

## Promoting and preserving the Ogbia language through social media

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### Abstract

This paper is tailored towards the broad concept of language activism through the use of social media. It aims to promote, preserve and document the Ogbia language on social media which has become a viable tool for communication. The Ogbia language by all linguistic standards is endangered, as its present status is far from vigorous use by its speakers. The language, from a linguistic point of view, is poorly described and undocumented. It is not taught in schools, not used in churches and above all it is poorly transmitted to the younger generation. As a means of promoting and preserving the language, the researcher takes advantage of the viability of social media to reach out to speakers of Ogbia on Facebook, by setting up a Facebook page strictly for Ogbia speakers. The target population is speakers between the ages of 18 to 55 years. A major rule of engagement on the page is for speakers to respond strictly in Ogbia as posts are made in Ogbia with English translations. However, young speakers tend to engage the page more in English and sparingly use few words in Ogbia. This is a clear indication of the poor use of the language among speakers from Ogbia and especially those on Facebook. Some of these engagements are presented in this paper as screen shots. The responses on the page have shown that social media is a viable source for promoting, preserving and documenting languages especially those classified as endangered.

**Keywords:** Ogbia, language, preservation, promotion, social media

### 1. Introduction

The significance of a language to its speakers cannot be over emphasised as it depicts the identity, culture and the entirety of a people. Fishman (1996) states that language is the mind, spirit and soul of a people. As a result, speakers of a language ought to do everything within

their rights to ensure that their language is sustained. Shawn (2015) also stresses that the death of a language does not imply the death of a culture but of wealth and identities and so should be promoted and preserved. Philemon (2020) also agrees that language promotion and preservation is undebatable as it is the driving factor for promoting and preserving culture. The size of a language may be measured by the number of its speakers' geography or status and in agreement to that fact, Udoh and Anyawu (2015) submit that every language has the right to exist, its number of speakers notwithstanding, because it is a language that can best tell a people's history, culture, religion and their entire existence.

In Nigeria, there are about 540 indigenous languages (NERDC, 2021) and it is also no longer a novelty that most of these languages are seriously endangered and need some prompt attention. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared the year 2019 as the year for indigenous languages and subsequently went ahead to declare the years 2022-2032 as the decade for indigenous languages after the reports of 2019 indicated the actual statuses of many indigenous languages of the world. The definition of an indigenous language by different sources is related with very minimal deviations. For example, The UNESCO defines an indigenous language as the language spoken in a particular region over a long period of time. Adedeji (2014) also refers to an indigenous language as a language that is spoken or connected or belonging to a particular area which a person refers to or where a person lives while Jibir-Daura (2014) adds that the language must be from a distinct community that has settled in an area for many generations and needs to be preserved else our identities and cultures die alongside. But for Lawson-Ikuru (2023) an indigenous language is what first identifies a person before any other affiliation. Therefore, it should be preserved through any possible means. Some authors like Emeka-Nwobia (2015) have stressed that preserving an indigenous language by indigenous people should not only be for sustaining their heritage but also for nationalism. According to her, indigenous languages play a vital role in nationalism, technological advancement and national integration.

This call to preserve indigenous languages is owed to the fact that research has shown that a large percentage of the world’s languages are endangered. The most endangered languages are the indigenous languages for very obvious reasons that range from natural causes like famine, poor political representation, economic dominance, religious enforcement, social recognition and lack of intergenerational transmission, with some of these causes overlapping (Sallabank 2010). Most indigenous languages are not transmitted to younger people, and this is a major cause for endangerment. UNESCO, in trying to analyse the extent of language endangerment through intergenerational transmission, listed six levels of endangerment as shown in the table below.

Table 1: UNESCO’s language vitality and endangerment framework

| Degree of endangerment | Intergenerational Language Transmission   |
|------------------------|---|
| Safe                   | Language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted  |
| Vulnerable             | Most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)  |
| Definitely endangered  | children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home  |
| Severely endangered    | Language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves |
| Critically endangered  | The youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently  |
| Extinct                | There are no speakers left  |

The state of the Ogbia language ticks some of the boxes in the table above such as being vulnerable, definitely endangered and severely endangered. This is the observation in most communities in Ogbia.

