

A Journey through the Uncharted Terrain of Igbo Linguistics

BY

Prof. P.A. Nwachukwu

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Ositadimma Chinedu Nebo,
My Respected Colleagues in the Academy,
Principal Officers of the University,
All the invited guests herein assembled,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Lions and Lionesses.

It is my rare privilege to stand before you and give this inaugural lecture as I bow out of the University, retired but by no means tired. The lecture has come late for reasons which may be obvious to most of you. But I feel impelled to give it because I am the first practicing linguist and foundation head of the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages. I believe that my experiences in my journey through the rough terrain of Igbo Linguistics have some lessons to teach. I therefore ask you to be patient as I move over times "turning the accomplishments of many years into an hour glass" (from Shakespeare's Henry V.).

Preamble:

The journey has been a long and arduous one; it started from my primary school days when my Headmaster then, Mr. Nicholas I. Nwachukwu (severus magister - a discipline-oriented teacher) found me in Standard 6 the most eloquent speaker of English in my class, and encouraged me by making me the spokesman of the class. Each time we went on an excursion, Philip was the pupil to give a vote of thanks to the Management of the establishment visited.

At Umuahia

And so it continued until I found myself a student of the prestigious Government College, Umuahia (1955-1961), and discovered, to my dismay, that I was not after all as wonderful in English as my primary school teachers thought. My weakness in the first two years of secondary education was in composition or essay writing: instead of scoring 8/10, 9/10 or 10/10, I found that at the hands of Mr. Marriot, our British English Language teacher, I never scored beyond 6V2/10, at times even went as low as 5/10. The usual comment, "muddled thinking" would stir me in the face. It was our usual practice in the school to compare notes; one would look round for the essays of students with good scores ranging from 7/10 to 8/10, borrow them and read them to discover the secret of their high scores. By the

time I got to secondary class 3, I had overcome my problem of muddled thinking which manifests in the form of unclear expressions. Apart from the good supply of literature books we had in our school library, we also had additional books on Model Essays, the most outstanding of which was *Hilary Bellock Essays*. One of his essays on "Clarity of Thought and Expression" ended in the following expression "Ayez des $\text{H}\text{O}\text{M}\text{O}\text{S}$ ♦♦ des expressions simples" (French) cultivate the art of clear thought and simple expressions. This simple guide to effective communication was not to be lost on me. From then onwards, I learnt not to park so many thoughts and ideas into one long and muddled sentence. This period of my learning process was the foundation of my terse or precise style today which is what linguistics as a precise science demands of its practitioners.

While still in Government College, Umuahia I came in first contact with *Lingua Latina* through the late George C. Akabogu of Otolu Nnewi, "Magister Oblivus", as we called and greeted him. A holder of an Hons Degree in Classics and an ex-seminarian, the late George Akabogu was a very learned and astute teacher of Latin, which he taught from Class 1-5 and later, up to higher school or A-level standard. Magister knew that Latin was a rule-studied language, Magister devised method of reducing the rules to mnemonic sentences with epigrammatic features, a device which turned the rules into memorable, pleasant poems. The form in which these rules were presented had a lot of appeal for me. Moreover, Latin is phonetic - it is pronounced as it is spelt just like Igbo. For me, therefore, studying Latin was a pleasant past-time.

At University of Ibadan

I added the knowledge of French to my strong classical background whose foundation was laid at the secondary school. With a solid background in Latin, a little knowledge of Greek, I found French a very easy modern language to study. We shall recall that French is one of the Romance languages, Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese; these are languages that hived off from classical Latin via Vulgar Latin - i.e. Latin for the vulgus or crowd of uneducated people), who could not cope with grammatical rules such as rules of strict concord, that demand agreement in number, gender and case between nouns and their modifiers. By getting well-grounded in these languages, I did not realise that I was getting myself ready for graduate studies in linguistics.

Ibadan 1962-1966

With three A-level subjects - English, Latin and Modern History (Europe since 1914) I easily got admission to University College Ibadan (UCI) which in 1963, fifteen years after its inception, was granted autonomy from University of London to become a full-fledged university (UI). I was admitted to read classics i.e. Greek, Latin and Ancient History - at Ibadan, a course I did for one academic year before changing to an Honours English programme on the advice of a very respected old boy of Government College, Umuahia, Paul Mbaeyi who read History at Ibadan and won the highly coveted Cecil , Rhodes Scholarship for postgraduate studies at Oxford University in the United Kingdom. Although I decided to opt for an Honours degree in English, I did not sever relations with Latin and French, I continued studying them as part of my B.A. part I subjects. By the end of the second year of this programme I dropped both Latin and French in favour of Linguistics.

The Modern Languages Department at Ibadan was highly disappointed; after enjoying a Ford Foundation Scholarship for a long-vacation course in French at the University of Dakar in Senegal, I was expected to come back and continue with an Honours programme in French language and literature, but I chose to continue with English as the main subject and linguistics as a subsidiary (subject).

Linguistics at Ibadan

My interest in linguistics was born out of patriotic fervour: as an undergraduate at Ibadan. I observed that the Yoruba people - their traditional institutions and educated elite - were very interested not only in their language and culture but also in who occupied what position in Nigeria's premier tertiary institution - University College, Ibadan. The late Prof. Kenneth Onwuka Dike, the first African Vice Chancellor of University College Ibadan, noticed the game being played there and invited Rev. G. Egemba Igwe - a Method Missionary with M.A. Cantab to Ibadan as a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of African Studies - under the supervision of a much younger Ph.D holder then a Lecturer 1. The argument by the Yoruba then was that a Lecturer I should not supervise a student senior to him. For him to do so, he had to be given at least an equivalent rank, they had their way in this balancing of ethnic equation, and the young academic became a senior lecturer much earlier than he expected..

This small anecdote sharpened my perception of the ethnic game in Nigerian

politics and education: it became clear to me that something must be done for Igbo just as the Yoruba were taking care of their own language and culture as their badge of identity.

And so it happened that after doing a good honours degree in English Language and Literature I switched over to Igbo Language Studies.

The first step I took was to do a Postgraduate Diploma in Igbo Linguistics, which I could not conclude until after the Nigeria-Biafra War (1967-70).

This postgraduate diploma in Igbo linguistics exposed me to the first and most detailed grammar book on the Igbo Language - *A Descriptive Grammar of Igbo* published (1963) jointly by Akademie Verlag in Berlin Germany, and Oxford University Press (OUP) in London; its authors were M.M. Green (M.A. Oxon) and G.E. Igwe (M.A. Cantab). Miss Green was a British Anthropologist on colonial mission to Eastern Nigeria, and G.E. Igwe was a Cambridge University-educated Methodist Missionary. A certain aspect of Igbo verb inflectional morphology baffled the analysts and led them into seeing two forms of the Igbo verb which they described as Subject-Verb Form 1 initiating and subject-Verb Form II non-initiating. I will not bother you with the details; what the depth of their analysis could not reveal then was that the Igbo language observes what came to be christened the 'Polarity Distinction'. Igbo is uFexanique in this sense that it does not possess a single negative marker such as not/never in English, *ko* in Yoruba, and *ɓe* in Hausa. For example we can simply say in English

The man did not come

The man never came

no money, et cetera.

Hausa - baa kwudi

no money

ɓe kwo daya

not even one

ɓe hanya

no road.

In short, in these languages we have negative markers (negators) which can negate both nouns and verbs. But in Igbo, no noun (phrase) (NP) can be negated, only verbs can be negated by the use of bound inflectional markers on the verb because nouns in the language are not inflected

Ibadan titled "The Verb-System of Ezinihitte-West Dialect of Igbo - A Suggested New Approach to Analysis". Typical of Philip Nwachukwu for whom procrastination is a second nature, I played down the importance of this paper by not getting it published in spite of promptings from my lecturer - Prof. Kay Williamson (now late) that I should do so. If I had accepted to do my graduate studies at Ibadan, the situation would have been different.

Graduate Studies Overseas 1972-1976

When I was filling the application forms for postgraduate studies in the United Kingdom (UK), it seemed (to me) that the requirements were tailor-made for me. To do postgraduate work in linguistics (M.A/M.Phil Ph.D) a candidate needed a good knowledge of a classical language, a Modern European language other than English, and English. Two of these, Latin and English were the subjects I studied for the Cambridge Oversea Higher School Certificate Examinations. When I got into University College Ibadan in 1962 to do classics, I took French as a third language because of sheer love of the language. Because of my good knowledge of Latin, I found French so simplified compared to Latin that I excelled in it and even won a Ford Foundation Scholarship for a long vacation course in Dakar Senegal in 1963.

From University of York to London school of Orientation and African Studies, (SOAS) I obtained the degrees of B.Phil and Ph.D degrees in Linguistics.

But this achievement was not without its price. By the time I finished the B.Phil (M.A) in linguistics at University of York, two-year British Council Scholarship was close to expiration. Although I had hurried to register with SOAS for a Ph.D before the scholarship expired, that was my business with my home university.. They advised me to go back to my university and my university expected me to come home with a master's degree. The ideas did not go down well with me and my wife. So I refused to go back and I had my wife's support. Later the Vice Chancellor of UNN visited during the summer of 1973, I had audience with him at 26 Hallam St. London WC1, the London office of University of Nigeria. The meeting ended in a sharp disagreement between me and my Vice Chancellor who maintained that there was no need for a "Ph.D Linguistic" against my own insistence that a Ph.D Linguistics was a necessary desideratum. I left his office convinced that this Vice Chancellor with an Oyibo wife could not be my shepherd. Between his linguistic (without s) and my linguistics (with s), there was a wide chasm that could not be easily bridged. What is more revealing is his lack of appreciation or insensitivity to the cultural and ethnic implications of my determination to press on for a Ph.D in Igbo linguistics. With this chapter ending

on a sad note, I turned my back on UNN.

But that was not the end of the road, my wife and I redoubled our efforts to face the challenge; with God on our side, we conquered and in June 1976. I was awarded the Ph.D of London University in Igbo Linguistics having successfully defended my thesis on a transformational account of noun phrase sentential complementation in Igbo.

Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the International African Institute (IAI). Jan-Dec. 1976

While I was busy rounding off my Ph.D thesis for defence, my humane and understanding supervisor, late Prof. Jack Carnochan, recommended me for a post-doctoral research fellowship at the IAI where I worked for a complete year as Guest Director of the Language and Education Unit of IAI and Editor of their bilingual journal -*African Languages/Langues Africaines*.

During the summer of 1976, I had the rare privilege of sitting on the same table discussing with the Prof. Kenneth Onwuka Dike (RIP), a renowned Historian and Africanist. Prof. Dike who as a life-member of the Board of the IAI had come for their annual meeting. When I was introduced to him as the Guest Director of the Language and Education Unit, he shook hands with me and said in Igbo "Nwa m, e mesia ka any! fx" - my son, let's see afterwards Lets - see - afterwards translated into an invitation to dinner and a chat in his Postgate Hotel in North London. You can imagine my joy at being invited to dinner by my former Vice Chancellor - a man who in his days as VC was very rarely seen. Our first sight of him in the 60s at Ibadan was the occasion when he delivered his Quinquennium speech to the University Community in Trenchard Hall, a speech which outlined his development

plan for five years; thereafter we referred to him in unalloyed admiration as Qinquennium.

The dinner was an occasion for Prof. Dike to find out what my future plans were. When he discovered my unwillingness to return to UNN, he appealed to me to forget the past and focus my attention on what pushed me to Igbo linguistics. To underscore the need for me to go to Nsukka and begin Igbo Linguistics there, he told me that he had also persuaded one bright Igbo chap in the U.S. to return to Nsukka and put his expertise into practical use. He mentioned his name as Dr. Alex Animalu, according to him "a highly gifted and brilliant chap". This advice coming from no less a person than the renowned Prof. K.O. Dike was to me a law. I obeyed and returned to Nsukka in Jan 1977, with very positive feelings about Dr.

Animalu whom I never met until 1980/81 when unpleasant circumstances brought us together.

My one-year stay at the IAI exposed me to research materials on various languages of Africa, to the ' language problems of developing countries and European contributions towards their solution, it provided me with the opportunity of touring such African countries as Ghana (University of Legon), Sudan, (University of Khartoum), Tanzania, (Institute of Kiswahili Research), Dar es Salam), Zaire (Universite National du Zaire (UNAZA) Kinshasa and its Lumumbashi Campus. All these tours were in aid of the 14th International Conference on African Languages in Education organized by the IAI from Dec. 18th -22nd 1976 - at La Ville Presidentiale a Nsele in Kinshasa by the River Congo. My one year stay at the IAI paid off very handsomely: my first book *Towards an Igbo Literary Standard* (1983) was written there, in addition to two volumes of its bilingual journal *African Languages/Langues Africaines*. This postdoctoral fellowship was a temporary escape from UNN for me, and an incubation of a linguistic career which I was to master.

Return to UNN Jan. 1977 to Date

I reported for duty on Jan 3rd 1977 in the Dept of English from where I went on study leave without pay, one of these civil disabilities consequent on our losing the Biafra war of independence. Our colleagues elsewhere in other federal universities enjoyed their full pay while on study leave. I came back straight for Igbo and would not like to be distracted from that mission. Even when I was nominated by Prof. E. N. Obiechina to be the Co-ordinator of the Use of English Unit of the Division of General Studies, I rejected the offer on grounds that it would be a distraction for me. Surprised by my candor and sense of mission, Prof. Obiechina thanked me for my frankness and promised to do all within his power to see that a Dept of Linguistics and Nigerian languages was established so that I could find professional fulfillment there. "You will surely be our own Bamgbose here", he remarked as he shook hands with me. Thereafter, he offered that position to Dr. B.O. Oluikpe who rose to be the first Professor in the Division of General Studies in this University. Although I was a staff of the then prestigious Dept of English at U.N.N with Professor D.I. Nwoga, M.J.C Echeruo, E.N. Obiechina, Chinua Achebe and other brilliant young academics, my teaching load was concentrated in the Dept of Modern Languages where Linguistics and Igbo took shelter until August 1981.

My First Major Assignment at UNN

I had scarcely settled down in 1977 when Dr. L.O. Orisakwe - then heading the Dept of Modern Languages, sent for me. "Philip, we have a major problem on our hands; the students who are registered for Linguistics and Igbo do not have any Senate-approved programme, they cannot graduate this year 1977 without a programme approved by Senate". Two previous attempts had been made but the person in charge could not defend it in Senate and so the programme failed two times.

The above information was like a shot in the arm, that was what I came back for. So I asked for travel authorisation and money to make a trip to Ibadan, the request was immediately granted; I needed to compare University of Ibadan B.A. Linguistics and Nigerian Languages programme with what I got from York University and School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Within two weeks, I was ready with the programme, and Dr. Orisakwe took me to Senate to present and answer questions on it. So I did, and it was approved retro-actively. I had done the magic and every body was happy.

But when I tested the sixteen students eager to graduate in June 1977, that what they knew about Igbo was little and they understood about linguistics was less. The fault was not theirs; for those three odd years before I came back, they were taught by staff without basic degrees in Linguistics.

About July 1978, I made the first move to formally transfer to the Dept of Modern Languages, and Prof. E.N. Obiechina, still Head of English, gave me all the support I needed, and the transfer was effected in July 1978. From that period, I became the Co-ordinator of Linguistics and Igbo programme in the Dept of Modern Languages.

Programme of Modernising Igbo

Although the Society for Promoting Igbo Language and Culture was founded by the indefatigable Chidozie Ogbalu (RIP) an Economist as far back as 1949 it was not until after the Nigeria-Biafra war that it started serious work on the modernization of the Igbo Languages. Its first major conference/seminar was held in 1972 after I had left the country for postgraduate studies overseas. But before then, a number of initiatives had been taken at the national level: The Federal Ministry of Education had directed the Vice Chancellors of Universities of Ibadan, and Nigerian and Ahmadu Bello University to nominate representatives for what was to be known as the Vice chancellors' Committee on the Orthographies of Nigerian languages. I was recommended to the then Vice Chancellor Prof. H.C.

Kodilinye (RIP) for the position by my department; Drs. M.J.C. Echeruo and D.I. Nwoga who made the recommendation did not take me into confidence. Later the Vice Chancellor invited me to see him at 10am on a Saturday morning, I was afraid. When I went to see him, I made sure I was neatly dressed, wearing a good tie. When I got into his office, I was ushered in by his secretary, Mr. Nonyelu (VC a na-afx anya), he asked me to sit down, I humbly obeyed.

"Yes, my son, I sent for you, I want to nominate you to represent this University in the Vice Chancellors' Committee on Nigerian Orthographies, you have been recommended to me by your Faculty. I took a momentary but bashful look at him and replied as follows:

"Thank you very much, sir", bowing my head. "I am a very young man with only a B.A. degree; Nigeria worships age and Ph.Ds, and I have none of these. But there is someone in the Faculty - Dr. Okoreaffiah - he is much older than I and has a Ph.D; he is better qualified than I." Professor Kodilinye could scarcely allow me to conclude my remarks when he thrust out his hands and shook me very warmly saying. "Thank you, my boy, for being honest. I like that quality in you." I left his office more at ease than I entered it.

When I came back to relate my story to Deem Dona (Dr. D.I. Nwoga then) he was annoyed with me. "Mike and I recommended you to the VC because Dr. Okoreaffiah has a very poor image in Nigeria's Linguistic circle, and we did not want to expose him to more ridicule; his presence there can only weaken an Igbo case." Without any further reference to the Faculty of Arts, Prof.




Kodilinye nominated Dr. Okoreaffiah as UNN's representative in the committee. All this happened in 1971.

To come back from any digression is to point out that the Vice Chancellors' Committee on Orthography was the seed to what has blossomed today as the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC); from a committee Vice Chancellors it became the National Language Centre far away in Obantia in Apapa Lagos. It then grew to become the Nigerian language and Education Research Centre and finally the NERDC with an expansive Headquarters at Gwagwalada on the outskirts of Abuja.



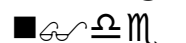
Projects of Languages Modernisation of the 70s

a. Decimalisation of the Counting Systems of the 3 Major Nigerian Languages - Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

The above project was the first in the series of moves to modernise the three major Nigerian Languages. The one-week workshop took place at Ile Ife - the seat of

Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU). Then in August 1978 the Igbo team was led by our own chief F.C. Ogbalu - our father-figure, other members were Dr. P. A. Nwachukwu, Mr. E.N. Emenanjo, and Mr. Tim Umeasiegbu, a fifth person was the representative of the Ministry of Education East-Central State. I was happy that the problem to which I had drawn attention in an article in Conch (1971) was receiving attention. In that paper "Igbo Languages Studies: Problems and Principles" I drew attention to the Igbo counting system and observed that it was not amenable to modern mathematics. In particular I pointed out the absence of any single word base for 100, 1000, 1,000,000. I thus introduced in print for the first time the words (I) nari (100), puku (1,000) and  uncountable for million. The first two, nari and puku found favour, while  lost out to  (million). I got these words from my father inlaw - Mr. John Ezugwu Ngwu (RIP), from Amadim Nru Nsukka a retired PWD driver who believed strongly in culture and tradition.

With these we had new bases with common multiples or factors:

Iri	ten
	100
	1,000
	1,000,000

With these bases clearly established we could now multiply, divide, add and subtract using the traditional Igbo words for these terms.

What is interesting to note is that these newly introduced bases came from obscure dialects, having been singled out and put in print, they have become everybody's property. The successful integration of these vocabulary items into mainstream Igbo vindicates my stand that the multiplicity of dialects in Igbo is a source

of strength rather than weakness: these dialects are the first authentic source of enrichment for the chosen standard Igbo, it cannot be otherwise; synonyms for the standard language are coming from the dialects so are different turns of phrases and idioms. Just as the English languages drew copiously from Latin, so will Igbo draw copiously from its many dialects.

