

RENAISSANCE OF THE IGBO LANGUAGE IN A DIGITAL AGE: THE TEN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

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Abstract

One of the basic facts about the contemporary era is that it is a digital age. Unlike the previous era where most activities were via analogue, today, the majority of people's daily activities are internet-mediated. Of course, such mediation is never without some effects on human reality, the Igbo language inclusive. The effect can be either constructive or destructive. Positively, it is a useful mechanism for language propagation and preservation. Unfortunately, some developed nations use it to further their linguistic imperialism over disadvantaged nations. As a result, such endangers the languages of the deprived nations, which includes the Igbo language. Admittedly, extricating the Igbo language from the linguistic endangerment is challenging. However, it is possible. Thus, this paper sets out to discuss the templates for achieving this, namely: the ten fundamental principles of Igbo language renaissance in the digital era. The principles are the essential epistemological framework for reviving, stabilising, projecting, promoting, and propagating the Igbo language to the global linguistic community. Further, the paper suggests ways of concretising the principles, such as Igbo language-mediated family interactions, Igbo language-driven educational system, and Igbo language-driven government-mediations. The paper considers these measures as potent antidotes against all manners of Igbo linguistic endangerments.

Keywords: Renaissance, Igbo Language, Digital Age, principle, Endangerment

Introduction

Today the Igbo language faces two threats: internal and external. The internal or threat from within accrues from some Igbo language users' aversion for and denigration of the Igbo language in preference for what they consider the popular languages, particularly the English language. On the contrary, external or threat from without arises from the thrust of digital technology as the contemporary society is a digital age. As a phenomenon, the digital age is an age characterised by greater access to information through a computer and internet-mediated process. So, the digital age marks an era when people have more access to information even in the comfort of their rooms. Besides, people can contribute

to the information system through the interactive features of the various information conduits. Digital age goes by various names. Some call it information age (Chiparausha & Chigwada, 2019; Özbölük & Kurtoğlu, 2019; Helfaya & O'Neill, 2019; Mengü, et al 2020; Tella,et al, 2020; Elaturoti, 2020) or an age of digital information (Geylani, 2020) . Also, some refer to it as the computer age (Wang & Torrisi-Steele, 2016). One can as well call it an internet age, a new media age, *et cetera*. The digital age is a period in history marked by the prevalent use of digital technology (Özkan, 2010; Beck & Hughes, 2013) or extensive use of technological products and networks and technological methods over traditional methods in life practices (Akdal, 2019). As well, another distinct feature of the digital age is easy and rapid access to information (Helfaya & O'Neill, 2019; Mengü et al., 2020; Statti & Torres, 2020; Huda et al., 2020). It demonstrates the ubiquity of internet-mediated computing system and the productive application of technology in nearly all spheres of human life (Wang & Torrisi-Steele, 2016; Tandoh & Ebe-Arthur, 2018). Digital age marks the era when smart machines are determinative in socio-economic and political life (Adomi, 2008; Atiku & Fields, 2019; Chiparausha & Chigwada, 2019; Köroğlu, 2020). So, the digital age is a historical epoch in the 21st century marked by a rapid change from traditional or industrial-based to the information-based economy with computers and other sophisticated technologies as means of communication (Owolabi & Nurudeen, 2020; Tella et al., 2020). Thus, the digital age is internet-driven. In that case, the internet determines the majority of what happens in all the spheres of human activities.

As a result of the two threats above, the Igbo language confronts two dilemmas: first, the dilemma of whether to yield to the pressure emanating from the threats; and second, the dilemma of whether to resist the pressure and continue the struggle. This paper, however, adopts the second option. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the prospects of reviving, stabilising, and propagating the Igbo language so that it can be at par with the languages of economically developed nations. That implies, situating it on a firm template that is resistant to the negative linguistic thrust of the digital age. For that reason, it is good to examine the essential principles that subsist as the fulcrum for achieving this objective. Hence, this paper sets out to examine what it refers to as the ten pillars or principles of Igbo language renaissance in a digital age. Prominent among the principle is the use of the prefix *equi* which is from the Latin word *aequus* signifying "level, equal; favourable, friendly, fair, just, calm" (Gerrard & Littlejohn, 2008, p.14). *Equi* also comes from the Latin adverb *aeque* meaning "equally" or "just as" [Gerrard & Littlejohn, 2008, p.14]. This paper, however, uses

equi in the sense of equality to show that the suffixed words are common denominators of all languages. So, it is equality in terms of the commonality of the fundamental principles of all languages.

