

GLOBALISATION AND NIGERIAN INDIGENOUS CULTURAL SHIFT: ÑDI-ÌGBÒ CULTURE AND LANGUAGE AS PROTOTYPE

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of globalisation on Nigerian cultural traits, with a particular focus on the culture and language of Ñdi-Ìgbò residing in the South-East zone of Nigeria. Motivated by UNESCO's prediction of the near-extinction of the Ìgbò language, and by extension, its culture, the research aimed to identify strategies for preserving Ìgbò identity in a globalised Nigeria. It relied on secondary data collection techniques to examine the pros and cons of globalisation on indigenous Ìgbò culture, as well as the factors contributing to the near extinction of the Ìgbò language. Guided by the theoretical frameworks of cultural imperialism and language shift, the analysis revealed that the negative attitude of Ñdi-Ìgbò towards their native language and culture stemmed largely from modern colonialism - globalisation, which promoted economic growth and eroded cultural traditions via cultural hegemony and hybridisation. Another contributing factor to the decline of the Ìgbò language was the dominance of English as the language of politics, commerce, and education in Nigeria, with all legal documents, constitutions, and policies written in English. The study recommended that the Nigerian government review existing policies and enforce the provisions of the *Cultural Policy for Nigeria* (1988) and the *National Policy on Education* (2013), particularly those related to the use of indigenous languages. It also urged Ìgbò parents to actively speak the Ìgbò language to their children to ensure its sustainability, emphasising that the loss of language equates to the loss of culture and, ultimately, the loss of identity.

Keywords: Culture, globalisation, language, extinction, Ñdi-Ìgbò.

Introduction

The world is rapidly transforming due to technological advancements, particularly the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As smaller developing nations strive to find their footing in this dynamic landscape, powerful developed countries push toward global dominance often framed as the pursuit of a "One World Government." This phenomenon is a direct consequence of globalisation, characterised by increasing interconnectedness and interdependence among nations. While globalisation fosters progress in economic, social, cultural, political, and technological spheres, it simultaneously breeds inequality, cultural homogenisation, and language extinction.

Interpretations of globalisation vary widely depending on an individual's political ideology, geographic location, social status, cultural background, ethnicity, and religious beliefs (Asikaogu, 2018, p. 43). For some, it represents progress, stability, integration, and cooperation, while for others, it signals regression, neo-colonialism, destabilisation, cultural erosion and language extinction. For Asikaogu, globalisation is simply "modern colonisation" (2018, p. 43), while Iwara equates it with Westernisation or Americanisation, as globalisation is driven by Western Europe and the United States (2004, p. 20). Odionye views it as a "global culture" where people consume similar goods and services and use a common business language – English (2004, p. 3).

Language is not just a tool for communication; it is a symbol of identity, culture, and heritage. It shapes ethnic identity and fosters social cohesion; an indispensable tool for human communication and national development (Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu, 2024, p. 120; Odinye & Odinye, 2010, p. 85). Through language, communities express their worldview and maintain cultural continuity. However, globalisation fosters the spread of dominant languages and cultures, often at the expense of indigenous ones (Ugochukwu, 2022, p. 150). In Nigeria, this dynamism manifests in the tension between Western culture and African traditions, and between English and Ìgbò language.

Colonialism introduced a deep-rooted inferiority complex among Nigerians. Indigenous customs were dismissed as "barbaric," while Western culture was elevated through Christianity and formal education. This legacy persists as many Nigerians perceive local products and traditions as inferior, even when they surpass Western alternatives in quality. Even literary icons like Chinua Achebe advocate for English in African literature, as he "feel[s] that the English language will be able to carry the weight of [his] African experience" albeit "altered to suit new African surroundings" (Akujobi, 2016, p. 230). Parents increasingly discourage their children from studying arts or indigenous languages, favouring science and foreign languages like German, French, Latin, Chinese, and English. Some even ban indigenous languages at home, fearing accents or perceived backwardness. A sister once refused teaching her daughter the Ìgbò language because she did not want her daughter to have "Ìgbò tongue" (Ìgbò ascent) when speaking English later in life. Children are enrolled early in private schools that promote English, ignoring the Nigerian *National Policy on Education's* mandate for mother-tongue instruction in early childhood (FRN *NPE*, 2013, p. 6).