Given the above background coupled with what SPILC had done on the decimalisation in Igbo, our job at Ife was easy, and the Igbo group was the first to finish the assignment and present their report.

b. Vocabulary for Primary Science and Mathematics

The venue for the workshop was also OAU Ife, and the languages were nine

in number. A list of terms used in elementary mathematics and science was prepared by experts and distributed to various language groups; where necessary each term was explained by the resource persons so that every language group had the same terms and their explanations in English. Each group had to work on their own, at the end of which reports were presented in a full house by one language group after another. The outcome of all these was published in (1987) in three volumes by FOURTH DIMENSION publisher Co Ltd. Enugu for the National Language Centre:

Vol 1

Fulfulde

Izon

Yoruba

Vol. 2

Edo

Igbo

Kanuri

Vol.3

Efik

Hausa

Tiv.

c. The Quadrilingual Dictionary for Legislative Terms.

This was the biggest and most expensive and profitable project for those who took part in it. The project was for the purpose of developing a vocabulary of political, economic and legislative terms for use in debates in National Assembly; the target languages were as usual the three major languages, Hausa, Igbo Yoruba, and the source language is English. The National Assembly under President Shehu Shagari attached a lot of importance to this project and voted a handsome sum of money for its execution. Each language group got close to one million naira then.

The notice for the Igbo group came through the secretary of SPICL then Mr. Emenanjo. When he got this initial invitation for us to mobilise, he called me aside and showed it to me; we were happy that there was enough remuneration in it for the participants. We agreed that Nna anyị Ogbalu would remain our father - figure and chairman of the Igbo group. In our reply, we asked the National Language Centre to direct all future correspondences to the Chairman of SPILC Chief F.C.

Ogbalu, who was to arrange for a meeting of the three of us to decide on the modalities and personnel for the execution of the project. I took that to be an agreement between three gentlemen.

When the final invitation with a time table of events and costing came, I did not know. We were robing near Government House Owerri for the 1977 Ahianjoku Lecture, when the Provost of Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Prof. S.N. Nwosu saw me. "Dr. Nwachukwu, why are you here when your colleagues are at Lagos sharing a huge sum of money for the execution of the Igbo version of the quadrilingual dictionary?" I was totally confused and short of words for a reply. "Without me?" I said, "that is unbelievable". As we started the procession to the Multipurpose Hall, I was telling Prof. Nwosu how the project all started and the agreement between the three of us Chief F.C. Ogbalu, Mr. E.N. Emenanjo, Dr. P.A. Nwachukwu. There and then Prof. Nwosu reminded me that F.C. Ogbalu was a politician and had handled SPILC like a personal property. He had his supporters including your friend, Emenanjo.

When I confronted Emenanjo, he denied ever having held any meeting with Chief Ogbalu. According to him, he was on another business at Lagos when he found Chief Ogbalu and his supporters there and joined them. I immediately wrote a strongly-worded letter of protest. Then we agreed to meet at Alvan to resolve the issue. When three of us met, Chief Ogbalu said that he thought that Dr. Nwachukwu and Mr. Emenanjo would be consultants, and so did not invite them as part of the Igbo Group. When pressed about the place of Dr. Nwachukwu in the project, he lamented that the money available had been used to mobilise those who went to Lagos - namely,

- (1) Chief F.C. Ogbalu (late) SPILC Chairman, Awka College of Education
- (2) Mr. E.N. Emenanjo, Secretary, Alvan Ikoku College of Education
- (3) Mr. Oruchalu (late), Awka College of Education
- (4) Mr. L.N. Oraka, Awka College of Education
- (5) Mr. Ezike-Ojiaku, Alvan Ikoku College of Education

In this way Dr. P.A. Nwachukwu, the most qualified, if not the most knowledgeable, was reduced to the position of having to ask for accommodation among the Group. That, I emphatically rejected, because I was too big to play a second fiddle in Igbo Studies. And so the project went on without me. I lost the money, but maintained my prestige.

The submissions from each Language Group needed thorough editing; the Hausa Editorial Team was headed by Dr. Dalhatu Mohammed of ABU, the Igbo Team by Dr. P.A. Nwachukwu of UNN and the Yoruba Team by Prof. Babalola of

UNILAG; the nominations were done from the National Language Centre, Lagos, which had remarked at the inception of the project that the absence of Dr. P.A. Nwachukwu meant that there was problem in the Igbo Group. Although the remuneration for Editors was nothing compared to the initial payment to the Translators from English to Igbo, I was happy that the Kingdom was restored to Israel and "the stone which the builders had rejected became the cornerstone". The pecking order was once more established. The editing revealed that the quality of the Igbo submission reflected the educational standard, teaching experience and exposure of the translators.

From my short experience in SPILC (1977-81) I came to the painful conclusion that most Igbo leaders do not like followers who have minds of their own and are out spoken.

The Establishment of the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages at University of Nigeria, Nsukka, August 1981

The struggle to establish a Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages at University of Nigeria came to fruition in 1981, thanks to persistent pressure from the Society for Promoting Igbo Language and Culture and the Anglican and Catholic Missions in East Central State. I had prepared the ground so as to avoid being its first head of Department by fighting for the employment of a Ghanaian professor of linguistics, Prof. L.A. Boadi from the University of Legon. My plan was to have the new department headed by a professor under whom we could all grow professionally; I was only a Senior Lecturer then. Accordingly, I advised Prof. Boadi to resist the temptation of aiming for the deanship of the Faculty, a reality then. When the time for deanship election came, Prof. Boadi offered no resistance to being drafted as a candidate; in fact he was the only candidate and became Dean of the Faculty of Arts for the period 1981-83. Inevitably, I was appointed Acting Head of the newly created Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, a position I wanted to avoid. I went to the out-going Dean, Prof. Uche Okeke to decline the offer and he wondered why I was reluctant to nurse the baby whose birth I had helped to midwife. "Who else is available?, Dr. Okereaffiah? You know his history here. Is it Mr. Iwundu? My friend, go and get ready to steer the new department in the right course." I left the Dean's office more reluctant than willing.

Preparing for the Young Department

When it became clear that I was going to head the Department, I approached a number of my colleagues in the English Department to come over to Macedonia

and help us: the first was Dr. Nzebunachi Oji, who retired two years ago as a Senior lecturer in the English Language. Dr. Oji declined the invitation to transfer to Linguistics; an unpretentious person. Dr. Oji told me that his Igbo was not as solid as mine and he was happy teaching English Grammar and Composition in the Department of English. As a matter of fact, I handed over phonetics and the phonetic Lab in the English Department to Dr. Oji when I transferred to Modern Languages Department from our new department hived off.

Next I went to Dr. Oluikpe whose interest was not in African Studies. He later transferred to the Use of English Unit of the then Division of General Studies where he eventually rose to the rank of professor of Applied English Linguistics. Dr. Oluikpe politely declined the invitation; he gave no reasons, he was a man of few words who held his cards very close to his chest. When all these efforts failed, I was left alone to plan the Department.

Meanwhile Dr. Okoreaffiah retired leaving me with only the late Iwundu whose M.A. was in the English Language with little linguistics and no Igbo at all. There was nobody on ground for Igbo Literature. The problem of shortage of staff had to be tackled head-on.

At University of Ibadan, we had Dr. Chukwuma Azuonye who had a first class from our Department of English and a Ph.D in Oral Literature from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. As soon as I settled down with office and classroom spaces, and basic furniture, I personally drove in my new Volvo Car to Ibadan to entice Dr. Azuonye back to UNN either as a full-time or part-time staff. I succeeded, he started as a part-time staff because he had to wait for his wife to finish her Master's degree in Language Arts. With a solid background in Literature in English, "Dr. Azuonye started the Literature section of our new department on a very sound academic footing, unfortunately, he did not stay long enough to bring up anybody in Igbo Literature, a fact which has weakened that section very considerably. The Department is still in search of strong academics in Igbo Literature.

The New Acting Head as ASUU Secretary

The first organisation that attracted my attention and interest was the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). I attended its meetings regularly. In 1978, Dr. Igbozuruike of the Geography Department (now a Professor in Imo State University) nominated me as Secretary of the Union; I promptly declined the nomination. Thereafter he nominated Dr. (Mrs.) Edith Ihekweazu who became elected unopposed. In 1981, the same person nominated me again as a good person

for the post. I could not turn it down again. I became elected in a contest between me and Dr. (Mrs.) Kamene Okonjo of Sociology Department. My friends and well-wishers wondered whether I could cope with these two demanding roles. As far as I was concerned, I had the energy for both, I had the time and no distractions since I had no children then, I least thought of the conflict of roles. By the beginning of the second term of the 1981-82 session, events which propelled me into a head-on collision with the University Administration started to unfold.

The Struggle for Mastery at UNN (1982-85)

The dramatis personae were Professor F.N. Ndili Vice Chancellor and Prof. A.O.E. Animalu, both of them were in the same Department of Physics and the same field of specialisation - High-Energy Physics. The struggle was over the control of resources: Prof. Animalu returned from the US a very practical scholar. Before his return staff in Engineering and Physics had been theorising about the practical application of solar energy to laundry. But Prof. Animalu came back and put the theory into practice by harnessing solar energy to power laundry machines. It started to work and yield money; the money became the focus of attention as Prof. Animalu began to see it as a personal enterprise; he had the connivance if not tacit approval of the then Dean of Students' Affairs, Late Sir Ezekwesili.

The Vice Chancellor was rightly up in arms; Prof. Animalu was removed from control of the solar-powered laundry machines, which eventually died a natural death. It did not stop at that. Prof. Ndili as Vice Chancellor contrived with his Governing Council to get Prof. Animalu's appointment terminated. At this juncture, ASUU UNN became involved; the Union argued that the termination of Prof. Animalu did not follow due process and rejected the termination by the Governing Council. Following the findings of a report by ASUU as presented by its Secretary, Dr. P.A. Nwachukwu to a full congress of the Union, the Union took a number of radical decisions, viz: Prof. Animalu was directed (i) to sue the Governing Council to Court;

(ii) to get a Court injunction restraining the Vice

Chancellor from evicting him from his campus accommodation; (in) to reject the cheque of #9,000 issued to him in lieu of six months' notice in return for ASUU's monthly payment of his salary of #1,500 for six consecutive months.

After these radical decisions, the line of battle was drawn between the radical and outspoken Secretary and the University Administration headed by Prof: F.N. Ndili. My Acting Headship appointment was terminated after one year, and the one-year old baby was left without a mother.