The ten principles of Igbo linguistic renaissance

1. The principle of equi-primordiality

The principle of equi-primordiality indicates that all languages are equal in origin. That they are equal in origin is true in two senses. First, when one considers language as a faculty in man. Then, second, when one views language from the pedestal of the ages of different mother-tongues or particular languages. As a faculty in man, all languages originate from man's innate capacity for speech. Hence, every human being has a natural ability for language. Here, "language denotes the function, the capacity with which man is naturally gifted...to express himself and to communicate with his peers through the word" (Mondin, 1991, pp.150-151). The potential for language is one of the fundamental features of human beings. It is "an innate capacity which comes to all men in the same way, independently from the nation and the culture to which men belong" (Mondin, 1991, p.151). It is one of the defining qualities of man. Inability to exhibit this capacity means that the reality in question is not a human being. Immediately, it is essential to add that the species of language at issue here is not just a spoken one. The language embraces verbal and non-verbal. Of course, Heidegger (1973) captured this fact aptly when he noted that man always speaks, whether asleep or awake, consciously and unconsciously (p.27). So, every human being has the natural faculty for both verbal and non-verbal aspects of language. When one aspect is lacking as a result of some defects, the other aspect must remain. There is no way one can lose two of them at the same time. It is either that one has two of them functioning or just one of them. For instance, children who do not use verbal language can also express themselves using non-verbal language. The same is valid in the case of a comatose. Even in his/her state of apparent motionlessness, a comatose still communicates with people through some non-verbal signs. That is why doctors can tell whether he/she is dead or alive.

Similarly, all languages are equal when one conceives language from the context of the ages of different mother-tongues or particular languages. Every particular language or mother-tongue is as old as the people that possess it. Mother-tongue started and developed with their owners. It stems from their natural faculty for a speech at no identifiable time. Thus, while it may be easy to indicate the growth in a particular language, it is difficult to state the precise time a mother-tongue

began. Every member of a language group came and saw themselves amidst a language community. None can accurately tell when his/her group started to speak the language. All they know is that they are members of a particular language group.

Therefore, the principle, all particular languages are equi-primordial, affirms that the Igbo language is of the same origin with other languages (Nnaemedo, 2014, p.47). It began at a time immemorial, with the people of Igbo race. The language developed with them and constituted the fundamental cultural ingredients of their worldview. On this premise, in terms of origin, no language, no matter the level of the economic development of its owners, can claim pre-eminence over the Igbo language, and indeed any other language. Hence, the principle of equi-primordiality of all languages is a formidable linguistic template and shield against the subordination of Igbo language to other languages, their presumed superiority notwithstanding.

2. The principle of equi-validity

The principle of equi-validity means that all languages are equal in legitimacy. All languages are legally and officially acceptable. As well, each is valid for informal relationships. Despite the pretensions of dominant languages, all languages enjoy equal validity (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2007, p.441; Nnaemedo, 2011, p.63; Okonkwo, 2012, p.16). Hence, all languages are linguistic, legal tender for transacting communication among the members of each language group, and also with others. Nobody deserves punishment for using any language in different life activities, even when the audience cannot understand him/her. The much he/she can do in such a circumstance is to employ an interpreter if he/she cannot but partake in the discourse. An outright restriction on the language of the discussion does not signal the inferiority of other languages. Instead, the restraint is only for uniformity and easy understanding among the participants. It also gears towards cutting cost and time, as insistence on the use of different languages may imply using many interpreters.

Then, as a principle of the renaissance of Igbo language, equal validity of all language implies that the Igbo language enjoys the same validity as every other language. Of course, this ridicules the practice of penalising children who speak the Igbo language in class as a way of encouraging them to master the English language. The logic behind such practice was the assumption that the English language is superior to the Igbo language. Following the same logic is the

proposition that no child can claim adequate education if he/she cannot use the English language efficiently. Such an assumption is very wrong and offends the principle of equal validity of all languages. Again, the criterion for intelligence is not how proficient one can use the English language. Instead, the measure of intelligence rests on the profundity of one's thoughts and ideas. What rules the world is not the English language; instead, it is the ideas -these ideas are translatable and communicable through all languages.

