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PED 329: Nigerian Languages (Igala) in Primary Education Studies III

A Term Paper for National Certificate of Education (NCE) Students (Continuing Education) Contact V

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Objective:

At the end of this Course, students should be able to explain the socio-cultural relevance of the use of language

Course Content

- The Language and Society (culture, tradition and acceptance)
- The Dynamism of Language (the living language)
- Language for Keeping Records (history), etc.
- Language Inter-lading (borrowed words)
- Introduction to General Linguistics
- Introduction to Ajami as a Medium of Writing (Hausa)
- Translation (theory and practice)
- Development of the Orthography (review of written text)
- Typology, Dialects and Registers of the Language

Historical Origin of the Name Igala

According to Unubi (2015:8) as well as Unubi and Yusuf (2017:411), the name Igala is believed to have been derived from two traditional sources. One tradition says the name Igala is a fusion of two nouns forming a compound. Iga means a sheepfold or a pen; while ala means sheep. Due to vowel elision, the two words (iga+ala) have now become IGALA. According to this tradition, the first settlers in the land (Igala land) called the Iga-ala-mela, meaning nine sheepfolds or pens, considered themselves as God's flock who were going about in search of greener pastures but eventually found one in this location. They were then generally referred to as the Iga-ala people, and this nomenclature latterly metamorphosed to become Igala. From here, the name Igala-mela (joined with Odolu), which is now one of the twenty-one Local Government Areas in Kogi State, was derived.

Furthermore, the second tradition has it that the name Igala is a derivative of the Yoruba name for antelope – Igala. It suggests that there were many antelopes during the early migration into the land, giving rise to the name IGALA. This looks plausible, considering the fact that some Igala villages were named after animals. For instance, Ój'uw'òchà means 'antelope hill', Ùgwol'awó means 'guinea fowl's bath', Òbàgwù means 'chimpanzee', Ògwùgwù means 'owl', Óg'efà means 'buffalo's valley', Áj'ukábú means 'baboon's river', just to mention a few (kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.com as paraphrased by me).

Historical Origin of the Igala People

As reported by Omale (2001:8), there are different versions or views about the historical

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origin of the Igala people, for example: *first*, G. M. Clifford, who was a one-time British District Officer in Igala land, claims in his book titled: The Igala Chiefdom that one version of the origin of Igala holds that Agenapoje was a 'Sky-God' who descended miraculously on a rock in the Niger opposite Idah, was the founder of the divine kingship under whose authority or guidance Igala was colonised. *Second*, Armstrong (1951) as cited in Attah (1973), an Igala historian, having given comparative linguistic analysis of Igala and Yoruba such as the above, upholds Armstrong's hypothesis of common origin tradition, comments thus The Igala were a branch of the Yoruba Group of people but broke off from this group before the Yoruba founding fathers settled at Ilé-Ife.. That is the reason why the Igala have no Ilé-Ife tradition of origin. This linguistic affinity could be seen in some of the words shared by the two languages, as shown below:

Igala	Yoruba	Gloss
Ọwọ	ọwọ	'hand'
Erẹ	ẹrẹ	'leg'
Ọmi	omi	'water'
Ìgbí	igbin	'snail'
Ẹja	ẹja	'fish'
Òkwú	oku	'corpse'
Òkwúta	oku	'stone',
Ọma	ọmọ	'child'
Áwó	awo	'guinea fowl'
Àchẹ	ase	'Amen'etc. (Omale, 2001:6).

Third, Attah (2011:246) also reports that His Royal Highness, Late Alh. Aliyu Obaje traces the migration of Igala to an Arab country of Yemen and submits that the Igala were in the present-day Nigeria at the same time as the founding fathers of the Yoruba, the Jukun and the Beriberi. Of all the traditions of origin advanced, the author holds the view that the Yemen version appears as the more authentic cradle of Igala migration. The author's stand is validated by Johnson's (1972) statement: The Yoruba are said to have sprung from Lamurudu, one of the Kings of Mecca whose off-springs were Oduduwa (the ancestor of the Yoruba) the kings of Gogobiri and of the Kukawa. The statement is silent over Igala-Yoruba communality of origin. There is, therefore, a clear indication that the Igala might have migrated from elsewhere which is supposedly Yemen. Another important point to note here is that since Mecca and Yemen are within the Arabian region, it is possible that the Yoruba and the Igala had social contact during the great movement, hence the fairly similar linguistic affinity

The Igala-Apa War

The Igala-Apa war, as reported by Attah (2011:250), usually and consciously referred to as a War of Independence, is the first recorded war which has placed Igala in the annals of Nigerian history. The Igala, a minority within the Jukun enclave, were dominated and exploited. Disillusioned with these developments, the Igala fled in canoes down the Benue River under the leadership

of Chief Idoko, who later became the fourth Ata Igala. Far away at Idah, the Igala continued to pay the annual tribute to the absentee Jukun overlords. But as the Igala became socially mobilized, they unconditionally resisted the economic exploitation of their meager resources, hence the genesis of the Igala-Apa war.

