, five associations in Lagos State were purposively selected from each state (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo) making a total of 25 Igbo cultural associations as research sample. This study is anchored on three objectives as follows: to examine the ideological position of Igbo cultural Associations in Lagos State regarding their language; to evaluate the language practice of Igbo cultural Associations in Lagos State during their meetings; and to estimate language management strategies of Igbo cultural Associations in Lagos State during their meetings. Based on these objectives, research questions were posed in correspondence. The study chose as guide, the Family Language Policy propounded by Spolsky O. This is essentially on account of the fact that, each cultural association is seen as a family, given their proximity and kinship ties. The study used the techniques of questionnaire and interview to elicit information from respondents from all the five states sampled. The mixed method helped to gather sufficient data and also helped to validate the data collected.

The study investigated the ideological stance of the participants with respect to their language; the questions posed in this respect are related to pride in the Igbo identity, the value of Igbo as a language, and the essence of speaking Igbo during meetings. The study also inquired about the actual language practice of the associations; that is, how each association used languages in their meetings in several role relations. Essentially, the languages involved are their native Igbo, English and the language of the host community, Yoruba. The role relations include languages used for such meeting activities such as prayers, breaking of cola nut, matters arising from previous minutes, language used in writing minutes, writing circular, writing bye laws or constitution. Others include languages used in making requests and languages used in making reports in the association. The study also investigated language management strategies of the associations, with respect to language policy, languages banned in the association, and motivation of members to speak their native Igbo.

## DISCUSSION

### Data Presentation

#### *Profile of Respondents*

The respondents to this inquiry are all members of the sampled Igbo cultural Associations. Their profile is presented below.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

		Abia(N=5)		Anambra(N=5)		Ebonyi(N=5)		Enugu(N=5)	
variable	Features	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Age Group	30-40 years	0	0	0	0	1	20	2	
	41-50 years	3	60	2	40	1	20	0	
	51 years +	2	40	3	60	3	60	3	
Sex	Total	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	
	Male	4	80	5	100	5	100	4	
	Female	1	20	0	0	0	0	1	
Occupation	Total	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	
	Trading	3	60	4	80	2	40	2	
	Working	2	40	1	20	3	60	3	
Marital Status	Total	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	
	Single	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Married	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	
Education	Total	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	
	Primary	1	20	2	40	1	20	1	
	Secondary	3	60	2	40	2	40	3	
	Tertiary	1	20	1	20	2	40	1	
	Total	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	

The table shows the age, sex, occupation, marital status, and educational attainment of the five respondents from the five Igbo States. As stated in the methodology, these respondents were pooled from the executive committee of each of the five Igbo cultural associations selected for the research. In terms of age, a majority of the respondents are from 51 years and above, followed by those between 41-50 years, and then 30 - 40 years. This is to show that, all the respondents are full adults, implying that information obtained from them is expected to be reliable. With respect to sex, a significant majority of respondents were male; aside Abia and Enugu, with one female respondent each, the rest of the states (Anambra, Ebonyi, Imo) had only male respondents. This lopsided situation is explained by the fact that, in these cultural associations, the researcher found out that, there were male and female wings of these associations, and each wing had their executives comprising solely male or female respectively.

Most of the data were obtained from the male wings of the associations because it was easier for the researcher to reach them. The two female respondents represents those that were able to submit their questionnaire at the appropriate time prior to analysis of data. In terms of occupation, there is a

balance between traders and workers; whereas Abia and Anambra had more traders and workers, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo had more workers than traders. Although the trade and work were not broken down to specifics, the traders were business men dealing in sundry items while the workers were employees in both government and private organizations in Lagos State. In terms of marital status, all the respondents were married at the time of conducting the research; there was no unmarried or divorced respondent. In terms of academic level, a majority of respondents had secondary and university education while a minority had only primary education; a majority of respondents from Abia and Enugu had more secondary education than university and primary education. A majority of respondents from Imo had university education than secondary and primary. Respondents from Ebonyi had more secondary education than university and primary, while respondents from Anambra had more primary and secondary education than university education. The result shows that all the respondents were educated; there was no illiterate among them. The implication of the overall profile of respondents is that, it is expected that information obtained from them will be credible since they had what it takes to provide right information expected from them.

### Language Background

Table 2. The Language Background of the Respondents Shows

Variable	Features	Freq.	%								
First Language	Igbo	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100
	English	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100
Second Language	English	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100
	Total	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100
	Other Languages										
Other Languages	Yoruba	2	40	1	20	1	20	2	40	1	20
	Missing	3	60	4	80	4	80	3	60	4	80
	Total	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100

The result of the language background of the respondents shows that, a majority of them were bilinguals in Igbo, their native language and English, while minority were multilingual in Igbo, English and Yoruba, the language of the host community. All the respondents reported that Igbo is their first language. The interviews revealed that all of them were internal immigrants from their home states in the South-East geographical area of Nigeria. They had already acquired their native language before migrating to Lagos state. Additionally, all reported that English is their second language. English is the official language in Nigeria and used in official matters in government establishments, education sector, etc.

