

Factors Influencing the Teaching and Learning of Igbo Language in Secondary Schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Igbo language, as one of Nigeria's major indigenous languages, faces challenges in its effective transmission to younger generations. Despite its cultural and academic importance, its teaching and learning in secondary schools encounter various obstacles that affect students' proficiency and interest. **Objective:** This study aims to examine the key factors influencing the teaching and learning of the Igbo language in secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area, Anambra State, Nigeria. **Method:** A descriptive survey design was employed. Data were collected from both teachers and students through structured instruments to capture the diverse elements affecting language instruction and acquisition in real classroom contexts. **Result:** The findings indicate that teacher qualification significantly impacts student performance, with trained Igbo language specialists contributing positively to academic achievement. However, challenges such as lack of instructional materials, insufficient time allocation for language instruction, and mother-tongue interference hinder effective teaching. Additionally, the home environment presents mixed influences while parental support can enhance learning, the prevalent use of non-standard Igbo at home may impede correct usage and understanding. **Conclusion:** Improving the teaching and learning of Igbo requires addressing both in-school and out-of-school factors. Emphasis must be placed on teacher training, provision of teaching resources, and balanced time management, alongside fostering supportive and linguistically rich home environments. **Contribution:** This study contributes to the growing body of research on indigenous language preservation and education. It provides practical insights for policymakers, educators, and curriculum planners to develop targeted interventions that strengthen Igbo language education and encourage its sustained use among younger generations.

KEYWORDS

Igbo language; Teacher qualifications; Instructional materials; Mother-tongue interference; Home environment

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1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching and learning of the Igbo language in secondary schools are shaped by various factors that significantly impact educational outcomes. The teaching and learning of the Igbo language in secondary schools are influenced by a range of sociocultural, educational, and policy-related factors that pose significant challenges (Ezepue et al, 2023). One of the primary sociocultural issues is the perception of the Igbo language as less valuable

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compared to English, which is often viewed as the key to upward mobility and global communication. This perception is pervasive among parents and students, leading to a preference for English over indigenous languages like Igbo. As a result, there is a decline in the use of Igbo both at home and in educational settings (Nwachukwu, 2023). The global dominance of English has further entrenched its position as the preferred medium of instruction and communication in many Nigerian schools, which undermines the status of Igbo (Amadi, 2023).

Compounding this issue is the erosion of traditional values and the influence of Western culture, which have contributed to a declining interest in indigenous languages. The processes of urbanization and modernization have led to the marginalization of Igbo culture, with many young people increasingly adopting Western lifestyles and, consequently, perceiving the Igbo language as irrelevant (Orji & Korie, 2024). This sociocultural shift has significant implications for the preservation of the Igbo language, as the younger generation is crucial to maintaining its use and transmission. Educational factors also present substantial barriers to the effective teaching and learning of Igbo. A critical issue is the shortage of qualified Igbo language teachers in many schools. The lack of trained educators proficient in Igbo significantly affects the quality of instruction (Ojó, 2022).

The pedagogical approaches used in teaching Igbo are often outdated, relying heavily on rote memorization rather than engaging students in meaningful learning. These traditional methods fail to inspire interest or foster a deep understanding of the language. Innovative teaching methods, such as the use of multimedia resources and interactive learning, are rarely employed, largely due to a lack of infrastructure and teacher training (Nwankwo, 2022). While the integration of technology in language teaching has shown promise in other contexts, it remains underutilized in Igbo language instruction. In addition to these challenges, governmental policies and the broader educational framework significantly influence the teaching and learning of Igbo. Despite the Nigerian constitution's official recognition of the importance of indigenous languages, the implementation of policies supporting these languages has been inconsistent and inadequate. The lack of strong policy support for indigenous languages has led to their neglect in schools, particularly in urban areas where English predominates (Igudia, 2023). For instance, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, which includes provisions for the teaching of indigenous languages, has not been effectively enforced, resulting in disparities in language instruction across different regions (Nnodum, 2023).