The Jukun, the reputed warriors in Kwararafa kingdom declared war on the Igala and so the war began. The prominent Igala figure who organised and prosecuted the war to the ultimate victory was Prince Ayegba Oma Idoko. He was said to be a strategist, and vast in metaphysics.

• The Role of Princess Odòkó in Apa War

Attah (2011:251) further says that the war progressed for a fairly long period without victory on either side. It was at this juncture that Ohiuga, the royal diviner, divined that to ensure victory at the battle field, a ritual sacrifice of Princess Odòkó, the daughter of Idoko, be made to appease the land and the gods, and that Angwa Muslim preachers be asked to prepare concoctions that were to be poured into the Inachalo River. Accordingly, Princess Odòkó was sacrificed and buried at the bank of the Inachalo River. Consequently, when the Jukun warriors drank the water and ate the fish from the river, a good number of them died, and were demobilised. These factors led to the eventual defeat and the subsequent attainment of Igala Independence at about 1449 AD.

Agbo War (1515-1516)

The events that led to the conflict between the Igalas and the Bini had political, economic and social implications, as recounted by Attah (2011:251). Politically, Ayegba Oma Idoko was a powerful and influential Ata of his time. He was reputed for the territorial expansion of his kingdom. This expansionistic programme evoked the suspicion of Oba Osagie, the then Oba of Benin because of a possible annexation of his territory by the former, especially Agenebode, the natural boundary between the two kingdoms. This suspicion fuelled the embers of, and later snowballed into full blown war. The second economic factor was the desire of Oba Osagie to control trade along the Niger River, where Ata Ayegba also had deep interests. This of course gave further impetus to the conflict. The third social implication was Oliha, a noble in the Benin Kingdom, whose public proclamation to the effect that his wife, Imaguero, was the most faithful woman in the Kingdom provoked the Oba to seduce her (Imaguero). Disillusioned by this incident, Oliha killed his wife and set out to cause confusion between the two kings. This was the immediate cause of the Igala-Benin war. The gravity of the conflict was such that the Igala Kingdom was on the verge of extinction; unless a ritual sacrifice of a princess was offered once again, to appease the gods with a view to forestalling or preventing the powerful Portuguese-backed Bini warriors.

- **The Role of Princess Inikpi in Agbò War**

Inikpi, the daughter of Ayegba Oma Idoko, was the beloved of the father. Seton (1928), as cited in Attah (2011:252) bluntly states that Inikpi was the daughter of Ayegba Oma Idoko. She is reported to have been very beautiful and of noble disposition and her father loved her more than anything else in the world and she loved him. Inikpi was thus the ritual victim as foretold by the oracle. Her father was reluctant to consent to the injunction of the Ifa diviners, but his daughter volunteered to be buried alive for the survival of her father's kingdom. Seton (1928) as cited in Attah (2011:252) further reports: 'She (Inikpi) is said to have gone nine times before he, Ayegba could consent that Inikpi, his beloved, was to be buried at the bank of the river Niger, en route the war with the Bini warriors'. He further describes the scene thus: 'A large hole was dug in the market place and she went down into it with nine slaves and with all her jewels and charms'. On the role of Princess Inikpi in Igala history, Attah (2011:253) reports that Okpanachi (1987), a researcher on Creative Television Documentary of Inikpi, believes that Inikpi is an Igala historical heroine. The story of Inikpi brings to mind, such historical heroines as Moremi of Ife, Queen Amina of Zaria, Madam Tinubu of Lagos, etc. The researcher goes further to state: Inikpi indulges her admirers in both the political and social debate and brings to light the virtues of selflessness, nationalism, patriotism and sacrifice. For this noble deed, her shrine exists till today at the bank of river Niger at Idah. The satisfying statement to be made about Inikpi is that she is a tutelary goddess that watches over the destinies of Igala. The Igala lost the war and had to pay war indemnity to the Oba of Benin, but the Igala kingdom remained Independent. Peace was subsequently made and the two kings exchanged gifts. One of such gifts from the Oba of Benin was the cocoanut (i.e., *Únọ* Oba, the Oba's kernel).

Igala Culture and Tradition

According to Attah (2011:253), since creation, man has been working relentlessly to meet the fundamental needs of his existence – food, clothing and shelter - and to bring under his control other forces of nature. Thus in the process of realizing his potentials – to live and conquer the universe, man has left behind traces of his achievements at every stage of his development and the cumulative knowledge of his various achievements constitutes what is referred to as culture.

In terms of definition, culture has been defined by many scholars as cited in Attah (2011:254) in line with how they view it. Here are some of them: Taylor (1871) observes, that culture or civilization taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of his society. He maintains that culture comprises inherited arts,

facts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits and values. Paddington (1950) states that the culture of a people can be defined as the sum total of the material and intellectual equipment whereby they satisfy their biological and social needs and adapt themselves to their environment. Kroeber & Kluck Kohn (1952), contend that culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts, the essential core of culture consisting of traditional beliefs, i.e., historically derived and selected ideas and especially their attached values. Culture systems may on the one hand be considered as products of action and on the other as conditioning elements of further action. Also, Radcliffe-Brown (1952) defines culture as the process by which a given social group or social class' learned ways of thinking, feeling and acting are transmitted from person to person and from one generation to the next.

