

Elitist Bilingual Teaching in Multilingual Nigeria

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Abstract: This essay advocates a bilingual language study in which English Language and one indigenous language will be central. The bilingual language policy, referred to as elitist bilingualism, is being advocated at the Universal Basic Education (UBE) level. In this study, Igbo Language is recommended to be studied along with English in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. We examine the gains learners are likely to derive from this language policy over and above the other language policies that may have been experimented upon within the nation's UBE schools. We will also consider certain discerning challenges English Language teachers and their learners face in the implementation of elitist bilingualism. Aware of the goal of the paper and the challenges that assail the teachers who will implement elitist bilingualism in the JSS UBE schools of the South-East as well as their learners, the paper makes recommendations on the way forward. The paper pursues literary or library research in this study and cites relevant literature to engage this discourse.

Keywords: bilingualism, elitist bilingualism, multilingualism, Universal Basic Education, mother tongue

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I. INTRODUCTION

Two language policies seem to have been in vogue in Nigerian schools right from the primary level to the tertiary level of the education system. These are *bilingualism* and *multilingualism*. In the language policies in place, much stress has been laid on the study of non-indigenous languages of English and French.

However, since the colonial Nigeria, the English language has been in use as official language within the four Regional governments of the East, West, Mid-West and North. At present, Nigeria has thirty-six States; these States are grouped according to geographical zones. These geographical zones are South-East, South-South and South-West. Others are North-East, North-Central and North-West.

Whereas the Northern blocs are carved out from the erstwhile Northern Region; the South-East and South-South (except Edo and Delta States) comprised the former Eastern Region. The South-West is intact as the former Western Region; the same is applicable to Mid-West today, where we have Edo and Delta States. The indigenous language spoken predominantly in the Northern geographic blocs is Hausa. In the South-West, the dominant indigenous language is Yoruba. In the South-East, the Igbo language is spoken by the Igbo people of Delta State (Anioma, comprising Asaba, Agbo, Isele-Ukwu, Kwale, Ndokwa, Ogwashiukwu, Onitsha-Ugbo, Umunede, etc) and Rivers State (Ahoada, Omoku, Ikwere, Ogba-Egbema, Etche, Elele, Elele-Alimini, Igwurunta, etc). Some pockets of Igbo speakers inhabit minute parts of Benue and Cross River States.

It is of interest to observe that Northern Nigeria has the largest population of Hausa-speaking people in Africa. In the same vein, the Yoruba language has the largest population who speak it in the South-West of Nigeria; the language is also spoken in parts of the Republic of Benin. On the converse, it is in the South-East and some parts of South-South Nigeria that the Igbo language is spoken in Africa. The largest ethnic group in Nigeria is the Hausa; the Igbo nation is the second largest ethnic group (Ejirofo, 2013).

With this background information, we can appreciate why the essayist has by purposive random sampling chosen the Igbo language as the indigenous language for his elitist bilingual language policy for the South-East geographic bloc. Another reason for his choice of the Igbo language is because of the speculation that the language is feared to go into extinction before long; a conscious measure to boost the fortunes of the language. Nonetheless, the paper does not share the pessimism that the Igbo language is soon to join its ancestors, as it were.

The recommendation of elitist bilingualism is innovative, as exploring the policy in Nigeria's education system at the UBE of the South East will facilitate the study of indigenous languages along with the official language of English, with the intent of fostering unity of the diverse ethnic groups and conglomerate languages that abound in the country. When we harness the gains of our indigenous languages, it will go a long way to entrench cohesion and integration of the Nigerian nation and when Nigeria enjoys peace and concord she will be

able to play its leadership role in Africa as well as impact positively on the global community among the comity of nations.

Conceptual Issues

Bilingualism

In linguistics bilingualism refers to the ability of an individual to read and or write two languages with remarkable degree of proficiency. Anyachonkeya and Izuagba (1999) say that a person who has knowledge of two languages exhibits bilingualism. Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (201:357) talk about *sequential bilingualism*, *bilingual language acquisition* or *simultaneous bilingualism*. By sequential bilingualism, they mean what they also refer to as second language acquisition, which generally pertains to the acquisition of a second language by someone – adult or child – who has already acquired a first language. This implies that the Igbo person of Nigeria, for instance, who has already acquired competence in the Igbo language, his mother tongue, and goes further to acquire competence in French or any other language exemplifies sequential bilingualism.