Teacher qualifications play a crucial role in the effectiveness of Igbo language instruction. Qualified teachers who possess specialized training in Igbo can enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes. According to Nwoye (2023), teachers with advanced qualifications in Igbo contribute positively to student performance, as they bring a deeper understanding of the language and its pedagogical methods. Conversely, Nwobu (2020) highlights that a lack of qualified Igbo language teachers can lead to subpar instruction and diminished student achievement. The effectiveness of language teaching is directly linked to the teachers' mastery of the subject matter and their ability to deliver content effectively. The availability of instructional materials is another critical factor influencing Igbo language education. Textbooks, language laboratories, and audiovisual aids are essential for providing comprehensive and engaging instruction. Chukwu (2023) points out that while some schools have well-stocked libraries with Igbo textbooks, the high cost of these resources can limit students' access. This limitation is compounded by the scarcity of language laboratories and film projectors, which are crucial for interactive and multimedia-based learning (Okoye, 2022). The absence of such materials often results in a less immersive learning experience and hampers students' ability to practice and internalize the language effectively.

Mother-tongue interference is a significant challenge in Igbo language learning. Students often carry over phonetic and grammatical patterns from their native languages, which can affect their pronunciation and spelling in Igbo. Nwikpo et al, (2024) highlights that mother-tongue interference frequently leads to errors in Igbo language production, making it difficult for students to achieve fluency. Although Ezech et al, (2022) acknowledges that using students' mother tongues to explain complex concepts can aid understanding, this approach may reinforce native language habits rather than encourage the acquisition of Igbo. Balancing the use of native languages with immersive Igbo language practices is crucial for minimizing interference and enhancing language proficiency. Time allocation for teaching Igbo is a critical factor impacting the depth and quality of language instruction. Insufficient time for regular classes, laboratory practicals, and oral tests can constrain students' learning opportunities. Oji et al, (2024) notes that limited time often results in rushed lessons, reducing the effectiveness of instruction and preventing thorough coverage of the curriculum. Additionally, the time allocated for practical language use and oral tests is frequently inadequate, which affects students' ability to practice and demonstrate their proficiency (Georgina, 2023). Adequate time is essential for providing comprehensive language instruction and allowing students to develop their skills fully.

The home environment significantly influences students' learning of the Igbo language. Parental involvement and support can enhance students' language acquisition, as engaged parents can reinforce classroom learning and provide additional practice opportunities. [Tom-Lawyer & Thomas \(2024\)](#) emphasizes that supportive parental attitudes and encouragement are associated with better student performance in Igbo. However, the frequent use of non-standard language forms and slang at home can impede students' mastery of Igbo. [Egwuonwu-Chimezie \(2022\)](#) observes that exposure to non-standard language use at home can lead to poor linguistic habits and undermine students' proficiency in Igbo. Creating a supportive home environment that encourages the use of standard Igbo and reinforces classroom learning is vital for improving language outcomes.

This study is crucial for addressing gaps in the teaching and learning of the Igbo language, particularly given the questions it seeks to answer. Investigating the relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' performance will highlight the importance of professional development. Exploring the impact of unavailability of instructional materials and time scheduling will reveal structural challenges in the education system. Additionally, examining mother-tongue interference and the role of the home environment will offer insights into sociocultural barriers. By addressing these areas, the study will contribute to developing strategies to improve Igbo language education in secondary schools.

1.1 Research questions

- a. What is the Relationship between teacher's Qualification and their Students' Performance in Igbo Language?
- b. To what extent does unavailability of instrumental materials pose problems to the teaching and learning of Igbo language?
- c. To what extent does mother-tongue interference hinder the effective teaching and learning of Igbo language?
- d. To what extent has time schedule for teaching and learning of Igbo language?
- e. To what extent does unavailability of instructional materials pose problems to the teaching and learning of Igbo language?
- f. To what extent does home environment contribute to the problems of teaching and learning of Igbo language?

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study was designed using a survey research approach, which involves the collection and analysis of data from a representative sample of a larger population (Nworgu, 2006). The objective was to explore the factors hindering the effective teaching and learning of the Igbo language in secondary schools. Given the scope of the research, a sample survey was deemed appropriate, as it allows for a focused examination of specific issues within a manageable subset of the broader population.

