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ASSESSMENT OF PERSISTENT POOR PERFORMANCES IN BASIC IGBO STUDIES AMONG IGBO STUDENTS IN NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY AWKA ANAMBRA, STATE NIGERIAFOR SUSTAINABILITY OF IGBO LANGUAGE.

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the 300 level Igbo students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Using simple sampling technique, 350year three students were selected from five faculties among the nine faculties in the university domicile in Awka, totalling 1,750 students. A self-designed instrument entitled "Assessment of Persistent Poor Performances of Igbo Students in Basic Igbo Studies Educational Instrument" (APPPISBISEI). The validity of the instrument was ensured while internal consistency reliability test was conducted and the resulted yielded 0.83 co-efficient index when subjected to Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics. This was considered reliable for the study. Frequency counts, percentage and mean scores were used to answer the research questions while z-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant. The study revealed among others that students were not exposed to the Igbo language right from home. In view of the findings, it is recommended that parents should as a matter of urgency revert back to teaching/speaking Igbo language to their children right from infancy for sustainability of the Igbo language to avert dearth of the language in the country and world over.

Keywords: Assessment, Persistent, Poor performance, Basic Igbo Studies, and Sustainability.

Introduction

Nigeria as a nation has three main tribes namely Igbo, Hausa and Yourba and many other minor tribes. The Igbo tribe is one of the three major tribes in Nigeria. This tribe is located at the old Eastern part of Nigeria but now called South East geopolitical zone. This comprised five states namely: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. These five states are also referred to as the South East geopolitical zone in Nigeria polity. Their major language is Igbo while other languages spoken by them are insignificant. Igbo language is therefore the mother tongue and major language of this Igbo tribe. It is the first language to be learnt and spoken by growing children as parents are expected to groom their children or rather lay the foundation of this language at home. This is ever before the child enrols for schooling.

In the light of the fore-goings, mother tongue is described as the language of the immediate community where one resides. In consonant with the above view point,

Nordquist (2019) averred that mother tongue is the person's native language which is learnt from birth. The author claimed that native language is also known as the dominant, home, and indigenous language. This is why contemporary linguists and educators refer to mother tongue as L1 while foreign language is known as L2. Mother tongue is therefore the first language to be learnt at home before the second or foreign language. It is the language of one's ethnic group. The Federal Executive Council(FEC) is not oblivious of the essence of mother tongue thus approved a new National Language Policy which makes mother tongue compulsory medium of instruction from primary one to six in Nigerian educational system(Agbakwuru, 2022) the use of English language could commence in the secondary education.

Language is a medium of communication which could be oral, written or symbolised. Language sustains transmission and preservation of traditional knowledge and culture. While applauding this course of maintaining Igbo cultural ethos, social and moral values, Onwuka & Uloh-Bethel (2010) emphasized that the Igbo language is the channel through which values such as respect for elders, hospitality, dressing code, and beliefs are transmitted to the young generation through oral or written tradition. This all important cultural identity is being driven to oblivion if nothing is done to salvage the Igbo language at all cost.

Suffix it to say that most parents both in urban and rural areas forbid Igbo speaking in their homes. They ensure that these children use English language as the first language. They specifically sought for schools that adopt foreign curriculum and fight the school players whenever their wards come back home from school to speak Igbo at home. This made most schools to forbid Igbo speaking in their schools. The public schools in an attempt to meet up the need of the parents in shunning Igbo speaking in schools followed suit. To them, they would not want to lag behind as they lose students to private schools since they do not meet up with them in any school competition. In agreement with the above exposition, Maduabum (2010) affirmed that the rate at which schools downplay the speaking of Igbo language is worrisome. The author noted that more often than not, school elements resort to name callings to humiliate the Igbo language speakers in school thus maintained that the school can single handily ensure extinction of Igbo language through this means.

To give credence to the above expressions, Udeze (2020) blamed mothers who according him speak English Language to their children right from infancy while they are still suckling. This accounts for their inability to learn, read and write Igbo language when they are eventually enrolled in schools. On his own submission, Afuba (2010) posited that many Igbos neglect their language and also prefer to learn and speak other languages in order to exhibit their language prowess. In confirmation of the negative attitudes of the Igbo parents towards speaking Igbo to their wards especially the educated and affluent ones, Aghaonu, Emeka-Nwobia & Aja (2018) citing Nwadike (2004) lucidly put that some Igbo parents do not either speak Igbo language to their children or allow them speak it among themselves.