When we come to simultaneous bilingualism, which is also known as bilingual language acquisition, we mean “the (more or less) simultaneous acquisition of two languages beginning in infancy (or before the age of three years).” Such a person at his tender age acquires proficiency in two languages at the same time. The common index of these definitions pertains to a person who speaks and or writes two languages with remarkable degree of proficiency.

Elitist Bilingualism

Elitist bilingualism still applies to the ability of an individual to speak and or write two languages remarkably. The contrast here is that while one of the languages is the person’s mother tongue (MT), the other language is official language used in his country. Anyachonkeya and Izuagba (1999: 103), cited earlier, observe that elitist bilingualism is a symbol of elite status; ipso facto that the official language used in education is associated with literacy. Elitist bilingualism in education is the policy of making the teaching and learning an official language and indigenous language compulsory in the country’s school system. The focus of elite bilingual teaching in schools, Anyachonkeya and Izuagba add: “should be for the learners to gain parallel command of both languages.”

It is on this premise that this paper espouses elitist bilingualism in Nigeria’s education system, especially at the UBE level. The policy, it is hoped, will enable our learners to not only acquire competence in Nigeria’s official language, English, the language of global discourse, but also develop interest in their MT.

Crystal (2008:53) calls elitist bilingualism *additive* bilingualism and states that “a majority group learns a second language without this being a threat to its first language....” Thus, the Nigerian from the Igbo extraction, who learns his MT and English, and which he studies in school and is proficient in them, exhibits elitist bilingualism. The paper believes strongly that our UBE learners in Nigeria’s education system will lose nothing if elitist bilingualism is made compulsory at that level of the nation’s education system, but will rather reap a lot of gains.

Multilingualism

Multilingualism refers to the person’s ability to speak and or write three or more languages. An individual who is able to perform this sociolinguistic behavior can be said to be multilingual. This sociolinguistic ability is highly relevant in a multilingual Nigeria. Apart from the official language, Nigeria has over four hundred and fifty indigenous languages. For instance, Ahukanna (1996: 61) says that “a greater majority of Nigerians who are illiterate in English or insufficiently educated to communicate effectively in English, the pidgin is the lingua franca.”

In view of the diverse linguistic groups available in the country, Nigeria has adopted multilingual language policy in its UBE schools across the country. The measure is aimed at exposing Nigerian children to the educational opportunity to learn the English language, their mother tongue – language of the immediate environment – and another major indigenous language (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba), which they study as L2 as well as French, studied as a foreign language.

Universal Basic Education (UBE)

The Federal Government has declared universal and free compulsory education for her citizenry from primary school to junior secondary education level. Explaining the details of this programme, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004: 13) states:

Basic education shall be of 9-year duration comprising 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education. It shall be free and compulsory. It shall include adult and non-formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary education levels for the adults and out-of-school youths.

Federal Government explains that the specific goals of UBE shall be the same as the goals of the levels of education to which it applies; that is, primary education, junior secondary education and adult and non-formal education. Those specific goals are spelled out in the nation's education document, *National Policy on Education* (2004).

We address the task proper – *Elitist bilingual Teaching in Multilingual Nigeria* – and ascertain what the corpus is all about and why we espouse it as a linguistic policy in Nigeria's UBE schools. It is the belief of this paper that it will facilitate, foster and harness linguistic treasures of the two languages towards meeting key challenges of the 21st century Nigeria, especially at a time the nation is assailed by Boko Haram insurgency and other security challenges as well as ethnic mistrust and cultural pluralism. In effect, the policy will impact positively on the unity and peaceful coexistence of Nigerians amidst our diversity.

