



# **Exploring the impact of BBC news Igbo on Revitalisation of Igbo Language**

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Dear Sir,

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I have read the draft thesis of Mr. Ikechukwu Williams Eke titled "Exploring the Impact of BBC News Igbo on the Revitalisation of Igbo Language" with a view to improving its readability, coherence/cohesion, and eliminating obvious and subtle grammatical and stylistic lapses. I have also attempted to minimise its punctuation weaknesses.

Sir, I do believe that I have succeeded in achieving those objectives.

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## **CERTIFICATION**

I certify that Ikechukwu W. Eke (36715727) completed this research under my supervision in the Indigenous Language Media in Africa Research Entity/School of Communication, Faculty of Humanities, North-West University (Mafikeng Campus), South Africa.

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4/4/2023  
**Date**

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this doctoral thesis entitled, “Exploring the Impact of *BBC News Igbo* on the Revitalisation of Igbo Language,” is solely my own, and has not been submitted to any other institution for the purpose of obtaining a degree or qualification, and all sources cited are acknowledged by comprehensive referencing.

**Signature:**

Ikechukwu Williams Eke

## **DEDICATION**

For paving my path to a career in the academia, I dedicate this thesis to the memory of Professor Idorenyin Udoesen Akpan, who passed away on October 29, 2014. Continue to rest in power, Prof.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Owing to the uncommon gestures he extended to me even before we met physically, I thought my thesis supervisor, Professor Abiodun Salawu, was the kindest, humblest, and most considerate academic. However, when we met on 23 February 2020, the feeling became avuncular. To my amazement, that familial touch remained familiar throughout my PhD sojourn with him. For your professionalism laced with avuncularity, I am super grateful to you, Prof. Salawu.

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Ahem, someday, I will write separate odes to Google, the dictionary, and coffee.

To God be all the glory!

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## ABSTRACT

Igbo language is endangered. In fact, UNESCO has predicted that the language could be extinct by 2050. Its low public profile made it increasingly unable to meet mass media owners/producers' and advertisers' commercial considerations. This limited Igbo language access to the mass media and underscored Fishman's media fetish. Considering the growing influence of digital media on social realities, this study explores the impact of digital media on the revitalisation of Igbo language, using *BBC News Igbo* as a case in point.

The study adopts the mixed methods approach to collect rich enough data and come up with valid and credible findings. Therefore, data were collected through Web survey, content analysis, and interview. The resultant quantitative and qualitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, summative approach to content analysis, thematic analysis, and Analysis of Variance, and the findings were triangulated.

Findings show that through digitisation and promotion, global access and visibility, domain expansion, social media presence, attitudinal change, revival of interest, restoration of pride, provision of learning resources, encouragement of usage, and improved knowledge, *BBC News Igbo* has largely enhanced the socio-linguistic values of Igbo language and greatly encouraged acquisition of its skills.

Again, findings show that *BBC News Igbo* has highly enhanced Igbo language prestige among its audience. Furthermore, *BBC News Igbo* has remarkably encouraged the acquisition of Igbo language skills among its audience. Once more, findings show that the Central and Onicha orthographies are prevalent in *BBC News Igbo* reports. Additionally, with an analysis of variance of  $F(3, 99) = 0.21, p = 0.8867$ , the study finds no statistically significant difference in how the

*BBC News Igbo* audiences' age, gender, and educational status shape their assessment of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language. These findings validate much of the postulates of David Crystal's Theory of Language Revitalisation, especially the hypothesis that access to electronic technologies enhances the chances of revitalising endangered languages.

Although when weighed against Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale findings from literature and data still marked Igbo language as "endangered," there is strong evidence that sustained exposure to sundry digital media platforms can halt its vulnerability and even make the language thrive once more. It is, therefore, recommended, among other things, that Igbo linguists, indigenous language media researchers, and Igbo language activists who want to embark on Igbo language revitalisation endeavours should look to the immense opportunities for progress the digital media offers endangered languages.

**Keywords:** language endangerment, language revitalisation, reversing language shift, Igbo language, BBC News Igbo, social media audience, computer-assisted language learning, thematic analysis

**Word Count:** 399

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the study and establishes its background, problem, and guiding questions. The scope and limitations of the study are also discussed here. The chapter equally establishes the significance of the study and states the organisations, bodies, and institutions that its findings will be beneficial to as well as how it will contribute to knowledge and literature in African languages and journalism.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Research in Igbo language endangerment has attracted appreciable scholarly attention (see, for instance, Adegbija, 1998; Igboanusi, 2006; Kuju, 1999; Ohiri-Aniche, 1997). However, this was heightened by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report of late 2006 (Asonye, 2013; Ani, 2012) which states that Igbo language would be extinct by 2050, if nothing was done to curb its fast decline. Although researchers like Igboanusi (2006) had been working on Igbo language endangerment and had reported that Igbo language was declining in vitality, the UNESCO report on the language becoming extinct must have come as a shock to researchers, Igbo language activists, and indeed the majority of Igbo language users who love and care for the health of the language. The untiring encroachment of English language into the core of Igbo language functional domains was becoming common knowledge, but it would appear that the extent of damage it had done to the health of Igbo language was underrated prior to the UNESCO report. However, the report would later serve as a credible wake-up call to Igbo language researchers, activists, and linguists.

Expectedly, some researchers sought to ascertain the veracity of the UNESCO report on possible Igbo language extinction (see Igboanusi, 2006; Madubuike, 2011; Odinye and Odinye, 2010; Okoro, 2018). The report encouraged more research into the status of Igbo language, and while some of the research focused on confirming the UNESCO report, other researchers (see, for instance, Odinye and Odinye, 2010) were focused on proffering measures to curb Igbo language endangerment and avert the fulfillment of the forecast. However, while the respective findings of the studies corroborated the UNESCO forecast, the researchers reported varying degrees of Igbo language endangerment. This, again, validates the pertinence of the UNESCO report on Igbo language. Odinye and Odinye (2010), for instance, report that some people actually anticipated the UNESCO report, so they did not think, as some others did, that the report was exaggerated, especially given Igbo language's "declining level of acceptability amongst the Igbo people" (p. 86). In any case, for those who believed the UNESCO report and those who doubted it, the forecast that Igbo language was facing the risk of extinction marked a watershed in critical enquiries into the endangerment status of the language.

Owing to its traditional functions of education, information, entertainment, mobilization, and even behavioral change (Ekwueme, 2011), the media have been widely recommended to play a critical role in improving language attitude, strengthening language vitality, and revitalising a language in regression (Ayenbi, 2014; Cormack, 2007b; Ekwueme, 2011; Garba, 2015; Igbokwe, 2013; Moriarty, 2009; Moring & Husband, 2007; Nwammuo & Salawu, 2018, 2019; Onuzulike, 2014; Salawu, 2015; Sallabank, 2010; Ugwuona, 2015; Vulchanova *et al*, 2017). The mass media, for instance, have the uncommon ability to influence a people's attitude to their language by conferring prestige on it. People who hitherto had a poor attitude to their language might begin to change their attitude when they repeatedly see the language used in a prestigious mass

media channel. Beyond this, the mass media are actually sites for language acquisition. Whether in the print media or on the electronic media, programmes can be created to teach a particular language to willing learners. This, if it is successful, would lead to increased usage of the language. In the same vein, using a minority language to disseminate information, especially on a regional or national scale, or using a minority language to create programmes aimed at entertainment and social mobilization will surely enhance the prestige and pride users of the language accord their language. It is for these reasons that minority language researchers have ascribed the roles of enhancement of language attitude, strengthening of language vitality, and revitalisation of declining languages to the mass media.

Similarly, recent studies have pointed to the roles of the digital media in maintaining and revitalising endangered languages (see, for instance, Belmar & Glass, 2019; Billock, 2015; Cassels, 2019; Cunliffe, 2007; Huaman & Stokes, 2011; Kelly-Holmes & Atkinson, 2017; Leslie, 2016; Outakoski, Cocq, & Steggo, 2018; Stern, 2018; Viernes, 2019; Williams, 2007). The digital media also performs the functions of the traditional mass media before it. In fact, because of its peculiar affordances, the digital media might be more suited for language revitalisation. For instance, Internet is increasingly becoming easily accessible, even in otherwise poor communities (Ward, 1997), that linguists embarking on language revitalisation have increasingly deployed the various organs of the digital media. Cost is another advantage of the digital media over the traditional mass media. The cost of hosting a minority language programme on radio, television, or featuring it as, say, a column in a newspaper would normally be far higher than creating a social media page dedicated to publicizing and strengthening an endangered language.

There is also the issue of reach. The digital media is ubiquitous in its reach that distance, especially one occasioned by migration or national borders, could easily be circumvented to make the issue of distance among scattered speech communities less challenging to minority languages. Therefore, as the researchers above have submitted, the advent of the digital media has heralded a remarkable era in language maintenance, language revitalisation, and language revival.

Specifically, therefore, this study explores the impact of *BBC News Igbo* service on Igbo language revitalisation. It is aimed at searching the various ways the setting up and operations of *BBC News Igbo* have helped the now well-documented Igbo language endangerment. This is imperative given that the decline of Igbo language happened and continues to happen regardless of the traditional media. Of course, the logic behind this is, if the traditional media owners, media managers, and advertisers have neglected Igbo language for economic reasons, whether they are right or wrong, what hopes does the digital media hold for Igbo language? If the traditional media have not encouraged the development of Igbo language, in what ways can the digital media help to reinvigorate it? This line of enquiry is validated by the differences in affordances between the traditional media and the digital media.

*BBC News Igbo* is a digital media platform of the British Broadcasting Corporation World Service, which started in February 2018. Although it is not a language revitalisation programme, per se, *BBC News Igbo* equally aims to help check Igbo language endangerment by “trying to attract a young audience” with the hope that “this will galvanize people to start speaking Igbo the more” (Ibekwe, 2018). Once more, this speaks to the fact of Igbo language endangerment being fairly common knowledge, especially among the Igbo. It also supports Odinye and Odinye’s (2010) assertion that some people did not consider the prospect of Igbo language going extinct

(reported by UNESCO) as an overstatement. Therefore, much as *BBC News Igbo* was not primarily set up to revitalise Igbo language, its managers are aware of Igbo language decline. It is, therefore, expected that the management of *BBC News Igbo* would create certain programmes with the aim of helping to curb Igbo language regression.

This is, of course, beyond the regular benefits the media hold for minority languages, such as status conferral, and attitudinal changes on the part of users of the languages. When, therefore, *BBC News Igbo* made the promise of creating programmes that would appeal to young people, who form a critical demography in language maintenance, that in itself represents a beacon of hope for Igbo language that is worth exploring further. Similarly, *BBC News Igbo*'s assurance of creating programmes that will hold sufficient appeals to its users to the point of using Igbo language more is a claim that demands substantiation. Should *BBC News Igbo* live up to these claims, Igbo language would be the better for it.

Igbo is the language of the Igbo people who are predominantly found in southeastern Nigeria. Southeastern Nigeria currently comprises Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states. However, the Igbo are also found in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers states in the south-south geopolitical zone of the country (Nnabuihe & Ikwubuzo, 2006; Onuzulike, 2014). Additionally, the Igbo are found in Kogi state (Okoro, 2021) and in Benue state (Oji, 2014), both in the northcentral geopolitical zone of Nigeria. These states are the ancestral nativities of the Igbo people who are found in them.

The adventurous, wanderlust nature of Igbo people is such that they also have a huge settlement in nearly every Nigerian city and town. Since they usually would form a minority language community in these cities and towns, this could make them to speak Igbo language less. Of

course, the tendency of minority language communities is to gravitate toward the language of the dominant community, usually for economic reasons (Belmar & Glass, 2019).

Figure 1.1: *Map of Nigeria Showing Igbo-speaking Zones*

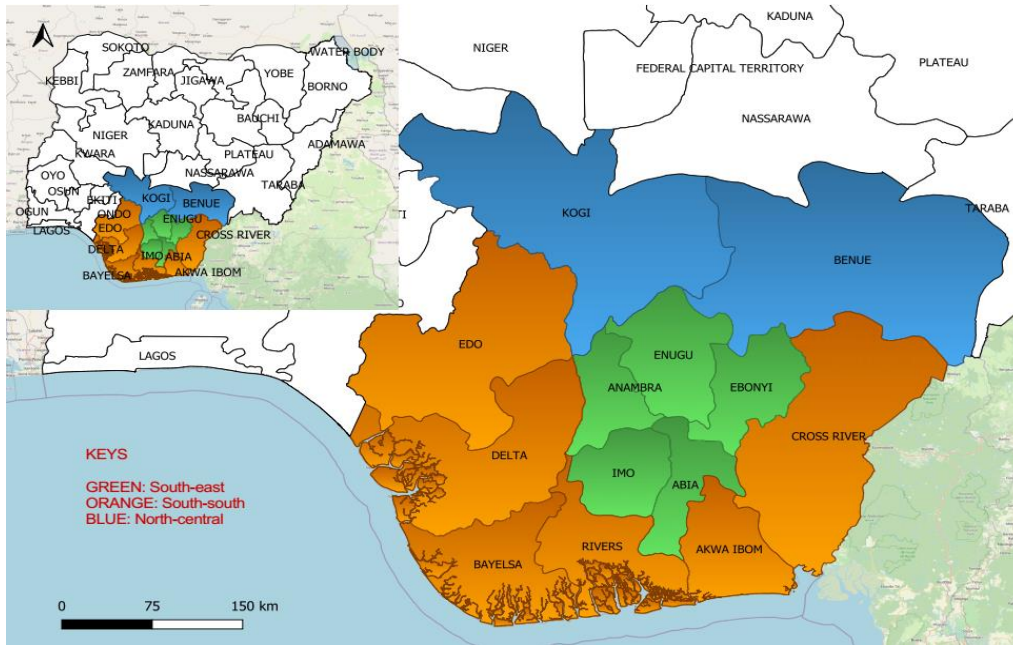


Figure 1.1 shows the different geopolitical zones of Nigeria where Igbo language is spoken by its indigenous people. The South-east is the main geographic base of Igbo people. In the South-south and North-central, Igbo language would be considered one of the many minority languages of the zones. From the map, one sees that it is hardly a coincidence that only two states in the orange zone – Edo and Delta – were not part of the defunct Eastern Nigeria, which existed from 1954-1967.

Uwechia (2016) estimates that Igbo language native speakers are about 25 million people, but Ugwuona (2015), who also states that Igbo language belongs to the new Benue Congo language family, puts the figure at between 25 and 40 million people in Nigeria, and 150 million people worldwide. Also, citing Greenberg, Ugwuona (2015, p. 203) classifies Igbo language “in the kwa

group along with other clusters such as Akan, Gbe, Yoruba, Igala, Nupe-Ebira, Edo, and Idoma.” Besides, Nwammuo and Salawu (2018), citing the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), add that Igbo language is also recognized as a minority language in Equatorial Guinea. For a language that is widely used – spoken by about 150 million people worldwide – and is even privileged a minority status in another country, the UNESCO prediction that it is headed for extinction if its decline is unchecked must have caused quite an uproar. It is little wonder that some people were skeptical of the prediction, prompting the wave of research that would later authenticate the report. The report, therefore, was characterized by fury and fact.

*BBC News Igbo*, the news media of interest in this study, was established in 2018 by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service to, among other objectives, provide Igbo-language programming for the southeast Nigeria – the main geographic base of the Igbo – and the Igbo in diaspora. Its programmes are purely digital, and are aired on two social media platforms, viz. Facebook and Instagram. It is rather curious that the sole Igbo-only media organisation is owned by the BBC. What could be the BBC’s reason for setting up *BBC News Igbo*? When one considers the fact that the prediction that Igbo language is headed for extinction came from a world body – UNESCO – it makes sense then to surmise that the establishment of *BBC News Igbo* might be connected with the UNESCO prediction. This position becomes more credible when one considers the BBC’s decision to make *BBC News Igbo* a wholly digital medium, which leverages the now incredibly pervasive social media that holds massive appeal for the youth. Again, one cannot but infer that the UNESCO prediction on Igbo language endangerment might have played a role in the setting up of *BBC News Igbo*.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is mounting research evidence that digital media plays significant roles in the maintenance, revitalisation, and restoration of endangered languages (see, for instance, Austin & Sallabank, 2011; Austin, 2013; Belmar & Glass, 2019; Billock, 2015; Cassels, 2019; Cunliffe, 2007; Emmanouilidou, 2014; Garba, 2015; Huaman & Stokes, 2011; Kelly-Holmes & Atkinson, 2017; Leslie, 2016; Outakoski, *et al.*, 2018; Stern, 2018; Viernes, 2019; Williams, 2007). However, digital technologies have hardly been deployed in media and communication studies in Africa. Mabweazara, cited in Salawu (2015), for instance, bemoans the rarity of research into the impact of new media technologies on African journalism. Salawu (2015), while explaining that Mabweazara was concerned with research into digital mainstream African journalism undertaken in some colonial languages, notes that when it comes to media operated in indigenous African languages, research is non-existent.

Today, Igbo language is endangered (see Ani, 2012; Asonye, 2013; Igboanusi, 2006), and this is largely because of persistent shift of domains, loss of vitality, its speakers' unfavourable attitude to the language, its native speakers' penchant for foreign ways of life and low level of intergenerational transmission (Igboanusi, 2006). Expectedly, there have been efforts to revitalise Igbo language through the mainstream media; however, these efforts have not halted the threat of Igbo language owing mainly to factors such as a dearth of Igbo-language newspapers and magazines (Salawu, 2006; Nnabuihe & Ikwubuzo, 2006; Nwammuo & Salawu, 2019), inadequate airtime allotted to Igbo-language programmes in the broadcast media (Garba, 2015; Nwammuo & Salawu, 2018), a dearth of Igbo language-based programming on radio and TV stations (Nwammuo & Salawu, 2018), and a general high preference among the Igbo speakers for English-language media (Oso, 2006; Igboanusi, 2006).

This study, therefore, seeks to address the palpable absence of research into the impact of digital technologies on African languages (Salawu, 2015) by examining the impact of *BBC News Igbo*, a digital media outlet, on the revitalisation of Igbo, an endangered indigenous Nigerian language.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The *BBC News Igbo* service is a digital media outlet hosted on the BBC website, Facebook and Instagram, and it has attracted a huge following. This study examines the impact engaging with the stories of *BBC News Igbo* has on its teeming audience as it relates to Igbo language revitalisation. Therefore, the specific objectives of the study are:

1. To find out if *BBC News Igbo* has enhanced the prestige of Igbo language among its audience.
2. To investigate the extent to which *BBC News Igbo* has encouraged the acquisition of Igbo language skills among its audience.
3. To identify the prevalent orthographies in *BBC News Igbo* reports.
4. To establish how the age, gender, and educational status of the *BBC News Igbo* audience shape their assessment of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

To effectively explore the impact of *BBC News Igbo* on Igbo language revitalisation, the researcher raised the following questions.

1. To what extent has *BBC News Igbo* enhanced Igbo language prestige among its audience?

2. To what extent has *BBC News Igbo* encouraged the acquisition of Igbo language skills among its audience?
3. What are the prevalent orthographies in *BBC News Igbo* reports?
4. How do the *BBC News Igbo* audiences' age, gender, and educational status shape their assessment of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language?

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation to the Study**

The study explores the impact of *BBC News Igbo* on Igbo language revitalisation. Igbo is an endangered language indigenous to Nigeria. Although *BBC News Igbo* stories are also published on the BBC website and Instagram, the study only focuses on its stories and audience on Facebook. The study focuses on Facebook because it is the world's most trafficked and most popular social networking site (Ogunnike, 2015, Emmanouilidou, 2014). Also, one in ten people, including minority language speakers, is a Facebook user (Huaman & Stokes, 2011).

One limitation of this study is that the survey response rate was low. The main reason for this is the global rise in cyber fraud, especially in Nigeria. For this reason, the survey recipients were afraid of clicking the questionnaire link, even after initially agreeing to participate in the study. Many of them, upon seeing that they had to click a link to complete the questionnaire, accused the researcher of attempting to defraud them and threatened to report the researcher's Facebook account. Many others asked the researcher to provide proof that his claim of undertaking research was authentic before they could fill out the questionnaire. This made the researcher to point them to his profile on his university's website. However, despite every effort to assure recipients of the questionnaire that the researcher was genuinely doing research, only 8.18% of them filled out the questionnaire. Nonetheless, the low response rate did not limit the study

significantly, because the survey was only one of the three instruments with which data were collected. The uniqueness of the survey was providing knowledge of the demographic profiles of *BBC News Igbo* users, which was not lost due to the number of respondents. The rest of the survey data such as the linguistic profiles of the respondents and their attitude to Igbo language were sufficiently supplemented with adequate data collected from the qualitative interview and qualitative content analysis to arrive at credible research findings.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study promises to be of interest to media studies researchers, communication studies researchers, digital media researchers, and indigenous/minority language scholars. Given Mabweazara (2014), Salawu (2015), Moyo (2017) lamentations of the paucity of research on the impact of new media technologies on African journalism, the shortage of research on indigenous African languages, and the dearth of Global Southern languages in the global information society respectively, this study will contribute to knowledge and literature in digitisation of African languages and African journalism, thus help flatten the digital language divide minority languages across the world currently suffer.

Furthermore, media managers, especially the ones looking to create programmes that will help revitalise endangered languages, will also benefit from the findings of this study. Again, the study will be beneficial to research-funding agencies as it will enable them to know the direction and state of research into both African digital journalism and indigenous African language studies vis-à-vis digital media. Additionally, Igbo socio-cultural bodies, like Ohaneze Ndigbo, and Igbo socio-linguistic bodies and think tanks, like Ahiajoku, Aka Ikenga, Odenigbo, and

indeed Igbo-language activists, enthusiasts, and scholars will find the study beneficial. The study will also be of interest to the National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN).

## **1.7 Thesis Structure**

The study has six chapters, and the preview of each of the chapters is shown below:

**Chapter One – Introduction:** This chapter introduces the study and establishes its background, problem, and guiding questions. The scope and limitations of the study are also discussed here. The chapter equally establishes the significance of the study and states the organisations, bodies, and institutions that its findings will be beneficial to as well as how it will contribute to knowledge and literature in African languages and journalism.

**Chapter Two – Literature Review:** This chapter analyzes the literature relevant to the study. The resultant reviews are grouped into ten sections. The sections are language endangerment and revitalisation, Igbo language endangerment, causes of Igbo language endangerment, and the Igbo orthography controversy. Others are the role of the mass media in language revitalisation, media Fetish, Igbo language and digital technologies, social media and language revitalisation, social media for language learning, the place of digital language divide in language revitalisation, and *BBC News Igbo* as the new Igbo public sphere.

**Chapter Three – Theoretical Framework:** This chapter analyses one theory upon which the study is anchored and a conceptual model related to it. They are David Crystal's Theory of Language Revitalisation and Joshua Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), respectively. Crystal's theory offers the indices for revitalising an endangered language, and Fishman's model provides the metrics for evaluating the degree of language shift. Therefore, GIDS provides the measures for assessing the degree of Igbo language endangerment, and

Crystal's theory represents some of the preconditions needed to reverse Igbo language shift.

**Chapter Four – Methodology:** This chapter details the nature of the study and the methods the researcher employed to access, collect, collate, and analyse data needed to answer the research questions. Therefore, the chapter explains the study's approach, population and sample size, content categories, units of analysis, sampling procedures, methods of data collection, instruments and instrumentation, and methods of data analysis.

**Chapter Five – Data Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion:** This chapter presents the findings of the study in tables and figures. The key contents of the tables and figures are analysed briefly and later discussed fully to establish their significance for the research questions, theories, and literature. The research questions guide the presentation of the tables and figures. Therefore, each research question is first reproduced, then the tables and figures that relate to it follow.

**Chapter Six – Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations:** This chapter summarises the study's overarching objectives and the eventual findings. It also presents the conclusions drawn from the main findings. The chapter equally provides general recommendations based on the research findings as well as makes suggestions for further research.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the study and established its background, problem, and guiding questions. The scope and limitations of the study were also discussed here. The chapter has equally established the significance of the study and stated the organisations, bodies, and institutions that its findings will be beneficial to as well as how it will contribute to knowledge and literature in African languages and journalism.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes the literature relevant to the study. The resultant reviews are grouped into ten sections. The sections are language endangerment and revitalisation, Igbo language endangerment, causes of Igbo language endangerment, and the Igbo orthography and dialects controversies. Others are the role of the mass media in language revitalisation, media fetish, Igbo language and digital technologies, social media and language revitalisation, social media for language learning, understanding *BBC News Igbo* programming, the place of digital language divide in language revitalisation, and *BBC News Igbo* as the new Igbo public sphere.

#### 2.2 Language Endangerment and Revitalisation

Language is an important element of culture. It is one of the most important means through which members of a culture communicate ideas, identity, feelings, and information. It is also a vital means of transmitting culture. Therefore, language is the lifeblood of culture (Samovar & Porter, 2004). It is language that gives expression to many aspects of culture. Both the internal and external representations of culture rely on language for expression. One can hardly imagine life without language. It is nearly inconceivable that life would be meaningful without language as humankind has it today. As Samovar and Porter put it, therefore, language gives meaning, essence, and breath to culture. Therefore, language is of immense value to any culture. This makes the prospect of losing aspects of a people's language rather heartbreaking, and if losing aspects of a people's language is considered disheartening, the likelihood of losing the language in its entirety then invokes a dire feeling that is nearly as unimaginable as the thought of

depriving humankind of language, except that a language community that loses its language would usually lose it to another language.

Language can suffer shifts, poor vitality, poor attitude, or even outright loss. The process that leads to the loss of a language is known as endangerment, and it happens when speakers of the language cease to use it, use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains, and cease to pass it on from one generation to the next (UNESCO, 2003). This lays out the process that leads to endangerment. It may start with a language losing grounds; that is, losing some of its important domains to a majority language. With this, poor vitality sets in; that is, the language will begin to lose strength – it begins to be limited in the amount of communication episodes, concepts, or emotions it is able to give meanings to. When this happens, the people's attitude to the language begins to wane, and this is because language is meant to be used. So, when a language ceases to meet its goals of giving expression to basic ideas, it begins to lose its functional values, and correspondingly, its users' attitude to it will begin to tilt toward negativity; they will begin to lose interest in the language. Should this situation go on unchecked, so that the language is no longer passed on from generation to generation, then the language will be heading for extinction.

The far-northern European group of indigenous Sami languages, for instance, are dying, with some, like Ter Sami from the eastern Kola Peninsula, only having two remaining speakers in the world. Also, Gwich'in language in Canada and Alaska is fast dying, and Ayapaneco, a language from Ayapa, Mexico, faces a similar fate to Ter Sami – only two living native speakers are left (Billock, 2015). This highlights the reality of language loss. It is possible for a language to go extinct. If, like in the case of Ter Sami and Ayapaneco, only two native speakers of a language are alive, this can only show that the language had suffered extreme shifts and prolonged

negative attitude to the point of non-transmission from the childbearing segment of the language community to the children and youths. The consequence of this, of course, is that the language can only live as long as its last living speaker. Therefore, language extinction is a social reality, and it does not just happen. It would usually start slowly, but if the threat is not curbed or stopped, then it keeps degenerating to the point of outright loss.

This situation is not different in Africa. In fact, it has been reported that 60 per cent of African languages are under threat, and this is despite it being the most linguistically diverse continent in the world (wa Thiong'o, 2019). Africa may be the most linguistically diverse continent of the world, but that does not immunise it from the scourge of language endangerment and language loss. Like in Europe, some African languages are also endangered. In fact, the situation could be worse in Africa, generally due to colonialism and its re-christening and assimilationist agenda. Many African languages are, therefore, increasingly endangered, even probably much more than European languages. For instance, Chakanetsa (2021), in a BBC report, chronicles how the devastating impact of colonial languages has fueled identity crisis among African children, from South Africa, to Ghana, to Nigeria. Chakanetsa writes:

Despite an estimated 2,000 languages being spoken across the continent there is still a tendency to see English and French – the languages of the countries which colonised most of Africa – as those needed to succeed and as a result some choose to abandon their mother tongue (para. 27).

However, an endangered language can be revitalised, maintained, or invigorated. If language endangerment is heartbreaking, language revitalisation is heartwarming. There is hope that a language that has suffered shifts of domains to a majority language can be revitalised. It can be

made to be valued again. A people's negative attitude to their language can be altered. When experts in reversing language shift (RLS) plan and undertake a revitalisation campaign, an endangered language can be made viable again. This, no doubt, offers hope to minority languages anywhere in the world. Since most language endangerment situations are often caused by human activities, it also takes some human activities to reverse language endangerment, and these activities can come in the form of language maintenance, language revitalisation, and language revival.

Language maintenance entails the series of language activities aimed at strengthening a language in the face of opposition from a stronger language. It is like a fightback mechanism against a rival language. Language revitalisation, on the other hand, happens when a language has lost some or most of its communicative domains to the majority language. It is the response to language shift – a situation in which a minority language has lost its status as the principal means of communication, especially among the youth population of a community. Language revitalisation efforts will usually involve changing the attitude of the users of the minority language to their language, making their language more accessible, teaching the language in their schools, teaching the language informally, and leveraging opportunities to publicise the language with the hope that this will enhance its prestige. Lastly, language revival, though it could be used loosely to mean language revitalisation, is more specifically used by linguists to refer to language activities that are aimed at recovering an extinct language. Expectedly, this is a daunting process that is often undertaken by experts only.

Maseko and Moyo (2013), citing Grenoble and Whaley, define language revitalisation as “counter-balancing the factors that cause language shift” (p. 250). Citing Munpande, they explain language revitalisation as “the imparting of new vigour to minority languages through

the expansion of domains to reverse language shift and empower the language” (p. 250). For Nyika (2008), who cited Paulston *et al*, language revitalisation refers to “the imparting of new vigour to a language still in limited or restricted use, most commonly by increased use through the expansion of domains” (p. 458). Therefore, language revitalisation is the variegated process that leads to the reinvigoration of an endangered language. Whatever the reasons for endangerment, revitalisation entails reversing the factors that have contributed to the decline of a language. This is why it is usually carefully planned, beginning with an empirical identification of the root causes of the endangerment. To reverse the causes of the endangerment of a language is to strengthen the language, to empower the language, and to restore its users’ pride in it.

Are (2015) posits that language revitalisation can come in two major types. The first is functional preservation that typically involves such a maintenance strategy as role allocation, which literally forces the affected language community to use the threatened language. The second type of language revitalisation is archival preservation which is about making efforts to document the endangered language not “as a living system of human communication” (p. 24) but for future generations, for posterity. Are’s explication emphasizes how the line between language revitalisation and language revival has been thinned, so that the two concepts, though distinct, have come to be collapsed often and used as a single concept. Technically speaking, however, Are’s explanation of functional preservation best captures language revitalisation, while archival preservation would more concretely be known as language revival. Regardless of the term one has adopted, what should be reassuring to any lover of language and linguistic diversity is the fact that an endangered language can be revitalised, and that even an extinct language can be revived.

### **2.3 Igbo Language Endangerment**

The UNESCO report of late 2006 (see Asonye, 2013; Ani, 2012) states that Igbo language will be extinct in the next 50 years, if nothing is done to curb its fast decline. This was shocking, for while there was talk about Igbo language becoming less appealing to Igbo people, especially young people, rarely did anyone envisage that the situation had become so critical as to lead to the loss of Igbo language in as a short period as the next 50 or so years. The UNESCO report, though rather alarming, became a wake-up call to the Igbo people, especially Igbo linguists, researchers, and enthusiasts. The impact of the report, therefore, became the heightening of research into Igbo language endangerment.

Earlier, Igboanusi (2006) had reviewed three categories of endangerment in order to determine the position of Igbo language in relation to language endangerment. They are Crystal's (2000) three-level language situations, Kincade's (1991) five-level language situations, and Wurm's (2003) five-level language situations. Although Igboanusi found Igbo language to be "viable" in Kincade's categories, he found Igbo language to be "endangered" and "potentially endangered" in Crystal's and Wurm's categories, respectively.

Igboanusi (2006), after carefully considering the different findings on whether Igbo language is truly endangered and/or the extent of endangerment – Kincade's "viable," Crystal's "endangered," and Wurm's "potentially endangered," – submits that the "very life" (p. 446) of Igbo language is not threatened yet. The situation of Igbo language, he argues, is that of erosion of prestige and functional roles, which is mainly caused by the dominance of English, especially in education, print media, entertainment, and oral communication in different contexts.

Igboanusi's submission above is consistent with the UNESCO prediction that Igbo language would be extinct in the next half a century, if measures were not taken to address its threats. That, as Igboanusi submits, the "very life" of Igbo language is not as yet threatened does not mean that Igbo language is not endangered. It means that Igbo language is not currently threatened to the point of death. But UNESCO has helped to put a time frame to when, with regard to Igbo language, "endangerment" can become "extinction," or when, to use Igboanusi's phrase, the "very life" of Igbo language could be threatened.

It must be re-emphasized, however, that Igboanusi's study, which was entitled, "Is Igbo an endangered language?" came before the UNESCO report. For this reason, there was no mention of "extinction" in the title of the article. This rather corroborates the claim that prior to the UNESCO report, Igbo language extinction, rather than endangerment, was hardly an issue. As could be seen from one of the models Igboanusi used to determine the status of Igbo language – Kincade's five-level language situations – Igbo language was even deemed viable. So, the UNESCO report, which should expectedly be broader in scope than a single researcher's effort, changed the direction of research into the status of Igbo language health. It put paid to the question of Igbo language endangerment and opened a novel angle to it.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a more recent study by Ugwuona (2015) reports that Igbo language has a low status in Nigeria and is "currently under severe threat of extinction" (p. 212). This is a direct confirmation of the UNESCO report. Ugwuona's study came about nine years after UNESCO's prediction that Igbo language was headed for extinction. Alas, the prediction has kicked in and is in progress. Reversing language shift experts involved in the revitalisation of Igbo language must now know that they are dealing with a bigger challenge. They have to change their strategies and/or intensify their efforts.

Now, although Igbo is one of the three major languages in Nigeria (the other two are Hausa and Yoruba), it is, when compared to English, a minority language. It follows, therefore, that most of the literature on endangered minority languages equally applies to Igbo language. It should be noted that Hausa language and Yoruba language also have their respective BBC-owned media organisations – *BBC Hausa* and *BBC Yoruba*. However, for reasons that will be explicated later in this section of the study, Igbo language is the only one that was reported – at least by the UNESCO – to not only be endangered but to also be heading toward extinction.

## **2.4 Causes of Igbo Language Endangerment**

The endangerment of Igbo language did not just happen. Some factors must have caused the language to lose communicative domains and functional roles for a lengthy period. These factors are interrogated below.

### 2.4.1 Colonialism

Colonialism is the root cause of Igbo language endangerment. It marks the first major affront on the culture of the Igbo. With colonialism came a new religion, a new educational system, a new commercial system, a new political system, a new communication system, and a new way of living. The effect of this overhauling of the Igbo people's social, political, educational, religious, commercial, and communitarian order is gargantuan.

With specific regard to language, colonialism is the reason for the disdain with which Africans regard their indigenous languages today. Colonialism has alienated Africans from their languages and made them to perpetually strive to use the languages of other cultures. Yet, cognitively responding to one's ideas, issues, emotions, and lived experiences with the language of another culture would often yield unsuccessful results. Chakanetsa (2021) writes that Ngugi

wa Thing'o, the Kenyan writer, has aptly captured this precarious situation as “linguistic famine” (para. 26). The report also shares the frustrations of young Africans who either cannot speak their indigenous languages or are derided for speaking their indigenous languages, whether it is Sotho, Xhosa, Zulu, Tonga, or Igbo.

Again, for the most linguistically diverse continent of the world, suffering from a linguistic drought is ironic. However, it is an apt representation of the African situation vis-à-vis indigenous languages. Africans are surrounded by a myriad of indigenous languages, but to be respected and accepted, they have to use the colonial languages. Unfortunately, the devastating impact of colonialism on indigenous African languages lives beyond colonialism. This is because coloniality, the usual after effect of colonialism, has been found to destroy local and/or national languages (wa Thing'o, 2009).

In proving that the pre-colonial Igbo had effective communication systems, Asakitikpi and Akujobi (2009) write that the diverse Igbo traditional forms of communication were extensively used in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* for interpersonal, group, and public communication. “Achebe,” they write, “was able to give some instances whereby information was created, disseminated and transformed into action” (p. 18). Additionally, Asakitikpi and Akujobi (2009), citing wa Thing'o, have argued that the missionaries (who later became the colonialists) were on a renaming ritual to gain ownership, to bastardize indigenous African languages, and to supplant the people's beliefs and knowledge. The researchers add that the unfortunate effect of the activities of the missionaries was that “new words were introduced for old concepts and this developed into old concepts in new words. The new culture and belief system were believed to be superior . . .” (p. 17). To dominate the Africans, the colonialists effectively destroyed their cultural elements, including their languages. As Asakitikpi and Akujobi assert above, the Igbo

has a functional communication system that effectively served their communication needs before the arrival of the colonialists (led by the missionaries) whose key task was the condemnation and fetishizing of Igbo people's cultural norms and practices in the guise of a new, superior religion, government, and way of living.

Part of the development that came with colonialism was, of course, the Western press, and later other forms of Western mass media. However, these would soon alienate the majority of the Igbo people, as the producers and the consumers of the Western contents were the minority: the Europeans and Igbo people who had acquired Western education. With time, the English language was favoured over Igbo language in the new Western mass media. Therefore, to either work in the Western mass media organisations or make sense out of the contents emanating therefrom, one had to be able to use the English language. As a result, the Igbo who used the English language in the modern press naturally served the interests of their ilk who had acquired the white man's education and those of the Europeans. As Asakitikpi and Akujobi (2009) put it, "the major early western mass media form used was the print media. Through the print media the nationalists wrote for the elites themselves and their aim was to influence the opinion of these elites and not the traditionalists who represented and lived as the uncivilized masses" (p. 20).

Ironically, when Salawu, cited in Asakitikpi and Akujobi (2009), writes that the missionaries along with colonialists introduced the print media to effectively share meaning with Africans and to help Africans effectively share meaning with one another, the unintended (or even intended) consequence was the alienation of the peoples of the emphatically large number of ethnicities in Africa. As can be seen from Asakitikpi and Akujobi's argument above, shortly after the introduction of the Western press, Africans who could not use the colonial languages were immediately sidelined. The tacit implication, of course, is that Africans who wanted to be

relevant in their own societies must learn and use the colonial languages. Therefore, Africans were left with no choice than to pare down the use of their languages in favour of the more useful, the more influential, and the more prestigious colonial languages.

As Nwokora (2000) captures it, one of the ways the colonialists effectively eroded the very roots of the Africans' culture and identity was to declare the African languages as "cacophony of animal noises" (p. 7). This heralded the disdain with which even Africans consider their languages. There was a deliberate smear campaign to devalue African languages, and that was quite strategic, because, as Samovar and Porter (2004) put it, language is the very lifeblood of culture. If you want to attack a people's culture and sow the seed of identity crisis in them, first render their language worthless. When they accord a negative attitude to their language, everything else will follow. They will hate their beliefs. They will hate their religions. They will hate their norms, taboos, and customs. They will hate these cultural elements, because the core essence of the cultural elements is grounded in their language. It is the language with which these cultural elements are expressed that extricate their very worth.

For this reason, many indigenous African languages were minoritised, endangered, or killed outrightly by the now dominant European languages. Today, owing to coloniality, even Africans themselves refer to their surviving indigenous languages as "vernacular." They entrench the vernacularisation of their own languages (Chimhundu, 1993). This is rather sad. To vernacularise a language is to pare down its status, its worth. If a language is a vernacular, it is neither a formal language nor an official language. It is not even expected to be standardised, because it is not supposed to be a literary language. A vernacularised language, to put it simply, is not a serious language. Sadly, that is the status of most indigenous, autochthonous African languages today.

Expectedly, Nigerian indigenous languages, mainly Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, were also victims of the onslaught of European languages that came with colonialism. However, it appears that Igbo language was affected more because it had to contend with other factors. One of these factors was the Igbo nation's loss of the Nigerian Civil War, which not only curbed the spread of Igbo language outside its main geographical areas, but, according to Igboanusi (2006), "also has an obvious psychological impact on many first language users of the language who have continued to associate the language with low status in comparison with English and Hausa and Yoruba" (p. 445). This is quite instructive, because it is often wondered why Igbo language is the only one threatened, even to the point of extinction, among Nigeria's three major languages. The answer lies, among other factors peculiar to the Igbo, in the extra material and psychological burdens that came with fighting in and losing the Nigerian Civil War.

To conclude, colonialism is the bane of Igbo language endangerment. The impact of colonialism on the generic status of African languages is so colossal that Nwokora (2000) bemoans it thus:

That African languages and cultures today direly need to be revived or resurrected is testimony to the historical fact that most of them were buried deep beneath the ashes of colonialism and complexes. What with the masterly art of brain-washing which emptied Africans of any love and respect for their own (native) personality and culture (p. 11).

#### 2.4.2 The Nigerian Civil War

As the Igbo were still reeling from the damaging effects of colonialism on its language and communication systems, the Nigerian Civil War happened from 1967-1970. The war, which was between the Nigerian state and the Igbo ethnic nationality, like colonialism before it, hugely

damaged the Igbo language, culture, and identity, as despite the storied genius of the Igbo soldiers (who were barely trained), the concerted efforts of foreign powers and the other ethnic nationalities in the country meant that the Igbo lost the war.

At the end of the war, the Nigerian government came up with the Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, and Reconciliation scheme meant to heal the wounds of the war and reintegrate the Igbo into the country's mainstream. However, the scheme was not implemented (see, for instance, Achebe, 2012). Instead, the Nigerian government implemented a couple of policies that aimed at stalling the resurgence of the Igbo economy (Achebe, 2012).

Firstly, the government came up with a banking scheme that rendered dormant all the bank accounts that Igbo people owned during the war; the government asked that only twenty pounds be left on the bank accounts that had the Nigerian currency, irrespective of the amount of money on these accounts. Secondly, the Nigerian government banned the importation of secondhand clothing and stockfish, economically viable businesses that would have heralded, as Achebe (2012) puts it, "the economic engines for the reconstruction of the entire Eastern Region" (p. 234). Thirdly, in 1974, the Nigerian government promulgated the Enterprises Promotion Decree, code-named Indigenization Decree. In principle, as Ogbuagu (1983) posits, the policy was aimed at encouraging Nigerians to own, manage, and control the means of production as well as enhance industrial development in Nigeria in order to encourage "foreign investment in intermediate and capital goods production as against foreign concentration in the consumer non-durable goods production" (p. 241). In reality, however, the policy dealt a deathblow to the economic recovery of the Igbo who could not benefit from what was otherwise an economically sensible policy because the Nigerian government had left them with only 20 pounds per bank account, which had deposits in naira.

All these austerity measures had huge implications for the health of Igbo language. For instance, to avoid suffering the marginalization meted out to the Igbo, many Igbo communities whose languages were classified as Igbo dialects declared linguistic independence. For this, Williamson and Williamson & Blench, cited in Igboanusi (2006), trace the threat to Igbo language to its split in Rivers State (one of Igbo language hitherto strongholds), where the erstwhile Igbo communities split from the mainstream Igbo and formed the Igboid range of languages. These researchers have also faulted this move. They think that these splinter languages do not have enough distinctions with Igbo language to form a separate range of languages. Therefore, they consider the idea of an Igboid range of languages erroneous. Until today, most of these communities, especially in the now Niger Delta states of Nigeria, despite sharing rather striking linguistic and ancestral affinities with the Igbo, quite often vehemently deny being Igbo.

The effects on Igbo language of the former Igbo communities' split and continuous denial, Igboanusi writes, are low status, decline in the level of interest in it (mostly by young people), and a general negative attitude. As stated earlier, however, at the root of the split and denial is the Nigerian Civil War along with the sundry socio-economic woes it brought upon the Igbo, which the Igbo in Rivers State tried, and still try, to avoid. Thus, denying their ancestry and endangering Igbo language.

#### 2.4.3 Intra and International Migration

One under-researched cause of the threat to Igbo language is migration. Bernard Spolsky defines migration as “the voluntary or involuntary movement of people speaking one language into the territory of people speaking another” (Abu-Irmies & Al-Khanji, 2019, p. 63). Spolsky's definition, admittedly, is tailored toward linguistics. There are other ways of conceptualizing

migration. One could see from the definition, however, that migration can be voluntary or involuntary. Migration, in the case of the Igbo, is both voluntary and involuntary. They have an innate proclivity for migration, no doubt, but they were also practically compelled to migrate at some points in their rather chequered history. All this, as will be expatiated shortly, contributed to the gradual endangerment of Igbo language.

Belmar and Glass (2019) report that migration has affected some minority languages in Europe when the process of industrialisation “undermined the socioeconomic basis of these languages, and many members of these communities migrated to the sprawling urban centres” (p. 3). This mirrors the Igbo situation, especially with particular reference to intra-national migration. The quest for survival and success overwhelmingly attracted the Igbo to the Nigerian major cities and towns. Beyond the Nigerian megacity, Lagos, or Abuja, the federal capital territory, or even oil-rich Port Harcourt City, Igbo people are known to form relatively large communities in virtually all the Nigerian towns outside the southeast Nigeria, which is their main geographical location. Per Belmar and Glass, Igbo language currently bears the brunt of this widespread migration, and this is just talking about intra-national migration.