3. The principle of equi-basic functionality

The principle of equi-basic functionality states that all languages are equal in the performance of their fundamental functions. The primary functions of all languages are "representative or descriptive (relative to the object), expressive or existential (relative to the subject), and communicative and inter-subjectivity before the person to whom the discourse applies" (Mondin, 1991, p.135). The descriptive role enables the users of a language to describe the state of affairs relative to the object. The expressive function, alternatively, enable the users of a language to articulate their feelings and sentiments. Then, the communicative role enables language owners and users to communicate and interact with others at various levels.

Again, one can divide the functions of human language into two broad categories, basically: constructive and de-formative roles, respectively. The constructive role is decisive in outlook. Here, one uses language as a means of engendering positive impacts on the life of one's audience. In this case, one uses language to correct, admonish, encourage, construct and reconstruct, all in a positive direction. The de-formative role, alternatively, is harmful in outlook. In this perspective, one uses human language as an instrument of destruction. Such wrong use of language plays out in the phenomenon of hate speech that is now the trending issue in the use of social media in some countries, Nigeria inclusive. So, today, the call for regulation of social media use is all hinged on this destructive use of language. No language group is immune to this abuse of language. It is an issue that cuts across all languages. Of course, most users of social networking sites articulate their points in diverse languages, which prove that one can put all languages to destructive use.

Consequently, since all languages are equal in their primary functions, Igbo language serves the same essential functions as every other language. Thus, there is no justification, whatsoever, for denigrating or substituting it with any other language. Instead, the fact of equality of all languages, in terms of their essential

functions, subsists as strong support and reinforcement for Igbo language renaissance.

4. The principle of equi-tripodal classification of terms

The principle of equi-tripodal classification of terms indicates that all languages have a tripartite division of terms. It shows that each language views terms in three senses: univocal, equivocal and analogous. For Onyeocha (1996), a term is univocal when the meaning of the word is the same; or when it signifies the things represented by the same concept (p.220). When one uses a term univocally in two contexts, it depicts that the meaning of the term in each of the contexts is the same. For instance, one can use the term *nwanyị* (female) univocally to represent either a girl or a woman. In the same way, one can use the concept of an *anụ* (animal) to represent any animal.

Alternatively, when one uses a word equivocally in two contexts, the terms do not apply to the two contexts in the same way. In this case, the word, though it may have the same spelling, means different things in the two contexts. A good example here is the word *bark*, which could mean the outer coating of a tree as well as the howling of a dog. The same applies to the term *bat*, which could represent a nocturnal flying bird as well as a sports instrument. Others are pen representing ballpoint and also an enclosure for domestic animals. As well, the Igbo word *ígwé* can stand for a king and also for a person's name.

On the other hand, "an analogical term is one that signifies things represented by a concept that has a unity of proportion" (Onyeocha, 1996, pp.220-221). When an individual uses a word analogously, it shows that though the two situations described may be different, yet they have some connections. For instance, one can apply the term *good* to *God* directly and to *man* analogously. *God* is good *per se*, whereas *man* only participates in the goodness of *God*. The same applies to the term *healthy*, which applies to both *man* and edible *vegetables*. Though one can apply the term *healthy* to both of them yet they differ in context, the fact that they have necessary connections notwithstanding. Similarly, there are many Igbo terms which one can apply analogically. For example, one can apply the term *agụ* directly to an animal of lion kingdom, and analogously to a person, perhaps because of his/her expressed valour. Also, the word *igwe* applies to iron directly and to man analogously, maybe due to the person's manifest strength.

Resultantly, the application of the principle of equi-tripodal classification of terms is a robust template for Igbo language renaissance in a digital age. Rather than unveil the complexities of Igbo language, this attribute shows forth the

linguistic richness of the language. As well, it makes eloquent the significance of engaging in the study of the Igbo language.