Given the academic background of respondents, they must have encountered and learnt English in school, primary, secondary, or tertiary

institutions. It is important that, a minority of respondents reported Yoruba as one of their languages; two respondents from Abia and Enugu and one respondent each from Anambra, Enugu and Imo reported that they spoke Yoruba. Thus, the research incorporated respondents who had encountered foreign a foreign language and culture, and also another indigenous language and culture, aside their own native language and culture.

### Language Ideology

The inquiry on language ideology sought to evaluate the respondents thought and belief about Igbo. The inquiry was founded on three statements or propositions: pride in Igbo, it is good to speak Igbo everywhere, and it is proper to speak Igbo in Igbo cultural meetings. The result of the inquiry is presented below,

Table 3. Evaluation the Respondents Thought and Belief About Igbo

Variable	Features	Abia(N=5)		Anambra(N=5)		Ebonyi(N=5)		% Freq.	Freq.
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
Pride in Igbo language	SA	5	100	5	100	5	100		
	A	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	SD	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	D	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Igbo is an important aspect of my life	SA	4	80	3	60	4	80		
	A	1	20	2	40	1	20		
	SD	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	D	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Igbos should speak Igbo in meetings	SA	5	100	5	100	5	100		
	A	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	SD	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	D	0	0	0	0	0	0		

Key; Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed(SD), Disagreed(D)

The result shows that respondents had positive language ideology towards their native language Igbo. All the respondents (100.0%) espoused pride in Igbo reflected in the fact that, they all Strongly Agreed (SA) to the statement and no one simply agreed nor disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. This is to say that, they were comfortable with Igbo as their self and ethnic identity. On the second statement about the value of Igbo as a language, all the respondents strongly agreed and simply agreed with the proposition. All the respondents from Enugu and Imo (100.0%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 80.0% from Abi and Ebonyi also strongly agreed with the proposition. Among the Anambra group, 60.0% strongly agreed with the proposition, while 40.0% simply agreed with the proposition. This symmetry in the result is sufficient to show that all Igbo among the sample were favorably attuned to their native language.

The idea that the language is an important aspect of their life shows the degree to which they aligned with the language. This is to say that, beyond

communication, the language is an identity marker and a very important means of defining them. On the last statement about use of language during cultural meetings, all the respondents reported that Igbo should be the default language in Igbo cultural meetings. Incidentally, all the respondents strongly agreed with the proposition, and no one either simply agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

The result shows that all the respondents were positively attuned with Igbo as their language as well as their self and ethnic identity. The interview result that followed this inquiry confirmed the stance of the respondents with the propositions and further explained reason behind their positive evaluation of their native language. The result of the interview is presented below.

### ***Abia***

Respondent AB1: Anyi bu Igbo; he e ji mara anyi bu Igbo. E lere anya na nwaafø Igbo obulaghi kwesiri i di na-asu Igbo mgbe nile

Respondent AB1: We are Igbo; we are known by our language Igbo. It is expected that every true Igbo person should be able to speak Igbo all the time

Respondent AB2: Ndi obula nwere hue e ji mara ha; ndi Yoruba anyi no na nga ha nji asusu ha etu onu. Ndi Igbo nkwasikwara it asusu ha kporo ihe maka na o bu asusu ka e ji mara ndi.

Respondent AB2: Every people have what they are known by. The Yoruba people in whose land we are use their language for pride. Igbo people should value their language because people are known by their language.

Respondent AB3: Ebe obula onye Igbo no, o kwesiri igosi ihe o jiri buru Igbo. The ahu bu asusu. Asusu di oke mkpa, especially now. O buru na isughi asusu gi one ahu furu efu.

Respondent AB3: Wherever an Igbo is, they should show why they are Igbo. That thing is language. Language is very important, especially now. If you do not speak your language, the person is lost.

Respondent AB4: O bu mgbe one kwuru okwu ka e ji mata be onve ahu si . Ekwenyere m ña onye Igbo obula ga-egosi ebe o si... werekwa asusu ya na-eme nganga

### ***Anambra***

Respondent AN1: Asusu bu ife e ji malu mmadu; onye mepee onu suo asusu amalu ebe o si. So. asusu di oke mkpa. N'ebø obuna Igbo no, ma Legoosi, Abuja, Kano, olwesiri kaani na-asu Igbo.

Respondent AN1: Language is a person's identity; when someone opens their mouth and speaks we know from where he is. language is very important. Wherever Igbo people are, in Lagos, Abuja, Kano, we are supposed to speak Igbo.

Respondent AN2: Asusu Igbo zulu ka emee; Avi bu Igbo kwesilu i na-asu Igbo ebe obunaayi no. Ndi Japan na-asu Japanese, ndi China na-asu Chinese; so, Igbo kwesirluijiasusu avi kporo ihe.

Respondent AN2: Igbo language is a great language; We Igbo should be able to speak Igbo wherever we are. The Japanese speak Japanese, the Chinese speak Chinese; so Igbo should place value on their language.

