LANGUAGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF IGBO CULTURE

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Abstract
Language and culture are always interdependent. The evidence became obvious in recent times when Igbo culture became endangered, as Igbo language was on a downward trend and at the brink of becoming moribund. The cause of this was traced to the preference of foreign languages by the Igbo people to the neglect of their language. It is against this backdrop that the study of this nature become necessary in order to contrast the relationship between language and culture as it affects the Igbo language. The study also analyses the roles played by Igbo language in the development of Igbo culture and ascertains how far the Igbo language can be explored in the future for the improvement of the Igbo culture.The study is descriptive in nature. The Theoretical Framework is anchored on Behaviorism. Data collection was done through observation and library sources. The findings of this work reveal that, generally, language is a vital tool in the development of people's culture and Igbo culture in particular, and that Igbo language has the capacity of developing and strengtheningIgbo culture. It is advised that Igbo people should hold fast to their language to restore and develop their culture better, for posterity to have a sound heritage.

Key Words: Language, Culture, and Development

1.0 Introduction

Igbo people of south-eastern Nigeria are the speakers of the Igbo language. As a speech community, they have similar experiences and behaviours which reflect in their language. Igbo people have sets of norms they share together and these pattern their behavior and their Igbo language usage. Language is the

vigor of the people. It is their strength of togetherness and a powerful force in their daily living. Language keeps a people's history alive. It is obvious therefore, that language plays a vital role in the development of the culture of the people. If however, a speech community could allow their language to be dominated by other languages, their culture, which is everything to them and what made them why they are different from others, may become extinct.Generally speaking,some of the Igbo people neglect their language in favor of other foreign languages. Since Igbo culture is expressed through Igbo language, the neglect of Igbo language by Igbo people affects the growth of Igbo culture.

Igbo people are found almost all the parts of the world, while in foreign land, they usually learn the language of their host communities and teach same to their children. When they visit their home land, they like to showcase their foreign language to the detriment of their mother tongue. Their children too neither understand nor speak Igbo language, talkless of following the cultural patterns. Also, some Igbo people that live in Igbo land, prefer foreign languages, such as English language, French language among others, to be learnt by their children, thereby neglecting Igbo culture which is transmitted through Igbo language. Some of the Igbo people learn and speak these foreign languages in order to belong to a class, indirectly subjugating their culture. These foreign languages are the major carriers of modernity;thereby having the power to affectIgbo cultural values adversely. Njoku (2004) affirms that the increasing demise of the Igbo language is the effect of an enormous interpretation of modernity and what it means to be part of it. It is also a fall-out of the sustained colonial campaigns that everything Africa is evil. He also states that the growing flight from Igbo language or interpretation of many elements of Igbo traditional life as evil is an indication that the colonial campaign albeit as a result of ignorance and incomplete information has succeeded.

It is clear that Igbo culture is the Igbo peoples' way of life. Igbo language is part of Igbo culture, therefore the speaking of Igbo language is the expression of Igbo culture and a way of transmitting Igbo cultural values. For this reason, this paper explores the roles Igbo language plays in the growth of Igbo culture and the preservation ofits identity. The meaning of language and that of culture will be explained. Different roles which language plays in the development of culture such as, language and cultural development, language as an instrument of thought communication for cultural development, language as an instrument that conditions our worldview for cultural growth, language and the development of people's identity will be explored. The theoretical Frame work and empirical studies will also be discussed. It is expected thatIgbo people

should refrain from the negligible act and embrace their language, because any society that loses its language has lost everything.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Explanation ofLanguage

Language is a means of communication by man. It is one enormous acquisition man has over other creatures. Language is a devise which employs vocal symbols to give or to hide information, to give illusions of love or to create realities of hate, to build or to destroy. We use language to give and to change names, to appreciate or to deceive, to create literature and to describe it. It permits our thoughts, mediates our relations with others and even creeps into our dreams. Most human knowledge and culture is stored and transmitted in language (Emenanjo, 1998). Akindele and Adegbite (2005: 1) describe language as being characterized by a set of vocal sounds which can be decoded. Brooks in Nzeakor and Osundu (2013:366-367) opines that language is a "Learned systematic symbolic vocal behaviour culturally acquired and exclusively mark of man".

