

MONSIGNOR PROFESSOR SIMON O ANYANWU'S CALL FOR A DAILY CATHOLIC NEWSPAPER IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR IGBO LANGUAGE PROMOTION

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ABSTRACT

Msgr Prof Simon Anyanwu, in his work, *Igbo Catholicism on the Move*, called for a daily Catholic newspaper in Southeast Nigeria. This paper investigates the implications of that call for Igbo language promotion. Specifically, it aims to portray how implementing that clarion call would promote Igbo language documentation, preservation, maintenance, development, propagation, revitalisation, renaissance, and hybridisation. The primary data sources are the work mentioned above and interviews, while the library and the internet are the secondary sources. The theoretical framework is Joshua Fishman's theory of revising language shift. The data analysis and interpretation methods are descriptive, analytical, and hermeneutical. However, the finding indicates his advocacy for a daily Catholic newspaper is implicitly Igbo language-promoting. Thus, this paper recommends that the proposed newspaper promote the Igbo language unreservedly and simultaneously translate to running Igbo and English versions.

Key Words: Newspaper, Language, Endangerment, Renaissance, Promotion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Monsignor Professor Simon Onuwabuchi Anyanwu raised and discussed many salient issues in his work, *Igbo Catholicism on the Move*. Among them was the media issue in evangelisation service – a sub-theme of his discourse on the Ahiara diocese. There he comprehensively delineated the print media landmark of the Catholic Church in Southeast Nigeria, even down to Issele-Uku in South-south Nigeria. The newspapers include *The Leader and Ozisa* (Owerri Archdiocese), *Trinitas* (Onitsha), *Lumen* (Umuahia), *The Flame* (Enugu), *Raindrops* (Abakaliki), *The Forum* (Orlu), *Voice of Religion* (Okigwe - today *The Sage newspaper* has replaced *The Voice of Religion*), *The Guide* (Ahiara), *The Rex* (Aba), and *Paulist Magazine* (Issele-Uku). After indicating the emergence of *The Guide* newspaper as an index of the vitality of Igbo Catholicism, exemplified in the Ahiara diocese, he called on the Igbo Catholic authorities to survey the possibility of a daily Catholic newspaper in the near future in Igbo land where the Catholic faith has taken roots. According to him, such a paper should be able to disseminate Catholic information, deepen knowledge of doctrine, social catholicism, and morals, be at service of the broader Christian context, compare with some others of the kind in some Catholic climes across the world, and promote the Igbo language (S.O. Anyanwu, personal communication, July 20, 2022). Such newspapers include the Italian *L'Armonia*, *Avvenire*, *L'Eco di Bergamo*, and *L'Osservatore Romano*. In Germany, we have *Die Tagespost*, a Catholic national weekly newspaper published by Johann Wilhelm Naumann Verlag in Würzburg. Besides, the USA has the *National Catholic Reporter* (NCR). He recalled that in the Traditional-Catholic countries, before now, well back in 19th century Europe, we had C-parties (Christian democratic parties), which benefited from such

newspapers (S.O. Anyanwu, personal communication, July 20, 2022). Sixteen years after this clarion call, this study deemed it apposite to critically appraise that glowing recommendation with the prospect of x-raying its implications for Igbo language development.

The timeliness of the above recommendation is predicated on the contemporary discourse on the Igbo language endangerment and the impact of newspapers on the issue (Eme, 2009). Besides, it rests on language promotion generally (Cheyney, 1992; Babalola, 2002; Rassoul & Khorsheed, 2018; Rao, 2019a; and Rao, 2019b). This deplorable Igbo situation originated from colonial subtle cultural and linguistic imperialism, now promoted and orchestrated by globalisation, socio-economic and religious factors, failure in parental-intergenerational language transmission role, and disaffection of the Igbo younger generation for the language. Among the scholars that dealt with this endangerment issue were Crystal (2000), Jha (2018), Bromham et al. (2022), Guérin & Yourupi (2017), etc. Others (such as Igboanusi 2006; Okonkwo, 2012; Onyemelukwe, 2019; Anumudu & Chikodi, 2018; Onu, Emeka-Nwobia & Aja, 2018; etc.) focused on the Igbo language endangerment and the way out of the linguistic web. While appreciating their invaluable contributions towards the Igbo language renaissance, it is critical to underscore that none deliberated on a daily Southeast Catholic newspaper's role on the issue. This paper bridges this epistemological gap by critically appraising the Igbo language-related implications of Msgr Prof S.O. Anyanwu's call for a daily Catholic newspaper in Southeast Nigeria. However, before delving into that, suffice it to discuss the phenomenon of Igbo language endangerment.