Kirkness (2002) stresses ‘that as a community of indigenous people, we are faced with many challenges in our attempts to maintain the vitality of our respective languages and to honour the natural order of the Creator. But in the end, the preservation and use of our languages depends on our communities’. There has to be some form of motivation for communities to preserve and promote their languages and this could entail a combination of different factors. They could range from religious, political, economic or social prestige. And sometimes the reasons are not very clear (Crystal, 2000). Kirkness (2002) gives ten critical tasks to indigenous people who are interested in promoting and preserving their language. According to her, the people must; (1) bank their language (documentation), (2) raise the consciousness level of their languages, (3) mobilize resources, (4) provide training and certification, (5) develop a comprehensive and appropriate curriculum (6) engage in meaningful research, (7) inform public opinion (8) eliminate artificial boundaries, (9) press for Aboriginal legislation, (10) work together. As a matter of fact, following these steps can raise the status of an indigenous language but they need a strong synergy among community members and policy makers and they are also not easy to achieve. However, this article takes cognizance of task 2 as a means of preserving and promoting the Ogbia language.

## **2. The Ogbia Language and its People**

The language under investigation in this work is Ogbia and the native speakers of the language are also referred to as Ogbia people. Currently the language is spoken in two Local Government Areas. They are Ogbia, and Nembe Local Government Areas. All towns and villages in Ogbia Local Government speak the language except for Oruma, Ibelebiri, Opume and a handful of villages in Nembe Local Governments speak the language too. These are mostly boundary communities. By geographical location, these communities in the

Nembe Local Government Area share boundaries with Ogbia Local Government Area. Ogbia and Nembe Local Government Areas are in present day Bayelsa State which is also in the South-South geopolitical zone in Nigeria. The Ogbia ethnic group is divided into three major zones. They are; Anyama, Kolo and Oloibiri. Geographically, the Ogbia territory is bounded to the North by Epie-Atissa, to the North-East by Odual, to the West by the Ijaws and to the South by the Atlantic where we have the Nembe people. The National Bureau of Statistics records that the population of the Ogbia people is about 350,000 based on the 2006 National Census result. It is important to state that these figures are being disputed in the political space. However, a large number of this population (the youths) do not reside in the communities and rarely speak the language. Data collected in Lawson-Ikuru and Icheku (2022) reveal that the few youths and children who live in the villages would rather speak Nigerian Pidgin instead of Ogbia among themselves as well to their parents.