The above concepts of language show that language is for communication and as well for social function. Language is the carriers of peoples' culture and a mean of transferring it from generation to generation. It is also something spoken and therefore belongs to human beings only.

2.2 The meaning of Culture

There are different definitions and conceptions of culture as perceived by different scholars. In the words of Geertz (1973), culture is seen as the sets of control mechanisms, plans, recipes, symbols, rules and constructions. Madubuike (2003:1) defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, morals, law, custom and any other capability and habit acquired by man as a member of society." Hofstede (1980) in his view defines culture as the collective programming of the mind distinguishing members of a group or category of people from others, where the "category" can refer to nations, ethnic groups, religions, occupations, organizations or genres.For Maduagwu (2008: 110)"Culture is transmitted through language. Therefore language is said to be the verbal side of culture. Consequently, if a language is affected in any way, the people who own the language are affected. The fabric that holds their belief system, custom, traditional proverbs and indeed, everything about them, becomes threatened".

Culture according toOmoregbe (1983:3) refers to the frame work within which a people live their lives and interpret their life experiences. It colours, shapes, and limits a people's view of reality. From the writer's point of view, culture

which includes language of a people is everything about people's ways of life. This in turn makes them what they are.

The first and second conceptions of culture are anthropological while the third and fourth definitions are metaphysical. But the most important thing there is that both conceptions refer culture as something belonging to human beings just like language. This shows that both language and culture are inseparable.

Culture exists in a community. It is the community that owns a language that speaks their language to protect their culture for onward transmission to their younger generation. A community indicates a group of people that have mutual experiences.According to Akindele and Adegbite (2005:16) "The people of a community have a common experimental, conceptual and societal life and their shared experiences are expressed and recorded in a language (or dialect of language) which belongs to them". When a community safeguards their language their culture is automatically safeguarded.

2.3 Language and Cultural Development

Language can be used variously by human beings to achieve desired developmental goals. It can also build or mar developmental processes. Adeyanuju, in Orji (2013:1), confirms that language is an important aspect of human development. It is a strong tool of achieving human goals. Little or no success is recorded in any societal endeavor without the use of language.Certainly language is vital for human development. Humans' objectives are achieved through language, and persevered for posterity by human language. Nzeakor&Osundu (2013) affirms that, man, as a social being, requires language for a harmonious living. That the purpose of every language is to communicate effectively and that failure to do so will lead to communication breakdown and hampers development. It is clear that distorted communication hinders developmental strategies. When language is not clearly stated or not well explained or misleading, it negates the main purpose for which it is meant to serve.

Language is the carrier of people's culture. People reflect themselves and theirculture through language, for this reason every community tries to protect and improve on its language. Economy, politics and the entire cultural patterns of the society depends on the efficacy of their language to boost their developmental processes. Language is one of the main tools or instrument by which values, norms, belief system, technology and cultural practices of any society are communicated. Nwadike (2006) believes that culture is a given way of a people, their language, religion and system of marriage, belief, technology, agriculture, aspirations, expectations and pursuits, their likes and dislikes, humors, triumphs and failures, fears and hopes and world view. Culture of a

people embraces their total ways of life. It shows who they are amidst other groups of people. One can easily be identified through ones culture. However societal culture can only be sustained through their language of communication.Ugwuenye(2009:176),writes that "Cultures are man-made rather than God given. They are designs, prescription and response, which are deliberately fashioned to guide all aspects of a people's way of life". People's culture cannot be separated from their language. It is through language that cultures are developed and transmitted from generation to generation. Downes (1998) affirms that "we cannot really appreciate a culture without knowing the language

Wolff (2006) expresses that, "The function which language serves in the society cannot be overlooked. The cultural values, history and realities are transmitted through language." Without language the aspirations of people are hidden in oblivion. The Federal Government of Nigeria was also aware of the role language can play in fostering national unity and for the development of peoples culture. Akindele&Adegbite (2008: 102 – 103) referring to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria state that;

> The three indigenous languages in addition toEnglish are considered as national languages, thatisthe language that can foster unity, since they represent nationalistic tendencies of the nation…these languages are considered as a means of fostering unity among the various ethnic groups in the country.