Igbo language endangerment

The term endangerment means the state of being in danger or at risk. It entails exposure to circumstances that make a thing vulnerable and can affect its vitality, resulting in extinction. When applied to language, it indicates a situation where a given language is in a state capable of stifling its vivacity and leading to its death and loss. UNESCO Atlas (2011) has identified six language endangerments: safe, stable yet threatened, unsafe, definitively endangered, severely endangered, critically endangered, and extinct. A language is *safe* when all generations speak it without any indication of linguistic threat from other languages, thereby making intergenerational language transmission uninterrupted. It is in a *stable yet threatened mood* when all generations of the language owners speak and transfer it unbroken across different generations. Unsafe language obtains where, although most but not all children or families of a given community speak a language as their first language, it could be of limited use, such as in interactions at home. A definitively endangered language arises when children no longer learn a language as their mother tongue, in which intergenerational language transfer exists no more. Parents are now the speakers of the language. In a severely endangered cadre, only the grandparents and older generations are the language speakers. Even though the parent generation might still understand the language, it does not constitute the *modus loquendi* of parent-children interactions. Then, at a critically endangered level, the great-grandparental generation is the youngest language speaker, and they do not use it for daily engagements as there may not be anyone to interact with. Finally, an extinct domain is where nobody can speak or remember the language.

Language endangerment is possible in all languages. Crystal (2000) showed that of about 7000 world languages, only 600 are safe. The rest are endangered. Research and experience have indicated that most endangered languages belong to minority languages (Austin, 2021; Jha, 2018). The Igbo language belongs to this category of endangered minority languages (Onyemelukwe,

2019; Anumudu & Chikodi, 2018; Onu, Emeka-Nwobia & Aja, 2018; Okonkwo, 2012; etc.). Indicators of this linguistic infection are obvious:

- i. lack of prestige for the language among younger generations;
- ii. parents' lack of enthusiasm for the intergenerational transmission of the language;
- iii. inability to interact in the language freely and without mixing the English language;
- iv. inability of the government officials of Igbo extraction to address their constituencies in the language;
- v. contemporary measurement of child intelligence on the ground of his/her English language proficiency;
- vi. inability of the younger generations to read and write in the language;
- vii. contemporary use of the English language as the official language of instruction in teaching and learning;
- viii. neglect of cultures that promote language transmission;
- ix. irresponsible assimilation of Western cultural life, which discourages language growth; and
- x. denigration of the language speakers and using the term *Igbotic* to depict inferiority. Such a description paints a negative picture of the Igbo people and their language.

Based on the indicators above, some scholars predict a bleak future for the Igbo language. For instance, Onyemelukwe (2019) highlighted two long-term adverse outcomes of language endangerment. First, it risks becoming extinct forty to fifty years from now, except there are drastic measures to curb the ugly trend. Second, it would lead to a linguistic and symbolic death of Ndigbo. Notably, this corroborated earlier studies by *Child Language Research* (2017), which projected that about 46% of the world's languages would be in danger of extinction at the end of this century. Indeed, this spells doom for the language and everything it sustains: people's worldviews and linguistic legacies. It would amount to not only the language's death but to all related. Subsequently, many Igbo language advocates (such as Archbishop Anthony J.V Obinna, Rev. Fr. Prof. Jerome Okonkwo, Rev. Fr. Dr Chinagorom Longinus, Rev. Fr. Dr Innocent Osuagwu, Rev. Fr. Dr Bartholomew Nnaemedo, Prof. Emmanuel Nwanolue Emenanjo, Dr Emmanuel Nwaoke, Dr Herbert Igboanusi, Dr Ifeoma Mabel Onyemelukwe, etc.) have sued for its renaissance and promotions to salvage the situation. These advocates backed their arguments with existing Igbo language renaissance and promotion strategies such as documentation, preservation, maintenance, development, propagation, revitalisation, and renaissance. They hoped, through these measures, to restore the language to its enviable status vis-à-vis other world languages. However, the above advocacy informs this paper's discourse on the implications of Prof. Msgr Anyanwu's call for a daily Catholic newspaper in Southeast Nigeria, as depicted below.