For a while the Vice Chancellor turned his "back" on the Department, much later in that first term, 1982-83 he asked the Dean of Arts, a Ghanaian to look after the affairs of the young Department.

In 1985, Prof. Ndili's solution was to post Prof. *B.O* Oluikpe to the new Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages as its head, ostensibly to delay and frustrate Dr. Nwachukwu out-of the Department he started. I have chosen my words carefully: I started the Department but I was not given the chance to found it on sound academic and moral principles.

Prof. Oluikpe did not come alone from the Use of English Unit of the Division of General Studies; he came with a team of two more. One of them, Mr. B.N. Anasiudu was the brain behind the English Language series ^s-' Intensive English for Secondary Schools for which Oluikpe and his team were famous. He secured his transfer to our new department so that two of them came

at the same time. The second person, Dr. Otagburuagu, was the next in the queue along with a possible third person to transfer to the new department. I felt very worried at the thought of seeing this new department as a new haven for Use of English staff seeking respectability in an academic department. These transfers were among the last acts of Prof. Ndili before the crisis which he generated ended in his termination in 1985/6 by the then Federal Military Government.

Prof. Chimere Ikoku (RIP) on the Scene

With Prof. Ndili out of the way, I had a Vice Chancellor to whom I could protest against the influx of Use of English staff into a department established to cater for the Igbo language. I wrote a strongly-worded letter of protest to Prof. Ikoku complaining about the dilution of staff in the young department; in that letter I listed Prof. Oluikpe's degrees and teaching career which had little to do with Linguistics and nothing to do with Igbo. Prof. Ikoku read this protest and was convinced; he gave it to Prof. Nwoga to read and discuss with him later. When both men conferred, they agreed that I had presented them with incontrovertible pieces of evidence, but regretted that my language was very strong.

Typical of Prof. Ikoku, he took no action, he must have minuted on my protest letter p.a. (put away). From that time he started to see me in the colour in which I was painted by the professional sycophants here, who are always looking for a master to praise and lean on.

Sooner or later, it became clear that Prof. Oluikpe had warmed his way into Prof. Ikoku's favour, and so my isolation became complete.

In the Department, a war was raging between me and Prof. Oluikpe. He used

his privileged position to deal with me including plotting to get rid of me from my own department. On one occasion the rumour in the department was that I forged an External Examiner's signature on M.A. question papers which I took to (badan and got moderated. Unknown to me, Prof. Oluikpe sent a memo asking the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Chimere Ikoku to set up a panel on me in order 'to determine my appointment'. The Vice Chancellor wrote to the Vice Chancellor of Ibadan, Prof. Ayo Banjo, to ask Dr. Ben Elugbe (the External Examiner in question) to do a report on me on the basis of which a panel would be set up. When Prof. Banjo showed the letter to Dr. Elugbe, Dr. Elugbe dissociated himself from any plot to deal with Dr. Nwachukwu, and advised his Vice Chancellor to ignore the fetter and thus keep off Nsukka politics. Thereafter Dr. Elugbe also wrote to Oluikpe and withdrew from serving as External Examiner to our Department.

Meanwhile I waited for the rumour of signature forgery to transform into an accusation, but the rumour died as it started, it did not pay the expected dividend. But I continued to be treated like a leper by all and sundry including the Secretary of the Department who once abused me in a Departmental Board meeting and did not get any reproach from the Head of Department. I started to see myself more and more as *Samson Agonistes* - Samson the Combatant of John Milton fame.

Appraisal for Professorship 1987-1999

After the end of the Ndili crisis, I decided to go out to update my knowledge of Linguistics - a discipline which was as unsteady as quicksand. Early in 1986, I applied for six months' study leave to enable me teach a course in African Languages at Harvard University; the request was granted quickly by Prof. Ikoku the Vice Chancellor. I returned in June 1986 to go on Sabbatical from September 1986 - October 1987. Both applications were successful. I reckoned that the idea was to keep Dr. Nwachukwu outside. Thus, I spent one and half years in Cambridge, Massachusetts and enjoyed one full-year of fruitful postdoctoral research fellowship at the famous Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which is the seat of Linguistics (and Philosophy) where the Doyen of Linguistics in this century reigns supreme. I returned at the end of October 1987 to face Prof. Oluikpe again.

I had sent my duly filled Appraisal papers to the Dean of Arts, then Prof. Oluikpe, and informed him that my publications would be submitted on my return. I was not very sure whether the number of publications I had could get me from Senior Lectureship to Professorship. I prevaricated until Prof. Nwoga called me to find out what was delaying my application. I expressed the fear that I might not

make a double jump with what I had. He asked for my list and the actual publications. Having satisfied himself about the status of the publishers of my three books and the standing of the journals in which my papers were published, he took them home to browse through and score them very conservatively. When he finished, he asked me to submit them for internal assessment. By the time I submitted them, a new Dean, Prof. Edith Ihekweazu was in officer.

Prof. Oluikpe had returned to the headship of the Department and demanded that all my submissions, including the form itself, be returned to the Department. The new Dean asked why and he did not give any reason. She insisted that she must start from where Oluikpe stopped since there was no reason for the call to return to the drawing board.

Prof. Oluikpe's game plan started to unfold: he was out to frustrate me. He boycotted any Faculty Appraisal meeting called to assess me, as-my head he had to present my case. The Faculty took note of his tactics and asked the Dean to write the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Chimere Ikoku. She did, and the Vice Chancellor asked her to invite Prof. Oluikpe in a personal letter and copy him. She complied. By this time we were in the second year of my appraisal. When the next Faculty Appraisal exercise was due, Prof. Oluikpe still failed to attend. The Dean had to go back to the Vice Chancellor again, who then mandated her to act as the Head of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages and present Dr. Nwachukwu case. This was done and I came out with an initial score of 95%, thus qualifying to be assessed for the next higher position- professorship, for which position my final score was 90%.

When Prof. Oluikpe got to know that I had passed' the Faculty Appraisals brilliantly, he petitioned that one of my publications was fake because there was no written contract agreement between me and Africana-FEP, (now Africana First). Africana-FEP is the publisher of Oluikpe's Intensive English series. Sorting out the truth naturally took its own time; Africana-FEP refused to reply to all the correspondences of the Dean of Arts. Determined to find out the truth, the Dean and I had to drive to Onitsha where Africana-FEP is located. There the Dean saw with her own eyes copies of the book - *Readings on the Igbo Verb*, which I edited. All these were delaying tactics employed by Prof. Oluikpe, but each: obstacle was dismantled- on& after the other.

The Issue of Tie

We are talking about a period in the history of academics in this country when the Igbo people were implementing the pyramidal structure to their own detriment. The establishment structure for my department allowed for two

professors, a non-linguist and General Studies professor occupied the first position leaving only one more vacancy. Dr. Azuonye the brilliant scholar of literature whom I had attracted to the Department had joined us as a full time staff- He now became a competitor for the vacant position: everything was going for him, he was brilliant and well-connected to the Vice

Chancellor Prof, Ikoku by Aro blood, He had put in application for Readership, and mine for Professorship, so there was a tie. The Faculty was in no doubt as to who was to be presented for the vacant professorial position. Dr. Nwachukwu had put in ten years post-Ph.D teaching and research, Dr. Azuonye had barely put in two years. Dr. Nwachukwu was successfully assessed for Professorship, and Dr. Azuonye for Readership. In terms of publications, Dr. Nwachukwu had a much higher score than Dr. Azuonye. So the Faculty resolved the tie in favour of Dr. Nwachukwu. The Faculty recommendation was turned down by the Vice Chancellor who insisted on setting up his own ad-hoc committee on the tie in the Faculty of Arts. Consequently, the promotion processes had to be halted; it took more than one year for the report of his committee to become available, and it upheld the Faculty recommendation, which the Vice Chancellor had earlier rejected. From that period onwards, my appraisal papers rested in the Vice Chancellor's office until the end of his second term in 1992.

The Consequences for the Young Department

A lantern was lit in Igbo Linguistic Studies and hidden under a barrel. There was no sense of direction for the new department; Dr. Azuonye who would have provided such a sense of direction soon left for greener pastures in the United States. The Department remained under the rule of one man who had no degree in Linguistics or Igbo and who had no programme of

development. "Nemo dat quod non habet". During my sabbatical at MIT, I spent hard-earned dollars buying books for the Department to re-purchase from me. When I made this clear to Prof. Oluikpe, he did not show any enthusiasm at all, the Staff Librarian in charge of the departmental library was equally indifferent. Dr. Nwachukwu was a "persona non grata" and everybody in the department isolated him.

The highlight of this rule of one Professor was that none of the first two or three Ph.D candidates in the Department (all of whom are staff) ever presented even one seminar to the department before they bagged their Ph.D certificates. My persistent insistence on this requirement earned me more dislike/hatred from

my younger colleagues who must be believers in the philosophy "akụ bN ndụ". Dr. Nwachukwu is a trouble maker" a very common statement then. I thank God for keeping me alive to see that image erased.

The same period witnessed a gradual dilution in academic standards as consanquinity, sectionalism and esprit de corps overthrew academic merit as criteria for employment. The decline of the Department which started from that time has continued because academically strong staff are hard to come by and those doing the selection have their eyes on friends and relations. This distortion of procedure can only be harmful to the academic image of our dear University of Nigeria, which is my 'alma mater' by adoption.

From August 1982 to August 1994 (twelve good years) I was relegated to a corner in a department that I had laboured to start. At the time that the Department gained its independence from Modern Languages, I had an offer from Imo State University to come and start an identical department for them. I had to go pleading with them to let me look after the new baby at UNN. If I had gone to Imo State University to start a Department of Linguistics and Igbo Studies, the situation there would have been different. But today the Department there is limping because of lack of sound and effective academic leadership. Because of their inadequacy at Imo State University, they shy away from their betters and mentors; Can you imagine a situation where the only Linguistics Department that I have not been invited as External Examiner in Southern Nigeria is Imo State University, my own home university?