Respondent AN3: ....Igbo amaka onwehu asusu du ka Igbo. Ndi nanna ayi ha such aaluva wee nyefee ayi n'aka. O buhu n'aka ayi ka o ganonwuo. Ayi ga-asu ya ruo na umuayi ha na um umu ayi ha galun'ihu na-asu ya.one uwa dum onu.

### *Ebonyi*

Respondent EB1: Y'see, 00 he mmadu nwere ka o ji aba. Onweghi asusu ozo dika igbo. A na m enwe mwuli elu na m bu onye Igbo.

Respondent EBI: Y'see, a person takes pride in what they have. There is no language as good as Igbo. I have self esteem that I am Igbo

Respondent EB2: ...E ji m Igbo etu onu maka na Igbo bu ebe a no vgbua. O nwere ndi Yoruba na-asi na uwa ha ozo na ha ga-abu Igbo.

Respondent EB2: ...I take pride in Igbo because Igbo is in vogue now. There are Yoruba people who say that, in their next life, they will be Igbo.

Respondent EB3: ..the mere m ji ejii Igbo eme onu bu na ndi mmadu na-asopuru Igbo n' uwa dum. Nsopuru a bu maka ike anyi na-akpa.

### *Enugu*

Respondent EN1: Igbo Zuru ka e mee, ma na alalgbu ma be ndi ozo. Igbo na-achi na Legoosi, Igbo na-achi na Kano, Kaduna, ebe nile. Onweghi ndi e ji atunyeru Igbo

Respondent EN1: Igbo are great people, both in Igbo land and elsewhere. Igbo are in charge in Lagos, Igbo are in charge in Kano, Kaduna, everywhere. No people can be compared to Igbo people.

Respondent ENS: ....E ji m Igbo eme onu di egwu nihi na Igbo dika osimiri. Igbo naejebe nine n'uwa. Onweghi ebe Igbo anoghi n'uwa

Respondent ENS: ...I take so much pride in Igbo because Igbo is like a sea. Igbo travels everywhere in the world. There is no place Igbo are not found in the world.

### *Imo*

Respondent IM1: ..Igbo bu oke asusu. Yes, Igbo abugh i obere asusu. Mgbe m ji ghotanke a bu mgbe otu one ocha biara n'ofusi m si m kuziere ya Igbo. onye France... O na-asu Igbo ugbua.

Respondent IM1: ...Igbo is a great language... Yes, Igbo is not a small language. When I understood this is the day a white man entered my office and asked me to teach him Igbo... a French man... He speaks Igbo now

Respondent IM2: Asusu Igbo amaka....o bu ihe m na-agwa umulgbo ebe obula. Asusu Igbo amaka...o na enye m okonobi isu Igbo

Respondent IM2: Igbo language is beautiful... That is what I tell Igbo people everywhere. Igbo is beautiful... I speak Igbo with passion

Respondent IM3: Igbo adighi abuo n'uwa. Igbo bu asusu obodo m buru asusu e  
ji maram... Igbo bu asusu ala nna m

Respondent IM3: Igbo is not two in the world. Igbo is my ethnic language as  
well as my identity... Igbo is my ancestral language.

The interview result above shows that the respondents were positively inclined to Igbo. They reported that Igbo is a part of their lives; they are one with the language. They placed both intrinsic and extrinsic value on Igbo. Additionally, they believed that Igbo is beautiful as a language. By deposing that language is a prime means of identification, they acknowledged that Igbo, though language, is their self and ethnic identity. In other words, they were comfortable with seeing themselves as Igbo, and also comfortable with being seen by others as Igbo. This perception is obtained despite the fact that there are languages, such as English, that seems to possess more utilitarian values, and are related to success in the social space. Thus Igbo is symbolic as a means of ethnic identification by the respondents; although, it is not attributable to their success in life, they were proud of the language as a veritable index of who they are.

### **Language Practice**

The inquiry on language practice sought to know the actual way the respondents used the languages in their repertoire, and this is contrasted with their avowed language ideology. The practices involved were the following: languages used in prayers, in breaking colanut, language used in writing bye-law, reading and writing meeting minutes, meeting circular, language used in discussing matters, language used to make request and language used to report a matter to the association. The result of the inquiry is presented below.

#### **Language Used in Prayers**

The result of the language used in prayers include opening and closing prayers and breaking of cola nut in the associations. The result indicates that Igbo is the language used in the meeting for prayers. All the respondents (100.0%) in each of the association reported that they used Igbo in saying both opening and closing prayers as a rule. As a ritual and procedure, prayer is used to begin a meeting and end a minute in these associations.

