

An Appraisal of Igbo Language Teaching Material Resources in Secondary Schools in Niger State

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Abstract

Igbo language and other Nigerian languages (NLs) have been suffering a lot of setback both in their use as medium of instruction and their studies in secondary school, due to lack of material resources. This research was initiated to find out how the study of Igbo language is fairing in Niger state with the topic: “An Appraisal of Igbo Language teaching material resources in Secondary Schools in Niger State.” Four research questions were formulated and reasonably answered by Igbo language teachers in the selected secondary schools, while one hypothesis was tested. The population of the study is 34 Igbo language teachers in the selected secondary schools in the 3 senatorial zones of the state. An Appraisal of Igbo Language Teachers questionnaire, (AILTQ), was drafted and validated to yield a reliability index of **.768** through Cronbach Alpha, and was used for data collection. The data generated were analysed using percentage, t-test and ANOVA. The results show that lack of relevant teaching materials were the main problem of Igbo language studies in secondary schools in Niger State. The result of the tested hypothesis shows clearly that there was no significant difference in the mean of quality and quantity of Igbo language teaching materials either between Federal and State secondary schools or among secondary schools in the three zones. The study recommended provision of relevant teaching materials for Igbo language teaching in Niger state secondary schools.

Keywords: *Igbo Language, Teaching material, Secondary schools*

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Background to the Study

Igbo language is one of the three major Nigerian languages (MNLs) approved by National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004, 2014) to be compulsorily studied in Primary schools through JSS to SSS. Others include: Hausa and Yoruba languages. The improper implementation of this policy is one of the problems hampering the proper study of Igbo and other Nigerian Languages (NLs) in many Secondary schools such as: unity schools, State secondary schools and other private secondary schools (Okwudishi, 2010; Ohiri-Aniche, 2014,). Observations have shown that many secondary schools in Nigeria are not studying these languages, due to lack of teaching material resources among other issues. Igbo children living outside Igbo land are mostly affected in this problem, as they are large in number outside Igbo land, owing to the Igbo peoples' natural habit of residing more outside their home land (Okwudishi, 2010; Ohiri-Aniche 2014,).

Apart from the above fact, UNESCO and other similar organizations concerned in the development of indigenous languages, have cried out severally on the danger of neglecting indigenous languages, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria, to the extent that Igbo language has been classified as one of the endangered languages that may die in near future, if something is not done to rescue the language (Emenanjo, 2001, 2006; Bamgbose, 1996 2006; Okwudishi, 2010; Ohiri-Aniche, 2014; Mubarak, 2016). This affects the study of other school subjects, but Igbo and other NLs are mostly affected due to poor attitude of people on indigenous languages, Igbo language inclusive, in Niger State secondary schools (Ijaya, et al 2013). The importance of indigenous languages to the development of the Nigerian child cannot be over emphasized. Item 10, section 1 of Nigeria's N.P.E. – 6th Edition 2014, is sub-headed 'The importance of language' and it states thus:

Government appreciates the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesion; and preserving cultures. Thus every child shall learn the language of the immediate environment. Furthermore, in the interest of national unity it is expedient that every child shall be required to learn one of the three major Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

From the on-going, it is obvious that item 10 of the N.P.E embraces indigenous languages as custodian of Nigerian cultures, which engenders citizenship awareness and unity amongst Nigerians. The state of the art in teaching and learning of Nigeria languages with particular reference to Igbo language is not encouraging. As observed by many researchers in Igbo language studies; attitude of parents, teachers, school authorities, government and general public towards the study of Igbo and other NLs is quite discouraging. Apart from these poor attitudes there is poor provision of relevant teaching materials (Ohiri Aniche, 2008, 2010, 2015; Okwudishi, 2010; Ejiifo, 2014; Mba, 2011,).