Mother Tongue

We want to understand mother tongue, also MT or L1, to mean the language of the learner's parents; the language the learner came into contact on coming into the world, that is, at birth; the language that receives both family and social reinforcement. The MT of learners of the South-East Nigeria is Igbo. The *Penguin Encyclopedia* (2006: 663) says, among other things, that the Igbo language "is a member of the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo family" of languages and the people of Eastern Nigeria "established the short-lived state of Biafra (1960[6]-70)."

English Language and Igbo Language, the Duo in Elitist Bilingual Teaching

His place of birth being South-East bloc of Nigeria, the essayist has chosen Igbo as the indigenous language that should be taught along with English Language in the elitist bilingual (teaching) policy. The purposive choice is informed by the fact that the Igbo language is among the three major ethnic groups approved by Federal Republic of Nigeria (2011: 54). The Federal Government approves that "English...Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba" shall be languages of business in the National Assembly. In addition, the Igbo people are the second largest ethnic group in Nigeria, after the Hausa ethnic stock. Again, the language is spoken in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States, all in the South East bloc as well as parts of Delta and Rivers States of the South-South bloc.

We wish to clarify that since Education is in the "Concurrent List" of the *2011 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as Amended*, any State government is at liberty to establish and run schools. Therefore, each of the thirty-six States in Nigeria should be at liberty to choose one major language for implementation in the elitist bilingual teaching in its UBE schools.

Let us examine the gains derivable in implementing elitist bilingual language policy, beginning with the Igbo language.

The Potentials of Igbo Language for Elitist Bilingualism

The Igbo language is mother tongue (MT) to five million, three hundred and eighteen thousand (5, 318,000) people of the Igbo, according to 1952 population census statistics of Nigeria (Ejiofo, 2013: 7). We construe language as culture carrier, the arrowhead of culture. Language may be likened to the chemical material or the building blocks of life in Biology we refer to as DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). Thus, a person's MT is the unique "chemical" material of culture, in the sense that language or MT carries an individual's cultural treasures.

Therefore, the MT determines an individual's essence. Language is about the only available instrument or medium of education, be it formal, informal, or non-formal. For the African, and probably any other racial stock of any continent, the MT remains the only available medium through which we inculcate cultural treasures in a child in rearing practice of that land or clime. The MT is the base, foundation or scaffold on which further language study or education of whatever nature is built. So, through the language policy of elitist bilingualism, the UBE learner of the South East of Nigeria is given the unique opportunity to learn his MT and official language of English, simultaneously. It is the right of the learner, though, to be educated at the formative stage of his education in his MT, and at a later stage, official language. Through elitist bilingual teaching, the UBE learner has ample opportunity to learn his L1.

Language scholars and educators strongly contend that a learner best understands or learns in his MT. It is the MT that best explains an individual's experience or his innermost consciousness. This is among the salient reasons advanced by Babs Fafunwa (1989: ix) when he queries the rationale in wisdom for teaching a learner in a language that is not his MT. Fafunwa philosophizes:

Not that the French (English in the case of Nigeria) language is not rich in its capacity, but for the Wolof child, it was lacking in its web of associations and fantasies. A language that you have never been happy in, never been angry in, never made love in, a language that is only for school, is no language in which to develop the enterprises of the mind. (*Words in round brackets, ours*).

In this excerpt, Fafunwa recommends MT as the language of classroom business where circumstances permit. Nations and groups who are fortunate enough to have meta-languages to conduct their educational businesses in their national languages, those languages become the vehicle through which they “develop the enterprises of the mind”, to quote Fafunwa’s apt phrase. Those national languages are their standard varieties, not anything substandard. It is on this premise that Amatu, quoted in Anyachonkeya and Izuagba (1999: 47), argues in favour of national languages of a people, which, of course, are their MT. He says:

It should be noted that the Americans and Russians describe their space programmes in their own languages. They and the Chinese, the Israelis, and the French are able to express their nuclear missile programmes in their own standard languages. The Biafrans invented standard Igbo concepts for their military inventions. In none of these situations is the description of the products of human thoughts and ingenuity in pidgin. All scientific subjects are dealt with in standard languages.

