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IGBO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

By

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Abstract

In this paper, we are going to discuss the status of Igbo Language and Culture in the past (ie. yesterday), presently, (ie today) and apparently predict the future (ie tomorrow) with the view to draw our attention to what is about to come upon 'the Igbo' if we do not heed to 'the call'

Keywords, Igbo Language, Igbo culture, yesterday and today

Introduction

The term 'Igbo' is a generic one. It is used to refer to three different concepts. In the first place, Igbo refers to a place or geographical location called Igboland. Igboland as we all know is located in the Eastern part of Nigeria comprising states as Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo, part of Delta, Rivers and Cross Rivers States. Secondly, Igbo refers to a people; the occupants of the territory called Igboland. And finally, Igbo refers to a language spoken by the people; the occupants of the Igbo land. In the scheme of all things in Nigeria and all over the world, Igbo is recognized. Igbo is one of the three major tribes in Nigeria (the others being Hausa and Yoruba), the reason for the coinage 'Wazobia'. Before the advent of the whites in Nigeria, the Igbo spoke no other language than theirs (Igbo Language), they had no other culture than theirs (Igbo Culture). This was their status irrespective of their neighborhood with other tribes. Language and culture are interwoven and inseparable. Language is the vehicle that drives the culture of a

people. Language is the engine that runs the cultural transmission industry. When language is lost, the culture is lost and the people follow. Our ancient ones knew this and took advantage of the language and handed over the culture from one generation to another. People argue today that Igbo language is not complete and try to buttress their points using frivolities and I wondered where the Igbo language failed our forefathers. Absolutely no where, Language is basically or primarily spoken or oral. All advent of the whites, Igbo had no writing system like many other languages, So these languages whether indigenous as ours or a world language as English is basically spoken and culture were orally transmitted. Because the language and culture were one and Speech is an equal beginning for all languages. Writing just a recent phenomenon Before no documentations, no texts, etc. However, during same, there were no institutions set apart for teaching the language. This does not mean that the teaching of the taken seriously as the teaching took place everywhere in the house, farm, on playground, the market square, during moonlight plays etc. Systematic instruction The Igbo Language Yesterday

C. language was not given but children observed skills and techniques as well as their parents and elders' habits. Through reinforcement and examples. children were gradually into their linguistic community. Children were taught the history, literature and (geography) count, add, subtract and divide and in practical terms. They were taught to observe their land through stories, songs and legends. Arithmetic was taught by asking children interpret their environment by the names and species of plants, trees, animals, birds, insects, etc as well as the description of the appropriate periods of the seasons of the year aspects of the socialization like respect for elders, authorities, custom and tradition we embedded in the language and practical examples. Language is so vital in man's life Children were taught the philosophy and ideology of their people through proverbs. Quite there is hardly any situation where language is not involved (Yusuf 2011). Let us consider Here under the formal functions of language as listed in (Anyanwu 2007) : and see where Igbo Language fell short of any of these functions for our fathers. this period, Igbo Functions Of Language the young ones and language was neglected Language, *liter efe gi amaka, i li gi a mala the stranger* In fact, I will Informational Role: This is the most important function of language. It is used to pass information from one person to the other. Didn't our forefathers have potential in Igbo Language Who devised the town crying system communication in the rural communities? Didn't they give, obtain information make enquiries in Igbo language. What about the *jū àsè*

(investigation) duty marriage contract; What about 'jū àsè' from the Dibia (divination); What about the 'in ómú' and 'ózi ómiú' (seeking redress)