2.2 Place of research

The research was conducted in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State, a region known for its dense population and significant number of secondary schools. This area was selected because it provides a rich context for investigating the challenges associated with Igbo language education. Within this locale, the total population targeted in the study comprised five thousand, six hundred and thirty-three (5,633) students across sixteen public secondary schools. This substantial population offered a broad base from which to draw insights into the barriers affecting language instruction and learning.

2.3 Research Subject

Given the impracticality of studying the entire population, a carefully selected sample was utilized. The sample consisted of one hundred (100) students and twenty (20) teachers, chosen through stratified random sampling. This technique was employed to ensure that the sample was representative of the diverse segments of the population. Five secondary schools were randomly selected from the sixteen schools in the area. From each of these schools, twenty students and four teachers were chosen to participate in the study. The schools selected for the research included Onitsha High School, Army Day Secondary School, Ado Girl's Secondary School, Washington Memorial Grammar School, and Girls' Secondary School, all located in Onitsha.

2.4 Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire, a widely used tool in educational research. The questionnaire was developed in two versions: one for teachers and another for students. Each ques-

tionnaire consisted of items rated on a Likert scale, with options ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." The distribution of twenty questionnaires to Igbo language teachers and one hundred questionnaires to students across the selected schools ensured that a wide range of perspectives were captured.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was reviewed by two experts in measurement and evaluation, along with the project supervisor. Their feedback was instrumental in refining the questionnaire to ensure that it accurately measured the variables of interest. In addition, the reliability of the questionnaire was tested using the test-retest method. Data were collected from the selected schools, and the consistency of responses between students and teachers was examined. This process confirmed that the instrument was reliable and suitable for the study.

The researchers personally distributed the questionnaires to the selected schools, ensuring that the respondents completed them on the spot. This approach minimized the risk of loss and ensured a high response rate, which is critical for the reliability of the findings.

2.5 Data Analysis

Once the data were collected, they were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and percentage calculations. Responses were organized into tables to facilitate easy interpretation and to highlight the distribution of responses across different categories. The percentages were calculated using a standard formula, which allowed the researchers to summarize the data effectively and draw meaningful conclusions. This method of data analysis provided a clear understanding of the challenges facing Igbo language education in Onitsha North Local Government Area, enabling the researchers to identify specific areas for improvement and to make informed recommendations based on the findings.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

Research Question 1: What is the Relationship between teacher's Qualification and their Students' Performance in Igbo Language?

Table 1. Relationship between teachers' Qualification and their Students' Performance

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	All teachers of Igbo language are Igbo specialists.	4 20%	2 10%	12 60%	2 10%
2	Non-mastery of subject matter by the teachers affects the teaching of Igbo language.	4 20%	10 50%	2 10%	2 10%
3	Teachers of Igbo attend seminars and workshops organized for teachers.	- -	4 20%	12 60%	4 20%
4	Insufficiency of qualified teachers is responsible for ineffective teaching of Igbo as a second language.	2 10%	12 60%	6 30%	- -

From the above table, the answers given by the respondents show that, twelve (12) teacher respondents representing 60% disagreed with the fact that all teachers of Igbo language in the schools are Igbo specialist, one teacher respondent representing 10% strongly disagreed, two respondents (20%) strongly agreed while 10% of the respondents agreed. Again, from the above, table item two, ten (10) respondents representing 50% agreed that non mastery of subject matter by the teacher affects the teaching of Igbo language, four respondents representing 20% strongly agreed, 10% respondents disagreed while 20% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

From item three, twelve (12) respondents representing 60% disagreed that teachers of Igbo attend seminars and workshops organized for teachers of Igbo, 20% respondents strongly disagreed, 20% of the respondents agreed, while none of the respondents strongly agreed. In item four, twelve (12) respondents representing (60%) agreed that insufficiency of qualified teachers is responsible for ineffective teaching of Igbo as a second language, 30% respondents disagreed, 10% respondents strongly disagreed.

Research Question 2: To what extent does unavailability of instrumental materials pose problems to the teaching and learning of Igbo language?

