

# Evaluating the Place of Indigenous Languages and New Technologies in Developing and Sustaining Nigerian Cultures


**Eucharía Ngozi Nwosu**

Department of English and Literary Studies, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State Nigeria, [eukaynwosu15@gmail.com](mailto:eukaynwosu15@gmail.com)

**Caroline Nonye Osuchukwu**

Department of English and Literary Studies, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State Nigeria, [carolineosuchukwu1@gmail.com](mailto:carolineosuchukwu1@gmail.com)

Corresponding Author: [eukaynwosu15@gmail.com](mailto:eukaynwosu15@gmail.com)

ARTICLE INFO	Abstract
<p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Indigenous languages, New technologies, Developing, Sustaining, Nigerian cultures.</i></p> <p>©2025 Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International</a></p> 	<p><i>The place of language and new technologies in developing and sustaining any indigenous cultures cannot be over-emphasised. Regrettably, their role in addressing the contemporary challenges to cultural development in Nigeria remains neglected in the literature. Against the backdrop, this study seeks to examine the place of indigenous languages and new technologies in developing and sustaining Nigerian cultures. Relying on secondary data, introspection and observation, descriptive survey and qualitative method are employed for data synthesis and analysis. The analysis shows that indigenous languages and new technologies have the potentials to develop and sustain Nigerian cultures. The study concludes that indigenous languages and new technologies are viable means of developing and sustaining Nigerian cultures, if duly deployed. Stakeholders are charged to ensure adequate deployment of the two measures, among others, for developing and sustaining Nigerian cultures beyond what obtains currently.</i></p>

## Introduction

With the trends of the contemporary society, it is imperative to deploy various measures, systems and strategies for the development and sustenance of indigenous cultures and systems across the globe. For this study, language and new technologies are some of the systems and strategic measures for developing and sustaining Nigerian cultures as well as the indigenous cultures of other nations across the globe. Nigerian cultures, languages and other indigenous systems are confronted with age-long colonial impositions, cultural and linguistic imperialism, and deliberate attrition and endangerment by Nigerians who consistently substitute foreign cultures, languages and other systems for the indigenous equivalents (Anyanwu, 2025; Nkereuwem & Robert, 2023).

As Robert et al. (2016) observe, the negative construction of non-Western cultures by their contemporary elite accounts for culture imperialism and the sustenance of westernisation in Nigeria and other African nations. For a turn around, different measures have to be devised and employed accordingly to rouse ethnocentrism in Nigerian individuals. For this study, indigenous languages and new technologies are some of the measures for subverting culture imperialism. This study seeks to demonstrate that indigenous languages and new technologies are viable means of making a sporadic shift from Westernisation and imperialism to ethnocentrism and sustained consciousness towards indigenous cultures, languages, technologies, enterprises, health and thought systems and others.

## Theoretical Framework

Being a study concerned with indigenous cultures, it is anchored on Robert's (2017a) Indigenous Existential Phenomenology Theory (IEPT), which upholds and demands for positive attitude towards every given people's indigenous cultures and existential phenomenon in totality. For

Robert (2017), the people of every culture ought to be conscious of their cultural specifics that make every culture unique, and cultural universals that make them relative, universal and general in some regards. The consciousness, he explain avers, would get rid of any acts of negligence or relegation that lead to the endangerment, attrition and erosion of indigenous cultures and other systems inherent to every given people.

To achieve the goals of cultural development and sustenance, as advocated by the present study, individual Nigerians have to remain continually conscious of their cultures, languages and other indigenous systems. This point calls to mind the view of Freire (1970) on critical consciousness as ‘conscientisation’ against the practice of sociopolitical domination of some societal systems by others. This means that by being conscious of one’s Nigerian culture, Nigerians individuals conscientise themselves and their fellows on the imperative of upholding their cultures and making sustained efforts to overturn the domination of Nigerian cultures by Western culture (Robert & Peter, 2023).

Therefore, following critical cultural literacy alongside technological literacy, many Nigerians would see the need to value, uphold, project, promote and develop their cultures using their indigenous languages and the new technologies that are revolutionising and innovating cultures and other systems of society. With effective language use, critical cultural literacy, and technological literacy, the ideals of IEPT can be achieved in the pursuit of cultural development and substance in contemporary Nigeria. With the aforementioned, Nigerians can ultimately show positive attitude towards their cultures. Thus, IEPT is apt for the study.

### **Indigenous Languages in Developing and Sustaining Nigerian Cultures**

The place of indigenous languages in developing and sustaining any cultures cannot be over-emphasised. Although language is one of the non-material aspects of culture, the expression of culture and the conveyance of all embodiments of cultures are done using language. It is through language that the people of a given culture know about their culture in details. Having no knowledge of one’s language hinders the individual from knowing a lot of what their culture entails. While a person having no knowledge of their indigenous language can read about their culture, to which the language is an integral part of, the individual cannot boast of familiarity with their culture. What the person reads about the given culture is written in another language (e.g. English).