5. The principle of equi-susceptibility to endangerment

The principle of equi-susceptibility to endangerment means that all languages are susceptible to endangerment. It signifies that they are vulnerable to decay. Language death is not a possibility for some languages. Instead, it can happen to any language. Of course, Wurm (1991) observed that over five thousand languages had existed in the world. However, hundreds of these languages are no longer living languages spoken by speakers and speech communities for their daily activities (p.1). That was why the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003) states that the world confronts "new challenges in keeping its languages alive and well" (p.18). So, all languages are equally prone to endangerment with its resultant language decay/extinction. As a result, the owners of different languages put in various mechanisms to forestall such linguistic challenges. For instance, some nations make their languages compulsory at the primary school level, as the language of formal instruction. A practical instance is in Nigeria, where the National Policy on Education (N.P.E., 2013) recommends the use of mother-tongue in the first three years in primary school as a language of instruction. Further, the policy requires the use of the English language as the language of formal instruction afterwards (section 2, subsection 20: 9d-e). In some countries today, there are incentives aimed at encouraging the use and study of the indigenous languages to avoid language death. At times the incentive can be in the form of scholarship. A typical instance here is the Igbo language, where some past state governors opened a scholarship scheme for those who would like to study the Igbo language at the higher institution. It is also to prevent language death that Germany, China, France, Italy, Spain, *et cetera*, require entrants into their countries to study their languages as a precondition for a residential and working permit.

Therefore, the fact of possible endangerment or vulnerability of all languages reveals that Igbo language, just like every other language, is subject to extinction. It is a critique against the imputation of poor status on the Igbo language vis-à-vis the languages of the developed nations. So, that the Igbo language is one of the endangered languages does not make it inferior, as every other language could experience the same plight. As such, this principle shows the significance of working to shield the Igbo language from all manners of endangerment, as it is not its unique attribute. Resultantly, it offers strong support to the efforts at the renaissance of Igbo language.

6. The principle of equi-dependency

The principle of equi-dependency states that no language is self-sufficient or self-reliant. All borrow from other language groups. No language is without some words borrowed from other languages. Haspelmath (2009) underscored this fact in its discourse of loanword or lexical borrowing, which it defines "as a word that at some point in the history of a language entered its lexicon as a result of borrowing" (p.36). The entrance could be in three forms: cultural, core, and therapeutic borrowings, respectively. Cultural borrowing designates a new concept entering from outside. It involves borrowing new words along with new concepts. Similarly, core borrowing is duplication in the meanings for which a native word already exists. So, it is borrowing for the sake of prestige. Then, therapeutic borrowing takes place when the borrowing is for therapeutic or curative purposes, that is, when the original word is unavailable, as in borrowings as a result of word taboo, and for the avoidance of homonymy (Haspelmath, 2009, pp.46-50; Myers-Scotton, 2002: p.41; Myers-Scotton, 2006: §8.3).

A critical analysis of many world languages reveals ample indices of lexical borrowings. A case in point is the English language which has borrowed and continues to borrow from Latin, Greek, French and German Languages. For example, the English word "in" is from the Latin word "in." The same applies to the English word "via," which comes from the Latin word "via." Also, there are many words in the English language that comes from French. Djurcevic (2019) lent credence to this in its analysis of the nature and place of French loanwords in English in the semantic field of mental states. The paper discovered that the English language consisted of 65–75 per cent of loanwords. It noted that a significant part of these words originated from the French language. As well, it indicated that a considerable fraction of French words belongs to the semantic field of mental or emotional states (p.290).

Similarly, the Igbo language has borrowed from other languages such as Latin, the English language, *et cetera*, respectively. For instance, the Igbo word for Jesus is *Jesu*, which is the same as *Jesu*, the Latin name for Jesus. The same applies to the Igbo word *Maria*, which is the Latin name for Mary. Besides, the Igbo word *gọọment* is from the English word, government. So, as long as science and technology continue to improve, linguistic borrowing has no end. Most often, scientists couch their discoveries in languages that often defy translation. The most useful thing to do in such circumstances is to borrow such words, despite the language.

So, for Igbo language renaissance, that no language is self-sufficient is a significant template. It shows the relevance of borrowing from other languages to actualise the goal of revival efforts. Besides, it is proof that though the Igbo language borrows from other languages, such does not make it inferior. Instead, it reveals its potentials for growth, a potential that is also present and has manifested in other languages.

