

Celebrating African Endoglossia: Towards a Sustainable Roadmap for Pan-Phonetic Partnerships in Higher Education

by

Eugenia Mbanefo

eugenia.mbanefo@uniport.edu.ng

eugenia.mbanefo@yahoo.com

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

Faculty of Humanities

University of Port Harcourt,

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract

Convinced that pan-phonetic partnership is capable of enhancing knowledge generation while promoting intra-Africa cooperation and cooperation with other parts of the world, the article proposes linguistic pan-Africanism (a platform of synergy among phoneticians of African extraction, working in institutions of higher education both in Africa and elsewhere in the world, with a long term purpose of producing a phonetic map of African languages) as a way of correcting a perceived imbalance in the rating of the linguistic biography of the African when compared with that of his European counterpart, and reversing a seeming tendency of not sufficiently singing the potentials of a continent whose plethora of indigenous languages provide a fertile ground for robust research in Instrumental/Experimental Phonetics. Structured in two parts, the first part of the paper provides a theoretical framework on endoglossic celebration, while the second part outlines the roadmap for pan-phonetic partnerships.

Key words: *ubuntu*, linguistic pan-Africanism, endoglossia, igbo language, pan-phonetic partnership, Experimental Phonetics, phonetic map.

Introduction

The fabric of the 21st century is globalization, which entails global competitiveness. However, there are many levels of global competitiveness and these include the benign and the less benign. While the less benign among the global competitive endeavours bother on the development of nuclear war heads, there are other healthy and impressive playing fields for global competition ranging from sports, trade, politics, to war against hunger and deprivation, education, socio-cultural emancipation, etc... Many of these are known to adopt a “pan” all-embracing approach or rule of engagement, symbolic of *ubuntu*, a term popularized by various authors including the novelist, scholar, and journalist Jordan Kush Ngubane in the 1950s and further orchestrated by public figures such as Nelson Mandela, while articulating a society and world of inclusiveness and equality.

In the global spirit of *ubuntu*, which captures the substance of collective ethos that is shared across the African continent and beyond, it must be noted that African nations are not entirely left out in the quest for identity in the numerous areas under mention. Of a fact, one such area where Africa has striven continuously for a pan identity is in the area of political integration. Examples can be drawn from processes of democratization giving rise to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the 60s and metamorphosing into the African Union (AU) at the turn of the 21st century. Much as efforts in this area are laudable and should be sustained, there are other subtle means of celebrating pan-Africanism that ought to be explored, chief among them being Linguistic Pan-Africanism (LPA). This has to do with exploring and harnessing the potentials of the African endoglossia (i.e. indigenous languages of the African soil, severally referred to as home or native African languages as opposed to foreign languages, dubbed exolects or exoglossia) with a view to forging a pan-African linguistic identity.

Talking more directly about the quest for a pan-African linguistic identity, it is not as if nothing has been done in this area. Of a fact, it is hardly possible to engage serious debate on the native African language question without due mention of the spirited struggle of the Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong’o as depicted in some of his landmark works like *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* and *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*. His pen-driven linguistic advocacy even culminated in him abandoning writing in English at one point and embracing his native Gikuyu, all in a bid to exhort other African writers to employ their native African languages as their preferred medium for literary expression. Indeed, in and out of prison, Ngugi’s African linguistic militancy as *per* Thiong’o (1986, 1993 and 2009) dominated the African literary landscape and generated a flurry of polemical discourse as could be evidenced in MacPherson (1997), Lovesey (2000 and 2012), Gikandi (2000), Vahunta (2010) and Spivak (in Lovesey 2012). The vibrancy of that African linguistic advocacy notwithstanding, it remained confined to the domain of literary production and sought mainly to show the crucial role of African languages in “the resurrection of African memory”. Beyond the literary-based advocacy for the use of African languages by African writers, the present writer is of the opinion that more needs to be done by linguists themselves to sustain the celebration and use of native African languages as a way of forging and nurturing the LPA of our dream in order to mould the pan-African linguistic identity.