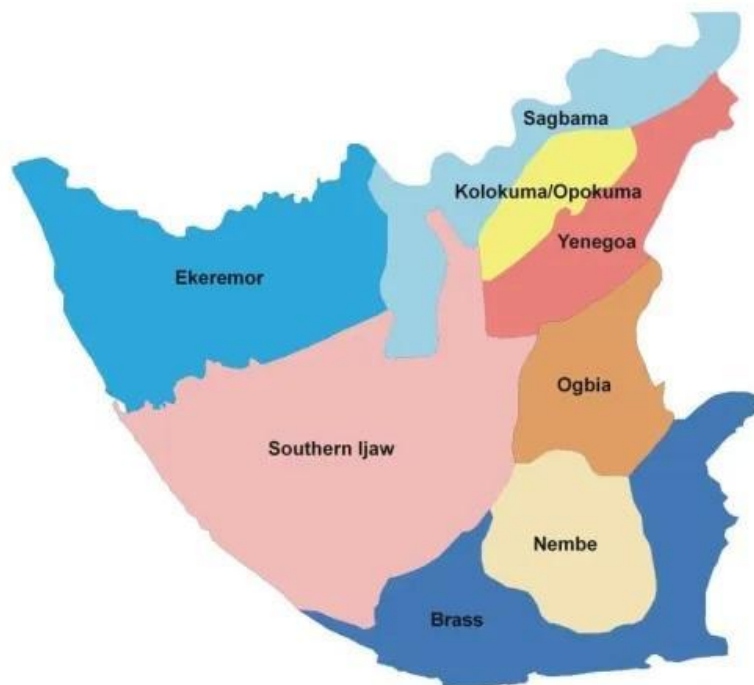


Fig 1: A map of Bayelsa State showing its 8 Local Government Areas

### **3. A Brief Ethnography of the Ogbia People**

An ethnographic study takes into consideration the social structure, language, religion, technology and culture of a people. It is that field of study which is focused on dissecting culture in its entirety and it has a lifelong relationship with language but Saville-Troike (2002) observes that linguists and ethnographers have failed to showcase this relationship. Since language is the instrument used in religion, culture, traditions etc. It is important that these aspects of the people who speak the language under investigation are briefly discussed as a way of giving an insight into the speakers' way of life.

A large population of the Ogbia people are Christians, with the dominant sect being the Anglican church. Catholic churches are sparingly found in Ogbia communities and more of new generation churches (Pentecostals) are springing up rapidly.

Prior to the advent of Christianity, the Ogbia people worshiped deities. A spectacular deity worship system was that each town or village had its own deity. There was and still not a general deity for the whole of the Ogbia kingdom. A deity (god) in Ogbia is referred to as 'èèrù' while the Christian God is 'Aziba'. Some older speakers also refer to the non-Christian God as Aziba in trying to assert the status of the traditional god.

Traditionally, the Ogbia people are predominantly farmers and fisher men and women. Although these occupational roles are defined on gender basis. The Ogbia people embraced western education when it was introduced by the orthodox churches. Presently, most Ogbia people are professionals working in various fields and in different capacities and this has really affected the production of farm produce as most farmers rather send their children to formal schools and less attention is given to agriculture. The introduction of western

education which is done in English, has also caused an adverse effect in the use of Ogbia among natives.

**4. A linguistic classification of the language**

From a linguistic point of view, the Ogbia language is closely classified under a small group of languages known as the Central Delta. It is a descendant of the Delta Cross group. This group is under a language phylum called the Benue-Congo (Williamson 1989). Other Central Delta languages include; Abuan, Odual, Degema, Abureni, Ogbogolo, Ubulom and Abureni. The Ogbia language has dialects which are mutually intelligible to some degree. Lawson-Ikuru, (2014) identifies six varieties of the language. They are Agholo, Amorokeni, Anyama, Otakeme, Otuelei and Otuokpoti while Blench (2008) groups Agholo and Anyama as distinct languages. Below is part of the Benue-Congo language family tree focusing on the Central Delta languages.

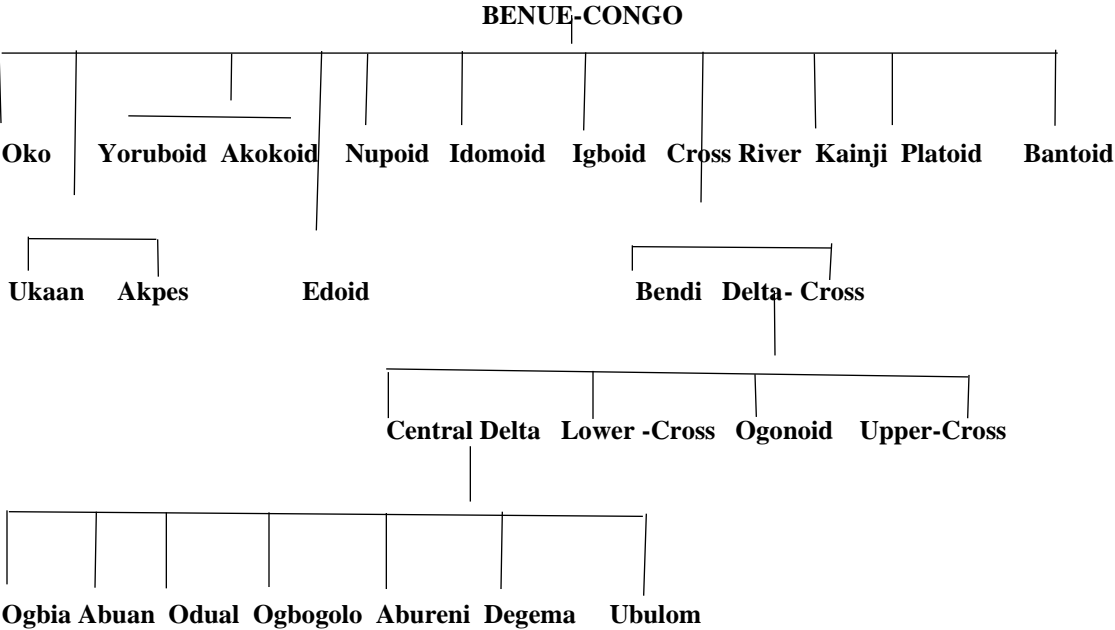


Fig.2 Benue-Congo language family tree.