The three Nigerian indigenous languages are Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. It can foster unity which in turn helps in developmental strategiessince any society in disarray is devoid of progress.Therefore the role language can play in cultural development is enormous.

2.4 Language as an Instrument of Thought Communication for Cultural Development

Thoughts are forms created in the mind, they arise within the mind rather than perceived through the senses. Thought could be trying to find solution to one's problem, an opinion, a venture, something presumed, a plan or something to be considered.A nation or a community could have a body of thought; the thought could only be worthwhile when translated into language. The language must be the language of communication in the said community so that the presumed thought would be meaningful to the users. According to Akindele&Adegbite (2005:5), "Language is an instrument of thought; it helps to concretize thought and also to explore, discover, extend and record the experiences in a

culture".Downes (1998) also states that People relate to language as an expression of thoughts. They often say that, they can't find words for their thoughts or express feelings". Language therefore is a means of communication. Krey (1997) expresses that

> Thought is like the abstraction of the social, and society is like the concretion of thought. But to speak about thought is abstract. The concrete word and the spoken or written languageneed to be placed as the mediating agent between the thought emblem and the personal or social being and the process of abstraction or concretion involved.

Ugwueye (2009:184) affirms that "Language is an essential aspect of every culture. It is a major instrument through which people express their ideas, thought, feelings and sentiments through which they communicate with each other." In view of the above Krey (1997) perceives language as the medium of life-world, he states that the way money and power are the media of the economy and political systems respectively can language be so powerful to play a role in changing the system as well. In line with this, Bellah in Krey (1997), notes that

> People have often tried to bring the world closer to the life-world by making it more human place, and they have tried to do so through language because on the whole they do not have a great deal of worldly power, butonly the words they speak. But through the words they speak and the practice they inaugurate, they create community.

2.5 Language as an Instrument that Conditions our Worldview for Cultural Growth

World view is the general philosophy of how one views the world. How one views the world is how one interprets it. It is however the totality of one's belief about reality. People's worldviews are better expressed through the language of communication. Sapir (1929) opines that "The real world is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. Language directs our thinking about reality. It gives meaning and understanding about social issues that bother man in his daily life".Egeonu(2016:132) discovers that "meaning that are associated with words and expressions change as the worldviews of those who use them change." Language therefore controls and influences mans' social reality in such a way that it significantly gives him a

reason for living and basis for his activities. Kalu (1978:37) discloses that "communities preserve their myths of origin as an explanation of things being the way they are".

Generally speaking, in African ontology, God is the Supreme Being. The sky is the abode of Supreme Being and major divinities. The Earth is inhabited by the Earth-Goddess and of course human beings. In the world beneath are the ancestors and the guardian spirits of human beings.Human life and nature are held sacred, intricately intertwined and under the governance the Supreme Being and his multifarious divinities (Kalu1978:40). For this reason character is emphasized and referred to as moral uprightness, peace with gods and peace with men. Hence, life free from immoral behavior is capable of attracting god's blessings and preventing the attack of evil spirits. In view of this, there aremapped out taboos that guide the life of people in all areas of life, such as religious, political, family, economic and social lives respectfully. Onyekwere (2009:92) opines that "man is assisted to confront nature with the spiritual forces to his side and thereby tap the spiritual resources needed to direct, control the course of nature and offer meaning to life." Man cannot control nature without the use of language. It is language that specifies the meaning of culture. Language draws people's world view closer to reality and preserves it for the future.Asomugha,(2009:43) notes that, it is because language

> Is the means by which people communicate with each other, and various elements in the world around them, it follows that the study of language is a valuable means of understanding the views and customs of those who speak them. A language furnishes the categories and division of experience in terms of which its speakers cope with the world.