Equally observed is the final examination results of Secondary Schools over the years which do not lend credence to government's efforts. Rather, they mostly belie government endeavours, as each year marks a drop in students' S.S.C.E and W.A.E.C. performance especially in Nigerian languages subjects, particularly in Igbo language. The Chief Examiners of NECO and WAEC in 2015 report that only less than 50% of candidates passed the Nigerian languages such as Igbo

(The Chief Examiners of NECO and WAEC in 2015). Furthermore, the report observed that reading culture amongst students in these indigenous languages is in serious decline and at its lowest ebb. In this wise, fully equipped and functional libraries with adequate and relevant text books should be provided; teachers and students should be motivated and made to read extensively. It will be hasty to point an accusing finger at the implementers or the end users of the N.P.E. without a proper assessment of the situation, hence the need for this project. This research tends to ascertain to which extent indigenous language teaching policy (particularly Igbo) has been prioritized, implemented and accomplished in secondary schools in Niger State and of adequacy qualitative textbooks and other teaching materials.

Statement of the Problem

There is no doubt that poor awareness of the provisions of NPE on indigenous languages and lack of adequate qualitative textbooks and other teaching materials can as well lead to loss of interest and poor performance of students, and could equally lead to poor implementation of policies. The pattern of indigenous language studies in secondary schools and the availability of teaching material resources have become worrisome. This is why the team of researchers examines an appraisal of teaching material resources for teaching Igbo Language in secondary schools in Niger State.

Research Questions

The research answers the following questions:

- i. To what extent are the secondary schools implementing the N.P.E provisions in Igbo language study in Niger State
- ii. What are the records of students SSSCE performances in Igbo language in secondary schools in Niger state?
- iii. What is the quality and quantity of Igbo language text-books and other teaching materials in secondary schools in Niger State?
- iv. What are other ICT instructional materials available for teaching of Igbo Language

Research Hypotheses

Since there is the need to test the result from our research instrument, the following hypothesis was formulated.

Hypothesis I: There are no significant differences in the availability of qualitative and quantitative teaching materials for Igbo language among secondary schools in the three zones of Niger State.

Research Methodology

The design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey. The choice of the descriptive design is guided by the fact that it is a systematic method of collecting and analyzing responses gathered from a large sample of respondents with questionnaire developed in order to seek their opinions and attitudes about the topic under study. Borg and Gall (1989) and Nworgu (1991) observed that in this type of research, a group of people or items are studied.

by collecting and analyzing data generated from a few people or items being considered as representative of the entire group. This gave the researchers the opportunity to obtain the necessary information required about the targeted population. The population of the study is all Igbo language teachers in all secondary schools in Niger State. Stratified sampling technique was adopted to select 5 Federal Government secondary schools, 8 state government secondary schools and 7 private secondary schools. Purposive sampling technique was also adopted to select 28 secondary schools that teach Igbo from Federal, state government and private schools that meet the requirements. The (28) selected secondary schools in Niger State which include at least 5-8 Secondary schools in each zone of the state were used. The selected schools have both senior and junior classes. 34 Igbo language teachers in the selected secondary schools in Niger State were used. The instrumentation used for this study is an Appraisal of Igbo Language Teachers questionnaire, (AILTQ) developed by 6-member researchers. The questionnaire was a combination of both structured and unstructured questions. Both descriptive and inference statistics were computed in order to obtain results used to address the research questions and hypothesis. The descriptive statistics involved were the frequency count and percentage distribution, which were used to answer the research questions. The inferential statistics involved the use of t-test and ANOVA used to test the hypotheses. The results obtained from the analysed data were presented in tables. The bench mark of the number of textbooks for students are as contained in the NCCE minimum standard for colleges of education.

Data Analysis and Results

The results presented in the tables in this section emanated from the analysis of the data generated from field work with the use of questionnaire. All the data were analyzed through the application of appropriate statistical tools in SPSS version 21.

Research Questions

In order to answer the research questions in this study, the frequency count and percentage analysis of the variables were computed from relevant data.

Research Question 1: To what extent are the secondary schools implementing the NPE Provisions on Igbo language study in Niger state

Table 1: Percentage of implementation of NPE provisions

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Awareness of NPE provisions	Yes	28	82.4
	No	6	17.6
Guides students'	Parents	28	82.4
	Yourself	5	14.7
	Students' peer	1	2.9
Igbo language not offered in SSS classes	Yes	28	82.4
	No	6	17.6

Table 1 shows that 82.4% of Igbo language teachers in Niger state secondary schools were aware of the provisions of NPE while 17.6% of the teachers were not aware of NPE provisions. The

results on table 5 equally show that 82.4% of individuals who guided the students were the students' parents, while 14.7% of the guidance was from the teachers and 2.9% of the guidance came from students' peers. Similarly, it was indicated that 82.4% of the opinion poll showed that Igbo language was not offered in all the Niger state senior secondary schools, while 17.6% opinion showed that Igbo language was offered.