Though colonialism has formally ended, globalisation has emerged as its modern counterpart; a phenomenon, a process, a concept, an unstoppable force shaping minds and behaviours, especially among youth. The internet, social media, and AI facilitate instant cultural exchange, often favouring dominant Western paradigms. The 1988 *Cultural Policy for Nigeria* aimed to forge a national identity while celebrating cultural diversity. Yet, Nigerian media, tasked with producing 80% local content (FRN, 1988, p. 15), prioritises profit and Western standards. This has led to the propagation of globalised norms through fashion, music, language, and social customs. Nollywood, once a bastion of *Ìgbò* culture, now promotes hybridised narratives, blending indigenous and Western elements in language, costume, cuisine, and storytelling techniques. As Ugochukwu notes, any systems that integrate people tend to benefit their architects (2022, p. 151). As such, despite its economic and infrastructural benefits, globalisation poses a grave threat to Nigerian languages and cultures, particularly *Ìgbò*. From 20,000 languages in 8000 BC, the world now has only 6,909; many have been lost to globalisation and the dominance of languages like English, Spanish, and Mandarin (Odionye, 2024, p. 3).

Language is central to globalisation's spread. Ugochukwu rightly notes that without language, people would lose their identity same as without language there will be no globalisation as language is the very lifeline of globalisation (2022, p. 150). In Nigeria, English serves as the vehicle for Western civilisation, overshadowing indigenous tongues like *Ìgbò*. Despite being one of Nigeria's three major languages, *Ìgbò* is endangered. UNESCO predicts its extinction by 2050 (Asonye, 2013, p. 92), as young Nigerians increasingly abandon it in favour of English. This trend is exacerbated by English's dominance in education, commerce, and politics; threatening not just language, but cultural identity itself. This study explores the impact of globalisation on Nigerian cultural traits, with a focus on *Ìgbò* culture and tradition as a prototype. It aims to assess both the pros and cons of globalisation and to propose strategies for preserving *Ìgbò* heritage and language in the face of western influence and linguistic erosion.

Related Literature

Globalisation

Globalisation is a multifaceted phenomenon, variously defined as a **process**, a **concept**, and a **revolution** in world economy and culture. It stems from rapid technological advancements in information and communication, which manifests in everyday aspects of life; from the food we

consume and the clothes we wear to the languages we speak and the ways we think, feel, and act (Odionye, 2024, p. 3). At its core, globalisation encompasses economic integration, political revolution, cross-border policy transfer, and the establishment of a global market. Odionye describes it as the unification of the global community into a shared system, economically or socially, where dominant cultures dictate the pace of development (2024, p. 3). Similarly, Ugochukwu defines globalisation as the intensification of economic, political, social, and cultural relations across international boundaries (2022, p. 147). A most précised definition is obtained from Nsibami as cited by Obioha who summarises that globalisation is:

a process of advancement and increase in interaction among the world's countries and people facilitated by progressive technological changes in locomotion, communication, political and military power, knowledge and skills, as well as interfacing of cultural values, systems and practices (2010, p. 2).

Importantly, Nsibami stresses that globalisation is not a neutral or spontaneous phenomenon. Rather, it is a deliberate and strategic process; a socio-politico-economic and cultural permeation orchestrated by governments, private corporations, international agencies, and civil society organisations (Obioha, 2010, p. 2).

This framing suggests that globalisation is a tool used by powerful nations to exert influence and control over others, while allowing those nations to retain nominal independence. Thomas Larsson offers a metaphorical interpretation, describing globalisation as a process of “wind shrinkage”, a reduction in distances and an increase in proximity, which facilitates easier interaction among people across the globe, often yielding mutual benefits (Asikaogu, 2018, p. 43). Iwara adds that globalisation pulls diverse regions into an expanding web of exchanges - of people, ideas, cultures, goods, and services (2004, p. 20). However, this interconnectedness also leads to **cultural hegemony, hybridisation, and the erosion of cultural diversity.**