The culture of the language used for writing the content manifests directly or indirect. What manifests influences the reader and blurs some of the cultural realities that can only be conveyed aptly using the associated indigenous language. The person obviously has no mastery of the culture, because of lack of the knowledge of the language of that culture. That is why an Igbo child, for instance, can be insulted or gossiped by others who understand and speak the Igbo language (fluently). That does not necessarily mean that the child does not know certain things about the Igbo culture. As Ubahakwe (1979) has rightly noted, texts written in non-Nigerian languages for Nigerian audience cannot solve the problems that are peculiar to Nigerians or their inherent situations. As such, to find tangible solutions to Nigerian problems or situations, indigenous languages should be used to write the educational contents for the Nigerian audience.

Furthermore, what cannot be expressed appropriately in English about Igbo culture, but only through Igbo language, would remain unknown to an Igbo person who has no knowledge of the Igbo language. The foregoing points underscore the need for using indigenous languages to develop and sustain Igbo and other Nigerian cultures across generations. More so, the value of indigenous languages in new technologies can be seen in the use of languages like Chinese, Japanese and French on technological products. Different technologies produced in non-English speaking countries usually have the languages of the countries, with manuals or inscriptions written in both the language(s) and the English language.

The gesture is a symbolic means of developing and sustaining cultures of the countries where the products are made. The gesture typifies the place of indigenous languages and new technologies in projecting, developing and sustaining the cultures of the nations where the products are made. Nigerian languages are not used to write on Nigerian products. Using them for product labels and instructions is a way of projecting, promoting, developing and sustaining Nigerian cultures. Since language is paramount to every human undertaking, indigenous languages can have a pride of place in efforts and gestures aimed at developing and sustaining indigenous cultures in Nigeria, and other nations of the world by extension. In what reflects the foregoing, Osuagwu and Chimakonam (2018) aver that language-based techniques have the capacity of addressing issues of decolonisation and tackling various issues in society, leading to the attainment of innovations. Their view aligns with and justifies the stance of this present study.

It follows that indigenous languages have the capacity to develop and sustain cultures and foster the attainment of innovations, such as technological and cultural innovations. Considering the foregoing, this study posits that by upholding, using, teaching, learning, projecting and promoting indigenous cultures, the cultures get developed, popularised and freed from Western imperialism and impositions. The stance that Nigerian cultures can be developed and sustained through indigenous languages reflects Ubahakwe's (1979) assertion that "a Nigerian problem would require, in language studies, a Nigerian solution" (p. xiii). Thus, deploying Nigerian languages for cultural development and sustenance implies resorting to a Nigerian solution to the problems confronting Nigerian cultures and peoples.

Considering the multilingual nature of Nigeria, the arguments against the foregoing assertions abound or may arise among scholars. Be it as it may, multilingualism does not prevent different Nigerian peoples from developing their indigenous cultures in this era of digitalisation. The willingness to do so is the ultimate factor. The educated members of each of the Nigerian cultural societies have the obligation of taking up the thankless task of teaching the younger ones their indigenous languages and cultures. The teaching should be at home and school concurrently. While the educated ones owe the younger ones school and home teaching of their indigenous cultures, languages and other systems, the uneducated ones must do so at home at all times. By doing the needful in various regards, they develop and sustain their cultures and languages individually and collectively.

Similarly, Anyanwu (2023) emphasises the need to look within for solutions to the problems confronting Nigeria and other like developing nations, which affect their indigenous systems. She exemplifies with the problem-solving potentials of Nigerian languages, traditional medicines, oral traditions, and educational and thought systems. Among these mentioned systems, languages are the topmost in projecting, promoting, developing and sustaining Nigerian cultures. These languages are the first and foremost identifiers of Nigerian cultures. Therefore, the need to develop and sustain them using the indigenous languages cannot be over-emphasised. Indigenous languages can be used to teach each children, and even adults, various aspects of their cultures. There are many aspects of peoples' cultures that can only be best understood and practiced through indigenous languages. Among such aspects are proverbs, idioms, adages, conventions, taboos, customs, literature and literary devices, and oral history, knowledge and traditions, to mention but a few.

Nkereuwem and Robert (2023) hold that indigenous languages and oral literature are viable mechanisms for developing, preserving and promoting Nigerian indigenous systems. This means that indigenous languages play a critical role in developing and sustaining cultures. It is to that end that the present study avers that indigenous languages have the potentials to develop and sustain Nigerian cultures. Basically, developing and sustaining the indigenous languages of certain peoples, such as the Nigerian peoples, implies developing and sustaining their cultures. It is vice versa in that in the course of developing and sustaining the culture of a people, or some peoples' cultures, their languages also get developed and sustained. It suffices to say that cultures and languages are intertwined. This

view is given credence by Osuchukwu(2011b), who points out that language and culture correlate significantly. Thus, developing and sustaining one implies doing same to the other.