Table 4. The Result of the Language Used in Prayers

		<b>Abia(N=5)</b>		<b>Anambra(N=5)</b>		<b>Ebonyi(N=5)</b>		
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Freq.</b>
Prayer	Igbo	5		5		5		
	English	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Breaking Cola-nut	Igbo	5		5		5		
	English	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bye-law	Igbo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	English	5		5		5		
Meeting Circular	Igbo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	English	5	100	5	100	5	100	
Writng minutes	Igbo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	English	5	100	5	100	5	100	
Reading Minute	Igbo	0	0	1	20	1	20	
	English	5	100	4	80	4	80	
Matters Arising	Igbo/English	5	100	5	100	5	100	
	Igbo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	English	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Making Request	Igbo	5	100	5	100	5	100	
	English	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reporting a Matter	Igbo/English	5	100	100	100	5	100	
	English	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The reason why the inquiry is made in this respect is due to the importance attached to it by members of the associations. The result of the interview inquiry shows the various reasons underlying this procedure. The result is presented below.

### **Abia**

Respondent AB1: Ekpere di mkpa na ndu mmadu... The anyi ji e ji Igbo e kpeekpere bu na Chineke na-anu Igbo. Bekee bu ogbaraohuru.

Respondent AB1: Prayer is important in somebody's life...The reason we pray in Igbo is that God understands Igbo. English is a recent language

Respondent AB2: ...Igbo bu asusu nnanna anyi ha ji kpokuoChineke. O di mma na onve chooikperechukwu, o jiri asusu ya kpoko ya.

Respondent AB2: ...Igbo is the language our ancestors used to invoke God. It is good that if someone wants to pray to God, they should use their language.

Respondent AB3: N'uche nke m, iji Igbo kpeereChukwu bu inye ya nsopuru... O di ka ebe nwatana-achoirio nna ya aririo, o were Bekee..... o bu mkpari, yes it is an insult, nwata i ji bekee rio nna ya aririo. So, o di mma na anyi na-eji Igbo akpokuChukwu maka na Chukwu abughi nwataibe anyi.

*Anambra*

Respondent AN1: Expele bu m kpoku. Mgbe ayi na-ekpeexpere, o bu Chukwu ka ayi na- akpoku. Nke bu eziokwu bu na Igbo bu asusu omenanikalia English. O ruo na expele, o na-adi m ka Chineke o na-aka anu ekpeleekpelu n'Igbo kalia asusu ndi ozo.

Respondent AN1: Prayer is invocation... When we pray it is God we are invoking. The fact is that, Igbo is more of a traditional language than English. When it comes to prayer, it seems to me that answers a prayer said in Igbo more than the one said in English.

Respondent AN2: O di mma na e jiri Igbo pokuoOlisa...maka na Olisa na-anu asusu nine di n'uwa. Ebe o bu na meeting ayi bu meeting umu Igbo, o kwesilu ka e jilu Igbo knee ekpele.

*Ebonyi*

Respondent EB1: Expere bu m kpoku a ne-emereChukwu. O bu ihe di omimi.. nke a mere avi ji eme va n'Igbo.

Respondent EB1: Prayer is invocation to God. It is a deep thing..this is why we do it in Igbo.

Respondent EB2: Chukwu bu onye Igbo...yabu na i chooikpere ya, i ga-e ji Igbo kpokuo ya. I were asusu ozo kpokuo ya echeighi m na o ga-aza.

Respondent EB2: God is Igbo.so, if you want to pray to Him, you will use Igbo to call on Him. If you use another language to pray to Him, I do not think He will answer you.

Respondent EB3: Ekpera bu ihe mmuo di omimi...ya mere ayi na-eji Igbo ekpeekpere na meeting.... maka na Bekee adighi omimi.

*Enugu*

Respondent EN1: A na-ejiBekeeekperekpere, jiri Igbo e kpeekpere. mana nihi onodu anyi o ka mmajji Igbo... O buru ebe a gwaraogwa, mmadu nwere ikeijiBekee.

Respondent EN1: Prayer can be said in English and Igbo...but because the context of our meeting, it is better in Igbo...If it were a mixed sthnic gathering, a person can use English.

Respondent EN2: ....O dighimmaijiBekee e kpeelperen'ogbako umu Igbo.

Respondent EN2: ...It is not proper to use English to pray in a gathering of Igbo people

Respondent EN3: Asusu obuna were ebe kwesiri isu ha. .o buru ebe dika skuul, ehnn, asuoBekee, mana o buru na meeting umu Igbo, Bekeeadabaghi.

*Imo*

Respondent IM1: Yes, nwanne m nwaanyi...ihe merenu anyi ji ejи Igbo ekpeokpere bu o bu he kwasiri ekwesi. Anvina-agbamboihu na e ji Igbo eme ihe na meeting maka na anvi bu umulgbo.

Respondent IM1: Yes, my sister... the reason why e use Igbo to pray is that it is the right thing to do. We try to ensure that Igbo is used to do things in our meeting because we are Igbo people.

Respondent IM2: ..Ekpere na-aka mma ma e jiri asusu Igbo kpee ya. That is, ndi obula tosiri it asusu ha ekpeekpere.

Respondent IM2: ....Prayer is better when it is said in Igbo language. That is, people should use their language to pray.