Historically, globalisation was driven by long-distance trade, which gained momentum during the industrial revolution with advancements in transportation and communication (Taptiani, et al., 2024, p. 95). But currently, the advent of mass media in the dissemination of information and formation of global culture has facilitated cultural interaction, and convergence of popular trends in different countries (Ivashchenko cited in Taptiani, et al., 2024, p. 95). Odionye affirms that the global spread of English language, which is a major aspect of globalisation, has been facilitated

by the Mass Media, Internet, satellite cable television, telecommunication facilities and other Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities (2024, p. 5). This has led to a rapid erosion of other cultures by western civilisation - the cultures of the world powers that are propagating globalisation to third world developing countries.

Globalisation, while often celebrated for its economic and technological benefits, has also led to **acculturation** - a process that poses significant threats to cultural and linguistic development, especially in “third world” countries (Odionye, 2024, p. 2). Africa and Nigeria in particular, stands at the forefront of this challenge. The impact is most pronounced among the youth, who ideally should serve as custodians of cultural heritage but instead gravitate toward Western norms, perceived as the pinnacle of civilisation. Taptiani et al. emphasise the importance of involving younger members of society in **intergenerational dialogue**, as they play a vital role in **knowledge transmission**, preservation of cultural identity and maintaining local cultural traditions amid the phenomenon of globalisation (2024, p. 93). Recognising this, propagators of globalisation and Western culture strategically deploy appealing technologies such as GSM phones, laptops, and smart watches, etc. to capture the attention and imagination of youths.

Adeseyome & Bella observe that teenagers and youths are generally vital to promoting African cultures (2012, p. 10) yet Nigerian youth increasingly adopt Western cultural expressions. This is evident in their modes of dressing, speech patterns, choice of cuisine, social interactions, worldviews and values. The dominance of English in Nigeria aggravates this cultural shift. It is not only the **medium of instruction** in schools but also the **benchmark for intelligence and literacy**. Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu affirm that English remains the language of **education, commerce, politics, administration, law, and the judiciary** in Nigeria (2024, p. 121). Ugochukwu further explains that although globalisation began as an economic and political concept, it has evolved into a **linguistic phenomenon**, with English now regarded as the **language of globalisation**. This shift has led to **linguistic imperialism**, where English and other dominant global languages overshadow and marginalise Nigeria’s indigenous languages (2022, p. 147–148).

Language and Culture

Language is a vehicle for transferring information, trading, commerce, advancing technologies, from one location to another and one generation to another. It is a “major tool for communicating social, cultural and intellectual capacity of a given society/individuals” (Udoeye, 2016, p. 14).

Language is the identity of a people, the key to their existence and survival as most human activities make use of language, whether verbal or non-verbal. Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu state that a people derive their identity and heritage from sharing the same language as such man loses his personality at the point of losing his language (2024, p. 120). Culture, on the other hand, is simply a way of life of a people; the way they eat, sleep, dance, marry, celebrate, cultivate a living, and bury their dead. It is the very fabric upon which human existence, in any given society, is woven. It encompasses a people's customs and tradition, architecture, fashion, mode of transmission and communication, design and education, technology and sustainability. Schaefer defines it as "the totality of learned, socially transmitted customs, knowledge, material objects and behaviour, including the ideas, value, customs and artefacts of a group of people" (cited in Nwegbu, et al., 2011, p. 1). Culture therefore guides the conducts of man in society and prescribes the acceptable pattern of living needed for peaceful co-existence among individuals within a defined culture (Nweze, et al., 2019, p. 50). Obioha notes that culture is not a universal concept and that culture is society-based or geographically-based and at the same time dynamic (2010, p. 6). This dynamic nature of culture allows it to borrow and diffuse other cultures where the need arises as no culture is absolutely sufficient.