This result implied that Niger state secondary schools were yet to adequately implement the NPE provisions on Nigerian languages of which Igbo language is one of the major as many schools terminated the teaching of Igbo language in Junior Secondary School classes. These results implied that Niger State secondary schools were yet to adequately implement NPE provisions on Nigerian languages of which Igbo languages is a major. The 2014 edition of NPE provisions on indigenous languages for JSS and SSS in section five, N0 24A, item (iv) & (v) and N0 25A item (iii), which stipulate in parts that the language of environment and one other major Nigerian language are among the core subjects to be compulsorily taken in JSS while in SSS, students are allowed to compulsorily choose one major Nigerian language of their choice other than the language of environment.

Despite these laudable National policies on education by government to encourage the teaching and learning of indigenous languages in our schools, there have been difficulties towards the implementation of these policies, while the trend is disturbing, it might not be out of place to say that successive governments have not done enough to supervise the implementation process. Following the poor implementation of the national policy on education as it relates to indigenous languages, it has been criticized by many language experts, Obuasi, (2002), Nwadike (2002) Ohaegbu (2010) describe it as a mere statement of intent rather than a serious programme for implementation. They argued that if government was serious about implementing the policy, there should have been a definite format for all states to follow in the implementation exercise. They also argued why the implementation of the language policy was made “subject to availability of teachers”, pointing out that if government actually considers the learning of the indigenous languages crucial for national integration, there should be legal backing to sanction defaulting schools.

Research Question 2: What are the Records of students SSSCE performances in Igbo language in secondary schools in Niger state?

Table 2: Records of students SSSCE performances in Igbo language in secondary schools in Niger state

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Records of students performances:		
2014 Excellent	13	38.2
Good	18	52.9
Fair	3	8.9
2015 Excellent	12	35.3
Good	19	55.9
Fair	3	8.8
2016 Excellent	8	23.5
Good	19	55.9
Fair	3	8.8
Poor	4	11.8
Analysis of students performance:		
40 – 49%	6	17.6
50 – 69%	17	50.0
70 – 100%	11	32.4

Results on table 2 show clearly that good grade was highest (52.9%) in 2014, followed by excellent grade (38.2%) and then 8.9% fair grade. In 2015, there was 55.9% good grade, 35.3% excellent grade and 8.8% fair grade. The same trend was noticed in 2016 with 55.9% good grade, 23.5% excellent grade, 8.8% fair grade but registered 11.8% poor grade. Analysis of these performances as shown on table 6 also reveals a 50.0% for range of scores between 50 and 69 (50-69%), 32.4% for range of scores between 70 and 100 (70-100%) and 17.6% for range of scores between 40 and 49 (40-49%). These results were indications that Igbo language learners have potentials to perform brightly in the language as well as indicative of effectiveness of the Igbo language teachers and the facilities involved in the cause of learning.

The results revealed that 31 out of 34 sampled Igbo language teachers rated their students “Good” and Excellent while only 3 out of 34 Igbo language teachers rated their students “Fair” in the year 2014 and 2015 while in 2016, 27 out of 34 of the teachers rated their students “Good” and Excellent while the remaining 7 teachers rated their students Fair and poor.

These records of students' performance, as seen obtained from school WAEC and NECO results, indicate that in spite of all the numerous challenges facing the studies of indigenous languages in Nigeria, Igbo language teachers in Niger State secondary schools worked hard and made sure that their students succeeded in their exams.

Research Question 3: What are the quantitative Igbo language text-books and other Teaching materials in secondary schools in Niger state?