Expressive Role: Language serves as a means by which one can express emotion feelings, or attitude towards one another or even expression of state of attribute. Didn't our fathers use Igbo language to woo and conquer their spouses, did they express anger, hatred, disappointment, disagreement, surprise, etc. what about exclamations, swearwords etc. **Phatic Role:** Language is used as a means of establishing contacts and relationship with other people within one's speech community. Didn't our ancient Ones use to greet and exchange pleasantries such as; 'I saala chi/ì bî ì la chi, ndi ij mma etc. How about making violently and Mr. B says "hdù gi". situation that would have been otherwise embarrassing for instance, Mr. A sneezes one comfortable other persons as in issuing orders, commands, or making Tequest. **Didactic Directive Role:** Language is also used to influence the behaviour or attitude. Logikwat forefathers, elders and authorities issue orders in Igbo Language and received compliance. What of those that were given severe punishments such as excommunication, banishing etc. were these not proclaimed and communicated in Igbo Language. **Ideation Role:** Language is used as a means of controlling or seeking compliance of the forces of nature in consonance with the peoples' beliefs and faith. This is what happens in prayers, incantations, libations, some rituals. Were curses not proclaimed on people or relieved from people in Igbo language. Were prayers not said in Igbo. Didn't our people conduct incantation, libation, and invocation of ancestral spirits in Igbo. Were not people initiated into 'òkónkò, 'Ekpè, Mmị nwú cult in Igbo Language, were not people dedicated to the gods in Igbo like the 'Njókú, Mmàáji, etc.

Performative Role: Language can be used to bring about sudden change in the state of affairs in the real world as soon as the utterance is made. For instance, a man and woman can be doing things together but it is only the day they are pronounced husband and wife by their kin's spokesman, by the priest in the church, or by the registrar in the court that they become husband and wife. A child could be having bath from the day he is born but it is only the day they pronounce him baptized that he is baptized. One can be languishing in detention for years, but it is only the day the magistrate sentences one to a term of imprisonment in the law court that the person becomes a prisoner. Didn't all these and similar things take place in our language. **Ludic Role:** Language is used for amusement and entertainment. Didn't our fathers sing beautiful songs,

lullabies, war songs, dirge, folksongs, and even the satirical songs that were meant to criticize and correct social ills. Now that we are convinced that Igbo Language was a sufficient communicative tool yesterday, let us take an overview of Igbo culture yesterday.

The Igbo Culture Yesterday:

Permit me to give a little insight of what culture means. Anthropologists such as Taylor (1871) defined culture as; 'That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, law, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society' Ruth Benedict, an American anthropologist defined culture as, 'a pattern of thinking and doing that runs through the activities of a people and distinguishes them from all other people!'. Corroborating the anthropologists, a document on Nigeria's cultural policy in 1988 describes culture as, 'The totality of the way of life evolved by a people in the attempt to meet the challenges of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economical, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organization, thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours. During a World Conference on cultural policies, a declaration was adopted that, Culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. includes, in addition to art and literature, ways of living together, value system, tradition and belief (UNESCO 2002). on people, implying that no human can exist without it. The culture of a people is Culture can be summarized as "people's way of life". people's everything, an imperali existence; it is learned, not innate. (Ohaikwe and Ikonne 2007). The construct 'culture is embodiment of everything they do. Culture is a product and development culture unless it is manifest. It manifests in a people's religion, language, philosophy, music, dance, drama, architecture, political organization. and morality (Anyanwu 2005) known as FESTAC 77, featuring dances, music, creative arts of the black people, their Perhaps, until Nigeria hosted the 2nd World Black Festival of Arts and Culture, other of a black man's culture may have been nebulous to the outside world. As we can Igbo Culture or the British culture as distinct from the Hausa. the America, India or other culture is often co-terminal with race or ethnicity, hence, we talk of the Yoruba culture, Culture is significant in the sense that it ascribes identity to a people. The way one speaks, dresses, behaves etc obviously point to the person's culture. It is the mirror in which the past is seen and the pillar on which the present is sustained. A nation without a culture non-existent in

itself. A people without culture are considered non-existent themselves (Ejiofor 1984). Ndi Igbo, like all other ethnic groups had enviable culture and told which they believed, respected and preserved before the new dawn.

The Belief System:

In those days, there used to be a 'chi' a god respected and worshiped in the community. They believed that the 'chi' protected them and guided their step. It also regulated their moral principles and their communal governments largely based on the dictates of the chi. There were the chi igwékaalà d Umunneoha, Alá ógbàgà of Chokoneze, Nnemiri ihe, mkpuruakpoukwu Amuzu, Ala obizi of Ovuokwu, Ometaranunje of Obegu and many others. People revered them and worshipped them in earnest, with the hopes of reward and punishment for their actions in social life, good neighbourliness, help fellow man, stealing, murder, incest, witchcrafts etc. They even sought redress times of hurt, from the chis. For these and many more, our forefathers endearing stability.