Besong and Robert (2019) rightly note that “language is instrumental to growth, development, national, interpersonal and inter-group relations, democracy, peace and conflict resolution, every field of study and all human endeavours. The right use of language makes all these, while its wrong use mars them” (p. 1). The implication of their words in the context of this study is that indigenous languages are instrumental to cultural development and other aforementioned spheres. Similarly, Franz and Murphy (2018) posit that language, “a process of knowledge creation,” is used for “looking for the world” (p. 5). Thus, indigenous languages can be used to create knowledge and look for the world beyond the cultural environment of the languages, as in the Nigerian cultural environments of the different Nigerian peoples.

The study by Emeka-Nwobia (2015) affirms the capacity of indigenous languages to serve as mechanisms for national development in Nigeria, as obtained in some non-Western countries. For her, Nigerian government is to blame for the common negative attitude towards Nigerian indigenous languages and other aspects of their cultures, since the government fails in its responsibility to ensure that citizens take interest in and cling tenaciously to their indigenous systems rather than dumping them for the foreign equivalents.

### **New Technologies in Developing and Sustaining Nigerian Cultures**

In this era of digitalisation, there is the dire need to leverage new technologies for cultural development and sustenance. New technologies comprise various innovative scientific and technological devices for seamless operations and undertakings of various human and non-human activities. Nwode (2022) notes that new technologies refer to sets of multifaceted digital and borderless means of communication, which include social media, websites, Google, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, blogs, emails, music and television streaming services, virtual reality, augmented reality, video sharing platforms, online newspapers, and online forums. Some others include smart devices (e.g. wrist watches, smart earphones, etc.), web advertisements, online education, podcasts, webinars, internet telephony, vlogs, and wikis, among others.

Using new technologies to teach and learn about indigenous cultures leads to promoting, developing and sustaining the given cultures across ages (Obinna et al. 2024; Nwode, 2022; Osuchukwu&Ugoji, 2019; Robert et al., 2016; Osuchukwu, 2011a; Osuchukwu, 2010). As such, new technologies can play significant role in developing and sustaining Nigerian cultures. By playing a significant role, they have a significant place in developing and sustaining Nigerian cultures. Interestingly, language remains paramount in all digital and analogous activities (Danjuma et al., 2023; Emeka-Nwobia, 2015; Dibia& Robert, 2014; Uche, 1994). All that concerns technologies is communicated using language. Thus, indigenous have a significant place in developing and sustaining Nigerian cultures. As Uche (1994) has observed, science is possible only with language, because nothing about sciences can be communicated and known well without language. For Dibia and Robert (2014), the extent to which science go is dependent on how far language carries it. The foregoing ideas underscore the importance of language in science and technology. The ideas also justify the combination of indigenous languages with new technologies for addressing the challenges of cultural development and sustenance in contemporary Nigeria.

Also, Robert (2017b) shows that new technologies can be used to develop, preserve, promote and popularise the societal systems of Bekwarra and other Nigerian peoples. The study lends credence to the stance of the present study that effective use of indigenous languages and the judicious leveraging of new technologies for developing and sustaining Nigerian cultures can yield appreciable results and proffer tangible solutions to the challenges of cultural development and sustenance in the country. More so, some studies unanimously confirm that besides inducing organisational changes and new forms of time management, new technologies seek a synthesis of textual and visual

information and knowledge materials (Nwode, 2022; Ezekoka & Anum, 2016). It follows that through the noted synthesis, different sources of information about and knowledge of Nigerian cultures, new technologies can help process, manage, disseminate and popularise Nigerian cultures. Basically, since new technologies offer to the contemporary society what could be regarded as media revolution, they also bring to place cultural revolution and reformation.

## Conclusion

Indeed, the place of indigenous languages and new technologies in developing and sustaining cannot be over-emphasised. By virtue of the critical role played by the two, there is no doubt that they have the capacity to develop and sustain the cultures of Nigerian peoples. The novelty of the study rests on its nuanced treatment of indigenous languages and new technologies advancing Nigerian cultures. By engaging with crucial multifarious subject matters of national development and pedagogic concerns, the study is innovative. Its stance is novel, result-oriented and practically realisable.

The expository evaluation made by the study has unveiled the all-important role indigenous languages and new technologies can play in developing and sustaining Nigerian cultures. By implication, indigenous languages across the globe are viable linguistic mechanisms for developing and sustaining the cultures of different peoples of the globe. In the same vein, new technologies can be leveraged for significant development and sustenance of different cultures. Their digitalised aspects of culture span ages and spread widely across the globe, unlike when they are not digitalised.