Implications of Msgr. Prof. Anyanwu's call for a daily Catholic newspaper on the Igbo language promotion

This paper analyses the implications of Msgr Prof. Anyanwu's call for a daily Catholic newspaper from the pedestal of the different measures for the Igbo language renaissance and promotion already recommended by some scholars and delineated in this paper. So, for proper and thorough handling, I would like to discuss them seriatim.

Implications for the Igbo language documentation and preservation

It is good to begin this section by analysing its key terms: documentation and preservation. The Igbo word that translates documentation is *ndebe* (recording), *ndeko/ndekota* (writing), and *ndetu*

(noting). The four terms deal with articulating a thing in written form. *Ndọkọrọ* (recording) and *nnyokoro* (videoing) are other Igbo words for translating documentation. *Ndọkọrọ*, unlike *ndebe*, involves the use of a tape-recording application. Therefore, documentation concerns the act of recording, tape-recording, videoing, noting, or writing something down for preservation purposes. Thus, generally, one could understand language documentation, also called documentary linguistics, as the creation of a body of *archivable* audio, video, and textual recordings, and translating and annotating them, paying attention to pertinent contextual metadata (Austin, 2013, Austin & Sallabank, 2018). As applied to the Igbo language, documentation entails recording its fundamentals to save it from endangerment and its attendant loss and death. Through documentation, it is possible to preserve a piece of writing for posterity. For instance, what we have today as the Holy Bible came to us through documentation. Concerning language, documentation is working to ensure that a language survives linguistic endangerment and extinction viral onslaught.

The Igbo words that translate preservation are *nchekwa* or *ndokwa*. Thus, preservation means ensuring that a thing does not decay. Igbo language preservation, therefore, entails checkmating the language from tendencies that might cause and accelerate its death and eventual loss. Achieving such requires the application of language preservatives such as language documentation, maintenance, propagation, revitalisation, etc. These anti-language endangerments, in turn, operate through media (print and digital), oral communication, cultural displays, and other non-verbal cues.

Following the analysis of documentation, and preservation above, the next is to determine how Prof. Anyanwu's call for a daily catholic newspaper would contribute to Igbo language documentation and preservation. Indeed, the above yet-to-be issues evoke the question of the relevance of newspapers in language promotion. So, to address the above issue, it is pertinent to inquire into the sources from which print media derive their information. Categorically, newspapers get their information from two sources: internal and external, which corroborates Babalola's (2002) view that "news is drawn from the life experiences of people who make up a society and between people and the world they experience" (p.404). The internal source comprises the media's immediate environment consisting of the people's worldview and daily events. Their worldview embodies their culture, philosophy, conceptual framework, etc. Admittedly, language is an aspect of culture. Then, the external source consists of the daily events and worldview of the newspaper's audience outside its immediate setting. The two sources represent the happenings and worldviews within and outside the media's natural or geographical setting, though both constitute its audience community or coverage area. The former designates its primary audience, while the latter is its secondary audience. So, Rassoul & Khorsheed (2018) were right to affirm that "newspapers connect individuals to their local society and other foreign societies as well" (p.1370). The two societies offer newspapers the matrix for reportage. As newspaper draws information from the sources already delineated, some consider it valid documentation of nations' history since they give vivid snapshots of diverse aspects of societal life: socio-economic, religiopolitical, and educational (Rassoul & Khorsheed, 2018; Bankole & Babalola, 2011; Babalola,2002; and Schoenback, 2005). Language is part of this history, implying that advocating for a daily Catholic newspaper in Southeast Nigeria is an implicit invitation to document the Igbo language.