This is what compelled Adesoji-Farayibi (2017) to espouse that Igbo language has suffered negligence and disdain mostly among its counterparts (Hausa and Yoruba).On another dimension, Okudo & Ifeagwazi (2021) ascribed the disregard and disparagement of the Igbo language to the migratory nature of the Igbo race in search of greener pasture thus choose to speak English so as to fit into the foreign land of their abode. In her own perceptions, Udoye (2019) citing Onwuka (2009) & Chidi-Ehiem and Ogbu (2017) while discussing the poor attitude of students towards the teaching and learning of the Igbo language noted with dismay that the experts and elderly in the language fail to encourage and motivate the young learners by unveiling to them the implications of the negligence and nonchalant attitude towards their mother tongue.

Parents, young and old, rich and poor aspire to belong to the educated elites among their folks. This quest for supremacy in the acquisition of western education, culture and civilization cut across every aspect of an Igbo man.Even traders, school drop-outs, artisan etc. force themselves to speak English language at all cost whether correct or incorrect. Funny enough most of them are so sure of themselves that they try to intimidate the educated ones by assuming that an incorrect term is correct. Take for instance where the term "Vulcanizer" is known and called "forknizer". This has watered down a lot long adored Igbo cultural heritage in terms of religion, mode of dressing, morals, values, ethos and currently in language usage among others. All of these have boiled down to the students' inability to learn, read, speak and understand their mother tongue.There is need for urgent revamping and sustainability of this national identity of Igbo tribe so as to maintain their position as one of the major tribe in Nigeria.

Apparently, the home and the school as agents of socialization are highly suspected in this scenario of non-acquisition of the rudiments of Igbo language among Igbo youths. Nnamdi Azikiwe University happens to be one of the Federal Universities in the South East geopolitical zone where the study of "Basic Igbo Studies 1 & 11" are studied as General Studies (GS) course for all the students on levels one and two respectively. This course of study has obviously received persistent poor performance by the students of Igbo extraction in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Nigeria. Thus throwing some concerned Igbo elites into bewilderment as to how to get to the root of this abnormality and possibly proffer lasting solution.

The school where the teaching of Igbo language is taught just like other subjects is bedevilled by lack of teaching facilities which could also pose a barrier on the teaching and learning outcome. Just like Okudo (2013) identified insufficient Igbo language textbooks, absence of language laboratories and poor method of instructions as the problems of effective teaching of Igbo language in secondary schools. In congruence with Okudo, Onwuka (2009) reiterated that lack of teachers, nonchalant attitude of both students and their parents as well as scarcity of teaching aids constitute a stumbling block to the effective and

efficient teaching of this subject in schools.

The importance teachers both in quality and quantity cannot be overemphasized in the school setting. The teachers of course are the fulcrum of the teaching and learning. Teaching aids are also very essential in teaching/learning process as they assist the teacher make abstract terms concrete for better comprehension and performance. Textbooks are also very imperative as the students use them for assignments and personal study at home for better achievement. In the school where all these are deficient, the teaching/learning outcome becomes abysmal.

Persistent means that something has continued to occur. It is constantly happening. Persistent poor performance implies that the failure has been unrelenting and importunate. The ultimate aim of schooling is to be successful and being successful involves excellent academic performance in all its ramifications. It becomes embarrassing that when one could not be identified with his or her native language. It is not only speaking the language that matters, the ability to read and write is one of the essential aspects of studying the language. Following the same trend, Cambridge Dictionary (2022) described persistent as an act of doing something over a period of time or something lasting for a long time or something that is difficult to get rid of. It is a phenomenal event or unending action. This poor academic performance in basic Igbo studies has continued to exist in Nnamdi Azikiwe University without any solution in sight hence the study.