## **5. The linguistic status of Ogbia**

By every linguistic standard, Ogbia is an endangered language. The status of Ogbia as classified by Ethnologue is far from the reality. Ethnologue places Ogbia to be in vigorous use. Following UNESCO's vitality framework, intergenerational transmission is very poor. This is observed through direct interactions with members of the communities during fieldwork trips. Lawson-Ikuru and Icheke (2022) observe that the domain of usage of the language is very limited as well as the age range of speakers who use the language consistently. The study showed that the language is not used in schools, churches and some formal events, it has no standard written form hence it has negatively affected research on the language and attempts on documenting the language. This is also the case with most of the Central Delta Language as observed by Kari (2009). He says there is a dearth of scholarly linguistic literature on the Central Delta languages. This claim is apt and timely because a comparative observation in the literature shows that these languages have very limited linguistic information. In the case of Ogbia, there are very few academic publications on the language.

## **6. Language Promotion and Preservation**

In a bid to preserve languages and mostly endangered ones, linguists and language activists are calling for the documentation of languages in various forms. Some of these bodies include the 7000 Languages Project, Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP), Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL) and more. This has led to the emergence of a relatively new field of linguistics called documentary linguistics or language documentation. Documentary linguistics or language documentation is basically concerned with the compilation and preservation of linguistic primary data and interfaces between primary data and various types of analysis based on these data (Himmelman, 2006). The common documentation methods include audio recordings, audiovisual recordings, making of dictionaries, writing grammar books etc. The result of any of these methods is archived in a library as a way of preserving the language. According to Bernard (1996), the awareness of



the endangerment of indigenous languages and the need for them to be preserved is increasing. Olaifa (2014) on the other hand says that libraries are very important in the preservation of languages because they create access to information in both written, electronic, audio and visual forms. However, this is just one aspect to it because as society evolves and advances, different methods of language preservation are evolving as well.

The need to promote indigenous languages in Nigeria is mostly seen as the duty of government through the implementation of existing language policies. Some aspects of the policies like the use of indigenous languages for instruction in the first three years of primary school as is found in the National Policy of Education (1981) manual, which states that ‘the medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of the environment for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject’. At the moment, this policy is not implemented in Nigeria, hence it behooves on the speakers of an indigenous language to promote their language if they are interested. An article titled ‘Promoting Indigenous Languages in Nigeria’ published in The Tide Newspaper of 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019 also reiterates the need for indigenous people to promote their languages. And that one sure way of promoting an indigenous language is by talking about the culture and studying the indigenous language.

## **7. Social media and language preservation and promotion**

Traditional means of promoting and preserving indigenous languages may have yielded results but it seems to be limited in its reach to the younger generation who spend most of their time on social media platforms and engaging in information that are mostly written in English, French and other global languages? At present, the impact of social media on young people cannot be underestimated, because it has become the fastest and easiest means to pass information. There are a myriad of publications on the impact of social media on young people, highlighting both negative and positive impacts. One of such recent articles is

Sumadevi (2023) which emphasizes that social media, especially Facebook, has aided communication skills and enhanced connectivity among young people. Social media is classified as a fairly new concept that emerged about 10-15 years ago. Kamnoestin (2014) says the term was first heard in 1994-1995 when the first social networking site Geocities was founded. Some popular social media sites are Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp and LinkedIn. According to Goble (2012), Facebook is judged to be the most successful of social networking sites because of its platform features. In another study done by the Harvard Institute of Politics (2011), more than 90% of students at 4-year colleges reported that they were Facebook users. The situation is not different in Nigeria. The use of mobile phones with internet access in many towns and villages, has caused a lot of young people to have accounts on different social media platforms especially Facebook. Financial Nigeria reports that in 2016, over 16 million Nigerians were active users of Facebook and that 7.2 million Nigerians visit Facebook every day and that 92% of these users access Facebook through mobile phones. Most academic research depends on social media for data collection and other research methods, hence social media has come to be a part of human existence.