Similarly, Blench, and later Mous, cited in Are (2015) establish the causal interrelationship among migration, demographic crises, and language recession in Africa. Migration causes demographic crises, which in turn cause language recession on the continent. One major effect of the massive migration of the Igbo intra-nationally is the southeast region’s dwindling population figures when compared to other regions of its status. Ironically, Igbo people constitute a sizable bloc in each of the regions whose population figures fare better. It, therefore, means that while the Igbo people dwindle their population in their immediate geographical bases, they swell the population figures of the other regions. Since in the Nigerian federal system, allocation of

resources is partly based on the population of states and local government areas, the storied migration of the Igbo has often robbed them of invaluable resources in terms of federal allocation of funds. Since it takes a lot of money to maintain and/or revitalise an endangered language (Crystal, 2000), this situation worsens Igbo language endangerment.

The other effect of the Igbo penchant for intra-national migration is under-representation in both federal appointments and the parliament. For instance, the southeast region has the least number of states. This also translates to having the least number of federal ministers and members of the national assembly. Intra-national migration, therefore, could be one of the reasons why the Igbo have not fared well in national politics, especially post-military era. The direct impact of this to the revitalisation of Igbo language is established below.

Politics, of course, has a lot to do with language maintenance, revitalisation, and revival. Crystal (2000) has posited that an endangered language is bound to make progress if its users consolidate their legitimate power in the dominant community. This is essentially about actualizing language revitalisation through legislation. It is about safeguarding cultural and linguistic rights of minority communities through legislation. For this reason, Crystal submits that “the need to maintain pressure on governments, at international, national, and local levels, to make sure that something is actually done, is therefore as critical as ever” (p. 135). With the marginalization of the Igbo premised on comparatively low population figure in the southeast, and democracy being a game of numbers, the hope of the Igbo effecting changes in Nigerian language policies to help revitalise Igbo language is dim; it seems as unlikely as it seems unattainable.

Also writing on migration, Agozino and Anyanike (2007) posit that the Igbo, driven by their *Uwa Bu Ahia* (the world is a marketplace) worldview, travel far and wide in search of economic

opportunities and are currently found in almost all corners of the world. So, added to the Igbo intra-national migration is the international dimension. The Igbo people have a cosmopolitan worldview that drives them into massive travels across the globe. This, as Are 2015 has observed above, causes demographic crises that often lead to language recession. Nwammuo and Salawu (2019), corroborate Agozino and Anyanike's position when they quote the *BBC News Igbo* editor, Adline Okere, as saying “. . . the Igbo man is popular for his spirit of entrepreneurship as they are scattered across borders” (p. 93). One must add that the high rate of migration among Igbo people, whether outside Nigeria or within the country, is not solely down to their worldview or entrepreneurial spirit. The after-effects of the civil war, especially the austere, debilitating post-war policies of the then Nigerian military government, equally contributed to the high-rate of migration among the Igbo. In this case, the Igbo were compelled into migration. They needed to escape the hunger, diseases, and trauma. They needed to journey away from the physical reminders of the war. Some Igbo people could have gone in search of their kith and kin who were trapped outside Igboland during the war. As will be seen below, in all of these journeys, care would be taken not to speak Igbo language, and the usual effects of situations like this on minority languages are negative attitude and poor vitality.

The effect of migration on Igbo language health, whether it is induced by the Igbo worldview, their entrepreneurial spirit, or sheer economic survival, is what Le Page Tabouret-Keller and Graham, referenced in Sallabank (2010), term conscious “acts of identity,” which can come in the form of “assimilation in hope of economic advancement” (p. 188). It suggests that when the Igbo travel to new places where Igbo language is not spoken, economic considerations often compel them to acquire the linguistic identities of their hosts, thereby speaking Igbo less often; the long-term effect of which is a possible lack of intergenerational transmission of the language.

Nwokora (2000) explains that “as a unit migrates, it loses and gains in cultural and linguistic patterns, as a necessary result of the new place and ‘strange’ peoples it comes into contact with” (p. 10). Therefore, when one carefully considers the debilitating effects of extensive intra-national and international migration on the health of minority languages, the UNESCO prediction that Igbo is gradually heading to extinction becomes more credible. This is bound to happen to any language community that travels as extensively as the Igbo. More so, socialisation into the culture cum language of a people is bound to thrive more in the language’s natural discursive environment, which is difficult to re-create in diaspora communities. This calls to mind Igboanusi’s (2006) report of Igbo people preferring foreign ways of life as well as Igbo language suffering from inadequate intergenerational transmission.

To conclude, although the Igbo people were hitherto known to travel far and wide (Nwammuo & Salawu, 2019), the series of economic deprivations they suffered during and after the war fueled migration among them. They, according to Agozino and Anyanike (2007), embarked on massive journeys across the world in search of economic opportunities. For economic survival, the Igbo migrants would have to speak Igbo language less; they would prefer to speak the language of their hosts. This, of course, led to a further threat to Igbo language. Are (2015) has said that “when a language in this situation begins to fall out of use, it can ultimately become endangered, and it may eventually die” (p. 16). It is not surprising, therefore, that in 2006, 46 years after the end of colonialism in Nigeria, and 36 years after the end of the Nigerian Civil War, the UNESCO declared Igbo an endangered language that must either be revitalised or left to die.

#### 2.4.4 Divisive Orthography Standardisation

Additionally, several years before the civil war, Igbo language had, like most minority languages, faced the challenge of orthography standardization. Ugorji (2007), citing Williamson, notes that orthography entails the principles that guide the giving of alphabets or symbols to speech sounds so as to make reading and writing possible in a particular language or its variants, or “a process of graphisation; that is, evolving a writing system” (p. 171). The Igbo orthography conflict was as fiendish as it was lingering. At a point, the government of the Igbo area set up a committee, the Onwu Committee, to try to solve the controversy. The Igbo orthography controversy, its impact on Igbo language recession, and the sundry efforts made to curb or solve it are discussed in depth below.

#### **2.5 The Igbo Orthography and Dialects Controversies**

Emenanjo (2015) recounts that the Igbo orthography controversy stemmed from the Protestant Mission’s attempt to evolve a pan-Igbo writing system; he adds that there existed an indigenous Igbo writing system that predates colonialism known as *uri/akwukwo mmuo* among the people of the Aguleri areas or *Nsidibi* (also spelled ‘*nsibidi*’) among the Igbo people of the Cross River areas. Here, emphasis is on “pan-Igbo.” *Uri/akwukwo mmuo* or *nsidibi* existed in some parts of Igboland. It never actually extended to all the Igbo areas. This supposes that though the Igbo had a writing system pre-colonialism, it was never used across Igboland. It was not truly pan-Igbo. Perhaps for this reason, the early missionaries’ task became that of evolving an Igbo writing system that would be *the* Igbo writing system. To do this, they ditched *nsidibi* and came up with theirs.

Emenanjo asserts that the Protestant Mission in its quest to evolve a pan-Igbo writing system would, in 1841, come up with one modelled after the Lepsius Alphabet, which was mainly a Roman alphabet. The resultant writing system was called Isuama Igbo. Ugorji (2007) states that the Igbo ex-slaves who were resettled in Sierra Leone also joined forces with the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in creating this writing system.

However, the efforts of the Protestant missionaries and the ex-slaves, Ugorji says, did not succeed so much because Isuama Igbo was rather alien to the Igbo homeland. It was an Igbo pidgin of some sort. Many Igbo people did not think that the Isuama Igbo writing system was authentically Igbo. This was probably owing to the influence of the ex-slaves on its creation. Being former slaves who had left Igboland for some African and South American countries, it is expected that their authentic Igbo language skills would have been corrupted by their lengthy interactions with non-Igbo speakers. Therefore, Isuama Igbo writing system was not well received.

Ugorji explains that the Protestant missionaries, again, embarked on another attempt to create a writing system for the Igbo. This time, they came up with the Union Igbo, which they thought would be more acceptable to the different Igbo dialect blocs such as Bonny, Owere, Onitsha, Arochukwu, and Unwana. Bonny, or Bonny Island, is in the present-day Rivers State, which corroborates the fact of a number of dialects in Rivers State and its environs being Igbo. Owere, or Owerri, is in the present-day Imo State. Onitsha, or Onicha, is in the present-day Anambra State. Arochukwu, or Arochuku, is in the present-day Abia State. Unwana is in the present-day Ebonyi State. The only southeastern state that was not specifically captured in the Protestant Missionaries' second attempt at evolving a pan-Igbo writing system was Enugu. However, this is excusable. It is not much of a problem because even though Enugu State has some distinct Igbo

dialects, like Waawa, some Enugu language communities share a great deal of ancestral and linguistic similarities with some language communities in Anambra State. Similarly, some Enugu language communities share striking ancestral and linguistic affinities with language communities in Ebonyi State. Despite this, Ugorji adds that “this multi-dialect amalgam . . . failed to resolve the dialect diversity problem in Igbo land” (p. 172).

Citing Uwalaka, Ugorji observes that the new writing system failed to be widely accepted because it was considered as some sort of Esperanto. In essence, it was, again, not considered authentically Igbo, although it survives even today, especially in the Protestant Bible and liturgy. At this point, it has to be noted that part of the Igbo orthography standardization problems stemmed from attempts to devise a writing system that would be representative of all the Igbo dialect blocs. This proved quite problematic, and makes one to wonder if it would have been more feasible to adopt the dialect of one Igbo area. It has to be said, though, that adopting one dialect as the standard language of a multi-dialect speech community comes with its own problem, too. According Crystal (2000), selection is usually the problem associated with adopting one dialect in a multi-dialect community, especially when, like in Igboland, the variety of dialects often differ from each other in the areas of sound, grammar, and vocabulary. Crystal argues that “ironically, the very process of selection can be a factor leading to the loss of the diversity it [introduction of literacy] was designed to safeguard” (p. 140). The question would then be whether the lingering problems of Igbo language standardization occasioned by the orthography proponents’ quest to devise a pan-Igbo writing system would have been less, and therefore, short-lived if, rather than working on a pan-Igbo writing system, they adopted the dialect of one particular Igbo language bloc and evolved Igbo literacy from it.

Emenanjo (2015) states that in 1929, the International Institute for African Languages and Cultures (IIALC) recommended the introduction of the Practical Orthography of African Languages. With this came Adam-Ward Orthography, also known as New Orthography (Igboanusi, 2006b) as a replacement of the Lepsius Orthography in Igboland. Per Igboanusi (2006b), Ida Ward, a British linguist, first introduced the Central Igbo in 1941. Also, the Roman Catholic Church, which came to Igboland many years after the CMS had come and settled mainly in the Onitsha, or Onicha, area of Igbo homeland, favoured the New Orthography with which it promoted the use of Onitsha dialect. This would mean that a big part of the problem of non-acceptance of the Union Igbo had come from the Roman Catholic missionaries. They had not accepted the Union Igbo. Their adherents had not accepted the Union Igbo. A large part of the Igbo standardization problem, therefore, is traceable to the orthography face-off between the Church Missionary Society and the Roman Catholic Church. Usually, when issues of cultural identities are mixed with religion, resolution is often complicated and protracted. Crystal (2000) underscores this when he reflects that the problem of language standardization:

. . . is especially difficult in places where two different alphabetical systems are in competition, perhaps associated with different cultural or religious traditions – such as the Roman (Christian) and Arabic (Islamic). The decision to write down any of the unwritten endangered languages within the Arabic – or Hindi-speaking countries can lead to confrontations of this kind (p. 140).

Part of the problem associated with introducing one generally accepted alphabetical system for the Igbo might not have been between two different religions – it was between two sects of the same religion – but it was no less difficult. It was as serious as one between two fundamentally different religious or cultural traditions.

Ugorji (2019) says that the Central Igbo “represented implicitly an attempt at resolving the dialect conflicts by adopting the variants that seemed naturally evolving to become (a) pan-Igbo dialect(s), to serve literacy needs, among other things” (p. 157). Sadly, the creation of the Central Igbo, or even Onicha Igbo, still did not solve the Igbo dialects chaos because the CMS opposed it. Instead, the CMS held on to its Union Igbo; the Catholics too failed to budge; they continued to use their Onicha Igbo, disregarding the Union Igbo. Admittedly, Igbo dialects are too multitudinous for only one pan-Igbo dialect to be conveniently devised. However, that situation was not helped by the battle of supremacy between the two groups of missionaries – those of the CMS and those of the Roman Catholic Church. As Crystal (2000) argues, when the process of achieving literacy in a language involves cultural or religious differences, the resultant problems are usually deeply entrenched. This quite aptly mirrors the impact the race between the two missionary groups to standardize Igbo writing system had on Igbo language.

Indeed, the controversy raged on, making the Igbo dialects dispute rather fierce. It was so fiercely fought that it took several interventions, including at least one in 1961 by the then government of Eastern Nigeria to try to resolve (Ugwuona, 2015; cf. Salawu, 2006; Ugorji, 2007; Nwammuo & Salawu, 2019). Every doubt that the orthography confrontation between the two missionary groups compounded the Igbo dialects standardization problem would be effectively dispelled by the fact that the first major headway in the efforts to resolve the rather protracted problem came in 1961, about one year after Nigeria gained independence.

The government set up a committee to look into the Igbo orthography problem and recommend a solution. The committee, now popularly called Onwu Committee, and named after its chairman, Dr. S.E. Onwu, introduced an Igbo writing system known as Onwu Orthography. Ugorji (2007) explains that the Onwu Orthography gave a footing to the standard Igbo as it does not belong to a

specific dialect community – it is essentially a combination of the two contending dialect blocs made rich by the other border Igbo lects and “loans from English as well as metalanguage development from the Society for Promoting Igbo Language and Culture (SPILC)” (p. 172). The missionaries – the CMS and the Roman Catholic Church – might have failed to evolve a writing system that was acceptable across Igboland. However, their contributions to the process of achieving literacy in Igbo language are remarkable. Their inputs were so significant that the Onwu Committee, per Ugorji (2007) could not but refer to their respective writing systems in order to create its own orthography.

As promising as the Onwu Orthography sounds, Ugorji (2007) has said that it only succeeded in solving the religious cum political dimension of the Igbo orthography crisis. For Ugorji, the Onwu Orthography failed to solve the linguistic and sociological aspects of the Igbo dialects issue (see also Emenanjo, 2015, for other reasons why the Onwu Orthography failed to address the Igbo dialects controversy). The effect, of course, is that despite being widely used in publications since inception, “dialect suspicion and conflicts, with associated complaints of oppression, imposition or marginalization, still linger among dialect communities and elites who have remained restless as a result” (Ugorji, 2007, p. 173). In principle, therefore, the Onwu Orthography solved the Igbo orthography controversy, but in practice, the writing system the Onwu Committee recommended merely curbed certain aspects of the dialects controversy. The emergence of the Onwu Orthography solved to a certain degree, the religious politics aspects of the Igbo orthography controversy, but the problem of not being truly pan-Igbo and its accompanying plethora of complaints persisted.

Therefore, not even the government intervention toward the resolution of the Igbo orthography dispute could harmonize the conflicting dialects; the intervention from the government only

succeeded in quelling the attendant unhealthy intrigues that came with the controversy. Today, the different major ways of spelling in Igbo still subsist, with each writer adopting what suits him or her and staying consistent with it. The Onwu Orthography was accepted, and according to Ugorji (2007), it was used in publications, albeit widely. However, after being around for 160 years, the Lepsius Orthography-based Union Igbo should still compete with the Central and Onicha Igbo that are based on the New Orthography. This is especially considering that the bibles, liturgies, and literary texts published in the Old Orthography still existed and should be expected to even be more in volume than those published in the comparatively new Adam-Ward Orthography and the emerging Onwu Orthography.

Therefore, it would appear that despite the Onwu Orthography, the two major contending Igbo orthographies still hold sway. Not surprisingly, therefore, Onumajuru (2016) argues that although Igbo language is replete with dialects, Igbo linguists mainly recognize the major dialect areas or clusters, viz. the Central Igbo and the Onicha Igbo, which despite “phonemic differences in lexical items” are mutually intelligible (p. 234). Onumajuru explains that the Central Igbo, which is mainly spoken around the Owerri and Umuahia areas, has “gradually established itself as the accepted form by writers, publishers and education authorities for use in schools and for many years has been used as the medium of written Igbo” (p. 225). She adds that the other equally compromise Onicha Igbo, “in its spoken form is more widely used than the Central Igbo because it is the form of Igbo most often learnt for the purposes of trade by non-Igbos” (p. 226). So, while the Central Igbo is the predominant written form, the Onicha Igbo is the favoured oral form among the Igbo and non-Igbo who have learnt the language. First, one notices a change of nomenclature in how Onumajuru referred to the two dominant Igbo writing systems. While Ida Ward called her writing system Central Igbo in order to give it a reflection of an all-

encompassing Igbo orthography, it would appear that by Igbo language scholars' judgement, the Igbo dialects spoken around Owerri and Umuahia areas are at the heartland of Igbo, and therefore, better fit to be called central Igbo. However, per Ugorji (2007), Igbo dialects used in the northern and border areas of Igboland “show much affinity to the Central dialects than to the Onitsha dialect which was the only possible rival” (p. 172). Therefore, Onumajuru would be right to refer to allied dialects from the northern, central, and border areas of Igboland as Central Igbo while referring to the writing system championed by the Catholics as Onicha Igbo to reflect the biggest of the dialect communities (Onitsha or Onicha) where it is mostly used. Again, what the Onwu Committee ultimately achieved was to create a centralized orthography for Igbo language. The Committee created the compromise Onwu Orthography, so that rather than using the Lepsius Orthography the CMS used or the New Orthography that the Roman Catholic Church used, Igbo language – whether it is the Onicha spelling system or the Central Igbo spelling system – is written with the Onwu Orthography. These two major dialect blocs can be effectively spelled with the Onwu Orthography, so their proponents adopted the Onwu Orthography but held on to their respective spelling systems. For instance, the Igbo word for “mercy” in the Central Igbo is “ebere.” In Onicha Igbo, the same word is spelled “ebele.” Their meaning, however, remains the same. *BBC News Igbo* provides an apt example of this in this story: “*Ụmụ Igbo bịa soro anyị n'elekere ise nke mgbede a (5pm) mgbe anyị na Ebere Okaro ga-enwe mkparịtaụka. Ugbua bụ ohere izite ajujụ gị. Mkpaparitauka puruiche BBC News Igbo na Ebele Okaro.*” The two versions – Central Igbo and Onicha Igbo – of the word “mercy” is used in one story. This stresses the persistence of the spelling systems that existed before the Onwu Orthography. In reality, therefore, the rivalry between the CMS and the Catholics was resolved

only with respect to their originating orthographies. Their respective spelling system still differs considerably from each other as will be seen below.

Onumajuru (2016) therefore submits that the main differences between these predominant Igbo dialects exist in the areas of phonology, lexicon, and morpho-syntax. Phonology has to do with speech sounds. So, there are differences in how even some words that have the same meanings are pronounced. Also, lexis is about the vocabulary of a language. It shows that there are differences in how even some words that have the same meanings are spelled in the two writing systems. Finally, morpho-syntax deals with the structuring of words and the system of doing this to form phrases and sentences. These differences, from Onumajuru (2016, p. 239), are reproduced graphically below:

**Table 2.1: Main Differences Between Central Igbo and Onicha Igbo**

Point of View	Central Igbo	Onicha Igbo
Phonological	/h/	/f/
	/h/	/r/
	/r/	/l/
	/l/	/n/
Lexical	ófè ‘soup’	ófɛ ‘soup’
	òké ‘rat’	òkɛ ‘rat’
	óché ‘chair’	óchɛ ‘chair’
	ósè ‘pepper’	ósɛ ‘pepper’
Morpho-syntactic	-rV	-IV
	-ghị	-rọ
	Ágàlà	Ejenâ
	-lá	-gó
	-beghị	-ka + vb + rọ
	-beghị	-ka.....rọ

The above, therefore, will form the framework for the analysis of the Igbo spelling systems present in *BBC News Igbo* stories and comments made on the stories.

With the Igbo dialects controversy largely unresolved, Peter Okwoche, the editorial lead of the *BBC News Igbo*, speaks to how his organization tries to manage the situation:

So what we have realised is that sometimes an accent might change, the spelling of a word might change. A lot of the time these things are not standardised. We are just trying to develop a formula where we make it as standard as possible realising that sometimes we might just have to change an accent or the way the word is spelt to reflect what part of Igboland we are talking about (Ibekwe, 2018).

Okwoche shows an understanding of the fact of Igbo language having numerous dialects and the standardisation problem this has created. However, changing the way a word is written to reflect the dialect community every story is coming from does not seem realistic, especially given the sheer multitude of Igbo dialects. Of course, this claim will be subjected to further enquiry in latter sections of the study. What would be more realistic, however, is helping to standardise Igbo language by making the decision to adopt one Igbo spelling system and using it consistently, especially in written stories. Considering the size of *BBC News Igbo*, its reach, audience engagement, and prestige, adopting one writing system is likely going to influence the acceptability of the chosen system among the Igbo.

## **2.6 Role of the Mass Media in Language Revitalisation**

The media, whether print or broadcast, have been variously said to play huge roles in the maintenance and revitalisation of endangered languages everywhere in the world, especially by elevating their social status (Kperogi, 2006). Status conferral is a well-known function of the

mass media. So, when a minority language is used in the media, the status of the language is enhanced. For a language to be covered or used in the media means the language matters. In the same vein, a language that hardly appears in the media or is not used in the media would be seen as rather irrelevant. With specific regard to language revitalisation, therefore, an endangered language that is either used in the mass media or is reported by the media is bound to be viewed favourably by its users. Similarly, when an endangered language, especially one that suffers a negative attitude from its users, is used in the mass media, the prestige of the mass media is extended to it. The feeling among users of an endangered language that is used in the media is, if the language could be so used, then we had better value it. This way, their negative attitude to the language is altered. Plus, to use an endangered language in the media, especially one that has not been used in the media before, marks a remarkable domain extension that is crucial to the survival of the language.

Salawu (2006) writes that the mass media help to ensure the survival of endangered languages. Obviously, with enhanced attitude comes increased usage, and increased usage shows pride in the language. What is more, enhanced attitude and increased usage of an endangered language will ensure that the language is re-invigorated. Besides this, even when some parents, for whatever reasons, fail to teach an endangered language to their children, their children can learn the language from the mass media, as education is one of the key functions of the mass media. Additionally, the media can help to sensitise children on the critical importance of using their mother tongue, and this will create in the children, the eagerness to use the language and help to foster intergenerational transmission of the language.

Dega (2015) notes that the media help to preserve the linguistic values of endangered languages. This has to do with establishing and re-establishing the worth of an endangered language through

the media. The mass media can be deployed to help revive interest in an endangered language by creating special programmes that are aimed at showcasing the true values of an endangered language, especially when it has been observed that members of a language community have a negative attitude to their language.

Negative attitudes often happen when members of a language community think that their language no longer serve much of their communication needs. Therefore, for a language that has suffered a shift to a dominant language as well as suffer a negative attitude from its speakers, a newspaper column, a news story, a documentary, or a talk show, especially one designed to sensitise members of the language community on the immense values of using their mother tongue, will go a long way in reclaiming the linguistic values of the language.

For Garba (2015), the mass media enhance the roles of endangered languages and expand their vocabularies. First, using an endangered language in the mass media, as noted earlier, translates to making the language more useful. Beyond this, however, the media also help to enrich the vocabulary of a language. Language is quite democratic. This means that users of a language often determine its syntax as well as semantics. In other words, users of a language create new words in the language through constant usage and determine how the new words are used. They also phase out some old words. This natural process is known as neologism. So, the mass media provide avenues in which an endangered language can be used, and with usage comes the innate urge for creative manipulation of the language in order to create appropriate effects and moods. This often leads to the coining of new words, which the media then make popular. In the end, the vocabulary of the endangered language is expanded. If the users of the language find the new words interesting and use them consistently for a considerable period, the new words will form

part of the standard vocabulary of the language. Of course, this will help to improve the people's attitude to their language.

Similarly, the mass media can help to grow the population of the users of an endangered language. One of the causes of language endangerment is lack of use. However, the mass media can help to transmit an endangered language beyond its geographic base and attract more and more people to the language. Music, movies, radio programmes, television shows, and other language-growth-specific programmes all have the capacity to boost people's interest in a language and grow its users' base. So, an endangered language can rely on the mass media for publicity, and if these publicity techniques enumerated above are sustained, the linguistic and social status of the endangered language is bound to improve; the endangered language is bound to develop. It is for this reason that Prah, cited in Garba (2015), asserts that the mass media help endangered languages to grow and develop.

The other roles the media play in revitalising endangered languages include saving them from dying prematurely (Ohiri-Aniche, cited in Garba, 2015). One major way the mass media can prevent an endangered language from dying is through documentation. When an endangered language is used in the media, the media help to aggregate the linguistic data of the language. These can come through the texts and recordings of various programmes produced in the language. Because the media also serve as repositories of these archival materials, the archived productions can be reused from time to time, such that even when the rate of the intergenerational transmission of a language dips, the media can assume this responsibility and help to keep the language alive. This the media can do through projecting archived programmes that can aid the acquisition of the language through the various elements of language skills, viz. writing, speaking, listening, and reading.

Quite similar to helping to stop a language from premature extinction is providing them with language input (Sallabank, 2010). Language input refers to the versions of a language a user can process in order to learn and use a particular language. It is mainly about the language skills – listening, reading, speaking, and writing. For instance, people can learn a language or enhance their knowledge of a language through listening and reading, but it is through speaking and writing that they can demonstrate their knowledge of the language. The media, of course, provide the ideal environment for the acquisition and demonstration of these skills. When programmes are carefully packaged and aired through the media, this makes for the provision of language input in the chosen language, and with these language activities, an endangered language can be strengthened. Finally, Cormack (2004) sums up these roles by adding that the mass media contribute to the maintenance, preservation, visibility, and domain expansion of endangered languages.

A lot has been said above regarding the powers of the mass media to help publicise, maintain, and preserve an endangered language. Now, focus will shift to the role of the mass media in expanding the domains of a language. The domains a language is used are the places it is mostly used, or its functional roles. These domains are media, education, home, entertainment, work, and so on. Although they are all, generally speaking, important, these domains have varying degrees of prestige. For instance, when a language is confined to only the home domain, the language probably suffers from a negative attitude. This could mean that its speakers are not proud of speaking it outside the confines of their homes. Therefore, the home domain, though it is critical for intergenerational transmission, is not often considered as prestigious as, say, the media domain. The goal, therefore, when it comes to language revitalisation, is to expand the domains in which a language is used. For an endangered language that is only used at home and

for entertainment at social ceremonies, using the language in the media will represent a major expansion to a prestigious domain. Obviously, when the domains of an endangered language expand continuously, the language is bound to make progress.

Despite the benefits of having an endangered language in the media enumerated above, the loss of prestige, which led to apathy on the side of Igbo language speakers (Salawu, 2006), means that the Igbo, among sundry other unfavourable attitudes, very often disregard texts produced in their language. In the main, Igbo language has suffered a devastating shift of important functional domains to the English language, so that Igbo people no longer pay attention to media messages produced in their language. This is very discouraging, because in this era of media commercialization, patronage is what mainly determines what programmes are created and in what language(s). In other words, commercial broadcasting, for instance, seems to have overwhelmingly overshadowed public interest journalism. Thus, when the extent of language endangerment is such that the owners of the language have lost interest in its usage, preferring a dominant language, it would always be difficult for media owners, media managers, and advertisers to consider producing programmes in such a language. This apathy on the side of Igbo language speakers is, according to Salawu (2006), one of the factors that have limited the growth of Igbo language, and indeed, endangered it.

Hence Igboanusi (2006) writes that “[o]ne consequence of the preference for English as a media language by Igbo MT [mother tongue] speakers is the fact that . . . Igbo has virtually no newspaper or magazine published in the language” (p. 448). This is rather alarming. There is currently no known newspaper or magazine that publishes in Igbo language only. In fact, there is also no known bilingual (English-Igbo, for instance) newspaper or magazine in Nigeria. This is not the case in the two other major languages of Nigeria. Some newspapers, both digital and

print, publish in Hausa. For instance, *Daily Trust*, a national daily newspaper in Nigeria, has a Hausa version in addition to its English language version. Again, *Premium Times*, a foremost Nigerian digital newspaper, also has a Hausa version in addition to its English language version. Similarly, there are some Yoruba-only newspapers. Salawu (2004), for instance, reports that Yoruba language newspapers like *Alaroye*, *Akede Agbaye*, *Alaye*, and *Ajoro* still abound, even though Yoruba elites do not seem to accord these newspapers the same measure of values they accord newspapers produced in English language.

Now, one may argue that this is just about one aspect of the mass media – the print media – but it is one that has huge implications for language revitalisation. Haruna (2017) has highlighted how having a written status can enhance the chances of an endangered language defying extinction. The print media is one of the prime drivers of literacy in a language, but Igbo language has lost this crucial domain. It is little wonder, therefore, that Igbo language is now facing the threat of extinction. Even worse is what some researchers have reported: Igbo language has completely lost the print media domain to English (see, for instance, Salawu, 2006; Nnabuihe & Ikwubuzo, 2006; Coker, cited in Oso, 2006; Nwammuo & Salawu, 2019). This suggests that beyond newspapers and magazines, Igbo language is also rarely used in the other subsidiaries of the print media such as books, brochures, and billboards.

With the loss of the print media, efforts toward increased use of Igbo language in the mass media turned to the broadcast media, which proved to be much better in the promotion of the language. Radio was especially useful in this respect. However, whatever gains recorded through the broadcast media were by no means adequate because the broadcast media also has its lapses. For this, Salawu (2006) submits, “the FM stations are almost exclusively for English language. Most private television stations are, heavily, guilty of this” (p. 13). There is, again, no Igbo-only radio

station or Igbo-only television station in Nigeria. However, unlike in the print media in which there is not even a bilingual newspaper or magazine involving Igbo language, the radio and television stations allot some slots to indigenous language broadcasting. Whether these slots are enough for the maintenance and/or revitalisation of Igbo language is a different issue.

With a more specific reference to Igbo, Ekwueme, cited in Nwammuo and Salawu (2019), expresses hope that the broadcast media, especially with its immense powers to inform, educate, entertain, mobilize, and foster behavioural change, could halt Igbo language endangerment, but regrets that this has not happened because Igbo-language programming was given rather negligible airtime on national and local broadcasts. It would appear that the slots allotted to Igbo language broadcasting are for mere tokenism. There is not enough sustained effort to use Igbo language in broadcasting in order to foster a change of attitude. Igbo language, quite simply, does not enjoy enough airing on radio and television stations to make Igbo people to change their negative perception of and attitude to their language.

In fact, Garba (2015) reports that there is no Igbo-only broadcast station, and that the southeast zonal station of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), a national station located in Enugu (the administrative heartland of the Igbo-speaking states in the country), allots a maximum of 20 per cent airtime to Igbo-language programming. The table below shows the national stations of FRCN and the languages they are expected to use in broadcasting (PLAC, 2004).

**Table 2.2: *The National Stations of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria and their Responsibilities***

Names of National Stations	Zone	Linguistic and other Coverage
FRCN Lagos	Southwest	English and three Nigerian languages.
FRCN Kaduna	Northwest	English, Hausa, Kanuri, Fulfulde, and Nupe.
FRCN Ibadan	Southwest	English, Yoruba, Edo, Igala, and Urhobo.
FRCN Abuja	Northcentral	English and other local languages as may be approved by the Corporation from time to time.
FRCN Enugu	Southeast	English, Igbo, Izon, Efik, Idoma, and Tiv.

The Act of Parliament that assigned these responsibilities to the FRCN national stations has since been amended to create zonal stations that cut across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. The new zonal stations are in Makurdi (North Central), Kaduna (North West), Maiduguri (North East), Enugu (South East), Yenagoa (South South), and Ibadan (South West). However, one can clearly see from Table 2.2 that Garba was right about the allotment of a maximum of 20 per cent to programmes aired in Igbo language. In fact, should the Enugu national station of FRCN truly broadcast in the other languages listed alongside Igbo, Igbo language programmes might not even realistically be allotted anything close to 20 per cent airtime. The table also shows that prominence is given to English language. By being included among the languages of all the national stations and appearing first on each of the lists, English language is shown to be the primary language of broadcasting in FRCN. This corroborates Salawu's (2006) submission that the FM stations in Nigeria very nearly broadcast in English language only. Now, FRCN is a government-owned radio corporation, which ordinarily the government should easily mandate to

give more prominence to indigenous Nigerian language broadcasting. If indigenous Nigerian languages are used sparingly in a government-owned media corporation, the situation should be worse in the privately owned media outlets. Akanbi and Aladesanmi (2014) share this sentiment thus:

Most of the electronic media operating in Nigeria are English based. That is, the major language used in many of Nigerian electronic media is English. . . English, as a medium of disseminating information, enjoys high prestige to the detriment of the indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria since it remains the language of officialdom. . . If there is any use of indigenous language in such electronic media at all, it only carries about five per cent of the whole period allotted to news and entertainment and other things in the station (p. 564).

These researchers confirm the minoritising influence of English language on indigenous Nigerian languages and provide a more realistic perspective to the amount of airtime actually given to indigenous language broadcasts in Nigeria. It is only about five per cent. At this point, one wonders why the federal government of Nigeria or even the state governments cannot use legislation and regulation to ensure more usage of indigenous languages in the country's media spaces.

Well, broadcasting in Nigeria is regulated by the federal government through the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). NBC is charged with the regulation of broadcasting through issuance of licence, sanctioning of erring organisations, arbitration of disputes involving broadcast organisations, and monitoring of compliance to its codes. Now, the NBC's code states that "every licence is required to adhere to a minimum of 60% local broadcast content for open

television and 80% local broadcast content for radio. The cable/satellite retransmission stations are mandated to reflect a minimum of 20%” (NBC, 2009, p. 3). This is the closest the NBC goes to mandating the use of indigenous language in broadcasting in Nigeria. In fact, by “local broadcast content,” the NBC actually means broadcast content produced in Nigeria, which could be in English language or in an indigenous Nigerian language.

Ihechu and Okugo (2013) report that local content monitoring and indeed other areas of monitoring are hardly pursued by the NBC, because the commission’s monitoring strategy is neither organized nor comprehensive. They add that even when the commission monitors content, its application of certain regulatory provisions is selective. Therefore, the broadcast stations have a field day favouring the English language over indigenous languages like Igbo.

Today, after decades of being served nearly only English language content, the effect is that newscasts in Igbo language no longer appeal to the Igbo audience, who prefers newscasts in English (Okere, cited in Nwammuo & Salawu, 2019). Harrison (2014) adds that the pervasive influence of English language has become rather overbearing on the indigenous Nigerian languages such that some minority Nigerian languages have actually died and some of the major languages are endangered and/or facing threats of extinction. Of course, Igbo language endangerment and threat of extinction validates this.

## **2.7 Media Fetish, Igbo Language and Digital Technologies**

The unsuccessful attempts to maintain and revitalise Igbo language through the mainstream media validate Fishman’s (2001) criticism as fetish and unrealistic, language activists’ tendency to rely so much on the media for language revitalisation. Fishman’s critical perspective on the power of the mass media to revitalise endangered languages appears at face value to indict the

media of powerlessness. It is controversial enough to draw criticisms. However, from Belmar and Glass (2019), one learns that Fishman's notion of media fetish is premised on good faith. According to Belmar and Glass, Fishman's "unwillingness to recognise a positive tool for the media was largely rooted in the organisational power structures that control the media, which he (rightly) states are usually located beyond the minority language community and outside its influence and control" (p. 11).

In other words, Fishman does not necessarily think that the mass media do not have the requisite powers to promote language revitalisation endeavours effectively; instead, he argues that minority languages are not usually able to attract enough media attention to make for effective revitalisation, what Androutsopoulos (2014) refers to as audience design strategies. Take Igbo language, for instance. English language programmes have been so consistently foisted on Igbo people that they have come to accept it and even tend to despise media texts produced in Igbo language so much so that even the token Igbo language programmes are generally unpopular. Fishman's media fetish argues that in a situation like this, there is little or nothing the media can do to help Igbo language.

Media content is primarily meant for the audience; so if a language, for whatever reasons, does not hold enough appeal to the audience, media content producers will naturally avoid producing content in the unpopular language. For Fishman, therefore, continuing to produce content in a language that is not widely used by the audience and believing that continuous use of the language in media texts, even when the audience generally shuns the programmes, will amount to wishing some magical powers on the media. This, for him, is unrealistic; it is fetish. This is a valid argument. It is valid because you need the active cooperation of the speech community for the mass media to help a language in decline. In fact, it is the members of the speech community

that should organize programmes in their language in order to deliberately court the media. It is their actions that should attract the media. If they remain docile, the media can hardly notice them. Should the media even notice them without solicitation, the efforts of the media would hardly be effective in terms of language revitalisation, because the media programmes have to be appropriately tailored to the needs of the speech community for the programmes to have any meaningful impact on the health of the target language.

In spite of the above, the unflinching rise of the new media with its concomitant sprawling influences (yet comparatively easily accessible and inexpensive), means that Fishman's media fetish may no longer hold true, even with regard to Igbo language revitalisation. Belmar and Glass (2019) share this notion thus:

The development of media, particularly social media, since Fishman first proposed GIDS [Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale], allows people to be connected in ways that were impossible in the late 20th century. The lines between the 'physical' and 'virtual' are becoming hazy in a world where it is possible to have strong connections and daily conversations with people all over the globe (p. 11).

More than anything else, the digital media has changed many of the means that media content was produced and consumed. These days, rather than courting the mass media, often unsuccessfully owing to commercial considerations and the popular demands of the audience, members of a speech community who care about revitalising their endangered language can utilize opportunities for less institutionalized content creation the digital media offers to craft content suitable for the revitalisation of their language. Per Belmar and Glass, however, the notion of media fetish vis-à-vis language revitalisation is increasingly inapplicable even with

regard to the mass media, because the mass media have also largely embraced the digital media, so that some of the benefits of the digital media could very easily be appropriated through the mass media.

Belmar and Glass (2019) further explain that Fishman's claim that physical social events and activities are real and, therefore, have instant feedback on one's family but the media can only create a virtual community "stem from a time when Internet-based communication was not yet the norm in society" (p. 12). Through its unique affordances, the digital media can be used to recreate physical social events with the look and feel of actual physical social events, yet guaranteeing instant feedback in ways that give the satisfaction of actual physical contact. Contrary to Fishman's criticism, therefore, the media with active cooperation of a speech community, particularly the digital media, can be veritable tools for the promotion of minority languages worldwide (Jones & Soria, cited in Belmar & Glass, 2019).

## **2.8 Social Media and Language Revitalisation**

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (p. 16). The social media has sundry interesting affordances. Kaplan and Haenlein have highlighted two of them: the social media has the unique quality of being both a medium for content creation and a medium for content dissemination. In essence, it is a platform for information or newsgathering as well as a platform for publication of news. It also makes for consumer-generated content. That is, it is often devoid of the gatekeeping that is an integral aspect of information management in the mass media. With social media, anybody who has something to share, creates his/her story and shares. Everybody is a potential journalist,

or what has come to be known in new media studies as “citizen journalist.” Therefore, the social media is inherently democratizing. It has had liberalizing effects not only on the people but also on the mass media. However, because it is a relatively new landscape, its precise definition is still being debated, but for Knight and Cook (2013), social media means:

[A]ll forms of new media production whose primary function is interaction – not simply presentation of information. Any news product or piece of information that is presented in order to be commented on, discussed, circulated and used within a network of social interaction is, for us, ‘social’ media. This includes what are increasingly thought of as the ‘social media’ applications – Twitter and Facebook – but also stories presented for comment online, television panel shows that incorporate audience commentary, live blogs that curate and collect material from multiple sources, and myriad other ways (some not yet invented) in which the audience and the producers meet and talk (p. 4).

Social media is, for Knight and Cook, principally about its socialness. It is mainly about interactivity, and this enables it to create a sense of community in and for its actively engaging audience.

Whiting and Williams (2013) categorize the examples of social media platforms to include social-networking sites (e.g., Facebook), photo-sharing sites (e.g., Flickr), video-sharing sites (e.g., YouTube), business-networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn), and micro-blogging sites (e.g., Twitter), and add that they “are inexpensive and, more often than not, completely free to use” (p. 363). The fact of being inexpensive and even oftentimes totally free is another essential quality of the social media that makes it uniquely attractive to minority language activists. If the mass

media are limited in their ability to help curb the decline of endangered languages, because the languages cannot compete for the often expensive media slots, or because they do not hold enough appeal for the majority, social media offers reversing language shift experts another new and interestingly effective pathway to help languages that are in decline. In addition to other exciting features, the social media comes in different platforms – Flickr, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook – so that language activists can choose one or a group of social media platforms that is most suitable for the kind of reversing language shift campaign they are embarking on.

As it concerns minority languages, again, Viernes (2019) notes, with some specific examples, that social media helps to bring scattered communities of minority language speakers together, provides a context for the exploration of new registers, increases awareness of linguistic diversity, boosts the confidence of speakers to use their language elsewhere, and creates a positive image of the minority languages by associating it with modern life. These points bear a bit more explanation. Social media breaks boundaries. So, when, as is often the case with minority languages, members of a speech community have been separated for whatever reasons, they can stay in touch with one another through the social media. This way, their collective identity is constantly maintained and intact. Cru (2018) shares this element of the social media by noting that even indigenous communities that have been split by national borders have been known to stay connected to their traditional territories through the social media.

Provision of a context for the exploration of new registers is, according to Viernes, another remarkable feature of the social media. There are two ways to view this. One is the fact of social media bringing members of a speech community together to interact and

socialize, and by doing so invent new words. The other is using their language in a novel context that necessitates the invention of new terminologies that can effectively explain the ideas, feelings, and concepts associated with the new context. There is also the added benefit of increasing the linguistic awareness of a speech community. Here is how that works. Social media is a melting pot of the world languages. Thus, a speech community that accesses the social media will learn more about other languages, other cultures, and other identities. This will naturally make members of the speech community more open to the world and more tolerant of other languages and cultures. There is also, in case of an endangered language, the opportunity to learn what other speech communities whose languages are threatened are doing to revitalise their languages.

Viernes also talks about the social media boosting the confidence of speakers of an endangered language to use their language outside their immediate community and on a global stage. This has a way of restoring the pride of the speech community in its language. Related to this is Viernes' assertion that the social media associates an endangered language to modernity and makes speakers of the endangered language to view their language in a positive light. This is particularly helpful when a minority language has suffered a major shift to a majority language to the extent that speakers of the minority language have adopted a negative attitude to it. By using the minority language in an elite domain like the social media, its speakers are wont to begin to reconsider their attitude to their language. They will begin to see the language as one fit for modern life, and this will help in the efforts to revitalise the language.

Also, citing Dias, Viernes (2019) adds that social media is "linked to the notion of digital readiness" (p. 14). This, he explains, is the creation and availability of neologisms

necessary to cope with new technology. That is it. Technological advancement creates innovations in language, too. Akanbi and Aladesanmi (2014) sums this thus: “It is never an overstatement to say that the world of computer in globalization has brought with it new concepts. The introduction of these new concepts, therefore, has increased the vocabulary of virtually all the world languages” (p. 566). Specifically, neologism entails the coining of new words or the expansion of the meanings of existing words. For an endangered language whose growth and development in terms invention of new words has been stunted by a dominant language, this is heartwarming. Putting the language on social media and subsequently coining new terms with which to navigate the social media will enrich the vocabulary of the endangered language, and make it easy for its users to express more ideas, feelings, and concepts with it, rather than resorting to the dominant language.

Furthermore, making endangered languages available on the Internet, says Daigneault of the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages, has a very strong impact on the youth, for it shows that the languages are still relevant and that the youth are proud of speaking them (Emmanouilidou, 2014). Social media generally appeals more to the youth than it appeals to the elderly, and the youths represent a critical demography in language revitalisation. According Riagáin (2008), when it comes to forming attitudes toward a minority language, the teenage years are critically important. If language attitudes are largely formed at a young age, and the social media holds immense appeal to young people, an endangered language that is exposed to the social media will likely make progress. This means that social media can get an important segment of a speech community to be proud of their language again. It is, perhaps, for this reason

that Belmar and Glass (2019) posit that social media platforms also “have the added benefit of being attractive to young people, without whom the languages have no chance of survival” (p. 7).

Young people occupy a strategic place in language revitalisation. If the young people, for whatever reasons, lose interest in a minority language, the chances of revitalising the language will become slim. However, because the social media is immensely enticing to the youth, an endangered language that finds its way to the social media will appeal to its young people, and this will mark a breath of fresh air for the language. In fact, per Belmar and Glass, when the young people of a speech community do not know their language, or have stopped speaking their language, such a language, even if it is not presently endangered, does not stand any feasible chances of surviving.

For Cassels (2019), the new media:

Gives speakers and learners freedom to self-determine their language usage and bring their language into contexts which are relevant to themselves and their peers. For instance, hashtags, a central component of new media platforms, empower language users to broadcast their identities and align themselves with cultural and linguistic communities (p. 30).