However, one would expect such pan-African linguistic identity to leverage on an existing global linguistic advocacy that maintains justice and dignity for all world languages. Unfortunately, this has not been possible because, from the global perspective, the much talked about principle of justice and dignity for world languages could merely be a mirage. This is due to an imbalance that tilts in the favour of exoglossia, much to the disadvantage of African endoglossia. This can be explained either using the score card of the African endoglossia or the poor rating of the African speaker of foreign languages. To begin with, the score card of African endoglossia hardly validates the notion of justice and humanity for world languages. This is because, whereas many world languages are celebrated and appear to occupy commanding heights, even on the African soil, either as languages of wider communication (LWC) Brann (1978), enjoying privileged status such as official language, national language or language of instruction, as the case may be (Bamgbose, 1978, Mbanefo, 2003), most African endoglossia are not even considered national languages, but are rather confined to the home as local languages, with some of them facing extinction. As pertaining to the rating of African speakers of foreign languages, the score card is as intriguing as unimpressive, when compared with a more humane consideration of their European counterparts. In this regard, Nwosu (2015) decries a Western theory-based assessment of language prodigy that tilts in favour of a Frenchman with a lesser linguistic repertoire than that exhibited by a Nigerian speaker of many tongues.

For the purpose of the present write-up, a closer view of the imbalance depicted in the two ratings of the African endoglossia and the African speaker of foreign languages throws up a kind of paradox. This paradox stems from the fact that those exoglossic languages enjoying commanding heights do so, as a result of the demographic patronage by speakers of African extraction. The same cannot be said about African languages, because non-Africans are not in the forefront of linguistic advocacy for African languages. Furthermore, the highpoint of the paradox, as far as this researcher is concerned, stems from the fact that a great number of Africans devote life-time energy on research in Non-African languages, neglecting languages of mother Africa, even though the African soil is home to a plethora of languages providing fertile ground for research in Experimental Phonetics. This paper is of the view that the time for LPA is now. The LPA project does not in any way seek to undermine interests being shown on foreign languages by phoneticians of African extraction. On the contrary, in view of the fact that charity begins at home coupled with a trending global spirit of North-South cooperation and mutual respect for justice and human dignity, the potentials of the African linguistic repertoire cannot and should not remain unsung. That is why, while positing that there should be a change in orientation in order to bring about more attention and more visibility to African languages, the author posits that it would be encouraging and desirable to canvass for a knowledge generating/knowledge sharing platform through pan-phonetic advocacy. When operational, such a platform would, in the long run, facilitate the production of a phonetic map of African languages. The roadmap to that development is the object of focus in the present article that is structured along two broad headings: the theoretical framework for the celebration of African endoglossia and a sustainable roadmap for pan-phonetic partnerships in higher education. While the theoretical framework will make a case for the celebration of African endoglossia, the roadmap will feature strategies to be adopted in order to ensure enduring pan-phonetic partnerships in higher education.

Theoretical Framework for the Celebration of African Endoglossia

This section provides a kind of conceptual framework that will feature considerations on issues like the following:

- ✚ The notion of celebration
- ✚ Celebrating a language
- ✚ Examples of celebrated languages
- ✚ The notion of justice and human dignity
- ✚ Applying justice and human dignity in the context of world languages
- ✚ The case of Igbo language

The Notion of Celebration

Celebration in general connotes bringing somebody or something into limelight. Having to do with an individual or a group of people, it is about showcasing their innate unsung potentials. Celebrating an object or a concept has to do with asserting or advocating a pride of place for the object of celebration. In contradistinction, that which is celebrated is neither obscured nor relegated to the background.

The Idea of Celebrating a Language

In this section, we shall attempt to address two questions, namely “Should a language be celebrated?” and “What happens when a language is celebrated?” In addressing the first question, one is actually asking the question: “Why celebrate a language?” There are good reasons to celebrate a language but the emphasis here will mainly be on what language stands for in the life of an individual or in the life of a people. Firstly, from the individual perspective, language can be celebrated at many levels, chief of which is the fact of it being a precious tool for communication. At this level of communication alone, research has shown that language has seven distinctive functions, namely instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, imaginative, heuristic and informative. Secondly, on a wider perspective, language is so central to the life of a people that one can say without equivocation that a people without language are a people as naked as an earthworm. Of a fact, humans are social animals relating in diverse ways at various platforms, the success of which may be a function of many variables including discovering the other. However, assessing a people’s worldview is central to that discovery. Though many pathways can lead to that discovery, language is the most effective doorway to a people’s worldview.