Naming System:

The spiritual or religious inclination of Ndi Igbo manifest in all they do. Whatever the Igbo do rotate around the chi. This is apparent in their names. It is a known fact that the traditional Igbo names are thoughtful and thought-provoking. And so Ndi Igbo bore names like; Chinenye, Chibudo, Chibuzo, Chizomut Onyinyechi, Nnamdi, Azuogu, Ebubechike, Nwigwe, Nwaeke, Okor Oguamalam, Jidefo, Alajuruonye, Onwuaturgwu, Achild. were given based on the belief system and circumstances surrounding the birth.

Igbo Customs and Tradition:

Ekejiuba etc. All these strands of traditions and culture include modes of dressing, marriage, prachios festivals, leadership, hospitality, and communal living. Dressing: Popoola (2000) reveals that dressing like religions and languages in Nigeria, is unique to regions. The modes and styles of dressing constitute one of the ways of identifying a people. Culture, races, communities, bodies, societies etc are easily recognized by their mode of dressing.

In those old days, Ndi Igbo did not joke with their traditional regalia. Women maintained the two-layer wrapper of George or ukpo, with the blouse and hair gear or scart. The men wore their

jompa, with their plain George wrapper, their cap and staffor walking stick. Titled men had their attire or costume full of royal splendor. The Igbo tradition costume distinguished Ndigbo from other people in any gathering.

Marriage: The society relies on marriage for procreation. Marriage was sanctimonious in the traditional society and as such, a child out of wedlock was out of it! Marriage was therefore viewed as an institution, a human affair, which by its nature, is ordained towards the well being of the spouses and the conservation of human species. The traditional marriage in Igboland was the highlight of human's life as the parent will have the opportunity to provide and transfer some cultural expectations to the bride and groom, payment of dowry and all other marriage protocols were observed before the man and woman were proclaimed husband and wife.

Leadership: Ndigbo appreciate and adore achievement and success attained through hardwork. Attainment of success by hardwork was like climbing an Iroko tree which is seldom done and when it is done, calls for celebration. Right from the pre-colonial era, Ndigbo are known to be so highly democratic that the choice of the Eze is strictly based on honesty, transparency, accountability and fairness of judgment, no matter whose is gored. Chieftaincy titles were either honorary or hereditary. They are earned not bought. The Eze and titled men were the true custodians of Igbo culture.

All constituted authorities were revered and obeyed. Festivals: Festivals occupy a vital place in the Nigerian society. Every ethnic group celebrates one thing or the other from time to time. It is a period of home-coming and a meeting of kith and kin. In those old days, the various versions of the yam festivals (the iriji and ikeji), the Ofala as it is called in some parts of Igboland, the Aja oru of ovuokwuwovwungwu, the ikoro of mbutu, the Ekpe of Nsulu, the Ohafia war dance etc were cultural festivals that pulled Ndigbo together and made them outstanding.

Hospitality: One amiable attribute of the Igbo is the spirit of hospitality. It does not follow whether the host is poor or rich, he wants to be of good help, treating his guest with dignity and respect. This attribute of Ndigbo is epitomized in Chinua Achebe's description of the coming of the Whites in Igboland. It is the hospitality virtue of the Igbo that earns them the slogan "o huru obia gbawa nkwa (egwu)".

Philosophy of Life:

Our values and worldviews constitute our ideas about what principles should guide our social interaction and social relations generally. Core Igbo values include:

Respect for Human Life: In those old days, human life was of great value. People did everything to preserve life. Killing of self or others i.e. Anybody who committed suicide caused unimaginable grief. The gods would have to be appeased before the body of the deceased was accepted in to the shrine or evil forest. On the other hand, anybody who commits murder was banished for good. The birth of a new child was communally celebrated. The value for life made it a taboo to terminate pregnancy or abandon a

Death: In the traditional Igbo society, death was respected. Our view of life and given a befitting burial while the death of an unclean one like one who committed a crime between life and death. Hence a clean death of a human at ripe age was celebrated. Suicide or murder of his kinsmen deceased would be incest or practiced witchcraft was termed 'onwu ojoo' such forest the people.