Table 3: Percentage of Quantitative Igbo language Text-Books and Teaching Materials

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Assess Availability: Adequate	7	20.6
Moderate	16	47.1
Inadequate	11	32.3
Provision of Teachers		
Text-books: School	15	44.1
P.T.A	3	8.8
Government	5	14.7
Self	11	32.4
Provision of Students		
Textbooks: Students	3	8.8
Parents	20	58.8
School	7	20.6
Government	4	11.8
Relevance of Textbooks: Relevant	28	82.4
Not Relevant	6	17.6
Recommended Igbo		
Textbooks: Yes	12	35.3
No	22	64.7

It is inferred from table 3 that accessibility of available Igbo language textbooks and other teaching materials in Niger state secondary schools were moderate with 47.1%, followed by inadequate with 32.3% and adequate with 20.6%. Similarly, it was revealed on the table that out of the category of means of providing teachers textbooks, school had 44.1%, followed by self with 32.4%, then Government with 14.7% and PTA with 8.8%. Further analysis of how students were being provided their textbooks shows that 58.8% were by the parents, 20.6% by the school, 11.8% by the Government and 8.8% by students themselves. The relevance of Igbo language textbooks was critical as 82.4% of the result revealed that the textbooks were relevant while 17.6% indicated non-relevance. Lastly, the table shows that 64.7% of the opinion indicated that recommended Igbo language textbook were not used while 35.3% of the responses showed that recommended Igbo Language textbooks were used.

These results implied that numerous Igbo language textbooks were available and accessible; schools provided Igbo language textbooks to teachers, parents were responsible for the provision of Igbo language textbooks to students, and while the textbooks used for Igbo language learning were relevant, majority of the textbooks used were not the recommended ones. The responses from the sampled teachers show that 23 out of 34 Igbo language teachers rated the Igbo textbooks in their schools “moderate” and “adequate”, which is acceptable while 11 out of 34 of them rated Igbo textbooks in their schools inadequate which is unacceptable. The results also revealed that 26 out of 34 sampled teachers confirmed that Igbo textbooks for teachers were provided by the school authority and the teachers themselves while 8 of the teachers ticked that government and P.T.A provided Igbo textbooks for teachers. The results equally show that 28 out of 34 teachers affirmed that the Igbo text books were relevant while

only 6 teachers ticked that the Igbo text books in their schools were not relevant. It was discovered also that most of the Igbo textbooks used in Niger State secondary schools were not recommended. We have seen from the above results that Igbo textbooks were available and accessible, very relevant but not recommended. This ugly situation raised the question of why Igbo teachers in Niger State secondary schools use books not recommended for WAEC &, NECO in teaching their students, The reason for this may be due to lack of fund, since the government neither provides the fund nor the books they recommend, the school and the teachers themselves went for the books that were affordable and relevant to Igbo language studies, not minding whether they were recommended or not.

Research Question 4: What are the ICT instructional materials available for the teaching of Igbo language?

Table 4: Instructional materials available for the teaching of Igbo language

Variable	Available		Not Available	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Conducive classroom	23	88.5	3	11.5
Language laboratory	5	19.2	21	80.8
Culture room	3	11.5	23	88.5
Library	14	53.8	12	46.2
Tape recorder	4	15.4	22	84.5
Pronunciation chart	10	38.5	16	61.5
Radio	6	23.1	20	76.9
Language laboratory material	5	19.2	21	80.8
Standing mirror	3	11.5	23	88.5
Television set	5	19.2	21	80.8
Overhead projector	2	7.7	24	92.3
Satellite dish and receiver	8	30.8	18	69.2
Computer with Igbo font	4	15.4	22	84.6
Internet facilities	8	30.8	18	69.2

It can be observed and deduced from table 4 that out of all the instructional materials considered, only conducive classroom and library recorded higher percentages on availability with 88.5% and 53.8% respectively. All other materials required for the teaching of Igbo language recorded higher percentage of not available in Niger state secondary schools.