What Happens When a Language is Celebrated?

In seeking to know what happens when a language is celebrated, one is actually interested in identifying evidence that can point to a language being celebrated. There are different ways of assessing the celebration index of a language. These may include, among others, the authority wielded by the language, the institutions that propagate the language and the international recognition enjoyed by the speakers of the language as illustrated in figure 1 below.

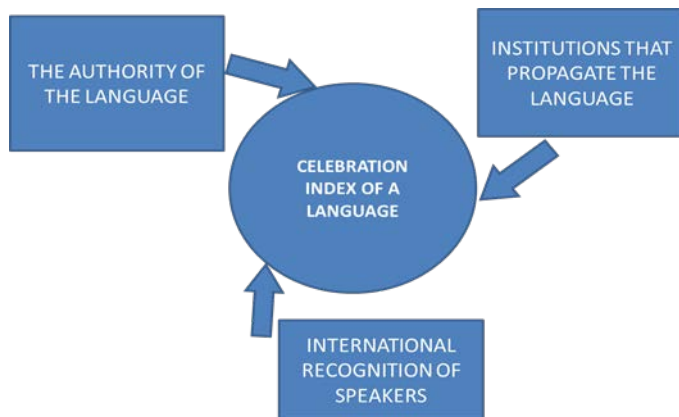


Figure 1: **The Celebration Index of a Language**

To begin with, a celebrated language can wield authority through its domain of usage. This can include science and technology, business, politics, sports and entertainment, etc... On the other hand, a language may be celebrated in terms of demographic influence. This has to do with the sheer number of people speaking the language. Also important here is the evolutionary trend in the number of people speaking the language (i.e. is the number increasing or decreasing?) A further measure of the celebration of a language can be deduced through the institutions propagating the language as can be reflected by institutions like government agencies, educational institutions or even professional associations. Similarly, the celebration of a language is palpable through the demand for the language, as evidenced by the number of people registering to learn it or even the number of programmes being mounted to teach it. Closely tied to this is the assimilating tendency of such celebrated languages. In his study on the role of language in the assimilation of Lebanese immigrants in Australia (an English-dominating environment), Ata (1979) reveals how the gap widens over time between the old and young generations of Lebanese in terms of linguistic and educational differences, pointing out that while the host culture is constantly reinforcing the values the children have adopted, the Lebanese tradition is gradually disintegrating.

Examples of Celebrated Languages

Going by the criteria indicative of a celebrated language as listed above, some of the celebrated languages are English, French, German or even lately Chinese. These languages have their corresponding celebrating agencies. Mention can be made of the British Council for English language, *la Francophonie and Alliance française* for French and the Goethe Institute for German. Other language celebrating agencies include Instituto Cervantes, Società Dante Alighieri, Instituto Camões, Confucius Institute.

The Notion of Justice and Human Dignity

Having talked about celebration as it concerns languages, one other issue that is under focus in this write-up is the question of justice and human dignity. Justice simply means mutual respect for one another and this has direct bearing with humanity which is the premise for justice. But the question is how do we apply these two concepts in the context of world languages? Such a question can only draw attention to the fact that reflecting on world languages equally implies giving due consideration to cultural diversity. From that perspective, it is even noteworthy that in reflecting on how languages can help restore dignity, UNESCO Article 2 maintains that cultural diversity is a rich asset for individuals and societies, insisting that the protection and maintenance of cultural diversity are an essential requirement for sustainable development that should benefit present and future generations. It is in line with such assertions that a report from the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (February 2008), cited in Milin (2016) goes as far as qualifying a people having lost their language as having suffered from a “crime against humanity”. Thus Ségalen (1908), cited in Milin (2016) could not have agreed any better having articulated: “when diversity shrinks, so does humanity”. A further appreciation of a similar mindset can be adduced through the laudable efforts of SOROSORO, a linguistic/anthropological programme carried out by the World Languages Conservancy Association (WOLACO) under the leadership of Rozen Milin (2016) with the logo “So the languages of the world may live” and supported by the Laboratory of Excellence of the University of Lyon through the activities of Advanced Studies on Language Complexity (ASLAN). As *per* the question raised earlier in this paragraph, the researcher considers that in the context of justice and human dignity, some languages seem to be more celebrated than others, whereas this runs counter to a more agreeable humanistic framework. That brings us to the Igbo language which is the anchor of our reflection in this regard.