Old Age and Wisdom: Old age is respected in the traditional society. The account of their age and experience are believed to have even some spiritual powers. The Igbo Language and Culture Today

Hard work: In the traditional Igbo society, wealth did not come in dreams was thrown into the affluence by chance but by dint of hard work. Source of wealth was critically scrutinized before it is accorded recognition.

We would recall that we said earlier that language is primarily spoken or oral; that writing is a recent phenomenon. The history of Igbo handwriting is traced to the whites who colonized and evangelized Africa. To them, African education was primitive because there were no documentations and everything was orally transmitted. This oral status of African language posed serious difficulty to the whites in their business of evangelism, modernization, Western Education etc.

It is against this backdrop that they decided to develop handwriting for African Languages (Igbo inclusive). The journey from oral to the written status of African and Nigerian Language (Igbo inclusive) is a distant one. The history, I will spare you here for fear of gaining volumes.

Although, it was a herculean task for the missionaries, the summary is that Igbo language has been reduced into writing today. Apart from the success reckoned with codification of Igbo language, Igbo language has been standardized and modernized to utilization in all spheres of life; education, commerce, technology, entertainment, communication/media, politics religion, etc.

Igbo Language in Homes Today

Igbo language has been developed to do more for us today than it did for our forefathers yesterday but unfortunately, the potentials of this language were harnessed more easily than it is today. And the question comes, why do we do less with our language today than the fathers did with it yesterday? A lot of factors have been blamed for this relegation of Igbo Language. Such as civilization. The threat Igbo language faces today started in homes with you and I. Ndigbo show negative attitude towards their language especially the Elites; the professors, doctors, teachers etc. The People are courted for their blessing, and revered for the potent curses. The death of a person is viewed as an increase in the ancestral membership. The guardian spirits Language attitude indicates how an individual feels and thinks about his/her language (Njemanze 2007). Parents do not communicate with their children in Igbo language. Even those who claim to be promoters of the Igbo language do not speak the language to their children and neither do they encourage their wards to make a career in Igbo Language (Study Igbo in higher schools).

Elites disqualify and dismiss domestic staff for not being able to speak impeccable English to their wards.

Many elites are illiterates in Igbo language. They can neither read nor write the language, where they make effort to speak Igbo at all, they speak 'Engliligbo', the type or version of Igbo Language described by the Igbo popular Musician, Late Oliver De Coque' when he sang,

Onye ch?r? isu oyilbo s?wa,

oye ch?r? isu igbos?wa.

Onye asula ogbara igbogharit,

Anyi achoghizi ingligbo oo

Meaning speak English if you wish, Igbo if you wish but not the adulterated (code mixed). To illustrate how incompetent many Igbo elites are in their mother tongue, if for instance, this whole environment becomes under siege by and a good Samaritan among them decides to save lives by dropping into each person's hand a piece of information written in Igbo describing how to escape through a hidden exit in this hall, how many of you here would take advantage of that gesture? Apparently very few this is because, very many, are illiterates in the language.

Igbo elites shamelessly apologize to the public that they cannot speak Igbo. Such quickly come to the rescue of their wards with the excuse that 'junior does not speak Igbo'. Many parents would say about their children, 'hey understand but they don't speak the language'. Tell me how they will speak when you don't, when greetings are said in English, family devotions conducted in English, every other instruction and interaction at home are done in English. How would they see any virtue in the language? The illiterate parents are about overtaking the elites in the quest for English medium in homes. Where do they go from there.

Igbo Language in Churches Today

This is one place Igbo language has been relegated to the background. Today church services are conducted in English irrespective of where it takes place. Funeral services are conducted in English even in the remotest part of Igbo land. At best, the services of an interpreter are employed. People no longer pray in Igbo; the reason why we have people praying "as our face difference so our problem difference" wonder how many people here can read the Igbo Bible and sing the Igbo Hymns? Apparently, a handful of this great audience.