The interview result shows varying reasons for the use of Igbo in prayers. The commonest reason for the use of Igbo in prayers is due to the nature and setting of the meeting; since it is a cultural meeting involving Igbo exclusively, respondents believe that Igbo is the typical language to be used to say prayers. This is the opinion of a majority of respondents such as ABS, ANA, EBA, EB5, EN1, EN2, EN3, ENA, ENS, IM3. According to EN1 and EN3, the setting is a paramount factor that determines choice of language for prayers. If it were a mixed gathering or a school, English is preferable for reasons of communication. The respondent (EN2) was emphatic that it is not proper to use English or any other language to say prayers in a meeting of Igbo people. This result tallies with Fishman's ) concept of domain that stipulates that each domain has the right or particular language that fits it.

A second reason for using Igbo in prayers is that using Igbo in prayers is a mark of respect to God. A number of respondents made this submission such as AB3, AN1, ANS, EB1, EB2, EB3, and IM4. The respondents (AB3) related the experience to a child making a request to his elder using English and concluded that using English in prayers to God is as disrespectful to God as a child using English in making request from their elder. Respondent EB2 actually submitted that God is Igbo, and so prayer should be directed to him in Igbo, otherwise He may neither hear nor answer. Similarly, EB1 and EB3 reasoned that prayer is a spiritual ritual and so requires a spiritual language such as Igbo to say it. According to them, English is not a spiritual language and so inadequate to be used in prayers. A reason for seeing English as inadequate is the official nature of the language that is mainly used in formal occasions and not in nuclear settings. To support this point, Respondent AB1 submitted that English is a modern language and not traditional, and therefore not fitting for invocations. He added that God understands all languages, including Igbo; and since God understands all languages, there is no point using another language in prayers in an Igbo meeting. According to Respondent AN1, God responds to all prayers in all languages but he thinks that God responds to prayers said in Igbo more than those said in English.

Another reason proffered for the use of Igbo is that it is more appropriate; According to Respondents AB4, AN3, EB4, IM1, and IM2, it is more appropriate to use Igbo in prayers than any other language. According to

Respondent IM2, every cultural group should use their language to say prayers to God, because prayers is better in the language of the person praying.

### **Breaking of Cola Nut**

Among other things, the Igbo are known for respect accorded the cola nut; the cola nut is given an important place in Igbo customs and ceremonies. It is used during marriage rites, child naming ceremony, morning invocation, chieftaincy title ceremony, covenant making, house warming ceremony, etc. All the respondents (100.0%) submitted that breaking of cola nut is facilitated through Igbo. An interview inquiry conducted to unravel the reason is presented below.

#### ***Abia***

Respondent AB1: Oji bu erimeri ndi mmuo... Ya mere ani ji asusu Igbo sooso ago oji. Ojianaghi anu Bekee.

Respondent AB1: Cola nut is the food of the spirits... That is why we use only Igbo to break it. Cola nut does not understand English

Respondent AB2: Ojianaghi anu Bekee. Sooso asusu oji na-anu bu Igbo.

Respondent AB2: Cola nut does not understand English. The only language cola nut understands is Igbo

Respondent AB3: Anaghi e ji Bekee ago oji maka na ojianaghi anu Bekee.

Respondent AB3: English is not used to break cola nut because cola nut does not understand English.

#### ***Anambra***

Respondent AN1: Oji bu mkpuluosisi ndi Igbo na ndi mmuo ji gbaandu... Ya mere e ji asi na ojianaghi anu Bekee.

Respondent AN1: Cola nut is a crop that the spirits and humans used as a covenant. That is why it is said that cola nut does not understand English.

Respondent AN2: Anaghi e ji Bekeeagwa ndi mmuo okwu... Ojianaghi anu Bekee maka na igooji bu igommuo.

Respondent AN2: English is not used to address the spirits..cola nut does not understand

#### ***Ebonyi***

Respondent EB1: Mbanu.....ojianaghi anu asusu ozo n'abughi asusu Igbo. I na-ago oji were Bekeeonwe gi ka i na-agoro ya. InfactoaruijiBekee goo oji.

Respondent EB1: No.....cola nut does not understand any other language aside Igbo. If you are breaking cola nut and used English, you are talking to yourself. As a matter of fact, it is an abomination to use English to break cola nut.

Respondent EB2: .....Nwanne m nwaanyi, n'ala Igbo o bu omenana... ojianaghi anu Bekee

Respondent EB2: ...My sister, in Igbo land, it is a custom...cola nut does not understand English. English because to break cola nut is to talk to the spirits.

Respondent EB3: ....IjiBekee ago oji dika mmadu ijen'arusi were Bekee na-agwa ya okwu...

### *Enugu*

Respondent EN1: Anaghiekwu ya ugboro abuo..ojianahu anu Bekee. Sooso Igbo ka oji na-anu.

Respondent EN1: We do not mince words with it...cola nut does not understand English. It is only Igbo it understands.

Respondent EN2: ..Leeanya igooji bu ikpokunnanna ayi ha. .ha anaghi anu Bekee. That is why e ji asi na ojianaghi anu Bekee.