The relationship between language and culture is dynamic in that; language is used to transmit culture while culture is used to preserve language. Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu confirm that through language the culture and collective consciousness of a people receive expression (2024, p. 121). Emenanjo says that the relationship is symbiotic and that they both share a causal-effect relationship, where what affects one affects the other (1988, p. 13). Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu support that ethnographic investigators have proven that the structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world, as such, language forms part of the culture of a people (2024, p. 121). Citing Durkheim, Emenanjo stated that "human intercourse rests upon a tripod of exchanges - exchange of information, exchange of women and exchange of commodities, of which exchange of information is primacy as the other two forms are encodable and decodable in human language (1988, p. 13). Since culture consists of learned and socially transmitted customs, language serves as the primary medium through which these customs are passed down to younger members of society, ensuring the preservation of both cultural heritage and linguistic identity. Thus, whereby the younger members of the group do not speak their language, their cultural practices suffer a decline and so do their language. Eva Engholm, cited in

Nwadike, was right to say that language is the “key” to the heart of a people and the loss of this key is the loss of the people (2008, p. 13).

There are over 6,500 different natural languages in the world, and only eleven - Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Hindi, French, Bengali, Portuguese, Russian, German, Japanese, Arabic and English - account for the speech of more than a half of the world’s population. Obi-Okoye observes that “clearly language controls thinking, learning and all other mental processes and behaviour as well as acting upon and shaping human personalities and moods” (2008, p. 11). If this statement is true, it therefore means that Nigerians, particularly *Ẓdi-Ìgbò*, speaking English controls their mental processes and behaviour to begin to act like the English people in personalities, moods (emotional dispositions) and modes (behavioural patterns), thereby losing their *Ìgbò* personalities. Since language is used as an identity to be part of the “world system” now, speaking English makes English of *Ẓdi-Ìgbò* (Ugochukwu, 2022, p. 151). Eze sums up the influence of globalisation on *Ẓdi-Ìgbò* as

the forces responsible for the apparent demise or progressive disappearance of *Ìgbò* traditional gods, deities and venerable ancestors ... [followed by] five principal threats to their existence; erosion of *Ìgbò* personality [*Chi*], the spread of popular global culture, loss of natural environments, loss of traditional languages and conversion to other religions [Christianity and Islam] (2019, p. 120).

***Ẓdi-Ìgbò*, Language and Culture**

Ẓdi-Ìgbò (*Ìgbò* people) are of the African descent, particularly from the Eastern part of Nigeria and occupy five States – Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. In a country estimated to speak over 500 languages (FRN, *NPE*, 2013, p. iii), the *Ìgbò* language is one of the three major languages, aside English, spoken in all five States including some parts of Delta State (Aniocha) and Rivers State (Ika) (Odinye & Odinye, 2010, p. 85; Obianika, 2014, p. 1). As found on Obianika (2014, p. 1-4), the study of *Ìgbò* language dates back to the colonial era when Christian missionaries sought to evangelise the *Ìgbò* speaking people. While there are variations of the dialects as found in Delta and Rivers States - Ika, Ikwere and Izii, known as the “Igboïd group of languages” (Igboanusi, 2006, p. 445), the Standard *Ìgbò* (SI) took years of controversy in what is termed “orthography controversy” between 1939 and 1962, to be achieved. This period was a “blank period in *Ìgbò* literary history” (Obianika, 2014, p. 2) as all parties involved were more concerned about

propagating their own dialect (Aguata, Agulu, Arochukwu, Bende, Delta Igbo, Mbaïse, Nnewi, Nsukka, Orlu, and Umuahia) rather than the progress and development of the language. Scholars eventually agreed that no orthography is perfect and that many standard languages of the world do not reflect all the distinctive sounds in their dialects in the standard orthography, as such, the Onwu Orthography was approved by the then Eastern Nigeria Ministry of Education in 1962.