To draw news items from a particular setting, a newspaper editor should understand the respective culture of the given environment. This insight would help the person know how to present a news

item to represent the cultural setting. When a piece of news runs contrary to the spirit of the cultural setting, it could experience a backlash from the audience, who are the culture's owners. Even when the aim is to critique the culture, constructive modality takes preference over the destructive approach, as the latter impinges on the people's cultural dignity. So, in the spirit of constructive criticism, editors present culturally-related news items mindful of their place in people's lives. It implies that media presentations and representations of cultural events represent subtle documentation and preservation of a people's culture. Ipso facto, the designation subtle shows that the two strategies of cultural renaissance and promotion already outlined are not the central aim of a newspaper. They are consequent upon a newspaper reportage and are part of the by-products of its resort to a local or internal matrix for content build-up. A by-product, in this sense, neither denotes nor connotes waste or unwanted products. Rather, it depicts one of the products of a fractional distillation of newspaper contents. The better philosophical terminology to use here is what I may call *fractional analysis*, which depicts a rational breaking down and stratification of a phenomenon to x-ray and unveils its components. So, when one carries out such an analysis of newspaper content, one discovers that it is a composite of many products.

Equally, when a newspaper draws a news item from external sources, it downloads it to suit its audience and their worldview, of which culture is an essential component. It means that, though the news item may be foreign, it bears local colouration to suit the audience. It is like a foreign matrix tinged and wrapped with local contents as apparel designed to endear it to the audience. Subsequently, like the internal sources, the external local content, which is the cultural element, has language as an essential component. So, an attempt to download foreign news sources to suit a given audience implicitly entails documenting and preserving their culture. Interestingly, as language is part of this culture, newspaper sources of information, whether internal or external, entail recourse to the audience's culture. Indirectly, documentation and preservation of their culture involve that of their language. Subsequently, deep insight into culturally-based news items requires recourse to the respective culture's originality. Such entrance into the cultural milieu demands understanding the language which constitutes its hood, gateway, content, and catalyst.

Therefore, Msgr Anyanwu's call for a daily catholic newspaper in Southeast Nigeria would enhance the documentation and preservation of the Igbo language. As already stated, as it would depend on internal sources for news items, it would promote the Igbo language. It would also encourage the language from external sources since foreign news would be stepped down to accommodate the audience in the media's local setting. However, one may argue that since the newspaper may be written in English, there is no way such can promote the Igbo language. Indeed, the above submission appears plausible, but reasoning from the premise that the Igbo language contains some irreducible and untranslatable concepts constitutes the obverse of the above deposition. The irreducible concepts are describable and non-identical with any word outside the Igbo language. A precise instance is the concept *ofọ*, the symbol of authority in traditional Igbo society. This term is only explainable but untranslatable. Its exhaustive hermeneutical interpretation is only possible through recourse to the original language embodying it. The same applies to many names in the Igbo language. In interpreting them, one naturally reclines to the original language. Then, given that translators are traitors, says Ryle (1949), depending solely on interpretation to understand words or text is faulty. The attempt to understand such words in their totality demands recourse to the source. - the Igbo language. Considering that one cannot interpret these words in isolation, it means that their holistic hermeneutical interpretation depends on other words and their cultural milieu. It implies that it requires not just mere etymological meaning;

socio-cultural, political, and economic contexts or factors are imperative. One must study these contexts in the Igbo language to grapple with them. Hence, one could argue that a holistic insight into untranslatable terms and expressions is impossible without resorting to the original language they occurred. So, advocating for a daily Catholic newspaper in the Southeast is a plus for the Igbo language documentation and preservation. Furthering the argument above, Msgr Prof. Anyanwu argued that the newspaper would reveal traces of *Igbohood or Igboness* in its presentations. Such arises as elements of people's writings reflect their lives in originality, couched under sentences such as "my people used to say." So he maintained that a daily Catholic newspaper would contain people's sayings in their originality. Notably, he remarked how Chinua Achebe's writings, such as *Things Fall Apart*, have enriched English and other languages through proverbs with Igbo flavour (S.O. Anyanwu, personal communication, July 20, 2022). Every written document, therefore, mirrors its writer's world and subsists as that world's repository and embodiments: linguistic and otherwise. By implication, a daily Catholic newspaper in the Southeast is an implicit archival of the Igbo language.