Similarly, many scholars have defined tradition in different or various ways, as outlined below: Webster Dictionary defines tradition as an unwritten or oral delivery of information, opinions, doctrines, practices, rites, and customs, from father to son, or from ancestors to posterity; the transmission of any knowledge, opinions, or practice, from forefathers to descendants by oral communication, without written memorials. Also, Wikipedia defines tradition as a belief or behaviour passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past. Dictionary.com sees tradition as the handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, information, etc. from generation especially by word of mouth or by practice. Lastly, Merriam Webster defines tradition in two ways: (a) it is an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior (such as a religious practice or a social custom); (b) it is a belief or story or a body of beliefs or stories relating to the past that are commonly accepted as historical though not verifiable.

- **Igala Cultural/Traditional Heritage**

After providing various definitions of both culture and tradition, Attah (2011:254) says that one may ask, what is the Igala people's perception of culture?, since the main thrust of the treatise is on Igala. In trying to provide the answer, one may say that Igala is part and parcel of the society. The Igala man lives and shares the joys and sorrows of the universe. His perception of culture is not significantly different but for minor peculiarities as a distinct group. Therefore, culture in the Igala context refers to those beliefs, practices and customs that are transmitted through the ages and are still cherished and valued by the present and even future generations of Igala. The Igala cultural heritage, therefore, includes the conduct of marriage, the rearing of children, mode of dressing, arts and crafts, the manner of speech, the style and pattern of building, social organizations, institutions, etc. For the sake of

emphasis, some of the easily perceived and noticed Igala cultural traits as outlined by Attah (2011:255) are as follows:

i. Social Heritage

- a) Greeting is a virtue cherished among the Igala and as such, this habit is inculcated in the young ones during the formative years of their development. The Igala people show respect for the elders by kneeling down when greeting or receiving blessings or tangible materials from them. Greeting is thus an essential ingredient of culture to the extent that a child who does not greet is rebuked by elders. So high in esteem is greeting held that in the past, it is enough qualification to contract marriage without paying bride price!
- b) Offering drinking water to visitors at any time of the day as a form of entertainment is typical of the Igala people. The cultural interpretation is that water precedes other forms of entertainment, and also symbolizes hospitality and open handed reception of the august visitor. The other analogy is that as water is deemed pure, so is the heart of the host to the guest.
- c) After drinking water, an Igala person treats his guest to kolanuts. These kolanuts or *óbì* Igala are the types that have three or four lobes. The significance or function is to revitalize after taking water, then food and drinks are served later.

ii. Moral Heritage

- a) The behavioural attribute of an Igala man is that he is self-critical and conscious of his responsibilities to his family, kinsmen, neighbours and the entire society. He prays to God regularly to forestall any act that can bring embarrassment to him and his family. Naturally, an average Igala person does not indulge in embezzlement, misappropriation and other vices. He believes in honesty and wants to be treated as such. Because of the tendency towards self-consciousness to avert humiliation and false personality, an Igala man is labelled conservative and calculative by other ethnic groups.
- b) The Igala believe that after the contractual marriage, the husband has the sole sexual rights among others over his wife. Onwuojegwu (1975) as cited in Attah (2011:256) affirms this statement in one of his studies of Nuer, a tribe in southern Sudan when he writes: Several rights are transferred to the husband with the bride price. These are rights in geneticism, i.e. rights over sexual, domestic and economic services.

In consonance with this belief, therefore, the wife must conduct herself in such a manner that she does not indulge in any act of divided loyalty or betrayal of trust reposed in her. To do otherwise will bring the life, integrity and personality of the husband to ridicule. This is why adultery is forbidden and if committed, will be treated as a serious crime in the land. However, if a woman commits adultery and confesses it, she may be purified by the

omonobùlẹ or the uterine kin, and reunited with the husband. Attah (2011:257) reports that Okwoli (1973) describes the purification rites as follows: If a wife confesses to committing adultery, the omonobùlẹ hears the confession and touches the walls of the home with a chicken (cock) as ritual, in a bid to cleanse it. She offers a cock to Ibegwu or the husband's ancestral shrine; and as a final act of re-establishment, food cooked by the woman is given to the husband. After the sacrifice, the woman is cautioned to refrain from such acts in the future. The family of the accused, in company of the man responsible for the offence, will lead a peace mission to the family of the legitimate husband to plead and seek for forgiveness. If accepted, a kolanut is broken and a piece is given to both, that is, the accused and the legal husband as a symbol of reconciliation.