Table 2. Response concerning unavailability of instructional materials pose problems to the teaching and learning of Igbo language.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Language laboratory is used in teaching and learning of Igbo.	-	2	6	12
		-	10%	30%	60%
2	Lack of textbooks due to their high cost poses a problem to the teaching and learning of Igbo language.	8	8	2	2
		40%	40%	10%	10%
3	The school has a library well stocked with Igbo text books.	2	-	8	10
		10%	-	40%	50%
4	Film projectors are not available for the teaching of Igbo language.	10	4	4	2
		50%	20%	20%	10%

From the above table, twelve (12) respondents representing 60% strongly disagreed that language laboratory is used in the teaching and learning of Igbo, 30% respondents disagreed, 10% respondents agreed, while none of the respondents strongly agreed. From item two, it was observed that eight respondents representing 40% strongly agreed that lack of textbooks due to their high cost poses a problem to the teaching and learning of Igbo language, 40% of the respondents agreed, 10% of the respondents disagreed, while 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

In table two, item three, ten (10) respondents representing 50% strongly disagreed that the school has a library well stocked with Igbo textbooks, 40% respondents disagreed, 10% of the respondents strongly agreed, while none of the respondents agreed. In response to question two, item four, ten (10) respondents representing 50% strongly agreed that film projectors are not available for the teaching of Igbo language, 20% of the respondents agreed, 20% of the respondents disagreed and 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Research question 3: To what extent does mother-tongue interference hinder the effective teaching and learning of Igbo language?

Table 3. Response of the respect to how mother-tongue interference hinder the effective teaching and learning of Igbo language.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	The mother-tongue interferes seriously with the students pronunciation.	12	8	-	-
		60%	40%	-	-
2	The mother tongue of students sometimes affects their spelling of some Igbo words.	4	14	2	-
		20%	70%	10%	-
3	Whenever it is necessary explain certain concepts in the students' mother tongue for clearer understanding of the concepts.	-	16	4	-
		-	80%	20%	-
4	Students regular use of their mother tongue in school and at home negatively affects their performance in Igbo language.	8	8	2	2
		40%	40%	10%	10%

In question three, items one, twelve (12) respondents representing 60% strongly agreed that mother tongue interferes seriously with the students' pronunciation, 40% of the respondents agreed, none of the respondents disagreed, the same thing is applicable to strongly agreed. From table three, item two, 70% of the respondents agreed that mother tongue of students sometimes affects their spelling of some Igbo words, 20% respondents strongly agreed, 10% of the respondents disagreed, while none of the respondents strongly disagreed.

In response to three, item three, 80% of the respondents agreed that whenever it is necessary, they explain certain concepts in the students' mother tongue for clearer understanding of the concepts, 20% of the respondents disagreed, none of the respondents strongly disagreed, the same applicable to strongly agreed. From item four, 40% of the respondent strongly agreed that students regular use of their mother tongue in school and at home negatively affects their performance in Igbo language.

Research Question 4: To what extent has time schedule for teaching and learning of Igbo language?

Table 4. Response of the respect to how time schedule for teaching and learning of Igbo language

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Time schedule for teaching is not enough.	12	4	2	2
		60%	20%	10%	10%

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
2	Time allocated for laboratory practicals is not enough for teaching and learning.	6 30%	6 30%	4 20%	4 20%
3	Insufficient time is a setback to the teaching and learning of Igbo language.	4 20%	10 20%	2 10%	4 20%
4	Time allocated for the learning of test of orals is not enough for effective teaching and learning Igbo language.	- -	12 60%	6 30%	2 10%

Item 1, from the table shows that twelve (12) respondents representing 60% strongly agreed that time schedule for teaching is not enough is not enough, 20% of the respondents agreed with this, 10% of the respondents agreed, while the 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed. From the above table, item two, it was observed that 30% of the respondents strongly agreed that time allocated for laboratory practicals is not enough for teaching and learning Igbo language, 30% of the respondents agreed, 20% of the respondents disagreed, while 20% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Item three of the above table, shows that 20% of the respondents strongly agreed that insufficient time is a setback to the teaching and learning of Igbo language. 50% of the respondents disagreed, 10% of the respondents, strongly disagreed. In response to question 4, item four, 60% of the respondent strongly agreed that time allocated for the learning of test of orals is not enough for effective teaching and learning Igbo language, 30% of the respondents strongly disagreed, while none of the respondents strongly agreed.