## **8. Promoting and Preserving Ogbia on Facebook**

The dependency on social media for every information is the premise on which this study is guided. Social media has become an archive of some sort to preserve information ranging from politics, medicine, agriculture, engineering, language etc. The choice of Facebook as the medium for this study is simply based on the fact that it is the first to popularize social media so that people who had access to the internet in the rural communities, first knew about Facebook as a social media platform before any other. This is information firsthand from fieldwork interactions with young people in villages in Ogbia. At the present, 95% of the 52 villages in Ogbia Local Government Area have access to telecommunication networks which in turn provides access to the internet. As a result, Ogbia youths and even middle-aged educated people get information on Facebook faster than from books, radio and television.

The excitement of the possibility of reaching others all over the world makes them active on Facebook. As a linguist whose research interests on language description and documentation, the author of this paper thought of raising awareness on the Ogbia language through postings on Facebook. This is in a bid to arouse the consciousness of young people from Ogbia who have become disinterested in the language for several reasons that may not form part of the scope of this paper. Personal experiences while on the field had shown that the level of endangerment of the language is alarming. As a means of celebrating the year of indigenous languages, a Facebook page specifically for Ogbia was set-up and named ‘The Ogbia Language’. Posts on the page are written in English and translated into Ogbia. It started by stating what the page is all about and the need for the language to be used consistently in order for it not to go extinct. Many speakers of the language are constantly invited to follow the page and engage as well.

Some of the initial posts on the page were on the orthography of the language to basic conversations like greetings (which are quite distinct from most languages), to formation

### **8.1. Methodology and Data Presentation**

The method of data gathering in this study involves creating posts on the Ogbia language page in Ogbia and English and eliciting comments on the posts. The data presented are screen shots of the engagements on the Ogbia language Facebook page. It starts by introducing basic linguistic information on the language like the alphabet, significant sounds, numbers and basic greetings which are written in Ogbia and translated to English. This is to give a background to the essence of creating the page and encouraging speakers to follow the pattern of posting or commenting in Ogbia.

## Intro


Visit the Ogbia Language page to understand the basic language structure of Ogbia!

173 characters remaining

 Public



Cancel

Save

 Page · Education

Promote Page

 tuma4me@yahoo.com

 Not yet rated (0 Reviews) 

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Basic Introduction of the Page on Facebook

Language name and location: Ogbia, Bayelsa state,  
Nigeria [Refer to [Ethnologue](#)]

语言名称和分布地区: 奥格比亚语, 尼日利亚南部巴耶萨尔州  
及河流州地区

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. ònín                                  | 21. súβ nò ònín                           |
| 2. wàali                                 | 22. súβ nì wàali                          |
| 3. sàari                                 | 23. súβ nì sàari                          |
| 4. ipè                                   | 24. súβ nì ipè                            |
| 5. òwù                                   | 25. súβ nò òwù                            |
| 6. òdìn                                  | 26. súβ nò òdìn                           |
| 7. òdūəl                                 | 27. súβ nò òdūəl                          |
| 8. ipàn / waàlì bà díòβ (10 - 2)         | 28. súβ nì ipàn / waàlì bà súβ (30 - 2)   |
| 9. isió / ònín bà díòβ (10 - 1)          | 29. súβ nì isió / ònín bà òdàβár (30 - 2) |
| 10. díòβ                                 | 30. òdàβár                                |
| 11. díòβ nò ònín                         | 40. wáli ipó (2 x 20)                     |
| 12. díòβ nì wàali                        | 50. díàβár / wáli ipó nì díòβ             |
| 13. díòβ nì sàari                        | 60. sàari ipó (3 x 20)                    |
| 14. díòβ nì ipè                          | 70. sàari ipó nì díòβ                     |
| 15. díòβ nò òwù                          | 80. ipè ipó (4 x 20)                      |
| 16. díòβ nì òdìn                         | 90. ipè ipó nì díòβ                       |
| 17. díòβ nì òdūəl                        | 100. òwù ipó (5 x 20), 200. wàali òwù ipó |
| 18. díòβ nì ipàn / waàlì bà súβ (20 - 2) | 400. ipè òwù ipó                          |
| 19. díòβ nì isió / ònín bà súβ (20 - 1)  | 800. wàali òwù ipó bá òdè, 1000. òdè      |
| 20. súβ                                  | 2000. wàali òdè ( 2 x 1000)               |