2.6 Language and the Development of People's Identity

Identity is the quality of being sameness. It marks the difference that makes individuals or communities different from each other. Language as an aspect of culture is one of the major identity of everycommunity. Afolayan (1988) observes that first language or mother tongue is the only language of a monolingual person which is acquired naturally in his native environment and which meets all his linguisticneeds. Wolfram (2012) discovers that "Language is one of the most powerful emblems of social behavior. In the normal transfer of information through language, we use language to send vital social messages about who we are, where we come from, and who we associate with." People's background, intentions, and behaviors are judged based on their language. One can also be accessed through the word he/she utters. Language however, in the

social context tellsus how to organize ourselves and our social relations within a particular community.Akindele and Adegbite (2005:49) opine that, "It is language which the users employ in expressing their nationalistic spirit".

Economy of each society is part of what they are known for. People's economic strength determines their rank in the entire world. Economy as an aspect of culture is transmitted through language. If the language of communication becomes faulty, the society that owns it bounds to have a lopsided economy.Afolayan (1994) in Akindele and Adegbite (2005:92), states that human societies are naturally monolingual-monocultural and monolingualism-monoculturalism is the agent of most human development so far because it is so easy for members of this society to pool their individual resources together, collectively as members of sociological unit. Okwudishu (2010:47) reaffirms that,

> Language and culture are intimately entwined and cannot be separated. To ensure cultural preservationand survival, a primary responsibility is the nurturingof cultural spirit, values and extended families, citizensowe the land the duty to live properly, retaining,teaching and modifying the culture in line withdevelopments while guarding against total loss of cultural identity. To ensure maintenance of identity which a people must hold dear, citizens with proper guidance from elders, owe their land the duty to teach their childrenthe values with language as first on the list of priorities.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 Behavioral Theory

Human behavior is unpredictable because it arises from various needs and values. However it could be partially understood on the framework of behaviorual theory. Behavioural sociologist (Baldwin and Baldwin,1986; Bushell and Burgess, 1969) concern themselves with the relationship that exists between the actors actions and the environment and its impact on the actors later behaviour. According to Baldwin and Baldwin (1986:6) "behaviour is modified by its consequences." The relationship between the actor's behaviour and its environment is basic with the operant conditioning of B. F. Skinner which is based on the idea that learning is as a result of overt behaviour. According to Angell (2017) behaviorual theory seeks to explain human

behaviour by analyzing the antecedents and consequences present in the individual's environments and the learned associations he or she has acquired through previous experiences. Ritzer and Stepnisky (2014 : 403) state that, the environment in which the behaviour exist, whether social or physical, is affected by the behaviour and in turn "acts" back in various ways. That reaction, positive, negative, or neutral affects the actor's later behaviour. If the reaction has been rewarding to the actor, the same behaviour is likely to be emitted in the future in the similar situation. If the reaction has been painful or punishing, the behaviour is less likely to be occurred in the future.

Furthermore, behaviourism is the theory that human or animal psychology can be objectively studied through observable actions (behaviours), rather than thoughts and feelings that cannot be observed. The founding fathers of behaviourism are John B. Watson (1913), (classical conditioning) and B. F. Skinner (operant conditioning).Psychological behaviourist believe that observable behaviours were the manifestations of unseen mental processes, but it is more convenient to study those observable behaviours. They believe that humans learn behaviours through conditioning, which associates a stimulus in the environment. (Lim, 2019). On the other hand, the behavioural sociologist is interested in the relationship between the history of environmental reactions or consequences and the nature of present behaviour. Past consequences of a given behaviour govern its present state. By knowing what elicited a certain behaviour in the past, we can predict whether an actor will produce the same behaviour in the present situation (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2014 : 403).In any case, the goal of behaviourism isto be able to predict and control behaviour

2.7.2 Strength of Behavioural Theory

- Behaviourism is based upon observable behaviours, so it is easier to quantify and collect data and information when conducting research (Flores, 2013).
- It uses positive reinforcement like rewards etc, to encourage good and wanted behaviour and negative reinforcement like punishment etc, to discourage bad and unwanted behaviour.
- People can adapt to new behaviours even when previous behaviour pattern has been established through reinforcement, etc.