7. The principle of equi-contextualisability

The principle of equi-contextualisability indicates that all language usages are from perspectives. All are contextual descriptive, expressive and communicational tools. Thus, whenever somebody uses a word, he/she does so in a context. Such is the case because, a word, according to Pinker (1995), "is a bundle of different kinds of information." (p.315). The paper compared each word with a hub which one can position anywhere in a vast region, provided its spokes extend to the regions of the brain, storing the sound, syntax, logic, and the appearance of the things the brain stands for (pp.315-316).

Likewise, Dash (2008) stressed the significance of context in linguistics. The paper held that it plays a crucial role in "...disambiguation of meanings as well as in understanding the actual meaning of words....Context triggers variation of meaning and supplies valuable information to understand why and how a particular word varies in meaning when used in a piece of text" (p21). Further, Dash identified four types of contexts, namely: local, sentential, topical, and global context, respectively (p.22). It conceived local context as the immediate setting of the keyword in a sentence where it has occurred, encompassing its immediately preceding and following words. Also, it considered the sentential context as a sentence where the keyword has occurred. Likewise, it viewed topical context as the theme of discussion and centres on the content of a piece of text. As well, it referred to the global context as pointing to the meaning of the word vis-à-vis other words since words are not isolated entities (pp.23-28). Besides, as Verschueren (1981) observed, words are related to extra-linguistic reality (p.337). So, even when one thinks the user of a word is doing so in a general sense, yet he/she is using it in a context, for no sense is general per se. In that case, one can say that he/she is using the word in a "general context." Therefore, one of the features of human language is that it permits contextual usage of terms.

Besides, another argument that reinforces and guarantees the principle, all languages are equi-contextual, is the fact that every human language belongs to

particular people. There is no universal language for every human race. What obtains instead is a language adopted as a lingua franca, just to ensure effective communication among a group. Even at that, it does not make it the universal language, for not everyone would accept that as a lingua franca. That is why in the use of a language a nation accepted as their language of formal and informal instruction, some members of the same group may decide to use their mother-tongue for the same operation. Hence, language use is always contextual. As a result, it is easier and better to appreciate the meaning of words in each language. Ipso facto, when a person uses another language adopted as a lingua franca, the in-depth analysis of such language can only come from an up-close or a thorough analysis of the language from the perspectives of the original owners of the language.

A typical instance here is the word 'Éké'- the first market day in Igbo calendar-, which could as well mean *Ékē* - python, *Ékè*, - creation, destiny, and *Ékè* - the name of a person. A similar word is *ígwè* - iron or bicycle, which could also mean *ígwé* - heaven, *Īgwē* - crowd, *Īgwè* - to grind, and *ígwé* - the name of a person (Nnaemedo, 2013, p.144).

Therefore, as a pillar of Igbo language renaissance, the stress on the contextual attributes of all languages is a plus for the Igbo language. It depicts the present scope of Igbo language usage as a matrix for the language renaissance, and not a discouraging factor. Today, the Igbo language is not as popular as the English, French, and German, language, respectively. Nevertheless, such does not make it less a language. Popularity does not signify superiority, unless at an imperialistic domain.

8. The principle of equi-untranslatability

The principle of equi-untranslatability states that all languages contain untranslatable deposits. It indicates that each language contains some words that defy translation. It is akin to what Nnaemedo (2017) calls "irreducible deposits" (p.41) or Derrida's (1991) undeconstructible. One cannot translate these deposits into other languages. At best, one can describe or borrow them. It was in tandem with the above position that Bon (2001) argued that the concepts of the nations have no common denominator as the same words evoke such diverse ideas in many minds. Thus, the paper ironically concluded that written words are absolutely untranslatable from one language to another. Further, Bon maintained that the same is valid for both modern languages and the language of extinct people (p.58). In the same way, Al-sayyid (1995) identified untranslatability as

one of the significant challenges in Arabic-English translation of the divine names of Allah in the Qur' ān. Other challenges she indicated are over-translation and under-translation. Likewise, Mohammed (2011) highlighted some instances of culture-specific terms that are untranslatable (p.217).