The neglect of Igbo Studies by Igbo governments and their academic institutions including the federal ones in the Igbo areas, is a matter for deep regret, a sad comment on the cultural and linguistic insensitivities of the Igbo intellectuals and elders. When Professor Animalu was being battered by Prof. Ndili, the elders in our midst stood and watched. Today the solar-powered laundry machines have stopped working, the baby was thrown away with bath water. We do not know how to do damage control. When the same Prof. Ndili turned on Dr. Nwachukwu to destroy him for speaking his mind on a very sensitive issue with serious ramifications, the elders in this university raised no finger in his defense. Dr. Nwachukwu survived the onslaught, but Igbo studies here turned out to be the loser and victim, it is yet to recover from the wounds inflicted on it in its infancy. Coming in 2004 to change the name from Linguistics and Nigerian Languages to Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages is mere cosmetic; that was Prof. Mbanefoh's major contribution to that department. The new name begs the question: what other Nigerian Languages have you been developing all these years if not Igbo? Good wishes are not enough, a change of name is mere cosmetic.

What is needed is a concerted effort by all concerned to inject money into Igbo studies. In the last section of this lecture, I shall proffer some suggestions. Igbo is not dying. It is merely threatened in those educated families which take pride in saying, "umụ anyị ada asụkwa Igbo. If only such parents were aware of the close link between knowledge of language and knowledge in general, they would be sorry for the harm they unwittingly are doing to their children. Knowledge of one's mother tongue provides a very easy bridge for crossing to another language - The Yoruba who love themselves, their culture and language which expresses that culture, have successfully conducted a research known as The Six-Year Yoruba Primary Project (SYPP), funded by Ford Foundation. The research set out to test the performance in the English Language of pupils whose kindergarten, and primary education was entirely through the medium of Yoruba with English as a curriculum subject in relation to the performance of those

pupils whose medium of instruction was English from the very beginning.

The result revealed that the pilot pupils had no problem whatsoever in passing entrance examination to secondary schools; none of them failed the English language at the Senior Secondary School Certificate examinations; many of them gained entrance to tertiary institutions (universities in particular); those who were so inclined went on to do an Honours degree in English, finishing with Second Class (Hons.) Upper Division degree while the Project Supervisor, Prof. Babs Fafunwa, was still at Ife. In short, none of those students suffered any disadvantage because of their early Yoruba medium of instruction.

The Lessons from this Research

The first and most important lesson is that a good mastery of the first language of a child is not an obstacle to the acquisition of a second language (in this case, English). In fact, it is an advantage: the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is a species-specific endowment which is not affected, by race, creed or colour or climate. It is located in the same area of the human brain - the Cerebral Cortex. LAD provides the invariant principles of human language known in Linguistics as Universal Grammar (UG), but there may be differences in the manifestation of these invariant principles from language to language, these are the parametric variations due to environmental and cultural factors. For example, in principle every sentence in human language should have subject and predicate, but there are living languages without overt subjects in their sentences - except when emphasis is implicated. Latin and Italian provide obvious examples. Take, for

example, Caesar's famous sentence,

Veni, vidi, vici Latin

I came, I saw I conquered.

Volio parlare Italiano Italian

I want to speak Italian.

In these examples the subject in each case is incorporated in the verb, hence they are languages with rich inflectional morphology. These two languages are known as Pro-Drop languages. Therefore the Pro-Drop phenomenon is a parameter for language variation, (parametric variation). By contrast, French a Romance language in the sense of having hived off from Latin is not a Pro-Drop language because it has lost the rich inflection characteristic of its mother - Latin, hence in French we have to say

French	Latin
Je suis	sum
I am	I am
Tu es	es
You are	you are
Il/elle est	est
He/she is	S/he is

Rather than being a liability, a good mastery of one's first language before a second language is a big assets to the acquisition of the second language.

Knowledge of Language and Knowledge in General

The close link between knowledge of language and intellectual growth has been well established in the literature. The index of a child's intellectual development is his use of language. Chomsky in his book *Language and the Problem of Knowledge* argues convincingly that knowledge of language is source of all knowledge, therefore knowledge of language is not different from knowledge in general.

Establishment of the National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN)

Between 1990 and 1992, the then Federal Minister of Education Prof. Babs Fafunwa decided that a National Institute for Nigerian Languages should be established. Prof. Emenanjo and I were at Gateway Hotel in Otta, Ogun State representing Igbo at a conference of Nigerian Languages. Having become a professor in 1984 at University of Port Harcourt, he got deeply involved in the politics of Aniom State. He was subsequently rewarded by being appointed

Provost of Bendel State College of Education, Warri. While we were at Otta, the talk of a National Institute became louder and clearer; its seat was to be at Aba, which meant that an Igbo man would be its foundation Director. We discussed the issue in our hotel room, and Emenanjo said that he was not interested in the post because he already had a government appointment - Provostship of Bendel State College of Education. So I became interested in the post. Together we went to the room of Prof. Ayo Bamgbose then Executive Assistant to the Honourable Minister of Education, Prof. Babs Fafunwa, He taught both of us at Ibadan, when I declared my interest in the post, in the presence of my friend, Emenanjo, Prof. Bamgbose was very happy. "I do not see anybody else better qualified than you for the post. Fortunately, the Honourable Minister listens to me, and I do not see any obstacle in your way".

We left his room very satisfied. It will be a very good temporary escape for you from Nsukka and their politics. Is it not a shame to Igbo people that both Ugonna and I became professors outside Igboland? Dr. Ugonna is now late and I had to leave Alvan for Port Harcourt to become a professor", said my friend Prof. Emenanjo.

Soon afterwards, the Planning Committee was constituted and the UNN representative in that committee was Mr. Iwundu then; other members included Prof. Emenanjo, Dr. B.I.N. Osuagwu of Alvan Ikoku College of Education, et cetera. In their wisdom, they decided that the Director must be a professor; that was an exclusive decision aimed at disqualifying me from the very beginning.

Without wasting time, Prof. Emenanjo rushed his own CV to Prof. Bamgbose at Ibadan who was completely shocked by Emenanjo's action which appeared like a stab on the back. After interrogating Prof. Emenanjo, he accepted his CV, but asked him to make sure to contact his friend, Dr. P.A. Nwachukwu and explain the situation.

From that moment Prof. Emenanjo started to avoid me. When he assumed office in 1992 and conducted his first interview for new staff, he never invited me as an expert. That single act told me a lot; he did not want me near him for as long as he was in office. I got the message and steered clear from NINLAN OGBOR HILL Aba for ten years. I only visited the Institute after Prof. Ben Elugbe from Edo State had taken over as the new Executive Director. I was not alone in my isolation, it became conspicuous because scholars had come to see me and Emenanjo as very close friends. Prof. Emenanjo had a policy of keeping all Igbo scholars at arms length throughout his tenure at the National Institute.

Out of the Cold 1994-1996

On August 1, 1994 twelve years after I was kicked out of headship, Prof. Oleka Udeala re-appointed me Acting Head of the Department. By this time I was the Vice Chairman of ASUU-UNN Branch and the effective chairman of Nsukka campus. I was in office for one full year 1994-95. During the 1995-96 session, the University again witnessed a crisis that culminated in the removal of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Udeala. A Sole Administrator in the person Prof. Umaru D. Gomwalk was imposed on UNN for the first time in her history. ASUU was on a national strike which the Government was bent on breaking through the Vice Chancellors. Prof. Gomwalk was sent expressly to do that at UNN especially as the National President of ASUU at that time, Dr. Assisi Asobie, was from UNN. ASUU UNN refused to cave in, and in one of our meetings I made it clear to him that he, the Sole Administrator sent by Government, and ASUU were moving along two parallel courses that can only meet at infinity. About two weeks later, he removed me from headship and put in a more pliable person who, unfortunately, had no following in my Department.

It has been my lot never to complete any term of headship in my academic career of more than thirty-five years.

Prof. Gomwalk's rule in UNN ended in 1996, and before then seven of us ASUU Stalwarts had been subjected to both police and prison detention allegedly for setting the Vice Chancellor's house ablaze and destroying property worth millions of Naira. When we were charged to court, the Public Prosecutor could not appear to prosecute the case. The case was therefore struck out here in the Nsukka Chief Magistrate Court for incompetence. The date was before Prof. Ginigeme Francis Mbanefoh assumed office as our new Ag. Vice Chancellor. His appointment, was confirmed in 1999 and his tenure ended in July 2004 barely three months after the life of the University Governing Council in April 2004.

The Mbanefoh Era 1996-2004 and Dr. Nwachukwu's Professorship

It was during Prof. Udeafa's tenure that I forwarded four sets of my publications for external assessment. I was reliably told that they had been sent out to External Assessors, but the end of his Vice Chancellorship was embroiled in such a serious crisis that it became difficult to know whether any reports had been received or not prior to the crisis. But by the time Prof. Mbanefoh took over from Gomwalk (both men were of the same progeny - Abacha's Presidential Advisory Committee, PAC), two out of the three expected reports had been received, and they were positive. But for one reason or another, my case was not among those presented to the University Appraisals Committee (UAC) in Mbanefo's first presentation to the

UAC in 1998. My case lingered on until a "deus ex machina" intervened decisively. The intervention was from a quarter that Prof. Mbanefoh could not afford to ignore. For the sake of confidentiality, I will not mention his name especially as both of them are still living. But the intervener stressed that Dr. Nwachukwu is not a push-over in linguistics, judging from his antecedents in London and what they have read of him in print. He begged the Vice Chancellor to save them further embarrassment of being addressed as professors in the presence of Dr. Nwachukwu their senior who is not worse than any of them.

There and then Prof. Mbanefoh said that he got the third report on Dr. Nwachukwu the day before his intervention, and promised to present the case at the next UAC. So it happened. In March 1999, Dr. Nwachukwu's case was before the UAC; according to those present at that meeting, Dr. Nwachukwu's case was the only one with three reports, and they were all positive, it means then that the two which had been lying in the Vice Chancellor's office could have got me off the hook, if I were a "better" person in the eyes of Administration.