Justice and Human Dignity: The Igbo Language

We are of the view that the Igbo language is not celebrated, or at least not sufficiently in the limelight. This raises further questions. For instance, one particular area of concern is the rating of an Igbo speaker who speaks English and French, particularly the use of bilingual instead of multilingual or trilingual when considering a native Igbo who in addition to proficiency in his mother tongue also speaks English and French.

Specific reference is made to Nwosu (2015) whose study on reincarnation and linguistic competence raises issues about Maama who is believed to be the reincarnation of her paternal grandmother whose greatest wish in her past life was to master ‘foreign language’. Though a polyglot, she is referred to as bilingual by reason of having French and English in her language repertoire. Curiously, a French man who speaks Alsacien/Spanish/Catalan is already a language prodigy, prompting questions from Nwosu (2015) as to what makes Maama and many Africans less prodigious. Why is African bi/pluri-lingualism dependent on its citizens’ proficiency in English and many other European or Asian languages? How can African linguists define their plurilingualism and engage their western counterparts ontologically drawing from existing western theories?

While not losing sight of the import of the foregoing questions, it is not so much the ontological preoccupation but rather the playing down on Maama’s linguistic pedigree, a prototype of many other Africans of this description that captures the essence of the paradox under focus. From the native perspective, this prototype figure speaks 6 dialects of Igbo language: Owere, Ngwa, Mbaise, Anambra, Etche and Umuahia. In addition to speaking standard English as well as pidginized variations of Nigerian, Sierra Leonian and Cameroonian colorations, she is not only an advanced user of French language, but her proficiency in other foreign languages includes basic Chinese and basic Dutch/German. Her endoglossic palette is equally inclusive of intermediate level Hausa, passive Yoruba and passive Efik/Ibibio.

If in spite of her linguistic prowess, this prototype is merely described as bilingual, it then raises the question of who is a bilingual. If the ability to speak and make functional use of two distinct languages qualifies one as bilingual, and full mastery of English and French smacks of bilingualism, at best Maama’s possession of Igbo, English and French presents a triglottic chimera. From that standpoint, judging by earlier remarks regarding the application of justice and human dignity with respect to Igbo, the bilingual labelling of this African prototype induced by a western-type categorization raises a fundamental question about the value placed on her African endoglossic Igbo background, which is why it is certainly not out of place to seek to mirror Igbo in the language cloud as represented in figure 2 below:

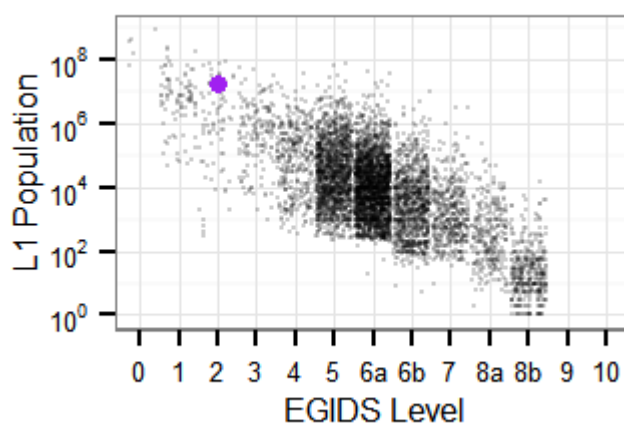


Figure 2: **Diagram Showing Igbo in the Language Cloud**

Understanding the EGIDS Level for Igbo Language

For many decades, Fishman's (1991) 8-level Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) provided seminal insight into an evaluative framework of language endangerment. However, based on further input from UNESCO (2009), the Ethnologue has adopted an E(xpanded) GIDS, which has been harmonized on a 13-level scale. While not posturing for a full-blown discussion on the details regarding language loss and death, the present article will endeavour to retain the essential information regarding Igbo language in the scheme of world languages. According to the Ethnologue, the EGIDS level for this language in its primary country is 2 (Provincial) – meaning that the language is used in education, work, mass media, and government within major administrative subdivisions of a nation. The cloud shows the place of Igbo within the cloud of all living languages. Each language in the world is represented by a small dot that is placed on the grid in relation to its population (in the vertical axis) and its level of development or endangerment (in the horizontal axis), with the largest and strongest languages in the upper left and the smallest and weakest languages (down to extinction) in the lower right. The population value is the estimated number of first language (L1) speakers; it is plotted on a logarithmic scale where $10^0=1$; $10^2=100$; $10^4=10,000$; $10^8=100,000,000$. The value for the development versus endangerment dimension is the estimated level on the EGIDS scale. Igbo is represented by a large, coloured dot, purple in this case. When the population is unknown, a colour-coded question mark appears at the bottom of the grid. When there are no known L1 speakers, an X appears at the bottom of the grid. The colour coding matches the colour scheme used in the summary profile graphs on the navigation maps for the site. In this scheme, the EGIDS levels are grouped as indicated in table 1 below:

COLOUR CODE	DESCRIPTION	EGIDS LEVEL	REMARKS
Purple	Institutional	EGIDS 0-4	<i>The language has been developed to the point that it is used and sustained by institutions beyond the home and the community. (emphasis ours)</i>
Blue	Developing	EGIDS 5	The language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though not yet widespread or sustainable.
Green	Vigorous	EGIDS 6a	The language is unstandardized and in vigorous use among all generations.
Yellow	In trouble	EGIDS 6b-7	Intergenerational transmission is in the process of being broken, but the child-bearing generation can still use the language so it is possible that revitalization efforts could restore transmission of the language in the home.
Red	Dying	EGIDS 8a-9	The only fluent users (if any) are older than child-bearing age, so it is too late to restore natural intergenerational transmission through the home, a mechanism outside the home would need to be developed.
Black	Extinct	EGIDS 10	The language has fallen completely out of use and no one retains any sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

Table 1: Language Description According to EGIDS Levels

Going by the descriptions and details thus far provided regarding the position of Igbo in the language cloud, it is clear that this language appears to be in good standing. Therefore, from the point of view of the focus of this article, as touching on the imbalanced rating of the speaker of this language, it is the view of the researcher that the Igbo speaker of several other tongues, local and international, is not just merely bilingual, but rather a polyglot and should be so recognized. That same recognition should also be accorded any other African speaker with a similar linguistic repertoire. That, in effect, summarizes the problem of the paper and clearly determines the objectives to be specified in the lines that follow.

Objectives of the Paper

Having stated the problem, our objectives in this paper include the following:

- ✚ Demonstrate the potentials of the Igbo language
- ✚ Mention the strategies for celebrating the potentials
- ✚ Identify the stakeholders to facilitate this celebration
- ✚ Explain the implications for Phonetic Sciences

Potentials of the Igbo Language

What is there to celebrate? As a matter of fact, there are many good reasons why Igbo should be celebrated. There are two sets of potentials to be celebrated, namely the people-oriented potentials and the linguistic potentials. Celebrating the people-oriented potentials as far as Igbo is concerned, is celebrating the Igbo nation. It is about celebrating its people, its communities and its users. To that effect, one can assert without being parochial that the Igbo nation is made up of a strong and resilient people. In a nutshell, Igbo ought to be celebrated because it has the wherewithal to be celebrated. These include:

- ✚ Its people (the population, prominent sons and daughters)
- ✚ Its worldview (their view on justice and human dignity)
- ✚ Its institutions and cultural heritage (Ohaneze Ndi Igbo)
- ✚ Its linguistic potentials

However, in view of the fact that special focus is given to pan-linguistic advocacy in the present write-up, it is mainly the linguistic potentials that will be retained for further discussion. From that standpoint, since the paper is particularly interested in developing pan-phonetic partnerships in higher education, the rest of the paper will propose a roadmap for such pan-phonetic partnerships.