Igbo Language In Our Schools Today

The history of language education in Nigeria is traced to the European Missionaries who in addition to propagation of Christianity, offered Western Education. In their effort to offer formal education, they made an early discovery that, "the African child was best taught in African mission (Nigeria Inclusive) and education. issued a report in Following this observation, the Church Missionary Society (CMS), as in the early years in primary education shall be in local languages and his native language"(Hair 1967) in Ikonne 2006) (Osokoya 1987 in Ohaikwe and Ikonne 2004). This report was reinforced by the 1922 reports of the Phelps-stokes recommended among other things, the use of indigenous languages for the beginning of education ", it is

against this background that the British Government issued 1923 and 194] respectively that, 'a child should not t move to2 higher class unless be revealed that, African fomal education was non-functional and made a good grade in mother tongue' fallacy that it was better and mnore esteemed to train persons in English n than in ndige In spite ofthese early views of the missionary that indigenous elites believed dand sprea languages (Taiwo 1980 in Ikonne 2006). So English medium stood ground in school many years after independence.

However, following heightened agitations in the parliament and other over the insistence of English at the detrient of our indigenous languages, Fed Government began to take interest in the language issues. In the early 1970s and by 19 Government issued an official document titled, National 1 Policy on Education' (NPEL The National policy on Education (NPE) provided i predorninantly among oher thing language policy for the nation. Government, in appreciation of the importance of lane relevant a in the educational process, in preservation of culture and in national integration provided for mother tongue (MI) education captured in the following statemnt- Government will see to it that the medium of instruction for early primary education would be Mother Tongue (MD) or language of Immediate Community (LIC) and at a later stage English. (NPE 1977, revised 2004) This language provision of the NPE for the beginning of education bas pedagvg justifications. Studies have shown that the language in which education is given to thech makes a huge difference in the way he/she receives education. NERDC (1971) reveals the Nigerian children will develop in curiosity, manipulative skills, spontaneous flexibiliy, initiative, industry and manual dexteriy i they are taught through the se of mother tongue.

This was confimed by the Ife Experimental project called the Ife SYPP which e among other things that, Primary Education in MTleads to more permanent literacy and numeracy; it leads to faster and more rounded development of cognitive, afective and manipulative skills, primary education in mother tongue has greater surrender value and makes the child a better adjusted citizen in the community (Fafunwa et 1989 citedin Ikonne 2006). Other scholars have lent credence to the language policy for the initial literacy instance, Chumbow (1990) observed that the child learns better and develops reason being that the child uses his MT/LIC to categorize bis environment, ie cognitively if he or she is taught in his her MT continuously over a period of time and are unwilling to wait another year for admission into the This lack of interest in Igbo

Language has resulted in Where there are no interested and motivated students to cannot be produced. In all the tertiary institutions in the studied, there is scarcity of Igbo Language lecturers. Such students make teaching of four languages difficult and uninteresting programmes of death of Igbo train, good and country where Igbo It is more worrisome to observe that the few people who hold the Nigerian Certificate Education (NCE) or even University degree in indigenous languages have them. They prefer to either teach their second teaching subject required. language teacher quality teach language studies or find jobs in banks or other such establishments where their training (S Igbo and Yoruba). like English, Igbo language in communication, entertainments and film industry today. Igbo language has been shown the exit door in the media Apart from the news in lot Aka ncha Rin, Rin, Aka ncha mara mma, their chog other programmes like Ni Nara Rie, all other programmes are transmitted in English otherwise referred to as 'Akuko Uwa' in our radio and television stations, and perhaps safe Radio South Africa etc have slots for transmission in Hausa but none for Igbo Language World Broadcasting Stations like BBC, voice of America, radio France, Radio Gera other major tribes in Nigeria have newspapers in their different languages except the channels for Hausa, Yoruba and some other languages but none for Igbo. Furthermore, Independent Television Industries in Nigeria like DAAR Communication, DSTV newspapers include, Alariya, Oodua, Alaroye, Iri, Akede Agbaye, Akede Oduduwa For instance, Hausa news paper titled Gakiya Tafi kabo exists, available Yoruba (Ejiofor 2008). The only Igbo newspaper, Ogene' published in 1976 by star printing publishing company died a natural death. (I am happy to announce here that the Institute for Nigeria Languages, Aba now produces newspaper in the three major languages, Hausa, French, so on Ona-asupu akwa ocha, ocha, ncha Rin anmaka a. It is disheartening that people do not create advert in Igbo language any more remember the advert on 'Rin' tablet soap: Many Igbo drama like Ojamba, Igiririndu, etc have gone moribund, why In the Nollywood, Igbo has gone under too. DSTV has African magic Hausa where Hausa films are shown, there is African mags Yoruba but no African magic Igbo. The same thing is applicable to African Independent Television (AIT). AIT has channel for Hausa and Yoruba but has none for Igbo. This is appalling. The reason however is not far fetched. Ndi Igbo set the pace in the movie industry but their movies are not produced in Igbo language. Shortly after the production 'Living in bondage', 'Ikuku' and few other Igbo films, the Igbo film producers decided produce in English.