This, again, is quite crucial for an endangered language in need of communicative spaces. Giving speakers of an endangered language a platform to use their language freely is as encouraging as it is empowering. To use the language in the context of the social media will mean placing less emphasis on prescriptivism and placing more emphasis on descriptivism. It gives minority language speakers the opportunity to use their language for the main purpose of sharing meaning, rather than worrying about conformity to standard practices of grammar, punctuation,

and spelling. This gives the people the liberty to play with the language as well as encourage them to use the language. The social media, therefore, is, as Cassels writes, an empowering platform that shapes language attitudes.

Therefore, Crystal, cited in Cunliffe (2007), notes that one of the six postulates for a theory of language revitalisation is that “an endangered language will progress if its speakers can make use of electronic technology” (p. 141), and citing Buszard-Welcher, he explains that whilst “electronic technology” encompasses a variety of media, including radio and television, more recent Internet-based media have a particularly important role to play in the future of minority languages. Crystal has analysed, with real-life examples, the events that led to the death of some languages of the world. He marshals six ingredients that make endangered languages to make progress and avoid death. One of these six requirements is access to electronic technology, or access to the Internet. Crystal notes that owing to the disadvantaged position of endangered languages, majority of them might not have been exposed to the Internet. He, however, affirms that an endangered language that manages to gain access to the Internet stands a realistic chance of progressing. Similarly, in highlighting the benefits of the digital media over the traditional media, especially as it concerns accessibility, UNESCO, cited in Cunliffe (2007), avers that “there will often be more minority language material produced on the Internet than in traditional print or audio-visual forms” (p. 133).

Other researchers have also found sundry other ways the new media can help to foster maintenance and revitalisation of endangered languages (see, for instance, Austin & Sallabank, 2011; Austin, 2013; Jones, 2013). Precisely, therefore, putting endangered Nigerian languages on new media platforms, for instance, would support them greatly (Garba, 2015). This represents

hope of survival for Igbo language. *BBC News Igbo* publishes its stories on social media, and this should normatively put Igbo language in a good stead to make progress.

## **2.9 Social Media for Language Learning**

The social media inherited most of the key functions of the traditional media such as information, education, entertainment, behavioural change, and mass mobilisation. It has become a genuine platform for sharing information, for teaching and learning, and for entertainment. In fact, owing to its comparative accessibility, adaptability, and affordability, social media has revolutionised the functions of the traditional mass media. It has given access to anybody who has something to say. As a result, there are now sites on social media dedicated to diverse informational pieces, sundry educational productions, enumerable entertainment offerings, a plethora of messages aimed at socio-political mobilization, and so on. Interestingly, prominent among the social media sites for education are those dedicated to learning a new language and enhancing language skills (Vanisree, 2019). While this is potentially beneficial to all languages, it is much more beneficial to endangered languages, especially the ones whose threats are occasioned by lack of intergenerational transmission or shortage of teachers.

Chapelle and Sauro (2017) have recorded an increasing exploration and substantiation of the potentials of the Internet for language learning, which gave rise to computer-assisted language learning (CALL) as a field of study. The potentials of the Internet (which hosts social media) for language learning are so remarkable that language learning through the digital media has become a whole subfield of its own. Of course, this is hardly surprising, considering its often surreal features. For instance, the digital media very nearly does all the functions of the traditional media. However, its strongest point would be performing these functions on a single platform. Take education, for instance. One can acquire skills through the traditional media: radio,

television, newspaper, magazine, book, billboard, and film. However, while some of these organs of the mass media can afford real-time feedback, others cannot. The digital media, however, converges all the elements of the traditional media organs mentioned above.

Beyond convergence, the other unique quality of the digital media is interactivity. The digital media offers high-level interactivity that could only be compared to a face-to-face communication setting in terms of effective meaning sharing. What is more, when it comes to learning, when it comes to learning a new language or sharpening one's skills in a language, interactivity is invaluable. These twin-affordances – convergence and interactivity – of the digital media will continue to be explored below.

Similarly, Barrot (2021), notes that research in social media for language learning and teaching (LLT) has produced a vast body of literature, which focuses, among other areas, on Language, Culture, Socialisation and Pragmatics (LCS), Corpus Linguistics (COR), and Phonology/Phonetics and Oral Communication (POC); others are Reading, Writing, and Literacy (RWL), Language Maintenance and Revitalisation (LMR), Language Planning and Policy (LPP), Second Language Acquisition, Language Acquisition, and Attrition (SLA), and Sociolinguistics (SOC). This, for Barrot, points to the fact “that research in social media for LLT has been gaining academic influence within the field of education and language pedagogy” (p. 15). It is, of course, exciting to learn that social media could be used dedicatedly for Reading, Writing, and Literacy (RWL). However, more interesting as far as this study is concerned is the knowledge that social media for language learning and teaching has given rise to such apt subfield as Language Acquisition, and Attrition (SLA) and more concretely, Language Maintenance and Revitalisation (LMR). All this makes social media increasingly indispensable for a language in decline.

The effectiveness of social networks in language learning could be attributable to its valuable affordances. For instance, in being widely accessible both to content creators and audiences, social media has broken the barrier of political and commercial considerations that mainstream media owners and media managers advance as preconditions for either setting up media organisations or using minority languages. Social media, therefore, gives access to language communities and groups the legacy media would normally consider peripheral. Today, it costs little to nothing to create a social media site dedicated to language teaching and learning; the result of this, of course, is often more opportunities for maintenance and revitalisation of endangered languages (Austin & Sallabank, 2011; Austin, 2013; Jones, 2013). It has been established earlier that access to the media is crucial for the survival of endangered languages. But per Graf (2009), minority languages usually find it difficult to get the attention of the mass media owing to a general lack of appeal to the greatest number of the audience. Hence, the comparative easy access to the social media and the limitless opportunities it offers to individuals and groups willing to utilize it for language revitalisation purposes are hugely remarkable. Therefore, the quality of being easily accessible is a social media affordance that appears tailor-made for endangered languages with limited access to the mass media.

Again, social media by its very nature encourages lateral communication, which creates the relaxed atmosphere crucial for LLT, encourages interactivity and collaboration, and makes learning fun. As Tang (2018) puts it, social media emphasizes “the process of discussion and persuasion at the horizontal inter-personal network” (p. 193). It is this personal touch, inherent in the horizontal communication social media offers, that often creates an ambience of fun for learners and makes learning seem effortless and subliminal. This, again, is suitable for endangered languages. When one is looking to get people interested in using an endangered

language more, strictness and formality should be used sparingly. Rather, people should be encouraged to adopt any approaches that work for them. This flexibility is what learning a language or sharpening one's skills in a language through the social media guarantees. With language acquisition at various levels typically being more effective in discursive environments – in environments that have a sense of community – the fact of social media guaranteeing interactivity and collaboration makes it a highly effective medium for language learning, and one that is fit for adoption by reversing language shifters.

Several researchers have also captured the sociality and communitarian affordance of social media in different ways. Slim and Hafedh (2019) see social media as generally conversational and interactive. For Selwyn (2012), learning on social media is based on the notions of collective exploration of communication. Similarly, Gikas and Grant (2013) observe that social media represents an ideal atmosphere for collaborative learning. Again, Bugeja (2006) underscores the fun aspect of learning through social media by stressing that learners mainly see it as a platform for social networking and not that of academics. Therefore, teaching and learning on social media quite aptly fits the appellation, “edutainment,” which underscores the fact of education on social media being normally laced with entertainment. This could be why Barrot (2021) identifies style – formality or informality – as a key issue with language learning on social media. In other words, is language learning on social media formal or informal? The researcher notes that some scholars view formality and informality as a continuum, while others think they are binary, but Manca and Ranieri, cited in Barrot (2021), submit that they are closely tied, so they should be seen as a continuum. Since context is crucial to language learning (van Lier, 2004), therefore, the admixture of the formal and the informal vis-à-vis approaches to language learning through social media is an added affordance that complements the positive impact social

media has on language learning. Recall that one aspect of Fishman's media fetish is the indictment of the media for not having the same measure of affectivity as physical social engagements. However, the social media's heightened propensity for sociality, communitarianism, interactivity, collective exploration, and social networking in contexts that blend formality and informality to achieve edutainment recreates the affectivities that are akin, if not more engaging, to the satisfaction one savours in physical engagements. For endangered languages, especially one whose speakers are scattered, those abilities of the social media are immensely helpful.

Another social media feature that influences language teaching and learning is learners' limitless access to teachers, mentors, and role models all over the world. This ensures that willing learners could go beyond regular closed or open language learning groups on social media to solicit for extra help from anyone they think could meet their needs. This, therefore, means that experts outside the immediate locations of language learners can create and share instructional materials meaningfully on social media (Zhu, 2012). Again, for an endangered language that lacks teachers, or one that is not taught formally in schools, social media provides an avenue for willing learners of the language to connect to teachers anywhere in the world. In fact, even with endangered languages that have enough teachers and are taught in schools, social media provides an opportunity for extramural learning that complements institutionalized acquisition of the language. This possibility of teaching a language from anywhere in the world can also help to provide a centralized virtual school for a scattered speech community.

Additionally, convergence has contributed to the success of social media in language teaching and learning. The availability of features for text messaging, videos, images, podcasts, and the like, ensures that learners are not only exposed to manifold pedagogical materials (Richardson

and Lenarcic, 2008; Fisher and Baird, 2006), but are also afforded the choice of learning according to their specific needs and preferred styles (Manca, 2020). As broached earlier, convergence is one of the core features of the social media. It is a thrilling blend of multifarious media and communication organs, which makes for more effective learning. It is more effective because learners are free to adopt an approach or a group of approaches that suits their affective and cognitive make up through a single smart device, be it a mobile phone, a digital notebook, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer. This aggregation of learning tools and approaches is beneficial for endangered languages, because per Crystal (2000), raising the profile of an endangered language requires money. For a minority language whose community is poor, and this is often the case, experimenting with different physical approaches to teaching and learning is not an option. Yet this has to be done in order to come up with applicable approaches. For this kind of speech community, having access to the social media will help to solve its problem of lack of the money needed to try several approaches in order to choose the ones that are most appropriate for imparting its language as well as raising its profile. Therefore, the social media provides a one-size-fits-all response for a poor speech community in need of effective variegated approaches to revitalising its language through teaching and learning.

Facebook, one of the four most used social networking sites (others being Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp), has attracted a considerable amount of research in the area of language acquisition. It is quite flexible. Therefore, it makes content creation easy. Facebook supports content creation that can enhance the different components of language arts. There are contents rich in text, which enhance reading as well as writing, and there are contents rich in oracy, which enhance speaking and listening skills. For this, people who are interested in the promotion of any language can easily create a Facebook page, whether open or closed, and invite like-minded

people or other target individuals to join the group. Today, many of such Facebook pages abound, and they can help language activists to grow and develop their languages of interest on and off Facebook. Since, again, raising the public profile of a language in the media, per Crystal (2000), is cost-intensive, using Facebook for language teaching and learning is particularly ideal for an endangered language, because, among other benefits, creating a group or personal page on Facebook is free. In fact, endangered language promoters might choose to monetize their Facebook pages, and the money they make can be invested in their language promotion endeavours.

Barrot's (2018) study critically reviews scholarly literature on Facebook as a technology-enhanced language learning environment and reports increased research focus on productive skills, especially writing. This finding is one that should be immensely gratifying to reversing language shifters. They should find it gratifying because of the sprawling role of literacy in language revitalisation. It, for instance, helps in the standardisation of a language. It is also an enduring repository of the various aspects of a language. The literacy domain is so crucial to the survival of endangered languages that Crystal (2000) declares, with examples such as Yup'ik and Quechua, that when speakers of an endangered language are able to write down their language, the language can make progress.

Similarly, Derakshan and Hasanabbasi's (2015) findings show Facebook to enrich students' communication and language skills. Again, Facebook was found to have boosted students' grammar, vocabulary, and writing, helping them to acquire new knowledge (Kamnoetsin, 2014). Facebook, therefore, has been known to be an effective environment for language learning (Slim & Hafedh, 2019). This is just about one social media platform: Facebook. The rest of the most widely used social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram also have features

similar to Facebook. They support impartation of knowledge via reading, writing, speaking, and listening. So, like Facebook, language activists can also deploy these platforms, or a combination of a number of them, for language maintenance purposes. If Facebook alone can be so instrumental to language documentation, language acquisition, and therefore, language maintenance, then combining a number of these social media platforms for the revitalisation of an endangered language can be transformative.

### **2.10 The Place of Digital Language Divide in Language Revitalisation**

The new media holds enormous promises for the maintenance and revitalisation of minority languages; however, these languages have to deal with issues of access and agency to the Internet, because there is a gap between languages that have ready access and agency to the Internet and minority languages that either do not have access or have limited access and agency to the Internet. Known as digital language divide, this poses a challenge to the health and restoration of endangered languages. The issue of access and agency are germane to the utilization of digital media for minority language revitalisation. Digital media might indeed hold immense possibilities for endangered languages, but these languages have to secure the means to access the Internet first in order to reap its inherent opportunities for growth and development. Crystal (2000), in his treatise of the conditions that favour the revitalisation of endangered languages, states that “many parts of the world where languages are most seriously endangered have not yet come to benefit from electronic technology – or, for that matter, electricity” (pp. 141-142).

Cunliffe (2007) has traced digital language divide to the developmental stage of the Internet when the English language and Western values were predominant, with the effect that, today, much of the underlying philosophy and technology of the Internet is rooted in the Western

cultural and linguistic origins. As a result, Stern (2018) points out that only a tiny fraction of the world's 7,000 languages dominates the Internet, so to participate in the digital world, therefore, users would have to have a basic understanding of English, Chinese, Spanish, or one of the few other languages commonly used for global communications. To further illustrate this barrier to minority languages, any language activist who needs to deploy the Internet for language revitalisation will first have to understand the language with which the guideline to accessing the Internet is written. There is also the manual for the specific Internet package the language activist wants use. If this language, the Internet language, is only available in the so-called world languages and the language activist does not understand any of them, this will doubtless constitute a major setback to the activist's language of interest. While it is possible for the language activist to not understand any of these languages that dominate the Internet, it is also possible for the language activist to understand one but to not be fluent enough in the language as to use it to create promotional tools that can effectively help his/her language of interest to progress.

Abu-Irmies and Al-Khanji (2019) add Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic, German to the list of most commonly used languages on the Internet, and reveal that approximately 97 per cent of the world's speakers use 4 per cent of the world's languages. Also, Emmanouilidou (2014), citing Anna Luisa Daigneault, adds Russian to the languages that dominate the Internet worldwide, and points out that the dominance of the world languages is one of the reasons for the endangerment of some indigenous languages. That among the world speakers, a massive 97 per cent, perhaps for economic reasons and availability, use only 4 per cent of the world's language is indicative of the extent the powerful languages of the world have attempted to monopolise the Internet. It also shows how much minority languages lose out in terms of visibility, digitisation, cross-border

connection with scattered users, inherent prestige of the Internet, and the many other benefits the Internet offers languages. Of course, as Emmanouilidou observes, the dominance on the Internet of the already powerful languages of the world translates to more and more prestige and influence to them. Unfortunately, this will further whittle down the vitality of minority languages and could result to more language endangerment and death around the world.

Thus, Cassels (2019) observes that new media platforms create new domains for language use, provide sites for potential indigenous language use, provide opportunities for language revitalisation movements, but citing Keegan, Mato, and Ruru, the author cautions that new media also provides “new opportunities for dominant languages to be even more dominant” (p. 25).

Well, let for the simple fact that the continuous dominance of the even now dominant world languages amounts to further regression of minority languages, one would have argued that language activists interested in revitalising minority languages should just concentrate on getting the minority languages on the Internet first and pay less attention to the competition the leading languages pose. It seems like this argument is still valid, though. The Internet, like the mass media before it, can remain a contested terrain between the world languages and minority languages. What reversing language shifters and other experts in minority language promotion should do is to focus on what they are able to benefit from negotiating access to the Internet for their languages of interest. They should place less emphasis on the barriers posed by the few but pervasively influential world languages. After all, when compared to getting spaces in the mass media for endangered languages, getting access to the Internet is far more obtainable.

Digital language divide is the reason for Mufwene’s, cited in Dega (2015), averment that globalisation, with the Internet as its prime driver, endangers minority languages. Accordingly, “Tunde Adegbola, a Nigerian computer scientist and a linguist, has some fear that technology

can overrun African languages and entrench Anglophone imperialism” (Salawu, 2006, p. 4). This sentiment is, again, echoed by Salawu (2015), when he decries the rarity of research on the impact of new media technologies on African journalism. These anxieties and fears as expressed above are premised on valid precedents. Prior to the advent of the Internet, and with it widespread globalization, the world languages that rule the Internet, whether English, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, Hindi, or German, exerted a great measure of linguistic influence on their continents and sub-continents as the case may be. In Africa, for instance, the continent is practically divided into two linguistic blocs, with one bloc speaking English, and the other bloc speaking French. Today, we talk about the Anglophone and Francophone countries in Africa.

Therefore, with the coming of the Internet, the world languages quite simply became the dominant online languages. In any case, a peep into the history of computer shows that the earliest computer programming languages and the ones coming after the earliest ones are rooted in the world languages (Y Studios, 2018), and in fact, English, for instance, has often been branded the lingua franca of computer programming. Therefore, the Internet only provided yet another elite firmament for domiciling the elite languages of the world, after they had conquered the offline realm. The map below, from Evans Data Corporation (EDC), shows the global computer developer population and demographic study leading into 2023.

**Figure 2.1: Global Developer Population and Demography**

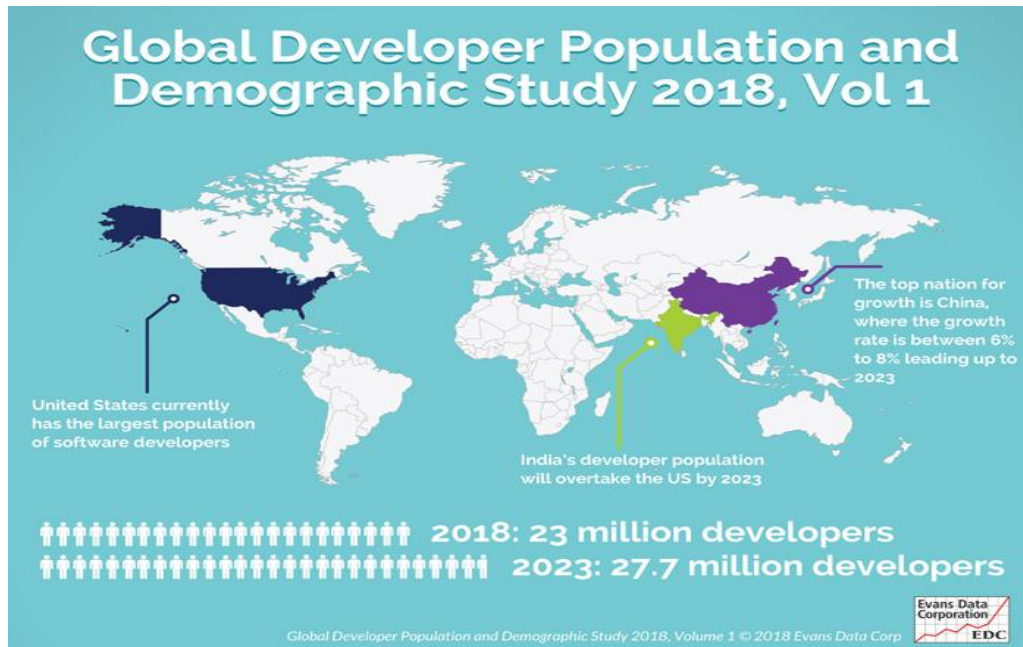


Figure 2.1 shows that English language is the leading language for coding. English is closely followed by Hindi and Chinese. Of course, these would be closely followed by the other world languages. In fact, Y Studios, a research firm, has observed that “while the US currently has the largest population of software developers, India’s developer population will overtake the US by 2023. The top nation for growth is in China, where it is projected to grow between 6-8% leading up to 2023” (para. 6).

English, Hindi, and Chinese are among the top ten world languages that dominate the Internet. This means that they equally dominate software development and Internet keywords. In essence, for the world minority languages to gain access and use the Internet meaningfully for their respective causes, they have to first be acquainted with the leading online languages. This, again, means an entrenchment of the age-long offline dominance of the powerful languages.

Moyo (2017) provides a broader perspective on the near-absence of African and Global Southern languages in the global information society when he explains that it “is not fundamentally a problem of access, but that of neutralized agency in cultural, scientific, and technological innovation” (136). Moyo argues that though access to the Internet might and does pose a threat to minority languages, when these languages eventually chart access to the Internet, there is the bigger issue of a colonized agency to deal with. These issues are both cultural and scientific. In essence, Moyo contends that the Internet is steeped in the cultures and scientific epistemologies of the languages that dominate it. A report of the collaborative and participatory ways for children to acquire coding skills shows that English will retain its dominance as the prevalent language in software development, and that this is owing to the “rising importance of STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics] education for global leadership” (Y Studios, 2018, para. 8).

Similarly, with the imposition of the cultures and sciences of the world languages on the rest of the world through unflinching advances in technology, “for any newspaper, electronic media houses, journal and news magazines being operated in the local languages to thrive and survive, they must look for and make use of words for these new concepts and names in the borrowing language” (Akanbi & Aladesanmi, 2014, p. 566). So, again, after negotiating access to the Internet, the minority languages of the world must contend with the fact that the Internet is replete with content rooted in the ever-dominant cultures and technological traditions.

Other authors have also emphasized the wider effects of digital language divide. UNESCO, for instance, cited in Cunliffe (2007, p. 65; see also Cawkell, 2001), explains that “digital exclusion tends to follow existing patterns of social exclusion, where minority language communities are

already socially excluded, they are also likely to be digitally excluded.” If the minority languages were socially excluded prior to the Internet era, it means that they probably were not reckoned with during the series of research leading up to the invention of the Internet, too. Therefore, they could not have been included when the Internet became operational. It would, therefore, be surprising to see a minority language that shot to prominence, especially to the point of measuring up to the world languages, following the invention of the Internet. Minority languages obviously can be used to participate in digital activities, but they have to first be tropicalized. The cumulative effect of all this is that minority languages have remained on the fringes of the global information society.

Again, wa Thing’o (2009) locates the effects of digital language divide within the issue of coloniality whose broad goals are, among other things, epistemicide or the destruction of indigenous knowledge, and linguicide or the destruction of local/national languages. Per Akanbi and Aladesanmi (2014), digital technology has introduced many concepts, which has enriched the vocabularies of the world languages. As wa Thing’o posits, therefore, minority languages are further destroyed when they cannot be used to name and explain the plethora of new concepts the advances in Internet technology give the world. This situation would heighten the feeling of inadequacy for communication and economic opportunities many minority language speakers have of their languages. On the other hand, the steady introduction of new concepts in the world languages must have further grown and developed the dominant languages at the detriment of the minority languages. Clearly, this is disturbing because “to lose a language amounts to losing a civilization, a worldview, a sense of identity, and the creative capacity to change one’s physical and virtual worlds” (Moyo, 2017, p. 143). The effects of the continual dominance on the Internet of the majority languages of the world and their offline social exclusion of minority languages

often endanger (sometimes unto death) these minority languages. Losing a language has a ripple effect. It means losing a people's culture, and culture is the totality of a people's essential qualities. Culture entails more aspects of living than are usually reckoned. It is so encompassing that it actually reveals so much about a people's views. Here is how Samovar and Porter (2004) encapsulate this:

Your views on work, immigration, freedom, age, cleanliness and hygiene, ethics, dress, property rights, etiquette, healing and health, death and mourning, play, law, magic and superstition, modesty, sex, status differentiation, courtship, formality and informality, bodily adornment, and the like are all part of your cultural membership (p. 33).

Losing a language, often through prolonged minoritisation by the majority languages, is not as simple as it sounds. It very nearly feels like the members of the affected speech communities losing their lives.

However, the reality of digital language divide may not be all doom and gloom for minority languages. Cormack (2007a) writes that globalisation sets the international context for minority language media and presents same as both threat and opportunity, especially, if, as Stern (2018) advises, digital tools are reoriented to serve endangered languages and make technology truly become a veritable source of linguistic and cultural diversity. As previously argued, the Internet can be of immense help to minority languages. It can help them to gain more visibility. The Internet can help minority languages to attain digitisation, as well as help them to break the barriers of migration and national borders. However, because the Internet philosophy is not in their favour, minority languages remain on the fringes of the digital media revolution. Therefore,

to use the Internet to advance their causes effectively, individuals and groups utilizing the digital media for language maintenance and/or revitalisation have to first embark on some reorientations.

Regardless of the limiting effects of digital language divide, some minority language researchers have expressed hope that the new media holds a bright future for endangered languages. One of such scholars is Emmanouilidou (2014; see also Salawu, 2006), who submits that “[e]ndangered languages stand a greater chance of survival when they are used online.” This re-echoes Crystal’s (2000) postulation that endangered languages that have access to electronic media will progress. Like the mass media, the digital media raises the public profile of a language exposed it, and it has the added edge of holding massive appeals to young people, who largely determine the overriding attitude of a speech community to its language. Additionally, owing to issues of cost, regulation, and commercial considerations, it is easier for minority languages to access and use the digital media than it is for them to use the mass media.

Also, Jany (2018), citing sundry instances, acknowledges that technology was hitherto perceived to be a threat to the vitality of endangered and minority languages, but adds that new technology and social media have now been found to be important tools in language maintenance. Well, the fear that the Internet would doom minority languages was appropriately premised. Obviously, the thinking then was, if minority languages could not compete against majority languages for mass media spaces, how then could they make an inroad into the highly prestigious digital media. This sentiment was, of course, buttressed by the fact that the initial design and epistemology of the Internet made it the realm of not even all majority languages of the world, but that of the super elite world languages, which one can count with the fingers of the hand. Of course, for some time, the world languages held sway on the Internet exclusively until the recent

democratization of the Internet. Belmar and Glass (2019), for instance, have said that social media enables the production of minority languages in environments where they were hitherto excluded. Ward (1997) add that in a bid “to make Internet access more available, a number of communities offer Internet access at public libraries, and such access might, indeed, be one way to mitigate lack of access for all citizens” (p. 374). This, coupled with technological advances in computer keyboards designed for minority languages and other tropicalized digital tools, has helped minority languages to fashion ways to tap into the rather immense possibilities the Internet holds for languages that are in decline.

Specifically, Sallabank (2010) examines the endangered indigenous language of Guernsey, Channel Islands, and reports:

Language maintenance and revitalization can be supported by virtual libraries and learning environments, Facebook pages for activists, discussion lists, blogs, etc., with online opportunities for speaking as well as writing (e.g., Skype). Although such activities as blogging and texting in an endangered language are easily dismissed by older community members (‘I don't do that in any language’), they can help to motivate younger learners and to (re)build communities (p. 199).

Whether it is the provision of virtual libraries, or the creation of educational environments, or yet the nurturing of an ideal discursive environment with a sense of community, the Internet, regardless of the yawning digital divide, remains a breathing space for minority languages. Its appeal to older people may not be comparatively massive now, but the massive appeal it currently has for the young digital natives is not likely to wane drastically when the now young people become old. In essence, the digital media does not currently appeal greatly to the elderly,

because it is not a phenomenon they were familiar with as young people. Instead, the digital media happened to them. On the other hand, young people grew up knowing and using the digital media, and this has imbued them with lots of enduring knowledge of the phenomenon, which they are not likely to lose when they are old. It has to be said, however, that young people's preferred digital media platforms might change with age. Appropriately targeted and deployed, therefore, the digital media can be, as in the case of Guernsey, a reliable tool for the revitalisation of an endangered language.

Similarly, Galla (2016) examines the various means that indigenous speakers are encouraged to maintain and use their ethnic language on social media, and finds out that technology and social media offer new avenues for the survival of mother tongues. Another example of the place of new media in language maintenance and revitalisation is found in Viernes (2017), which studies the reasons why people use minority languages on social media as well as participants' attitude to using their indigenous languages on social media. Viernes' findings show that majority of the speakers have positive attitudes to using minority languages on social media, and actually do use their respective languages on social media. Likewise, Putra (2018) focuses on what influences the youth to use the Lampung indigenous language on social media and the viability of social media as a language maintenance tool. Again, most of the participants in the research think social media is a potent mechanism for promoting Lampung language. Also, Hassen (2016) examines the impact of electronic media discourse on Amharic language in Ethiopia and notes:

The words that surround us every day influence the words we use. Much of the written language we see is now on the screens of our computers, tablets, and smart phones, language now evolves partly through our interaction with technology. And because the language we use to communicate with each other

tends to be more malleable than formal writing, the combination of informal, personal communication and the mass audience afforded by social media is a recipe for rapid change. From the introduction of new words to new meanings for old words to changes in the way we communicate, social media is making its presence felt (pp. 54-55).

The essential features of the digital media, its unique affordances, make it such an interesting platform that has something for everybody. In fact, from Hassen's findings, convergence, flexibility in terms of degree of formality of messages, a generous dose of language transfer, and engenderment of profoundly personal communication with a great number of people have to be some of the greatest strengths of the digital media, especially with regard to language maintenance.

Lastly, Abu-Irmies and Al-Khanji (2019) investigate the factors that motivate Chechens of Jordan to use their indigenous language on Facebook and WhatsApp as well as the participants' views on the use of social media to preserve and revitalise the language; their findings show social media to be a powerful means of getting Jordan's Chechens to preserve and strengthen their ethnic language and culture. The findings also show Chechens' attitude to the use of their language on social media to be quite positive. In spite of the limitations digital language divide poses to minority languages in terms of access and tools, minority languages whose speakers and/or activists have exposed to the digital media, from Guernsey, to Lampung, to Amharic, to Chechen, have recorded positive results in the areas that are vital to language maintenance. Some of these areas include attitude, prestige, literacy, appeal to a key demography, language transfer, language acquisition, and visibility. Therefore, as Hassen (2016) summarises, the digital media has stamped its presence in significant ways toward the revitalisation of endangered languages.

## **2.11 Understanding *BBC News Igbo* Programming**

Content of *BBC News Igbo* is also available on its parent body's website: <https://www.bbc.com/igbo>. Although the website is categorized into *Akuko* (Stories), *Egwuregwu* (Sports), *Ihe nkiri* (Videos), and *Ihe ka ewuewu* (Most read/viewed), a close observation of its content shows that it comes mostly in four main genres: written stories, live-video stories, pre-recorded-video stories, and question stories. The features of each of these genres are explained below:

### 2.11.1 *Written Stories*

The written stories are often accompanied by pictures or video links. They are essentially stories told with written words, other than pictures or videos. Some of the subjects mainly covered in this genre include socio-economic issues, politics, foreign affairs, personality interviews, and education. Rather than directly inviting audience participation, the written stories are mainly geared toward informing the audience of *BBC News Igbo*. The table below shows samples of *BBC News Igbo* written stories.

**Table 2.3: Sample BBC News Igbo Written Stories**

Title	Translation	Subject Matter
<i>“Mịnịsta okwu agum akwụkwọ nke steeti bụ Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba gara nleta ụlọakwụkwọ n'Owere taa.”</i>	The Minister of State for Education, Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba, went to inspect a school in Owerri today.	Education
<i>“Lekwa ka ndị mmadụ si enweta onwe ha na Wuhan, China bụ ebe mbụ Coronavirus malitere. Nke a mere na Wuhan Maya Beach Water Park ebe e mere mmemme egwu na ngwụcha izuuka gara aga.”</i>	See how people are enjoying themselves in Wuhan, China, which is the place coronavirus began. This happened at Wuhan Maya Beach Water Park where a music concert took place last weekend.	Health
<i>“Akụkọ na-ekwu na a nwuchiela Harry Maguire bụ 'captain' ndị Manchester United maka ilusa ndị uweojii oḡu na Mykonos, Greece.”</i>	Story has it that Harry Maguire, who is the captain of Manchester United, has been arrested for fighting the police in Mykonos, Greece.	Sports
<i>Onye mere ihe onyonyo Wakanda bụ Chadwick Boseman anwụọla site n'orịa akpụ (kansa) nke eriri afọ. Nwunye ya na ezinaulọ ya nọ mgbe ọ nwurụ. Olee ozi nkasịobi i nwere igwa ha?</i>	Chadwick Boseman, who made the movie, <i>Wakanda</i> , has died of cancer of the intestine. His wife and family were there when he died. What condolence message do you have for them?	Entertainment

### 2.11.2 Live Video Stories

The live video stories are aired live to viewers. They are, like the written stories, mostly about socio-economic affairs and politics, but they can also be live telecasts of other social realities such as community, security, or health events.

When the live videos emanate from *BBC News Igbo*, an announcement is sent out prior to the time of the event. The announcement typically invites the audience to watch out for and join the event when it goes live. The live stories are mostly audience participation events. For instance, the following is an announcement that invited *BBC News Igbo* audience members to join a live story: *“Ụmụ Igbo bịa soro anyị n'elekere ise nke mgbede a (5pm) mgbe anyị na Ebere Okaro ga-enwe mkparịtaụka. Ugbua bụ ohere izite ajujụ gị. Mkparitauka puruiche BBC News*

*Igbo na Ebele Okaro* – “*BBC News Igbo* Special Chat with Ebele Okaro: Igbo people, join us at 5 pm when we will have a chat with Ebele Okaro. This is your opportunity to send your message.” The table below shows some *BBC News Igbo* live videos.

**Table 2.4: Sample *BBC News Igbo* Live Video Stories**

Title	Translation	Subject Matter
“ <i>Ndị Enugwu Capital Territory akwatuwala ulọ elu ogogo atọ ahụ dara n'Enugwu na 9a Egwuekwe street, Maryland. Ndị Federal Fire Service nakwa Enugwu Fire Service nọkwa chim dika a na-akwatu ulọ ahụ.</i> ”	The Enugu Capital Territory has pulled down that three-storey building that fell in Enugu at 9A, Egwuekwe Street, Maryland. Officers of the Federal Fire Service and Enugu Fire Service were well positioned as the house was pulled down.	Community
“ <i>Mkparitauka Puruiche BBC News Igbo na Praise. Ngwa bute nụ oche o ja anyị karia. O bu @itz_praise nọ n'ogbo n'oge a, kedụ ihe ndị i bu n'obi kamgbe o nọ n'ulọ #bbnlockdown</i> ”	<i>BBC News Igbo</i> chat with Praise: @itz_praise is with us now. What did you have in mind since he was in the #bbnlockdown house?	Personality Interview
“ <i>Onwa ole ka nne kwesiri inye nwa ya naanị mmiri ara? Bija soro anyi kpaa maka ya.</i> ”	How many months should a mother do exclusive breastfeeding? Join us to discuss this.	Health
“ <i>Nkwakorita ndi IPOB na Police/DSS n'Enugwu: Ndị Emene amalitela zūwa ahia tata na-agbanyeghi ogbaghara mere unyaahụ nke tara isi ndi IPOB nakwa ndi uweojii. Lee ihe ndi mmadu kwuru maka ya.</i> ”	The clash between IPOB and Police/DSS in Enugu: Emene people have begun going to market in spite of the disturbance that happened yesterday, which claimed the lives of IPOB members and police officers. Here is what the people say about it.	Security

### 2.11.3 Pre-Recorded Video Stories

As the name implies, the pre-recorded videos are video stories *BBC News Igbo* records prior to sharing them with its audience. They are usually prefaced with written words that ask users of *BBC News Igbo* to view the videos. The videos

may be produced by *BBC News Igbo* or sourced elsewhere. Like the other genres, the pre-recorded video stories usually comprise socio-economic, political, and cultural issues. The table below shows samples of *BBC News Igbo* pre-recorded video stories.

Title	Translation	Subject Matter
<i>“Umụakwukwọ Najirija guchara na mahadum Chajna n’afọ 2020 atọla na mba ahụ n’ihi mmachi obodo.”</i>	Nigerian students who completed their studies in Chinese universities in 2020 are stranded there because of restrictions.	Human Interest
<i>“Ima aka onye ma agụ akwukwọ Igbo. I ga-emenwu ka Stella Damasus? Lee ka o siri guọ, 'Anu gbaa ajo egbe' nke Osita Amakeze dere   Ndị biputara akwukwọ: @purplshelves”</i>	Igbo reading competition: Can you do like Stella Damasus? See how she reads “Anu gbaa ajo egbe” authored by Osita Amakeze, and published by @purplshelves.	Education
<i>“Kedụ etu Hydroxychloroquine si metụta covid-19? Gee ntị ka Dkt Ije bụ nwa Dora Akunyili gwa gị ugbua. Gaa gwaa ndị yaadị gị.”</i>	How does Hydroxychloroquine relate to covid-19? Listen, let Dr. Ije, who is Dora Akunyili’s daughter, tell you now. Go and enlighten people in your house.	Health
<i>“Ogbunigwe gbara na Beirut, Lebanon adagbuchala onye ntaakukọ BBC na-arụ ọrụ. Lee ka o si mee n’ihe nkiri a.”</i>	The bomb that exploded in Beirut, Lebanon, has killed a BBC journalist who was working. See how it happened in this video.	Security

#### 2.11.4 Question Stories

The question stories typically entail *BBC News Igbo* posing a question, mostly accompanied with a picture or a web link, and asking its viewers/readers to answer the questions. Like the other genres, the question stories usually cut across regular social realities such as education, politics, entertainment, health, etc. However, the one unique attribute of the question stories is that they are necessarily interactive. *BBC News Igbo* invites its audience members to participate in question stories, so they are primarily interactive. The table below shows samples of the question stories.

**Table 2.6: Sample BBC News Igbo Question Stories**

Title	Translation	Subject Matter
<i>“Mike Ejeagha Kedu egwu mbu Mike Ejeagha tiputere? Kedu egwu ya ndi i ma?”</i>	Mike Ejeagha: What is Mike Ejeagha’s first song? What are his songs that you know?	Entertainment
<i>“Ma a puo n’asompi bopolu, Neymar na Ronaldinho Gaúcho bu ndi a ma ama ihe oringo na-amasi nke ukwu. N’etiti ha abuo, kedu onye kacha abanye na nsogbu maka oringo?”</i>	Outside of soccer, Neymar and Ronaldinho Gaúcho are noted for being fun lovers. Between the two of them, who gets into trouble more because of fun?	Sports
<i>“Kedu ihe i maara gbasara Ibrahim Babangida? Kedu ihe i chetara gbasara Ibrahim Babangida mgbe o no n’ochichi (Ogost 27 1985 – Ogost 26 1993)?”</i>	What do you know about Ibrahim Babangida? What do you remember about Ibrahim Babangida when he was in government from August 27, 1985 to August 26, 1993?	Politics
<i>“Gini bu “Mutiny” n’asusu Igbo? Kedu ndi a niile na-asu Bekee ebe a kemgbe, ngwa, o ruo n’omume... 😊</i>	What is “mutiny” in Igbo language? Where are all the people who have been speaking English here? This is the time to act.	Education

*BBC News Igbo* content is, therefore, wide-ranging in scope. For instance, a one-month topical index of its offerings shows that they are rather diverse, covering politics, foreign news, personality interviews, society news, health, sports, culture, and education. Nwammuo and Salawu (2019, p. 91) agree to this when they write that *BBC News Igbo* has “a wide range of stories and topics that concern local people, reverberate across the region, have a wide reach and can be listened to from anywhere in the world.” A cursory examination of the index of *BBC News Igbo* stories showed that some of the stories are crafted in ways that encourage audience engagement. For instance, in this story, “*Oke soro ngwere maa mmiri...? I mara na i bu Odenigbo, mezu akpaala okwu a,*” *BBC News Igbo* quotes an Igbo adage halfway and invites its audience members to complete it, if they are truly grounded in Igbo language. Stories like this have a way of attracting strong interest and attention to Igbo language. It was also noticed that

many of the *BBC News Igbo* stories, true to its claim, are geared toward getting the people to use Igbo language more. This story, “*O buru na i hu foto gi ka o na-efeghari na soshal media ebe ndi mmadu sin a i nwuola, gini ka i ga-eme?*” (If you saw your picture trending on social media with people saying that you are dead, what would you do?) will doubtless get the audience of *BBC News Igbo* commenting on it. It naturally compels engagement, and since it is written in Igbo in an Igbo-only medium, most of the commenters will mostly likely use Igbo in their comments. In the end, Igbo language is used more and more.

Although using Igbo language more is advantageous to the health of the language, the fact that *BBC News Igbo* is a digital medium also means that the continuous use of Igbo language in the medium, especially on social media, has other implications for the revitalisation of the language. Take digitisation, for instance. The continuous use of Igbo language in *BBC News Igbo* is bound to enhance the digitisation – conversion to digital forms – of the language and further increase its presence online. Again, increased use of Igbo language on a digital platform like *BBC News Igbo* will also influence its speakers’ attitude to the language. Since the digital media, especially social media, is comparatively more modern than the traditional media, having Igbo language on a large-scale digital media should make its speakers to link it with modernity, and this will in turn enhance the people’s attitude to the language as well as make it gain some prestige.

It appears, therefore, that *BBC News Igbo* has Igbo language revitalisation in its overarching objectives. This much was revealed in a newspaper interview that Peter Okwoche, the then Nigeria editorial lead for *BBC News Igbo*, granted the *Premium Times* newspaper.

He says:

According to the United Nations, by the year 2050 the Igbo Language will be in serious decline. To stop that you have to get people to start reengaging in the Igbo language. I think this BBC Igbo service will help to do that as well. We are trying to attract a young audience. We have to get our youth to start speaking the Igbo language. So, if they visit our website and say Oh! The BBC has an Igbo website, maybe it is cool to speak Igbo (Ibekwe, 2018).

This is quite illuminating. It at once underscores the seriousness and ubiquity of the UNESCO prediction as well as how strategic a language Igbo is. It also emphasizes the strategic place of young people in language revitalisation and the confirmation that the digital media holds immense appeal to them. All this shows that the digital media is increasingly becoming indispensable in today's reversing language shift (RLS) endeavours.

Nwammuo and Salawu (2019) confirm the efforts of the BBC in promoting indigenous African languages, and make a list of other African languages the BBC had used long before it started using Igbo language. They include Hausa, Somalia, Swahili, Afaan Oromo, Amharic, and Tigrinya. There is the *BBC News Yoruba* too, which started on the same day as *BBC News Igbo*.

In a continent that is noted for its linguistic diversity, BBC's choice of setting up media services in the languages mentioned above must be strategic. Its choice of these languages must be based on certain important indices. That Igbo language made the cut, therefore, emphasizes the fact that it is such an important, widely used language. Therefore, losing it will be, to say the least, disastrous. It has to be saved, and that is the message the BBC seems to be sending out there by establishing an Igbo-only digital news medium on large scale. The management of *BBC News*

*Igbo* echoes this by reiterating its commitment to targeting the youth and getting them to accept and use Igbo language.

In their assessment of the effectiveness of the BBC in promoting African languages, with particular focus on Igbo, Nwammuo and Salawu (2019) find *BBC News Igbo* to have the potentials to make Igbo language popular again, to promote *some* cultural elements, and to encourage “the respondents to speak the language.” They conclude that *BBC News Igbo* “may help strengthen the language on the long run” (p. 96). One can hardly fault these findings. When one considers the distinctive affordances of the digital media, the sheer scale of *BBC News Igbo*, and its earnest promise to consider the fact of Igbo language endangerment in its programming, the findings of Nwammuo and Salawu above cannot but be credible, despite coming only less than one year after the setting up of *BBC News Igbo*.

However, it is pertinent to point out some areas this study differs from Nwammuo and Salawu’s. The first is in the area of methodology. The second is in the area of theory. In other words, this study adopts theoretical and methodological approaches that are different from the ones Nwammuo and Salawu used. Furthermore, this study and Nwammuo and Salawu’s differ significantly in that the researchers conducted their study at about seven months after the launch of *BBC News Igbo* (and at least 17 months earlier than the commencement of this study), hence their optimism that the service, that is, *BBC News Igbo*, “may help strengthen the language on the long run.” Since this study is coming two years after *BBC News Igbo* started, it might well fit into the “long run” expressed by Nwammuo and Salawu (2019, p. 96).

Similarly, Nwammuo and Salawu (2018) researched extensively the BBC age-long foray into indigenous African language programming. However, their focus here is quite different, for with

some skepticism, they questioned why the BBC invests in African language media. Specifically, the researchers examined if the BBC's motive was to gain hegemonic control of Africa, and they found that "[a]lthough this may strengthen the indigenous languages and save some of them from going into extinction, it is however, not without consequences as a hegemonic control of the African media landscape by the BBC seems to be fast taking shape" (p. 25). This echoes the submissions of the *BBC News Igbo* editorial lead, Okwoche, who said that beyond the other purposes for setting up the media organisation, it would also help to rekindle the people's interest in using Igbo language. So, even if the core motive of the BBC, as Nwammuo and Salawu (2018) investigated, is that of gaining undue control of the indigenous African language media firmament, the other benefit to African languages, whether intended or unintended, is the strengthening (via visibility, digitisation and sundry other means) of these languages.

Nwammuo and Salawu's (2018) finding equally aligns with Browne's (2007) revelation that the pre-World War II propaganda broadcasting in indigenous languages, especially by countries like Nazi Germany, Japan, and Italy, "helped to spur the British Foreign Office to support BBC external broadcasting in languages other than English" (p. 121). However, even though the underlying motive of the BBC might be maintaining the British government's hegemonic hold on its colonies, and now former colonies, Browne (2007) asserts that "[t]here is little evidence that external services directed to indigenous minorities have had much success in fomenting rebellion. They often serve to encourage the development or expansion of indigenous language services within the target areas . . ." (p. 122). Again, the BBC's real motive might be using its vast media tentacles to sustain its influence on its erstwhile empires and some other countries of interest, but the collateral advantage of this media hegemony could be the maintenance and/or revitalisation of the indigenous African and other languages the BBC uses.