Linguist providing data and date: Dr. Merosobo Lawson–Ikuru,  
Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Port Harcourt, Nigeria  
/ University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom Ibom State, Nigeria,  
November 28, 2021

提供资料的语言学家: Dr. Merosobo Lawson–Ikuru., 2021 年  
11 月 28 日.

Other comments: Ogbia has a vigesimal numeral system.

Note:

1. Numbers 2 and 3 have long phonetic vowels.
2. 'nò' and 'nì' are connectives

## The Numeral System

## 8. COVID-19 Terms Translated into Ogbia

The covid-19 terms presented above are translated into the Ogbia language. Here, the word is English and the translation is done based on the definition given in English.

- Aerosol:** iburubu ara za ẹroni ologi obhibhiloma.
- Antibody:** oḍa bho di ta oloma be nwa aḍi aḅana anwera.
- Antigen test:** oḍa bho di ta oloma be anwera ola ologi oḅu ana. omana oḍabha pe di wa inugian akine.
- Asymptomatic:** okoko anwera aroni ologi oḅu ana du nwe digirisi. opo kpa ni ne aten oni
- Cluster:** akokodan igu ibanani onin anwera ologi onin ema akiti onin esi
- Contact tracing:** aso awunom ze ẹroni onin esi dini iguzi ibanani anwera hoke nwa ada awo abho.
- Coronavirus:** okarabh anwera opa na agbologi obha ta oni. awuzo okoko pe dini anye oni ibogi, anon dini ezu oḅu.
- COVID-19:** adien opa wa wa awera opa ite arua ologi walode ni diobh ni isio ala.
- Droplet:** adukpo arara zu wi te ologi onu dini izon oni okoko donuma ikpisa ni dini okoko donuma onon ni.
- Epidemic:** awer da inugom ni atei ibabutu awunom ologi ema.
- Hydroxychloroquine:** owowo du wa bhi agbal akom dini awer opa obha.
- Incubation period:** okoko opa onuma opa ko bana awera arọ etuan iguza ibana awera kuku onuma opa ko bana awera aru abana awera. ni ine abhi akuwọ owu adio agi ite oleleman diobh dini owu adio.
- Infusion:** egbala di ta bhi asi dini amu alo ologi ogibh doni na wer.
- Pandemic:** awer da saragin agi ite ibabutu ibe
- Personal protective equipment (PPE):** Includes ekwe zu wa aruom abhi ibhugom oḅu hoke okarabh awer ko tei iguza wa gbal awunom za wera.
- Quarantine:** amaru du wa kiti iguza ibana awer ologi akera esesebh ologi otua
- Self-isolation:** amaru da oni da bani awera na bhi oḅu olo alo ologi igula de no bene taro.
- Social distancing:** amaru da awunom ikokodan esi kisi arọ etuanan hoke awera ko ten awunom.
- State of emergency:** ologo da akosina nalọ okoko da obagbologi ite ni ologi iba
- Swab test:** oḍabho du wa abhi abhar abhi akor ologi izon oni. esuo pe wabhi agi bho akuo da awera aroni ologi oḅu onuma.
- Vaccine:** owowo enem ni di na sigiman awer bokı ko tej awunom.
- Variant:** okoko da awera abanani ibabutu adien.
- Ventilator:** ekwe du wabhi obhilo ewu alo ologi oḅu toni hoke ine obha.
- Viral shedding:** okoko da oni da banani awera bene abhi nege ma awunom.