Igala Belief System

- **The Supreme Being**
The Igalas believe and recognize the existence of one Supreme Being, the Father Almighty, who is variously referred to as *Òdóbà Ògágwú, Ọjó Òlíchòkè, Ọjó Chàmacháálá*, among other theophonic ascriptions.
- **The Intermediary Beings**
The intermediary gods that will be treated here are *Ìbégwú*, or ancestral gods, *Ègbúnú* and *Ìkpàkàchi* or personal gods and *Ẹbọ Ọlópù* or communal god. These, among others are listed and explained as follows, according to Attah (2011:258):
 - **Ìbégwú** (*Àbégwú*) or ancestral spirits or the living-dead are regarded highly in Igala traditional society. In fact, they are next to the Supreme Being. Sacrifices are offered to them when an Igala person is in trouble, when he is prosperous, when a woman commits adultery, when a woman uses foul language on her husband, etc. Libation is often poured on the ground to appease the *Ìbégwú* and to steer them to keep vigil over the people, and at the same time acting as intermediaries between the people and the Supreme Being. Apart from these, an annual festival is held to commemorate their good deeds and to ask for more blessings. *Ìbégwú* like the institution of *Àlèkwú* among the Idoma, is described by Enwa (1985) as cited in Attah (2011:258) as the society of ancestors, dead or alive, who are the core regulators of social control among the people. In the same vein, Mbiti (1969), as also cited in Attah (2011:258) describes the Ancestral spirit as: A person who is physically dead but alive in the memory of those who knew him in this life, as well as being alive in the world of the spirits. Thus in recent times, the names of the living dead are given to children who show peculiar characteristics reminiscent of the dead one; for example, *Ọmayema* - the sister/brother, *Bàbáun* - the father and *Òméyi* - the aunt. By this device, the memory of the dead is kept alive among the people.
 - **Ègbunu** or personal god is manifested when a child is

born with a cord around the neck. A child with this abnormality is automatically named Ègbunu, because it is believed to have been influenced by the Ègbunu spirit. A welcome ceremony is performed for the Ègbunu by the parents of the child. In performing the ceremony, a branch of an iroko tree or 'ùlókô' is cut and placed in a calabash with áfu or native chalk, assorted grains and a day old chick is sacrificed. After the welcome ceremony, Ègbunu becomes the guiding spirit of the child. When the child falls sick, the spirit is appeased and the child recovers from the ailment.

- **Ìkpàkàchi** (Ìkpàkàchi) or personal god normally resides in a local stream which is usually the source of drinking water for the locality. It is believed that as a woman goes to draw water from the stream, she is in constant contact with the spirit. When the woman is pregnant and gives birth, the husband normally consults the Ifa or oracle to know in which of the streams the Ìkpàkàchi resides, if there are more than one stream in the area. After the confirmation of a particular stream, the husband takes a bottle to the stream and from the middle of the stream draws water and goes home with it. At the entrance of the compound, the bottle is placed on sand and other particles are placed beside it. A sacrifice is offered and it is expected that the Ìkpàkàchi will watch over the child throughout his stay on earth.
- **Èbọ Ọlópù** or communal god, as the name implies, is the custodian and the symbol of peace and unity among the people of the community. The Èbọ Ọlópù is either housed in the outskirts or in the middle of the town, with usually the eldest person acting as the chief priest. The Èbọ Ọlópù is consulted in case of inter-communal conflicts or war. It is believed that the success at the war-front rests with it. Despite sporadic sacrifices, an annual festival is held to appease the god to enhance bumper harvest, ward off sicknesses, diseases and other calamities.

- **The Native Doctor or the Òbóchí System**

As expressed by Attah (2011:260), illness and death represent very serious sources of insecurity for most people, because they are important for continued wellbeing and even the overall existence of man. Yet, they are at the same time subject to many influences that are not under an individual's control. It is therefore not surprising that native doctors are called upon to render services to forestall evils and enhance prosperity. The Igala believe in the services of the native doctor or òbóchí and adhere to his conditionalities because the native doctor attempts to coerce supernatural powers by performing certain rituals and using natural materials in his own way to make life worth living. Thus to make rain or prevent it during a special ceremony, cure a sick person, ensure success in business or an examination, restore harmony in a family, among other expectations from a good native doctor.

Normally, before a native doctor solves any problem at all, he tries to investigate and establish the real cause of the problem in the spirit world. After discovery, he takes appropriate action within his powers to solve the problem. Native doctors are indispensable in Igala society because they play a complementary role in the health care delivery in addition to conventional medical doctors. Chronic illnesses such as cholera, acute infections and obstetrical implications are cured in no time by the native doctors

- **The Sorcerer or Áchogwù Èbíñẹ**

Attah (2011:261) states that a sorcerer utilizes the power of medicines to attain an evil end. Examples of such evil machinations are preparing concoctions to induce illness, death, or failure of crops among others to a fellow human being. Áchogwù èbíñẹ is usually hired by others to cause harm to their suspected enemies. The sorcerer makes use of roots, leaves, bark of tree, and alligator pepper with other substances and tries the potency of his power on the victim through remote control. The ready examples of sorcery in Igala land are íwọ or sudden swelling of the foot, *ìgbógà* or sudden pain at the lower abdomen, and *óliẹ* or needle invasion/shooting through remote control. Sorcery is easily identified because of the suddenness of the illness. Thus, Boston (1979), as reported by Attah (2011:262) identifies the three main forms as follows: Acute skin troubles which develop quickly particularly on the legs.