2.7.3 Weaknesses of Behavioural theory

- Behaviourismfocus on a one dimensional approach to understand human behaviuor. It does not account for free will or other influences such as feelings, thoughts and mood.
- It neglects any other behaviour or learning that occurs without reinforcement, etc.

From the forgoing, it seems adequate to base this study on the theory of behaviourism,since observable behaviour is powerful in providing explanation to certain phenomenon. Observable behaviour is also helpful in changing misguidedbehaviour. Furthermore, regardless of the behaviour, learnt in the past, it can still be modified as new circumstances are encountered.

2.8 Empirical Studies

Nwaozuzu (2015) carried research on "Agbammbọndị Igbo nankwaliteasụsụ ha" meaning the efforts ofthe Igbo people in promoting their language. She enumerates five signs that are used to show languages that are at the point of endangerment. In her research, Igbo language was used to test the rate people use Igbo language to do the following: act drama, teach in the schools, communicate, write and view people's mind about Igbo language. At the end of her study, she observes that Igbo language failed in the examination. Nwaozuzu (20150, also condemns the way Igbo elites regard their language and culture because she observes that they do not write letter nor write and read welcome address in Igbo. Nwaozuzu's work relates to the present work of study because they are based on improvement of language and culture but are different because Nwaozuzu studied Igbo people's attitude towards their language use while the present work is on language and the development of Igbo culture.

Umeodinka&Okoye (2018) in their research on " Mmekpaahụndịnnenannana-enyeasụsụ Igbo n'ogeugbua". Their research adopted descriptive and survey method and the framework used for the analysis was ethno linguistic vitality theory. Their study reveals that Igbo parents struggled so much to see that their children learn other languages than Igbo language, their mother tongue. The study of Umeodinka&Okoye (2018) and the present study have sameness in the sense that both of them are on how to improve Igbo language and culture but are different in the area of concentration. Again the work of Umeodinka&Okoye is on "Mmekpaahụndịnnenannana-enyeasụsụ Igbo" while the present work is on language and the development of Igbo culture.

Furthermore, Okorie (2008) carries out a study on Language, culture and power: tripartite assets for developing human capital and self-reliance in Nigeria. The objectives of the study are: to know the relationship if any, between language, culture and power and how language, culture and power can help to develop and sustain us to economic recovery in Nigeria. The findings of the study show that adequate development of human capital and self-reliance in Nigeria depends largely on indigenous languages and culture as immediate sources of power for other developmental needs. Okorie's study and the present study are related because both of them looked at the relationship between language and culture as one of their objectives but they are different in the area of

concentration. While the work of Okorie (2008) focuses on "Language, culture and power: tripartite assets for developing human capital and self-reliance in Nigeria", the present work discusses on the roles Igbo language play in the development of Igbo culture.

On the other hand Ihejirika (2008) wrote on Language and human development: The pedagogic implications in a multilingual situation. The major objective of his paper is to discuss the place of language in human development and the pedagogic implications in a multilingual situation like Nigeria. The findings of the work show that language plays important role in the stages of intellectual, educational and social development of any human. The study of Ihejirika (2008) relates to the present study because both of them concentrated on the use of language for culture and human development. The difference lies in the topics of study.

3.0 Analysis of Findings

It was gathered that without language it will be difficult for Igbo people to express themselves and communicate their thoughts. Language is the greatest weapon Igbo people have for their developmental strategies since language is a means of thought communication. Actually, Igbo language could be used to develop Igbo culture by forming a tangible or representative idea through a particular instance or example. Most people felt that a plan to erect market buildings that would afford a community the opportunity of buying and selling, and to also attract meaningful projects to the community would not be possible except through appealing, admonishing and explaining using the Igbo language. The thought of making the market premises clean, clearing the path that lead to a stream and sweeping of the village squares can only be made known through language of communication.