We have gone this far to argue that elitist bilingualism is ideal for the Junior Secondary School (JSS) UBE learners of the South-East, as doing so will enable the children to learn their MT, Igbo, and official language, English. In the process, they are exposed to their cultural treasures, which they now learn in both formal and informal education.

Culture, of course, is the totality of the people’s way of life. “This way of life” comprises “knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”, constructs or indices of culture enunciated by Tylor, quoted in Ezewu, et al (1981: 34). These cultural universals are spread in three components of culture, namely, technological or material culture, sociological or social culture and ideological culture.

These cultural features constitute the appurtenance of culture inculcated in the learners in the child rearing practice of Africa. In developing the enterprises of the mind via education, the JSS UBE learners of the South East learn all of this in their MT before they can approximate the concepts in the English language, Nigeria’s language of classroom instruction, etc.

We contend also that the product of UBE formal education is deemed literate when he is able to read and write, beginning with his or her MT. At the end of his educational experience, he will be considered an *educated* person. This will mean that his *individuality* and *personality* have been adequately taken care of. Thus, even though an educated person must be literate - ability to read and write -, he must be ethical in conduct. That is why he must not throw stones in the marketplace for if his mother is not there, his father is there. He must consider the interest of humanity in whatever activity he may embark upon. He does not go ahead to exercise the repertoire of his *cognitive domain*, of his scientific ingenuity and manufacture chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction without pondering on the adverse consequences of that to humanity. If he is able to so reflect, it does mean that his educators took time to specify the instructional objectives to cover the three taxonomies of educational objectives, namely, *cognitive domain*, *affective domain* and *psychomotor domain*. This makes for holistic education.

The hallmark of elitist bilingualism for the JSS UBE learners of the South-East Nigeria is that they study their MT and its Literature; thus they are given the opportunity to internalize the tenets of their culture. We can see the affinity language has with culture; one does not leave the head and break one’s neck. No one runs away from one’s shadow.

We beam our searchlight on English Language, the duo in elitist bilingual policy and ascertain the gains derivable in the mastery of the language.

English Language, the Duo in Elitist Bilingualism

The impact of the English language in all facets of our national life and at international level has made the study and acquisition of the prestigious language Hobson’s choice. That is why we are left with no choice than to befriend the language, as it were.

In view of the role the erstwhile Imperial Great Britain played in world politics in the colonial era, the language has had far reaching contact with nations and peoples and tongues across the five continents of the world. At present, the Anglo-American world power holds dominance in world affairs and so calls the shot in global politics and diplomacy. It is without doubt the language of international trade, scholarship, science and technology and those of information communication technologies as well as international civil aviation. Thus, the English language stands tall in virtually all facets of life. *The Webster’s Dictionary* (2004) cited in Anyachonkeya (2010: 112), talks about the strength of the English language in its seeming limitless tentacles across the globe. The source elaborates:

One of the healthy outcomes of the wide tentacles of English, so to say, is that a speaker of English can travel around the world and almost never find it necessary in major cities to employ a language other than his own in order to be understood. At the wake of the nineteenth century, English was the native speech of barely fifteen million people. But at the moment, this language is used regularly by more than 320 million number of

speakers and it is used second only to Chinese...Indeed, the British Council speculates that by 2010, the number of the world's population that uses English will hit the two billion mark.

Anyachonkeya documents his findings in 2007; his 2010 statistical speculation date he has credited to the British Council may have doubled, if not even quadrupled, in the year 2018. We want to ascertain further some other strengths of the English language over and above the other world languages to illustrate what JSS UBE learners of the South East Nigeria will certainly gain if exposed to the language policy of elitist bilingualism.

On this unique role the English language plays in international civil aviation, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania (April, 2008: 16), explains: "To avoid dangers that could result from miscommunication, the international civil aviation organization selected English as the common language in aviation."

To this noble role, among others, Anyachonkeya (2010: 113), cited above, describes the English language as "a paragon and pacesetter among the Indo-European languages," by way of global spread, since, among other things, "three or four new words and phrases make their debut in English every day (Gooden: 2009:195)".