(ii) Acute stomach troubles and illness with severe abdominal swelling.

(iii) Any illness whose onset is particularly sudden or has some other dramatic and unusual feature e.g. menorrhagia.

A sorcerer is also sought for when an influential person causes the divorce of and takes over the wife of a poor man, when there is an intra-ethnic conflict especially over a parcel of land, when one sorcerer is in trouble with another powerful sorcerer, etc. Thus, it can be concluded that a sorcerer is not normally sought for fun but as a retaliation of especially another person's act of intentional/willful misdeeds by omission or commission.

- **The Óchú or Witchcraft Phenomenon**

As reported by Attah (2011:262), witchcraft or óchú is supposedly a psychic emanation. Witchcraft is believed to be a substance which causes injury to health and prosperity. The witchcraft is believed by the Igala to be a material substance in the bodies of certain persons that is not visible to outside observers. Witchcraft is a social heritage, as it is transmitted from the parents or any close relation to usually small children by eating the food contaminated by the óchú substance. Upon eating the food, the child or the person becomes aware of his witchcraft powers. The

Igala refer to such a victim as having acquired *éjú mélé* or second sight.

The processes of a witchcraft operation according to research findings are that a witch/wizard does not immediately kill his victim. If a man becomes suddenly ill, it is attributed to sorcery and not witchcraft, for the effects of witchcraft lead to death by slow stages. Thus when a person falls ill, first attempts are made to treat him with herbs, when this fails, an oracle or *ífa* is consulted to find out the cause of the illness. If it is discovered that a witch is behind the illness, an appeal is made to the witch by the native doctor, so as for her to desist from such acts. If the patient gets better, the matter is laid to rest, but if on the other hand, he/she dies, the relatives may seek vengeance through *ébo* or the gods to deal with the witch. A sociological interpretation of *óchú* is that it is an enemy of progress or *ìnàchà* in all its ramifications. This is why anybody who behaves in a diabolical manner is said to be an *Óchú* (witch).

- **The Earliest Form of Igala Traditional Marriage**

Skills (1972) as cited in Attah (2011:263) states that marriage is a culturally-approved relationship between a man and a woman in which there is a cultural endorsement of sexual intercourse between them. Marriage also leads to the legitimacy of children and places them in their rightful position in the society. In the pre-colonial era, the father selects a life partner for his son upon attaining the age of 25 years. The 25 years age specification is for the male, the female can get married even at the age of 16. In his choice of a wife, the father looks for such qualities as good character, obedience, honesty, modesty and freedom from witchcraft suspicions, among others. When the background information about the girl is gathered and considered acceptable, marriage negotiations with the girl's parents begin, either by the father or through an intermediary (*átógbòyà*).

The girl's parents in turn will conduct preliminary investigations as to the background of the would-be son-in-law, his credibility and other qualities valued among the Igala. If the result of the exercise is positive, then the response is conveyed to the boy's parents usually through the go-between (*átógbòyà*). With the approval of the girl's parents, *àlèkàgo* or the trial period is set in motion. The boy's parents will now present kolanuts through the *átógbòyà* to the girl's parents. The acceptance means that courtship has started in earnest.

It is customary for the bridegroom to leave for the father in-law's house. Here, he farms for them for a period of about 7 years. According to Omale (2011:293), these 7 years' service for a bride were years of challenges and of hard labour. The young man farmed for the father of the bride in the morning hours and for the mother of the bride in the evening hours.

He fetched and hewed wood, he pounded yam into food, he climbed the palm tree and harvested its fruits and used his bare feet to puddle it into a stage when it was ready to boil into palm oil etc. He did every brave thing imaginable to prove that he was able to take care of his wife and deliver her from whatever danger the couple might face in future. Omale (2011:294) also reports that Boston (1966) puts this point more vividly and dramatically when he says: 'an *àná* (son-in law) performed the most difficult or most menial tasks in the hamlet activities like puddling the clay for house building, carrying the heaviest timber, and being expected to work harder than any other group. They provide the labour force for unwelcome tasks such as grave-digging, carrying messages to distant places, or public works to which the kin group has to send representative'. In every respect, this period was a trial period. It tried not only the industry and bravery of the son-in-law but his manners, his patience, his tolerance, his gentleness, etc.

In this type of marriage, there is no bride price, as the aforementioned farming and hard labours substitute that. The first year of the boy's stay in the in-law's house is regarded as the trial period or *àlèkàgo*, as such engagement may be broken if he behaves contrary to expectation. He should have no sexual dealings with his bride. At the end of the second year, purification rites are performed provided the bridegroom's conduct is found to be satisfactory.