Despite *BBC News Igbo* not being primarily an Igbo-language promotion medium but a fully digital news medium whose content is published on two main social media platforms: Facebook and Instagram, several studies point to its potentials for language maintenance and revitalisation. One of such studies is Leslie (2016), which is about deploying digital methods, including social media approach, to indigenous language revitalisation. Also, Outakoski *et al.* (2018) note that the “expansion of learning spaces to the realm of social media is an important step in winning new ground and domains for Indigenous languages and culture” (p. 24). As noted earlier, Outakoski *et al* observe that rather than limiting the chances of growth and development of indigenous languages, the new media actually offers them fresh avenues for propagation.

For Sallabank (2010), virtual social networks, which the social media provides and encourages, are essential factors in the maintenance of endangered languages, especially with regard to widely dispersed or diaspora communities. Sallabank’s finding here is noteworthy, especially with particular reference to *BBC News Igbo*. It has been noted earlier that Igbo people are widely dispersed across Nigerian towns and cities, far beyond their regional homestead. They have also formed many diaspora communities around the world. In fact, most of the non-Igbo states around the core Igbo region have Igbo language as a minority language, just as Igbo language is a minority language in another country – Equatorial Guinea. Per Sallabank’s finding, therefore, the power of the digital media to reach minority language speakers or learners dispersed through migration is one that quite strikingly pertains to *BBC News Igbo* as well as Igbo people.

In the same vein, Lackaff and Moner, cited in Abu-Irmies and Al-Khanji (2019, p. 67), state that:

social media introduce a significant opportunity for societies to communicate with each other regardless of the place of residence. In other words, social media platforms permit speakers of indigenous languages to stay connected with each other whether they live in the same area or not.

Lackaff and Moner's assertion above, like Sallabank's before it, further helps to underscore the benefits the digital media hold for minority languages, even if their speakers live in scattered communities. This also stresses the suitability of *BBC News Igbo*, being a digital media organisation, for the revitalisation of Igbo language, especially given that Igbo speakers, despite being mostly concentrated in southeastern Nigeria, are known to travel far and wide across the globe.

Also, Mitra, cited in Cunliffe (2007, p. 145), reports on the effectiveness of using the Internet to create new senses of community where traditional identities (like a people's heritage language) have been disrupted by migration. As has been noted above, and would be seen later in this study, this resonates with the Igbo situation. Mitra's assertion lends credence to the potentials of *BBC News Igbo* to revitalise Igbo language. The fact of being a digital medium equips *BBC News Igbo* with the potentials to effectively reach Igbo people anywhere in the world. It appears to be the remedy for the itinerant nature of Igbo people, which could be one of the reasons behind Igbo language endangerment and gradual descent to extinction.

Mitra has said that the Internet helps to create a sense of communality for language communities that have been scattered by migration, and this represents hope that the myriad Igbo communities outside the core geographic base of the Igbo and even around the world can, through *BBC News Igbo*, reconnect to and commune with their linguistic roots. This, of course, would have immense

benefits for Igbo language, especially in terms of visibility, attitude, intergenerational transmission, and prestige.

From the foregoing, therefore, the new media, when properly deployed, has immense potentials to maintain and revitalise endangered languages, and these potential opportunities have hardly been explored by minority language researchers (Crystal, 2000; see also Buszard-Welcher, 2001; Welcher, 2012; Cunliffe, Morris & Prys, 2013).

### **2.12 *BBC News Igbo* as the New Igbo Public Sphere**

The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere theory was propounded in 1962 by Jürgen Habermas, a German philosopher and sociologist of the famous Frankfurt School. In his theory, Habermas is principally concerned with the building of an ordered, egalitarian, and inclusive society. Therefore, he theorizes the collapse of the seventeenth-century realms of state, court, civil society, and conjugal family's internal space, and the emergency of new realms comprising the political, the world of letters and the "Town" (Habermas, 1962).

The characteristics of the new public sphere had manifested in major European countries in the eighteenth century. In Britain, they found expression in coffee houses. In France, these played out in *salons*, and in Germany, *Tischgesellschaften* (or table societies) were the hosts of the new public sphere. The then public sphere, or the bourgeois public sphere, which Habermas argues should be transformed, was the domain of the feudal powers – "the Church, the prince, and the nobility, who were carriers of the representative publicness" (Habermas, 1962, p. 11).

Habermas posits that the new public sphere, the transformed public sphere, is the platform for the revelation of that which exists, as issues are known to be solidified and made topical when they are subjected to critical discussion among citizens. He believes that the aspiration toward a

rational society (the title of his 1987 book) will be enhanced when issues are openly debated and ideas contested in order for the best to excel and gain essence, what he called the “immortality of fame” ((Habermas, 1962). For clarity, the transformed public sphere is, according to Habermas, “a forum in which the private people come together to form a public, readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion” (Habermas, 1962, pp. 25-26). The public sphere, therefore, is largely about the availability of communicative spaces where private people can take part in shaping the issues of their society, the availability of, as Amiri (1990) puts it, a forum where private people can convene and “discuss issues that concern them and exercise their democratic rights” (p. 29). For Smith (1992), the transformed public sphere is a “literary-critical social space” comprising “socio-spatial locations” where the bourgeois and the noble debated albeit critically and rationally literature and art “within a social structure which was premised on the equality of its protagonists” (p. 182).

Although the public sphere is traceable to the eighteenth-century Britain, France, and Germany, Adut (2012) explains that its contemporary equivalents are physical or virtual spaces that afford citizens the platforms to actively deliberate issues that could potentially engineer the common good, especially in a manner devoid of unnecessary class consciousness. Adut further shows, by citing modern-day scholars, that the public sphere has contemporary relevance. Thus, Baiocchi, Eliasoph, and Alexander, cited in Adut (2012, p. 239) respectively explain the public sphere as “an instance of open-ended and public-spirited communication,” “when people speak public-spiritedly” and “a solidary sphere in which a certain kind of universalizing community comes to be culturally defined and to some degree institutionally enforced.”

Habermas is mainly seen as a political theorist. However, his theory of the public sphere has direct implications for the mass media (see, for instance, Kellner, 2006; Mcguigan, 2005). In

fact, the media, especially in their undiluted and undistorted forms, could easily be seen as the means to achieving a vibrant, viable public sphere in any given society. In the bourgeois public sphere, the coffee houses, the *salons*, and the *Tischgesellschaften* served as institutions where public opinions on topical issues of the society were mined. Not just this, members of the bourgeois public sphere, in order not to keep their ideas to themselves, sought to reach out to the rest of the society. Habermas suggests that *Diskurse der Mahlern*, which he describes as “a moral weekly,” was published for this purpose in Zurich in 1721 (Habermas, 1962, p. 37).

Amiri (1990, p. 10) notes that one of the pillars of the public sphere theory is its emphasis on the essential role that the media play in the formation of public opinion and in publicity, whether “critical” or “manufactured.” This corroborates the quest by the public sphere, although mainly constituting different circles of people, to make use of the press in publicizing the outcomes of its critical debates. Amiri states that the “critical tradition” of the realm of the literary public sphere, especially scholarly journals, which primarily sought to address “the small circle of educated people, was carried into the daily press . . .” (p. 10). He adds that Habermas has also suggested that in the new public sphere, the press, which hitherto served as the vehicle for the transmission and amplification of the “rational-critical” debates of the public sphere, would be transformed. His reason is that commercial considerations and public relations have eroded press freedom and open debate (Mcguigan, 2005).

Habermas may not have specifically theorized the new technologies, as Kellner (2006) notes, but the public sphere theory has been hailed as dynamic (see, for instance, Amiri, 1990). Therefore, other scholars have successfully pushed its boundaries to accommodate contemporary trends in globalization and new technologies. Kellner (2006), for instance, argues that following the present-day, high-tech societies, the public sphere is significantly being expanded and redefined

beyond Habermas. For Keller, therefore, the public sphere has come to be conceived as “a site of information, discussion, contestation, political struggle, and organization that includes the broadcasting media and new cyberspaces as well as the face-to-face interactions of everyday life” (p. 18).

Today, therefore, the various organs of the media, viz. television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the new media outlets, pass as the new functional public spheres for “debate, discussion, and information”; Kellner adds that whoever wants to get the attention of the public, whoever wants to get involved in public affairs, and whoever wants to reach the people where they are “should make use of these technologies and develop communication politics and new media projects” (p. 18). Kellner further points out that the new public spheres – media, computer, and information technologies – are critical to advancing politics and culture, especially of the future.

Adrian Rauchfleisch and Marko Kovic are other researchers who seek to understand online communication through the lens of the public sphere theory. Therefore, in their research, “The Internet and Generalized Functions of the Public Sphere: Transformative Potentials from a Comparative Perspective,” they question whether the features of the Internet, mainly social media, do contribute to the public sphere. This stretched the usual thoughts on the public sphere theory. In doing so, they identified four general functions of the public sphere to be identity building, agenda-setting, control and criticism, and deliberation (Rauchfleisch and Kovic, 2016). They add that though the Internet contributes to the functions of the public sphere, owing to some variables such as internet penetration rate, civil liberties, and media freedom, the Internet does not contribute equally to all of the generalized functions of the new public spheres.

To theorize the existence of an ancient public sphere in Igboland, a peep into the novel, *Things Fall Apart*, authored by Chinua Achebe, is necessary. The events of *Things Fall Apart* show that the pre-colonial Igbo was a well-ordered, admirably administered, and socio-economically and politically viable society. In his book, written in 1958, four years before Jürgen Habermas wrote *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Achebe talks about the pre-colonial Igbo culture and government in depth.

Asakitikpi and Akujobi (2009), in their analysis of *Things Fall Apart*, observe that the pre-colonial Igbo was characterized by a political system with rather unique democratic principles. The researchers state that the spiritual, the elders, and the religious cults effectively ran the pre-colonial Igbo society. They add that “these three major arms served as a check and balance system whereby the dead ancestors and the gods checked the living to ensure that vices such as laziness, brutality against members of the society and indebtedness were not encouraged” (p. 16).

The pre-colonial Igbo, therefore, was a democratic society. Through the various institutions of the society mentioned above, laws were created by consensus. Accordingly, the people had no problem obeying the laws. When the laws were broken by either omission or commission, appropriate punishments were served. The different clans that made up the Igbo were equitably represented during festivals and sporting events. Anybody who had something to say was given the opportunity to do so, except for certain people who had been barred by the law of the land from participating in the affairs of the society.

The pre-colonial Igbo also had effective communication systems. Asakitikpi and Akujobi (2009) state that, in *Things Fall Apart*, the various media and channels of communication were widely used in sundry communication settings. The researchers list these forms of communication as the

town crier, *ekwe* or talking drum, clan meetings, story-telling, gossip, and the oracles. Therefore, like the eighteenth-century European cities that Habermas talks about in the public sphere theory, the pre-colonial Igbo equally had an admirably run representative government.

The pre-colonial Igbo had a viable public sphere. For instance, like the interplay between the Habermasian public sphere and the press, there was a symbiotic relationship between the Igbo public sphere and its traditional media outlets. In the Habermasian public sphere, the critical debates, discussions, and consensus filtered to the press or were passed to the press to be widely publicized. In the same vein, the *ilo* or village square, age-grade meetings, and the *obi* or central building also served as the brewing grounds for what found its ways to the forms of communication with wider reach in the pre-colonial Igbo society. Thus, the *ilo*, *obi*, and the age grade were for the Igbo what the coffee houses, the *salons*, and the *Tischgesellschaften* were for the eighteenth-century Britain, France, and Germany, respectively. Thus, while the coffee houses, the *salons*, and the *Tischgesellschaften* were the institutions of the Habermasian public sphere, the *ilo*, the *obi*, and the age grade were the institutions of the Igbo public sphere. Matters that had been keenly debated, contested, and endorsed here found their ways or were passed to the pre-colonial Igbo press, which were the town crier, *ekwe* or talking drum, clan meetings, story-telling, and the oracles.

Sadly, while Habermas was championing the transformation of the European public spheres, Achebe was lamenting the erosion, through colonialism, of the Igbo public sphere by the Europeans, who imposed an alien culture on the people. Citing wa Thing'o, Asakitikpi and Akujobi (2009) write that the Western missionaries and colonialists embarked on a rechristening adventure that not only damaged indigenous African languages but also usurped the beliefs and

knowledge of the people. The introduction of the modern press, for instance, largely rendered the traditional Igbo communication systems moribund.

Consequently, only a few Igbo people who had taken to the white man's ways and had learnt English language could use the modern press. This resulted to widespread alienation of the majority of Igbo people who had no material means of accessing the modern press. Even if they could access the Western press, most Igbo people at the time did not understand English language. Fundamentally, the introduction of the Western press in Igboland effectively destroyed the thriving, highly effective Igbo public sphere and traditional press.

Fortunately, there is today, *BBC News Igbo*. It is a digital news media organization that publishes in Igbo language only. *BBC News Igbo* typically shares its stories on Facebook and Instagram. Although it is not officially an Igbo language revitalisation organ, the facts of publishing in Igbo language, targeting the youth, and focusing on Igbo people's values, customs, and beliefs (Ibekwe, 2019) mean that it provides a socio-cultural, economic, and political ecosystem for the Igbo. It is a veritable marketplace of ideas and a cultural hub of some sort for Igbo people.

When weighed side by side with the concept of the Habermasian public sphere, *BBC News Igbo* might well be the twenty-first-century public sphere of the Igbo. For instance, Habermas has posited that the transformed public sphere is the platform for the revelation of that which exists: the hub for solidifying topical issues through critical discussion. In the same vein, *BBC News Igbo*, by its nature and operations, meets Baiocchi's explanation of the public sphere as "an instance of open-ended and public-spirited communication"; it also meets Eliasoph's explication of the public sphere as instances of people speaking "public-spiritedly," and it obviously meets Alexander's exposition of the public sphere as "a solidary sphere in which a certain kind of

universalizing community comes to be culturally defined and to some degree institutionally enforced” (Adut, 2012, p. 239).

Keller’s (2006, p. 18) conception of the public sphere as “a site of information, discussion, contestation, political struggle, and organization that includes the broadcasting media and new cyberspaces as well as the face-to-face interactions of everyday life” also emphatically endorses *BBC News Igbo* as a veritable public sphere to its users.

Therefore, if *BBC News Igbo* is likened to the present-day public sphere of the Igbo, the social media platforms it publishes its contents on would serve as both its institutions and publicity outlets – the social media, of course, serves as both a source of information and an information-sharing outlet. As Keller quite aptly reflects, *BBC News Igbo*, itself a cyberspace, has provided a suitable site of information where a large number of Igbo people meet virtually to discuss issues (often using Igbo language) affecting them, contest the validity of different arguments, and generally shape public opinion and policies on their socio-cultural, political, and economic affairs. It is left to see how the nature and operations of *BBC News Igbo* translate to realistic outcomes with specific regard to the revitalisation of Igbo language.

### **2.13 Conclusion**

In conclusion, linguistics, socio-linguistics, mass media, and new media literature has been reviewed in this chapter. Therefore, the chapter has addressed the meaning of language endangerment as well as language revitalisation. It also delved into the question of Igbo language endangerment: is Igbo endangered or not? Literature showed that Igbo language is, true to the UNESCO prediction, endangered. However, its extent of endangerment is thus far not fatal. Its extent of recession will become fatal, though, if effective measures are not taken to revitalise it.

The chapter also reviewed the root causes of Igbo language endangerment such as colonialism that gave Igbo people the now more prestigious English language and implicitly gave rise to the lingering Igbo language orthography controversy. There are also the adverse effects of the Nigerian Civil War, which made some hitherto Igbo language communities to deny being Igbo, thus foisting a negative attitude on the language. The war also exacerbated migration among the Igbo, which, again, dealt a deathblow to Igbo language.

The role of the mass media in language revitalisation was also reviewed in this chapter. And although the mainstream mass media have the powers to revitalise an endangered language, issues like the political economy of minority languages, economy of scale, and audience preferences have often made minority-language content in the media to either be shunned completely or relegated to the background. The effect of this on Igbo language is that the mainstream media have failed to encourage sufficient use of the language, so they have failed to strengthen Igbo language. This situation was what gave rise to Fishman's media fetish, an instance of wishing unrealistic powers on the media to revitalise a language that the audience, for social, political, and economic reasons, has rejected or does not take pride in. This situation has made most efforts to revitalise minority languages to shift to the more recent, easily accessible, and comparatively cheaper new media, which also has the added advantage of appealing to the younger generations of minority language users. This, of course, ensures intergenerational transmission of a minority language that finds its way to the digital media, especially the social media.

Digital language divide, however, means that the powerful majority languages of the world have continued their dominance in the legacy media even in the new media. Despite this, the advantages of the new media enumerated above ensure that in spite of the ubiquity of the world's

majority languages on the Internet, the minority languages still manage to create their own breathing spaces. The chapter reviewed sundry examples of minority languages that exploited the digital media space and recorded immense benefits in terms of attitude, prestige, appeal to young people, documentation, language transfer, and domain expansion. All these are key indices of language health and maintenance, which point to the fact that the digital media, despite the gulf between the majority and the minority languages in it, holds enormous opportunity for the revitalisation of minority languages. The relationship between the public sphere and *BBC News Igbo* was also established. *BBC News Igbo*, like the Habermasean public sphere, has provided an ideal site for democratic communications in Igbo language by the Igbo, and for the Igbo. The study will then examine how the discussions, debates, and criticisms that take place in *BBC News Igbo* in Igbo language have impacted the revitalisation of Igbo language.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Introduction

This study explores the impact of *BBC News Igbo* on the revitalisation of Igbo language. Thus, this chapter analyses one theory upon which the study is anchored and a conceptual model related to it. They are David Crystal's Theory of Language Revitalisation and Joshua Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), respectively. Crystal's theory offers the indices for revitalising an endangered language, and Fishman's model provides the metrics for evaluating the degree of language shift. Therefore, GIDS provides the measures for assessing the degree of Igbo language endangerment, and Crystal's theory represents some of the preconditions needed to reverse Igbo language shift. In addition, they both hold that an endangered language can be conditionally revitalised, so they offer hope that Igbo language can be revitalised.

#### 3.2 David Crystal's Theory of Language Revitalisation

In his 2000 book entitled *Language Death*, David Crystal, a British linguist, emphasizes the importance of language maintenance and revitalisation. The book is a valuable treatise on the contextual understanding of language death, the critical need to preserve linguistic diversity, and the ways this can be achieved. Crystal (2000) writes that languages are endangered because of a sequence of events that comes in three broad stages:

- a) "The first is immense pressure on the people to speak the dominant language – pressure that can come from political, social, or economic sources" (p. 78).

b) The second is “a period of bilingualism, as people become increasingly efficient in their new language while still retaining competence in their old” (p. 79).

c) Then there is “the third stage, in which the younger generation becomes increasingly proficient in the new language, identifying more with it, and finding their first language less relevant to their new needs” (p. 79).

Crystal explains that the underlying factors, usually global forces, of the first stage are impossible to influence, and for most languages, the third stage is usually too late. Therefore, “it is the second stage – the stage of emergent bilingualism – where there is a real chance to make progress” (Crystal, 2000, p. 79).

On what could be done specifically to halt a language in decline, Crystal (2000, pp. 130-144) puts forward a six-postulate theory of language revitalisation. Here are the six postulates:

1. ***“An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their prestige within the dominant community”*** (p. 130):

According to Crystal, this is about visibility and public profile. It is about speakers of an endangered language making the presence of their language felt. They are enjoined to explore opportunities in the media to make their language noticed – to avail themselves of the chances they can muster to gain access to the media. This could be via regular newspaper columns in the language or one in the dominant language provided that the column is aimed at promoting the endangered language. Speakers of an endangered language can also promote their

language through intermittent radio and/or television programmes, as these programmes would give the language visibility and raise its public profile.

2. ***“An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their wealth relative to the dominant community”*** (p. 132):

This is about the fact that language revitalisation needs money to be successful. Specifically, Crystal argues that raising the socio-political and linguistic profile of an endangered language requires funds, which can only come from a rich environment. Therefore, if the endangered community has extractive and service industries, its economy would grow, and it would be able to fund its language maintenance endeavours. However, as it concerns language revitalisation, the extractive industries might be counterproductive because of the practice of foreign companies coming to mine resources with expatriates, who mostly live in the indigenous community for a long period of time and could pose an unwanted foreign influence. It is the service industries, according to Crystal, that hold immense benefits for endangered languages. Tourism, for instance, exposes many foreigners to an endangered language, thus elevating its profile. Interestingly, there is no fear of the tourists constituting a threatening presence to an endangered language, because they usually come from diverse linguistic origins as well as visit at a particular period of the year.

2. ***“An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community”*** (p. 133):

This is principally concerned with legislations that would enhance the status of endangered languages. Speakers of an endangered language are enjoined to explore every legitimate means of getting the government to promulgate laws that would translate to increased recognition and use of their language. Among other examples, Crystal cites that of the 1991 Law on Languages of the Russian Federation that accorded all languages the status of a national property with the protection of the state. Therefore, individuals and groups looking to revitalise an endangered language should initiate and sustain pressure on governments – international, national, local – as the case may be, in order to push for the legislation and implementation of their language rights.

4. ***“An endangered language will progress if its speakers have a strong presence in the educational system”*** (p. 136):

Here Crystal talks about the home and the school system. While the benefits of intergenerational transmission that mostly take place at home cannot be over-emphasised, the school system, particularly primary and secondary, should not be ignored. It is pertinent to note that Crystal is not advocating that endangered languages should be the primary media of instruction, and this is because most endangered languages lose that domain to the dominant languages. Instead, it is about education authorities permitting the use of endangered languages in certain social occasions that are often mediated through schools such as religious events, cultural events, sports events, and allied activities, which are wont to increase the pupils’ confidence in as well as foster their awareness of the languages. Crystal also notes that a broader understanding of the educational system would include

the different kinds of adult education that typically take place in local halls, community-based programmes, informal apprenticeships, in-service courses, and sundry other activities designed to raise awareness of endangered languages.

5. *“An endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language down”* (p. 138):

Although this could come under general education, Crystal explains that the importance of literacy to language-revitalisation endeavours has earned it a separate section. It is generally helpful for language maintenance, but more so when an endangered language cannot be passed on from one generation to the other as the first language in the home domain. This is, however, not the only reason for writing down an endangered language, because there are other ways of ensuring enduring preservation of the language such as audio and video recordings. Literacy is different in its contributions to language maintenance because it is a unique intellectual activity that should be undertaken by linguists trained for it. Crystal adds that it involves “an analysis of the way the sound system of the language works, so that the most efficient form of spelling system can be devised, and the preparation of materials to aid learning, in the form of dictionaries, grammars, and other manuals” (p. 139). The process of achieving literacy also comes with some challenges that can further hamper the maintenance of a language. For instance, in a multi-dialect community, which dialect or group of dialects will be the written form? What will happen to the rest of the dialects? In general, this process is bound to result in one orthography standardisation dispute or the other. Therefore, care should be taken to avoid igniting conflicts

that would deny endangered languages the benefits of literacy. If the multi-dialects issues and the process of evolving their written form(s) are handled creatively, they could lead to more linguistic diversity, a much-desired language maintenance element that Crystal advocates.

6. *“An endangered language will progress if its speakers can make use of electronic technology”* (p. 141):

Crystal asserts that the point of an endangered language making progress if its speakers use electronic technology is hypothetical, because many of the endangered languages are yet to have access to information technology, especially the Internet, or even electricity. However, for an endangered language that has achieved literacy, access to electronic technologies means access to sundry novel opportunities to thrive. One of these benefits, of course, is the prospect of increasing the public profile of the language, given that the Internet is a relatively inexpensive means of elevating the social, political, and linguistic profile of an endangered language, the type that comes from the rather luxurious traditional print and broadcast media. For context, the traditional media are often out of the reach of minority languages. The Internet is, however, the leveler, which despite some service providers' attempted repression of certain languages, grants all languages equal opportunities. To paraphrase one of Crystal's examples on this, the cost of procuring a Web page to write in Spanish is not higher than the cost of getting one to write in English language. Crystal also articulates the other benefit of access to the Internet of an endangered language as making the language widely visible and accessible, so that even members of the endangered

community dispersed through migration can access and maintain linguistic identity with the rest of their community. Another benefit of having an endangered language on the Web is the chance to utilise the “steady growth in computer-assisted self-study materials” (p. 143). Conversely, Aikhenvald (2002), who reviewed Crystal’s *Language Death*, notes that this hypothesis “is hard to accept” (p. 444) on the grounds that access to the Internet and other electronic services automatically exposes speakers of a language to a high degree of globalisation that would greatly threaten their language. One must point out, however, that Crystal in commenting on the knowledge-management aspect of information technology, addresses the negative effects globalisation could have on endangered languages. He states that the notion of localisation – “the adaption of a product to suit a target language and culture” (p. 143) – has made steady progress to the extent of having the status of an industry, as exemplified by the formation of the Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA). Crystal, who clarifies the basic difference between localisation on one hand and globalisation and internalisation on the other hand, argues, by the definition above, that the steady growth of localisation should help to check the negative impact of globalisation and internationalisation on endangered languages. Accordingly, Crystal avers strong conviction that electronic technologies, although they have been clearly under-utilised in this respect, have immense potentials to revitalise an endangered language.

Are (2015) hails Crystal’s theory as practical and significant because it is a product of actual interventions toward reversing language shifts across different parts of the world.

Comparing Crystal's theory to Fishman's Reversing Language Shift, which is contained in his 1991 book entitled *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*, Masruddin (2018) observes that Crystal views language revitalisation as a battle to be fought actively on several fronts all at once. Unlike the GIDS, which should be used as a precursor for language revitalisation endeavours, Crystal's theory cannot be read as a series – meaning that the six postulates are not graded. Masruddin adds that this is a good feature, if the people concerned with language revitalisation have enough money. This attribute of the theory could also be its major strength, since each endangered language has its peculiar situation. So, the implication for language revitalisation campaigners of the non-graded, non-series nature of the postulates of Crystal's theory is that they can choose one or a set of the postulates to deploy depending on the stage, nature, or level of shift of their language of interest. All six postulates must not necessarily be met for an endangered language to be reversed.

### **3.3 Joshua Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS)**

Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) is principally concerned with the importance of the domains of usage to the health of a language. The GIDS, therefore, rates the ethnolinguistic vitality of an endangered language from the most, or stage 8, to the least, or stage 1 (Coles, 1994). It spells out the eight-stage typology of languages in distress occasioned by use or lack of use in certain useful and expected domains. A summary of GIDS is shown in the table below.

**Table 3.1: Joshua Fishman's GIDS**

GIDS Level	Description
1.	The language is used in education, work, mass media, government at the nationwide level.
2.	The language is used for local and regional mass media and governmental services.
3.	The language is used for local and regional work by both insiders and outsiders.
4.	Literacy in the language is transmitted through education.
5.	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form throughout the community.
6.	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.
7.	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it with their elders but is not transmitting it to their children.
8.	The only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.

**Source:** Fishman (1991)

Fishman's GIDS is an eight-level evaluative means of ascertaining "where a language is on this scale of disruption from full use by many users to no use by any users" (Lewis and Simons, 2010, p. 105). It is further categorized into two broad continuums. Levels 1-4 are the "strong side," and Levels 5-8 represent "the weak side." Fishman counsels that linguists embarking on reversing language shift (RLS) should first focus on the weak side, or safe side in broad terms. Thonus (1993) notes that Fishman had used the Maori language as an example to warn against paying attention to the strong side (or vulnerable side in broad terms) first as that would amount to impeding a primary goal of reversing language shift. To effectively reverse language shift, therefore, resources meant to encourage language use should be concentrated on "intimate and small domains before confronting media, work spheres, and governmental contexts" (Coles,

1994, p. 118). Part of Fishman's reasons for preferring that RLS efforts should be focused on the lower side is the need to circumvent the possible pushback from the dominant language community (Kaufmann, 2008).

Stage 6 is considered as the most crucial. It is the tipping point of all the other inter-related stages: the point from which an upward or downward movement of language shift would decide whether it is safe or vulnerable respectively. According to Kaufmann (2008), if the other stages do not culminate in Stage 6, they might not be effective. For Fishman, therefore, "if this stage [Stage 6] is not satisfied, all else can amount to little more than biding time" (Fishman, 1990, p. 21). Explicating the core of Stage 6 further, Fishman notes that it is essentially characterized by "family-home-neighborhood-community" reinvigoration as the core of transmission (Fishman, 1991, p. 161). Additionally, Lewis and Simons (2010) write that Level 6 of the GIDS is critical because a language that is at that level and is tending toward Level 5 is developing, but a language that is at Level 6 but is moving toward Level 7 is vulnerable. It means that the language that tends toward Level 7 from Level 6 is suffering a shift. Level 6 is, indeed, a critical point in assessing the vitality or endangerment of a language, which is in turn crucial in determining the revival, revitalisation, or maintenance efforts to apply to the language.

Kaufmann (2008, p. 2432) puts forward the three extents of language endangerment, according to Fishman, as language revival (language shift that has been completed), language revitalisation (language shift that is well advanced), and language maintenance (language shift that has just begun). Likewise, since language maintenance alone in this sense would naturally entail a different regenerative scheme, Fishman advises that, depending on the extent of shift, language revitalisation should normally start with Stages 7 or 6, while language revival should commence with Stage 8 (Kaufmann, 2008).

It is important to point out that Crystal's language revitalisation theory, like Fishman's GIDS model, is not without evaluative stages. The theory enunciates a three-stage assessments, viz. immense political, social, or economic pressure to speak the dominant language, a period of bilingualism, and the stage of emergent bilingualism (Crystal, 2000), which should precede any meaningful revitalisation efforts and guide individuals or groups undertaking language revitalisation. However, GIDS is more encompassing. Therefore, using Crystal's rather broad assessment criteria alongside Fishman's more detailed endangerment evaluation would make for more accuracy and reliability.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Essentially, therefore, Crystal's language revitalisation theory and Fishman's GIDS conceptual model for reversing language shift are largely complementary functionally. The GIDS provide parameters for evaluating the extent of shift of a language and Crystal's theory provides the criteria for reversing the shift. GIDS is applicable to language revival, language revitalisation, and language maintenance, but Crystal's theory tends to focus more on language revitalisation, hence the advice to language revitalisers to target the third stage of the evaluative criteria and implement any of the six postulates they deem applicable to the peculiar situation of the concerned minority language.

For the purpose of this study, therefore, the language behaviours of *BBC News Igbo* users gleaned from data for the study will be analysed using GIDS to ascertain the current level of Igbo language endangerment. Similarly, four research questions that have implications for Crystal's language revitalisation theory were framed. It is, therefore, hoped that the line of

inquiry will reveal how many of the theory's axioms *BBC News Igbo* empirically confers on Igbo language and their implications for the revitalisation of the language.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter details the nature of the study and the methods the researcher employed to access, collect, collate, and analyse data needed to answer the research questions. Therefore, the chapter explains the study's paradigm, approach, population and sample size, content categories, units of analysis, sampling procedures, methods of data collection, instruments and instrumentation, and methods of data analysis. The study explores the impact of *BBC News Igbo*, a digital media outlet, on the revitalisation of Igbo language. To achieve this objective, the researcher put forward the following questions:

1. To what extent has *BBC News Igbo* enhanced Igbo language prestige among its audience?
2. To what extent has *BBC News Igbo* encouraged the acquisition of Igbo language skills among its audience?
3. What are the prevalent orthographies in *BBC News Igbo* reports?
4. How do the *BBC News Igbo* audiences' age, gender, and educational status shape their assessment of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language?

#### 4.2 Research Paradigm

A paradigm generally entails the series of beliefs that informs what a researcher should study, how a researcher should go about the study, and the techniques of interpreting the results of the study. Per Mackenzie and Knipe (2006), a paradigm embodies the researcher's worldview, and

in explaining the word “worldview,” with respect to research paradigms, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) note that it “is the perspective, or thinking, or school of thought, or set of shared beliefs, that informs the meaning or interpretation of research data” (p. 26). Over all, a research paradigm can be positivist, interpretivist, critical, or pragmatic. This research, however, rests on the philosophy of practicality and pluralism or the belief that appropriate methods of research – quantitative and qualitative – should be combined to investigate a phenomenon of interest (see, for instance, Alise & Teddlie, 2010; Biesta, 2010) called the pragmatic paradigm.

This paradigm focuses on the real behaviours of participants, the beliefs behind those behaviours, and the likely consequences of the behaviours. It, therefore, advocates a relational epistemology, a non-singular reality ontology, a mixed-methods methodology, and a value-laden axiology (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 35). Therefore, the pragmatic paradigm provides the philosophical foundation for the mixed methods research as a practical, realistic means of making sense of human behaviour.

### **4.3 Research Approach**

The research approach adopted for the study is the mixed-method approach, otherwise known as triangulation. This strategy entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2003). More specifically, this approach is used for studies that integrate quantitative and qualitative research within a single project (Bryman, 2012).

As Webb, Campbell, Swartz, and Sechrest (1966) put it, although there are several reasons why researchers may want to adopt a multi-method strategy, confidence in findings of a study that uses quantitative research method can be improved by adopting a couple other ways of measuring a concept. Accordingly, Bryman (2012, p. 634) notes some of the other reasons for

adopting a mixed methods research approach as greater validity, credibility, completeness, different research questions, and diversity of views.

To collect rich enough data and arrive at valid and credible findings, data for the study were collected quantitatively and qualitatively. The qualitative methods used were content analysis and interview, and the quantitative method employed was Web survey.

#### **4.3.1 *Qualitative Content Analysis***

Bryman and Bell (2003) describe qualitative content analysis as a design that entails the searching-out of essential themes in the materials one is analyzing. However, in “Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis,” Hsieh and Shannon (2005) identify three approaches to qualitative content analysis. They are conventional content analysis, in which coding categories are derived directly from the text data; directed approach, in which analysis starts with a theory or relevant research findings as guidance for initial codes; and summative content analysis, in which counting and comparisons of keywords or content is usually followed by the interpretation of the underlying context (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1277). The researcher found the summative approach to qualitative content analysis more suitable for this study because of the need to first count and record the frequency of the manifest content of comments made on *BBC News Igbo* stories before interpreting its underlying contexts. Data collected through the qualitative content analysis helped to provide information on *BBC News Igbo* audiences’ attitude to Igbo language, which in turn showed whether they found the language prestigious as well as the degree of prestige they accorded it.

### **4.3.2 Qualitative Interview**

Qualitative interview is typically unstructured or semi-structured, and it is “meant to be flexible and seek out the world views of research participants” (Bryman, 2012, p. 498). The unstructured interview typically involves the researcher having conversations with interviewees and generating questions in response to the interviewees’ narration. This type of interview has no predefined theoretical framework and thus no hypotheses and questions about the social realities under investigation (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). On the other hand, the semi-structured interview refers to a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that serve mainly as an interview schedule, as the interviewer is at liberty to vary the sequence of questions as well as ask follow-up questions when interviewees give significant replies that warrant this (Bryman, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the semi-structured interview was preferred over the unstructured interview because of its flexibility, which gave the researcher the latitude to ask the sampled participants further questions related to the interview guide. Responses garnered from the qualitative interview provided data for the research question bordering on the prevalent orthographies in *BBC News Igbo* reports.

### **4.3.3 Web Survey**

Web surveys, according to Bryman (2012, p. 671), “operate by inviting prospective respondents to visit a website at which the questionnaire can be found and completed online.” The researcher considered this quite suitable for the study because *BBC News Igbo* is a digital media organization that users could access from any parts of the world. Using a Web survey therefore meant that the researcher could effectively reach *BBC News Igbo* audience across the globe. This method yielded the bulk of the data for the study. As a result, data from the method exclusively

provided information on whether *BBC News Igbo* audiences' sex, age, and educational qualifications influenced their assessment of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language. The data were also triangulated with data collected from the qualitative content analysis and the qualitative interview, and the resultant findings cut across the rest of the research questions.

#### **4.4 Study Period**

The researcher analysed *BBC News Igbo* stories published from 1-31 August 2020. This period is important because it was the period *BBC News Igbo* became two years, as it was established on 19 August 2018. The researcher chose to study the impact of *BBC News Igbo* on the revitalisation of Igbo language two years after the media platform was established because two years was enough for the organisation to be well established, to attract a sizable following, and to standardize its programming.

#### **4.5 Population, Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

The population, sampling technique, and sample size of each of the three methods triangulated in this study are detailed below.

##### **4.5.1 Qualitative Content Analysis**

The population of the qualitative content analysis were all the *BBC News Igbo* stories published on Facebook in August 2020 and the comments and meta-comments made on them. Although *BBC News Igbo* also posts its stories on Instagram, Facebook was preferred because it is the most trafficked and most popular networking site (Ogunnike, 2015, Emmanouilidou, 2014) with one in ten people, including minority language speakers, using it (Huaman & Stokes, 2011). This

is also true with *BBC News Igbo*, which had far more followers on Facebook (1,317,325 as at 17 April 2022) than it had on Instagram (190,000 on the same date).

The total number of stories *BBC News Igbo* published in August 2020 was 176, and the total number of comments and meta-comments made on the stories was 71,164. These were the number of stories, comments, and meta-comments as at 25 March 2021 when the stories were listed and sampled. To ascertain the Igbo dialect bloc (dominant orthography) used in *BBC News Igbo* stories, the researcher analysed eight of the stories – two stories each from the four broad genres of *BBC News Igbo* stories identified through an initial ethnographic study of its programming. The genres were live video, pictorial question, pre-recorded video, and written story. The researcher chose eight stories because, added to similar data from the interviews, they would be enough to establish the prevalent Igbo dialect bloc in *BBC News Igbo*.

To analyse comments and meta-comments aimed at determining the language with which they were written, the presence of code-switching and transliteration in them, their subject matter, and the type of Igbo orthography used in them, the researcher chose one story each from the two stories sampled per genre, making four stories. The total number of comments and meta-comments derived from the four sampled stories was 23,632. After further sampling, which saw the researcher analyse 500 comments per sampled story, with the exception of pictorial question and written story genres that had 455 and 177 comments respectively, the number of comments and meta-comments became 1,632. Out of this number, 89 comments and meta-comments were voided because they were either Web links, emoticons, emojis, advertisements, or tags. Therefore, the total number of comments and meta-comments the researcher analysed was 1,543.

To arrive at that sample size, the researcher made a list of all the *BBC News Igbo* stories published in August 2020 and purposively selected eight stories for analysis. To select the eight stories, all the stories were grouped into the four broad story genres in *BBC News Igbo*: live video, pictorial question, pre-recorded video, and written story. Two stories with the highest comments in each of the genres were then selected for analysis, making eight stories. The eight stories were further divided into two categories. The first category consisted of the stories with the highest number of comments from each genre, and the second category consisted of stories with the second highest number of comments from each genre. That amounted to four stories per category. Then the texts, comments, and meta-comments of the stories in the first category were analysed, but only the texts of the stories in the second category were analysed.

In the pictorial question and written story genres, however, the stories selected were not the ones with the highest comments. The story with the highest comments in the pictorial question genre was entitled “*Kedu aha Igbo kachasi too ogologo I ma? Kosisochukwunobikanma, dgz. Tinye nke gi* [What is the longest Igbo name you know? *Kosisochukwunobikanma*. Add your own],” which had 725 comments. Next was “*Kedu ihe unu na-akpo ihe a n’obodo unu* [What do you call this in your community?],” which had 716 comments. There was also “*O buru na i nwe nkeji 30 iricha ihe niile di n’efere a, onye ka i ga-akpo* [If you had 30 minutes to eat everything in this place, whom would you call?],” with 598 comments, and then came “*Jiri naani out (sic) mkpuruokwu kwuo ihe kacha agu ndu gi aguu ugbua. Nwanne ginị kacha di gi mkpa ugbua? Ekwula otutu okwu. Kwuo ya gbowam* [Use only one word to say what you need most right now. Do not talk too much. Just name it!],” with, again, 598 comments. The one common feature among these stories was that they were not suitable for the elicitation of the kind of discourses that would provide data for the content categories; commenters on these stories were directly or

indirectly asked or required to provide only one-word responses. For that reason, the researcher selected the story with the fifth highest comments (455) entitled “*Gini bu ‘Feminist’ n’Igbo? BBC News Igbo - O kwa a na-ekwu na Igbo akuwaala 'slate'. Ngwa gini ka 'feminist' putara n'asusu anyi* [What is ‘Feminist’ in Igbo?].” This story was selected because the word “feminist” hardly exists as one word in Igbo language, so commenters were unlikely to give one-word responses. Also, because the Igbo society is largely patriarchal, feminism and issues around it are often contentious. Therefore, the researcher reasoned that commenters were wont to be interested in the story, and it would generate discursive comments rich enough to provide the needed data for the content categories of interest. For the written story genre, the story with the highest comments (387) was entitled “*Chioma Uzodimma, bu nwunye Hope Uzodimma, zutere makwa nabata Oluomachi dika nwa ya n'ubochi gara aga* [Chioma Uzodimma, wife of Hope Uzodimma, met and welcomed Oluomachi as her child recently].” However, while the story had 387 on 25 March 2021 when all the *BBC News Igbo* stories were listed for sampling, it had no comments on 23 October 2021 when the researcher went back to it for analysis. Therefore, the story that hitherto had the second highest comments (177) was then selected for analysis; it is entitled “*Lee ihe Senator Enyi Abaribe nwere ikwu maka ogbaghara mere n'Emene, Enugu* [See what Senator Enyi Abaribe has to say on the crisis that happened at Emene, Enugu].”

#### **4.5.2 Web Survey**

The population of the Web survey were all the *BBC News Igbo* commenters who had responded to its stories published in August 2020. The criterion for selection of the survey respondents was being a *BBC News Igbo* audience member who had commented on any of the sampled stories. The population was roughly 71,164, being the number of comments and meta-comments made on all the stories. However, to get an accurate number of commenters, the number of repeated

comments and comments made by *BBC News Igbo* would have to be deducted from the total number of commenters. The researcher did this for the sampled comments and meta-comments. The total number of commenters on the four stories with the highest number of comments sampled for the qualitative content analysis was 23,632, but only the first 500 commenters from each of the stories were sent the questionnaire. This should have brought the total number of the survey respondents to 2,000. However, for stories in which the commenters were not up to 500, the questionnaire was sent to all the available commenters. Comments and meta-comments in pictorial question and written story genres were 455 and 177 respectively, and that brought the total number of sampled commenters to 1,632. After deducting 104 (80 for pictorial question and 24 for written story), being the number of prospective respondents whose Facebook Messenger accounts were inactive, the number of people commenting for a second time or more in one story, and the number of comments made by *BBC News Igbo*, the total number of commenters whom the researcher sent the questionnaire to became 1,528. It was possible for the researcher to get 500 commenters each for live video and pre-recorded video genres because they had well over 500 commenters, so invalid commenters (that is prospective respondents whose Facebook Messenger accounts were inactive, people commenting for a second time or more in one story, and comments made by *BBC News Igbo*) were replaced by other commenters. Finally, out of the 1,528 commenters sent the questionnaire, 125 participants filled it and returned to the researcher.

The researcher's choice of 500 commenters per sampled story was informed by the rather huge numbers of some of the comments. For instance, the story with the highest number of comments in the pre-recorded genre had 14,000 while the story with the highest comments in the live video genre had 9,000. The researcher did not have enough of the excessively long time it would have taken to contact and send the link to the questionnaire to such a massive number of people.

### **4.5.3 Semi-structured Interview**

The population of the interviewees were all the *BBC News Igbo* presenters/producers, and all Igbo language enthusiasts who actively promoted the use of Igbo language on the Internet, or people whose academic research interest was in Igbo language. The researcher sought the interviewees' expert opinions on *BBC News Igbo* potentials to revitalise Igbo language, the Igbo dialect bloc *BBC News Igbo* uses, and the lingering Igbo dialects controversy and how *BBC News Igbo* negotiates it. The sample size was six, comprising three *BBC News Igbo* presenters/producers and three Igbo language enthusiasts. The researcher considered six interviewees adequate because qualitative interviews yield rich, in-depth data.

To arrive at the sample for the semi-structured interview, the researcher used purposive sampling. First, the editor of *BBC News Igbo* was contacted and intimated about the study. Thereafter, the researcher visited the Facebook page of *BBC News Igbo* (@BBCnewsIgbo), read and viewed some of its stories as well as made a list of some of its presenters/producers whose bylines came up quite repeatedly. Since the criterion for inclusion in the interview was simply being a *BBC News Igbo* presenter/producer, three presenters/producers whose bylines featured more prominently were contacted through their Facebook Messenger accounts. The researcher then explained the objective of the study to them and asked if they were willing to participate in it. When they agreed to participate, they were sent the informed consent forms, and after informed consent was obtained from each of them, further modalities (like the time and date for the interviews) were negotiated, and the interviews were conducted.