### *Imo*

Respondent IM1: Anyi e jighioji egwu egwu. o bu nrimmuo na mmadu. sooso asusu e ji ago oji bu asusu Igbo, bu asusu nanna anyi ha na-aghotia.

Respondent IM1: WE don't play with cola nut. it is food for spirits and man. the only language used to break it is Igbo, that is the language our ancestors understand.

Respondent IM2: No, no. ..ojianaghi anu Bekee.e ji ya etwu okwu mgbe nile. Ejighi Bekee ago oji.

Respondent IM2: No, no...cola nut does not understand English. it is a maxim. English is not used to break cola nut.

The unanimous opinion of the respondents is that cola nut is a spiritual crop that connects the living Igbo and the ancestors. As a result, the Igbo share a belief that, cola-nut does not understand English but Igbo only, because the ancestors do not understand any other language except Igbo. Consequently, addressing the ancestors in another language is a waste of lime.

Some respondents such as AB4, ABS, EBI and IM3 actually went a step further to claim that it is an abomination to break cola nut in any other language apart from Igbo, and that such a cola nut cannot be eaten. Personifying cola nut as if it has auditory ability is a symbolic way of suggesting that breaking cola nut in any other language is not permitted.

The implication of this belief is that, English, as prestigious as it is, is not useful when it comes to cultural cum spiritual things that concern the relationship of the people with their ancestors. It is important that, at a time when it is believed that Igbo is endangered due to minimal use by its speakers, especially the young, that there are cultural artifacts that restrict Igbo to their language. The obvious effect is that, the custom of offering cola nut is one of the aspects Igbo can strengthen to encourage the use of the Igbo among the speakers, from generation to generation. The effect, in relation to Igbo language maintenance may seem peripheral, but the fact is that, any measure employed

to safeguard an endangered language is worth the effort, irrespective of the degree of impact.

### **Bye-Law, Minutes, Circular**

This inquiry is about the language used to write association bye-law, minutes of meeting and circulation of meeting circular. The result shows that all the respondents (100.0%) reported that they used English in writing their bye-laws, minutes of meeting and meeting circular. The critical factor in this aspect of the survey is language in its written form. It is not really curious that the associations used English in writing their laws, minutes and circular, but it is still questionable that, a standardized language such as Igbo cannot be used to write cultural association materials. An inquiry about this phenomenon, using the interview yielded the following results.

#### ***Abia***

Respondent AB1: Eziokwu, obatabeghi anyi n'uche i ji Igbo dee iwu na-achi meeting anyi maobu minute meeting na circular. Kama ihe mere nu bu na English bu ihe anvi jitobuede he ndia....

Respondent AB1: Frankly, we have not thought of using Igbo to write our bye law or minutes or circular....But what happened is that it is English that we have been using to write these things..

Respondent AB2: 00 Bekee ka anvi ji ede minute na he ndi ozo.... ihe kpatara ya bu na Bekee bu asusu ejikariede he odide.

#### ***Anambra***

Respondent AN1: The ayi ji ede minute na Bekee bu na o di mfeide ya na Bekee. Ima na- edechaa ihe ndiaatupuo ha atupo na Komputa maka i printi ya eprinti. The ndi a na-aka mfe na Bekee. Bekee bu ihe ka doo ndi na atipu iheanya karia Igbo.

Respondent AN1: The reason why we write minutes in English is because it is easy to write it in English. You know that after writing these things diacritic marks will be added during typing in computer for the sake of printing. These things are easier in English.

#### ***Ebonyi***

Respondent EB1: The mere ihe ahu is that, Bekeejuru ebe nileAkwukwo anyi guru. site primary, secondary, ruo na University, 00 English ka a na-asu ebe nile. English amarala one obuna ahu.

Respondent EB1: What happened is that, English is everywhere...Our education...from primary, secondary, to university, only English is spoken everywhere. We are all used to English

Respondent EB2: Emmm, n'eziokwu, Bekee na-aka mma ma abia n'ihe a na-eede. Respondent EB2: Emmm, in truth, when it comes to writing, English is better.

### **Enugu**

Respondent EN1: The kpatara ya n'uche m bu na ayi nine guru alwutwo, mara ede Bekee mara aguBekee...

Respondent EN1: To me, the reason is that, we are all educated, and knows how to read and write in English

Respondent EN2: he mere bu na o marana avi ahu ijiBekee dee ihe odide..

Respondent EN2: The reason is that we are used to using English to write things...

Respondent EN3: .....00 English ka avi ji ede ma minute ma constitution, ma osia ma osighi ya. maka na o dika ihe odide n'aka mma na Bekee.