The Ice Starts to Thaw

With the announcement of my promotion after twelve years of deliberate delay, the number of my friends started to increase. In May 1999, I was approached by some senior professors in my Faculty to run for the Deanship of the Faculty. After some discussion with my wife, I accepted to do so. I took things for granted because my opponent was a very easy walk-over. While I was planning on what to do to make a difference in the Faculty, a third candidate emerged and spoilt the game for me. It pained me only for a while. Soon, another chance came to test my popularity on a wide, university scale, that was the Council election of the year 2000. Hitherto Prof. Mbanefoh had operated like a Sole Administrator, which his predecessor Gomwalk was-

- As God would want it, I was one of the four Senate Representatives in the Council headed by Prof. F.N.C. Osuji. The University Community had come to see Philip Nwachukwu for what he really is - a believer in principled behavior and mature enough to be elected to the Governing Council of this great university.
- In 2005, I was appointed Chairman of Senate Entrance Board. In that capacity I assembled a team of dedicated academics and we carried out the first post-JAMB Screening examination at UNN, and the first in the country. The exercise was a big success, thanks to the devotion of that team and their confidence in me.

- In the year 2005, I was honoured by the Linguistics Association of Nigeria in a big Festschrift of 701 pages with my photograph on the cover.
- Not long after in 2006, I was appointed to the Humanities Committee of the Board of Nigerian National Merit Award as a mark of recognition for integrity.

With all these honours, Philip Nwachukwu feels fulfilled and to God be the glory.



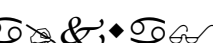

Four years in the Governing Council with Prof. Ginigeme Mbanefoh as Vice Chancellor was not altogether smooth. When I was declared a professor in March 1999, I expected Prof. Mbanefoh to ask me to head the department, but he had other plans, he wanted supporters and not academics who would help to build the image of the department. For him, helping the Department grow meant simply adding Igbo to its name -Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages. The unfortunate thing for Ndi Igbo and their language and culture is that none of its leaders past and present has made it a cardinal principle of his administration to do something for the language. For all his struggle in promoting Igbo language and culture, the late Ogbalu never got any recognition from any government headed by any Igbo man either here in Igboland or outside it. However, our present Vice Chancellor, Venerable Ositadimma Nebo has been jolted by the propaganda that Igbo is on the verge of becoming extinct, and he is ready to do all that he can to help the language. The invitation for us to come forward with proposals is very well taken and we shall not disappoint him. On this note, I conclude my journey through the uncharted terrain of Igbo linguistics. The next section will not be as sweet as the foregoing one. The reason comes from my own conception of an inaugural lecture. In my judgment, an inaugural lecture, (given when a professor is newly made) is meant to introduce the newly made professor to the world of his peers, it is a statement of how and where he started, obstacles he must have encountered and surmounted, and his findings and contributions to that field of knowledge. In classical Rome, we had a set of people called Augurers, they used to be consulted before a leader took a very important step forward, such as going to war, engaging in stiff competitions etc. We will recall from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, the Augurers were a type of soothsayers whose opinion was often sought in deciding whether to take a step or not; in other words they possessed the art "to look into the seeds of time and determine which will germinate".

In this section of the lecture, we shall dwell on the characteristic features of Igbo and from there go on to point out the contributions of Igbo to general linguistic theory.

Salient Features of Igbo

□ Pitch and Tone

Pitch and Tone are very closely related. Pitch is simply the vibration of the vocal cords when air is passing between them, pitch can be high or low according to the rate of vibration of the vocal cords which are located in the voice box or larynx. When pitch centres on individual syllables for purposes of distinguishing a set of lexemes which differ only in pitch arrangement we refer to it as tone. Such a language is said to make use of "lexically significant and contrastive pitch". The famous Igbo quartet brings out the point. 1.

- (a) a  HH cry
- (b)  LL bridge
bed
- (c)  HL
Cloth
- (d)  LH
egg.


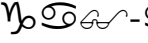
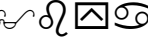








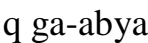


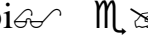




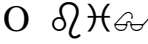



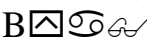




If, on the other hand, pitch is spread through a word group or expression, it is known as intonation as in the following English sentences.

John has gone. Has John gone?)

She is mad) Is she made?)

The statements have falling intonation. While yes/no questions have rising intonation.

Every tone language uses pitch to perform this lexical differentiation function. But Igbo does much more than this: the grammar of Igbo is interwoven with tone, tone is its body and spirit to an extent that a descriptively adequate grammar of Igbo is inconceivable without due attention to tone. Consider these few sentences which each Igbo speaker can use as occasion demands

- 2 (a)     
    
(b)    q ga-abya? Will Ike come?
- 3 (a) A    bi   a: Mr. Anya lives here
A    O   a
Does Anya live here
- 4 (a) B    n'oge (Imperative)
Come in time
(b) Ya   n'oge
He come in time: Let him come in time

Ya/q bya n'oge, o ga-ad [mma.

If he comes in time, it will be good.

5 (a) Ogu bi m a: Ogu lives here (statement)

(b) Ogu bi ebe a HSS level-level

L(a clause) Ogu who lives here

6 (a) Nkw uzq road-side palm tree

(b) nkw Xzq Mr. Xzq's palm tree.

7 m m qnx mx

g [anya

g [anya

Shut your mouth lest I blind you with a slap.

or else “ “ “

Anybody here with an ear for music will easily perceive how tone changes in accordance with different sentence types. An Oxford Philosopher, J.L. Aust characterised a certain subset of English verbs as performative verbs in a book titled *How to do Things with Words*. This title reminds one of what our forebears did with tone. *How To Do Things With Tone* is the title of an enlarged version of Tone in Igbo Syntax (cf. Nwachukwu, 1995).

Looking at what our forebears did with tone, we cannot but admire the fertile imagination behind it all. There is no other tone language that I know of (in Nigeria/Africa) that got close to the level of delicacy that our forebears attained in their manipulation of pitch. The sharp wit and creativity behind this manipulation of the vibration of the vocal cords for syntactic and semantic purposes is still alive in the ingenuity of the Igbo race today. It has been genetically transmitted over the millenia, and if you do not have it, you cannot dare many of the things that Ndi Igbo have faced and come out of superhumanly serene. These are the attributes that our modern educated Ndi Igbo, would want to sacrifice on the altar of expediency and pursuit of material wealth. E ji asusu Igbo eje ebee? Only onye Igbo here in Nigeria with well-established Igbo identity and root can engage in this rhetorical question.

Vowel Harmony

Though not limited to the Igbo language vowel harmony is certainly most developed In the language; it is a system whereby vowel co-occurrence in a simple uncompounded word is strictly guided by it. Vowels in Igbo (and there are***) neatly fall into two sets as follows:

i u [x

e o a q

In any simple Igbo word, vowels from set A never co-occur with vowels from set B. Any exception to this rule must be a loan word from other languages that do not observe the vowel harmony rule. A few examples will suffice.

○ ɔ ʔ ɛ ɛ / ○ ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ	ɲ ɲ ɲ ɲ ɲ ɲ
ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ	ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ
ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ	ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ
○ ɛ ɛ ɛ	ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ ɔ
ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ	obi
a ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ	ɲ ɲ ɲ ɲ
q ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ	ɔ ɛ ɛ ɛ
ɛ ɛ ch [cha	
ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ	
ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ	

These vowels, like the vowels of other human languages, are the product of the same vocal organs that are responsible for the production of human speech sounds. But the Igbo language observes a strict rule of phonotactics for the co-occurrence of its vowels. Whenever the vowel harmony rule is broken in Igbo, it is a signal that we have a compound word from the union of two different simple roots

[ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ	ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ
ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ	ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ
ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ	

The pattern of occurrence of Igbo vowels is yet another index of the ingenuity of its speakers and their language. These features were developed at a time when the entire Igbo race had not been exposed to any western education, a clear indication that intelligence is innate whereas western education is acquired using that innate intelligence.

• Igbo - A Verb-Centred Language

In Igbo, the verb is central to most, if not all, constructions in the language. Most function words in Indo-European languages are verbs in the Igbo - to, than, in order to, from etc., most prepositions in English have equivalents as verbs. Example:

Mx ɛ ka ɛ g[ogologo
I big surpass you in height – I am taller than you.

2. Q ɛ ka ɛ g [ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ ɛ akwxkwq

Compound Verbs Compound Nominal

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ azx

ndaghachiazx decline

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ [

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ (ala/ego)

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

[lqppta

nlqppta

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ xzq

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

[አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

[አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

አንድ ስሜት ስሜት አዲስ

It is not easy for those of us whose English can be said to be seasoned. Very often we, including other Nigerians code-switch, that is, we start an Igbo expression and

complete it with an appropriate English word.

He is honest Q d[hqneest

It is serious Q di serious

It is also important Q d[kwa important

One of the fruits of being under colonial power that imposed its own language and culture on the subject race is the lasting effect on the language and culture of the ruled. The English language has been deeply influenced, first by Latin through Roman conquest and by French through the Norman conquest of Britain in 1066. As a result of these experiences, the English language has drawn heavily from both Latin and French languages. Without these two languages it is difficult to imagine what the English language would have looked like.

The Igbo language did not go through such an experience; moreover, nouns in Igbo are not inflected, and even the verb inflection does so minimally to show time *as it is easy* in English to go from verb to adjective and to noun –

realize realizable realization

adore adorable adoration

desire desirable/desirous desirability

There is no such derivational process in Igbo

Apart from the Latinate words which abound in English, there is a number of abstract noun-forming suffixes as such

-hood, -ship, -dom

as in fatherhood, priesthood, falsehood, brotherhood, manhood, childhood;


Kingship, scholarship, apprenticeship, partnership, traineeship, leadership;

Kingdom, freedom, serfdom. In Igbo, by contract:

enyi translates friend, friendship, friendly

okorqb[a - young youth

n'okorqb[a - in youth

(d[) ka  okorqb[a like the young/youth.

Igbo - an Igbo

Igboness ihe e ji bxxr onye Igbo

Character agwa, njirimara

Characterization ngosipxta agwa nkepxta.

But in science and technology, the terms have got to be short and precise, leaving no room for description.