## References

- Anyanwu, E. A. (2023). Nigerian indigenous languages and medicine in containing challenges of global pandemic: Looking within for remedies. Paper presented at the *34th Annual Conference of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria (LAN)*, held at Federal University, Lokoja, 15th-19th October.
- ... (2025). Rousing the consciousness of the young Igbo to their linguistic identity in contemporary classroom: Prospects and challenges. Paper presented at *3rd Hybrid World Igbo Conference and Workshop*, organised by the Centre for Igbo Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 13th-15th March.
- Besong, E. N., & Robert, O. S. (2019). Philosophical consideration of herdsmen menace and hunger in contemporary Nigeria. *American Journal of Service Science and Management*, 6(1), 1-11. doi: 10.11648/j.
- Danjuma, C., Anyanwu, E. A., & Robert, O. S. (2023). Language and critical thinking as vehicles of environmental ethics and metaphysics. *BJBio*, 14(3), 16-23. <https://doi.org/10.62865/bjbio.v14i3.76>
- Dibie, G. A., & Robert, O. S. (2014). Appraising the significance of arts and languages in polytechnic education. Paper presented at the 5th National Conference of the Nasarawa State Polytechnic ASUP Chapter, held at Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia, 9th-11th Sept.
- Ekpenyong, B., & Ikegbu, E. A. (2018). The language of philosophy and the philosophy of language: A symbiotic paradigm. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*, 1(3), 296-305.
- Emeka-Nwobia, N. U. (2015). The place of indigenous Nigerian languages in national development. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(12), 114-115
- Ezekoka, G. K., & Anum, O. (2016). Enhancing tertiary education using social media. *Journal of Educational Media and Technology (NMemt)*, 21(1), 287-297.
- Franz, B., & Murphy, J. W. (2018). Reconsidering the role of language in medicine. *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine*, 13, 5. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13010-018-0058-z>
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Herder & Herder.

- Nkereuwem, O. N., & Robert, O. S. (2023). Oral literature and the maintenance of indigenous languages among contemporary Nigerian peoples. In G. Obiamalu, H. Hunjo, & A. Adesanya (Eds.), *Evolving trends in language and linguistics: A festschrift in honour of Harrison RotimiAdeniyi*. The Linguistic Association of Nigeria/Free Enterprise Publishers.
- Nwode, G. C. (2022). Impact of new media on students' performance in written composition in selected tertiary institutions in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. PhD thesis, Department of Languages and Linguistics, Post-Graduate School, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
- Obinna, N. N., Thuraka, B., & Okusi, O. (2024). Impact of information technology on teaching and learning: A focus on hybrid teaching mode. *African Journal of Humanities and Contemporary Education Research*, 15(1), 119-130. <https://doi.org/10.62154/689nh583>
- Osuagwu, N., & Chimakonam, J. O. (2018). African studies through language-based techniques. *FilosofiaTheoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*, 7(1), 101-124, workshop special issue, January-April, doi.org/10.4314/ft.v7i1.5.
- Osuchukwu, C. N. (2010). Exploring new dimensions of lingual communication as a panacea for national development. In *Humanities: Nigerian people, cultures and development*, vol. 1 (ed.), (154-165). Oremus Prints.
- ... (2011). Basic methods of using resources for teaching: an innovational approach for language teaching and learning. *Journal of School of Languages, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe*, 1(2), 177-186.
- ... (2011). The inter-relationship of language and culture in developing society. *Architects of the Intellect: A Multi Disciplinary Journal Exploring the Frontiers of Knowledge*, 135-140.
- Osuchukwu, C. N., & Ugoji, S. C. (2019). Digital methods in the teaching of phonics: Current trend in the development of reading. *EBSU Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 9(1), 100-107.
- Robert, O. S. & Peter, W. N. (2023, September 21). Ezumezu logic and existentialist conscious conciencism as alternative ideological solution to global problems. *Flash: Journal of Philosophy, Religion and Peace Studies*, 10(1). 127-128
- Robert, O. S. (2017). *The imperative of promoting, developing and sustaining indigenous music in Nigeria*, catalogue number v354538. Grin Publishers.
- Robert, O. S. (2017). The imperative of projecting, promoting and developing Bekwarrathrough ICT, catalogue number v356513. GRIN Verlag.
- Robert, O. S., Abubakar, Z. A., & Besong, E. N. (2016). Library, information technology, oral literature and history education and sustenance in contemporary Nigeria. *Sub-Sahara Scholar International Journal of Contemporary Education Research– JCER-2016-057*.
- Ubahakwe, E. (Ed.) (1979). *The teaching of English studies: Readings for colleges and universities*. University of Ibadan Press.
- Uche, B. G. (1994). The interaction between science and language. *The Nigeria Teacher Today: A Journal of Teacher Education*, (1) 101.