Similarly, to select the Igbo language enthusiasts to interview, the researcher used Twitter and Facebook. On Twitter, the researcher typed “#Igbo” in the search bar icon and carefully

examined the pages that popped up. After going through the top five pages that were about the promotion of Igbo language and culture, the researcher contacted, using the direct message feature, the handlers of two of the Twitter pages who were more vigorous and consistent in their promotion of Igbo language. However, only one of them responded to the researcher's direct message. So, after the objectives of the study and mode of the interview were further explained, the interview was conducted. On Facebook, the researcher typed "Asusu Igbo" (Igbo language) and examined the descriptions and posts of the top 10 pages that popped up. The criterion for selecting the Igbo language enthusiasts was being familiar with *BBC News Igbo* as well as actively promoting Igbo language online. Therefore, two of the pages that not only actively promoted Igbo language but also had Igbo language class component were selected, and their handlers contacted to participate in the interview. After they confirmed that they knew *BBC News Igbo* very well and actually used it quite often, the researcher obtained informed consent from each of them, arranged and conducted the interviews separately. Because the target population for the interviews was a dispersed group, all the interviews were conducted through physical mobile telephone.

#### **4.6 Research Content Categories**

The researcher adopted the summative approach to qualitative content analysis, which usually starts with counting the frequency of certain words or content before proceeding to the interpretation of the latent content (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Below are the content categories (and their operational definitions) for the qualitative content analysis aspect of the study, which guided the coding of the texts of the sampled *BBC News Igbo* stories, their comments, and meta-comments.

***Type of Language Used:*** this means the type or types of languages used in the texts of the stories, the comments, and the meta-comments. This is aimed at empirically ascertaining the languages that compete with Igbo for domain use.

***Presence of Code-switching:*** this means the instances of switching from Igbo language to other languages or vice versa in the texts of the sampled *BBC News Igbo* stories, comments, and meta-comments. Code-switching, especially when it is preponderant, has implications for users' attitude to a language.

***Presence of Transliteration:*** this represents instances of writing words written in other alphabets using corresponding letters of the Igbo alphabet. For instance, using “*praɪmari*” for “primary” represents a transliteration of the word “primary” from English to Igbo. Like code-switching, transliteration has implications for users' attitude to a language.

***Subject Matter of Comment:*** this means the primary focus of the comments and meta-comments. This category was aimed at ascertaining the amount of comments and meta-comments that were primarily about Igbo language usage. Depending on its overriding themes and frequency, this bears a relationship to the attitude of Igbo people to their language.

***Type of Igbo Orthography:*** this is used loosely to mean the Igbo dialect bloc used in the text of sampled stories, comments, and meta-comments. It is aimed at ascertaining the prevalent Igbo dialect bloc used by *BBC News Igbo*, its commenters, and its human subjects.

***Presence of Meta-comments:*** these are comments made in response to other comments. The presence of meta-comments shows lateral, horizontal, and

collaborative engagement with *BBC News Igbo* stories, which could have impact on the Igbo language skills of the users of *BBC News Igbo*.

#### **4.7 Research Units of Analysis**

The units of analysis for the qualitative content analysis were the words, phrases, and sentences used in the sampled *BBC News Igbo* stories and the users' comments on the stories. Similarly, the units of analysis for the Web survey were individuals and groups. That is, the audience members of *BBC News Igbo* and what they said as individuals and as a group of participants of the same age band, gender, and educational status. Again, the units of analysis for the interview were individuals. That is, *BBC News Igbo* producers/presenters and Igbo language enthusiasts who promoted Igbo language use online and were familiar with *BBC News Igbo* programming.

#### **4.8 Methods of Data Collection**

The researcher sought and obtained institutional review board approval from the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University, South Africa, before collecting data for the study. Data were collected using three instruments, namely, coding sheets, questionnaire, and semi-structured interview. Coding sheets, aided by coding schemes that spelled out the data analytic procedures, were used to collect data from the qualitative content analysis. Also, the researcher used questionnaire to collect data from the Web survey. Finally, semi-structured interview was used to collect data from the interview.

#### **4.9 Instruments and Instrumentation**

To collect data for the qualitative content analysis, the researcher used coding sheets. The coding sheets had rows that embodied the initial content categories used to code data from the sampled *BBC News Igbo* stories and comments. The categories were language of story/comment,

presence of code-switching, presence of transliteration, presence of meta-comments, subject matter of comment, and type of Igbo orthography. Therefore, using the coding scheme, which spelled out the analytic procedure for each category, values denoting the presence or otherwise and/or type of the specified categories were coded. However, because the researcher used the summative approach to qualitative content analysis, the frequency of the manifest content was first counted and recorded before the latent content that emerged as subcategories was interpreted to understand its contextual use. The listing, sampling, coding, and analysis of the *BBC News Igbo* stories and comments took place between 25 March 2021 and 05 March 2022.

To collect data from the Web survey, the researcher used the questionnaire. The questionnaire items were typed on a Google Form, which had six sections. The first section had the participants' information leaflet and consent form, and the second section had the agreement/disagreement checkboxes and the optional contact information field. The third section of the questionnaire comprised the survey participants' demographic profiles such as sex, age, educational qualification, and country of residence. The fourth section comprised seven multiple-choice questions on *BBC News Igbo* audience assessment of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language and one rating-scale question, which required the participants to rate *BBC News Igbo* potentials to revitalise Igbo language on a scale of 0-10. The fifth section of the questionnaire comprised five open-ended questions carefully crafted to elicit responses on such variables as the participants' attitude to Igbo language before and after they started using *BBC News Igbo* and their overall impression of the news medium. Lastly, the sixth section comprised seven open-ended questions bordering on the relationship among participants' Igbo language proficiency, acquisition of Igbo language skills, and *BBC News Igbo*.

The researcher solicited respondents' agreement before sending them the Web link to the questionnaire. Since the respondents were users of *BBC News Igbo* who had commented on the sampled stories, the researcher viewed their Facebook accounts by clicking on their names, then used their individual Facebook Messenger accounts to tell them about the study and ask if they were willing to participate in it as respondents. The researcher then, through Facebook Messenger, sent the Web link to the questionnaire to respondents who agreed to participate in the survey. An informed consent statement that required prospective respondents to check an "Agree/Disagree" checkbox preceded the questionnaire items. The checkbox was made a requirement on the Google Form so that respondents could only proceed to the main questionnaire sections after they checked the informed consent box. Contacting and subsequently sending the link to the participants took place from 30 October to 30 November 2021. However, access to the questionnaire was open until 30 January 2022. It took the researcher one month to send the questionnaire because it was sent in bits of 50-55 per day to avoid flouting Facebook Community Standards. Also, access to the questionnaire was left open for three months to collect as much data as possible; it was closed after three months because it was time to analyse its resultant data.

To interview the presenters/producers, the researcher first emailed and notified the editor of *BBC News Igbo* of the study and its overarching objective as well as seek permission to interview presenters/producers of the organisation. Then the researcher visited the Facebook page of *BBC News Igbo*, read and viewed some of its stories, and thereafter contacted presenters/producers whose bylines featured prominently in the stories. After they agreed to participate in the study, the researcher obtained informed consent from each of them and scheduled the interviews separately. The interviews were semi-structured, so the researcher used an interview guide

comprising general questions on the focus of the interview. The interview focused on the views of *BBC News Igbo* producers/presenters on the prevalent orthographies in *BBC News Igbo* reports and the potentials of *BBC News Igbo* to revitalise Igbo language. Therefore, the researcher sought the respondents' views on topics such as the specific ways *BBC News Igbo* helps in the revitalisation of Igbo language, the Igbo orthography controversy, the Igbo dialect bloc *BBC News Igbo* prefers and ways of dealing with the numerous other Igbo dialects.

Similarly, data from Igbo language enthusiasts were collected using interviews. The researcher used an interview guide comprising general questions regarding the prevalent *BBC News Igbo* orthographies. The researcher first contacted prospective interviewees to seek their consent to participate in the study, and after they agreed to participate in the study, informed consent was obtained from each of them, then the interviews were arranged and conducted separately. The interview with Igbo language enthusiasts also focused on the prevalent orthographies in *BBC News Igbo* reports and the potentials of *BBC News Igbo* to revitalise Igbo language. Therefore, they were basically asked the same questions as the producers/presenters.

All the interviews – *BBC News Igbo* presenters/producers' and Igbo language enthusiasts' – were conducted through mobile phone, audio-taped, and transcribed verbatim. All the interviews were conducted between 8 November 2021 and 27 January 2022.

#### **4.10 Method of Data Analysis**

The researcher used the summative approach to qualitative content analysis to analyse data collected from the *BBC News Igbo* stories and comments. With the summative approach, data that came under the initial content categories as subcategories were identified, defined with the aid of a coding scheme, coded, and later quantified before they were analysed to establish their

latent implications for the study. Similarly, data from all the interviews and the third section of the questionnaire, which comprised open-ended questions, were analysed using the thematic analysis approach. This method typically entails identifying, analysing and reporting patterns/themes within a data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, the researcher first got immersed in the data to understand them thoroughly, generated the initial codes, and then searched for themes from the initial codes. Thereafter, the researcher reviewed the themes, came up with the coding schemes that defined and named the themes, then produced the reports for both sections.

To establish credibility in both the summative approach and thematic analyses, the researcher observed the data persistently to the point of immersion and engaged with them for a whole long time; in fact, each data corpus was coded three times to make for excellent understanding and ensure trustworthiness. After each round of coding, the researcher observed a regular break to brainstorm on the tentative codes and themes.

Data collected from the first and second sections of the questionnaire, which comprised close-ended questions, were analysed using descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Kaur, Stoltzfus, and Yellapu (2018) write that descriptive statistics is commonly used to summarize data in an organized manner by explicating the relationship between variables in a sample or population. Descriptive statistics is already inherent in Google Form, so the researcher, working with a statistical consultant, used ANOVA for the analysis of the complex aspect of the data that entailed isolating respondents' views on the potentials of *BBC News Igbo* to revitalise Igbo language according to age range, gender, and educational status. To do this, respondents were asked a rating-scale question. After sorting their responses according to age bands, gender, and educational qualification, quantifying and measuring the mean averages for each category

and its subcategories, ANOVA was used to calculate and analyse the statistical differences among the means. The collation, coding, and analyses of data for the qualitative content analysis and the semi-structured interview took place between 16 October 2021 and 05 March 2022.

#### **4.11 Intercoder Reliability**

For accuracy and validity of the codes, the researcher contacted two of his colleagues, got them acquainted with the study, and ran the coding schemes with them. Sizeable portions of the applicable data were also given to them to run some trial coding. After they each coded the data, the researcher used their separate reviews and feedback to craft the final drafts of the coding schemes.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

The overall strategy of the study and its methods have been detailed in this chapter. The researcher employed the mixed methods research approach. The methods triangulated were qualitative content analysis, Web survey, and qualitative interview. The chapter, therefore, largely focused on how each of the methods was applied in accessing, collecting, collating, and analysing data needed to answer the research questions satisfactorily.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study in tables and figures. The key contents of the tables and figures are analysed briefly and later discussed fully to establish their significance for the research questions, theories, and literature. The research questions guide the presentation of the tables and figures. Therefore, each research question is first reproduced, then the tables and figures that relate to it follow. However, since some of the data for the study was collected through survey, the table and figure bearing the demographics of the survey respondents were presented first.

**Table 5.1: Respondents' Sex, Age, and Educational Status**

Sex	(%)	Age	(%)	Education	(%)
Male	63.2	13-25	30.4	PhD	6.4
79		38		8	
Female	35.2	26-38	43.2	Master's degree	16
44		54		20	
Prefer not to say	1.6	39-51	23.2	University/College degree	56.8
2		29		71	
		52-64	2.4	Polytechnic/university	5.6
		3		diploma	
				7	
		65 years or older	0.8	Secondary school certificate	15.2
		1		19	
				Primary school certificate	0
				0	
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100
125		125		125	

Table 5.1 shows that more males (63.2%) than females (35.2%) responded to the questionnaire. This suggests that more men than women use *BBC News Igbo*. Also, given that respondents aged between 13 and 51 accounted for 96.8% of the respondents and the ones aged 52 and older made up only 3.2%, most of the respondents are still in their active years. This suggests that *BBC News Igbo* appeals more to the younger generations than it appeals to the older generations. Findings also show that *BBC News Igbo* users are generally well educated and literate as 56.8% of the respondents had a university or college degree while none of the respondents had only a primary school certificate; the least educational qualification of the respondents is the high school certificate, and only 15.2% of them had that.

**Figure 5.1: Respondents' Countries of Residence**

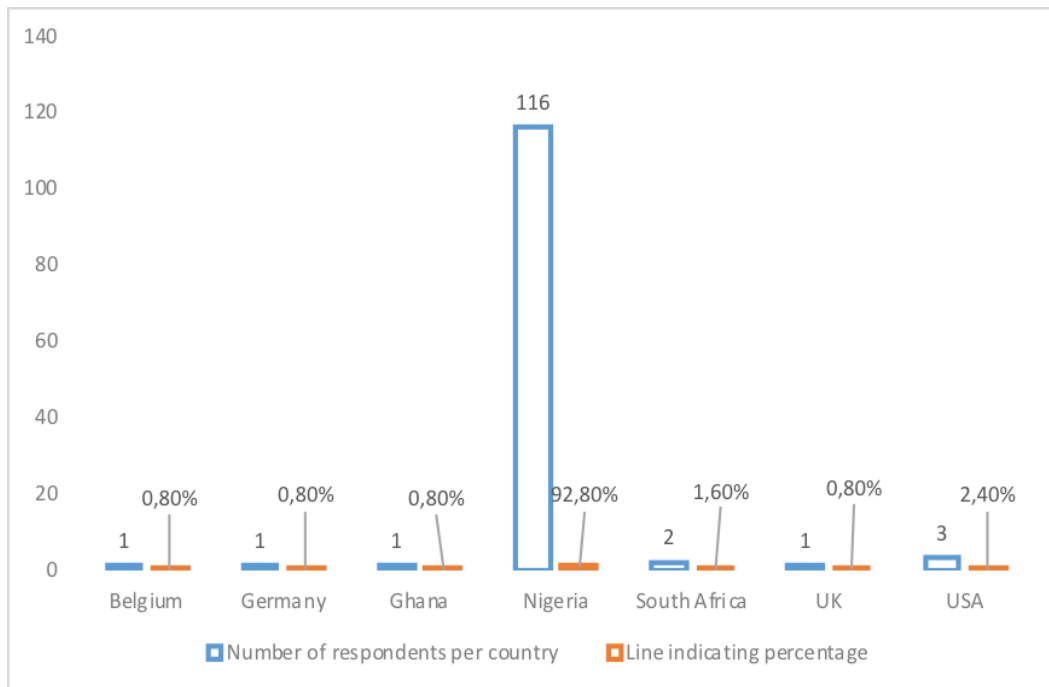


Figure 5.1 explains that the respondents resided in seven countries of the world, which cut across three continents, namely, Africa, Europe, and North America. That respondents who lived in Nigeria top the chart with 92.80% is understandable because Igbo language is not only autochthonous to the country but is also one of its three major languages. Also, that the

respondents cut across six countries outside Nigeria attests to the global nature of the social media and the well-documented proclivity of the Igbo people for international migration.

## 5.2 RQ 1: To what extent has BBC News Igbo enhanced Igbo language prestige among its audience?

This research question seeks to establish the degree of prestige – social and linguistic value – *BBC News Igbo* has accorded Igbo language through its programming. Therefore, following are the tables and figures that present the quantitative and qualitative findings relating to the research question.

**Table 5.2: Respondents' Attitude to Igbo Language Before and After They Started Using BBC News Igbo**

Before			After		
Theme	Description	Exemplar	Theme	Description	Exemplar
Positive	Respondents who said their attitude to Igbo language was positive.	“Positive and proud speaker but sad at its deteriorating state.”	Now Positive	Respondents who said their attitude to Igbo language became positive.	“My approach to Igbo language now is that of taking pride in communicating with [in] my language.”
Indifferent	Respondents who expressed noncommittal attitude to Igbo language.	“Not concerned about the language.”	Still Positive	Respondents who said their attitude to Igbo language was and remained positive.	“It has remained as positive as it has always been.”
Negative	Respondents who said their attitude to Igbo language was not good.	“Wasn't that good.”	Courageous	Respondents who said they found courage to use Igbo language.	“The ability and courage to speak Igbo more often engulfed me.”
Select Domain/ People	Respondents who said they felt Igbo language was for a certain age or domain.	“Was of the opinion that it's meant for the older ones and not for the young generation.”	Still Indifferent	Respondents who said their attitude to Igbo language remained indifferent.	“I still do not have any urge to learn Igbo.”
Difficult	Respondents who said they felt Igbo language was difficult.	“I felt it was difficult given I wasn't brought up with it but I was open to learn.”	Domain Shift	Respondents who started using Igbo language in places they did not use it before.	After I started using BBC News Igbo, my use of the Igbo language transcended the realm of basic communication with family members to more complex and intellectual conversations across various other topics.

Table 5.2 indicates the thematic views of the respondents on their attitude to Igbo language before and after they started using *BBC News Igbo*. Both questions yielded five themes apiece, and the themes were presented in descending order. Interestingly, in the “Positive” theme, the respondents said their attitude to Igbo language before using *BBC News Igbo* was positive, but the respondents who had an indifferent attitude to Igbo language before using *BBC News Igbo* immediately followed. However, after they started using *BBC News Igbo*, some of the respondents said their attitude to Igbo language had become positive, and though some of the respondents said that their attitude to Igbo language remained indifferent, no negative attitude was recorded.

Similarly, while some of the respondents said prior to using *BBC News Igbo* they thought Igbo language was difficult, many of the respondents in side B of the table said using *BBC News Igbo* gave them courage to use Igbo language more.

Additionally, the “Select Domain/People” represents respondents who said prior to using *BBC News Igbo*, they used Igbo language only in select domains as well as felt it was the language of the aged. In side B, however, that theme gave way to “Domain Shift,” which indicates, as the exemplar quote shows, that using *BBC News Igbo* made the respondents to use Igbo language in domains they hitherto shied away from using it.

**Table 5.3: Interview Participants’ Views on the Potentials of BBC News Igbo to Revitalise Igbo Language**

Question	Theme	Exemplar
Impact of <i>BBC News Igbo</i> on Igbo Language Revitalisation	Digitisation & Promotion of Igbo Language	“Also, speaking about Google Translate, when we started, we noticed that the translations were quite poor, but it is getting better and more accurate with time, due to, I believe, the fact that more Igbo language texts are being published and consumed more regularly. Thanks chiefly to BBC Igbo.” – Interviewee 4
	Revival of Interest in Igbo Language & Culture	“The fact that we had a lot of people that could no longer speak Igbo because in their homes they no longer spoke Igbo as their first tongue or their mother tongue. They now started putting effort, they now started trying again to speak Igbo because all of a sudden they saw the importance of speaking again, and somehow BBC News came in and it seemed that there was this revitalisation of even the culture, people now started identifying with the culture, a lot of people started springing up on social media.” – Interviewee 3
	Conferment of Prestige on Igbo Language	“So for me that’s one of the gains of having BBC Igbo; the fact that people can see people they look up to being very, very confident in speaking their language; that helps a lot, so I think going forward, it’s going to get better and the influence is going to spread more. Now, everybody knows that there is BBC Igbo; people respect it; people are willing to come on.” – Interviewee 2
	Provision of Access and Resources for Learning Igbo Language	“OK, like me, take for an example, when I have my classes I encourage people, that’s the learners, you know what? Watch Igbo movies, watch other people speak Igbo, and one of the great resources I told them to look at is BBC News Igbo; I direct them there because all their interviews, everything is in Igbo, even their subtitles are also in Igbo language, that will also help people to know how to spell, how to write Igbo language.” – Interviewee 1

Table 5.3 represents the general views of *BBC News Igbo* producers/presenters and Igbo language experts on the potentials of the media organisation to revitalise Igbo language. The theme, “Revival of Interest in Igbo Language & Culture” quite strikingly corroborates the view of the respondents in Table 5.2 that *BBC News Igbo* encouraged increased use of Igbo language among them. In addition, the “Conferment of Prestige on Igbo Language” theme echoes the view expressed in the “Select Domain/People” theme (see Table 5.2) to the effect that *BBC News Igbo*

had awakened its users' consciousness to the utilisation of Igbo language in domains (like the media) other than the domestic domain, and that Igbo is a language young people proudly use in these domains.

**Figure 5.2: Respondents' Preferred Igbo Language Domains After Using BBC News Igbo**

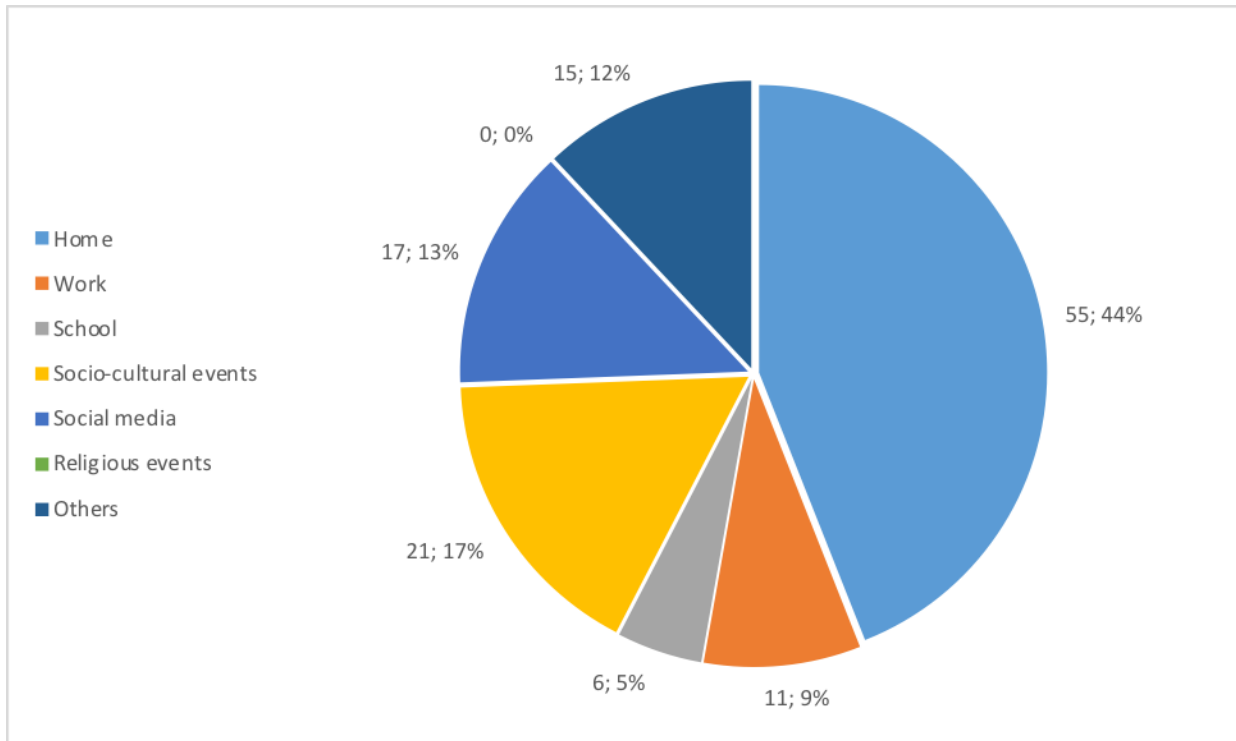


Figure 5.2 shows that *BBC News Igbo* not only encouraged the respondents to use Igbo language more as Tables 5.2 and 5.3 indicate, but also encouraged them to do so in domains that symbolize pride in the language such as work, social media, and school. The representative quote in Table 5.2 above underscores this: “After I started using BBC News Igbo, my use of the Igbo language transcended the realm of basic communication with family members to more complex and intellectual conversations across various other topics.” “Others” represents responses like “Everywhere,” “Anywhere Igbo comes,” “Not applicable,” “All of the above,” and the like.

**Table 5.4: Usage of Igbo Language on Social Media Before and After Using *BBC News Igbo***

(A) Prior to using <i>BBC News Igbo</i> , did you use Igbo language to post or comment on social media stories?	Percentage (%)	(B) Now that you use <i>BBC News Igbo</i> , do you use Igbo language to post or comment on other social media stories, different from <i>BBC News Igbo</i> posts?	Percentage (%)
Yes	44.8	Yes	41.1
56		37	
No	50.4	No	55.6
63		50	
I can't remember	4.8	I don't know	3.3
6		3	
Total	100	Total	100
125		90	

Table 5.4 illustrates how the respondents used Igbo language on social media before and after they started using *BBC News Igbo*. Findings show that a good number of the respondents (44.8%) used Igbo language to post or comment on social media posts prior to using *BBC News Igbo*. Similarly, 41.1% of the respondents, who might have additionally commented on *BBC News Igbo* stories, used Igbo language to post or comment on social media posts, different from *BBC News Igbo* stories. Added to 13% of the respondents (see Figure 5.2) who said social media was their preferred domain for using Igbo language after they started using *BBC News Igbo* and the rather huge number of comments some of the sampled *BBC News Igbo* stories attracted (see Table 5.19), this theme, “Digitisation & Promotion of Igbo Language,” in Table 5.3 becomes more plausible. The theme indicates that the texts of *BBC News Igbo* stories and the comments they generated had gradually but steadily increased the volume of Igbo language texts in the digital space, which had resulted in more accurate translations of the language on Google.

**Table 5.5: Discussion of BBC News Igbo Content Outside of Social Media and the Preferred Language**

Do you discuss the content of <i>BBC News Igbo</i> outside social media?	Percentage (%)	With what language do you discuss <i>BBC News Igbo</i> content outside social media?	Percentage (%)
Yes 100	80	Igbo 24	19.2
No 25	20	English 18	14.4
		Igbo & English 77	61.6
		Others 6	4.8
Total 125	100	Total 90	100

It is interesting, as Table 5.5 indicates, that a greater number of the respondents (80%) discussed the content of *BBC News Igbo* outside social media, but even more interesting is that more respondents (19.2%) preferred to do so in Igbo than in English (14.4%), which is the main language that minoritised Igbo. This, therefore, suggests that using *BBC News Igbo* imbued the respondents with pride that transcended the social media and translated to increased use of Igbo language.

**Table 5.6: Respondents' Views on Seeing BBC News Use Igbo Language on Facebook**

Theme	Description	Exemplar
Awesome & Proud	Respondents who said they were elated.	"It is awesomely great."/ "Proud that the uniqueness of the Igbo language is made accessible to all and sundry, on social media."
Sense of Belonging	Respondents who said they felt a sense of belonging.	"The platform gives me joy and sense of belonging."/ "I feel that we (the Igbo people) are not left out. I feel that we (the Igbo nation) is known to the rest of the world."
Indifferent	Respondents who said they did not care.	"Indifferent."/ "Indifferent."

Table 5.6 explains the aggregated views of respondents on how they felt upon seeing *BBC News Igbo* use Igbo language on Facebook represented in three themes, which largely show that most of the respondents were filled with awe and pride. The themes, except “Indifferent,” show that the respondents recognised that being a digital language would accord Igbo language more visibility and, therefore, prestige, which are essential ingredients of language maintenance and revitalisation.

**Table 5.7: Respondents’ Views on Learning about *BBC News Igbo* for the First Time**

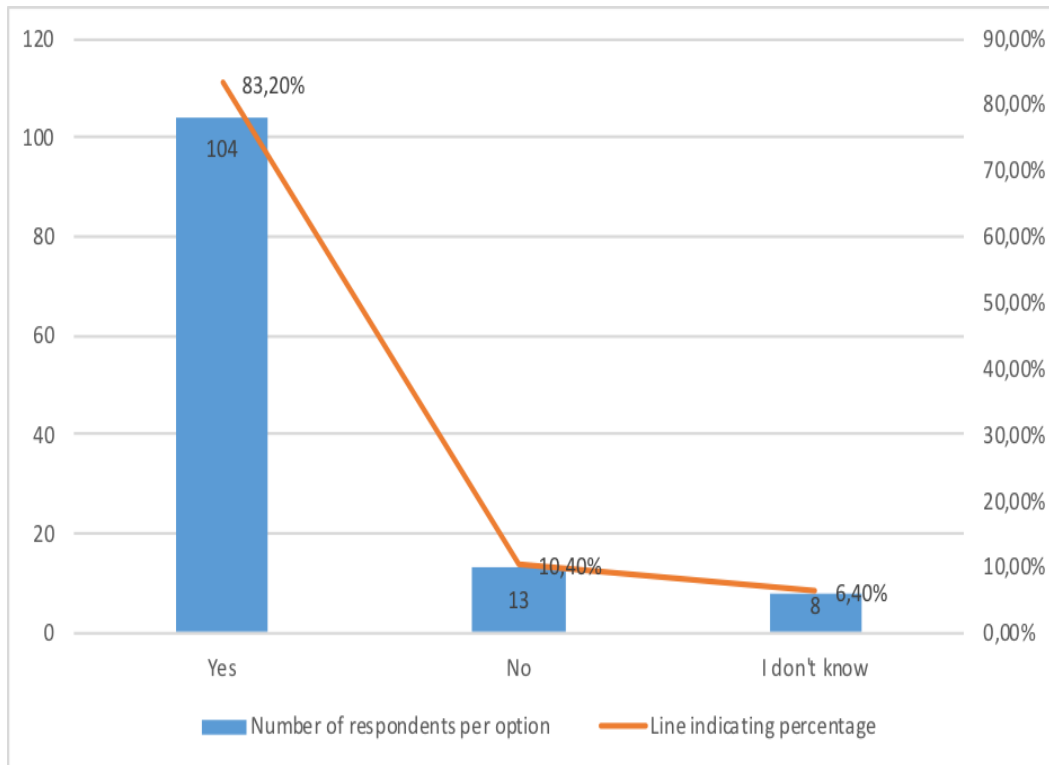
Theme	Description	Exemplar
Very Excited	Respondents who said they felt greatly excited to learn about <i>BBC News Igbo</i> .	“Very Excited”/“Elated.”
Pleasantly Surprised	Respondents who said they were surprised to learn about <i>BBC News Igbo</i> .	“I was surprised because I did not think something like this existed.”/“Surprised that such existed.”
Proud and Encouraged	Respondents who said learning about <i>BBC News Igbo</i> for the first made them proud and encouraged to use Igbo language.	“I felt great about Igbo language”/“Proud and encouraged.”
Promote and Preserve Igbo	Respondents who said <i>BBC News Igbo</i> would promote and preserve Igbo language.	“I felt good because I see it as a platform to promote our language.”/“I felt elated because it is a platform to preserve Igbo language.”
Indifferent	Respondents who said they showed no concern about <i>BBC News Igbo</i> .	“To be candid, I was initially indifferent about it as I thought of it as just another news outlet.”/“No feeling.”
International Recognition	Respondents who said they felt <i>BBC News Igbo</i> would help give Igbo global exposure.	“To be honest I actually felt excited knowing that Igbo language has gone globally. Initially I wasn't happy seeing only BBC Hausa and Yoruba without Igbo but since the start of BBC Igbo you can be rest assured that Igbo language is no longer a local language spoken only in Eastern part of Nigeria. People all over the world gets to hear and learn our beloved language.”/“I was so happy that Igbo language is been displayed worldwide.”
Included	Respondents who said learning about <i>BBC News Igbo</i> gave them a sense of inclusion.	“I believe BBC Hausa has been in existence for while before BBC Igbo. I felt included and relevance accorded to my mother tongue.”/“Sense of belongings in the society.”

Table 5.7 shows the responses of the survey respondents when asked to tell their feelings the first time they learnt about *BBC News Igbo*. The responses yielded seven themes that, except “indifferent,” expressed high expectations of *BBC News Igbo*. Of particular interest were the respondents who said in the theme, “Proud and Encouraged,” that learning about *BBC News Igbo* made them proud of Igbo language. Also in the theme, “Promote and Preserve Igbo,” were respondents who readily affirmed that *BBC News Igbo* would help to promote and preserve Igbo language. Another theme, “International Recognition,” held that *BBC News Igbo* would accord Igbo language international recognition. In general, the respondents suggested that *BBC News Igbo* would help to enhance the social and linguistic value of Igbo language within and outside Nigeria. Remarkably, previous findings (see, for instance, Tables 5.2, 5.3, and 5.6) such as improved attitude to Igbo language, increased usage of the language, and enhanced visibility would suggest that *BBC News Igbo* had lived up to these respondents’ prediction and optimism.

### **5.3 RQ 2: To what extent has BBC News Igbo encouraged the acquisition of Igbo language skills among its audience?**

The following figures and tables present findings relating to the degree *BBC News Igbo* has encouraged its audience to speak, read, and write Igbo language. The findings presented below emanated from both quantitative and qualitative data.

**Figure 5.3: Encouragement of Igbo Language Usage by BBC News Igbo**



The findings in Figure 5.3 show respondents’ answers when they were asked if *BBC News Igbo* encouraged them to speak Igbo language. The findings show that *BBC News Igbo* did so to a great extent. This is consistent with one of the themes (Encouraged & Comfortable) observed in Table 5.8 below when the respondents were asked to tell how they felt after some time of using *BBC News Igbo*. One of them had said, “Happy and willing to use the language,” and another said, “I felt like there was a need for me [to] use it more and encourage other Igbo’s (sic) to listen to BBC Igbo.”

**Table 5.8: Respondents' Views on BBC News Igbo After Some Time of Using It**

Theme	Description	Exemplar
Great Experience	Respondents who said using <i>BBC News Igbo</i> felt great and exciting.	"It was a great experience i must say."/"I was impressed with what they do."
Improved Knowledge of Igbo Language & Culture	Respondents who said their knowledge of Igbo language and culture improved.	"I felt good because I believe is kind of helped my igbo vocabulary and I started realizing how more diverse the igbo culture was."/"I enjoy it, it improves my use of the language."
Promotion & Preservation	Respondents who said <i>BBC News Igbo</i> would help promote and preserve Igbo language.	"I feel more hopeful about preservation, intergenerational transmission and wider usage of the language."/"Am glad and appreciate the way they are promoting the language."
Sense of Belonging	Respondents who said using <i>BBC News Igbo</i> gave them a sense of belonging.	"I feel it's a good outlet in encouraging people to be prouder of the Igbo language, as it gives one a sense of belonging to a larger community."/"I felt and still feel elated that people of Igbo extraction now have a credible platform they can access news stories in their own language as well as comment on issues."
Needs to Improve	Respondents who pointed out areas <i>BBC News Igbo</i> needs improvement.	"Some information put out on the platform turned out to be unreliable or misleading."/"I felt that the handlers need to do a lot to improve on their choice of words and regular and consistent use of central Igbo in their publications."
Encouraged & Comfortable	Respondents who said using <i>BBC News Igbo</i> made them feel encouraged and comfortable to use the language.	"Happy and willing to use the language."/"I felt like there was a need for me use it more and encourage other Igbo's to listen to BBC Igbo."
Indifferent	Respondents who said they were unconcerned.	"Indifferent."/"I wouldn't know."

Table 5.8 shows the cumulative views of the respondents on what they thought of *BBC News Igbo* after using it for some time. The table has seven themes that are similar to the ones identified in Table 5.7, which is about the first time the respondents learnt about *BBC News Igbo*. The theme, "Improved Knowledge of Igbo Language & Culture," stands out here because, as the respondents said, using *BBC News Igbo* had made them better users of Igbo language.

**Table 5.9: Respondents’ General Comments on BBC News Igbo Programming**

Theme	Description	Exemplar
Great Work	Respondents who said <i>BBC News Igbo</i> is doing a good job.	“Jisike” [Igbo for “well done”]/ “Keep up the great work.”
Promotion & Preservation of Language & Culture	Respondents who said <i>BBC News Igbo</i> promotes and preserves Igbo language.	“BBC NEWS Igbo made me curious at first but now I can say categorically that it is a credible platform, not only for disseminating news using Igbo language but also for promoting the language and keeping it from going extinct.”/ “It’s the best thing happening to Igbo language because it will encourage it not to die. So I like BBC News Igbo.”
Do More	Respondents who urged <i>BBC News Igbo</i> to improve on certain aspects of its programming.	“Let them improves on their translations because often what they write is not really what is been translated.”/“Ha ga nekwu ihe neri ndi Igbo nri nahu karichaa” [Igbo for “It should focus more on issues that affect the Igbo.”]
Encouraged to Use Igbo	Respondents who said <i>BBC News Igbo</i> encourages the use of Igbo language.	“I believe BBC Igbo will encourage igbos to embrace the language and actually teach non igbos the language.”/ “It’s wonderful, the way they describe certain things makes me like speaking igbo language the more.”
Acquisition of Igbo Language & Culture	Respondents who said <i>BBC News Igbo</i> is an avenue for learning Igbo language and culture.	“I also think that if someone wanted to learn Igbo, BBC news Igbo could help.”/“It is the best program so far.... It gives us the opportunity to communicate with Igbo and also learn most of our culture and tradition.”
Great for Non-English Speakers	Respondents who said Igbo speakers who do not understand English would find <i>BBC News Igbo</i> especially useful.	“I think it’s nice that there’s a news outlet in a language other than English because some people don’t know English but know Igbo so it’s easier for them to understand.”/“It’s just a great way of communicating for people who can’t speak English but the language.”

The themes presented in Table 5.9 embody the survey respondents’ general comments on *BBC News Igbo* programming. Interestingly, the “Acquisition of Igbo Language & Culture” theme, which equally occurred in Table 5.8, is present here. Respondents in the theme said *BBC News Igbo* could be an ideal platform to acquire and use Igbo language skills.

**Figure 5.4: Respondents' Extent of Usage of Igbo Language After Using BBC News Igbo**

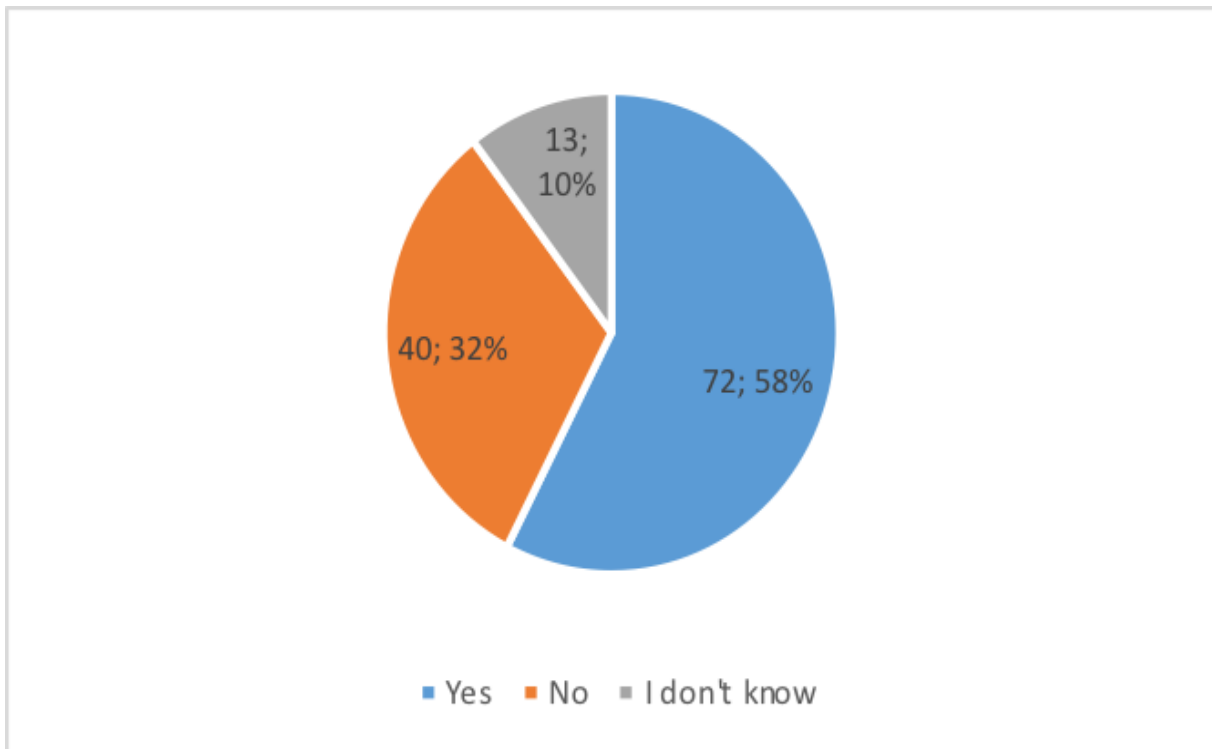


Figure 5.4 illustrates how the respondents answered when they were asked to tell whether they spoke Igbo language more than they did before they started using *BBC News Igbo*. The findings show that majority of the respondents (58%) used Igbo language more after they started using *BBC News Igbo*.

This is, again, exemplified by one of the themes (“Encouraged to Use Igbo”) observed (Table 5.9) when the respondents were asked to comment on *BBC News Igbo* programming; one of the commenters in the theme said, “It's wonderful, the way they describe certain things makes me like speaking Igbo language the more.”

**Table 5.10: Respondents' Views on Their Igbo Language Skills Before and After Using BBC News Igbo**

(A) Before			(B) After		
Theme	Description	Exemplar	Theme	Description	Exemplar
Fluently	Respondents who said they could speak, read, and write Igbo very well.	“Igbo language is part of my day to day life. i live in and Cherish it, so i can't shy away from it. i speak it anywhere i find myself.”	No Change	Respondents who said they had not observed any change in their use of Igbo language.	“I don't have any experience yet.”
Not So Fluent	Respondents who said they did not use the language so well.	“I was a below average reader to be honest. I could read a few sentences but struggled a bit with some pronunciations.”	Encouraged for More	Respondents who said they were encouraged to use Igbo more.	“It's encouraged me to speak Igbo language the more.”
Did Not Know It	Respondents who said they could not use the language.	“I still cannot write in igbo unfortunately.”	Now Proud of It	Respondents who said they now use Igbo language with pride.	“Pride overwhelms me when I use igbo since then.”
Not Proud of It	Respondents who said they were not proud of using Igbo language.	“I was a bit incoherent and often ashamed of using the language publicly.”	Know It Better Now	Respondents who said they know Igbo language better now.	“I know a little more vocabulary but my pronunciation skills haven't improved.”
Not Interested	Respondents who said they were not interested in using Igbo language.	“Always unwilling to speak it.”	Still Do Not Know It	Respondents who said they still could not use Igbo language.	“I still don't know how to write in Igbo, because BBC news Igbo did not influence me.”

Table 5.10 indicates the collective views of respondents when they were asked to explain their experience speaking, reading, and writing in Igbo language before and after they started using *BBC News Igbo*. The findings show that many of the respondents used Igbo language fluently before they started using *BBC News Igbo*, but many of them also said they did not use it quite fluently, and some said they did not even use it at all. However, after they started using *BBC News Igbo*, many of the respondents reported being encouraged to use Igbo language, and although many of them said that they had not observed any change in their Igbo language usage, a good number of them said they knew it better after they started using *BBC News Igbo*.

Similarly, the theme, “Not Interested,” observed before the respondents started using *BBC News Igbo* is absent from the themes observed after they started using *BBC News Igbo*. The number of the respondents who reported not knowing Igbo language even after using *BBC News Igbo* dropped significantly, which suggests that using *BBC News Igbo* encouraged some of the respondents to acquire and/or use Igbo language skills.

Remarkably, the theme, “Acquisition of Language and Culture” was identified (see Table 5.9) when the respondents were asked to comment on *BBC News Igbo* programming with the representative quote, “I also think that if someone wanted to learn Igbo, BBC news Igbo could help.”

Another theme, “Provision of Access and Resources for Learning Igbo Language,” was also identified (see Table 5.3) when the interviewees were asked to comment on the potentials of *BBC News Igbo* to revitalise Igbo language with Interviewee 1 saying, “OK, like me, take for an example, when I have my classes I encourage people, that’s the learners, you know what? Watch Igbo movies, watch other people speak Igbo, and one of the great resources I told them to look at

is BBC News Igbo; I direct them there because all their interviews, everything is in Igbo, even their subtitles are also in Igbo language, that will also help people to know how to spell, how to write Igbo language.”

### 5.4 RQ 3: What are the prevalent orthographies in *BBC News Igbo* reports?

The tables and figure that follow show findings that have to do with the study participants’ views on the dominant Igbo orthography, or system of spelling, in *BBC News Igbo*. Some of the findings also came from the analyses of comments *BBC News Igbo* users made on its stories. Therefore, the findings were derived from qualitative and quantitative data. In addition, the Onumajuru (2016) framework for distinguishing between the Central and Onicha Igbo was used to determine when any of these two main Igbo dialect clusters was used in the texts of the sampled *BBC News Igbo* stories, their comments, and their meta-comments. Onumajuru (2016) has put forward a three-marker framework for identifying the Central and Onicha Igbo. They are the phonological (h/f, h/r, r/l, l/n), lexical (ófé/ófè, òké/òkè, óché/óchè, ósè/ósè), and morpho-syntactic levels (rV/-IV, -ghì/-rọ, ágàlà/ejenâ, -lá/-gó, -beghì/-ka + vb + rọ, -beghì/-ka.....rọ).