The next phase is the *ébojì* or initiation into womanhood ceremony. The bridegroom is required to buy the necessary items for the purification rites as the girl is expected to know a man for the first time. The father and a group of elders perform this ceremony. Usually a cock, a he-goat, a keg of palm-wine with kolanuts are presented and slaughtered to the gods. Ancestors are appeased and their blessings solicited. In the night of this ceremony, the girl is formally given to the husband in a hut specially built for this purpose. He is henceforth to exercise exclusive sexual rights over her. The sincerity of the bride in terms of losing or maintaining her virginity is revealed that night. The Igala attach much importance to virginity to the extent that if the lady concerned had prior to that time lost hers, she is said to have brought shame upon her family or whosoever is responsible for her upbringing. If on the other hand she maintains her virginity, she is sure of valuable gifts from the husband, from the sisters-in-law and mother-in-law. Besides this, she would be hailed and commended. She would be respected by all and sundry within the locality. Farming for the in-laws continues until the expiration of the agreed period. At the end of the period, therefore, the bridegroom decides either to stay with the in-laws or go to his hometown for settlement. Sometimes, he is encouraged to live in that hut with his

wife until she gets pregnant and gives birth so that her mother could guide and help her take care of the baby since she is inexperienced in this aspect. This leads to the situation where the firstborn child is usually brought up by the parents of the mother in a typical Igala traditional society. When the woman gets pregnant for the second time, she is this time around made to leave for her husband's family or house formally. However, if the groom decides to leave after knowing his wife, he would inform the *átógbóyà* of his decision who would in turn inform the in-laws accordingly. The date of departure would be arranged and the parents of the bridegroom would send some ladies to collect the bride. Thus by the virtue of taking away the girl from her parents, the marriage contract is sealed as the lady assumes new status.

- **Modern Traditional Marriage**

As captured by Attah (2011:265), culture is a changing phenomenon, and as such, marriage system is not an exception. Hitherto, it was the parents who looked for a well behaved girl for their son to marry. In the new dispensation however, it is the boy or the girl who scouts for a life partner and informs the parents accordingly. Before this time, the boy or the girl would have agreed, had interacted well enough and understood each other. Another innovation brought into the marriage system is the issue of bride price. This is a system in which money is paid as a token to the parents of the girl before she is taken away as against the earlier custom of substituting bride price with seven (7) years farming period. This system further enhances the contractual authority over the bride. As already stated above, when the boy has identified his life partner and has informed his parents, his parents may raise objections if the girl in question is not deemed suitable for the family in terms of witchcraft, genial and mental deficiency, amongst others. If on the other hand the girl is free from all these shortcomings, the parents of the boy would start the preliminary marriage negotiations by going to the parents of the girl. The first leg is to go to the would-be in-laws with kolanuts, a pot of wine/carton of beer/a keg of palm wine and some amount of money, even though there are local variations. These items are given to the girl and she in turn hands over same to her father, indicating that she has accepted the proposals. This acceptance or *ùgbálú* marks the beginning of formal courtship. The bridegroom, would from henceforth, send money and food stuff to the bride and her family. He is required to perform minor manual labour or pay for same to the in-laws from time to time. The period of courtship or *àlèkàgo* or a period of trial is short lived depending on the mutual understanding between the in-laws. If the son-in-law is adjudged capable, then the in-laws would inform the

parents to make part payment. After a considerable period of time, the bridegroom's parents through the intermediary would seek the approval of the in-laws to fix a date for the payment of the bride price. When the approval is given, the relatives of both parties and other well-wishers will witness the ceremony and bless the marriage. Payment of the bride price is made through the *átógbóyà* or the intermediary who serves as a witness to both parties.

The next important occasion is the *ébojí* or the initiation into womanhood. Here, the personal god is appeased by offering a cock, a goat, kolanuts and palm wine. It is after this ceremony that the first sexual intercourse with the bride commences. Almost immediately after the ceremony, the girl is expected to leave for the husband's house, unless the husband decides to live with the in-laws. On the night of her departure, the parents, including the elders in the family, would advise, encourage, bless and bid her good-bye. She is often escorted by one or two elderly women to the *átógbóyà* in the first instance. Then the *átógbóyà* will in turn accompany them together with the persons sent by the son in-laws to the husband's compound. At her husband's compound, she is accorded a warm reception. A few days after her arrival, she is expected to assume the duties of a house wife.

- **Festivals**

Attah (2011:267) stresses that throughout the history of human culture, certain days or periods of time have been set aside to commemorate, ritually celebrate or re-enact, or anticipate events or seasons that give meaning and cohesiveness to an individual and his religious, political and socio-economic community. Ayisi (1979) as cited in Attah (2011:267) echoes that festivals are common to all human societies. They are the only means apart from worship whereby man has sought from time immemorial to express his awareness of a transcendental being outside himself. The function of festivals among others is to unite people in a common exercise thus strengthening the prosperity and safety of the group. Festivals in the Igala Kingdom, as in other African traditional societies, are held to commemorate the ancestors, the heroes and heroines of the kingdom. The main festivals in Igala kingdom include:

- **Ócho:** This Festival is celebrated in two phases. The first phase is the coronation of the new Ata. Under the first phase, it is customary that when the Ata dies or passes on, it is not publicly announced. It is normally said that the Ata has gone on a hunting expedition. This is why (Boston, 1969) as cited in Attah (2011:268) refers to *ócho* as a hunting ceremony. To keep the secrecy of the Ata's death, kingmakers arrange for the selection of the new Ata, burial of the late and installation of aspirant to

coincide with the dry Season so that the returning from hunting fulfils the first leg of the ócho celebration.