In Physics, Mr. Onuekwusi Obinabu published a compilation of technical terms in the subject - the basic terms in the wordlist include

Insulator - nɔ̃jxgãa

Conductor - nɔ̃ykwegãa

Force - ike

Field of force - qmaike

Potential - iked[̃nx

Resistor - rezistq

That was the first time, and perhaps the only time an Igbo scientist has shown interest in modernizing or enriching the vocabulary stock of his language. Our Igbo scholars have their noses in the air, they are not interested in language and cultural matters. But they are interested in development - human development, industrial development, economic development et cetera. I doubt that they have ever stopped to ask themselves: what factors are essential for this development? Does language play any role?

Yes, language is an indispensable element in human development. If you want to get the people involved in their own development, you must do so in the language which they understand - their native tongue. A Japanese scholar, Prof. Susumu Kuno, a renowned linguist at Harvard University, gave me a little insight into the strategy for Japanese industrial development: The Japanese government planned their industrial development; first of all, they assembled scholars and provided money for the purchase of books, articles and other publications in science and technology. These were translated into Japanese by experts in Japanese *language and linguistics*. *The reason for this exercise is simple* - both the innovators, the technologist, the scientist on the one hand, and the factory Hands at the Assembly line, those who assemble the raw materials, and mix them in given proportions on the other, have got to speak the same language. I would very much like to know of any industrialized country which achieved industrialization using a foreign language.

Planned development calls for this strategy of laying solid foundations for people's participation in their own development and progress. Technology must be

domesticated, and the essential tool for the domestication of technology is language. Igbo will begin to become extinct only when we do not make it an instrument of industrialization and people development

Igbo Morphology

I am sure that Igbo scientists will be wondering what an Arts man has to do with a term such as morphology. Language has structure just as cells etc. Word-formation processes go by the name morphology -from morphemes to words. One of the essential features of Igbo word-formation processes is reduplication i.e. repetition of roots and stems to form new words; as I said earlier, only verbs are involved in this process in Igbo. Examples of reduplicated words in Igbo include:

As we can see, the group of words in (1) are examples of root reduplication with a prefix - while those in (2) are instances of stem reduplication plus an interfix. Thus from Igbo morphology, a new term - interfix - has come into linguistic vocabulary, we now have prefix, infix, interfix and suffix.

Igbo Syntax - Essential Features

One of the outstanding features of Igbo syntax is the lack of a single negative marker (negator), such as 'not' and 'never' in English, *ko* (Yoruba) and ***** (Hausa). This means that we cannot negate a noun in Igbo except via a syntactic construction with a verb. Thus, in these languages as in English one can say

I and not I

John and not John

In Igbo we can only have

***bx~&gh[m<^r

It is not I.

Imperative Constructions

Igbo imperatives are full sentences. People are surprised at this especially when they compare Igbo with English where imperatives always have the second person as subject as

Come here

Come here, will you

Behave yourselves, won't you. But English has other forms - the let-constriction

Let me go

Let him pray always

Let them abide by the Law

Let them mind themselves. These examples show that the imperative construction in English bifurcate into two:

(i) Imperative with you as subject, and

(ii) Let - Imperative/constructions. In Igbo, the imperative involves an overt subject except when the such a subject is the second person singular-contrast the following:

These data from Igbo speak for themselves. Such facts from Igbo have helped to broaden our horizon about the structures of sentence types in natural language; they have also thrown into bold relief the issue of principles and parameters in the syntax of human languages.

• Serial Verb Constructions

Igbo, like most Kwa languages of West Africa, has serial verb constructions, that is a construction with a concatenation of verbs sharing the same subject. Its illustration is given in the following examples.

Carry money your and start going

Go away with your money.

(2) Onye qbxia *****

Person every carry seat his (and) come

Let everybody bring his seat with him.

(3) *****

He used knife stab him in eye

He stabbed him in the eye with a knife.

Such instrumental constructions containing prepositional phrases are not available in Igbo; they can only be expressed in Igbo via a serial verb construction such as those above.

Igbo has gone beyond this specific use and has extend serial verb constructions to the conjunction of verb phrases/predicates. Examples:

Emeka went to the market, bought some meat, returned home, cooked and ate (it) alone. As we can see, many verbs are involved in the above examples, and they express not instrumental (PP) phrases but the conjoining of different verb phrases (VPs).

The Absence of Passives in Igbo

Igbo like so many languages of Nigeria does not have passive sentences such as the pairs of English example below:

(a) Dike shot the wild dog.

(b) The wild dog was shot by Dike.

(2a) This dog ate the chicken almost alive.

(c) The chicken was eaten almost alive by the dog.

Passive formation is a sorting device that separate transitive from intransitive verbs: only transitive verbs accept passivization. Igbo on the other hand distinguishes between transitive and intransitive verbs, yet it has no rule of passive formation. Passivisation entails NP- movement, and Igbo has NP -

movement rules, yet it lacks passives. It seems, therefore, that the above two conditions - the transitivity and NP-movement requirement though necessary are not sufficient to guarantee the passive formation in the language. The crucial and sufficient condition is the possession of rich verb inflexion that distinguishes between present, past and past participle of a transitive verb. Participles, present or past are adjectival in meaning, this explains why the past participles are known as adjectival passives. Every language that has the passive formation rule must have a passive form to each transitive verb. This crucial (sufficient) requirement is lacking in Igbo with its limited verb inflexion.

Inherent - Complement Verbs

Igbo possesses a subset of verbs which are characterized by their morphemic constituents. They are exemplified by the following:

The list can go on and on. Why is this so in Igbo. I guess that our Proto-Igbo speakers had to devise this as a means of having as many verbs as possible in the language. Igbo has a simple syllable structure CV and is essentially bisyllabic ie words are generally of two syllables

The number of basic tones in the language are two, H and L, the third, the downstep (s) is essentially a grammatical tone with very light semantic load ie the number of minimal pairs based on the contrast between H and S is very small

Examples

Above all, the number of vowels in Igbo as in many Nigerian languages is small ranging from eight to a maximum of ten. Given the above situation, Igbo would have been full of homophones ie words with the same spelling and tone pattern. To solve this problem, the Proto-Igbo speakers decided to semantically differentiate these verbs by attaching different meaning-specifying nominals to the one and the same spelling. It is for this reason that the nominals are described as inherent complements/meaning specifiers. This is another mark of the ingenuity of Proto-Igbo speakers.

Contributions to Linguistic Theory Issues in the government binding (GB) Framework

The Government and Binding framework (see Chomsky (1981) introduced a modular approach to linguistic analyses. Among these modules are the Government sub-theory, the Movement sub-theory, the Binding sub-theory and the Empty category principle (ECP) among others. Government is about syntactic relations between the heads of constructions and the categories to which these heads assign grammatical functions. This is an old notion in classical Latin grammar which has now been rehabilitated and given a place of prominence in GB.

The same applies to Case theory.

6a. For Chidi to have said that is unfortunate.

6b. *Chidi to have said this is unfortunate.

The grammatical case which a preposition assigns in English can be many and varied unlike Latin form where the notion of government originated. Unlike English, Latin prepositions fall into two discrete subsets -those that govern the accusative case and those that governs the ablative or instrumental case. All prepositions in the following examples are underlined.

Accusative/Objective Case

Ante meridiem (am)

Before mid day

Post meridiem (Pm)

After mid day

Ad Jesum per Mariam.

To Jesus through Marx.

Lexio sancti evangeli seccundum Joanem

A reading of the holy gospel according to John.

Ablative Case

Dulce et decorum est po patria mori

Sweet and proper is for fatherland to die.

To die for one's fatherland is delightful and respectful.

Pro bono publico For the good of public.

For the public good/for the good of the public.

Ab urbe condita

From the city having been founded: from the foundation of the city (Rome).

Syntactic Movement and the Trace Modules

Syntactic movement is one of the principles of core or universal grammar. The trace theory is introduced to tell us the original place from where a sentence

constituent has been moved and the destination of the moved constituent, (extraction site and landing site).

Thus, a trace can only occur when a constituent has changed position.

In classical English transformational grammar, the trace of a moved constituent is always an empty space known as empty category and represented with the letter e as in the following examples:

Whom, can I see e, (from I can see whom)

[The book], which, I bought e, is expensive. Both the displaced constituents and their traces have been indicated above by co-indexing.

But facts from Igbo syntax have revealed that a trace left by a moved constituent is not always an empty category (e), it can be a category with phonetic form, a resumptive pronoun as in the following

Who is the person we are talking about him:

Whom₁ are we talking about e₁.

Xmxaka, ha ga-abyakwa? (Yes/No Question)

Will the children come?

Thus, the addition to linguistic theory of the resumptive pronoun as another type of trace is largely due to accurate descriptions of Igbo and languages like it. (cf Nwachukwu 1987, Uwalaka 2000).

The Binding Subtheory

The Binding theory was introduced in linguistics in order to account for co-reference in human languages. Binding is a relation holding between antecedents and anaphors. Chomsky set up three binding rules to predict co-reference in syntax thus:

1. An anaphor is bound in its governing category (local domain)
2. A pronoun is free in its governing category,
3. A referential expression is free in all categories. Examples
 1. The two friends love each other
 2. Students always protect one another
 3. I know myself.
 4. They hate themselves
5. The judge knows that John lied under oath. All the anaphors (anaphoric pronouns) refer back to their antecedents - the subject of the sentence in (1-4). Example 5 contains definite NPs, which are not bound, but free in all categories/local domains.

ECP and Trace

The empty category principle stipulates that an empty category must be properly governed; to be properly governed is to head-governed. All anaphoric pronouns are head-governed the traces they leave behind in their logical positions must be properly governed.

But there are other traces in syntax- NP traces and Wh-traces. NP traces arise from raising i.e. subject Raising and Object Raising. Since NP Raising is an infra-clause movement from one NP position in the lower sentence another NP position in the higher sentence, NP-traces must be properly governed for the binding rules to be complete, the rules must be enlarged to accommodate NP-and Wh-traces. In the same way Wh-traces are properly governed, not in their local domains, but by the Wh. Operator in Spec(ifier) position of the higher or containing sentences

Logophors - A unique feature of Igbo

Logophors are like anaphors in many respect they refer back to their antecedents. Whereas an anaphor is bound within the clause that contains its governing category, a logophors is bound outside the clause containing it. Consider these examples

6a. Ibe_i ma na ya_i ga-anwx

Ibe knows that he, Ibe will die

b. Ibe ma na Qj ga-anwx

Ibe knows that he (somebody other than Ibe) will die

7a. Ha_i ma na ha_i, txrx_i as [_i]

b. Ha_i ... na xmx/nwoj txrx asi Any native Igbo speaker will interpret ya, the subject of the embedded/subordinate clause, as conjoint in reference with the higher sentence subject, Ibe hence they are co-indexed whereas Q in 6(b) is disjoint in reference. A similar interpretation goes for 7(a)(b) which contains the third person plural pronouns. The interpretation of 7(a) is inclusive i.e. the higher subject ha is included in the lower subject ha. whereas the interpretation 7(b) is exclusive ie x_s-mx/nwo_s refers to a different set of people from the higher subject ha.