This is the reason the DSTV African Magic (the English channel) is dominated by the actors and actresses. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) 2006 cited in (2008) reveals that 44.9% of Nigerian films (Nollywood) are produced in English, 31% Yoruba, 24% in Hausa and 1% in Igbo. However it is worrisome that the majority of the entertainment industry reveals that while the Hausa, Yoruba and other tribes in Nigeria English films are produced by Ndigbo. Similarly, appraisal of the music and produce songs music in their languages, the Igbo musicians float. Their productions are neither indigenous nor foreign it is for such situations that Ejiofor (2002) asked: The Igbo language is it a tongue which is out of a mouth? Surely, it looks like a dying language of a living people. The Igbo Culture Today:

A The Belief System.

As if it is only in Igboland that civilization and Christianity came. Ndigbo are after strange gods, they abandoned their chis, made no sacrifices for them, and did not think of them as anything but artifacts. The relegation of the chis became complete with the embracing of foreign politics enforced by colonialism. The cherished communal values of brotherhood, family ties are now of little value to Ndigbo. Modernity, commerce and other contact add to the influx of foreign people and ideas and inroads are made into our cherished culture. Even the morality-regulating gods are sold as works of art to foreigners who ostensibly value them more than we do. We are left with greed, avarice, and clamour for strange gods and values. Although, societies are bound to change, we want to believe that the Igbo communities seem to value more other people's culture than theirs. We are neither close to nature, to the land nor to our gods anymore. All that revolves around the care today considered.

B The Naming System Today.

For practical purposes, the Igbo are murdering their language and consequently their culture. The well thought-out Igbo naming system has been bastardized. What could be possibly offensive in Oluebube, Mmeri, Amarachi, Chidiebube, Chiagoziem, etc that today we can only bear, favour, Amblessed, Miracle, Prosper, Success, Praise, Gospel, Providence, Marvelous and the like. Today, after parents had given Igbo names to their children, either they or their children repent later and either anglicize the names or denounce them completely. I had a funny experience sometime ago when I visited my cousin in his new location. I spent hours asking around when

in the real sense I was at the right place. The reason being that nobody knew him by the name I was calling. My cousin had repented changed his first name and took my grandfather's silent name. Instead of Enyeribe Nweke, my cousin bears Gospel Mark. (I hope he doesn't squeeze my mouth after here).

These days, people no longer want to maintain family names. Wives bear their husband's first name, so also children, their fathers' first name. In this era of foreign names, these are the kind of names people bear; Glory Peter, Favour Praise, Eucharist Gospel, Amblessed Johnson etc. and they will ask, does it matter Let us give an illustration that determines whether it matters or not. Nigerian children, basically Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba travelled in a boat' and incidentally the boat sank with all the occupants. Then Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba was alerted and charged to rescue the children by their names only. The Hausa must rescue Hausa children only, the Yoruba and the Igbo, respectively. Meanwhile all the children were alive when the rescue teams arrived The Hausa rescue team, rescued the Jumais, Aishas. Halatus, Audus, Usmans, etc.