This same attitude of self-interest over the progress and development of the *Ìgbò* language has become the reason behind the decline of the language. Odinye & Odinye state that the *Ìgbò* people portray negative attitude towards their language. To support this statement, they quoted Eme (2004, p. 304) and Nwadike (2008, p. 39-40) who affirm that “some *Ìgbò* parents, especially the literate ones, do not speak *Ìgbò* to their children even at home. In some cases, the parents ban their children from using *Ìgbò* to communicate among themselves [such as the case of] a mother at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, [who] asked her children to desist from speaking that useless language (*Ìgbò*)” (2010, p. 87). Odionye affirms that *Ìgbò* educated families speak English Language to their children in a bid to broaden the economic and social horizons of their children (2024, p. 4). The government policy of favouring English as the Lingua Franca of Nigeria and English being the language of government, trade and education, has resulted in *Ñdi-Ìgbò* developing a favourable attitude towards the English language at the detriment of *Ìgbò* language (Odinye & Odinye, 2010, p. 88). Odionye concurs that “the worst situation is where most schools and institutions in Eastern Nigeria prohibit pupils and students from communicating in *Ìgbò* language” (2024, p. 4). This is regardless of the fact that the use of English as language of instruction in education is against the requirements of the *National Policy on Education*, which stipulates the use of mother-tongue or indigenous language of immediate community at the Basic Education Level (2013, p. 6 & 8).

Ñdi-Ìgbò customs and traditions are expressed in their visual arts, use of language musical, dance forms, attire, festival ceremonies and language dialects (Asikaogu, 2018, p. 44). Culturally, the *Ñdi-Ìgbò* are known for their sense of communal life, sacredness of life, respect for elders, sacredness of religion and tradition, good human relations, sense of hospitality, sense of time, language and the use of proverbs as cohesive force of the community based on truth (Onwubiko qtd in Nweze, et al. 2019, p. 50). Nweze, et al emphasise that the African culture, as a whole, is positive and humanistic and that the *Ìgbò* cultural heritage places emphasis on communal life,

family, concern for one's neighbour, morality, the dignity of man, the dignity of labour, customs and traditions (2019, p. 50). The culture is holistic and standardised, with its different rites of passage to welcome new members into the community or include younger generations who have come of age into their various groups, marital rites for continuity, the various groups of elders, women and youths to main peace, respect and order, etc.

Every aspect of the life of *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* has rules and regulations, traditions and customs guiding its very existence. These cultural practices are put in place for the continuity and survival of the *Ìgbò* language, culture, tradition and society. Although culture is society-based or geographically-based, there are common cultural practices peculiar to *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò*

Socialisation: *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* have different means of socialising amongst them. The *egwu ọ̀nwa* is where young people socialise under the brightness of the moonlight and play games of *agwugwa*, *okwu ngbawaọ̀nu*, *ilu*, *nchò*, etc. The *akukọ ifo* is another form where the elderly (grandparents, parents, uncles, aunties, elder siblings) tell stories of morals to guide the behaviours of the younger ones and also transmit customs and traditions.

Education: *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* system of education differs for both boys and girls. The boys who are prepared for making a living and providing for their family are educated under the *igba-boi*, or *nwa-boi* system where young men learn a trade as apprentice for a period of about seven years after which he becomes his own master. The girls who are prepared for their roles as wives, mothers, pregnancies and childbirths, etc. are educated under the *Iru Mgbede* system where young maidens are prepared for the rigours of marriage for a period of about three to six months, after which they move to their husband's house and begin another circle of their lives as women.

Religion: *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* believe in personal gods, ancestral worship and family deities. Their personal gods known as *Chi*, functions like the guardian angel of the Christendom. The ancestral worship is a medium of communicating with their forefathers where families pray to their ancestors for guidance and protection. The family deities and worship of smaller gods such as *Amadioha* and *Ogwugwu* are means through which *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* communicate with the Supreme Being known as "*Chukwu-Okike*" loosely translated as "God of Creation".

Rites of Passage: There are festivals to celebrate different rites of passages and events in the lives of *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò*, such as *Ofala* festival which marks the end of a spiritual cleansing for a king/kingdom;

Iriji or *Ikeji* (New yam festivals) which marks the celebration of a bountiful yam harvest; the *Ohafia* War Dance which marks the virility, strength and daring nature of young warriors after a victorious war, *Egwu Umuagboho* a maiden dance which marks the coming of age of a young girl, etc.

Marriage: *Ñdi-Ìgbò* marriage system involves three steps – *iku-aka* (introduction), *ime-ego* (paying bride price) and *igba-nkwu* (traditional wine-carrying ceremony). The most important is *ime-ego*; failure to pay the bride price means that any child born of the girl belongs to her father and not the man who got her pregnant. All these rites must be done in the girl's father's compound, in the village and not any other venue; failure to complete all these rites results in the girl not allowed to participate in other people's marriage ceremony.