Implications for the Igbo language maintenance and development

Igbo language maintenance is a process ensuring the retention of the identity of the language. The Igbo term *ndozi* translates the term maintenance appropriately. It indicates that Igbo language maintenance aims at language stability by keeping to the status quo. Likewise, the Igbo words denoting development are "*imepe* or *mmepe*" (Nnaemedo, 2017). It indicates that "development entails a transition from potentiality to actuality, the progression from 'yet' to 'not-yet,' from 'an-already' to the expected" (Nnaemedo, 2020a, p.64). Thus, Igbo language development aims to de-envelop or unwrap the inner content and dynamism of the language to achieve its utmost potential. Igbo language maintenance and development are ongoing processes critical for language vitality. Whereby the process stops on the way, the consequence is usually language endangerment which could result in language shift, extinction, and loss.

Calling for a daily newspaper could help arrest the above language's death-prone situation. The probability of concretising the call above is glaring on two counts. First, because newspaper develops "humans' knowledge ..., enhances their language skills, ... and ...natural outgrowth of critical thinking" (Rao, 2019a, p.154). The second rationale is that newspaper and other media derive their news matrix from internal and external sources. Internal sourcing could require interviews with residents of the media's immediate environment. Though some of the interviewees might present their responses in English, there are some whose only language of communication is Igbo. The interviewers record and transcribe them accordingly. It implies that for the interviewer to conduct and transcribe the interview, especially in the Igbo language, he/she should be knowledgeable in the language. If not, the media house suffers a news drought.

Then, getting an interviewer well versed in the language of the interview requires some training in the said language, both at a pre-employment and post-employment stage; that is, as a prerequisite for employment and as an essential component of in-service training. Such training is implicitly an exercise in Igbo language maintenance and development. So, whether it is by way of demanding that such an interviewer be a graduate of the Igbo language, a fluent speaker of the language, or undergo continuous orientation in it, the idea is to have media personnel conversant with the language of interviewer-interviewee interaction. Furthermore, as every media house aspires for growth and development to achieve continuity, so must it steadily sustain employing and

encouraging personnel grounded in the Igbo language. Therefore, Igbo language maintenance and development continue as long as the media house exists.

Consequently, besides being a faith-promoting invitation, Msgr Prof Anyanwu's call for a daily Catholic newspaper in the Southeast would help to maintain and develop the Igbo language. As the media house grows, the interviewers are expected to invent newer and improved methods of interview conduction in the languages of their audience. Also, such makes them develop new vocabularies and expressions for emerging realities. They gain wide attention and acceptance as they propagate the new language modes above. With such in place, one of the beneficiaries is the language, which now receives new vigour and attention. In this sense, having seen language as a veritable tool, careful attention would be given to maintaining, developing, and promoting it. Besides, as every media house has an editorial crew that carries out their gatekeeping operations, the language personnel required is not just one, but many; if not, they may end up producing something substandard, contrary to their media policy, and antagonistic to the audience's culture. Then, as senior personnel retires, they recruit and employ new ones. Eventually, the media house would indirectly build individuals with an Igbo language promotion mindset, advocates of the language, within and outside. Unlike the language despisers, these individuals would see Igbo language expertise as a means of survival and empowerment and encourage a love of the language among people.

Implications for the Igbo language propagation

The Igbo word denoting propagation is *mgbasa* (spreading, broadcasting). Subsequently, Igbo language propagation means disseminating the language to the audience to achieve its renaissance and promotion. It is no longer news that the language is endangered and needs revival to salvage it from extinction. Furthermore, it is insufficient to document, preserve, maintain, and develop the language. Its propagation is imperative, using traditional and contemporary means such as print media and digital applications (online publication, social media, etc.). These would aid in propagating the language on two fronts. First, at the local level, it would ensure the dissemination of the cultural peculiarities of each dialect in the geopolitical zone and Igbo land in general. Igbo land comprises all the language-speaking areas in Nigeria. The zone indeed has the Igbo language as a unifying language, yet there are variations in the rendering of this same language. For instance, Nsukka, Enugu, Onitsha, Abakaliki, Owerri, Nneato, Obowo, Mbanjo, etc., have different dialects. Each of the dialects slightly varies from the others. As well, each has vocabulary peculiarities. Through this daily Catholic newspaper advocated by Msgr Prof. Anyanwu, these vocabularies would readily be available to various parts of Igbo land, who would benefit from them, as they shed light on what they already have. So, it would help enrich Igbo vocabulary in general. Most often, some held the lack of some vocabularies in the central Igbo as a reason for denigrating the language. Igbo vocabularies are insufficient for these people to accommodate the different sheds of reality. However, apart from countering such a position on the ground of what Nnaemede (2020b) called equi-insufficiency of all languages, which implies that no language is self-sufficient, there is another argument from what I call the *theory of vocabulary integration*. This theory considers the dialects in Igbo land parts of the Igbo language, with the different words in these dialects as the language vocabulary-wealth index. Based on this theory, the summation of the vocabulary in the dialects is the composition of the Igbo language vocabulary. They are but different words expressing the same thing found in various tongues of the Igbo land. Therefore, the dialects are comparable to sons of the same parents. The wealth of the parents is the summation