**Table 5.11: Participants’ Views on the Prevalent Igbo Orthography in *BBC News Igbo***

Question	Theme	Exemplar
Prevalent orthography in <i>BBC News Igbo</i>	Central Igbo/Igbo	“It’s the standard one – they don’t use Onicha dialect there. BBC News Igbo uses the standard Igbo dialect popularly known as Igbo izugbe.” – Interviewee 1
	Izugbe/Standard Igbo	“In the main, it’s Igbo izugbe that we use consistently, all through.” – Interviewee 2
		“I will say that we use mostly the central Igbo.” – Interviewee 3
		“What we use to pass our information is the standard Igbo . . . . So the standard Igbo is gotten from an aggregation of all the Igbo dialects around.” – Interviewee 4
		“I will say that they are trying their best to use the centralized one, that’s the Igbo izugbe.” – Interviewee 6

Findings in Table 5.11 explain the responses of the interview participants on the Igbo system of spelling used more by *BBC News Igbo*. Interviewees 1,2,3,4, and 6 said *BBC News Igbo* used the Central Igbo, as against Onicha Igbo. One of the interviewees reported not paying attention to the issues of orthography in *BBC News Igbo*. Now, it is pertinent to emphasize that the Central Igbo, which is also variously called Standard Igbo and Igbo Izugbe (General Igbo), and Onicha Igbo, emerged following the adoption of the New Orthography in 1929. For this reason, the interviewees, as can be seen in Table 5.11, used the Central, Standard, and Igbo Izugbe interchangeably. For consistency and clarity, this study adopts the new Central Igbo, which is different from Onicha Igbo and any other Igbo dialect (or *olundi*) that is traceable to a particular Igbo community, as the generic name for its other variants.

**Table 5.12: Interview Participants’ Reasons for BBC News Igbo’s Choice of Central Igbo over Onicha Igbo**

Question	Theme	Exemplar
Choice of Central Igbo	Generally Accepted for Literature & Writing	“Igbo Izugbe is for, when I say Igbo Izugbe, of course, you understand it, that’s the standard Igbo, for writing, and for teaching the language, and for maybe writing novels in the language – every other Igbo dialect will maintain their dialect while speaking.” – Interviewee 4
	Accepted Variant in the Academia	“Igbo izugbe was a fallback for us; it felt natural for us to use Igbo izugbe because that’s what is being used in the academia in Nigeria at the moment across board . . . so the one that the majority have already agreed or the one that the majority of the scholars had already agreed that this is the one they are going to be working with, so we chose to work with that one.” – Interviewee 2
	Choice of the Missionaries	“It still boils down to the controversy, that age-long controversy. When the Westerners came it was the Onicha dialect that they thought they were going to use because that was the commonly spoken one but I think when they came, they all changed it and said it was going to be the other one.” – Interviewee 1

Table 5.12 presents the themes that emerged following the analysis of *BBC News Igbo* producers/presenters’ and Igbo language experts’ responses on why *BBC News Igbo* preferred

the Central Igbo to Onicha Igbo (see Table 5.11). While some interviewees hinged this on the Central Igbo being the long accepted mode in literary and academic circles, some traced it to the orthography dispute between the early Anglican and Catholic missionaries.

**Table 5.13: Interview Participants' Views on How BBC News Igbo Managed the Igbo Orthography Controversy**

Question	Theme	Exemplar
Changing Accent to Reflect Where a Story Is Coming From	It Is	“No, I don’t think that’s realistic.” – Interviewee 2
	Unrealistic	“So what he said there is just in theory; in the practical aspect of it they are not even doing it.” – Interviewee 6
		“I would say no because we can’t, actually. Do you understand? That’s why I’d say no, that’s not totally how...because it’s not possible, so to say, it’s not something we can, we can’t achieve that being in the field, and I can tell that you can attest to that; we can’t achieve that.” – Interviewee 3
Coping with the Diverse Igbo Variants	Subtitle to the Rescue	“It’s that thing I am telling you, that even when someone is speaking Onicha dialect, they don’t write it that way. Take for example, “obiaro” but BBC News Igbo will change it to “biaghi” – that’s what they write, that’s what they subtitle.” – Interviewee 1
	We Let the People Tell their Stories	“So the way we achieve what our editorial lead said is not by writing it but by letting the people tell the stories themselves, we are letting them be the owners of their orthography, be the ones that are narrating their stories by themselves, so that’s how we achieve this and not by us writing it. We do this through videos, through audios, and audio-visuals.” – Interviewee 3

Table 5.13 illustrates the responses of the interview participants to the former *BBC News Igbo* editorial lead’s claim that the medium changed the spelling system in each story to reflect the

part of Igboland the story emanated. The participants said that could only happen in audio and audio-visual stories in which guests on *BBC News Igbo* shows or people who featured in its stories were allowed to speak in any of the numerous Igbo dialects. However, for consistency and mutual intelligibility, *BBC News Igbo* subtitled the dialects, including Onicha Igbo, in the Central Igbo.

**Table 5.14: *BBC News Igbo* Stories Analysed for Prevalent Orthographies and Other Orthographic Features**

Title	Genre	Date of Publication	Comments	Orthography	Code-switching	Transliteration
“Mkpariṭaṅka Puriiche Gbasara IPOB Na Ogbaghara Mere N'emene, Enugu”	Live Video	26/8/2020	5,900	Central/Onicha	Igbo to English	None
“Kedu aha Igbo kachasi too ogologo I ma? Kosisochukwunobika nma, dgz. Tinye nke gi.”	Pictorial Question	31/8/2020	725	Central	None	None
“Etu Nghotahie mu na Bishop Awka Diocese Si Malite”	Pre-recorded	10/8/2020	4,800	Onicha/Central	Igbo to English	English to Igbo
“Chioma Uzodimma, bu nwunye Hope Uzodimma, zutere makwa nabata Oluomachi dika nwa ya n'ubochi gara aga.”	Written	17/8/2020	387	Central	None	None
Total	4		11,812			

Table 5.14 shows findings from the *BBC News Igbo* stories analysed to determine the dominant orthographies in *BBC News Igbo*. The findings show that Central Igbo and Onicha Igbo were the dominant orthographies in *BBC News Igbo*. The findings also corroborate the interviewees' views in Table 5.11, as the Central Igbo was used in most of the stories *BBC News Igbo* wrote,

while the stories involving other Igbo speakers, like interviews – whether live or pre-recorded, showed a mixture of the two orthographies. Out of the two stories in this category, Onicha Igbo was used more in one while the Central Igbo was used more in the other. Also, there was one instance of neutrality, which means either of the two main Igbo orthographies would write the story the same way.

**Table 5.15: Analysis of a BBC News Igbo Live Video for Orthography and Code-switching**

Title	Type of Igbo Orthography		Code-switching
	Central	Onicha	
“Gịni na-afi ọ? Mkparịtaụka Purụiche Gbasara IPOB Na Ogbaghara Mere N'emene, Enugu”	<b>BBC News</b> <b>Igbo:</b> ihe/ha/kwuru/ egburu/ gosiri	<b>BBC News Igbo:</b> nke izizi, daalụ rii nne  <b>Guests:</b> kọlọ/onwero/julụ/ kọlụ/izizi/daalụ/nunwa/al ụsi	Igbo to English  <b>Examples:</b>  <b>Moderator:</b> then/freedom of association/ network/free speech, etc.  <b>Guest 1:</b> defence fund/armoured tank/social media handler/gazette/award, etc.  <b>Guest 2:</b> retired judge/demonstration/journalist/panel/ extradition/with firearm

Table 5.15 presents an analysis of a *BBC News Igbo* live video in which two guests were interviewed. The title, “*Gịni na-afi ọ? Mkparịtaụka purụiche gbasara IPOB na ogbaghara mere n'emene, Enugu,*” means, “What’s trending? Special conversation about IPOB and the crisis that happened at Emene, Enugu.” Central Igbo was used in the title; its Onicha Igbo translation

would be, “*Gịni na-afi o? Mkpaliṭauka puluiche gbasatalu IPOB na ogbaghar(l)a mere n'emene, Enugu.*”

However, excerpts from the interview show that the *BBC News Igbo* presenter used both the Central and Onicha Igbo; ditto the guests. In the following, the Central Igbo versions of the sample Onicha Igbo used in the interview are placed in parentheses: *kọlọ (kọrọ)/onwero (onweghi)/julu (juru)/kọlu (kọrọ)/izizi (mbu)/daalu (imeela)/nuna (nke a)/alusi (arusi)/.*

The interview also featured some code-switching from Igbo to English at word (judge) and phrase (freedom of association) levels, which came from both host and guests. Overall, this finding shows that in speech, Central and Onicha Igbo were hardly mutually exclusive; one very often slithered into the other.

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**Table 5.16: Analysis of a BBC News Igbo Pictorial Question for Type of Orthography**

Title	Type of Igbo Orthography
<p>“Kedu aha Igbo kachasi too ogologo I ma? Kosisochukwunobikanma, dgz. Tinye nke gi.”</p>	<p>Central</p>

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Table 5.16 shows the pictorial question, “*Kedu aha Igbo kachasi too ogologo I ma? Kosisochukwunobikanma. Tinye nke gi,*” which translates to, “What is the longest Igbo name you know? Kosisochukwunobikanma. Add your own?” Finding shows that Central Igbo was used in the title, and the markers are /aha/ and /ogologo/. In Onicha Igbo, these words would be /afa/ and /ogonogo/.

**Table 5.17: Analysis of a *BBC News Igbo* Pre-recorded Video for Orthography, Code-switching and Transliteration**

Title	Type of Igbo Orthography		Code-switching	Transliteration
	Onicha	Central		
“Etu Nghotahie mụ na Bishop Awka Diocese Si Malite – Ekene Nwosu”	<b>Guests:</b> nwatakili/enwego/ aburo/cholu	<b>BBC News Igbo</b> <b>Subtitles:</b> nwatakiri/enweela/ na-abughi/choro	Igbo to English  <b>Examples:</b> canonical crime/or canonical impediment/moral conscience/use/ too much/ dump/mandated me/ three different people/ about/ six/I have this paper here/release to him/internet/appeal	English to Igbo  <b>Examples:</b> Austria/Bishop/ dayosis/intaneti/ fada/katolik

The story in Table 5.17, which translates to, “How my misunderstanding with the Bishop of Awka Diocese started,” is an interview *BBC News Igbo* had with two priests over a misunderstanding involving one of the priests and his bishop. From the headline to the excerpted Central Igbo words and phrases, *BBC News Igbo* remained consistent in preferring the Central Igbo to the Onicha version, especially in writing.

Its practice of subtitling the guests’ Onicha Igbo words and expressions to the Central Igbo (see, also, Table 5.13) – mostly in written and pre-recorded stories – further evidenced this. *BBC News Igbo*, for instance, subtitled these Onicha Igbo words, *nwatakili/enwego/aburo/cholu*, which its

guests used to the words’ Central Igbo equivalents thus: *nwatakiri/enweela/na-abughi/choro*, and the subtitle is consistent with the Onumajuru (2016) framework.

The interview also had a lot of code-switching from Igbo to English, and *BBC News Igbo* attempt to subtitle some of the English words and expressions its guests switched to resulted in the Igbo transliterations in parentheses: “Austria (*Austria*)/Bishop (*Bishop*)/diocese (*dayosis*)/internet (*intaneti*)/Father (*fada*)/Catholic (*katolik*).”

**Table 5.18: Analysis of a Written BBC News Igbo Story for Orthography, Code-switching and Transliteration**

Title	Excerpt	Type of Igbo Orthography	Transliteration
“Chioma Uzodinma, bu nwunye Hope Uzodinma, zutere makwa nabata Oluomachi dika nwa ya n’ubochi gara aga.”	“Aha mmadu na-eso ya n’ezikwu, i chetara Oluomachi Opara nwere olu ogene, govanọ Imo steeti kporo dika nwa ya?”	Central	English to Igbo  <b>Examples:</b> govanọ/steeti

When translated to English, the headline of the story in Table 5.18 would be, “Chioma Uzodinma, who is the wife of Hope Uzodinma, meets and accepts Oluomachi as her son recently.”

Again, in keeping with the *BBC News Igbo* observed tradition of using the Central Igbo in writing (see, again, Table 5.19), the headline and the excerpted body text were written in Central Igbo. In Onicha Igbo, */n’ubochi/aha/olu/kporo/* would be */n’mbosi/afa/onu/kporo/*. In addition, the excerpt has a couple of instances of transliteration from English to Igbo, which point to the

fact of English being the language that competes with Igbo language more for key domains of usage (see, for instance, Tables 5.5 and 5.23).

**Table 5.19: BBC News Stories Analysed Alongside Their Comments for Orthography and Other Orthographic Features**

Title	Genre	Date of Publication	Comments	Comments Analysed/ (%)	Voided Comment s/ (%)	Code-switching/ (%)	Code-switching Involving Igbo/ (%)	Transliteration/ (%)
“Mkparitaṅka BBC Igbo na Angela Nwosu”	Live Video	5/8/2020	9,000	500/32.40	63/70.78	41/25.15	38/25.16	15/71.43
“Gịnị bụ ‘Feminist’ n’Igbo?”	Pictorial Question	25/8/2020	455	429/27.80	26/29.21	60/36.81	57/37.75	4/19.05
“Chidinma nwa m dī ndū gaa ọrụ, ebulatara m ozu ya.”	Pre-recorded Video	5/8/2020	14,000	500/32.40	-- --	50/30.67	44/29.14	2/9.52
“Lee ihe Senator Enyi Abaribe nwere ikwu maka oghaghara mere n’Emene, Enugu”	Written	25/8/2020	177	114/7.39	-- --	12/7.36	12/7.95	
Total	4		23,632	1,543/≈ 100	89/≈ 100	163/≈ 100	151/100	21/100

Table 5.19 illustrates the *BBC News Igbo* stories analysed alongside the comments made on them using the summative qualitative content analysis in order to ascertain the dominant orthography in *BBC News Igbo* (see Figure 5.5).

Findings show code-switching and transliteration to be present in the comments. Now, while code-switching indicates the commenters’ struggle to speak Igbo only, transliteration shows their

determination to use Igbo language more, even if it meant using transliterated versions of certain words and expressions.

The stories listed in Table 5.19 were supposed to be the stories with the highest number of comments in each genre, but that did not apply to the “Written” genre, because the comments made on “*Chioma Uzodimma, bu nwunye Hope Uzodimma, zutere makwa nabata Oluomachi dika nwa ya n'ubochi gara aga*” were not found when it was revisited for analysis. Therefore, the story with the second highest comments and its comments were analysed, while the text of the story that had the highest number of comments on the day it was listed for sampling was analysed. The same thing happened with the “Pictorial Question” genre, but the story that had lesser comments and its comments were analyzed because comments made on a few of the other stories with more comments were not informative enough to elicit the needed data.

**Table 5.20: Orthographies, Code-switching, and Transliteration Found in BBC News Igbo Comments and Meta-comments**

Central	Onicha	Central/Onicha	Neutral	English	Code-switching	Transliteration
“Ima Ihe gbasara umu nwanyi, ihe banyere umu nwanyi ma obu odi nma umu nwanyi.”	“Ndi Ife na-eme n'isi”	“Chai Naza, uburo ya o. Obu nwanyi choro ka anyi mara na nwa nwanyi dikwa nkpa ka nwa nwoke. Chokwa ka azuo nwa nwanyi na ulo akwukwo.”	“Ezem gozie gi nnam.”	“Really? That means he is a threat to your business .”	“Nwanyi ma obu Nwoke nwere Uche, sika oghere enyere Nwoke, ka enye kwa nwanyi ! Na onye obula bu madu Chineke Kere! Don't get it twisted, guys!”	“Ndi katolik.”
“Ndi uka, uka a na-aka. So Chukwu ma nke onye na-eme. Osọ enigwe a dighi mfe o. Chukwu Okike Abiama, nye anyi amara ka anyi na-emeso mmadu ibe anyi omume etu anyi siri choo ka mmadu niile meso anyi.”	“Obu nwanyi zulu oke.”	“Umu nwanyi kpatala ego nke ukwu.”	“Chukwu gozie gi nna anyi maka na ibu onye ezi okwu!”	“Don't mind them”	“lol ife eji li unu olu. White people are in heaven but they told blacks that they have to die to go to heaven. Amaka hapu ndia”	“Obu na ha achoro gi, gini ka iji na dogbu onwe gi? Rapunu ha ga ebe achoro gi. Iwu aburo na iga echiriri fada. Gaba ulouka uzo”

Table 5.20 illustrates the main orthographies found in the analysed *BBC News Igbo* comments and meta-comments. In the first comment under the Central Igbo column, /ihe/, which was repeated, marks it as Central Igbo. The Onicha Igbo equivalent of that would be /ife/.

In the Onicha Igbo column, /zulu/ in the second exemplar is the marker, and its Central Igbo version would be /zuru/. The Central/Onicha column presents an interesting finding: the admixture of the Central and Onicha Igbo (see, also, Table 5.15). In the first comment, /u[ɔ]buro/ is a typical Onicha Igbo way of saying /ɔbughi/, and /chɔrɔ/ and /ɲlɔ/ are Central Igbo words whose Onicha Igbo equivalents would be /chɔlɔ(u)/ and /ɲnɔ/.

In the second Central/Onicha Igbo comment, /kpatala/ is Onicha Igbo, but this meta-comment – “*Gini ka ana-akpo nwoke kpatara ego nke ukwu?*” – which replied to the comment, helped to provide its Central Igbo version by changing “*kpatala*” to “*kpatara*.” Again, “*Nke ukwu[u]*” is usually associated with Central Igbo, with its Onicha Igbo version being “*rii nne*.”

The neutral column shows two similar comments that exemplify instances of neutrality between the Central and Onicha Igbo; that is, instances in which either the two main Igbo dialect areas would say something the same way.

Comments in the column marked “English” show that some of the *BBC News Igbo* comments and meta-comments were written exclusively in English language, and the comments under the code-switching column show instances of a commenter switching from Igbo to English or vice versa. Similarly, the transliteration column bears two examples: “*katolik*” and “*fada*,” which were transliterated from English to Igbo; the English words transliterated were “Catholic” and “Father,” as in a priest of the Catholic Church.

**Table 5.21: Breakdown of the Focus of Analysed BBC News Igbo Comments and Meta-comments**

Subject Matter of Comment/Meta-comment	Total	Percentage
What	557	36.09
Who	353	22.88
Source	90	5.83
Igbo Usage	107	6.93
Co-commenter	430	27.87
What & Who	3	0.19
What & Source	1	0.06
Who & Source	2	0.13
Total	1,543	≈ 100

Table 5.21 indicates the foci of the *BBC News Igbo* comments and meta-comments analysed. However, there are two subject matters of interest here. One is “Igbo Usage” or comments and meta-comments focused on Igbo language skills and how they were used, and the other is “Co-commenter” or the totality of meta-comments directed at other commenters.

That 107 (6.93%) comments focused on Igbo usage, even when that was not the topic of the stories (the exception here is “*Gịnị bu ‘Feminist’ n’Igbo?*” – What is feminist in Igbo?), shows the people’s awareness of Igbo language apathy and their commitment to see it used more and appropriately so. For instance, reacting to how a *BBC News Igbo* presenter had used Igbo language, one commenter had written, “*Nwata nwanyi a amaro asu Igbo ofuma. Jisienu ike* (This lady does not know how to speak Igbo well. Well done.)” A similar, but more illuminating, dialogue excerpted from one of the analysed stories is reproduced below:

**Commenter:** “*Agavu nwanyi*” (Worthless woman.)

**Meta-commenter 1:** “Chai asu'su bayi atoka kwa'nu 😊” (Wow, our language is too sweet.)

**Meta-commenter 2:** “Enweghi ife dika 'VU' n'asusu igbo” (There is no such thing as “VU” in Igbo language.)

**Meta-commenter 1:** “OK ngwa nwa'ne kedu otu esi ede agavu ni'gbo?” (OK, my brother (sister), how is “agavu” written in Igbo?)

**Meta-commenter 3:** “Asi nwanne. O nwere okuko a na-akpo Okuko Avuke na asusu Igbo.

Jukwaa ese 😊” (Lie, my brother (sister). There is a chicken called “Avuke” in Igbo. Find out.)

**Meta-commenter 2:** “Hahaha abuke not avuke” (It’s “abuke,” not “avuke.”)

**Meta-commenter 2:** “Agafu” (It’s “Agafu.”)

**Meta-commenter 4:** “Isi gini?” (What did you say?)

**Commenter:** “O wu ya” (That’s it.)

In another similar exchange, a commenter had questioned the existence of the word “umuntorobia” (youths) in Igbo language, and the following dialogue ensued:

**Commenter:** “What is Umuntorobia? @BBC stop damaging our language biko [please].”

**Meta-commenter 1:** “Umuntorobia means youths, umuokorobia means young men, umuagboyobia means young women, is that clear?”

**Meta-commenter 2:** “O maghi kwa ede Igbo bia ebe a ime mmacha” (S/he doesn’t know how to write in Igbo but came here to show off.)

**Commenter:** “Daalu” (Thank you.)

**Meta-commenter 3:** “Lee ka isiri mee onwe gi akaje n'enu asusu gi” (See how you disgraced yourself over your own language.)

**Commenter:** “Kee Ka m siri mee onwe m?” (How did I do myself?)

**Meta-commenter 4:** “*Ihe imere onwe gi bu na imaghi ihe ntorobia putara*” (What you did to yourself is that you didn’t know the meaning of “*ntorobia*.”)

**Commenter:** “*Kee otu oji buru njo?*” (How is it bad?)

**Meta-commenter 3:** “*Na mmanite, yoo BBC mgbaghara tupu agabam n'ihu iza ihe ndi ijuru*” (To begin with, apologise to BBC before I go ahead to answer what you asked.)

**Commenter:** “*Imara ihe, iwere akunuche iji gwa m yoo ndi e were ihe oma obula ha putara ndi Igbo mgbaghara*” (You are ignorant. You are stupid for telling me to apologise to people that do not mean any good thing to Igbo people.)

**Meta-commenter 5:** “*Nwanne ihe ana akpo ya bu nwokorobia, not ntorobia. Ntorobia abughi central igbo*” (Brother (sister), it is called “*nwokorobia*,” not “*ntorobia*.” “*Ntorobia*” is not Central Igbo.)

The presence of “Co-commenter” – comments directed at other commenters – suggests that users of *BBC News Igbo* must have found it an ideal discursive environment where they could interrogate diverse issues.

What is more, some commenters focused on the subject matter *BBC News Igbo* put forward (what), others focused on newsmakers (who), yet others focused their comments on *BBC News Igbo* (source). In addition, some comments went from addressing the topic of a story to focusing on its human subjects (what & who) or were focused on both topic and *BBC News Igbo* (what & source), and some comments went from talking about persons in the stories to speaking to *BBC News Igbo* (who & source).

**Table 5.22: Breakdown of the BBC News Igbo Meta-comments Analysed**

BBC News Igbo Genre	Meta-comments	Percentage
Written Story	34	6.40
Pictorial Question	115	21.66
Pre-recorded Video	281	52.92
Live Video	101	19.02
Total	531 (34.41% of all analysed comments)	100

Table 5.22 presents the breakdown of the analysed meta-comments, which amounted to 34.41% of all the comments and meta-comments analysed. While comments made directly on *BBC News Igbo* stories indicate the level of user engagement the stories attracted, the meta-comments denote horizontal interactivity and suggest that *BBC News Igbo* had created an online community and served as a digital space, a digital public sphere of some sort, where its audience could have conversations with one another on shared interests.

**Figure 5.5: Types of Dialects Present in the BBC News Igbo Comments**

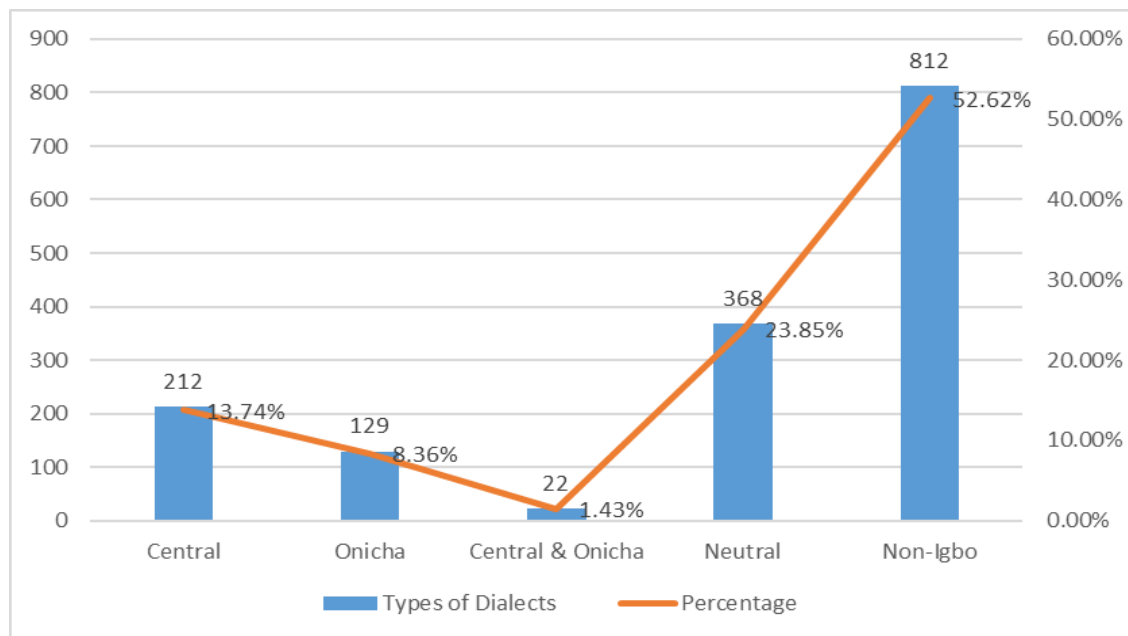


Figure 5.5 presents the findings from the summative qualitative content analysis of the comments made on the four sampled *BBC News Igbo* stories. Although the non-Igbo orthographies were present and even had the highest number, the findings show, again, the two dominant Igbo dialects in *BBC News Igbo* to be the Central and Onicha. The Central dialect, however, remained more prevalent. Of interest were the instances of neutrality between the Central and Onicha Igbo (23.85%); these were instances in which comments were written such that the markers of the differences between the two main Igbo dialects were not revealed. Again, like in Table 5.14 above, there were instances of the same commenters going from one of the two major Igbo dialects to the other in the same comments.

**Table 5.23: Igbo Comments and Code-switching, Non-Igbo Comments and Code-switching, and Their Exemplars**

Language(s) of Comments	Number of Comments	Percentage	Exemplar
Igbo	580	37.59	“Naani otu onye Igbo kwunwuru okwu ma megide ndi goomenti Nigeria na ejighi nti anu na onyea bu onye Igbo. Chukwu gbaa gi ume.”/“Ndi BBC News Igbo, Ebe o bu na okwu ahụ adighi na Igbo mana anyi ghotara ihe o putara, Nyenu aka wee meputa (bekee kporo ya "coin") okwu a ga na-akpo ya ya!”
English	780	50.55	“Thanks for telling them the truth.”/“This is d only people's representative without political godfather, and he is one of the best senators in Nigeria.”
Pidgin	20	1.29	“You no get sense.”/“Na em go save dem.”
English & Pidgin	12	0.78	“Church business. Wetin concern me sef 😊.”/“Leave ijele speaks. He must suffer wella.”
Igbo & English	126	8.17	“Are you asking me? I na-aju m?”/“Come and school this people na atumatu feminism, Odika ha amaghi ihe obu.”
Igbo & Pidgin	25	1.62	“Abeg live the Inu iyi biko”/“No off nne.”
Total	1,543	100	

Table 5.23 shows samples of Igbo language found in the analysed *BBC News Igbo* comments, non-Igbo languages (English and Pidgin English), instances of commenters switching from English to Pidgin English or vice versa, instances of commenters switching from Igbo to English (or vice versa), and instances of commenters switching from Igbo to Pidgin English (or vice versa). These findings show the languages that competed for usage with Igbo language in *BBC News Igbo*. In addition, finding shows that commenters on *BBC News Igbo* stories used English language far more (50.55%) than they used its Pidgin counterpart. In fact, the comments made in English were 12.96% more than the ones made strictly in Igbo language, and 3.17% more than the addition of comments made purely in Igbo and the two types of code-switching involving Igbo. Therefore, English language dominated Igbo language in the comments, and as previously found in Table 5.5, English language is the prime competitor of Igbo language.

**5.5 RQ 4: How do the *BBC News Igbo* audiences' age, gender, and educational status shape their assessment of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language?**

The findings in the figure and tables below relate to how the different age bands, genders, and educational statuses rated the potentials of *BBC News Igbo* to revitalise Igbo language. The results came from the analyses of the rating-scale question the survey respondents answered.

**Figure 5.6: Respondents' Rating of BBC News Igbo Potentials to Revitalise Igbo Language**

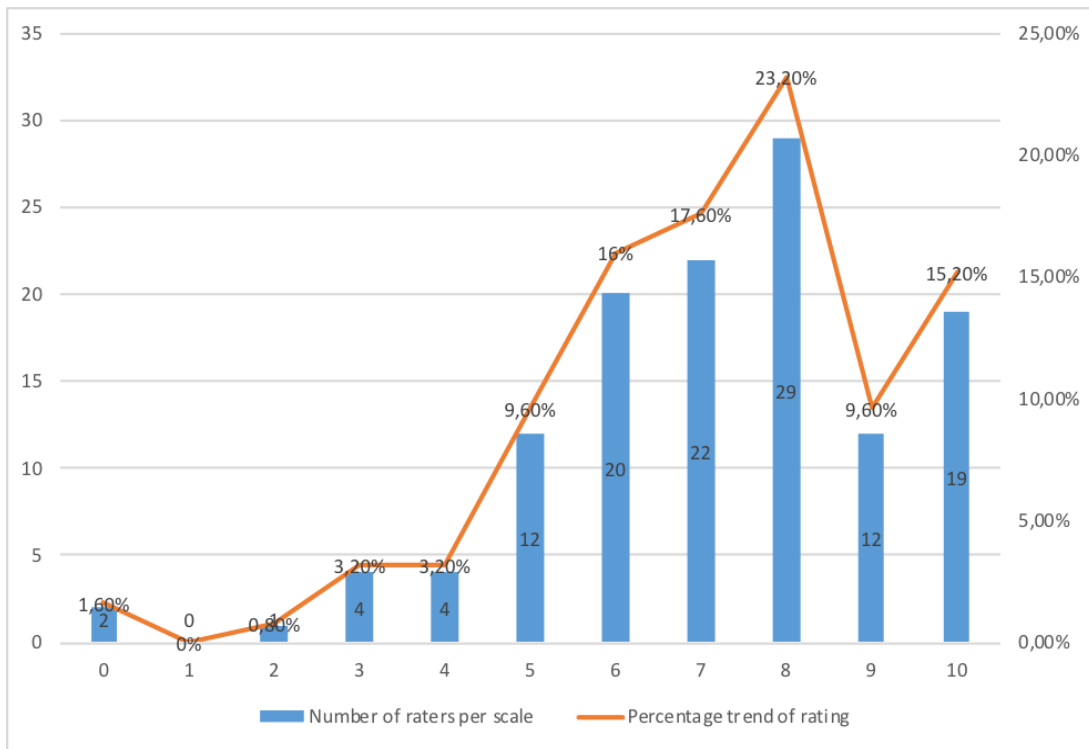


Figure 5.6 indicates that the respondents generally rated the potentials of *BBC News Igbo* to revitalise Igbo language high. Respondents who rated the potentials of *BBC News Igbo* to revitalise Igbo language between 5 and 10 were the highest, and their ratings averaged 7.5.

**Table 5.24: Respondents' Mean Rating of BBC News Igbo Potentials to Revitalise Igbo Language by Age and Sex**

Sex:

Age	Female	Mean	Male	Mean	Prefer not to say	Mean	Total
13-25	20	7.1	17	7.05	1	7	38
26-38	16	7.78	38	7.02	0		54
39-51	6	8.18	23	6.65	0		29
52-64	2	6.5	1	10	0		3
65 years or older	0	0	0	0	1	7	1
Total/Mean	44	7.4	79	7	2	7	125

Table 5.24 illustrates how the females and males in the respondents' age bands rated *BBC News Igbo* potentials to revitalise Igbo language. Findings show that the ratings of both females and males in all the age bands were high at between 7 and 7.4, averaging at 7.13.

**Table 5.25: Respondents' Mean Rating of BBC News Igbo Potentials to Revitalise Igbo Language by Educational Status & Age**

Qualification	Age:					Total
	13-25	26-38	29-51	52-64	65 years or older	
Master's degree	0	10	8	2	0	20
PhD	0	3	4	0	1	8
Polytechnic/university diploma	0	5	2	0	0	7
Secondary school certificate	14	4	1	0	0	19
University/college degree	24	32	14	1	0	71
Total/Mean	38/7.05	54/7.03	29/6.96	3/7.7	1/7	125/7.148

As Table 5.25 explains, the ratings of the different age bands in all the educational statuses remained high at 7.15 average. Therefore, all the respondents, regardless of age and educational status, held the view that *BBC News Igbo* had high potentials to revitalise Igbo language.

**Table 5.26: Respondents' Mean Rating of BBC News Igbo Potentials to Revitalise Igbo Language by Educational Status and Gender**

Qualification	Sex:					
	Female	Mean	Male	Mean	Prefer not to say	Mean
Master's degree	5	7.6	15	6.7		
PhD	2	8	5	5	1	7
Polytechnic/university diploma	2	7	5	8.2		
Secondary school certificate	7	6.4	11	9	1	7
University/college degree	28	7.6	43	7.3		
Total/Mean	44	7.3	79	7.2	2	7

As Table 5.26 shows, the average mean rating of respondents in the different educational qualifications, whether they were females or males, is 7.17. Again, this suggests that *BBC News Igbo* had high potentials to revitalise Igbo language, and it is consistent with the findings in Figure 5.6, Table 5.24, and Table 5.25.

**Table 5.27: ANOVA Test to Determine the Difference in Mean Ratings of BBC News Igbo Potentials to Revitalise Igbo Language by Age, Gender, and Educational Qualification**

Number of obs =		125	R-squared =		0.1608
Root MSE =		2.13182	Adj R-squared =		0.0512
Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob>F
Model	86.190211	25	3.4476084	0.76	0.7827
Gender	3.6526523	2	1.8263262	0.40	0.6702
Age	4.0439438	4	1.010986	0.22	0.9253
Gender#age	18.736307	3	6.2454355	1.37	0.2551
Eduqual	22.70028	4	5.6750699	1.25	0.2954
Gender#eduqual	5.2879654	4	1.3219913	0.29	0.8833
Age#eduqual	16.403172	5	3.2806343	0.72	0.6086
Gender#age#eduqual	2.9126883	3	.97089609	0.21	0.8867
Residual	449.92179	99	4.5446645		
Total	536.112	124	4.3234839		

Table 5.27 indicates a three-way ANOVA test run on a sample of 125 participants to examine the effect of gender, age, and level of education on rating perception. Findings show that there was no significant three-way interaction. This is shown statistically in the gender, age, and

educational qualification row of the table thus:  $F(3, 99) = 0.21, p = 0.8867$ ). That there is no statistically significant relationship in the respondents' ratings according to gender, age, and educational status confirms the initial findings (see Figure 5.6, Tables 5.24, 5.25, and 5.26) that the respondents regardless of gender, age, and educational qualification generally held the view that *BBC News Igbo* had high potentials to revitalise Igbo language.

## **5.6 Discussion of Findings**

Having analysed the data presented in tables and figures above, this section discusses the wider findings from the data, and this is guided by the research questions.

### **5.6.1 Extent of *BBC News Igbo* Enhancement of Igbo Language Prestige among its Audience**

Prestige refers to the social and linguistic values a language commands. It is the totality of regard a speech community has for its language. Language attitude on the other hand refers to the way a speech community feels about its language. This feeling can be positive, negative, or indifferent.

A positive language attitude is characterised by a keenness to use a language in all spheres of life, and a negative language attitude is exhibited when a community for whatever reasons shies away from using its language, especially in a variety of domains. When the attitude of a community to its language is indifferent, members of the community show little or no enthusiasm in their language; they simply show a lack of interest in the language.

Language prestige and language attitude go hand in hand. A sustained positive attitude to a language enhances its prestige. In the same way, a prolonged negative attitude to a language affects its prestige and status, especially relative to a dominant language. So both language prestige and language attitude are important indices of language health. It is not surprising,

therefore, that prestige forms the first postulate of Crystal's Theory of Language Revitalisation. In Crystal's (2000) words, "an endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their prestige within the dominant community" (p. 130). This, therefore, provides the premise for the enquiry into the extent *BBC News Igbo* has enhanced the prestige of Igbo language among its audience.

Findings reported in Table 5.2 show three themes – "Now Positive," "Courageous," "Domain Shift" – that strongly suggest that *BBC News Igbo* might have enhanced Igbo language prestige among its users. The first theme represents the views of participants whose attitude toward Igbo language was negative before they started using *BBC News Igbo*, but their attitude to the language changed to positive after they started using *BBC News Igbo*. The second theme captures the views of respondents who lacked the courage to use Igbo language prior to using *BBC News Igbo* but reported being imbued with renewed courage to use their language upon using *BBC News Igbo*. Lastly, the third theme comprises respondents, who, before they started using *BBC News Igbo*, held the view that Igbo language was ideal only for the aged, and that its use was limited to the home domain; however, after they started using *BBC News Igbo*, their perception of the language changed: they became aware that young people fancied Igbo language and used it in a recognised digital media organisation.

Several reasons have been adduced for the negative attitude and loss of prestige associated with Igbo language. Citing wa Thing'o, Asakitikpi and Akujobi (2009) blame this on the colonialists' renaming ritual aimed among other things at bastardising indigenous African languages. The effect of this, among other things, is the erosion of the prestige of Igbo language and its functional roles by English language (Igboanusi, 2006).

The finding that *BBC News Igbo* has enhanced the attitude and prestige of Igbo language among its audience, therefore, has huge implications for Igbo language revitalisation. For instance, that finding shows that the medium has potentials to improve the socio-linguistic values of Igbo language.

Again, since a lack of courage in using one's language signals a poor attitude to the language, the finding that *BBC News Igbo* gave its users courage to use Igbo language, which, according to Sallabank (2010), is one of the benefits of having an endangered language in the media, suggests that the medium can potentially enhance Igbo speakers' attitude to the language and thus accord prestige to it. This finding is in line with that of Nwammuo and Salawu (2019) who found *BBC News Igbo* to have the potentials to encourage its users to speak Igbo language. This is also in consonance with Crystal's (2000) explanation that sustained access to a language instills the habit of using it in the people. Hence, the admonition that intermittent language activities be replaced by consolidated language activities with "a predictable presence" (p. 131). With respect to this study, therefore, rather than the sporadic language activities in say, the mass media, *BBC News Igbo* provides the predictable presence on which regular Igbo language activities take place.

Also, the domains in which a language is used mainly determine the status of the language. For this Igboanusi (2006) cites loss of functional roles to English language as one of the causes of Igbo language endangerment. When, therefore, the respondents reported having their rather negative perception of Igbo language as one fit only for the elderly and the domestic domain changed to a positive one by now seeing the language as one of value used by the young and vibrant in domains of prestige like the media, the finding marks the restoration of a major

functional role for Igbo language (at least among the study participants) and corroborates Kperogi's (2006) assertion that the media elevate the social status of an endangered language.

The finding also lends credence to Crystal's assertion in the Theory of Language Revitalisation that the longterm goal of media-procured prestige is increased "visibility in more and more sectors of the public domain" (Crystal, 2000, p. 131).

Additionally, the interview data yielded the "Digitisation and Promotion of Igbo Language," "Revival of Interest in Igbo Language and Culture," and "Conferment of Prestige on Igbo Language" themes (see Table 5.3), which are directly related to language attitude and prestige.

Digitisation, for instance, has huge implications for digital language divide. Emmanouilidou (2014), for instance, has noted the dominance of the world languages on the Internet as one of the reasons for the endangerment of some indigenous languages. Hence, beyond promoting Igbo language, this theme would also help to make available and accessible more Global Southern languages in the global information society, the dearth of which Moyo (2017) has lamented.

That the respondents reported that *BBC News Igbo* was capable of reviving interest in Igbo language and culture is equally significant, especially given Igbo language speakers' well-documented apathy to their language (see, for instance, Salawu, 2006). Likewise, Igboanusi (2006) points out that owing to the psychological impact of the Nigerian Civil War that the Igbo lost, there was intense disinterest in the language, which led to its low status, even among many Igbo people who used Igbo language as their first language. All this makes this view as expressed by one of the interviewees quite instructive:

The fact that we had a lot of people that could no longer speak Igbo because in their homes they no longer spoke Igbo as their first tongue or their mother tongue.

They now started putting effort, they now started trying again to speak Igbo because all of a sudden they saw the importance of speaking again, and somehow BBC News Igbo came in and it seemed that there was this revitalisation of even the culture, people now started identifying with the culture, a lot of people started springing up on social media.

This heightened interest in Igbo language, newfound identification with it, and even the well-meaning efforts to propagate the language on social media collectively denote a major positive attitudinal change that would doubtless help to revitalise Igbo language.

Again, the media, according to Dega (2015), help to preserve the linguistic values of a language, and Salawu (2006) adds that the media help to ensure the survival of an endangered language. However, Garba (2015) reports the non-existence of Igbo-only broadcast station in Nigeria and the allotment of meagre airtime to Igbo-language programming by the southeast zonal station of the country's Federal Radio Corporation. Similarly, other researchers (see, for instance, Salawu, 2006; Nnabuihe & Ikwubuzo, 2006; Coker, cited in Oso, 2006; Nwammuo & Salawu, 2019), have found that Igbo language has totally lost the print media domain to English language. These portend obvious loss of prestige on the part of Igbo language and threats to its survival. The "Conferment of Prestige on Igbo Language" theme, thus, indicates the respondents' affirmation of *BBC News Igbo* potentials to restore the linguistic cum social values of Igbo language among them. Obviously, this would enhance the chances of survival for Igbo language.

Another significant finding reported in Figure 5.2 shows that beyond encouraging its users to use Igbo language more, *BBC News Igbo* has equally encouraged them to use the language in domains that symbolize pride and prestige. They are socio-cultural events (17%), social media

(13%), work (9%), and school (5%). Although the home domain has 44%, encouraging the use of Igbo language in these other socially prestigious domains translates to crucial domain expansion and increased visibility, which Cormack (2004) has highlighted as some of the roles the media can play in halting the decline of an endangered language.

Similarly, the finding provides empirical furtherance of Crystal's (2000) urging of speakers of an endangered language to explore every opportunity of gaining access to the media in order to raise the visibility and profile of their language.

Correspondingly, findings (see Table 5.4) showed that a good number (41.1%) of the survey respondents used Igbo language to post and/or comment on social media posts other than those of *BBC News Igbo*. This result further substantiates the expansion of Igbo language domains reported above, which per Maseko and Moyo (2013), empowers an endangered language as well as helps to reverse its shift.

In many ways, expanding the domains of Igbo language to the social media is particularly valuable to its revitalisation. Viernes (2019), for instance, has said that social media creates a positive image of minority languages by associating them to modern life. Another pertinent benefit of expanding Igbo language domains to the social media is, per Viernes (2019), helping to bring scattered communities of minority language speakers together. This is germane with respect to Igbo language because migration, for which the Igbo are noted (Agozino & Anyanike, 2007; Nwammuo & Salawu, 2019), has been known to cause poor language attitude in Europe (Belmar & Glass, 2019), and language recession in Africa (Are, 2015). Additionally, Crystal (2000) in buttressing the postulate that making use of electronic

technology enhances the progress of an endangered language, aptly captures how the Internet is changing our circumstances of endangerment with regard to migration:

What is significant, of course, is that the Net provides an identity which is no longer linked to a geographical location. People can maintain a linguistic identity with their relatives, friends, and colleagues, wherever they may be in the world. Whereas, traditionally, the geographical scattering of a community through migration has been an important factor in the dissolution of its language, in future this may no longer be the case (p. 142).

That the survey respondents' countries of residence were seven and were spread across three continents, viz. Africa, with the exception of Nigeria, (2.40%); Europe (2.40%), and North America (2.40%), is a proof of Igbo speakers' penchant for international migration.

Yet another significance of expanding the domains of Igbo language to the social media is the comparatively higher affordability and accessibility of the social media, which enable it to circumvent the barrier Fishman's media fetish poses to minority languages. Media fetish is the notion that the organisational power structures that control traditional media (Belmar & Glass, 2019) are usually outside the control and influence of minority languages. Additionally, Viernes (2019) has found that using an endangered language on social media boosts its speakers' confidence to use their language in other domains. This is true of the survey respondents, as 80% of them (see Table 5.5) discussed the contents of *BBC News Igbo* in domains outside of the social media, with 19.2% of them doing so in Igbo language, and another 61.1% doing so using a combination of Igbo and English languages.

Two main themes pertaining to the concept of language prestige, “Awesome and Proud,” and “Sense of Belonging,” emerged (see Table 5.6) as the collective views of the survey respondents on seeing *BBC News Igbo* use Igbo language on Facebook. They seemed to recognise in the first theme, the importance of access and agency that Moyo (2017) reckons as some of the impediments to the use of African languages on the Internet, hence this excerpt: “[I am] Proud that the uniqueness of the Igbo language is made accessible to all and sundry, on social media.” On the second theme, one respondent had written, “I feel that we (the Igbo people) are not left out. I feel that we (the Igbo nation) is known to the rest of the world.” This depicts a favourable disposition to having *BBC News Igbo* use Igbo language on Facebook and is reminiscent of the finding by Abu-Irmies and Al-Khanji (2019) that the Chechens of Jordan had a very positive attitude to using their language on social media, following the researchers’ investigation of the Chechens’ views on using social media to revitalise their language.