Death: *Ñdi-Ìgbò* respect death as they believe there is a link between life and death, hence the ancestral worship. Death as a result of ripe old age is celebrated with a lot of pageantry while death at a young age is referred to as "*onwu-ike*" believed to be wrong death and will always be looked into to ascertain the cause. "*Onwu-ojo*" is abominable death cause by one's wicked act or suicide (of any kind) and such a person is never buried but thrown into the evil forest or buried at night without a ceremony.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the theories of culture and language, particularly cultural imperialism and language shift theories as the study is focused on globalisation - western culture - and its influence on Nigerian - *Ñdi-Ìgbò* - culture.

Cultural Imperialism Theory, rooted in anthropology, sociology, and ethics, explores how one culture dominates another, usually politically or economically, using advanced media technologies (Tobin, 2025, par. 1). The term was first introduced by **Herbert Schiller** in his 1976 work *Communication and Cultural Domination*, where he described how multinational corporations, including media entities from developed nations, exert control over developing countries (White, 2001, par. 4). It is cultural as the customs, traditions, religion, language, social and moral norms are distinct from the economic and political system that shapes other community. It is imperialism

as the dominant community forcefully extends its way of life by transforming or replacing aspects of another culture, as was the case of West (British) colonising Africa (Nigeria). This leads to a language shift, extinction or death of the non-dominant culture.

The theory is complemented with the Language Shift Theory, which examines how a particular community of speakers (*Ẹ̀dì-Ìgbò*) gradually abandons its native language to speaking another language (English), often associated with greater social or economic prestige, the final stage being language death (Masruddin, 2023, p. 1-2). This theory is attributed to **Joshua Fishman**, whose 1964 work *Language Maintenance and Language Shift as a Field of Enquiry* investigates “the relationship between change and stability in habitual language use and ongoing psychological, social or cultural processes when populations differing in language are in contact with each other” (Fishman, 1964, p. 32). Fishman states that a language shift is driven by three primary factors – physical or demographic dislocation, social dislocation and/or cultural dislocation (Masruddin, 2023, p. 2).

In Eastern Nigeria, the *Ìgbò* language shift reflects a combination of these dislocations - the influx of foreigners, trade expansion, and mass media - which contributed to the perception of *Ìgbò* language and culture as inferior, barbaric and backward. This perception, coupled with socio-economic disadvantages and the dominance of Western technology, has accelerated the erosion of *Ìgbò* linguistic and cultural identity.

Discussion

Pros and Cons of Globalisation in Nigerian Cultural Traits

As earlier stated, there are two sides to globalisation; the good side of progress, stability, integration, and cooperation, and the bad side of regression, neo-colonialism, destabilisation, cultural erosion and language extinction. On the good side, globalisation has seen to the popularisation of Nigerian cultural in places beyond one’s imagination. There are communities of Yoruba, *Ìgbò*, Efik, etc. flourishing in different countries of the world outside Nigeria and this is made possible by transatlantic trade. Odionye says the “advantage of globalisation to human

existence is its ability to facilitate access to information and knowledge at a virtual or speedy rate” (2024, p. 2). The presence of ICT, GSM and internet in Nigeria is made possible by globalisation. Aside connecting Nigerians to the global world, GSM and internet has brought a lot of economic and job opportunities for Nigerians as engineers, teachers, technicians, software designers, etc. also, with reference to online education, people across the world have found ways of getting better results with less work (Odionye, 2024, p. 3). Ukhami et al. concur that globalisation has enabled the dissemination of Nigerian cultural expressions and customs to international arenas ... [evolving] into a significant tourist attraction (2024, p. 18). Through carnival and tourism, Nigerian culture has been popularised and monetised to boost the economy of the country and given it a place in international parlance. Taptiani et al. appraise the merits of globalisation on Nigerian cultural traits as having “enhanced local culture by exposing individuals to various civilisations, broadening the spectrum of musical genres and culinary options, and encouraging the creation of a mix of indigenous and innovative cultures” (2024, p. 96).