These results implied that Igbo language teachers and students have been teaching and learning the language under-grossly inadequate learning environment that requires the modern technology driven learning. That is to say that insignificant number of secondary school in Niger State employs modern ICT facilities in teaching Igbo language. The results show that 23 out of 34 sampled Igbo language teachers have conducive classrooms in their schools, only 14 of them have library, 10 of them have pronunciation chart, 8 of them have internet facilities, satellite dish and receiver, 6 teachers have radio, only 5 have language laboratory and television set; 4 of them have computer with Igbo font and tape recorder, 3 have culture room while only 2 of the teachers have overhead projector in their schools. In all the infrastructure and ICT

instructional materials considered above, only conducive classroom and library recorded as high as 23 and 14 respectively. The implication here is that 20 out of 34 sampled Igbo language teachers have no library in their schools and 29 of them have no language laboratory in their schools. One wonders the kind of learning that takes place in a secondary school without a library where students can go and read on their own. No meaningful language learning can take place without a language laboratory. It can be observed that most of the schools visited have chemistry, physics and Biology laboratories but without language laboratories, cultural rooms or mini-museums. It becomes glaringly clear, our poor attitude and neglect to the studies of our indigenous languages. If a school can afford a chemistry, physics & Biology laboratories, what stops it from having a language laboratory too?

Research Hypotheses

The two hypotheses formulated in this study were tested with the use of t-test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical tools.

Research Hypothesis 1 (Ho₁): There are no significant differences in the availability of qualitative and quantitative teaching materials among secondary schools in the three (3) zones of Niger state.

Table 5: t-test of Qualitative and Quantitative textbooks and teaching materials (ICT infrastructure) by school name).

Variable	School name	N	\bar{x}	SD	DF	T	Sig (2-tailed)
Textbooks	Federal	19	11.79	1.847	24	2.674	.013*
	State	15	9.00	3.357			
Teaching materials (ICT/Infrastructure)	Federal	19	41.93	4.599	24	.045	.966
	State	15	41.93	6.548			

Table 6: ANOVA of Qualitative and Quantitative Textbooks and Teaching materials (ICT/Infrastructure) by Zones.

Variance		Sum of squares	DF	Mean squares	F	Significant
Textbook:	Between groups	48.131	2	24.065	3.249	.059
	Within Groups	170.369	23	7.407		
	Total	218.500	25			
Teaching materials: (ICT/Infrastructure)	Between groups	8.731	2	40.865	1.414	.264
	Within Groups	664.923	23	28.910		
	Total	746.654	25			

Table 5 displays a result that shows that there was a significant difference in the availability of qualitative and quantitative textbooks in Igbo language between secondary schools controlled by Federal and state, $t = 2.674$ at $p < .05$. However, there was no significant difference in the qualitative and quantitative teaching materials (ICT/ Infrastructure) on Igbo language between schools controlled by Federal and state.

The ANOVA results on table 6 show a no significant difference in the qualitative and quantitative textbooks and teaching materials (ICT/infrastructure) on Igbo language among secondary schools in the three zones of Niger state.

These results are indicative of the fact that secondary schools in Niger state did not consider the teaching and learning of Igbo language as crucial for Igbo language student to accept their mother tongue a relevant tool for excellent display of knowledge in other fields of study. The non-significant difference notwithstanding, the graphical analysis shows the distributions of the variables among the zones as displayed on figures 3 and 4.

Conclusion

The result obtained from this study affirms the poor state of Igbo language teaching in Niger state secondary schools. It is quite pathetic to observe that many Igbo children are in Niger State but there is no opportunity for them to learn their mother tongue. The NPE provision is that Nigerian children should learn one other Nigerian language other than theirs, is equally suffering as no known secondary school in the state is teaching L2 Igbo. It is also disheartening to observe that ICT facilities which are the modern aids for teaching are almost absent in many secondary schools. As a result of these, teaching of Igbo language is suffering severely in Niger state secondary schools. There is the need for the Niger State government to implement the NPE provisions on the study of Nigeria Languages.

Recommendations

The study recommends these for the proper studies of Igbo language in Secondary Schools.

- i. Enough relevant and adequate teaching materials for the teaching of Igbo language should be provided by the governments and proprietors of secondary schools in Niger States so as to enhance effective teaching and learning of the language.
- ii. Governments and proprietors of secondary schools in Niger States should provide relevant infrastructural facilities for the teaching of Igbo language.
- iii. All the secondary schools in Niger state should be mandated to comply with the 2014 NPE that makes the study of Nigerian languages compulsory for every student in SSS classes.
- iv. There is the need for the Niger State government to implement the NPE provisions on the study of Nigerian Languages.

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