---

A Translation of Covid19 Terms





The Ogbia Language is 😊 feeling happy.

May 31, 2023 · 🌐



Ema ini wigulu. Omana alebh pa abhi akene ari ediguriman be ologoko ko ghor pe, ari warua onu Ogbia ologi abhar opa ebeke za wa wabe ayutube boke aguru anyari aruwa onu emarar. Isisei, isiye wa nye asikira awunom. Kumagba ooo.

Hello dear followers. Trust you are all doing great inspire of the nationwide fuel crisis? However, this is to inform you that the Ogbia Language page will soon launch its YouTube channel for ease of learning the language. Please invite your friends to follow the page. Thank you.

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👍 28

8 comments



Like



Comment



Send



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Below are comments from this post



Poduana Contentment Tebeda  
Alua 👍

1y [Like](#) [Reply](#) [Hide](#)



Likeness Abome Egbo  
Yaa.....

1y [Like](#) [Reply](#) [Hide](#)



Robinson Matthew  
Bha alua ohh

45w [Like](#) [Reply](#) [Hide](#)



Abaiyam-ola Esther Abraham  
Worose

1y [Like](#) [Reply](#) [Hide](#)



Eluan Banigo  
I tried.

1v [Like](#) [Reply](#) [Hide](#)




The comments are in Ogbia and one in English but the first word in comment 3 is wrongly spelt.



This post is strictly in Ogbia but comments below are a mixture of both English and Ogbia. See comments below.



- Profit Ezekiel  
Amen
- 1y Like Reply Hide
- Kose Abere
- 
- 1y Like Reply Hide
- Elamini Bernard  
Ariwoni alua
- 1y Like Reply Hide
- Williams Allison  
Azibaqiri oo
- 
- Victor Tari  
Alua
- 1y Like Reply Hide
- Ibibo Marvelous Kenneth  
Àsuòbo itè
- 1y Like Reply Hide
- Gloria Egele  
Asuobo ite
- 1y Like Reply Hide
- Deborah Digibo  
Asuoboite
- 1y Like Reply Hide
- Felicity Ekio  
Asuobo ite
- 1y Like Reply Hide
- Amb Raphael Damini Godfrey  
Àsùoboite imori

These comments show an improvement in the language as there are more of the Ogbia comments than English.



## Greetings In Ògbià

Greetings in Ògbià can be expressed depending on the location, time and occasion. Greetings can be accompanied by actions like hugging, shaking, bowing and genuflecting.

### 1. Greeting at departure

bhó àdọ̀n 'safe trip' 'go safely'

àdìò ẹ̀bàl 'may the day break' 'good night'

nwà zùṣan 'we shall see again or we shall meet'

gìò ẹ̀bàrọ̀ 'stay well' 'goodbye'

### 2. Greetings on arrival

àlúà 'welcome' (generic)

nwà dọ̀n 'you moved well'

### 3. Greetings accompanied with action

Shaking with the two hands and bowing or hugging and genuflecting has to do with the age of actors and it goes with the phrases;

Younger actor: àlìkè ólẹ̀ àdẹ̀ 'my legs are on the ground' simply meaning i acknowledge your age

Older actor: ẹ̀rà ẹ̀rà 'rise up'

Note: In most cases shaking alongside bowing or hugging and genuflecting are gender specific. The former is synonymous with men and the latter with women. However, this is not a standard rule.

## Comments



**Standwell Willy**

Congratulations, very nice, and commendable project in the Ogbia Kingdom, I love to on this platform. Alua, ini wa giri

1y [Like](#) [Reply](#) [Hide](#)



**Geoffrey Nabhiram Ofonih**

Wa zuan and not nwa zuan. I don't know the part of ogbia nwa zuan is spelt, the Oloibiri clan spells wa zuan. Don't mind my inability to use the diacritics.