The interview result showed several reasons why these three written documents are not done in Igbo but in English. The major reason is that people are accustomed to English and therefore see English as the default language for written documents, without questioning the rationale. A majority of respondents (AB1, AB2, AB3, AN2, AN4, ANS, EB4, EN2, IM1, IM2, IM3) were of the opinion that it has become a custom to use English in writing their materials such as meeting minutes, circular, constitution or byelaw, etc. It is note worthy that, the reason why people are used to English is the fact that, over time the language policy in Nigeria places English above native languages as the sole official language used in formal occasions and for official businesses, especially documentation of materials in files; therefore people naturally engage with the foreign language due to its utilitarian values at the expense of their own native tongues. In Nigeria, English is the sole official language, and in the education sector, without a credit pass in English none can gain admission into any tertiary institution. English is glamorized as the language of government, the judicial system, bureaucracy, etc.

The second reason advanced by respondents is that, it is easier to write English than Igbo; which translates to the fact that, it is difficult to write in Igbo. A number of respondents (AB4, AN1, EB2, EB5, EN3, EN4, ENS, IM5) claimed that it is easier to write in English than Igbo. A major reason for this admission is the inability of their personnel to write in Igbo. Three respondents (ABS, AN3, EB3) actually reported that, their secretaries cannot write in Igbo due to an academic experience that gave them no training to write in their native language.

Another reason advanced is the fact that, all of them are somewhat educated, and therefore using the language of education seem to be more reasonable. This is a reason advance by respondents EB1, EN1 and IMA. It is note worthy that these respondents related education to the ability to read and write plus other language skills in English. They failed to understand that being literate or educated is not limited to ability to write English, but ability to write their native language is also a mark of literacy.

### **Reading Minutes**

The inquiry on reading of minutes during minutes showed a discrepancy; a- majority of respondents reported that they used English in

reading minutes, while a minority reported using Igbo. Respondents from Abia and Ebonyi (100.0% each) reported using only English to read minutes while a majority of respondents from Anambra, Enugu and Imo (80.0% each) reported in English alone to read minutes. A minority (20.0% each) from Anambra, Enugu and Imo reported using Igbo to read minutes. Since, they all had earlier reported using English to write minutes and other documents, it is possible that, among the sole groups in Anambra, Enugu and Imo, the secretaries translated what had been written in English into Igbo during the meetings.

### **Matters Arising**

Matters arising are issues or outcomes of the previous minutes written by the secretary as agenda for a current meeting. Members are free to bare their minds on issues, ask questions, seek clarifications, etc. The result of this inquiry showed that both English and Igbo are used by members during discussion of matters arising from the previous minutes written. All the respondents (100.0%) reported that their members used a combination of Igbo and English during such discussion. This is an indication that the bilingual members of these associations did not completely keep their languages apart from each other. In other words, they used either code switching or code mixing during such discussions. In terms of code switching, they switched from one language to another across sentences; in terms of code mixing, they switched from one language to another within sentences. Whichever one they adopted, it is obvious, going by their collective report that, they alternated between Igbo and English during matters arising time.

Against the background of the result of the earlier inquiry about their language ideology, where they reported pride in Igbo and the importance of speaking Igbo by Igbo, especially in their meetings, the respondents were interviewed to know the reason for code alternation. The result of the inquiry from each of the respondents is presented below.

#### ***Abia***

Respondent AB1: ...Nwanne m nwaanyi, o dighimfeisusooso Igbo. Anyi na-anwa mana o dighimfe, maka na English jruuanvi onu

Respondent AB1: ...My sister, it is not easy to speak only Igbo. We try but it is not easy, because our mouth is full of English

Respondent AB2: Nke bu eziokwu bu a onweghi one Igbo na-asu sooso Igbo ugbua. rara ahu one Igbo isusooso Igbo na-etinyeghi English.

#### ***Anambra***

Respondent AN1: Nne, ngililgboamarana ayi ahu. O ji one ihujide one azu. Mu onwe m na-asu ya. Oo maka na English bu ihe a na-anu ebe nile na Lagos. Mana radio, TV, social media, English ka gbaaenu na ha.

Respondent AN1: Lady, we are used to mixing English and Igbo. It has affected everybody. I myself speak it. It is because English is pervasive in Lagos. In radio, TV, social media, English is the main language in them.

Respondent AN2: Ihe anyi ji agwa asusu agwa bu na ayi ma etu e si asu asúsu abuo ndia, yabu Igbo na English. O bu eziokwu na mmasi ayi bu isunaani Igbo, o-dighimfe.

Respondent AN2: The reason why we mix languages is because we know how to speak these two languages, that is Igbo and English. It is true that we are interested in speaking only Igbo, it is not easy.

### *Ebonyi*

Respondent EB1: ....00 uwa ndiocha mere ayi ji agwa asusu...ma ndi guru akwukwo ma ndi agughit.. Bekeejuru ebe nine. O dighimfe one Igbo isunaani Igbo

Respondent EB1: .. It is the white man's world that provokes mixing languages...both the educated and the uneducated...English is everywhere. It is not easy for an Igbo to speak only Igbo

Respondent EB2: ....The o ji raa ahu isusooso Igbo bu na English bu asusu e ji aguakwukwo... English a baana ayi n'umiokpukpu...

Respondent EB2: .... The reason why it is hard to speak only Igbo is that English is the language of education...English has entered our bone marrow.