When asked to tell of their views on learning about *BBC News Igbo* for the first time (see Table 5.7), the respondents’ assessments of the medium yielded themes similar to the ones addressed above. They are “Very excited,” “Pleasantly surprised,” “Proud and encouraged,” “Promote and preserve Igbo,” “International recognition,” and “Included,” which aptly corroborate Nwammuo and Salawu’s (2019) finding that *BBC News Igbo* had the potentials to make Igbo language popular again, promote aspects of the Igbo cultural elements, and encourage increased use of the language. This, again, is in tandem with Crystal’s (2000, p. 130) assertion that “prestige comes when people start to notice you” – to notice your language.

Generally, findings in this section indicate that *BBC News Igbo* has demonstrably enhanced to a high degree the social and linguistic values of Igbo language among its audience, not only in Nigeria but also internationally. Crystal (2000), who has hypothesized and proved that

endangered languages show progress when their speakers expand its prestige in the dominant community as well as utilize electronic technology, sums up the import of this to Igbo language revitalisation theoretically.

In the theory, Crystal (2000) has maintained that prestige is about being noticed. It is about achieving visibility. It is about having a recognizable public profile. All this, Crystal observes, makes gaining access to media quite critical. Therefore, by according Igbo language enhanced visibility, by according it a recognized public profile, and by putting it in a large-scale digital media, *BBC News Igbo* has greatly enhanced the prestige of Igbo language.

### ***5.6.2 Extent of BBC News Igbo Encouragement of the Acquisition of Igbo Language Skills among its Audience?***

For a language to thrive, it has to be passed from one generation to the other. This is what informs the concept of intergenerational transmission. A language that has ceased to be passed along from one generation of speakers to the next is bound to be endangered, and if this situation continues, the language will be doomed altogether. UNESCO (2003) underscores the failure to pass a language on from one generation to the next as one of the leading causes of language shift, poor vitality, poor attitude, and even outright loss.

As with education generally, the process of transmitting a language can be formal or informal. For instance, the language learning that happens in the home and other phatic domains are typically informal, and the language acquisition that happens in the institutionalized education domains, such as schools, is formal. Whether formal or informal, language acquisition is critical to the vitality of a language. For the purposes of language revitalisation, informal acquisition of language is not inferior to formal acquisition. For this, Crystal (2000), while explaining the

importance of an endangered language having a robust presence in the educational system, avers that giving an indigenous language a formal status along with the dominant language, especially if carefully planned and executed, greatly increases the pupils' self-confidence. So, informal and formal learning complement each other. They, however, have varying degrees of prestige. In theory, the institutionalized education domain is usually accorded more prestige than the home domain. Realistically, however, the home domain has to be in place for the formal education domain to be effective.

Whether a language is acquired through formal or informal learning, usage is important. Increased usage of a language, as Ibekwe (2018) observes, would usually translate to increased proficiency in a language. To attain literacy in a language, therefore, one has to attempt to use the language. Thus, whoever or whatever encourages a people to use a language more, would naturally make them to know the language more. Accordingly, it is based on the fact of *BBC News Igbo* being an Igbo language communicative domain and, therefore, a learning space that this study sought, not whether users have necessarily learned Igbo language from the medium, but the extent the medium has encouraged its audience to acquire Igbo language skills.

Finding showed (see Figure 3) that *BBC News Igbo* has largely (83.20%) encouraged the survey respondents to speak Igbo language more. The reality of this finding was tested when (see Figure 5.4), majority (58%) of the respondents reported to have actually used Igbo language more after they started using *BBC News Igbo*. This is similar to the finding by Nwammuo and Salawu (2019), reported earlier, that *BBC News Igbo* encouraged its users to speak Igbo language.

Since UNESCO (2003) posits that a language would be endangered if its speakers cease to use it, then the fact of majority of the *BBC News Igbo* users being encouraged to speak Igbo language

and to, in indeed, use it more speaks to the medium's potential to revitalise Igbo language. The logic here is, if non-use endangers a language, more usage should help to revitalise it.

The finding above reverberated among the respondents, with some of them (see Table 5.8), again, disclosing that their knowledge of Igbo language improved as they used *BBC News Igbo*, and others stating that they were encouraged to use Igbo language and actually felt comfortable doing so (see Tables 5.8 and 5.9).

Even more salient were the views expressed in the "Acquisition of Igbo Language and Culture" theme in which the respondents reported, based on their experience of using *BBC News Igbo*, that it was an ideal medium for the acquisition of Igbo language skills and socialization into Igbo culture. What is more, this finding backs Crystal's (2000) argument that the school is not the sole source of knowledge of a language's inherent elements such as folklore, history, and literature, as language awareness and social solidarity can be acquired via various other means.

To be clear, when the respondents were asked to tell of their Igbo language competence before they started using *BBC News Igbo* (see Table 5.10), themes such as "Not So Fluent," "Did Not Know It," and "Not Interested" emerged. However, after they started using *BBC News Igbo*, those themes gave way to "Encouraged More," and "Know It Better Now."

Granted that some respondents said they used Igbo language fluently before and after using *BBC News Igbo*, and some even reported not knowing the language even after using *BBC News Igbo*, some of them reported being encouraged to use the language, and some actually reported learning new aspects of it and thus knowing more about the language. This provides strong evidence that *BBC News Igbo* had greatly encouraged the acquisition of Igbo language skills among its respondents.

Now, *BBC News Igbo* is a digital media platform that publishes its stories on Facebook, and evidence drawn from literature tends to principally ascribe the success of *BBC News Igbo* in encouraging the acquisition of Igbo language skills to being a digital media with strong presence on social media. Outakoski *et al.* (2018), for instance, have submitted that when the learning spaces of a language extend to the social media, the language stands a huge chance of winning new ground and domains, which would, of course, translate to more usage. With particular reference to Facebook, Derakshan and Hasanabbasi (2015) are of the view that it enriches language learners' communication and language skills. This, Tang (2018) explains, is plausible owing to Facebook's emphasis on horizontal discussion and persuasion, especially at the interpersonal level. This, (see Table 5.22) was the experience of *BBC News Igbo* commenters, and their experience further underscores *BBC News Igbo* as a transformative digital public sphere where horizontal interactivity takes place among members of an online community and extends offline (see Table 5.5). What is more, 6.93% of the interactions were comments and criticisms on Igbo language usage ((see Table 5.21).

In the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), Fishman (1991) notes that transmitting literacy in a language through education is one of the key indicators of language vitality. The findings above, which indicate that *BBC News Igbo* encouraged the acquisition of and in fact imparted Igbo language skills to its audience, is evidence that it transmits literacy in Igbo language through informal education. Equally meeting Fishman's postulate is this theme, "Provision of Access and Resources for Learning Igbo Language," which was identified (see Table 5.3) when the interviewees were asked to comment on the potentials of *BBC News Igbo* to revitalise Igbo language. Here, one of the interviewees had said:

OK, like me, take for an example, when I have my classes I encourage people, that's the learners, you know what? Watch Igbo movies, watch other people speak Igbo, and one of the great resources I told them to look at is BBC News Igbo; I direct them there because all their interviews, everything is in Igbo, even their subtitles are also in Igbo language, that will also help people to know how to spell, how to write Igbo language.

This clearly adds the element of transmitting literacy in Igbo language through formal education. Findings also showed (see Table 5.21) two themes – “Igbo Usage” and “Co-commenter” – that provide evidence that *BBC News Igbo* audience debated and learned Igbo language on the platform, and that it inspired and created a community of learners who demonstrated awareness of the people's apathy to their language and showed their commitment to seeing the language thrive. This they did through comments on the need to use Igbo language more and criticisms that bordered on the acceptable means of writing it. This Cunliffe (2007) envisages when he argued that the Internet forms active communities of cooperatively engaged minority language producers, who quite vigorously interrogate the materials they produce in their language as well as commune with their community online.

The finding above represents another empirical support that *BBC News Igbo* has genuinely encouraged to a great proportion, the acquisition of Igbo language among its audience. Theoretically, this finding fulfils one of Crystal's (2000) requirements for the revitalisation of endangered languages espoused in the Theory of Language revitalisation: that an endangered language gains vitality when its speakers write it down. Crystal says, “once a language passes the stage where it can be transmitted between generations as the first language of the home, its future is vastly more assured if it can be written down” (p. 138). This is especially apt given that all the

comments and criticisms pertaining to Igbo language usage were written, 37.59% of the analysed comments were written in Igbo, and another 9.79% of the comments (see Table 5.23) were code-switching involving Igbo language.

### ***5.6.3 Prevalent Dialects in BBC News Igbo Reports***

Orthography standardisation, or simply put, having generally acceptable standard of using words, is key to the growth and development of a language. The delayed standardisation of Igbo language orthography and dialects was one of the factors that hampered its growth, and after some standard dialects emerged, the issue turned to the development of a pan-Igbo dialect. This and the conflicts associated with it culminated in a rancorous history that bears a bit of backgrounding. These views put forward in Crystal's (2000) Theory of Language Revitalisation resonate quite strikingly with the Igbo dialects standardisation controversy that though rather copious, are worth reproducing here:

The decision to introduce literacy involves a second problem of selection. Which variety of the language shall be written down? Many endangered languages exist in a variety of dialects, some of which are very different from each other in sounds, grammar, and vocabulary. It is rarely possible, for reasons of practicality, to write them all down; so one dialect must be selected. What, then, happens to the others? Ironically, the very process of selection can be a factor leading to the loss of the diversity it was designed to safeguard. . . Moreover, when a particular dialect is chosen for literacy, it inevitably acquires a higher status, and this can result in community divisiveness, which again might hasten the process of language loss. The problem is especially difficult in places where two different

alphabetical systems are in competition, perhaps associated with different cultural or religious traditions (pp. 139-140).

Citing Williamson, Ugorji (2007) puts forward two notions of orthography. One is orthography as “a process of graphisation; that is, evolving a writing system” (p. 171), and the other is orthography as the principles that guide the giving of alphabets or symbols to speech sounds in order to make reading and writing possible in a particular language or its variants. The first understanding of orthography has to do with assigning of graphic codes that form the alphabet of a language, while the second sense is about the visual representation of a language, the spelling system. It is the first sense of orthography that makes the second possible. As a result, two or more spelling systems can evolve out of one orthography. A good example of this is the English language. The North American spelling system and the British spelling system both came from the Latin/Roman Orthography.

The concept of orthography and/or dialects standardisation has remained current in Igbo language studies because the conflicts associated with it have not been wholly resolved. It is, as stated earlier, one with a controversial history that dates back to 1841 when the Protestant Mission first attempted to create an Igbo language orthography. The first couple of Igbo writing systems, Isuama Igbo and Union Igbo, both created by the Protestant Mission and based on the Lepsius Orthography failed to be generally accepted as *the* standardised Igbo system of spelling. Apart from issues around Igbo dialect diversity, the main opposition to those writing systems was the Roman Catholic Church, which came to Igboland many years after the Church Missionary Society had come. Although the Isuama Igbo, and later Union Igbo, was not accepted for not being authentically Igbo, it was the only standardised Igbo writing system for about 88 years.

In 1929, following the New Orthography as a replacement of the Lepsius Orthography (Emenanjo, 2015), the Roman Catholic Church promoted the Onicha Igbo spelling system. However, that was in turn opposed and rejected by the Church Missionary Society. As a result, each group of missionaries held on to its spelling system and used that in its main geographical spheres – the Owerri areas for the Protestant Mission and the Onitsha areas for the Catholics. That lingered until 1961, 120 years after the Protestant Mission created Isuama Igbo, when the government-backed Onwu Orthography was introduced. This captures a bit of the downside of language standardisation, which Crystal's Theory of Language Revitalisation discusses above.

The Onwu Orthography gave rise to the Standard Igbo, or standard alphabet, which is an amalgam of the two main Igbo dialect blocs, other border lects, and loans from English (Ugorji, 2007). However, Onumajuru (2016) argues that in practice, probably owing to scores of years of usage, Igbo linguists mainly reckon with two major dialect areas. They are the Central Igbo, used mainly around the Owerri and Umuahia axis of Igboland, and the Onicha Igbo, used mainly around the Onitsha areas of Igboland.

Therefore, what the Onwu Orthography succeeded in doing was to harmonize the existing Igbo orthographies. The Union Igbo and the Central Igbo were rooted in the Lepsius and New Orthographies respectively. With the standardised Onwu Orthography, Igbo spelling systems are based on one central alphabet. Accordingly, the exponents of the Protestant Mission's Union Igbo and those of the Catholics' Onicha Igbo, although they shelved the Lepsius and New Orthographies respectively, adapted the Onwu Orthography after the prevalent Igbo dialects of their respective linguistic spheres. Owing to the idea of being created from the dialects of the centrally located Owerri and Umuahia areas, the Central Igbo that emerged from the Onwu Orthography is also variously referred to as Standard Igbo and General Igbo (or Igbo Izugbe).

Today, just as pre-Onwu Orthography, the two opposing Igbo spelling systems, the Central/Standard/General Igbo and the Onicha Igbo, which are both derived from the Onwu Orthography and are highly mutually intelligible, still have, per Onumajuru (2016), variations in phonology, lexis, and morpho-syntax. This study, therefore, sought to know the prevalent, or preferred, dialects in *BBC News Igbo*. The result of which was then related to the revitalisation of Igbo language.

Findings showed that the Central and Onicha Igbo, true to Onumajuru's (2016) observation, were the prevalent Igbo dialects in *BBC News Igbo* reports (see Table 5.14), and of the two, the Central Igbo rooted in the Onwu Orthography is dominant (see Table 5.11). The interview participants unequivocally said *BBC News Igbo* preferred the Central Igbo to the Onicha Igbo, and in the analysed comments and meta-comments, the Central Igbo (see Figure 5.5) had 13.74% while Onicha Igbo had 8.36%.

Some of the study participants adduced *BBC News Igbo* preference and more usage of the Central Igbo to being the generally accepted variant for literature and writing as well as the one acceptable in the academia. This result aptly echoes Onumajuru (2016, p. 22) assertion that the Central Igbo has “gradually established itself as the accepted form by writers, publishers and education authorities for use in schools and for many years has been used as the medium of written Igbo.”

However, another theme also hinged *BBC News Igbo* preference of the Central Igbo on the choice of the missionaries. A respondent in this theme said, “it still boils down to the controversy, that age-long controversy. When the Westerners came it was the Onicha dialect that they thought they were going to use because that was the commonly spoken one but I think when

they came, they all changed it and said it was going to be the other one.” At once, this is in line with the argument that the orthography rivalry between the two missionary groups still subsists, and that the two major Igbo spelling systems that emerged from the Onwu Orthography are essentially modelled after the long-existed systems variously powered by the Lepsius and Practical Orthographies.

For instance, one of the first Igbo novels, *Omenuko*, authored by Pita Nwana, was published in 1933. When, therefore, Onumajuru (2016) holds that the Central Igbo had established itself as the accepted mode for writing, publishing, and schooling, it could not have been solely about the Central Igbo that emerged after the Onwu Orthography of 1961. It is also about the Isuama Igbo, later Union Igbo (but now based on the Onwu Orthography), which was the functional Igbo language writing system for about 88 years and was rivaled only by Onicha Igbo of the Catholics for another 32 years. So when the participants said *BBC News Igbo* choice of Central Igbo over Onicha Igbo was down to the more widely accepted of the two writing systems the two missionary groups separately championed, it was also about the oldest and most widely used in writing and other elite domains.

Another finding (see Table 5.14) showed that the Central Igbo was used in most of the stories *BBC News Igbo* wrote, while the stories involving other Igbo speakers showed a mixture of the Central and Onicha Igbo in equal proportions. Onumajuru (2016, p. 226) has also added that Onicha Igbo, “in its spoken form is more widely used than the Central Igbo because it is the form of Igbo most often learnt for the purposes of trade by non-Igbos,” and the respondent’s excerpt above supports this. However, while this finding further substantiates Onumajuru’s claim of the Central Igbo being dominant in writing, there is no empirical evidence that Onicha Igbo is dominant in spoken form in *BBC News Igbo*. This could be because in all the data sets – survey,

interview, and content analysis – there was no attempt to separate non-Igbo participants and commenters who could use Igbo language from the indigenous Igbo participants and commenters.

Finding presented in Table 5.14 equally showed that the two prevalent Igbo orthographies were sometimes used together in writing and speech. In the analysed comments and meta-comments, these instances of mixing both the Central and Onicha Igbo accounted for 1.43% (see Figure 5.5). This provides evidence, as Onumajuru (2016) notes, that these two orthographies are mutually intelligible to a great extent. Crystal’s theory also encourages this. According to Crystal (2000, p. 140), who favours linguistic diversity, “sometimes, two writing systems can be involved.”

In addition, finding showed instances of neutrality (see Tables 5.14 and 5.19) or occasions in which certain meanings were expressed in ways that denoted neither of the spelling systems of the two main Igbo dialect blocs. In the analysed comments and meta-comments, these accounted for 23.85%. This finding underscores the fact of both systems of spelling being currently based on one parent orthography – the Onwu Orthography. It, again, shows how closely tied the Central and Onicha Igbo are.

Another pertinent finding was the presence of code-switching and transliteration in the *BBC News Igbo* stories and comments analysed (see, for instance, Table 5.19). Code-switching accounted for 10.56% of the analysed comments and meta-comments, and transliteration accounted for 1.36%. As inferred previously in this chapter, code-switching reveals the commenters’ struggles to speak Igbo only, and transliteration suggests that the commenters were poised to speak Igbo, even if it entails using weak substitutes. Beyond this inference, the code-

switching, especially given that 9.79% of it involved Igbo language, and transliteration both indicated the presence and extent of multilingualism among the study participants. This, of course, has theoretical implications for the revitalisation of Igbo language, since, according to Crystal (2000), it is the stage of emergent bilingualism, when speakers, though retaining competence in their first language, become more and more versed in a second language that an endangered language stands a realistic chance of being revitalised.

Finally, although the Central and Onicha Igbo are the prevalent Igbo orthographies in *BBC News Igbo*, in the Theory of Language Revitalisation, Crystal (2000), beyond highlighting the knotty issues involved in orthography standardisation, favours two writing systems, as they make for “a more dynamic linguistic interaction” (p. 140). This suggests that more attention should be paid to the finding that both the Central and Onicha Igbo were occasionally mixed in writing and speech with a view to harnessing its benefits for the health of Igbo language.

#### ***5.6.4 BBC News Igbo Audiences’ Assessment of its Potentials to Revitalise Igbo Language by Age, Gender, and Educational Status***

For a language to develop properly and thrive, its speakers of all ages have to play their respective, and sometimes overlapping, roles diligently. The elderly have their roles in language revitalisation. The middle-aged have their roles in language revitalisation. Likewise, the young have a role to play in language revitalisation. Age, therefore, plays a critical role in the health of any language. Similarly, gender is a crucial concept in language revitalisation. Female parents especially play quite critical roles in revitalising a distressed language, in that they wontedly spend more time with children than male parents. Thus, the transmission of a language from

parents to children mostly revolves around women. It is for this reason that a child's first language is generally referred to as "mother tongue."

In the same way, education is strategic to the success of language revitalisation efforts. Institutionalised education is an effective medium of transmitting literacy in a language, and this, along with informal education, helps to foster intergenerational transmission. Crystal (2000) says this much when, in the Theory of Language Revitalisation, he postulates that "an endangered language will progress if its speakers have a strong presence in the educational system" (p. 136) and that "an endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language down" (p. 138).

Since literacy in language generally improves with education, the educational status of speakers of a language is essential. A generally high educational status among speakers of an endangered language should normally improve the chances of success of efforts aimed at revitalising the language. This study, therefore, sought the views of the survey respondents, comprising both males and females of different age bands and educational statuses, on *BBC News Igbo* potentials to revitalise Igbo language with a view to determining how each of those variables shaped their assessments.

Findings rendered in Table 5.1 showed that male survey respondents (63.2%) were more than the female survey respondents (35.2%), which implies that *BBC News Igbo* probably has more male users than female users. Also, at 96.8%, respondents aged 13-51 constituted the majority, with the ones aged 52 and older making up only 3.2%. This suggests that most audience members of *BBC News Igbo* are still in their active, productive years. Similarly, the finding that respondents

aged 13-38 constituted 73.6% shows that *BBC News Igbo* might hold more appeal to the younger generations of its users than it holds to the older generations.

With respect to education, findings presented in Table 5.1 also showed that *BBC News Igbo* users are generally well educated and literate; majority (56.8%) of the respondents had a university or college degree. The ones who had a master's degree came a distant second with 16%. The respondents who had a PhD constituted 6.4%, but none of them had only primary school education, which makes high school education, at 15.2%, the least educational qualification among them.

As it concerns Igbo language, therefore, Igboanusi (2006) has reported a decline in the level of interest, especially among the younger generation, which has in turn diminished interest in teaching and learning the language. Consequently, with regard to Igbo language revitalisation, the fact of *BBC News Igbo* appealing more to young respondents is a positive index, which finds empirical corroboration in Outakoski *et al.*'s (2018) finding that how much the younger generations use and advance their languages is a pertinent factor in determining the vitality of the languages. This is also true of Belmar and Glass' (2019) submission that an endangered language whose young people fail to take interest in does not stand a chance of survival.

Again, the finding that majority of the survey respondents are highly educated, especially if it translates to majority of Igbo speakers being highly educated, appears to be a huge boost for Igbo language, considering Crystal's (2000) postulate that an endangered language stands more realistic chances of revitalisation when its speakers have a strong presence in the educational system.

Further finding (see Figure 5.6) showed that the sampled audience of *BBC News Igbo* in general (without considering the differences in age, sex, and educational qualification) rated it high in terms of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language, a finding consistent with the views of the interview participants on the same subject matter (see Table 5.3).

Respondents who rated the potentials of *BBC News Igbo* to revitalise Igbo language 8 were the highest at 23.20%, and the cumulation of respondents' ratings that were between 5 and 10 averaged 7.5. This result was similar when the ratings were separated by age, sex, and education, and each variable's mean averages summed (see Tables 5.24, 5.25, and 5.26). When the mean averages of the ratings were calculated according to age bands to sex, males' averaged 7.4, and females' averaged 7. When the mean averages of the ratings were summed by educational status to age, they averaged 7.148. Similarly, when the mean averages of the respondents' ratings were summed by educational status to gender, males' was 7.2 and females' was 7.3.

Additionally, an ANOVA test that examined the rating perception of the respondents in accordance with gender, age, and educational status showed no significant three-way interaction. With the result of the ANOVA test as  $F(3, 99) = 0.21, p = 0.8867$ , there was no statistically significant relationship in the respondents' ratings according to gender, age, and educational status. There is, therefore, no empirical evidence that gender, age, and educational status separately shaped *BBC News Igbo* respondents' assessment of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language. Instead, regardless of gender, age, and educational qualification, the respondents generally held the view that *BBC News Igbo* had high potentials to revitalise Igbo language.

Although aspects of Fishman's GIDS, an evaluative framework to ascertain the degree of endangerment of a language, have already been applied to this study, it is now pertinent to weigh

its indices against other relevant findings to determine the degree of Igbo language endangerment based on current findings.

**Table 5.28: Evaluation of the Status of Igbo Language Endangerment Using Fishman's GIDS**

GIDS Level	Description	Relevant Findings	Degree of Endangerment
1.	The language is used in education, work, mass media, government at the nationwide level.	Respondents reported using Igbo language in work and social media (see Figure 5.2), but Igbo language is definitely not used nationwide in government.	Partially safe
2.	The language is used for local and regional mass media and governmental services.	Igbo language is used in local mass media, but per Nwammuo and Salawu (2018), the volume of Igbo language-based programmes is comparatively low. Also, per Garba (2015), Igbo language programmes exist at regional level, but they are allotted limited airtime. There is no evidence of Igbo language used in government services.	Partially safe
3.	The language is used for local and regional work by both insiders and outsiders.	As reported in Level 1, Igbo language is used for work (see Figure 5.2) locally and regionally (see Figure 5.1) and per Onumajuru (2016), outsiders (non-Igbo people) also use the language for work purposes.	Safe
4.	Literacy in the language is transmitted through education.	Literacy in Igbo language is transmitted through education (see, for instance, Tables 5.3 and 5.9)	Safe
5.	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form throughout the community.	Igbo language is used orally (Table 5.10) by all generations (Table 5.1) throughout the main geographic base of the Igbo people.	Safe
6.	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.	Igbo language is used orally (Table 5.10) by all generations (Table 5.1), but per Igboanusi (2006) young people have little interest in the language, so it is in most cases their second language.	Vulnerable
7.	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it with their elders but is not transmitting it to their children.	The child-bearing generation (Table 5.1) knows the language, but per Nnabuihe and Ikwubuzo (2006, p.52), “parents do not interact with their children in their mother tongue at home and discourage them from embracing it in school.” So, there is low level of intergenerational transmission (Igboanusi, 2006).	Vulnerable
8.	The only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.	Speakers of Igbo language cut across all generations (Table 5.1).	Safe

The evaluation above suggests that Igbo language remains “endangered.” This finding adds to earlier evaluations by Igboanusi (2006), who finds Igbo language to be “endangered,” “potentially endangered,” and “viable,” using evaluative frameworks by Crystal (2000), Kincaid (1991), and Wurm (2003) respectively, and avers that Igbo language is not fatally endangered. However, a comparatively recent study, Ugwuona (2015), provides an update on the status of Igbo language endangerment by reporting that Igbo language is “currently under severe threat of extinction” (p. 212).

Conversely, findings from this study do not exactly agree with Ugwuona’s finding. The difference between these two findings appears to be the fact that *BBC News Igbo* is a digital media. As Crystal (2000) quite strongly observes, the opportunities electronic technology offers endangered languages have scarcely been explored in the domain of language maintenance. Therefore, Ugwuona’s study, which outlines the status of Igbo language before, during, and after the Nigerian Civil War, true to Crystal’s observation, had not factored in the role of digital technology, especially the Internet, in Igbo language maintenance. Instead, status, institutional support, and population of users formed Ugwuona’s yardsticks for determining the state of Igbo language endangerment.

Given the enormous opportunities the Internet offers endangered languages demonstrated in this study, sustained use of Igbo language on digital media should make the language viable again. For instance, Lewis and Simons (2010) have explained how critical Level 6 of the GIDS is: a language at this level and is moving toward Level 5 is developing, but a language at the level but tends toward Level 7 is vulnerable.

Crystal has said, “once a language passes the stage where it can be transmitted between generations as the first language of the home, its future is vastly more assured if it can be written

down” (p. 138). This means that what Igbo language loses from a low level of intergenerational transmission, it makes up from its now regular digital media, *BBC News Igbo*, where, alongside other language activities, the language enjoys a predictable presence in written form. Therefore, although vulnerable at Level 6, Igbo language is pointing to Level 5, and that suggests hope that electronic technology can help to revitalise the language.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings of the survey, qualitative interview, and qualitative content analysis in tables and figures. The key contents of the tables and figures were first analysed briefly and later triangulated and discussed fully, establishing their implications for the research questions, theories, and literature. Findings showed that *BBC News Igbo* has largely enhanced the prestige of Igbo language and encouraged the acquisition of its skills among the respondents.

Findings also showed the Central and Onicha Igbo orthographies to be prevalent in *BBC News Igbo* reports, established the nuances and similarities between the two standardised orthographies, demonstrated their often indistinguishability, and showed how, like in the Englishes, the two could feature quite unproblematically in one phrase or clause.

Finally, findings showed that the respondents generally – both males and females, in all the age bands, and in all educational qualifications – rated high, the potentials of *BBC News Igbo* to revitalise Igbo language. There was, however, no statistically significant evidence that gender, age, or educational status shaped the respondents’ assessments. Overall, findings corroborated most of the postulates of David Crystal’s Theory of Language Revitalisation, chiefly the postulate that electronic technology, although its potentials are yet to be sufficiently explored in the domain of language maintenance, holds immense opportunities for endangered languages.

Also, when the findings were evaluated using Fishman's GIDS, Igbo language was found to still be "endangered." However, there is evidence that if Igbo speakers continuously use the language on digital media, it can survive endangerment and thrive again.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study's overarching objectives and the eventual findings. It also presents the conclusions drawn from the main findings. Based on the research findings, the chapter provides general recommendations and makes suggestions for further research.

#### 6.2 Summary of Findings

Drawing motivation from the reported paucity of research into the impact of digital technologies on African languages (Salawu, 2015), the study set out to examine the impact of *BBC News Igbo* on the revitalisation of Igbo language. While *BBC News Igbo* is a digital media outlet that publishes its reports on social media, Igbo is an indigenous Nigerian language that is endangered. More specifically, the study sought to find out if *BBC News Igbo* has enhanced the prestige of Igbo language among its audience, and if it has done so, the extent of prestige it has bestowed on the language. The study also attempted to ascertain whether the digital news medium has encouraged the acquisition of Igbo language skills among its audience as well as the extent it has encouraged the acquisition of competence in the language. Additionally, owing to the protracted orthography standardisation conflict that beset Igbo language, the study sought to determine the prevalent orthographies in *BBC News Igbo* reports. Lastly, the study attempted to find out how *BBC News Igbo* audiences' age, gender, and educational status shaped their assessment of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language.

To accommodate diversity of viewpoints, to be able to answer different research questions, and to ensure greater validity, the study adopted the mixed method approach. Hence, the study used

quantitative and qualitative research strategies. As a result, data for the study were collected using the qualitative interview method, the qualitative content analysis method, and the survey method. The resultant data were analysed using the summative approach to qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis, descriptive statistics, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and presented in tables and figures. After the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the data in relation to relevant empirical literature and extant theoretical and conceptual frameworks, the following findings were made:

1. A key finding of this research is that *BBC News Igbo* has highly enhanced Igbo language prestige among its audience. This it did through enhanced attitude, revival of interest, increased digitisation, improved visibility, domain expansion, global exposure, increased presence on social media, diaspora inclusion, and provision of broad-based access and agency to the Internet, which translated to restoration of pride and more usage.
2. Another major finding of this study is that *BBC News Igbo* has remarkably encouraged the acquisition of Igbo language skills among its audience. This medium did this by improving the knowledge of Igbo language, encouraging the use of the language through diverse means, and providing a regular, reliable access and rich resources for learning Igbo language.
3. This research has also confirmed that Central and Onicha spelling systems are prevalent in *BBC News Igbo* reports. However, the medium adopts Central Igbo. Therefore, the Central Igbo is the dominant spelling system in its reports. This finding indicates that of all the many Igbo dialects, these two orthographies might be the only ones standardised and, therefore, more amenable in written form.

4. Finally, the study found no statistically significant difference in how the *BBC News Igbo* audiences' age, gender, and educational status shape their assessment of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language. With the result of the Analysis of Variance as  $F(3, 99) = 0.21, p = 0.8867$ , the three variables showed no significant three-way interaction. Instead, the audience members of *BBC News Igbo* collectively rated its potentials to revitalise Igbo language highly. This finding suggests that the audience members are generally attuned to the role of the media in the revitalisation of endangered languages.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

Contrary to the fears of some researchers that internet access (Aikhenvald, 2002), globalisation (Mufwene, 2004), and technology (see, for instance, Salawu, 2006<sup>1</sup>) pose further threats to endangered languages, this research has shown that the digital media can be a huge boost to the maintenance or revitalisation of an endangered language. This validates Crystal's (2000) hypothesis to the effect that an endangered language exposed to electronic technology stands more realistic chances of thriving.

Similarly, one of the main contributions of this research is the provision of empirical evidence that the digital media holds high hopes of revitalisation for Igbo language. This is especially significant because all hopes of it being revitalised through the traditional media had been lost, because of its failure to meet the commercial considerations necessary for media owners/producers and advertisers to create more programmes in it as well as give it more airtime and space in broadcast and print media respectively.

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<sup>1</sup> In Salawu (2006), a computer scientist and linguist expressed fears that technology would have adverse effects on African languages and perpetuate Anglophone imperialism.

The study also contributed to knowledge and literature in digitisation of African languages and journalism. This would doubtless check the fact of digital language divide that confronts most indigenous African languages and add to research on the impact of new media technologies on African journalism, the paucity of which Mabweazara (2014) laments. It has also enhanced research on indigenous African languages, the shortage of which Salawu (2015) decries, and it has boosted Global Southern languages in the global information society, the dearth of which Moyo (2017) bemoans.

This research has established that rather than being entirely new, the Igbo orthographies – Central and Onicha – that emerged following the adoption of Onwu Orthography are offshoots of their forerunners separately pioneered by the Protestant Mission and the Roman Catholic Church. This explains why there were two widely known and used Igbo orthographies pre-and post-Onwu Orthography. The significance of the Onwu Orthography to the Igbo writing systems that existed before it was the centralisation of the Igbo alphabetic spelling system, which made the Protestant Mission to shelve the Lepsius Orthography and the Roman Catholic Church to give up the New Orthography.

Adopting a mixed method approach for the study proved helpful, because it ensured that the views of key participants in the research were obtained sufficiently. These participants are *BBC News Igbo* producers/presenters, commenters, audience who used *BBC News Igbo* but might not have commented on its stories, and Igbo language enthusiasts who knew about the medium's operations. Collecting data from all of these people would not have been possible without a multi-faceted research approach.

## 6.4 Recommendations

This research set out to explore the impact of *BBC News Igbo* on the revitalisation of Igbo language. Therefore, it was aimed, by extension, at examining the hope of revitalisation the digital media holds for endangered languages and fill the near non-existence of research into the media operated in indigenous African languages (Salawu, 2015). Therefore, the following recommendations are made from the research findings:

1. Igbo linguists, indigenous language media researchers, and Igbo language activists who want to embark on Igbo language revitalisation endeavours should look to the immense opportunities for progress the digital media offers endangered languages.
2. Since *BBC News Igbo* is the sole noteworthy Igbo-only media organisation in Nigeria and indeed anywhere in the world, Igbo socio-linguistic bodies and think tanks, such as Ahiajoku, Aka Ikenga, Odenigbo, and Igbo language activists/enthusiasts should endeavor to set up more Igbo-only media outlets. This will ensure that more of the benefits for Igbo language revitalisation inherent in organisations like *BBC News Igbo* could be harnessed further.
3. Rather than allowing the ever-lingering Igbo standardisation issue to continue to endanger Igbo language, the battle for supremacy between exponents of Central Igbo and those of Onicha Igbo should be resolved and turned to a strength. The differences between the two leading orthographies are quite similar to those of the English language. The differences in grammar, sounds, and vocabulary between the leading Englishes – British and North American – have been streamlined such that individuals can choose which to use, depending on their audience or the one their organisations and institutions have adopted. So rather than preferring the Central Igbo for written form, while discarding Onicha Igbo, stakeholders in the efforts to revitalise Igbo

language should take a cue from the example the Englishes offer by accepting the two standardised versions but make it clear that writers should stay consistent with anyone they choose to use in a piece of writing. This is the case in English language; writers are often advised to stick to either the British or North American variant in one piece of writing, and jumbling the two is often frowned upon. Should this be applied to Igbo language, the protracted disputations surrounding the idea of having only one standardised Igbo orthography would be put to rest. In fact, doing this would turn the lingering Igbo language standardisation problems to some strength that would boost the chances of Igbo language making more rapid progress.

4. Media managers/producers and advertisers who are interested in creating programmes to revitalise Igbo language, or any other endangered languages, should think of modelling their programmes after those of *BBC News Igbo*, which have proved to be attractive to the audience and to encourage audience use of Igbo language, resulting in demonstrable capacity to revitalise the language.

5. Research-funding agencies who are interested in knowing the direction and state of research into indigenous language media in Africa with respect to the utilisation of digital technologies, should embrace this study.

### **6.5 Suggestions for Further Studies**

This study has explored the impact of a digital media organisation, *BBC News Igbo*, on the revitalisation of Igbo language. Although the study adopted the mixed method approach to collect rich, adequate, and reliable data, it focused primarily on *BBC News Igbo*, and this situation might limit the generalisability of the research findings. There is, therefore, the need to

embark on further investigation into the deployment of digital media for the revitalisation of Igbo language. The researcher suggests that further research on this should focus on the following:

- Since *BBC News Igbo* is the only recognisable Igbo-only digital media, further research should focus on a small group of the less prominent new media outlets that promote Igbo language in order to examine their roles in revitalising Igbo language.
- Given the remarkable presence of Onicha Igbo in the analysed comments made on *BBC News Igbo*, researchers should explore the perceptions and attitudes of Igbo language users and scholars on the possible acceptance and recognition of the written form of Onicha Igbo in literature, publishing, and education.
- Given that the setting up of *BBC News Igbo* was part of a wider policy of the BBC to promote indigenous African languages such as Hausa, Yoruba, Somalia, Swahili, Afaan Oromo, Amharic, and Tigrinya, other researchers should endeavour to replicate this study in these languages.

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## APPENDICES



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**Senate Committee for Research Ethics**  
Tel: 018 299-4849  
Email: [nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za](mailto:nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za)

31 May 2021

### ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)** on 31/05/2021, the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWUSERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

<b>Study title: Exploring the Impact of <i>BBC News Igbo</i> on the Revitalisation of Igbo Language.</b>																
<b>Supervisor: Prof. A. Salawu</b>																
<b>Student/P</b>																
<b>Primary</b>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>6</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>7</td> </tr> </table>	N	W	U	-	0	0	6	4	2	-	2	1	-	A	7
N	W	U	-	0	0	6	4	2	-	2	1	-	A	7		
<b>Investigator:</b>																
<b>Dr. Ikechukwu W. Eke Ethics number:</b>																
	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">Institution</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Study Number</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Year</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Status</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">                     Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation                 </td> </tr> </table>	Institution	Study Number	Year	Status	Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation										
Institution	Study Number	Year	Status													
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation																
<b>Application</b>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Low</td> </tr> </table>		Low													
	Low															
<b>Application Type: Single Study</b>																
<b>Commencement date: 31/05/2021</b>	<b>Risk:</b>															
<b>Expiry date: 31/05/2022</b>																
<b>Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the <u>annual</u> (or as otherwise stipulated) <u>monitoring report</u> and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.</b>																

**Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):**

**General conditions:**

*While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:*

- *The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the BaSSREC:*
  - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and*
  - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the BaSSREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and BaSSREC reserves the right to:*
  - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
  - *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*

- *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
  - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
  - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the BaSSREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
  - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
  - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*

□ *BaSSREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via [21081719@nwu.ac.za](mailto:21081719@nwu.ac.za) / [13128388@nwu.ac.za](mailto:13128388@nwu.ac.za).*

The BaSSREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the BaSSREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance. Yours sincerely

  
Prof Jacques Rothmann

Chairperson NWU Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm 8 November 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

## SELF-COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE TO EXPLORE THE IMPACT OF BBC NEWS IGBO ON THE REVITALISATION OF IGBO LANGUAGE

Form description

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

You are being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my PhD research. The title of the research project is “Exploring the Impact of BBC News Igbo on the Revitalisation of Igbo Language.” The principal investigator of the project is Professor Abiodun Salawu. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part. Prior to publication of the study’s results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data you generate.

This study has been approved by the Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University (NWU-00642-21-S7) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that we (the researchers) are conducting research in an ethical manner.

This study is an investigation of the potentials of the BBC News Igbo stories published on Facebook to revitalise Igbo language, and it will involve the use of Web survey. I have been trained to use Web survey for data collection. Approximately 4000 participants will be included in the Web survey.

The objectives of this research are: To find out if BBC News Igbo has enhanced the prestige of Igbo language among its audience; to find out if BBC News Igbo has encouraged the acquisition of Igbo language skills among its audience; to find the prevalent orthographies in BBC News Igbo reports, and to establish how the age, gender, and educational status of the BBC News Igbo audience shape their assessment of its potentials to revitalise Igbo language.

You have been invited to participate because you have commented on a BBC News Igbo story published on Facebook in August 2020. You will be excluded if you have not commented on a BBC News Igbo story that was published in August 2020.

You will be invited to participate in the noted study by a Web survey. You will have one week to indicate whether you would be willing to participate. After reading this Informed Consent Statement, you will be requested to check either “Agree” or “Disagree” before the commencement of the study.

There are no direct benefits for you as a participant; however, you will benefit indirectly by contributing to knowledge generation.

The possible risk in this study is the inconvenience filling out the questionnaire might cause; however, to mitigate this, you are at liberty to choose a time convenient to you to fill out the questionnaire.

However, we do believe that the benefits to you and to science (as noted in the previous section) outweigh the risk we have listed. If you disagree, then please feel free not to participate in this study. We will respect your decision.

Should we learn, in the course of the research, that someone is harming you, or that you are intending to harm someone, then we must tell someone who can help you/warn the person you are intending to harm.

The handling, storage, security and analysis of data is critical in ethical considerations. I will ensure data in both hard-(printed) and soft copy (electronic) are safely locked away and password-protected, respectively. Only approved people in my research team may have access to my raw data where the need arises. At the analysis stage, as will be the case throughout, the use of coding will reinforce participants' non-identification, hence upholding the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity.

I will not ask you to tell me your name, and I will not mention your Facebook account throughout the research process. Confidentiality will include the use of pseudonyms for participants, organisations and locations. It involves not disclosing any information gained from a respondent deliberately or accidentally in ways that might identify an individual. Privacy will be ensured by not probing unnecessarily if you do not wish to discuss particular matters. I will not use a translator/interpreter for the purpose of explaining the informed consent, etc. The data will be stored safely in electronic form for a period of five years after which it will be destroyed.

The data from this study will be reported through thematic analysis and descriptive statistics. In all of this reporting, you will not be personally identified. This means that the reporting will not include your name or details that will help others to know that you participated (e.g., your address or the name of your social media account). Data may be re-used in the form of conference papers and journal articles.

Please, note that you will not be paid/compensated to take part in the study. If participating in the research means that you have to travel especially for the purpose of participating, then your travel costs will be paid. There will thus be no costs involved.

The general findings of the research will be shared with you by email. If you would like feedback on your personal results, then email me. You can contact Ikechukwu W. Eke at +23438037070 and [ikechukwueke79@gmail.com](mailto:ikechukwueke79@gmail.com) if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.

You can contact the chair of the Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Prof Jacques Rothmann) at 018 299 1595 or [21081719@nwu.ac.za](mailto:21081719@nwu.ac.za) if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.

You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

#### Declaration by participant

By checking the “Agree” below, you have agreed to take part in the research study entitled: “Exploring the Impact of BBC News Igbo on the Revitalisation of Igbo Language,” and that you have made the following declarations:

- I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/draw/produce visually) could be reproduced publically and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
- I consent to an audio and/or audio-visual recording of the interview.
- I am aware of the fact that I may request that the researcher does not continue with said recording if I request it.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

If you don't mind if I contact you again, or if you would like a summary of the findings of this research, or if you would like feedback on your functioning/wellbeing as reflected in the questionnaire you completed, please send me an email at [ikechukwueke79@gmail.com](mailto:ikechukwueke79@gmail.com)

Kindly let me know the best way to contact you in the space provided below:

#### Section 2 of 6

##### Agreement and Contact Information

Please check the “Agree” below, if you have agreed to take part in this research study. Also, choose the best way to contact you.

Please check the “Agree” below, if you have agreed to take part in this research study. Check "Disagree" if you don't agree to take part in this research and wish to discontinue answering further questions.

\*

Agree

Disagree

What is the best way to contact you? Example: Ikechukwu Eke/[ikechukwueke79@gmail.com](mailto:ikechukwueke79@gmail.com)

Long answer text

#### Section 3 of 6

##### Section A: Demographic profiles

Description (optional)

Sex:

\*

Male
Female
Prefer not to say

Other...

Age:

\*

13-25
26-38
39-51
52-64
65 years or older

What's your highest educational qualification?

\*

Primary school ce
Secondary schoo
Polytechnic/ univ
University/ colle
Master's degree
PhD

Please, write your country of residence below:

\*

Short answer text

Section 4 of 6

## Section B: Audience assessment of BBC News Igbo potentials to revitalise Igbo language

Description (optional)

Does using BBC News Igbo encourage you to speak Igbo language?

\*

Yes
No
I don't know.

Do you speak Igbo language more than you did before using BBC News Igbo?

\*

Yes
No
I don't know.

Where do you speak Igbo language more after you started using BBC News Igbo?

\*

Home
Work
School
Socio-cultural events
Religious events
Social media

Other...

Prior to using BBC News Igbo, did you use Igbo language to post or comment on social media stories?

Yes
No
I can't remember.

Now that you use BBC News Igbo, do you use Igbo language to post or comment on other social media stories, different from BBC News Igbo posts? Please, do not answer this question if your answer to the last question is Yes.

Yes
No
I don't know.

Do you discuss the content of BBC News Igbo outside social media?

Yes
No

With what language do you discuss BBC News Igbo content outside social media? If your answer to the last question is No, please do not answer this question.

\*

Igbo
English
Igbo and English

Other...

Please rate the potentials of BBC News Igbo to revitalise Igbo language on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is "has no potentials at all" and 10 is "has enormous potentials."