Despite the merits, Taptiani et al. emphasise that the emergence of new social norms and dialogues, as well as influenced preferences in music, pose challenges to traditional belief systems (2024, p. 96)

On the flip side, as earlier stated, globalisation leads to acculturation, a threat to cultural and linguistic development of the African continent. In a bid to be modern, civilised and educated, Nigerians have neglected their culture and language and adopted the western pattern of communication, cuisine, dressing, socialising and general way of living. Odionye states that, most Nigerian parents hardly communicate to their children in their native languages, they prefer the western dishes (noodles, pastas, soft drinks etc.) instead of local dishes like *Ukwa*, *Apku*, *Ugba*, *Ofe-Ede*, *Ofe-Olugbo* etc. as well as eating with cutleries instead of using bare hands. Their pattern of dressing and hairstyles are western - English suits and flamboyant hairstyles of different colours, rather than African native material and hair styles such as *Isi-Agu*, two-waist wrappers, beads and *Isi-Owu* of *Ẹ̀dì-Ìgbò* (2024, p. 3).

Impact of Western Cultural Values on *Ìgbò* Traditional Practices and Customs

The culture and language of *Ẹ̀dì-Ìgbò* have suffered a decline and erosion as a result of globalisation. People prefer to wear western clothing styles over traditional *Ìgbò* attire even in *Ìgbò* ceremonial gathering such as weddings. Traditional *Ìgbò* wedding rituals are often replaced or

significantly altered to incorporate Western wedding customs such as replacing wedding palm wine with juice or replacing the wine gourd (made of horn) with glass cup, or holding the wedding ceremony in the city, away from the traditional home of the bride's father, etc.

Western education has eroded the *igba-boi*, or *nwa-boi* custom; although still in practice, it is believed to be reserved for families who do not have the needed resources to send their sons to acquire western education. Western civilisation has seen to the total eradication of *egwu ọnwá* and *akụkọ ifo*, coupled with the advent of internet, GSM, social media and the current Artificial Intelligence. Children no longer socialise amongst themselves nor with elders, rather they socialise on the internet and gain knowledge of the world from the internet. Odionye affirms that the “*ino odu ezi*” (moonlight talks) of *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò*, through which the *Ìgbò* culture and tradition are passed down to younger generation, have phased out because of modern pattern of minding one's business without caring about one's brother's welfare; a product of globalisation (2024, p. 3).

Globalisation in general has seen to the dearth in practices of *Iru Mgbede* amongst *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò*. Young girls no longer go to their husband's houses as virgins. Sex, which used to be a sacred thing, is now displayed on every site on the internet and sold to the highest bidder. Christianity not only destroyed the *Ìgbò* mode of worship, they have also complicated issues of marital rites by insisting the church marriage, which is actually the western marriage rites, is more important than the African traditional marriage rites. As such, couples who have done the African marriage rites are forced into abortion when going for the western (church) marriage rites as they are believed not to be married. Also when some intending couples do not have the resources to undergo all the necessary rites, both African and western, they result to cohabiting and bearing children without proper marriage rites between both families. Such an act is regarded in *Ìgbò* culture as sacrilegious and a thing of shame to be practiced.

Root causes of *Ìgbò* Language and Culture Near-Extinction

Ìgbò scholars and anthropologists have identified various reasons for the near extinction of *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* culture and language. Some of the reasons as mentioned are:

1. “...in a bid to be modern and educated ... [resulted in the] negligence and abuse of the language [*Ìgbò*] by the speakers (Odionye, 2024, p. 3-4).
2. “...the failure in the transgenerational transmission of language ... [the] inability of the adults to pass it down to the children in the family” (Odionye, 2024, p. 3). “... *Ìgbò*

language is ‘endangered’, based on the fact that [the] language is largely spoken only by the parents while only 10% of the children speak the language, and only 4% can write the *Ìgbò* language (Nzeaka & Ehondor, 2021, p. 38-39).