Basic Igbo language studies just as the name implies is the fundamental of Igbo language which could otherwise be referred to as Igbo language 2 (L_2) which is supposed to be meant for foreign students. This is to say that it is one of the simplest language studies meant for non-indigenes. It then becomes astonishing that some students who are of Igbo origin do not perform up to expectation while yet others fail this course out rightly. It is the meant to ensure sustainability of the Igbo language in Nigeria and even beyond. It is irritating that even those students who have not gone outside the South East zone in pursuit of primary and post primary education also fail the course. The problem of the researcher is to excavate the cause of this anomaly to avoid dearth of Igbo language at the long run in terms of the family causes and the school causes. These are the components of the study which comprised the elements of the research problems.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to appraise the persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra, State Nigeria for sustainability of Igbo Language. Specifically the study is set out to investigate the following:

1. The family causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo male and female students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. The school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo male and

female students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

i. What are the family causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo male and female students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria?

ii. What are the school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo male and female students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female students on the family causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female students on the school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria.

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the level one Igbo students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Using simple sampling technique, 350 year three students were selected from five faculties among the nine faculties in the university domicile in Awka, totalling 1,750 students. 300 level students were chosen since they have done the course (basic Igbo language studies) and were better placed to state why it good or poor result. A self-designed instrument entitled "Assessment of Persistent Poor Performances of Igbo Students in Basic Igbo Studies Educational Instrument" (APPPISBISEI). The validity of the instrument was ensured while internal consistency reliability test was conducted and the resulted yielded 0.83 co-efficient index when subjected to Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics. This was considered reliable for the study. Frequency counts, percentage and mean scores were used to answer the research questions while z-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant. Four-point Likert scale was used for the analysis of the data as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The collected were thus coded and weighted thus to get the criterion mean: 4+3+2+1 = 10/4 = 2.5 which therefore becomes the criterion mean. By this, any mean score that falls on 2.5 and above is taken as Agree while any mean score that lies below 2.5 is taken as Disagree. The distribution of the instrument was carried out by the research in company of five trained research assistants; it took them 6 weeks to complete the tasks. Out of 1, 750 copies of questionnaire distributed, 1,746 copies

were collected irrespective of the on-the-spot fill-in technique employed and were used for the result analysis.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the family causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo male and female students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria?

Table 1: The frequency counts, percentage and mean scores of the respondents on the family causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo male and female students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria.

S/N	**Item Statement: Do you agree on the following statement on the family causes of incessant poor performance in Igbo basic studies?**	**Male Students. N=758 Frequency counts/ % SA A D SD**	**Mean**	**Rmk**	**Female Stds. N=988 Frequency counts/% SA A D SD**	**Mean**	**Rmk**
1.	Igbo language is always spoken in my family.	85 56 235 382 11%7%31%50%	1.79	D	56 68 320 544 6% 7% 32% 55^	1.63	D
2.	My parents encourage me to study my Igbo books at home.	69 91 185 413 9% 12%24%54%	1.76	D	63 56 203 666 6% 6% 21% 67%	1.51	D
3.	I speak Igbo with my sibling at home	58 89 152 459 8% 12%20%61%	1.66	D	45 52 236 655 5% 5% 24% 665	1.48	D
4.	My parents assist me in reading and writing Igbo assignment	63 78 103 514 8%10%14%68%	1.59	D	23 41 239 685 2% 4% 24% 69%	1.39	D
5.	My parents enrolled me in the school where students speak Igbo language freely.	38 59 280 381 5%8%40%50%	1.68	D	98 59 123 708 19%6% 12% 71%	1.54	D
6.	My parents use to tell me folktales in Igbo language.	90 80 399189 12%11%53%30%	1.57	D	30 56 200 702 3% 6% 20% 71%	1.41	D
7.	My parents make and explain Igbo proverbs to me	40 64 259 3 95 5%8%34%52%	1.67	D	41 59 312 576 4% 6%32%58%	1.56	D
8.	I can conveniently tell stories in Igbo	25 53 230 450	1.54	D	58 98 111 721	1.49	D

	language	3% 7% 30%59%			6%10%11%72%		
9.	Sometimes I think in Igbo	34 51 98 575 4% 7% 13%76%	1.40	D	58 99 238 593 6% 10% 24%60%		D
10	Respect for elders, morals and greetings were imparted to me by my parents	320 438 -- -- 42% 58% -- --	3.42	A	232 565 89 102 23%57%9%10%	2.94	A
	Cluster mean		1.81	D		1.35	D