A Sustainable Roadmap for Pan-Phonetic Partnerships in Higher Education

There are many pathways to a pan-phonetic roadmap capable of sustaining the LPA being advocated in this paper. For want of precision, these pathways can be regrouped under two main types, namely context-specific strategies and broad spectrum strategies.

Context-specific Strategies

In talking about context-specific strategies, one is advocating using a particular African indigenous language from any African country whatsoever to develop a template that is replicable many times over, in other given situations. For instance, with reference to African endoglossia as the general domain of interest in this paper, discussions may not capture the entirety of the African spectrum. However, it may be considered expedient to evolve a template that can be replicated on as many African indigenous languages as possible. From that perspective, given any indigenous language of choice, the roadmap template would feature strategies for celebrating that particular language. From the foregoing, having opted for the Igbo language, an African indigenous language of Nigerian extraction as the reference point, the lines that follow will illustrate the context-specific strategies for celebrating the Igbo language.

Context-Specific Strategies for Celebrating the Igbo Language

There are two major options for celebrating the Igbo language in the Nigerian context and these include internal and external. Internally, Igbo language can be celebrated through a project of Language Education Across Renascent Nigeria (LEARN), while externally it can be celebrated through Igbo Project Across the Globe (IPRAG). In essence, these two strategies are sensitization campaigns to be driven by the combined effort of three categories of professionals, including educators, linguists and air talents. However, because the focus in this write-up is entirely phonetic-oriented, one has to look at the implications for Phonetic Sciences.

Context-Specific Strategies and Implications for Phonetic Sciences

Here the crucial question is what linguists in Phonetic Sciences can do to enhance the celebration of the Igbo language. Specifically, they should provide a pan-phonetic agenda that will aim at providing answers to the following questions:

- ✚ Does Igbo language have any phonology? (i.e., does it have a phonetic alphabet?, any vowels, any consonants, any syllables...?)
- ✚ Does the language possess any suprasegmental information?
- ✚ In terms of scientific phonetics, can acoustic data be generated for utterances in Igbo language?

It is to be noted that each of these questions can be answered in the affirmative and they require details that will cover both scientific and linguistic phonetics. While the linguistic will highlight painstakingly the Igbo phonology, both at the segmental and suprasegmental levels, the purely scientific will not only describe the articulatory details in terms of the physical properties and the production of igbo sounds, but also provide insight into the acoustic correlates of Igbo utterances. Talking about acoustic correlates, Hyman (1975) and Ladefoged provide some insight to the description of a few vowels in some Igbo words in isolation, but Mbanefo (2005) provides an example of an attempt at generating a spectrographic analysis of an igbo utterance as illustrated in figure 3 below:

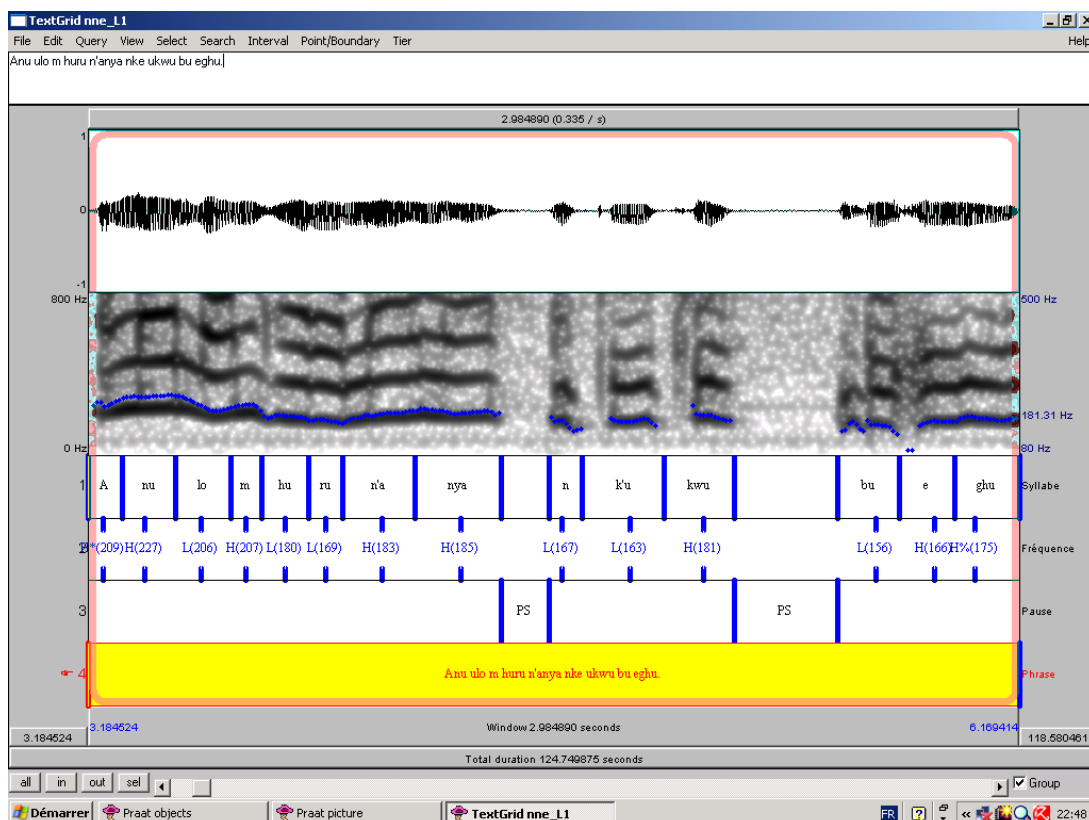


Figure 3: Spectrogram of an igbo declarative sentence, “*Anu ulo m huru n’anya nke uku bu eghu*” meaning, “My favourite domestic animal is the goat”.

Broad Spectrum Strategies

The broad spectrum sector can be organised at two main levels, involving mainstream and collegiate strategies, details of which are highlighted in the ensuing paragraphs.

Mainstream Strategies

These can be viewed as across-board strategies in universities, in general. Some of these will include but are not restricted to the following muster points:

- ✚ Creating partnerships
- ✚ Funding phonetic chairs
- ✚ Undertaking cross-linguistic studies
- ✚ Sharing research findings
- ✚ Ensuring linguistic profiling

In terms of partnerships, this involves instituting phonetic laboratories with the potential of fostering co-operations of diverse magnitudes. For instance, establishing international phonetic laboratories will allow for North/South linkages between African and non-African universities. Furthermore, from the South/South perspective, similar international linkages can foster and sustain intra-African linguistic development initiative. On the other hand, at the national level, joint phonetic partnership synergies can be built through inter-university platforms within a given African country.

As touching on phonetic chairs, if the LPA is to gather a quantum leap in African universities, such universities ought to fly their phonetic flags high enough to attract the naming and funding of phonetic chairs across the length and breadth of Africa. Consistent upon such campaigns, cross-linguistic studies could be undertaken to bring to the fore what shared phonetic traits there are among African languages belonging to the same families.

Yet another strategic option for shoring up the LPA, as far as the phonetic advocacy is concerned, is to aim at providing profiling for African languages. It may not just be enough to claim that some African languages belong to the Kordofanian family. Such claims could be authenticated further if the identified acoustic correlates of phonetic features of such languages do bear any affinity.

Collegiate Strategies

This collegiate typology derives from an experimental option of mentoring, through which, rather than go into comatose upon retirement, the African arrow heads in Phonetics should aim at establishing a college of African professors of Phonetics. Such an outfit will be a rallying point with a roadmap that stretches to include proposing the teaching of the phonetics of African languages in all known institutes of African studies.

Conclusion

Envisioned in the spirit of *ubuntu* and globalization, the ultimate aim of this paper was to canvass for linguistic pan-Africanism (LPA) as a knowledge generating/knowledge sharing platform capable of facilitating a long term agenda for the production of a phonetic map of African indigenous languages, as a way of celebrating the unsung riches of the African endoglossia. From the perspective of justice and human dignity for all world languages, the call became necessary in order to checkmate an atmosphere of perceived imbalance either in the rating of African languages or even the labelling of African speakers of foreign languages. The pan-phonetic nature of the linguistic advocacy stemmed from the author's conviction that phoneticians of African extraction ought to be in the vanguard of this endoglossic celebration.