The English language enjoys rather infinite repertoire of lexical growth over and above all other world languages, which confers it a comfortable lead as a global language. Thus, the sources of lexical growth of the English language range from borrowing from other languages of the world, compounding, formation by affixes, functional shift, figures of speech, clipping, back-formation, acronyms, imitation of sounds, "name" words, blending or blends, changes in words, degeneration and elevation, generalization and specialization, exaggeration and understatement, abbreviation and extension, metathesis and folk etymology, shifts and association, to radiation of meaning, abbreviation, eponyms, slang and jargon, (Anyachonkeya, 2007: 287-300; Gooden, 2009: 201-208).

We want to examine some of the challenges which the teachers of English and their learners of the UBE schools of the South East Nigeria likely face in the implementation of elitist bilingualism.

Challenges in the Implementation of Elitist Bilingualism in UBE Schools of the South East of Nigeria

The Case of English Language

Part of the challenges arises from inability of the parties involved to learn the language well in communication, probably due to the fact that the users use English in a second language situation. It follows that since the teacher is not adequately competent in the language, he or she cannot give what he or she does not have. Let us share Jowitt's experiences. On "Grammar and Communication", Jowitt (2012: 1, 2), observes:

Scanning down the list of sub-themes...I was alarmed... to come across 'The State of English and Development Nigerian'. I asked myself, and must now say it aloud, but ask you to pardon me for expressing what may sound like a complaint so soon into this Conference: What happened to that writer's knowledge of English syntax? Does he or she not know that in English adjectives precede nouns, not vice versa (though they follow nouns in Igbo, Hausa, French, Italian, Spanish, Swahili, and many other languages)? Or has a bigger syntactic dislocation taken place - is what we see written a weird transform of 'the Development of Nigeria'? We do not know; we cannot say, or I at least cannot say. What we are compelled to say is that the writer has failed to communicate meaning, and in saying this we assume, generously because we are Nigerians, by birth or by association, that the writer had a meaning that he or she wished to communicate, but failed to communicate it. The failure, moreover, is a grammatical, or more precisely a syntactic or perhaps morphological failure; and it very neatly shows that grammar, far from being a kind of luxury 'extra', which 'good' writers and speakers add to their linguistic production to make it look or sound better... as grammar is indispensable to successful linguistic communication; and this is true at any level and in any context of communication.

There is no doubt in our mind that the author of the conference advert to which Jowitt has referred to and which he has made a critical commentary on for our consumption and learning is a teacher of English. We may speculate that even though the omission may be a mistake, not an error; is immaterial, for the author should have scrutinized his or her script before going to press!

This teacher of English will dispense same to his or her learners. We want to also read Jowitt's observation on the grammatical blemish he has observed in the written poetry of his student as a teacher of English:

"when the row is called up yonder
and the record is rolled out to know your deeds
and the witness summon to their view proof
I will lift my hand and say of my mentor
he is a good man (p 2 of his keynote address)."

Jowitt notices “several grammatical and other infelicities, especially in the third line.” He cautions aloud:

A loud message needs to go out to all apprentice creative writers and to would-be poets in particular: forget about ‘poetic licence’, or at most apply it only to punctuation, and ensure that your use of grammar is absolutely Standard. The simple reason is that if not you will not communicate. To all writers, in fact, the message should be: Anything you write, if you want to be understood, must be grammatically correct and coherent (p 2).

Anyachonkeya (2007: 281-204) unveils problems which militate against effective Oral English usage in Nigeria. But we do know from our experience as classroom teachers; such common errors range from morphological, semantic, syntactic, phonological errors to those of cliché. Of course, problems are restricted to oral English, not extended to the other levels of linguistic organization. In such homes, English as a language is only novel and its use is even resisted and discouraged.

Anyachonkeya acknowledges the fact that MT interference is a prominent factor towards effective oral English communication in Nigeria. Thus, the second language users of English unwittingly and unconsciously transfer the components, such as phonological, semantic, syntactic and even morphological features of the MT onto the second language.