Igbo people can also use their mother tongue to speak up in matters of politics, economy, religion, etc, and bring to lime light the values that were enshrined in them as a focus for the younger generation. The trend of events seen these days is not what it is used to be. The implication for the younger generation is massive accumulation of wealth by all means. Power tussle, elimination of opponents and working for selfish interest without recourse to the common good and moral justice for which Igbo people were known. (Isidienu, 2016). The above trend can be changed through the use of Igbo language. For instance in matters of politics if the idea of anulaataaechibunta, meaning literally that if animal is not caught in a hunt today, tomorrow is another hunt.Onyeube ruolu o rachaa, meaning literally as whoever the pear ripe for, should eat. It is obvious thatwhen the virtues attached to Igbo political organization are communicated and emphasized, politics with rancor and shedding of blood will come to the lowest minimal. When the younger generation imbibe the Igbo idea that, if I do

not win a political position today, I can be fortunate tomorrow, then Igbo politics as an aspect of Igbo peoples' culture can be strengthen.In line with the behavioural theory, if the attitude adopted in the past, that politics is do or die affair can be changed and a new attitude which is, if I don't win today, I can tomorrow will be adopted;It is believed that, the Igbo political culture will bemore organized.

The rate at which some Igbo people regard their language and embrace other foreign languages may not augur well for the progress and growth of Igbo culture. It was observed that most parents do not speak Igbo language to their children at homes; some even send their wards to schools where only foreign languages are spoken. Evidence has shown that such children cannot know or understand anything about their cultural background. Their thoughts are filled with foreign ideas, which havelittle or nothing to offer for cultural development. People think that such parents behave in that way in order to belong to a certain class, believing that where people act in unison with the expectations of others their behaviour is social and acceptable. Behaviourism focuses on behaviour and denies any self-standing importance for mind and assuming that behaviour is determined by the environment. But there is no denial that one may act in accordance to his or her thought. Research findings have shown that most of the things people do are mostly conceived in the mind. This however supports the saying that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." as seen in Mathew chapter twelve verse thirty-four. Igbo people also say that "okwu e kwuru e kwubu obi ahụrụanya." Nevertheless, the neglect of Igbo language cannot have a positive effect on Igbo culture, therefore parents should refrain their steps to ensure that their children use their mother tongue on various occasions for the promotion of Igbo culture and Igbo heritage.

Igbo language could also be used to express some thought in different ways that can lead to developmental processes. For instance, it is a general belief that music as an aspect of culture, is a part of the things that bind people together. When people sing and dance they relate and forget their differences. Music is a powerful means of reconciling differences for a peaceful co-existence of members of the society. The role of Igbo language in this aspect cannot be over emphasized. It is the culture of the people that provides the language through which the singers deliver their lyrics. Igbo people sing in their mother tongue which is Igbo language. They express their thought in the song. Most people felt that, if Igbo people can promote their cultural poems and songs, the powerful wordings of the lyrics can move affluent members of the community to give donations for developmental purposes. Igbo music, sang with Igbo language can ignite a powerful force for patriotism in the minds of the people.

Obviously, it is in the use of Igbo language that a meaningful change can be effected in the Igbo society. Igbo language can change Igbo society if only Igbo people can raise their language to a very high standard, bearing in mind that no language is better than the other so far it is useful to the owners and was providing for them their needs. Igbo people say "iheonyekporonkitayaka o na-aza." Whatever name one gives its dog is what it answers. "onyekpooobayamkpokoro e jiriyakpoontu." When one disregards his cup, another will use it in scooping of ashes.It was indicated that the upgrading of some foreign languages to the detriment of Igbo language will not help the growth of Igbo culture in any way. In fact people only act in a certain way in order to gain social acceptance. When the action however is not favourable, they try to retrieve. It was therefore gathered that most Igbo people are strugglingfor think home philosophy. Some people have seen an urgent need to speak Igbo language in every occasion.From the forgoing, there is an urgent need to teach Igbo language to the younger generation; if they learnt Igbo language they can use it to express, develop and promote Igbo culture.