Respondent EB3: The kpatara ayi ji agwa asusu bu na English agbaanamgborogwu n'obodo ayi. ebe obuna i chereihu English. mana radio, TV, mana phone, English.

Respondent EB3: The reason why we mix languages is that English has gained root in our land.....Everywhere you face English...in radio, TV, in phone, English.

Respondent EB4....The mere ya bu English...English dicha anyi n'obara nke bu na mgbe ufodu i chooisu Igbo Bekeeabata gi onu.

### *Enugu*

Respondent EN1: ... Oo ihe imara mmadu onu. anyi asukatana English mee na isusooso Igbo dika isiokwuten'oku.

Respondent EN1: We are used to it... We have spoken English to the point that, to speak Igbo alone is like boiling stone in the pot.

Respondent EN2: Odighi me isusooso Igbo maka na o were udi he di n'uwa laa adibughi n'ala Igbo mbu. For instance, computa, phone na he nai oz...

Respondent EN2: It is not easy to speak only Igbo because there are certain things in the world today that were not in Igbo land before. For instance, computer, phone, and other things.

### *Imo*

Respondent IM1: The kpatara ya bu na ani na English bi. Especially Legooosi.....English juru ebe niile...

Respondent IM1: The reason is that we live with English. Especially in Lagos. English is everywhere...

Respondent IM2: .... Omweghi ka i na-anu na-asu English wee gharaigwa asusu agwa...

Respondent IM2: ... It is not possible that you hear and speak English without mixing languages.

The result of the interview showed several reasons why respondents code switched during matters arising. A major reason as submitted by a majority of respondents (AB1, AB2, AB3, AN1, AN3, AN4, ANS, EB1, EB2, BB3, EBA, EBS, IM1, IM3) is the dominance of English by virtue of education; an education system that prioritized English technically condemned learners to imbibe the language and use it more often than their native tongues. Over time, English became so pervasive that it is difficult to ignore; as a consequence, even illiterates switch codes, although the educated are worse hit by the experience as reported by (AN4, EB1). The experience is described by AN3 as akin to the proverbial goat that visited their mother's land and learnt how to chew the cud, meaning that it is difficult to learn English without being affected by the experience: According to respondent EB2 and EB4, English has permeated the bone marrow and blood of the Igbo respectively, so much that it is difficult to speak only Igbo during interaction. In the opinion of EB3, English has, over time become very rooted in the Igbo culture, as it is evident in Virtually all media. The cumulative result is the inability to keep Igbo and Yoruba apart during interaction, especially while speaking the native language. Almost all the respondents lamented the inability to speak only Igbo and reasoned that they are already accustomed to the practice.

A second reason advanced by respondents for code switching is bilingualism; the knowledge and proficiency in two languages, in this case, Igbo and English. The respondents (AN2, AN4, EN3, IM2) who reasoned along this line thought that code switching is a natural consequence of proficiency in two languages. The idea is that it is impossible to know two languages without using the two simultaneously in the course of interaction.

A third reason observed as a factor responsible for code switching as reported by two respondents (EN2, EN4) is the fact of technological advancement, that renders Igbo inadequate to discuss certain matters. According to EN2, it is not possible to speak only Igbo in contemporary times due to the presence, in Igbo culture, of things that were never in the culture, such as computer and telephone. In other words, due to technological advancement and the language used to describe them which is English, the Igbo has no option than to use the foreign language when talking about such technologies. Similarly, EN4 suggested that it is impossible to speak only Igbo in Igbo meetings because, there are certain things that are easier to say in English than Igbo. Although the respondent did not provide examples of those things, they may be referring to foreign concepts that are borrowed.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

The aim of this study is to examine the use of language among Igbo cultural associations in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study found that, to a large degree, the members of these associations used Igbo in their meetings. They used Igbo exclusively to do the following: prayers, breaking cola nut, making requests from the association. Additionally, they used a combination of Igbo and English in the following sessions; matters arising from minutes, making reports to the meeting as well as reading of minutes. Their language management strategies involved essentially encouraging members to use Igbo because they are Igbo.

### Recommendations

The result of this study leads to the understanding that Igbo cultural organizations are not taking adequate stand in the area of maintaining and projecting the Igbo identity. Consequently, the following are recommended. Igbo cultural associations should have an official and explicit language policy that is monolingual, in favor of Igbo. A cultural association is a good ground for the use of the native language exclusively, despite the dominance of English. A monolingual Igbo policy will be used to restrict all members to the native language. There are more for where the members can speak English or any other language. Igbo cultural associations should endeavor to write all official documents in Igbo; minutes, meeting circulars, bye laws/constitution, letters and other written documents should be done in Igbo. They should endeavor to appoint secretaries who are not only proficient in Igbo but are capable of writing Igbo. They may take a step further to train the secretaries that lack Igbo writing skill. This is to ensure that their operations are well documented in Igbo language.

### FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research needs to be carried out on the topic "Language Use Among Igbo Cultural Associations in Lagos, State, Nigeria."

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