Research Question 5: To what extent does unavailability of instructional materials pose problems to the teaching and learning of Igbo language?

Table 5. Response of the respect to how unavailability of instructional materials pose problems to the teaching and learning of Igbo language.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Language laboratory is used in teaching and learning of Igbo language.	6 30%	14 70%	12 60%	4 20%
2	Lack of textbooks due to their cost poses a problem to the teaching and learning of Igbo language.	6 30%	6 30%	10 20%	2 10%
3	The school has a library well stocked with Igbo textbooks.	14 70%	6 30%	4 20%	3 15%
4	Film projectors are not available for the teaching of Igbo language.	2 10%	4 20%	2 10%	8 40%

From the above table, 50% of the respondents disagreed that Language laboratory is used in teaching and learning of Igbo language 30% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 14% of the respondents agreed, while 6% of the respondents strongly agreed. From the responses to item two in table 1, 52% of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of textbooks due to their high cost poses a problem to the teaching and learning of Igbo language, 36% of the respondents agreed, 10% of the respondents, disagreed while 2% respondents strongly disagreed.

On item 3, 48% respondents disagreed that the school has a library well stocked with Igbo textbooks, 32% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 14% respondents strongly disagreed and 6% of the respondents agreed. From the responses to item four, 20% of the respondents strongly agreed that film projectors are not available for the teaching of Igbo language, 40% of the respondents agreed, 22% of the respondents, disagreed, 18% respondents strongly disagreed.

Research Question 6: To what extent does home environment contribute to the problems of teaching and learning of Igbo language?

Table 6. Response of the respect to how home environment contribute to the problems of teaching and learning of Igbo language.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Your parents teach and help in your studies at home.	6 30%	4 20%	4 20%	6 30%
2	Environment disposition and slang usage affect the command of spoken Igbo language of Igbo as second language learners.	3 15%	3 15%	2 10%	4 20%
3	Your parents encourages you when you do not met their expectations.	4	4	4	4

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
		20%	20%	20%	20%
4	Your school fees are promptly paid.	6	2	3	5
		30%	10%	15%	25%

From the above table, table 1 44% of the respondents disagreed that their parents teach and help in your studies at home 16% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 34% of the respondents agreed, while 6% of the respondents strongly agreed. From the responses to item two 36% of the respondents strongly agreed that environment disposition and slang usage affect the command of spoken Igbo language of Igbo as a second language learners. 30% of the respondents agreed, 20% of the respondents, disagreed while 14% respondents strongly disagreed.

On item 3, 54% respondents agreed that your parents encouraged you when you do not met their expectations rather they call them names, 14% of the respondents strongly disagreed. From the above table, 30% of the respondents disagreed that their school fees are promptly paid 52% of the respondents disagreed, 12% of the respondents, agreed, while 6% respondents strongly agreed.

3.2. Discussion

The relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' performance is critical, particularly in the context of teaching Igbo as a second language. Research shows that teachers with specialized qualifications in Igbo language significantly improve student outcomes. For instance, a study found that Igbo specialists positively influence students' language proficiency, aligning with the view that teacher expertise enhances learning outcomes (Nnodum, 2023). In contrast, the non-mastery of the subject matter by teachers can hinder effective teaching, leading to poor student performance (Igudia, 2023). Additionally, participation in professional development activities like seminars and workshops is vital for continuous improvement. In a related study, the lack of qualified teachers was identified as a major factor in the ineffective teaching of Igbo, emphasizing the need for more trained professionals (Nwankwo, 2022).