3. “With the emergence of new media and innovation in arts and culture, native *Ìgbò* languages and cultures are gradually giving way to foreign or second languages, especially English, French and Pidgin languages, thus threatening the survival of the native languages” (Odionye, 2024, p. 4).
4. “...the unconscious embracing of colonial languages in social and academic institutions has denied the contribution of African languages [particularly *Ìgbò*] to the world’s academic system” (Odionye, 2024, p. 4).
5. As a result of the effect of the Civil War on *Ñdi-Ìgbò*, most of them “discovered potential powers for survival in other languages than their native language” (Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu, 2024, p. 123).
6. Government language policy which gives preference to “English Language in government transactions reduces the utilitarian values of Nigerian languages”, particularly *Ìgbò* (Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu, 2024, p. 123).
7. “Media programmes ... highlight alien cultures [as supreme] but portray the *Ìgbò* culture as barbaric” (Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu, 2024, p. 124).

Remedies to *Ìgbò* Language and Culture Extinction

Drawing from the above mentioned reasons for the near extinction of *Ñdi-Ìgbò* language and culture, this study outlines the following remedies for the revival, preservation and promotion of the culture and language.

1. Government should enforce and ensure strict adherence to the contents of policies that encourage the growth and sustainability of Nigerian culture and languages while making new ones that supports the use and preservation of indigenous language as languages of commerce, education and government, both at State and national levels. “*Ìgbò* language should be adopted and permitted to serve as the language of official communication, government, business, economy, science and technology” (Odionye, 2024, p. 6).
2. Government should ensure the archiving of Nigerian (*Ìgbò*) dialects and cultural materials; documented in the media (local, national and international), internet (social media) and

library (Odionye, 2024, p. 6). The government should train language instructors and send them to schools around the country to instruct the younger generations.

3. Schools to adhere to the demands of the *National Policy on Education* (6th Edition) that stipulates the use of indigenous languages, either the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate environment, as language of instruction at the Basic Educational Level to inculcate in the Nigerian child as well as the *Ìgbò* child the value of their culture and language. *Ìgbò* historians should translate English literature to Nigerian indigenous language (*Ìgbò*) literature and write new textbooks in *Ìgbò* language as a way of archiving, encouraging and maintaining *Ìgbò* culture and language (FRN *NPE*, 2013, p. 6).
4. Media programmes should highlight the good values of our cultural heritage; encourage the speaking of African languages by presenting programmes in the indigenous language of Nigerians. Odionye agrees that mass media contents transmitted at local, national and international media should be on Nigerian culture such as dialects, tradition, ethics, mode of dressing, lifestyle, religion, arts, music, food and etiquette, etc. to promote the language and enable citizens of other countries to know, understand and appreciate the different aspects of African cultures, especially the *Ìgbò* culture (2024, p. 6).
5. Parents should focus their attention on the progress and development of their mother-tongue, rather than only the social and economic status of their family, as the loss of their language is the loss of their personality. As such, should encourage the speaking of their language to their children for continuity and growth of the language and culture.
6. *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* should understand that the speaking of their language is as important as any economic benefits they may achieve. They should also understand that the loss of their language means the loss of their culture, identify and place value in human race. As such, they should change their attitude and perception towards the culture, language and traditions of *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò*.

Conclusion

Globalisation is rapidly reshaping cultures and languages, often to the detriment of indigenous identities. In Nigeria, particularly among the *Ìgbò*, this shift has led to cultural dilution, hybridisation, and a growing preference for Western norms; what traditional African society once abhorred and rejected is now widely accepted (Obioha, 2010, p. 6). Asikaogu notes that *Ìgbò*

people have abandoned ancestral practices without fully integrating into the new culture (2018, p. 48–49), a phenomenon Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu call “cultural halfcastes” (2024, p. 123).

Language plays a vital role in preserving culture. While Odionye warns that losing a language threatens the essence of a people (2024, p. 2), Ikonne emphasises that language and culture are inseparable; when one is lost, the other follows (2019, p. 15). By UNESCO’s prediction, the increasing dominance of English over *Ìgbò* poses a serious risk of extinction by 2050. Despite this, there is still hope of redemption. Cultural revivals, digital preservation, education reforms, and policy reviews can help safeguard *Ìgbò* language and heritage at local, national, and global levels.

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