of those of their sons. For instance, following the same logic in a family, no child can claim to be richer than his parents, as all that each child has adds to the parents' wealth. Likewise, the different dialects sum up the riches of the Igbo language. The vitality of the language should also be predicated on them. So, as the newspaper reports from different parts of the Igbo land, their different approaches to the issues described in diverse vocabulary are brought to light. Though different in phonetics and spelling, these vocabularies present and represent the same reality. Such helps to enhance and enrich Igbo synonyms and antonyms. Consequently, a daily Catholic newspaper in the Southeast would facilitate the harvest of Igbo vocabulary and ultimately helps to propagate the language.

Second, it is critical to remark that Igbo language propagation is not limited to the primary audience's field. The availability of digital apparatus has ensured news dissemination globally. Thus, Rao (2019b) was right to assert that "newspapers and magazines are the most widely used of the media" (p.65). Through digital means, the international communities would readily learn about the language and be able to compare the Igbo terms used in disseminating the news vis-à-vis their language. Such would not only strengthen the language but also underscore its equi- validity. Like other world languages, such encourages its intergenerational transmission. Thus, whether in the internal or external domain, a daily Catholic newspaper advocated by Msgr Prof. Anyanwu would add value to the Igbo language.

Implications for the Igbo language renaissance, revival, and revitalisation

The Igbo language renaissance entails the rebirth of the language in its entirety, while the language revival means reversing aspects of the language that have experienced a complete language shift. Further, Igbo language revitalisation is reversing a language shift in those areas of the Igbo language that are already at an advanced stage. The three processes aim to save the language from endangerment and direct it to the path of dynamism. Previous studies have shown different ways of achieving this dynamism, such as the daily use of language in speech and writing. Among all the measures involving written documents, a daily newspaper occupies a significant position, providing a daily forum for enhancing the language and people's knowledge. Hence, Cheyney (1992) defines a newspaper as "the textbook that provides up-to-date information on local, state/provincial national, and world affairs; the most current analysis and criticism on executive and legislative decision-making; the latest in music, theatre, television, and the fine arts and even columns and comics to make people laugh" (p.36). Besides, *Academic American Encyclopaedia* (1989) broadly viewed it as an unbounded publication issued at regular intervals, which seeks to inform, analyse, influence and entertain. Thus, granted that books also propagate language, I maintain that a newspaper uniquely disseminates it by undertaking daily engagements in and with the language of the immediate community directly or indirectly. Unlike books that take years, daily newspaper upgrades use the latest form of expression and writing. A daily newspaper is a clear attestation of the dynamism of language. It is always contemporaneous in its presentation to gain the audience's attention, patronage and readership. Resultantly, it employs every trending strategy to improve its acceptability and marketisation. Like other human investments, a newspaper business is profit-oriented and shuns de-marketing and liquidating agents.

As a daily news outlet, a Catholic newspaper would add to the daily editorials read over the radio and television in Igbo and English. Given that the editorial rests on Igbo worldview and happenings primarily within the immediate media environment and secondarily outside the media's local setting, such a newspaper would greatly influence the reflective atmosphere of its audience. It

would encourage the audience to read the paper, think and reflect on its background, and speak the language without indignation. They would see in the newspaper not merely a presentation of news items but a more profound and excellent invitation to cultural emancipation, re-appreciation of Igbo linguistic heritage, and its salvage from endangerment shift, extinction, and loss, through a renaissance, revitalisation, and revival. Rendering such in the Igbo language will endear more people to the language, encouraging them to appreciate it.