Table 1 presents the frequency counts, percentage and mean scores of the respondents based on gender. Items with serial numbers 1- 9 had their mean scores ranging between 1.40 -1.79 which is below the criterion mean of 2.5 indicating that the respondent disagree that Igbo language is always spoken in their homes, parents encourage them to study their Igbo books at home, allow them speak Igbo with their siblings, tell them stories in Igbo, make proverbs and explain them among others. Percentage scores for disagree ranges between 50% - 72% indicating that the level of disagreement is high. The respondents agree on item with serial number 10 which states that respect for elders, morals and greetings were taught by their parents with mean scores of 3.42 and 2.94 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5. The percentage scores yielded 58% and 57% for male and female in that order. The cluster mean gave rise to 1.81 and 1.35 which connotes disagree for both male and female accordingly.

Research Question 2: What are the school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo male and female students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria?

Table 2:The frequency counts, percentage and mean scores of the respondents on the family causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo male and female students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table 2 presents the frequency counts, percentage and mean scores of the respondents on the school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo male and female students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria. Both male and female students disagree that Igbo competitions are usually done in the school, Igbo teachers make use of teaching aids, Prices are given to the best Igbo student during price giving day, their school has Igbo group as part of clubs and societies, Students are always allowed to speak Igbo language among themselves,

S/N	Item Statement: Do you agree on the following statement on the school causes of incessant poor performance in Igbo basic studies?	Male Students. N=758 Frequency counts/ % SA A D SD	Mean	Rmk	Female Stds. N=988 Frequency counts/% SA A D SD	Mean	Rmk
1.	All the school programmes and activities are played out in English language	200 471 56 31 26% 62% 7% 4%	3.11	A	324 298 166 200 43%39%22%2%	3.60	A
2.	Igbo competitions are usually done in the school	68 69 189 432 9% 9% 25% 56%	1.70	D	99 130 389 370 10%13%39 37%	2.0	D
3.	Igbo teachers make use of teaching aids	100 101368 189 13%13%49%25%	2.15	D	120 75 412 381 12%8%42%39%	1.93	D
4.	My school has sufficient Igbo teachers	47 37 389 285 6% 5% 51% 34%	1.80	D	299 289 244 156 30%29%25%16%	2.7	A
5.	Prices are given to the best Igbo student during price giving day.	86 56 380 236 11% 7% 50%31%	1.99	D	136 189 429 234 14%19%43%24%	2.23	D
6.	My school has Igbo group as part of clubs and societies.	nil nil 421 337 -- nil 56% 44%	1.56	D	86 67 400 435 9%8%40% 44%	1.80	D
7.	Students who speak Igbo language are ridiculed in my school	259 294 107 98 34% 39%14%13%	2.94	A	332 269 175 212 34%27%18%21%	2.73	A
8.	Students are always allowed to speak Igbo language among themselves	29 152 258 319 4%20%21%42%	1.86	D	68 102 459 359 7% 10% 46% 36%	1.88	D
9.	During Igbo language lesson, only Igbo language is spoken	186 191 158 123 25% 25%21%16%	2.32	D	177 189 321 301 18%19%32%30%	2.24	D
10	My school has Igbo language laboratories	Nil nil 369 389 Nil nil 49% 51%	1.49	D	109 124 458 297 11%13%46% 30%	2.05	D
	Cluster mean		1.92	D		2.32	D

During Igbo language lesson, only Igbo language is spoken and their school has Igbo language laboratories with the mean scores from items with serial numbers 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 ranging from1.49-2.32 and 1.73-2.24 for both male and female students respectively which is below the criterion mean of 2.5. Both male and female students however agree that all the school's programmes and activities are played out in English language on items, school has sufficient Igbo teachers and students who speak Igbo language are ridiculed in my school in item numbers 1 and 7 with mean scores of 3.11, 2.94 & 3.62, 2.73 for both male and female students accordingly. Both differed in item with serial number 4 while the males disagree with mean score of 1.80 the females agree with mean score of 2.7. Cluster mean yielded 1.92 and 2.32 for both gender respectively.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores on the family causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria based on gender.