The second phase is the ushering in of the hunting seasons. For this reason ócho festival is generally arranged to take place in March/April of each year. The period of dry season hunting extends from November of each year to March/April of the following year. The two periods coincide with the fishing and farming and so, óchó festival becomes more relevant to the lives of Igala peasant farmers and traders. There is feasting, dancing and other forms of merriment in all homes. Masquerades usually entertain the audience during the festival. It is sad to note that this annual festival of historical significance has been banned by the then Kwara State Government for the past fifty years or thereabout. Nevertheless, it is ecstatic to also note here that the ban has just been lifted by the present Executive Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, consequent upon frequent explanation and solicitation by the Ata Igala, His Royal Highness, Idakwo Michael Ameh Oboni II.

- ii. **Ògbádú:** It is a corollary of the modern Armed Forces Remembrance day. It is celebrated annually to commemorate the defeat of the Jukun warriors and the narrow survival from the Bini wars. Thus *Ògbádú* stands out as the Igala Independence Day and for that reason it is one of the most celebrated festivals in the kingdom. During the celebration, the royal masquerades grace the occasion. The festival is celebrated in the palace, in every household and by the river ìnácháló.
- iii. **Ògàgànyí:** This festival which hitherto connotes outing Day Ceremony observed by the Ata on the 9th day of his ascendancy to the throne is now an annual stock-taking cultural event. On *Ògàgànyí* day, the potentate comes out in full regalia to welcome his nobles and subjects and to show his gratitude to them. On this occasion, the Ata assesses critically, the pace of development, the progress made so far, the shortcomings and the prospects for the future. The potentate also pronounces forgiveness to his transgressors, being the father of all his subjects, and asks all to emulate him. The Ata confers traditional honours on deserving Igala sons and daughters who have distinguished themselves in their various disciplines. The occasion is rounded off by the Ochala dance performed by the noble beaded elders.
- iv. **Íníkpi:** This festival is celebrated on the 18th day of the Òchó festival. In the past, the Ata usually enters the tomb of the late princess to pay homage for her courage, obedience and self-sacrifice. During the celebration, sacrifices are made at her monument located at the heart of Ègà market (ájégà). Here, assorted grains, money, kola-nuts and palm oil are poured on the ground. After all these, an appeal is made to Íníkpi to continue to champion the cause of the Igala people.

• The Igala Kingship System (Ata-Igala)

As put forward by Attah (2011:269), the evolution of Igala kingship as a dynastic process is developed by the Igala, for the maintenance of peace, cohesion, control and sanction. This historical fact is attested to by Okwoli (1973) as cited in Attah (2011:269) when he states: 'The origin of Igala kingship is Igala. Idah, the capital had the economic, social and geographical factors, which enabled its early inhabitants to evolve their own kingship'. The Igala-mèla, the indigenous Igalas, had their system of Kingship before the arrival of the immigrant royal groups. It is now clear that the evolution of Igala kingship without outside influence is not in doubt, and therefore invalidated the claim by Clifford (1936) as reported in Attah (2011:270) to the effect that there was no earlier dynasty at Idah but only a system of clan government in which the Heads of the indigenous families or Igala-mèla participated.

History has it that the Benin royal immigrants overthrew the indigenous government at Idah and continued to rule until they were subsequently overthrown by the Jukun royal dynasty, under the leadership of Ebulejonu. Incidentally, Ebulejonu became the first Queen ever to rule in Igala kingdom, further confirming the kingship phenomenon. It is correct to say that the royal dynasty at Idah today is of Jukun creation. The royal dynasties created by the Jukun were originally three: the Akumabi, the Akogwu and Ocholi respectively and the succession to the throne are rotated among them. But an additional one emerged because when Ata Akumabi died, his son Amacho, who was to succeed him, also died before the completion of installation rites. Therefore, his younger brother, Itodo Aduga was installed as the Ata hence the emergence of the present four royal ruling houses of Amacho, Itodo Aduga, Akogwu and Ocholi at Idah.

The list of Atas as documented by Clifford is highly commendable as it has provided the basic reference point, even though the names of the earliest kings were omitted. The omission is inconsequential as it was based on the available information at that time and more so as no historian/anthropologist has provided an alternative to debunk his claim. The documented king list thus begins with Abutu Eje and runs through to the present Ata Igala, HRM Idakwo M. Ameh Oboni, who is from the Ocholi ruling house.