Implications for the Igbo language hybridisation

Currency in newspaper content requires keeping abreast of contemporary issues within and outside the media setting. Language hybridisation is one way of achieving this. It entails updating the language of media engagement, comprising the audience's mother tongue and that used in media reportage. Igbo language hybridisation means cross-breeding the Igbo language with other languages to achieve effective communication. Thus, Igbo Language hybridisation is the fusion or cross-breeding of the language with other world languages to enable it to address contemporary issues. Nevertheless, this paper identified two kinds of hybridisation: *lone-word and phasal*. The former occurs when the end product is a single word. For instance, the Igbo word *sakramenti* is a hybrid of the English word sacrament and the Igbo translation of it. Conversely, the latter, *phasal hybridisation*, occurs when the aftermath is a phrase, as in the translation of the phrase, *holy Mass*, to *Misa di aso* in Igbo. However, the two hybridisation species consist of three types: homogenous, dual or two-tier, and triadic or three-tier. Homogenous hybridisation represents a cross-bred word or phrase whose spelling (orthography), sound (acoustics), and pronunciation (phonetics) are unchanged. For instance, the term *Maria* is the same for Igbo and Latin. Dual hybridisation only differs in sound and pronunciation; their meaning is the same. A case in point is the term *Jesu*, which retains the same spelling in Igbo and Latin yet differs in sound and pronunciation in the two languages. Lastly, triadic hybridisation occurs where the terms' spelling, sound, and pronunciation vary in the two languages concerned. For example, the term *sakramenti* has a different spelling, sound, and pronunciation in both Igbo and English.

The *hybridisational* value of a daily Catholic newspaper in the Southeast is apparent in internal and external dimensions. The former (internal dimension) is evident when one reflects against the backdrop of the missionary mandate of the Church by Jesus Christ to his followers: to go and evangelise all nations, baptising them using the Trinitarian formula (Matthew 28: 19-20). The Church cannot undertake this mission without evangelising the people and their cultures. Such precisely informs the Church's efforts at cultural refinement and Christianisation of peoples down the ages. The Church-employed theories include inculturation, acculturation, enculturation, contextualisation, indigenisation, adaptation, and accommodation.

Inculturation involves divesting the message of Christ of unnecessary Western coatings of meanings, symbols, and norms that accumulated over the centuries (Azevedo, 1982); and enwrapping and disseminating it with a model that is in tandem with the cultural realities of the people. Acculturation, in cultural anthropology, underscores "the contact between cultures and ensuing changes" (Amafili, 1998, p.24). Azevedo (1982) defined enculturation as "the process by which the human individual becomes inserted into his/her own culture" (p.523). Contextualisation means "weaving together." Hence, it is the interweaving of the gospel with every particular situation (Schineller, 1990; Amafili, 1998). Indigenisation of theology "means that the local community, with its indigenous leadership, has the primary responsibility and task of developing the teaching, the liturgy, and the practice of that local Church" (Schineller, 1990, p.19). Adaptation

refers to a particularly creative method of pastoral activity whereby the message of the gospel and the celebration of the liturgy are adapted to the customs of a given people. Further, adaptation implies seriously listening to and studying a given culture. It is similar to indigenisation but also differs from it, as indigenisation emphasises the promotion of indigenous church ministers in every locality (Amafili, 1998). Accommodation entails "the application by way of an analogy of Holy Scripture to something not intended by the writer" (Attwater 2010, p.5). It resembles adaptation as it tries to accept some aspects of a people's culture for evangelisation. However, of the approaches above, inculturation is the most acceptable. Inculturation brings about what Amafili (1998, p.11) called "the kernel of Christ's message", devoid of Western trappings. Consequently, such leads to a better appraisal of African culture, improved evangelisation of the people, and a healthy relationship between Christianity and African culture.