Correspondingly, in the Igbo language there abound many instances of culture-specific terms that are untranslatable. A case in point is the Igbo word *ofọ*¹. Ordinarily, *ofọ* is a piece of wood with some feathers of a fowl tied at one end of it and smeared with animal blood. However, the meaning of *ofọ* is far more profound than the simple description above. So, the fact that some Igbo words defy translation into other languages or vice versa does not mean that renaissance of Igbo language is a fruitless effort. As shown above, every language has its untranslatable words. Hence, the existence of untranslatable words in all languages is proof of the uniqueness of each language. It is an invitation to consider each language as an inevitable part of a global language, and as, an embodiment of specific global linguistic wealth.

9. The principle of equi-dynamism

The principle of equi-dynamism implies that all languages are lively and so capable of growth. It means that "language is a living and dynamic phenomenon" (Banga & Suri, 2015, p.182). Language, like other human phenomena, has potentials for growth and development, and so "changes in forms and functions" (Eyisi et al., ENG 453). Each language changes with time and prevailing situations. For that reason, Smith declared: "all languages are in a state of constant flux, characterised by dynamic variation and massive diversity at all levels of analysis (p.34). Likewise, Hickey observed that "when a system is dynamic and shows movement, there is change" (p.8). A critical look at some of the dominant world languages portrays this fact. For instance, today, the English

¹A more in-depth insight into the meaning of *ofọ* reveals further facts about it. First, it shows that it is not a product of any type of wood, but that of a particular tree called *ofọ*. Besides, the person that keeps it is usually the eldest man from the eldest family in a community. The rationale for such arrangement is that *ofọ* is a symbol of traditional authority encapsulating the totality of the norms and codes guiding the dos and don'ts in the traditional Igbo society. So, one can describe *ofọ* as a kind of unwritten constitution, and ipso facto, unwritten scripture of the traditional Igbo society. The traditional Igbo society of Nneato in Umunneochi Local Government Area in Abia State, Nigeria, for example, used *ofọ* to perform sacrifices and oath-swearing ceremony. For them, *ofọ* was a means of settling dispute and legitimisation of community decisions (J. Nnaemedo, personal communication, April 26, 2020).

language has transited from old and archaic English to modern and contemporary English. At present, the word "you" has replaced the term "thou." The same applies to the Igbo word *chukwu* which has replaced the old term *cukwu*, an old Igbo name for God as well as that of a person. The same dynamism obtains in every other language.

It is as a result of the ability of language to grow that the owners of various languages put several measures in place to promote their languages. "It is this dynamism of language that allows words to acquire new meanings. It also allows newly invented or discovered objects to have new names" (Eyisi et al., ENG 453). Besides, the possibility of language growth explains why members of different languages groups could borrow from other language groups. Similarly, the quality of growth inherent in each language also informs the possibility of the death of each language. The reason being that whatever that grows is subject to specific growth limits and, subsequently, to death as a possibility.

Dynamism is an inherent feature of all languages. It places the Igbo language more on the route to linguistic recovery amidst all endangerments. Hence, the Igbo language has the propensity for growth. Given adequate attention vis-à-vis other dominant languages, the Igbo language is capable of attaining an enviable and unprecedented global linguistic altitude.

10. The principle of equi-renascent

The principle of equi-renascent implies that all languages are revivable. This principle states that it is possible to revitalise and sustain all languages. It follows the principle of equi susceptibility of all languages to endangerment. So, as each language is subject to possible decay and extinction, each of them is prone to language recovery. For this reason, Almurashi (2017) noted that though reviving some languages, such as aboriginal languages, may pose more challenges than others, yet it is possible to revive, revitalise, and maintain them. The paper further pointed out several factors that can revitalise endangered and no-longer-spoken languages. These include "the community of language, the time frame in which the revival begins, the level of official and community support, the dedication and motivation of groups and individuals, and official governmental recognition for the language" (p.71).