Thus, the presence of anaphors and logophors in Igbo resolves the problem of co-reference in the language.

Subjectless Infinitives in Linguistic Theory

Consider the following English examples

1 (a) For John to do such a thing is unbecoming

(b) John's doing that is unbecoming

(c) For John to have done that is unbecoming





2(a) *John to do such a thing is unbecoming

(b) *John to have done such a thin is unbecoming



The claim based on facts from English linguistics is that the infinitive, not being a finite verb, cannot govern a subject. This is a logical follow-up from the law of predication which states that a predicate must be predicated of something". In other words, every predicate must have a subject.

Examples 1(a) - (b) are grammatical because there is a preposition which assigns the grammatical function of subject to John. The absence of such a preposition in 2(a-b) renders them ill-formed or ungrammatical.

Our research in Igbo presents a counter argument because infinitives do take subject in Igbo.

Examples 3 (a) Ibe   asi. q  ha mevgrq ya 

For Ibe to have lied in public disgraced him.

(b) O  .ken  ye [vx nri n'oha na-eme ihere.

For an old man to scramble for food in public is shameful.

These Igbo examples do not have any preposition, yet they are grammatical sentences of the language. This fact calls into question the claim that tense governs and assigns grammatical function to the subject of a sentence i.e. only a tensed clause or a clause with a finite verb can have a subject.

The investigation is on-going, and for any claim about the Igbo examples to be valid, we need cross-linguistic evidence from other languages in the Kwa sub-family. The resolution of this problem will enable us to determine what really belongs to core grammar principles) and what belongs to parametric variation on the core grammar.

The Igbo Language in Perspective

I have gone at length to highlight the salient features of Igbo the manipulation of pitch variation for grammatical purposes, a feat which no other tone language has achieved with the same delicacy of details; the rule of co-occurrence of vowels, (vowel harmony), a rule which is never broken except in compound words of two or more roots; the harmonisation of imperative sentence

structure with the structures of other non-imperative sentences; the extension of the use of serial verb constructions to sentence (VP) conjoining without any overt conjunctions; the existence of anaphors and logophors - third person pronouns which make pronominal reference in Igbo unequivocal or unambiguous, an aid to the semantic interpretation of sentences, the presence of inherent-complement verbs, a strategy for specifying verb meanings and reducing homophony in the language.

All these features point in one direction - the ingenuity of the owners of the language. The Proto-Igbo speakers were never exposed to any form of western education and civilisation. West European grammatical tradition is derived directly from the Graeco-Roman tradition. The Greeks were men of ideas whose thoughts laid the foundation for western civilisation. But the Proto-Igbo speakers learnt from nobody, they were the untaught teachers of themselves, they must have exercised their intellectual powers, observed their surroundings closely, asked questions and argued among themselves. The outcome of their intellectual exercises is what we see today in their language - the Igbo Language - a highly complex language which scared Europeans away because they could not understand the intricacies of tone in the language - a feature they dismissed as "tonal perturbation". This is the rich bequest that modern Ndi Igbo would want us to throw away in their quest for transitory power and material comfort. E ji Igbo eje ebe a?

Ihe e ji Igbo erne juru eju, bara abara. E ji asxsa na omenaala anyi bụ Ndị Igbo amata anyi. E ji asxsa Igbo emepe ala Ndi Igbo. A ga-eji ya kuzie nkanxxx nile ka onye qbxia ghqta ihe ekwe na-akx, were soro n'ihe a na-eme. Ijx ebe e ji Igbo eje putara [jx ihe e ji Ndi Igbo erne na Naijir[a. Isi ehi, a na-achq ya achq n'ite?

In the period of discovery, expansion and empire, a British Lord was known to have said: "O yes, those primitive peoples lack sophistication, the grammar of their languages can be summarised on a postage stamp." Available evidence shows that the British never felt at home among Ndi Igbo, and, in fact, kept them at arms length because they saw Ndi Igbo as the only group in Nigeria that could use the whiteman to climb only to push him down afterwards

On the contribution of Igbo to Linguistic theory, I would like to add that from a close study of tone in Igbo and Japanese (see Haruguchi & Heny) a theory of auto-segmental phonology has been developed (cf. Goldsmith 1990) The theory establishes tone as an auto-segment, and not a suprasegmental like intonation in English. Before this realisation, languages of the world were thought to be either intonational or tonal. But today, we

know that a tone language can have its own intonation.

Secondly, a resumptive pronoun is now well established in linguistic theory as another form of trace, an empty category and a resumptive pronoun are not mutually exclusive. The Igbo language has both of them, (cf. Nwachukwu, 1999).

Thirdly, the existence of both anaphors and logophors in Igbo has given rise to a revision of Chomsky's Binding rules to accommodate these new facts (cf. Nwachukwu 1987).

Fourthly, the issue of subjectless infinitives has been called into question by contradictory evidence from Igbo. If it turns out that an infinitive can take a subject, as it does in Igbo, then the whole theory of tensed clauses will have to be drastically modified or rejected.

The Way Forward

I think that the time for telling ourselves the home truth has come. This home truth would have been told "tuch earlier than now but the chance never came, because the person who could do so was in chains. The moment of truth is now.

The development of Igbo Language and Culture has suffered undue setback because of the indifference of (1) Successive Administrations from Eastern Nigeria to the days of East Central and the smaller states carved out of it. The Sole Crusader for Igbo Language and Culture was Mazi Fredrick Chiedozie Ogbalu of blessed memory. He was seen but not admired, listened to, but not taken seriously by the governments of the day. "Ogbalu and his boys" as Government officials saw them, were merely tolerated. Ogbalu started a foundation for the Society for Promoting Igbo Language and Culture (SPILC), known as Igbo Language and Culture Endowment Fund (ILCEF), but he got no hearing from either Government or private individuals including those who would carry money **in** cartons to the North and West for such occasions.

Change of Attitude

This is the time for a change of attitude from our intellectual elite, a change of attitude from the Vice Chancellors in the Igbo area, a change of attitude from governments, a change of heart from all of us.

Does the educated Yoruba man hold his language in contempt? Does the average Hausa-Fulani man look down on those who speak Hausa? The answer to these questions is no. Why does the educated Igbo man or woman think that Igbo is of no use. Is there any pride in being literate in English, French, German but

illiterate in one's own language? How many of us here can boast of literacy in Igbo? Literacy in English does not amount to literacy in Igbo. We as educated Igbo people, are role models, if we speak our language with pride, others will imitate us. No matter how sophisticated we are, we still remain Ndi Igbo in the eyes of Nigerians and the world. We have already made a name for ourselves in Nigeria and the world as a hardy, intelligent and resourceful race, our language marks us out as Ndi Igbo. We must not let it die, and it will not die.

Leadership Leadership in Igbo Studies

In any serious organization, a leader does not just emerge from nowhere; the eyes of everybody interested in the continued existence of the organization are open, searching for those with leadership qualities. When they are found, they are groomed by being tested in various decision-making capacities before they have the mantle of leadership thrust upon them. This is how ASUU has weathered the storm of military dictatorship in Nigeria. ASUU always has a line-up of possible leaders who have been tried in various sensitive positions over the years. They know their colleagues and their colleagues know them.

What I am saying underscores the weakness in our present system of headship rotation, not every academic in a Department can lead. Headship by rotation has an unacceptable face: it makes people sit by, watch in silence as-if to say within themselves: "don't criticize that you may not be criticized".

If we want Igbo Studies to blossom, the Director of the Institute of African Studies must be a person deeply immersed in Igbo Studies whose professional interest is in Igbo studies, not somebody on the periphery. If we want the Igbo language to grow, we have to look for an academic who is immersed in Igbo language or literature or both, not anybody from anywhere. Playing politics with Igbo studies weakened the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages here at UNN. The addition to the above name "Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages" is mockery. The University should take the bull by the horn and set up a Department of Igbo Language and Literature to be manned by a scholar with a good record in Igbo studies. It must be headed by a person who can lead and not simply rule. The insinuation that Igbo is on the verge of extinction justifies such an action.

Funding

Igbo Studies in this University has received virtually no funds from either the University or from the governments in the Igbo-speaking areas. It is high time the situation changed. We have a plan, we have a dream on how funds can be raised for Igbo Studies without bothering the university or governments. We shall

unfold our plan to the Vice Chancellor in due course. All we need is his support.

Happily, the Vice Chancellor Prof. Ositadimma C. Nebo is a dreamer in words as in action, and all Empire builders are dreamers. We have seen one big dream of his UNRED, it will come true. We are free to scrutinize it, criticize it constructively, remove any undesirable aspect of it and embrace it as our own. It is a very good dream which must come true in the interest of all of us. My reading of the present situation at UNN is that Prof. Nebo has a sense of history, and history will have quite a few things to say in his favour.

A Programme for Igbo

A programme for promoting Igbo Language and Literature studies is in the waiting and requires funds. It is my determination whether retired or not, that this University must stamp its name on the Igbo language and its development. This is our finest hour.

Conclusion

The Vice Chancellor, Fellow Academics, Ladies and Gentlemen, I will express deep appreciation for your patience in the following languages:

Multas gratias vobis ago propter magnam patientiam vestram
Merci beaucoup pour votre attention et patience

I thank you very much for your patience and attention
Ana m ekele unu maka ndidi unu na etu unu siri gee m nti. Ndeewqnx.

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3. 1982-1989 Foundation Editor; *JOLAN (Journal of the Linguistics Association of Nigeria)*.
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