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Table 3: The z-test analysis of mean scores on the family causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria based on gender.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	z-cal	p-value	Sig. level	Decision
Male	758	1.81	0.86	1,744	1.04	0.08	0.05	Not sig.
Female	988	1.35	0.67					

Table 3 shows the mean scores of the respondents as 1.81 and 1.35 with the SD of 0.86 and 0.67 for the male and female students, with the degree of freedom of 1,744, z-cal of 1.04, p-value of 0.08 which is greater than the 0.05 level of significant upon which the hypothesis was tested. It is therefore declared that there is no significant difference between the mean scores on the family causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria based on gender.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean scores on the school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria based on gender.

Table 4: The z-test analysis of mean scores on the school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria based on gender.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	z-cal	p-value	Sig. level	Decision
Male	758	1.92	0.85	1,744	1. 26	0.06	0.05	Not sig.
Female	988	2.32	0.92					

Table 4 presents z-test analysis of the mean scores of the respondents as 1.92 and 2.32 with the SD of 0.85 and 0.92 for both male and female students in that order, with the degree of freedom of 1,744, z-cal of 1.26, p-value of 0.06 at 0.05 level of significant. Since p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significant upon which the hypothesis was tested thus maintained that there is no significant difference between the mean scores on the school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria based on gender.

Findings

The first finding of this study is that most male and female students disagree that both male and female students disagree on the school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria. They disagree that Igbo language is always spoken in their homes, parents encourage them to study their Igbo books at home, allow them speak Igbo with their siblings, tell them stories in Igbo, make proverbs and explain them among others. All these acts do not mean well for the sustenance of Igbo language. In order to sustain the legacy, cultural heritage and tribal identity which is crucial in human existence, Igbo language should be accorded its rightful position through impartation of this tribal language to the younger generation right from home at infancy for continuity and sustenance of the Language. This is line with what Udeze (2020) and Aghaonu, Emeka-Nwobia & Aja (2018) citing Nwadike (2004) discovered that parents are responsible for this language quagmire. The corresponding hypothesis maintained that there is no significant difference between the mean scores on the family causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria based on gender.

The second finding of this study is that most male and female students disagree on the school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria. They disagree that Igbo competitions are usually done in the school, Igbo teachers make use of teaching aids, Prices are given to the best Igbo student during price giving day, their school has Igbo group as part of clubs and societies, Students are always allowed

to speak Igbo language among themselves, During Igbo language lesson, only Igbo language is spoken and their school has Igbo language laboratories. The school is one of the social institutions that propagate knowledge, skills, norms, cultures, values and morals to the learners. Whenever the school is found wanting in any of the above elements, that singular element is doomed to die off. It is in the light of this that Okudo (2013) identified insufficient Igbo language textbooks, absence of language laboratories and poor method of instructions as the problems of effective teaching of Igbo language in secondary schools. In congruence with Okudo, Onwuka (2009) reiterated that lack of teachers, nonchalant attitude of both students and their parents as well as scarcity of teaching aids constitute a stumbling block to the effective and efficient teaching of this subject in schools.

Maduabum (2010) reiterated the rate at which schools neglect the speaking of Igbo language. The corresponding hypothesis declared that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the respondents on the school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria based on gender.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the family and the school are the causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo Language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria based on gender and there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the respondents on the school causes of persistent poor performances in basic Igbo studies among Igbo students for sustainability of Igbo language in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria based on gender.

Recommendations

Following the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. The family should as a matter of necessity ensure that the mother tongue be spoken the children right from infant so as to imbue with the children the spirit of preservation of tribal identity and cultural heritage for sustainability of Igbo language.
2. Schools should forthwith start to establish Igbo programmes and provide adequate teaching aids, textbooks and language laboratories in schools so as to make the study of this language enticing and captivating for sustainability of Igbo language not only in Nnamdi Azikiwe University but even beyond.

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