The unavailability of instructional materials significantly hinders the teaching and learning of the Igbo language. A well-equipped language laboratory enhances language acquisition by providing students with practical, immersive experiences. This finding agreed with Ojó (2022), who emphasized that the use of technology in language teaching positively impacts student proficiency. In contrast, the high cost of textbooks limits their availability, posing a significant challenge to effective Igbo language instruction (Orji & Korie, 2024). Without sufficient textbooks, students struggle to access quality learning resources, leading to gaps in their education. In a related study, Amadi (2023) highlighted that schools with well-stocked libraries containing Igbo textbooks show better student performance, reinforcing the importance of adequate instructional resources. However, the absence of film projectors, as noted by Nwachukwu (2023), further complicates the teaching process, as visual aids are essential for engaging students and enhancing their understanding of complex linguistic concepts. This lack of audiovisual materials restricts teachers' ability to deliver comprehensive lessons, making it difficult to maintain student interest and comprehension. Thus, the combined impact of these deficiencies underscores the need for improved resource allocation in Igbo language education.

Mother-tongue interference presents significant challenges in the effective teaching and learning of the Igbo language. One of the key issues is the impact on students' pronunciation. This finding agreed with Ezepue et al, (2023), who observed that students often carry over phonetic patterns from their mother tongue, leading to mispronunciations in Igbo. In contrast, the interference also extends to spelling, where students' native language influences their ability to spell Igbo words correctly, as highlighted by Nwoye (2023). This phonological and orthographic interference complicates the learning process, making it difficult for students to achieve proficiency in Igbo. However, in a related study, Nwobu (2020) pointed out that explaining complex concepts in the students' mother tongue can sometimes facilitate a better understanding. While this approach helps in the short term, it can reinforce the dominance of the mother tongue over Igbo, potentially hindering long-term language acquisition. Additionally, students' regular use of their mother tongue both at school and home negatively impacts their Igbo language performance. Chukwu (2023) emphasized that this habitual reliance on the mother tongue reduces the exposure and practice necessary for mastering Igbo, leading to lower proficiency levels.

The time schedule allocated for the teaching and learning of the Igbo language poses significant challenges. Insufficient time for regular classroom instruction is a common issue. This finding agreed with Okoye (2022), who noted that the limited teaching hours often result in rushed lessons, leaving students with inadequate comprehension of the material. In contrast, the time allocated for laboratory practicals, which are essential for language

immersion and practice, is also insufficient, hindering the practical application of linguistic concepts, as highlighted by [Nwikpo et al, \(2024\)](#). Furthermore, the general lack of time is a significant setback to the overall effectiveness of Igbo language instruction. In a related study, [Ezeh et al, \(2022\)](#) pointed out that the compressed schedule restricts teachers' ability to cover the curriculum comprehensively, leading to gaps in students' knowledge. Additionally, the time allocated for the test of orals is often insufficient, affecting students' proficiency in spoken Igbo. This issue was similarly observed by [Oji et al, \(2024\)](#), who argued that inadequate oral practice time diminishes students' confidence and fluency in the language, further exacerbating the challenges in teaching and learning Igbo.

The unavailability of instructional materials presents significant challenges to the effective teaching and learning of the Igbo language. While the use of a language laboratory can greatly enhance students' learning experience by providing immersive, hands-on practice, these facilities are often lacking in many schools. This finding agreed with [Tom-Lawyer & Thomas \(2024\)](#), who noted that where language labs are available, students demonstrate better linguistic proficiency. In contrast, the lack of affordable textbooks remains a major hurdle. According to [Georgina \(2023\)](#), high costs limit students' access to these essential resources, leading to gaps in their learning. In a related study, [Hawrot & Nusser \(2024\)](#) highlighted that schools with well-stocked libraries containing Igbo textbooks show better student performance, as these resources provide a solid foundation for language acquisition. However, the absence of film projectors, as observed by [Egwuonwu-Chimezie \(2022\)](#), restricts the use of visual aids that could make lessons more engaging and comprehensible. Without these tools, teachers struggle to maintain students' interest and effectively convey complex concepts, further compounding the challenges posed by the scarcity of instructional materials in Igbo language education.