Furthermore, it was observed that Igbo people had a worldview that is peculiar to them. Igbo world is made up of spiritual and physical. God and other spiritual beings inhibit the spiritual world while humans and other created things such as animals; trees etc inhibit the physical world. Ijiomah (2005:84) places the Igbo worldview in three levels; the sky, earth and underworld. In as much as these demarcations are made, a communion that makes humans to be at peace exists between the physical and the spiritual world. However, this can only be achieved through language of communication that appeals and brings both the unseen and seen in total unity. Without meaning, life is baseless; and it is only language that can communicate meaning to life. Igbo people use Igbo language to direct social order, so that humans can be in a good relationship with all things. Since man is at the center of the physical and spiritual beings, his power of language can bring unity that leads to growth and development of the world he lives in. ForEzeoke (2010:20-21) "Igbo people were known and respected for their total regard for the sanity of life. They are trustworthy and take very seriously any person who defiled their land by way of perpetrating criminality or any other unconscionable and unacceptable act". Therefore, Igbo language has the power of discouraging evil acts.

Behavioural theory believed that all behaviours are learnt, although this cannot be applied to innate traits; therefore, Igbo people can condition the younger generation to learn Igbo language based on the fact that most people have discovered the disadvantages of embracing only the foreign languages. The language of the people can help in building the peoples worldview, thereby minimizing unwarranted behaviours. Through experiences it has been observed

that the neglect of Igbo language has had a great effect on the growth and development of the Igbo people's culture. It was therefore gathered that Igbo language can be learned through development and enlightenment in order to achieve the desirable goal.

Also, Igbo language is used to identify Igbo people as their native language. It is through their language that their culture is identified. Igbo language is used to express Igbo people's traditions, culture and their entire world view. Language as an instrument of developing people's identity has a powerful force in instilling the spirit of patriotism in its members. Most people were of the view that language can move people to love their native culture and create the passion for selfless service which has the power of uniting people together. A kind of enthusiasm which can be heated by the use of language can lead to developmental strategies, instances are seen in some people who have picked up and completed one or more projects in the community without demanding for reward. Ezeoke (2010:20) confirms that "Igbo people are very hard working people who sacrifice everything to benefit their families, their people and their communities." Igbo people's language can improve their lives if the speakers of Igbo language could not allow other foreign languages to overshadow their language. Igbo language is therefore, capable of developing the Igbo identity since Igbo people are the speakers of the language. They know how to speak their language, and can manipulate the words both formally and informally. It is their everyday language of communication and activities. They can impute meanings and clarifications without recourse to any other language. This will go a long way in realizing growth and development in the society as Ezeoke (2010:21) declares that "Igbo people were known for speaking out boldly, particularly in the face of injustices, wickedness and depravity". People's economy is also their identity. Igbo people are very hard working, they have various economic activities such as Agriculture, manufacturing and trading. Language is a veritable means of harnessing people's economy. If Igbo language will be used specifically for economic activities, Igbo people will be able to understand themselves better, improve their economy and transfer them to future generation. Igbo people will be able to build a better and stronger society.

4.0 Conclusion

The link between language and cultural development is a crucial tool in fostering developmental process. According to Okwudishu (2009:54-55) "Language is an interactive tool which can only be sustained if there is a conscious effort by the users to use it and hand it down from generation to generation". Igbo people should note thatno language is greater than the other once it is serving the community the purpose for which it is meant to serve.

They should as a matter of fact safeguard their language by using it in all spheres of life and ready to hand it over to generations. This will go a long way in sustaining Igbo culture and the entire Igbo society in general. From all indications, Igbo language is in the hands of the Igbo people. Their language has the capacity of developing the totality of Igbo people's cultural heritage such as Igbo identity, Igbo worldview among others. Igbo people should therefore be proud of their language and then transfer it to the future generations. They should speak their language and use it in their everyday affairs.

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