\*

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.

Section 5 of 6

**Section C: BBC News Igbo and Enhancement of Igbo Language Prestige**

Description (optional)

How did you feel the first time you learnt about BBC News Igbo?

\*

Long answer text

Describe your attitude to Igbo language before you started using BBC News Igbo.

\*

Long answer text

How do you feel about BBC News Igbo after some time of using it?

\*

Long answer text

Describe your attitude to Igbo language after you started using BBC News Igbo.

\*

Long answer text

Describe how you feel seeing BBC News Igbo use Igbo language on Facebook.

\*

Long answer text

After section 5

Go to section 6 (Section D: BBC New...o Language Skills)

Section 6 of 6

### **Section D: BBC News Igbo and Encouraging the Acquisition of Igbo Language Skills**

Description (optional)

Tell me about your experience speaking Igbo before you started using BBC News Igbo.

\*

Long answer text

Describe your experience reading in Igbo before you started using BBC News Igbo.

\*

Long answer text

Explain your experience writing in Igbo before you started using BBC News Igbo.

\*

Long answer text

Tell me about your experience speaking Igbo after awhile of using BBC News Igbo.

\*

Long answer text

Describe your experience reading in Igbo after using BBC News Igbo for some time.

\*

Long answer text

Explain your experience writing in Igbo after some time of using BBC News Igbo.

\*

Long answer text

Is there anything else you would like to say about BBC News Igbo?

Long answer text

## INTERVIEW GUIDE

***BBC News Igbo* Producers and Igbo Language Enthusiasts' Views on Igbo orthographies?**

### Semi-structured Interview Guide

<b><i>BBC NEWS IGBO</i> PRODUCERS &amp; IGBO LANGUAGE EXPERTS' VIEWS ON IGBO ORTHOGRAPHIES</b>	
<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
What can you say about <i>BBC News Igbo</i> with regard to the revitalisation of Igbo language?	
In general, what's your view on the various Igbo orthographies? By orthography, I mean the different ways the major Igbo dialect blocs spell Igbo words.	
From your experience, which of the Igbo orthographies are dominant?	
Why do you think these orthographies are dominant?	
Peter Okwoche, the editorial lead of <i>BBC News Igbo</i> , has said that the response of the BBC to Igbo orthographies is to change an accent or the way a word is spelt to reflect what part of Igboland a story is coming from. What is your view on this approach?	

Thank you for all the valuable information. Is there anything else you would like to add?	
---	--

<b>Coding Sheet – Survey</b>
Question:
Theme 1: Coding Scheme: Exemplar:
Theme 2: Coding Scheme: Exemplar:
Theme 3: Coding Scheme: Exemplar:
Theme 4: Coding Scheme: Exemplar:
Theme 5: Coding Scheme: Exemplar:
Theme 6: Coding Scheme: Exemplar:
Theme 7: Coding Scheme: Exemplar:

**CODING SHEET FOR QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS**

S/N	Language of Comment	Presence of code-switching	Type(s) of code-switching	Presence of Transliteration	Subject matter of comment
-----	---------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------




<b>S/N</b>	<b>Headlines of BBC News Igbo stories published in August 2020</b>				
	Umụ Igbo Yemi Alade abiakwa ọzọ, kedụ ihe a ga-akpọ nke a? O nwetara nke a ka ọ dara ya? I ga-akwa akwa a?				
	Kedu aha Igbo kachasi too ogologo I ma? Kosisochukwunobikanma, dgz. Tinye nke gi.				
	Onye obula gburu mmadu site n'ikwo ugboala ara ara na steeti anyi ga-akwu ugwo isi onye o gburu tupu ama ya ikpe onwu. – Bello Matawalle (govano Zamfara steeti) Lee ihe govano Zamfara steeti kwuru. Kedụ ihe i chere? Govano steeti ndi ọọ ekwesiri iso ya n'azu?				
	Kedu ihe I chere maka 'ukwu ose' Adele kpara? Kedụ etu i siri hụ ya? Kedụ aha Igbo i ga-enye ya?				
	Lee ka mgbape ọdọgbọelu Akanu Ibiam si aga n'ututu a. <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53964049">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53964049</a>				
	Onye mere ihe onyonyo Wakanda bụ Chadwick Boseman anwuola site n'oria akpu (kansa) nke eriri afo. Nwunye ya na ezinaulo ya no mgbe o nwuru. Olee ozi nkasio i nwere igwa ha?				
	Mkparitauka Puruiche BBC News Igbo na Praise. Ngwa bute nu oche o ja anyi kari. O bu @itz_praise no n'ogbo n'oge a, kedụ ihe ndi i bu n'obi kamgbe o no n'ulo #bbnlockdown				
	Kedu nke iga-eji eri ya? Osikapa, agidi, ji, ojoko: Horo otu n'ime ndi i ga-eji eri ya.				
	Ihe i ga-eri agaghi ako gi n'izu a, ihe ga-eri gi agaghi ezutekwana gi. Kedụ ihe ndi i choro ka o mezuoro gi n'izu a? Kpotakwa ndi enyi gi ka ha bia soro gi dohiri ngozi a.				
	I ga-ejinwu aka gi eme onwe gi isi? I so na ndi mutarala iji aka ha elekota isi ha?				
	Kedu nke i ka ekwu? "Ndo", "Biko", "Daalu": Ufodu ndi na-ekwukari na ndi Igbo enweghi nsopuru na nkwanye ugwu. O bu eziokwu?				
	Gi na umunne gin a-akpa, i na-asi 'nne anyi' ka o bu 'nne gi'? Kedụ nke o bu?				
	Unu asaala chi? Anyi si Akanu Ibiam ewetere unu ekele puruiche n'ututu a. Dika odogboelu a ga-agbape nwanne echi, i zutala 'ticket' gi?				
	E higharikwala mmalite njem mba ofesi gaa abali 5 onwa Seputemba. O bughizikwa nwanne echi bu abali 29 onwa ka o ga-amalite. Obi adikwa gi mma na nke a? <a href="https://bbc.in/2YCZ7Tm">https://bbc.in/2YCZ7Tm</a>				
	I ma steeti ndi e kewaputara taa bu Ogostu 27 n'afo, 1991? Ufodu steeti na-eme ncheta omumu ha taa.				

	I ma steeti ndi ahu? Kpoputa ha ebe a
	Gini bu 'Network' n'Igbo? Ka i ma nke a i ma nke ozo? Gini ka a na-akpo okwu Bekee a n'asusu Igbo?
	Elon Musk \$101B Jeff Bezos \$204.6B: Kedu ndi na-akpo onwe ha "aku na-atakasi"? Ugboro ole ka i ga-agbako ego di n'obaego gi ka o ruo nke Jeff Bezos?
	I leela ejije 'Home Alone'? Afọ ole ka i di mgbe o mere ejije a?
	Lee ndi izizi bidoro BBC Igbo, n'afọ 1990 ha amaghi na ha ga-aruru ntaakuko n'asusu Igbo.
	Gini bu 'bankrolling' n'Igbo? Bia gwa anyi.
	O nwere onye i mara nwuru n'ogbaghara mere n'Emene, Enugwu? Ihe mere bu ihe obi mgbawa mana biko kedu ndi o metutara?
	Kedu otu egwuregwu i che na Messi ga-esonye ugbua?
	Mkparitauka Puruiche Gbasara IPOB na Ogbaghara mere n'Emene, Enugu: Ndi onu na-eru n'okwu n'okwu IPOB ga-etinye onu n'okwu a. Ekwewala ka a korọ gi akorọ. Kedu ihe i nwere ikwu maka ya bu okwu?
	Okwa Onwu
	Di gi maobu enyi gin woke buru nne ya n'ugboala, I ga-agafe n'azu? Asa nwaanyi ngwa bia zara onu gi. O ga-aputa okwu na uka?
	Nchupu Oria nturi okpa n'Afrika
	Mkparitauka Puruiche BBC News Igbo Na Dimma Umeh
	Lee ihe Senator Enyi Abaribe nwere ikwu maka ogbaghara mere n'Emene, Enugu.
	Gini bu 'Polio' n'Igbo?
	Gini bu 'Feminist' n'Igbo?
	Gini kpataara ufodu umunwoke ji atu ujo iku nwa a muru ohuru?
	Jiri naani out mkpuruokwu kwuo ihe kacha agu ndu gi aguu ugbua. Nwanne gini kacha di gi mkpa ugbua? Ekwula otutu okwu. Kwuo ya gbawam!
	"IPOB kwusinu ogbako niile unu na-eme n'Enugwu ugbua! Ekwe akwola! Unu anula ozi si n'onu onye ndu ndi IpoB puta? I kwenyere n'ihe o kwuru?"
	Komishona ahuike Legos steeti ebutela Covid-19
	Mkparitauka puruiche BBC News Igbo na DKT Tochi Okwor (Announcement)
	Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi bu govanọ Enugwu steeti na ndi nchekwa agaala ebe ogbaghara mere n'Emene taa.
	O buru na i nwe nkeji 30 iricha ihe niile di n'efere a, onye ka i ga-akpo?
	I ga-achọ iso n'ezinaulo a? Chika Okpala ga-abu nnukwu mpa, Kanayo O Kanayo ga-abu mpa, Patience Ozokwo ga-abu mma, Aki na Pawpaw ga-abu umunne gi.
	Nwanne o kwa Najjiria bu ihe a o!! Lekwa ugbo ohuru ndi Najjira zuru. Ka o kpotuba, i ga-aba ugbo a mee njem?
	Kedu ihe i ji echeta Kobe Bryant?
	Kedu etu i siri dee aha nne gi n'ekwenti gi?
	Akuko na-ekwu na a nwuchiela Harry Maguire bu 'captain' ndi Manchester United maka ilusa ndi uweojii ogu na Mykonos, Greece.
	Kedu nri izizi i jiri aka gi sie?
	<u>Cuppy</u> <u>, AdekunleGold</u>

	, BurnaBoy na <u>Fireboy Dml</u> ebiputela 'album' ha. Kedụ egwu ha ọhụrụ kachasi amasi gi? Kedụ egwu ha di ọba egwu gi?
	Onye obula gbara boolu n'izu a ga-aracha oroma. Kweere anyi iseeeee!
	Kedu udi egwu i na-agu ma i na-aga ozi n'ulo?
	Kedu ihe unu na-akpo ihe a n'obodo unu?
	Ngwa, onye obula wete efere ya. I ritula agbugbu na ji ubochi uka?
	Isi agu abanyela Hip Hop. Onye egwu Skepta  na Nike tikotara aka wee meputa uwe a. Kedụ etu i siri hu ya. I ga-eyi ya?
	O buru na enyeghi gi ikike iji ya, kedu ihe mere i ji jide ya? Umụ Igbo, lekwa ozi ndi uwe ojii Najiria chorọ inye gi.
	Onye bu 'onye oma CY'?
	Kedu ndi mere ihe a mgbe ha di na nwata?
	Kedu nri i nwere ike iji ngwa nri ndi a meputa? Kedụ ihe foto a na-echetara gi?
	Gini bu "Mutiny" n'asusu Igbo? Kedụ ndi a niile na-asu Bekee ebe a kemgbe, ngwa, o ruo n'omume... 😊
	Kedu ebe i no mgbe egwu ndi a na-ewu? Kedụ ihe o na-echetere gi? <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-52064601">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-52064601</a>
	Kwuo eziokwu 😊 I ga-egonyeli nwa gi ihe onyinye ruru N500K?
	Oburu gi ka akwunyere N14m n'obaego gi, kedu ihe I ga-eme? I nuru akuko nwaanyi ahụ wechiri ego a maghi ama kwunye n'akpaego ya n'uloaku?
	O buru na i hu foto gi ka o na-efeghari na soshal media ebe ndi mmadu sin a i nwuola, gini ka i ga-eme?
	N'ime Kai Havertz, Kalidou Koulibaly, Jadon sancho na Ben Chiwell kedụ onye i chorọ ka otu egwuboolu gi gote? 😊😊
	Lekwa ka ndi mmadu si enweta onwe ha na Wuhan, China bu ebe mbu Coronavirus malitere. Nke a mere na Wuhan Maya Beach Water Park ebe e mere mmemme egwu na ngwucha izuuka gara aga.
	Oke soro ngwere maa mmiri...? I mara na i bu Odenigbo, mezu akpaala okwu a.
	Kedu mgbe ikpeazu i kere isi a? Kedụ ndi 'team natural' tinyenu onu n'okwu a.
	Otu League ndi France na Germany abuzi ndi kachasi mma n'uwa niile dika o bu ha ka no na Champions League?
	Lekwa ihe Michelle Obama kwuru n'ogbakọ ndi Democrats n'ubochi gara aga. <a href="https://bbc.in/2EevCQ6">https://bbc.in/2EevCQ6</a>
	I nula na John Mike Obi nozi na Stoke City ugbua?
	Kedu obodo ndi a kacha anu aha ha na steeti gi?
	Ngwanu o! Kelee nu onyeisi ulo nke izu a. Kedụ aha ochichi i ga-etu Kidwaya?
	Kedụ ihe ahụ niile i chorọ igwa @tochi.official mgbe o no n'ulo BBN Lockdown2020? Lekwa ohere iju ya maobu igwa ya ha niile. Chebiri mkparitauka ma bido ugbua zite ihe niile i chorọ ikwu ozugbo. Mkparitauka puruiche BBC News Igbo na Tochi Okechukwu
	Minjista okwu agum akwukwo nke steeti bu Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba gara nleta uloakwukwo n'Owere taa.
	Ozi nke a na-eme obi polina polina 🍑🍑 o na-emekwa gi?

	Ebe ka i ga-amapu gawa? <a href="https://bbc.in/3azjcyz">https://bbc.in/3azjcyz</a>
	O bu ezi ihe ijiri maka umu gi nosie ike n'ezinulo ebe a na-emegbu gi? O nwere ndi i maara na-eme udi ihe a, kedụ ihe i gwara ha? 🤔
	Ahuekere/kashu: Kedụ otu nke i so na ya?
	Kedu usoro ntuliaka maka nchupu ka amasi gin a BBN? O bu nke ndi bi n'ulo ka o bu nke ndi no n'ezina-eme? Tinya onu n'okwu a.
	Chioma Uzodimma, bu nwunye Hope Uzodimma, zutere makwa nabata Oluomachi dika nwa ya n'ubochi gara aga.
	Kedu ihe i maara gbasara Ibrahim Babangida? Kedu ihe i chetara gbasara Ibrahim Babangida mgbe o no n'ochichi (Ogost 27 1985 – Ogost 26 1993)?
	Kedu ekpere I ga-ekpere ndi no n'ule Waec ugbua? Ule Waec amalitela taa.
	Sooso Kaisha puru n'ulo Big Brother n'izu a. O bu ya ka i chere ga-apu? Guo ihe mere ebe a 🙌🙌 <a href="https://bbc.in/3kPwOuf">https://bbc.in/3kPwOuf</a>
	Lekwa ugegbe anya oheru Kanye West chorọ iweputa. I ga-azu ya?
	Willian aburula onye otu egwuregwu Arsenal. Ndi Arsenal si nu ya noo. Ndi Chelsea Football Club o na-ewute unu? 🏴
	Ma a puo n'asompi bọlu, Neymar na Ronaldinho Gaúcho bu ndi a ma ama ihe oringo na-amasi nke ukwu. N'etiti ha abuo, kedụ onye kacha abanye na nsogbu maka oringo?
	Biko tuonu ya Mama Munir 🍌🍌🍌 A guola nwa Regina Daniels aha. A na-akpo ya Munir Neji Ned Nwoko 🍌🍌
	Keduzi nke na-eme ebe a 🤔🤔🤔 kedụ nke a na-etu ya nakwa okwu ya kacha ato gi?
	Kedụ ugboala nna gi maobu nnanna gi nwere?
	Ka3na na Lilo aburula ndi izizi puru n'ulo big Brother. O bu ha ka i chere ga-apu? Lekwa etu o siri gaa 🙌🙌 <a href="https://bbc.in/3gzWqsJ">https://bbc.in/3gzWqsJ</a>
	Onye ka o bu? Ngwanu ka anyi mara ndi ga-enweta nke a.
	Umụ Igbo bja soro anyi n'elekere ise nke mgbede a (5pm) mgbe anyi na Ebere Okaro ga-enwe mkparitauka. Ugbua bu ohere izite ajuju gi. Mkparitauka puruiche BBC News Igbo na Ebele Okaro
	Etu m ji si Mbaise buru 'Minister' ikpe nkwumoto na Canada – Kaycee Madu Etu m ji si Mbaise buru 'Minister' ikpe nkwumoto na Canada – Kaycee Madu 🙌 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/53969401">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/53969401</a>
	I ma na omenala Igbo, nwaanyi nwere oke n'ihe nna ya? I ma n'omenala Igbo, nwaanyi nwere oke n'ihe nna ya? Lee ihe mere o ji gbanwee ugbua dika McGinger Ibeneme siri kwuo.
	Lee ka ufodu ndi siri nabata mgbape odugboelu Akanu Ibiam taa. 🙌 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53964049">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53964049</a>
	Mmepe odugboelu Akanu Ibiam di n'Enugwu

	Mmepe ọdọugboelu Akanu Ibiam dị n'Enugwu abịala n'isi Njedebe. Ugbọelu ga-amalitezi ife ugbua.
	Mmepe Akanu Ibiam Int'l Airport tata ka na-aga n'ihu...
	Mmepe Akanu Ibiam Int'l Airport Enugwu ka na-aga n'ihu tata. Ndi Ministers, Senators na House of Reps awuchiela ugbua. Lee ka o si akpotu.
	Mmepe Akanu Ibiam Int'l Amalitela ugbua. Lee ka o si afio.
	Welie aka gi elu ma o buru na nke a metutara gi.
	Eze Ekwensu na ihe mere e ji akpo ya Eze Ekwensu "Oge m na-aga uka ihe anaghi agara mu nke oma. Ugbua m bu onye ozi ekwensu, ihe na-agara mu nke oma" - Eze Ekwensu 🙌 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-51425003">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-51425003</a>
	Nwa aniga o! Nwa aniga o! 😂😂 Nwa Igbo, ka anyi kpolaraa gi ulo ozugbo. 😂
	Africa Eye nke choputara mba UAE gbasara agha Libya Africa Eye achoputala na aka mba UAE di na ogbunigwe ugbọelu a turu na Libiya gburu ndi agha na-ejighi ngwoagha obula.
	Mkparitauka anyi na Praise nke noro na Big Brother.
	Ugo eberela na mgbagbu, Akanu Ibiam Int'l Airport adila njikere maka mmepe n'ubochi 30th August. Igbala tiketi gi? Ugo eberela na mgbagbu, Akanu Ibiam Int'l Airport adila njikere maka mmepe n'ubochi 30th August. I gbaala tiketi gi?
	Lee nkowa ihe omimi di n'ilouwa, ogbanje na agwu n'onu Nze Duruagwu Ukaejuoha: Kedu ihe i che bu ogbanje maobu agwu? <a href="https://bbc.in/3b82gPL">https://bbc.in/3b82gPL</a>
	Ebe ugbọelu helikopta dara n'Opebi, Legos Ebe ugbọelu helikopta dara n'Opebi di na Legos taa. Nke a sitere n'aka BBC News Pidgin. <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53948980">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53948980</a>
	Ebe ugbọelu helikopta dara na Opebi, na Legos Lekwa ebe ugbọelu helikopta dara na Legos taa. Nke a sitere n'aka BBC News Pidgin. <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53948980">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53948980</a>
	Ebe ugbọelu helikopta dara na Opebi, na Legos Lekwa ebe ugbọelu helikopta dara na Legos taa. Nke a sitere n'aka BBC News Pidgin. <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53948980">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53948980</a>
	Nwada Igbo na-ere abacha Umụ Igbo na-agba mbọ ebe obula ha no. Lee nwaada Igwe Glory na-ere ahia abacha iji nweta ndu o chorọ! 🍲🍲 🙌 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-49043504">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-49043504</a>
	Mkpochi ulohia na Ghana

	<p>Nigeria vs Ghana: Lekwanu etu umu Igbo na umu Naijiria ndi ozonon na Ghana si ebe akwa ariri maka mkpochi a na-akpochi ulohia ha.</p> <p>Ha na-eme ngaghari iwe maka mkpagbu ha ha-agabiga.</p> <p> <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53935786">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53935786</a></p>
	<p>Femi Kayode kpariri onye ntaakuko Lekwa onye ntaakuko ahụ Femi Fani-Kayode kpariri maka o juru ya ajuju. O nwere otutu okwu maka mkpari ahụ enyere ya, i buru onye ntaakuko a, ginị ka i ga-eme?<a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53893892">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53893892</a></p>
	<p>Akiddie na-enyere umuaka aka imuta asusu Igbo Akiddie bu app Dominic Onyeka meputara inye umuaka aka imuta asusu Igbo.  <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-50182275">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-50182275</a></p>
	<p>Mkpariaka puruiche gbasara IPOB na Biafra na okwu ihe mere n'Emene, Enugwu steeti, Naijiria.</p>
	<p>Mkpariaka BBC Igbo na Dimma Umeh Mkpariaka BBC Igbo na Dimma Umeh amalitela. I nwere ajuju, bia juo ya ugbua.</p>
	<p>Ugbuala otu onye oru n'uloaku ahụ gbatoro agbatu. Kedu ihe o ga-eme ugbua?</p>
	<p>Ndi Eziosu na-eti mkpu maka ogbunigwe n'ala ha O teela a luru agha mana ndi Eziorsu n'Oguta LGA, Imo steeti ka na-enweta ogbunigwe n'ala ha, lekwa udi mkpu ha na-eti maka ndu ha.</p>
	<p>"O nweghi ihe e mere ndi na-achi anu na-eji egbe na-emebi ihe kama a na-egbusi ndi ntorobia Igbo ejighi egbe." -Okwu Guy Ikokwu ji kwaa ihe mere n'etiti Ipob na ndi oru nchekwa n' Emene,Enugwu. <a href="https://bbc.in/3aUbQG5">https://bbc.in/3aUbQG5</a></p>
	<p>'Igbo niile kwesiri iputa katoo ihe e mere ndi Ipob n'Emene' - Aloy Ejimakorm, Okaiwu Ipob 'Igbo niile kwesiri iputa katoo ihe e mere ndi Ipob n'Emene' - Aloy Ejimakor, Okaiwu Ipob...</p>
	<p>Govanon Borono steeti Govanon Borono steeti si na o bu ha bu ndi ochichi ka uta diri na-ebute nsogbu ndi Boko Haram. Lekwa etu o siri kwaa aku oyibo nsugbe.</p>
	<p>Mkpariaka BBC News Igbo na Tochi Okwor, onyeisi nchekwa na mgbochi oria na NCDC Mkpariaka BBC News Igbo na Tochi Okwor, onyeisi nchekwa na mgbochi oria na NCDC</p>
	<p>Nkwakorita ndi IPOB na Police/DSS n'Enugwu: Ndi Emene amalitela zuwa ahia tata na-agbanyeghi ogbaghara mere unyaahu nke tara isi ndi IPOB nakwa ndi uweojii. Lee ihe ndi mmadu kwuru maka ya.</p>
	<p>Gini kpatara ogbaghara daputara n'Emene, Enugu? Gini kpatara ogbaghara daputara n'Emene, Enugu?...</p>
	<p>Uru di na mmanya ngwo Nwanne mmanya nkwa o na-agu gi, bia nara otu iko ebe a ka i jiri jide akpiri gi aka. </p>

	<p>Mana chere o, onye malitere iku mmanya kamgbe afọ 1982, gini ka a ga na-etuzi ya ugbua?</p> <p>👉 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-46489179">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-46489179</a></p>
	<p>Onye na-awu 'jam jam'          Umụ Igbo lekwanu 'Jackie Chan' nke Naijiria oo!! 🤔🤔</p> <p>Lekwa etu o si awufe ihe niile. Biko kedụ ihe a ga-akpo nke a?</p> <p>🔥 Anwakwala ihe o na-eme n'ulo gi. 🔥</p> <p><a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/46129282">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/46129282</a></p>
	<p>'Nnamdi Kanu enweghi ikike igbanwe Okoloto Biafra'          Gee ihe onu na-ekwuru otu Massob bu Samuel Edeson kwuru banyere Okoloto Biafra Nnamdi Kanu gbanwere ohuru a: <a href="https://bbc.in/3hjBYwi">https://bbc.in/3hjBYwi</a></p>
	<p>Bia huru etu nwaanyi ocha si edebe ngwa nri o ji esi ofe. 🤔🤔</p> <p>Bia huru etu nwaanyi ocha si edebe ngwa nri o ji esi ofe. 🤔🤔</p>
	<p>Mmeri anyi ga-ebuli mmuta Teknuzu - Umwakwukwo Regina Pacis          Ka anyi chetere gi maka umwakwukwo Regina Pacis meriri n'asompi teknuzu nke Technovation. Ha gara mba Amerika turu ugo lota.</p> <p>Kirie ya ebe a 📺 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-45544742">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-45544742</a></p>
	<p>Etu iko igbo ga-esi nye gi dola 10,000 n'otu onwa - John Okakpu          Abu m okwogboelu mana iko igbo tokariri m ife ugboelu - John Okakpu</p> <p>👉 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/53814439">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/53814439</a></p>
	<p>Nke na-eme ugbua: Goomenti Enugwu na-akutu uloka Ebenezer Methodist n'Emene          Nke na-eme ugbua: Goomenti Enugwu na-akutu uloka Ebenezer Methodist n'Emene.</p>
	<p>Mkparitauka BBC News Igbo na Tochi Okechukwu          Mkparitauka BBC News Igbo na Tochi Okechukwu nke Big Brother Naija Lockdown</p>
	<p>"Waec nke afọ a adighi iche na nke ndi ozọ." - Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba (Minista Agumakwukwo nke steeti)</p> <p>👉 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53762198">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53762198</a></p>
	<p>O ruola nu n'omume! 🤔🤔🤔 Ngwa mee nke gi jiri #abchchallenge ma tagi anyi ka anyi bugharia ya. Ngwa ka o sara oku 🤔🤔🤔 . . #bbcigbo #bbcnewsigbo #igboamaka #abchchallenge #igbo #learnigbo #ogeneigbo #okwuid #akwukwo #</p> <p>O ruola nu n'omume! 🤔🤔🤔</p> <p>Ngwa mee nke gi jiri #abchdchallenge ma tagi anyi ka anyi bugharia ya.</p> <p>Ngwa ka o sara oku 🤔🤔🤔</p>
	<p>Odo ugboelu Akanu Ibiam Enugwu: Goomenti Enugwu ka nokwa na nkwa na nkuri ulo n'Orie Emene Enugwu. Ulo ahia, ulo ndi mmadu nakwa ulo uka adaruola ala.          Ibe akwa na iru uju juputara n'Emene Enugwu ugbua.</p>

	Lee etu e si ele Waec n'ụlọakwụkwọ 'Trans Ekulu Girls Secondary School', n'Enugwu. Lee etu e si ele ule WAEC n'ụlọakwụkwọ Trans Ekulu Girls Secondary School Enugwu.
	Etu dị iche iche esi eyi okpu nwagorọ na ihe putara Ị ma ụzọ dị icheiche e si eyi okpu nwagorọ na ihe ha putara?  <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53790419">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53790419</a>
	"Dị m chụpuru mụ na ụmụ n'ụlọ n'ihia anya anyị na-acha anụnu anụnu." - Risikat Moromoke Azeez Akụkọ sitere n'aka BBC News Yoruba
	Ofe onubu wufuru n'ala Lekwanu nri di uto e sichara, mana ha niile awufuo n'ala. Chai!!! 🍌🍌  O buru gi ka aguu ji, ginj ka i ga-eme? 🍌🍌  <a href="https://bbc.in/2zNddHB">https://bbc.in/2zNddHB</a>
	Igbo na-asu n'olu n'olu Igbo na-asu n'olu n'olu, lee olu di icheiche si n'ala Igbo. Kedu nke gi?
	Onyonyo etu e si agba mkponala Nwanne, i notula ebe a na-agba egbe mkponala?...
	Odo ugboelu Akanu ibiam Enugwu: Ndi oru ECTDA n'Enugwu amalitela ikwatu ulo ndi mmadu nakwa odu ahia no na gburugburu odo Ugboelu ahia. Ebe a na-akwatu ugbua bu ihu ahia Ori Emene n'Emene Enugwu steeti.
	Odo ugboelu Akanu ibiam Enugwu: Ndi oru ECTDA n'Enugwu amalitela ikwatu ulo ndi mmadu nakwa odu ahia no na gburugburu odo Ugboelu ahia. Ebe a na-akwatu ugbua bu ihu ahia Ori Emene n'Emene Enugwu steeti.
	Odo ugboelu Akanu ibiam Enugwu: Ndi oru ECTDA n'Enugwu amalitela ikwatu ulo ndi mmadu nakwa odu ahia no na gburugburu oduugboelu. Ebe a na-akeatu ugbua bu ihu Emenite n'Emene Enugwu steeti.
	Odo ugboelu Akanu ibiam Enugwu: Ndi oru ECTDA n'Enugwu amalitela ikwatu ulo ndi mmadu nakwa odu ahia no na gburugburu oduugboelu. Ebe a na-akutu ugbua bu ihu Emenite n'Emene Enugwu steeti.
	Gini na-afio? O di mfe ibu onye ntorobia n'oge a? O di mfe ibu onye ntorobia n'oge a?...
	'O buru na-enyeghi onye Igbo okwa onyeisi Naijiria, ihe ga-emebi." - Ezekwesili Nwodo 'O buru na-enyeghi onye Igbo okwa onyeisi Naijiria, ihe ga-emebi." - Okwesiliezekwe Nwodo  👉 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53740076">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53740076</a>
	Akanu Ibiama Int'l Airport Enugu: Njem nleta nke ministra na-ahu maka njem ugboelu n'Enugwu, Hadi Sirika. Mazi Sirika kwuru na ubochi 30th August ka a ga-emepe ya bu odu ugbo elu n'Enugwu.
	Lee Oguta, obodo oma no n'akuku mmiri I nula maka Ugwuta di n'Imo steeti? ...
	Odo ugboelu Akanu Ibiama n'Enugwu: Oru ndozi odo Ugboelu na-aga n'ihu ugbua. Lee ka ndi ECTDA si aru oru ha.

	<p>Mkparịtaụka BBC News Igbo na Jude Chukwuka</p> <p>Mkparịtaụka BBC News Igbo na Jude Chukwuka, ome ejije na Nollywood.</p>
	<p>Zaa Ngwangwa nke Destiny Etiko</p> <p>'Drama doll' ndi Nollywood <u>Destiny ETIKO Official</u>. na-eke ka onwa taa 🤔🤔 mana o bughị naani n'ahụ ka o mara mma, lekwa ihe ndi o ma eme. 🤔🤔 I nukwara etu o si asu asusu obodo ha 🤔🤔🤔</p> <p>Gini ka i ga-agwa ya taa?</p>
	<p>'Etu m si eso ndi obi akpoo'- Angela Nwosu</p> <p>'Etu m si eso ndi obi akpoo.' - <u>Angela Nwosu Page ...</u></p>
	<p>Mkparịtaụka Puruiche nke BBC Igbo na Stella Damasus</p> <p>Mkparịtaụka Puruiche nke BBC Igbo na Stella Damasus</p>
	<p>Mkparịtaụka BBC News Igbo na Okwesilieze Nwodo</p> <p>Mkparịtaụka BBC News Igbo na Okwesilieze Nwodo amalitela. Bia sonye anyi ugbua.</p> <p><a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53740076">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53740076</a></p>
	<p>Etu ufo du ndi oru ahike si erefusi ngwaoru covid ekwesiri inye na nkiti</p> <p>Etu ufo du ndi oru ahike si erefusi ngwaoru covid ekwesiri inye na nkiti.</p> <p>👉 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/media-53712147">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/media-53712147</a></p>
	<p>Etu nghotahie mu na Bishop Awka Diocese si malite.' - Ekene Nwosu</p> <p>'Etu nghotahie mu na Bishop Awka Diocese si malite.' - Ekene Nwosu</p> <p>👉 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53701830">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53701830</a></p>
	<p>Ogba Mbọ: Loveth Ifunanya Chinyere na-eme okpa n'uzo puru iche</p> <p>Loveth Ifunanya Chinyere bu okaiwu hapuru oru ya ibido ire okpa.</p> <p>Ngwanu gee nti choputa ka o siri malite.</p> <p>👉 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-50514450">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-50514450</a></p>
	<p>O di mma nwaanyi irio nwoke o huru n'anya maka olulu?</p> <p>O di mma nwaanyi irio nwoke o huru n'anya maka olulu? I buru nwaanyi i ga-eme ya, nwoke i ga-ekwe?</p> <p>👉 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/53683899">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/53683899</a></p>
	<p>Ogbambo nke nwoke na-akpa isi Success Okoli</p> <p>Lekwa nwoke aka ochie ndi umunwaanyi na-agba akwukwo ka o kpaa ha isi. 🤔🤔</p> <p>Sucess Okoli na ezinaulo ya niile ji ikpa isi eri. Lee etu ha si agba mbọ.</p> <p>👉 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53619755">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53619755</a></p>
	<p>Ihe Joe Igbokwe kwuru maka ochichi 2023</p> <p>Joe Igbokwe tinyere onu n'ihe gbasara ndi Igbo izo okwa onyeisiala Najirija n'afọ 2023. Kedu</p>

	<p>ihe i che maka okwu ya?</p> <p>👉 <a href="https://bbc.in/30AsBm1">https://bbc.in/30AsBm1</a></p>
	<p>Ndi dokita na-azo ndu ha ga-egbuzi onwe ha n'ihhi ntuliaka?</p> <p>Lee ka ndi otu 'NMA' nke Enugwu steeti ji ogo na mgba lusa ntuliaka ha mere unyaahu.</p>
	<p>Onwa ole ka nne kwesiri inye nwa ya naani mmiri ara? Bia soro anyi kpaama ya.</p>
	<p>Gini na-afio nke Mercy Eke</p> <p>I chetara mkparitauka anyi na Mercy Eke nwere n'ubochi Eprel 2? Lekwa ka o siri gaa ebe a.</p>
	<p>'Etu umuagboghoh si dinaa m n'ike mgbe m di afio ise'.</p> <p>'Etu umuagboghoh si dinaa m n'ike mgbe m di afio ise'...</p>
	<p>A si na mmiri bu ndu mana lee udiri ahuhu ndi obodo Olo na-ata inwete mmiri.</p> <p>A si na mmiri bu ndu mana lee udiri ahuhu ndi obodo Olo na-ata inwete mmiri.</p> <p><a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53605210">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53605210</a></p>
	<p>Lee ka ihe dara ka ogbunigwe siri mee na Beirut, Lebanon ka onye ntaakuko BBC na-arụ oru.</p> <p>Ogbunigwe gbara na Beirut, Lebanon adagbuchala onye ntaakuko BBC na-arụ oru. Lee ka o si mee n'ihe nkiri a.</p>
	<p>Mkparitauka BBC NEWS IGBO na Angela Nwosu</p> <p>Mkparitauka BBC NEWS IGBO na <a href="#">Angela Nwosu Page</a></p>
	<p>Ndi agboro nyere ndi "pensioners" oso n'Owere</p> <p>Lee ka ndi agboro na-eti ndi na-eme ngaghariwe maka ego ezumike nka e ji ha.</p> <p>Guo maka ya n'uju ebe a: 👉 <a href="https://bbc.in/3kdBaev">https://bbc.in/3kdBaev</a></p>
	<p>Ihe Mabaka kwuru maka Orji Uzor Kalu</p> <p>Jiri nti gi nuru ihe Mbaka kwuru maka Orji Uzor Kalu.</p> <p>Dika Adoration Ministry kwuru na onweghi mgbe o jiri kwado Kalu.</p>
	<p>'Chidinma nwa m di ndu gaa oru, e bulatara m ozu ya.' - Chineze Ajoku</p> <p>'Chidinma nwa m di ndu gaa oru, e bulatara m ozu ya.' - Chineze Ajoku 🙄</p> <p><a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53650062">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53650062</a></p>
	<p>Etu Oluomachi si ekwe ukwe n'uloka govanọ Imo Steeti</p> <p>Kedu etu Oluomachi si ekwe ukwe n'uloka govanọ Imo Steeti?</p> <p>Lee ya. <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53627242">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53627242</a></p>
	<p>'Anaghi m aga Champions League igwu egwu.' - Ndubuisi Emmanuel Egbo</p> <p>'Anaghi m aga Champions League igwu egwu.' - Ndubuisi Emmanuel Egbo</p> <p><a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/egwuregwu-53620520">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/egwuregwu-53620520</a></p>
	<p>A na-ahuzi Odumeje (Chukwuemeka Ohanemere) ebe niile. Lekwa mgbe o gara njem nleta na be Orji Uzo Kalu na govanọ Enugu steeti, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi.</p>
	<p>Ima aka onye ma agu akwukwo Igbo.</p> <p>I ga-emenwu ka Stella Damasus? Lee ka o siri guo, 'Anu gbaa ajo egbe' nke Osita Amakeze</p>

dere   Ndi biputara akwukwo: @purpleshelves
<p>Kedu etu Hydroxychloroquine si metuta covid-19? Gee nti ka Dkt Ije Akunyili gwa gi Kedu etu Hydroxychloroquine si metuta covid-19? Gee nti ka Dkt Ije bu nwa Dora Akunyili gwa gi ugbua.</p> <p>Gaa gwaa ndi yaadi gi. <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53620523">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53620523</a></p>
<p>BBC News Igbo na Brown Igboegwu</p> <p>Brown Igboegwu gwara anyi ihe ya na nwunye ya gabigara tupu ha amuo nwa ha nwaanyi ka afu iri (10) gachara.</p>
<p>Okwudili na Loveth Egbo bu di na nwunye kpuru isi amuola ejima ka ha sechara okwu amuola ejima.</p> <p>I chetara Okwudili na Loveth Egbo? Ha bu di na nwunye kpuru isi amuola ejima ka ha sechara okwu. 🙌👉 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53533404">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53533404</a></p>
Mkparitauka anyi na Ebele Okaro amalitela. Bia sonye anyi ugbua
<p>Ndi Enugwu Capital Territory akwatuwala ulo elu ogogo ato ahụ dara n'Enugwu na 9a Egwuekwe street, Maryland. Ndi Federal Fire Service nakwa Enugwu Fire Service nokwa chim dika a na-akwatu ulo ahụ.</p>
<p>Ndi Enugwu Capital Territory akwatuwala ulo elu ogogo ato ahụ dara n'Enugwu na 9a Egwuekwe street, Maryland. Ndi Federal Fire Service nakwa Enugwu Fire Service nokwa chim dika a na-akwatu ulo ahụ.</p>
<p>Mike Ejeagha</p> <p>Kedu egwu mbu Mike Ejeagha tiputere? Kedu egwu ya ndi i ma?</p> <p>👉 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-47158577">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-47158577</a></p>
<p>Ndi Enugwu Capital Territory akwatuwala ulo elu ogogo ato ahụ dara n'Enugwu na 9a Egwuekwe street, Maryland. Ndi Federal Fire Service nakwa Enugwu Fire Service nokwa chim dika a na-akwatu ulo ahụ.</p>
<p>Lee ka ulo elu ogogo ato siri daa n'Enugwu na 9a Egwuekwe street, Maryland, Enugwu. Ndi Enugwu Capital agbatala oso enyemaka ugbua.</p>
<p>Umakwukwo Najirija guchara na mahadum China n'afu 2020 atola na mba ahụ n'ihu mmachi obodo.</p> <p><a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53605208">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53605208</a></p>
<p>Ndi Ugu na-achi Najirija adaala, ka e nye ndi Igbo ochichi - Onye Fulani Okaiwu Wan Mohammed Shehu bu onye otu South-East for President kwuru na oge eruola ka onye Igbo chia Najirija.</p> <p>Aloy Ejimakor bu okaikpe Nnamdi Kanu na Ipob tinyekwara onu na ya.</p> <p>Kedu ihe i chere? 🤔 <a href="https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53608006">https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53608006</a></p>



BBC News Igbo

'Etu nghọtahie mụ na Bishop Awka Diocese si malite.' - Ekene Nwosu

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Echiri m Dikin n'Awka dayosis.  
Onye chiri m ya bụ Bishop  
Paulinus Ezeokafor

0:14



-6:17



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BBC News Igbo

31 August 2020 at 12:00

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Tinye nke gi. 🍌👉

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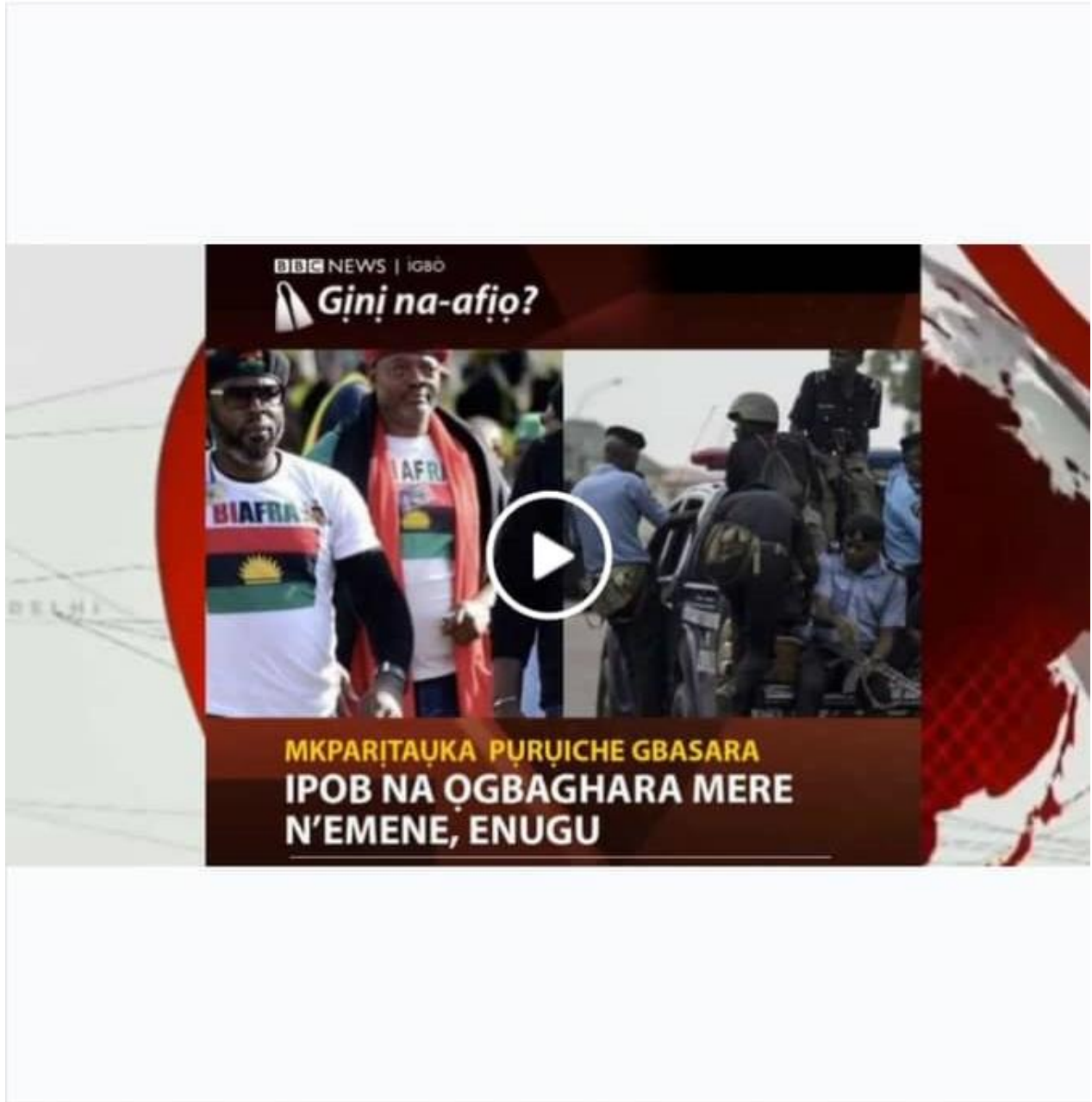
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Mkpariaku puruiche gbasara IPOB na Biafra na okwu ihe mere n'Emene, Enugwu steeti, Naijiria.



**BBC News Igbo**

Chioma Uzodimma, bụ nwunye Hope Uzodimma, zutere makwa nabata Oluomachi dika nwa ya n'ụbọchị gara aga.

 Chioma Uzodimma

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# Gịni bụ 'Feminist' n'Igbo?



BBC News Igbo

Ọ kwa a na-ekwu na Igbo akụwaala 'slate'. Ngwa gịni ka 'feminist' pụtara n'asụsụ anyị?

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'Chidinma nwa m dī ndụ gaa ọrụ, e bulatara m ozu ya.' - Chineze Ajoku  
'Chidinma nwa m dī ndụ gaa ọrụ, e bulatara m ozu ya.' - Chineze Ajoku



<https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-53650062>

🙄👍 Desmond Chinaza Muokwudo and 23K others

👍 23K

💬 15K

➦ 3K



BBC News Igbo

25 August 2020 at 17:00 ·

Lee ihe Senator Enyi Abaribe nwere ikwu maka oghaghara mere n'Emene, Enugu.