He also notes that flagrant violation of grammatical rules impede effective communication in oral English among the second language users, especially students in Nigeria. These errors are so many among our tertiary learners that educators and parents begin to lose confidence and faith in our education system.

Anyachonkeya identifies poor vocabulary of our learners of the elite language as yet another challenge. Because of this embarrassing linguistic poverty, a good number of them indulge in or resort to silent fillers or mannerisms as “em...em; you know; you know, etc”, to cover up their poor vocabulary in the English language.

Many of the JSS UBE learners of the South East Nigeria face a nagging problem that is commonplace in the entire Nigerian school system; they look up to those they consider as “models;” when in actual fact, are pseudo models on English or oral English; in the mistaken belief that they are competent in the elite language.

Of course, code-switching or shifting and code-mixing in communication do not escape Anyachonkeya’s list of these problems. These phenomena are a great hindrance and dangerous in sociolinguistic transaction in good English language acquisition.

The problems are rather infinite inasmuch as language remains dynamic as human society. These few problems or challenges provide us with a tip of the iceberg of those numerous challenges. In fact, right language usage is a thing of beauty. Language remains the physiognomy of the mind when beautifully used. This assertion informs Oji’s (1989: 96) declaration that: “serious students and teachers of English at all levels will discover that correct usage gives rise to linguistic appetite; that is, the more one appreciates good writing the greater the instant temptation to ask for ‘more.’”

Let us take a brief look at some problems which these learners and their teachers face in the study and use of their MT.

The Case of Igbo Language

The Igbo language has become badly battered by the native speakers of the language especially the elite class, who frustrate the development of the language. For instance, it is embarrassing to observe that Chinua’s Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* that has been translated into and published in more than fifty major European languages and in Yoruba, one of Nigeria’s three major national languages; sadly, it is yet to be translated into and published in the Igbo language! Out of curiosity and excitement, when the author of this essay learned from a professor of Linguistics and Nigerian languages of Yoruba descent that the epic novel has been published in Yoruba, he called two professors of Linguistics of Igboto find out if the novel has been published in our language, one of them answered “No”; while the other professor told him that the manuscript of the translated novel is in print, well more than fifty-eight years that novel was published by Heinemann in London!

The author invited his Rector to a prestigious annual lecture of his people – Ahiajoku Lecture -, the professor of Mathematics and Rector declined. *Reason?* “I am a Nigerian. I don’t attend such forums.”! The same professor of Mathematics refused to allow a seminar on the Igbo language to be held in his Polytechnic, for the simple reason that his Institution is a Federal Polytechnic, where ethnic languages are not discussed as academic discipline.

Ejiofo (2013:67-69) ruefully reports a pathetic case. A postgraduate student and lecturer was denied a direct entry admission in her alma mater to read Law, for the preposterous reason that the 5th subject she passed at credit level in her Ordinary Level certificate was Igbo Language! Rather she was asked to go to either University of Ibadan or University of Lagos, who accept vernacular subjects. What a bundle of contradictions! Her alma mater where she had her Bachelor of Arts Honours in Upper Division and a Master’s degree in

Theatre and Film Studies denied her admission, but did a referral of her, as it were, to other universities in another speech community to seek admission with her Igbo Language in which she made Grade A credit pass!

Anyachonkeya and Anyachonkeya (2013: 4) express fear that the Igbo language is among the endangered species of Igbo heritage in view of the violence that is being meted out to it by the very owners of the language. They hold the intelligentsia more reprehensible. They lament:

The Igbo language is among the endangered species of Igbo heritage. Whata negative heritage! The salient detractors of the Igbo language are the literati, the intelligentsia who populate our Ivory Towers. They have done a lot of violence and disservice to the language of their heritage. Let us recollect that *mother* is *Supreme*.

The few staggered but random scenario shows the place in which the owners of the language place their language and the challenges teachers of Igbo Language and their learners face in the teaching and study of their pet language.