Many instances abound where different language groups recovered their languages from possible endangerment with its attendant decay and extinction. A case in point is the Maimi language currently undergoing revival (Leonard, 2008, p.2). The success of these linguistic recovery points to the possible success

of similar ventures in other languages experiencing the same challenges. Therefore, as every language is revivable, no language group should claim superiority over other languages. If a language is functional today on account of effective language maintenance, other endangered languages can assume the same status given similar efforts of their owners and users. Today, many industrialised nations have supported their language growth through their technology and aid packages. When one purchases their technology, he/she implicitly adopts their languages since the buyer requires their language for a proper understanding of the workings of their technology. Likewise, a country that depends on another country today can become more robust, self-reliant, and technologically advanced tomorrow. Resultantly, she could also use the same advantage not only to promote its language within but also to market it to other peoples. For instance, there was a time the whole world looked to Latin and Greek languages as two of the world's most coveted languages. Any scholar worth his/her name must be proficient in the two languages. In the contemporary epoch, however, the reverse is the case. Latin is now among the dead or near dead languages, as they only "have some restricted and specialised roles to play today" (Wurm, 1991, p.1). What this implies is that, if a country subsumes its language in dominant languages as a result of technological advantage, it does not necessarily mean that such a country cannot transit from that colonised status to that of linguistic independence.

Subsequently, the template of the possible revitalisation of all language implies that the Igbo language is revivable, despite the depth of its present endangerment. Hence, no genuine efforts to revive and stabilise it are waste. Persistence in such efforts is bound to yield soothing future results.

Conclusion

Endangerment is an undeniable feature of some world languages, of which the Igbo language is not an exception. However, the endangerment is not the endpoint of the Igbo language's journey to attainment of global linguistic status. The Igbo language has the potentials and prospects for a renaissance. It also has basic templates for the renaissance project, albeit the negative thrusts of the digital age. These essential templates constitute the fundamental epistemological furniture for erecting any significant Igbo language renaissance project in an internet age. The relevance of these fundamental principles for the renaissance of the Igbo language in a digital age is two-pronged. First, they guarantee the possibility of the Igbo language renaissance overcoming the negative thrust of the digital age, given the fact that the dominant languages also overcame the

harmful thrust under the same fundamental principles. Second, the principles are proof that the Igbo language renaissance could utilise the valuable thrust of the digital age to attain linguistic prominence since dominant languages could achieve the same and under the same principles. Consequently, the principle of equi-primordiality is a caveat against viewing dominant languages as more ontological than the Igbo language. Besides, the principle of equi-validity by granting legitimacy to all languages as well validates the possibility of Igbo language renaissance in a digital age. Also, as the principles of equi-basic functionality and equi-tripodal classification of terms show the primary use into which one can put all languages, so is a renaissance of the Igbo language in the digital age a possibility. Similarly, as the principles of equi-susceptibility to endangerment, and equi-contextualisability, portray the typical limitations of all languages, all which could not debar the dominant languages from achieving global prominence; likewise, such would not prevent the Igbo renaissance in the digital age. As well, as the shortcomings of equi-dependency and equi-untranslatability were no barriers to dominant languages, so they would not constitute the same to the Igbo language renaissance in a digital age. Equally, as the principles of equi-dynamism and equi-renascent indicate the potentials of every language for growth amidst different constraints, so the thrust of the digital age would not stifle the Igbo language renaissance. Therefore, the principles are justifications for the pursuit of renaissances of the Igbo language despite the challenges of the digital age. They show that the renaissance of Igbo language in a digital age is not a wild goose chase. At this point, it is significant to indicate that this paper does not view these principles as the only possible pillars. There could be others, both primary and ancillary, to the ten pillars.

Recommendations

For the ten principles above to achieve the desired objectives, it is crucial to download them through precise and concrete mechanisms. Hence the paper recommends:

- i. The use of Igbo language-mediated family and community interactions: that is, using the Igbo language in family and community discussions and interactions. Parents should speak Igbo to children at home.
- ii. The adoption of the Igbo language-driven educational system: that is carrying out teaching and learning in the Igbo language.

iii. The intensification of Igbo language-driven government-mediations: by formulation and implementation of policies that enhance the Igbo language in all ramifications and at all levels.

iv. Furthermore, the application of persistent, tolerant, accommodative, and collaborative Igbo renaissance methodology. Persistency makes the renaissance efforts unrelenting, despite the challenges. Tolerance enables it to cushion divergent views on any matter concerning the renaissance endeavours. Accommodation creates room for responsible harnessing and embrace of the different opinions. Finally, collaboration depicts the significance of partnership or teamwork in the realisation of the Igbo language renaissance project.

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