1y [Like](#) [Reply](#) [Hide](#) Edited



**Jonah-Eteli Mero**

**Geoffrey Nabhiram Ofonih** thanks for the comment. Are you a phonologist? I think it's nwa in this case. I did the recording and the phonetic observation on the software showed more of nwa than wa. But it's open to more analysis. Thank you



1y [Like](#) [Reply](#) [Hide](#)



**Geoffrey Nabhiram Ofonih**

**Jonah-Eteli Mero** The natives of every language are the best to pronounce





1y **Geoffrey Nabhiram Ofonih**

**Jonah-Eteli Mero** The natives of every language are the best to pronounce words in their dialect. Nwa sounds like igbo, don't depend on any software to pronounce local words, as it may be misleading.

Ogbia language has about three dialects, so nwa could be the appropriate in one of the dialects. But the Oloibiri clan dialect is Wa!

Another concern about the Ogbia language is attaching vowels sound to words that begin with consonants.

For instance, my name is Nabhiram but people omitt the N, which is a consonant and call me Abhiram, which begins with a vowel.

1y Like Reply Hide Edited



**Jonah-Eteli Mero**

It might interest you to know that I'm a native speaker of Ogbia and as a linguist I have been working on Ogbia for 13 years so these are not speculations. They are data driven. Because nwa is an Igbo sound does not mean that it can't occur in another language. There are words with wa as well as nwa. In the most recent orthoagraphy 'nw' is one of the letters so ves

mean that it can't occur in another language. There are words with wa as well as nwa. In the most recent orthography 'nw' is one of the letters so yes native speakers are in the best position to make claims to their languages but professionals also analyze the language based on general and language specific rules. Thank you sir

1y Like Reply Hide



**Geoffrey Nabhiram Ofonih**

**Jonah-Eteli Mero** My brother, there are so many factors that deplete or improve languages.

One of such factors is cultural influence. When you say "data driven", note that the input of data into a system is done by human and you can't rule out the error factor in data gathering.

Words can sound alike from different languages, but can't be spelt exactly the same, with the same meaning. For example Ngozi is blessing in Igbo and Ingozi in izon is wealth, but they sound alike with different meaning and spelling.

I hope this platform would be open enough to accept views and opinions from Ogbians that might be useful or contradict the development of our language.

This post was more engaging with some speakers laying claim to spellings but it actually showed that the awareness is growing.

## **8.2. Findings**

The observations from the interactions on the page show that some speakers of the language who are on Facebook are actually interested in engaging on the page. This group of people can be classed as young and middle-aged. The data show that responses are encouraging as speakers try to engage the poster or other speakers on the page. However, it has been difficult to get speakers to write consistently in Ogbia. Some try to comment in Ogbia and switch to English, some code-mixed with English and a lot more simply comment in English. So, there is a lot of code-switching and code-mixing in the engagement process.

Another interesting observation is that a lot of the people use their knowledge of the English alphabet to spell and even tend to challenge the orthography that was posted on the page. This is actually expected as there is yet to be a standardized orthography of the language. A proposal by the author is in the process with the hope that there will be acceptability, adaptability and adoption for it to serve as the standard for reading and writing Ogbia. The issue of dialectal variation cannot be overlooked because some commenters who are not conversant with the Otakeme variety seem to be at a loss with some of the discussions on the page.

## **9. Conclusion**

The study is a practical venture with feedback that can lead to further research in language documentation. It shows that linguists and language advocates can easily get an audience through social media communication than the traditional means. This creates room for all participants to have the opportunity to express themselves by engaging and sharing posts. However, the data from the comments prove that there are gaps in the language especially in

its orthography and tone system which is a linguistic phenomenon that is quite prevalent in the language. Research has shown that Ogbia is a tone language and tone alterations can create meaning differences (Lawson-Ikuru, 2021), but this is not recognized by speakers who make efforts to comment in the language. But those observations notwithstanding, the aim of creating the page which is first to promote the language and preserve it in what seems to be the easiest way, was relatively achieved. It is also important to state that the gaps found in the study will aid further research on the language.

## **10. Recommendations**

This method of language promotion can be termed as relatively new and should be adopted by language advocates and practitioners. It has proven to be one of the easiest methods of promoting, preserving and even documenting indigenous languages. This is so because the social media has come to stay and as stated earlier, a huge population of the world has at least one or more social media handles and more social media platforms are emerging.

Secondly, it should be employed in the transmission of less spoken languages to the younger generation who are constantly engaging on social media.

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