So, a daily Catholic newspaper would internally help the Igbo speakers hybridise the language for a deeper insight. For instance, in evangelising the Southeast through a daily Catholic newspaper, the Church would certainly endeavour to shed light on those aspects of its cultures that could promote the gospel and constructively critique others. Thus, the newspaper would employ a hybridised version of some Igbo concepts, proverbs, names of persons, festivals, events, and places to achieve this objective. Msgr Prof. Anyanwu observed that often these are used to drive home certain information in their originalities. He noted that the hybridisation could be transliteration or *Engligbo* - a combination of English and Igbo language or what Okonkwo (2012) called *compositum mixtum* or code-switching syndrome. Msgr Prof Anyanwu typified this with the transliteration of Igbo's definition of proverbs: *ilu bu mmanu ndi Igbo ji eri okwu*, as *proverbs are oil with which the Igbo eat words*. He noted that such an approach would elevate the Igbo conceptual framework and improve its recognition and use in the global intellectual community. Using Chinua Achebe's work, *Things fall apart*, as a case in point, he noted that many scholars today follow that thinking mode as a literary genre to bring about a profound view of African societies (S.O. Anyanwu, personal communication, July 20, 2022).

Externally, hybridisation enables an external audience (non-Igbo readers) to appreciate Igbo names and untranslatable Igbo phrases, as evident in the Western rendering of some Igbo names. For instance, *Onicha* is called *Onitsha*, *Owere* – *Owerri*, *Olu* – *Orlu*, *Ogwu* – *Awgu*, etc. The same applies to Vatican documentation of Igbo names, as in Diocese Okigvensis for the Diocese of Okigwe, Diocese Overriensis (Diocese of Owerri), Diocese Orluana (Diocese of Orlu), Diocese Abana (Diocese of Aba), Diocese Umuahiana (Diocese of Umuahia), Diocese Ahiarana (Diocese of Ahiara), etc. The Latinised version of these names, unlike the Igbo original, are gender sensitive and declinable, which is evidence of hybridisation. These hybridised Igbo words testify to the language's innate dynamism and malleability against those who look askance at it. They are proof of the insufficiency of every language as well. Thus, embarking on a daily Catholic newspaper proposed by Anyanwu (2006) is a commendable recommendation for the Igbo language renaissance and promotion. It would strengthen and project the language even to the virtual community.

2.EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Anyanwu (2006) stressed the urgency of a daily Catholic newspaper. During the interview, he pleaded with the Church authority, particularly in the Southeast, to embark on it, to enable her to grow, address issues peculiar to her, showcase her response to them, and give her a voice in national discourse and burning issues. He also sued for a daily Catholic Igbo language newspaper

to supplement the Ozisa newspaper. So, indisputably, Msgr. Prof. Anyanwu's call for a daily Catholic newspaper in the Southeast is timely. It is a summon to re-appreciate the role of media, culture, and language in evangelisation. The newspaper would assist the zone in profound cultural reflection and insight, leading it into areas that require refinement and others that need outright repudiation, thereby giving inculturation its proper place in evangelisation. Further, a daily Catholic newspaper would salvage it from the harsh language endangerment climate plaguing most minority languages. Hence, it would help save it from endangerment, shift, extinction, and loss by promoting its documentation, preservation, maintenance, development, propagation, revival, renaissance, revitalisation, and hybridisation. A daily Catholic newspaper, like others, would also operate at print and digital levels. The printed version is archived in libraries to offer researchers hard copy research matrixes, while the digital version would make it available to virtual communities worldwide. Such would translate the language from a local daily to international status. Afterwards, intergenerational transmission of the language would no longer be wishful thinking but rather a possibility for every Igbo person, notwithstanding their geographical location. Therefore, as I unreservedly commend Msgr Prof Anyanwu for his invaluable implicit Igbo language advocacy capable of yielding perennial Igbo language-promoting fruits, I recommend that the daily Catholic newspaper should:

- i. have some columns for Igbo language advocacy, and hence, present some of its contents in Igbo,
- ii. avoid undue Western influence in its presentations while maintaining audience-friendly content capable of commanding a wider readership,
- iii. in the long run, use the Igbo and English languages as mediums of content presentation; and
- iv. establish a partnership between their experts in the language and developers of digital infrastructure within the language vicinity; for instance, partnering with developers of an advanced Microsoft (M.S.) Word or Excel application compatible with the Igbo language. Such would afford digital editors and publishers the necessary tools to enhance their publications. Further, the experts should work towards developing their media websites and applications in the Igbo language.

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