These challenges have put the language in a precarious situation of being feared to be categorized a dead language before long. *Tufia Kwa!* (Exclamatory Igbo word for rejection or denunciation of the forbidden or the unacceptable; that can't happen to our very dear MT)! Those are among the challenges which Igbo Language teachers and their learners face in the teaching and study of their MT in schools. Something drastic has to be done by the stakeholders to checkmate the worrisome drift. If a person fails to lick his or her lips, the harmattan licks them for him or her.

The Role of Governments and Others in the Implementation of Elitist Bilingualism

Our governments should encourage the implementation of elitist bilingualism in the UBE schools of the South East. They could do this by publishing relevant books on the Igbo language. They should also have a programme of capacity building of training Igbo language teachers, so that more Igbo language teachers are produced for our schools. Those teachers should be awarded scholarship to further their knowledge in the national language, the duo of the elitist bilingualism.

The same scholarship opportunity should be extended to our learners, who wish to pursue undergraduate and graduate programmes in Igbo Language. In this way, the teacher and the taught are encouraged and given a sense of belonging that they are relevant in the scheme of things.

In its implementation, it is expedient that our governments play a leading role through necessary legislation and provision of relevant learning facilities for language study.

Since education is tripartite in nature, the burden of implementing elitist bilingualism should not be borne by governments alone; parents and nongovernmental organizations should also come in. Parents should ensure parallel development of the two languages, such that the two languages receive both family and social reinforcement at home.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having gone this far; this paper makes the following recommendations.

1. The Igbo people should have a change of heart and promote the study and use of their MT, to avoid their language going into extinction. They should give their children Igbo names and make their children appreciate the meaningfulness of such names in relation to their world view. Parents should teach their children their language by using the language at home. In effect, they should *live* their language.
2. Our governments of the South East should encourage Igbo Language teachers and their learners through scholarship programmes to study Igbo Language and Literature.
3. Nongovernmental organizations should liaise with our governments through creating scholarship opportunities to specialist Language teachers and their learners.
4. Igbo artistes should produce their artistic creation such as music, video films, literature, etc in the Igbo language. Their inventions and patents should be given standard Igbo names. By so doing they immortalize their language and in the process showcase the fecundity of their cultural heritage to the global community.
5. Igbo elites should learn from their counterparts of Hausa and Yoruba who hardly play with their MT. No matter their area of specialty or calling, they do not denigrate their MT as the Igbo elites do. Their ignoble stance or attitude, at present, is tantamount to sabotage.

III. CONCLUSION

Language determines thought. This is the crux of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. According to Sapir and Whorf, "the semantic structure of the language which a person speaks either determines or limits the ways in which they are able to form conceptions of the world in which they live" (Matthews 2007: 354). These "ways in which (the people) are able to form conceptions of the world in which they live" is what the Igbo people refer to as *Uwa Ndi Igbo*, their cosmology or world view. Language, nay, the people's MT, is the deoxyribonucleic acid of culture, the chemical material of culture.

In the light of the foregoing, our JSSlearners of the UBEschools in the South East of Nigeria should study the official language of English and Igbo, their L1. It is necessary, *yes*, mandatory, that these learners be exposed to their cultural heritage and in the process internalize their cultural treasures as early as possible in their formative age. This is the language in which they have first been happy in, have been angry in, and have made love in, a language in which they should develop the enterprises of the mind, if we may reconstruct Fafunwa's thought cited earlier. It is, indeed, the language in which they have been able to build a scaffold of associations and fantasies.

Having laid a solid base in the language, they go in for formal education, where they begin to learn the nation's official language, the all-important language of the global human family, a language that stands tall of all the dominant world languages. Indeed, Singh (2005: 200) predicts that "the 'big six' languages in 2050 (that are likely to emerge in order of ranking are) English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Hindu/Urdu."

These considerations inform the author's position in recommending elitist bilingualism as experimental bilingual language policy for our learners of UBE schools of the South East Nigeria. The paper strongly recommends Igbo Language as the duo language of elitist bilingualism since charity begins at home though it should not end there. This proverbial dictum is in harmony with Igbo proverb which says that a person should first become good at home before proceeding outside the home. If not, *why not?*

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