Structured in two parts, the first part of the paper provided the theoretical framework for the celebration of African endoglossia, while the second part centred on strategies to be adopted in order to ensure enduring pan-phonetic partnerships in higher education. Areas covered under the theoretical framework included the notion of celebration, the idea of celebrating a language as well as examples of celebrated languages. Equally highlighted was the notion of justice and human dignity and from the standpoint of applying justice and human dignity in the context of world languages, a template for further reflexion was projected using the case of Igbo language, an indigenous African language of Nigerian extraction.

The second part of the article presented a two-dimension roadmap, featuring context-specific and broad spectrum strategies. The context-specific strategies, as far as the Igbo template was concerned, included both internal and external options, the LEARN and the IPRAG, respectively. Attention was drawn to the fact that these acronyms could be adjusted to suit any given language in any particular African country.

As for the broad spectrum strategies, they had to do with mainstream strategies and collegiate strategies. The mainstream strategies involved creating partnerships, funding phonetic chairs, undertaking cross-linguistic studies, sharing research findings and ensuring linguistic profiling. The collegiate option involved a think tank apparatus through which retired professors and arrow heads are expected to provide mentoring under the umbrella body of professors of phonetic studies.

The paper may not have exhausted all that there is to say regarding singing the underlying potentials of the plurality of native African languages. Nevertheless, it is the hope of this researcher that the much that was presented in this write-up would have the merit of stimulating further thought on this specifically phonetic dimension to linguistic pan-Africanism, in reinforcement to Ngugi wa Thiong'o's literary-based option.

References

- Ata, A.W. (1979). The role of Language in the Assimilation of Lebanese Immigrants in Australia. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 4(1).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.1979v4n1.4> consulted 16/09/2016
- Biram, M. (ed.) (2000). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Bamgbose, A. (1991). *Language and the Nation: the Language Question in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Brann, C.M.B. (1978). Functions of World Languages in West Africa. *West African Journal of Modern Languages*, (3) 6-28.
- Cooper, R.L. (1989). *Language Planning and Social Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fishman, J.A. (1991). *Reversing Language Shift: Theory and Practice of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Gikandi, S. (2000). *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gordon, R. G. (ed.) (2005). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 15th edition, Dallas: SIL International.
- Grimes, B.F. (ed.) (2000). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 14th edition, Dallas: SIL International.
- Hyman, L. M. (1975). *Phonology: Theory and Analysis*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Ladefoged, P. (1993). *A Course in Phonetics*. International Edition. New York : Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Lewis, M. P. & Simons, G.F. (2010). Assessing Endangerment: Expanding Fishman's GIDS. *Romanian Review of Linguistics* 55 (2) 103-120.
- Lovesey, O. (2000). *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Lovesey, O. (2012). *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America.
- MacPherson, S. (1997). Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An African Vision of Linguistic and Cultural Pluralism. *TESOL Quarterly* 31 (3): 641-5.

Mbanefo, E. (2003). Applied French Studies in Nigerian Universities: Towards a Curriculum Proposal. *International Journal of Educational Studies (IJEST)* 1(2) 70-83.

Mbanefo, E. (2005). *Analyse des interférences prosodiques dans l'organisation intonative du texte lu en français: cas des apprenants igbophones*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Université de Besançon.

Milin, R. (2016). www.sorosoro.org consulted 22/09/2016.

Nwosu, N.N. (2015). Can reincarnation explain linguistic competence? In *Global Journal of Applied, Management and Social Sciences-GOJAMSS*, Vol. 10, September 2015-ISSN: 2276-9013, pp. 1-10.

<http://www.gojamss.net/journal/index.php/gojamss/article/view/>

Spivak, G. (2012). Ngugi wa Thiong'o: In Praise of a Friend. In Lovesey. *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o*.

Thiong'o, Ngugi wa (1986). *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Series.

Thiong'o, Ngugi wa (1993). *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thiong'o, Ngugi wa (2009). *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.

UNESCO (2009). *UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*. UNESCO.
<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00139> .

Vahunta, P.W. (2010). Toward an African Renaissance: A Review of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Something Torn and New* (consulted 20/02/2017) www.africanwriter.com