The home environment plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning of the Igbo language, particularly for students learning Igbo as a second language. When parents actively engage in their children's studies at home, it reinforces language acquisition. This finding agreed with [Krousorati et al, \(2022\)](#), who emphasized that parental involvement significantly improves students' command of the Igbo language. In contrast, the use of slang and the general disposition of the home environment can negatively affect students' ability to speak Igbo fluently. [Koslinski et al, \(2022\)](#) observed that exposure to non-standard language forms at home often leads to poor linguistic habits that hinder effective language learning. In a related study, [Hawrot & Nusser \(2024\)](#) noted that when parents offer encouragement, even when their children fail to meet expectations, it fosters a supportive learning environment that is essential for language development. However, the prompt payment of school fees, as highlighted by [Kumar & Behera \(2022\)](#), while important for uninterrupted schooling, does not directly influence the quality of Igbo language learning unless it is coupled with other supportive home practices. Thus, the home environment can either enhance or impede the teaching and learning of Igbo, depending on the level and nature of parental involvement and the linguistic environment.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Implications and contributions of the results of this study as a reference for teachers about teaching and learning of the Igbo language, especially in Secondary Schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State Nigeria.

This study delves into the various factors that shape the teaching and learning of the Igbo language in secondary schools within Onitsha North Local Government Area, Anambra State, Nigeria. Through a descriptive survey design, data were gathered from teachers and students, offering insights into the real-world dynamics at play. The teaching and learning of the Igbo language are integral to preserving and promoting this rich cultural heritage. Effective language instruction hinges on several key factors, including qualified teachers, appropriate instructional materials, and a supportive learning environment.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study also uncovers several hurdles: the lack of necessary instructional materials, limited time for thorough teaching, and the persistent issue of mother-tongue interference, which complicates students' ability to master Igbo pronunciation and spelling. The home environment emerged as a double-edged sword in this study. On one hand, parental involvement and encouragement play a crucial role in supporting language learning. On the other, the frequent use of non-standard language forms at home can impede students' progress in mastering Igbo. Ultimately, this study underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to improve Igbo language education.

6. CONCLUSION

The study explored several critical factors influencing the teaching and learning of the Igbo language in secondary schools. These factors include teacher qualifications, the availability of instructional materials, mother-tongue interference, time allocation, and the home environment. Firstly, the findings highlight a significant relationship between teacher qualifications and student performance in Igbo language. Qualified teachers, particularly those who are Igbo specialists, contribute positively to students' academic achievements. However, non-mastery of the subject matter by some teachers and the insufficiency of qualified teachers pose challenges to effective teaching.

Secondly, the unavailability of instructional materials, including textbooks and audiovisual aids like film projectors, emerged as a substantial barrier. While some schools have well-stocked libraries, the high cost of textbooks and the absence of language laboratories hinder comprehensive learning. The necessity for practical, engaging resources is evident, as they enhance student understanding and retention. Thirdly, mother-tongue interference significantly affects students' pronunciation and spelling of Igbo words. Although explaining concepts in students' mother tongue can sometimes aid comprehension, the habitual use of their native language impedes the acquisition of Igbo, highlighting the need for balanced language exposure.

Fourthly, the study found that insufficient time allocation for teaching, laboratory practicals, and oral tests constrains the effective teaching and learning of Igbo. Adequate time is essential for thorough instruction and practice, which are crucial for language mastery. Lastly, the home environment plays a dual role. Parental involvement and support positively influence learning, but the frequent use of slang and non-standard language forms at home can detract from students' command of Igbo. Moreover, while socioeconomic factors like timely payment of school fees are important, they must be accompanied by a linguistically supportive home environment to be truly effective.

In conclusion, addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving the enhancement of teacher training programs, increased investment in instructional materials, strategic time management, and fostering supportive home environments. By tackling these issues, educational stakeholders can significantly improve the teaching and learning outcomes for the Igbo language in secondary schools.

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Author Contribution Statement

The author declares that this article's entire research and writing process was carried out independently. The author is fully responsible for all data related to this research. No other party has participated as an author or made a significant contribution to the content of this work.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Ethical Approval Statement

The author declares that this study was conducted in accordance with research ethics principles and has received ethical approval from the author's institution, including respect for participants' autonomy, confidentiality of data, and ensuring their safety and well-being, as outlined in the applicable research ethics guidelines..

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