All the Hausa children were rescued. The Yoruba rescued all the Bimbo% Tokumbos, Seyins, Idowus, Alabas etc and all the Yoruba children were rescued the Igbo team could only rescue five people namely, Nnenna, Uju, Emeka Obioma and Chinyere. They went home rejoicing that not only five Igbo children were involved in the incident. Hours later, it was announced that about 500 Igbo children who were

involved in the incident drowned. The drowned are the Mary Jones, Favour Peter, Ruth Paul, Ange, Praise, etc. Ask this great audience, who is to be blamed for this loss of life

C. Mode of dress today:

All through the colonial rule, the Hausa/ Fulani and Yoruba never flirted with an idea of adopting the western mode of dress. They stuck to their flowing *pagowne*: the Igbo that still prefers suit even in the scorching African sun. As for the contemporary Igbo woman, hers is the skimpy, semi-nude provocative dress of the West. And the young find succor in Yankee dressing.

D. Marriages today:

The new churches will almost jeer at a member who puts on *jompa*, two layer wrapper etc. They have a special day for African dressing/service made up Today young men and women live as

husbands and wives without formal introduction to the parents. Payment of dowry and other marriage protocols are neglected: single parenthood is an innovation and broken homes are also common

E. Festivities:

Old Age and Wisdom: In those days people rallied round the old to seek counsel and wisdom. The old dished out wisdom in proverbs. In those days, such was the esteem of orators that children were encouraged to keep the company of elders in order to learn the uses and meaning of proverbs. On the contrary today, any child who displays the admirable quality of speaking in proverbs is derisively called a village champion by his peers.

F. Leadership:

The Argungu fishing festival is an annual event in Sokoto. The Egungun festival in Yoruba land is eagerly awaited yearly, the Eyo festival of Yoruba land is now an international event drawing active participants from all over the world every August. But here in Igbo land, the Iri ji, Ikeji, Ala obizi, festival and the Ohatiawa dance face stiff opposition from the Christian religion. They are fetish. We need know what Ndiigbo will bequeath to their future generation! Today, the Ezeship is contested, Chieftaincy titles are bought. Our custom traditions are now in the custodian of those who know next to nothing about the culture of the land. That is the reason, they commit sacrilege.

G. Respect for Human Life:

Today, this value is lost. People go into ritual killing, assassination and cold illegal nursing and maternity homes where children born out of wedlock are taken blooded murder for flimsy reasons.

H. Death:

The era of throwing people who died unclean death into the evil forest is gone. Today, with the proliferation of mortuaries, anybody that dies irrespective of age or cause and the quality of his life is dumped in the mortuaries awaiting befitting burial.

J. Hard work:

Today, unlike the yester years, hard work is no longer highly rated. Shady short-cuts abound to acquire wealth without sweat. All kinds of malpractices are flagrantly displayed in the society; money, property etc are taken from legitimate custodians at gun points! Where do we go from here? I ask again.

Igbo Language and Culture Tomorrow

If nothing is done to change the current trend, I join others to predict the extinction of Igbo language and culture in the near future. The embodiment of culture is language. Cultures are transmitted using language. Language also binds the society together. A people without a language may be dumb animals. To preserve the God-given identity, one's mother tongue must be preserved and nurtured. The language must be spoken, written, chanted in, praised in and worked with. It is the pivot of culture. Language is the most endearing artifacts of culture. Except it is forced by conquest or by superior members or by social, economic and political domination to give up their language, a people can always have their history traced through their language (Sidi 1996 in Obioma 2010). A situation that causes one to give up one's language, voluntarily, should be viewed in all its severity.

CONCLUSION:

If we don't change our attitude towards our language and culture, speak our language and work with it. manifest our rich cultures and get our children to do the same, certainly, there will be no Igbo language and culture tomorrow. I assure you that Igbo scholars are busy with documentations. If we allow the gate to be shut against Igbo Language and culture, scholars will hang the following documentations on the gate; "there was a tribe called Igbo, their language was called Igbo and their territory was here. The letters of their alphabet was.

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