✓ The Achadu

According to Attah (2011:271), Achadu is an immigrant royal sub-clan whose genealogical trait is traced to an Ibo hunter, who came to the Igala territory on a hunting expedition. The Achadu has a unique place in Igala history, partly because of his royal connection at Idah and partly because of his position as the prime minister in Ata's royal council. The Achadu's royal connection at Idah has been given a lot

of interpretations but the version that seems enduring to the author is that of Boston (1969) as cited in Attah (2011:271) which states: When Ebulejonu became the Ata, she was a young girl and had no husband. She was fond of festivals and one day she went to a celebration arranged by the Igala-mẹla at Igala-ogwa. At the festival she saw a slave belonging to Igala-mẹla who was of a strikingly handsome appearance. He was a man of Ibo origin who had come to the Igala area for hunting... Ebulejonu was so much attracted by this person that she had him transferred to her own service and eventually made him her consort. The royal marriage between the first Achadu (certainly not Achadu Omepa because there were Achadus before Omepa just as there were many Atas before Abutu Eje) and Ebulejonu was symbolically a breakthrough in the cultural history of the Igala people. This is because her royal majesty had married a man of no consequence, more so an Ibo.

The nickname 'Slave' preferred against the Achadu was masterminded by the Palace eunuchs who were envious of his marriage and position. Apart from this, another explanation is that the Achadu's actual place of birth was not known, he was only referred to as an Ibo hunter. In Igala tradition, a person whose actual identity is not known is referred to as a slave. But the 'slave' as used by the eunuchs is not tenable for it would have been an abomination for her royal majesty to marry a slave. Hence this 'slave' phenomenon was debunked by her and styled "Oma-Achadun" (a free born cannot be a slave) and this was later shortened to Achadu. Because of the early marriage between the Achadu and Ebulejonu, the Achadu is consciously referred to as *Ọkọ-Ata* or Ata's husband and in the same token every Ata that is enthroned is *Ọyà-Achadu* or Achadu's wife. This is why every Ata's ear is ritually pierced like that of a woman.

The Achadu, whose clan is federated into *Ọdọlu*, *Igama-mẹla* and *Igala-Ogwa* districts, is the head of kingmakers and binds Igala-mẹla together, just like the Bashorun, the head of the Oyo mesi. But unlike the Bashorun, the Achadu does not participate in the selection of the new Ata. The actual selection is done by the royal ruling house concerned. As a cabinet minister in the Ata's council, he is consulted in matters of major policy decisions affecting the Igala Kingdom. He confers traditional titles on worthy members of his clan.

✓ **The Igala-mẹla**

The Igala-mẹla or the nine Igalas, refers to the group consisting of the nine autochthonous clans in Igala kingdom, as reported by Attah (2011:272). They are the earliest settlers and land owners in Idah. The federated Igala-mẹla consists of the following:

- Etemahi
- Agbenyo
- Aleji
- Onede
- Onubiogbo
- Unana
- Okweje
- Achadu Kekele Ukwaja
- Obajadaka.

As the kingmakers, the Igala-mẹla chiefs perform the following noble functions: 1. The *Atẹbọ* - (the chief priest) assumes full responsibilities of the palace consequent upon the death of the incumbent Ata, and performs the funeral ceremonies, until a new Ata is selected and installed. 2. When the new Ata is selected, he is taken to Etemahi who in turn takes him (the new Ata) to Achadu for ritual ceremonies. 3. The Onede and Onubiogbo act as the foster parents of the Ata.

✓ **The Ankpa Onuhate**

As stressed by Attah (2011:273), Idah is the traditional headquarters of the Igala kingdom. It is also the seat of Ata Igala, the president of the kingdom. As the traditional headquarters, Idah has the monopoly of political and spiritual administration of the entire land. As stated elsewhere in this chapter, the founding fathers of the present Igala towns and villages migrated from Idah. It is therefore, to be acknowledged that Idah is the cradle of Igala civilization just as Ile-Ife is to the Yoruba, Gboko is to the Tiv, and Otukpo is to the Idoma, before their subsequent dispersions to their various locations. The genealogical relationship between Idah and Ankpa is unique and of interest to the contemporary historians and social anthropologists. Idoko the 4th Ata, during whose reign Igala fought and won Independence from the Jukun, had many children. Amongst these children were Atiele and Ayẹgba. From the information available, Atiele was the eldest of all the children of Idoko. When Idoko was on the throne, Atiele left towards Ankpa, the Eastern part of Igala land and settled there.

However, two schools of thought on the issue of eldership between Atiele and Ayẹgba emerged. But it is satisfying to note that both of them agreed that Atiele left Idah for Ankpa. One of such schools states inter alia: 'Atiele, a younger brother of Ata Ayẹgba came to Ankpa area trading. The people of Ojja who settled there gave him a wife called Anagba, who was the mother of Ogwuchekwọ. She was the relation of a local chief called Agbaji. Ogwuchekwọ got so strong eventually that Agbaji gave up his title and later Ogwuchekwọ went to Idah and was given beads by the Ata'.

The above statement upholds the royal descent of Atiele as explained by the author in the genealogical interpretation. The other school of thought sheds light

on the first when it contends: 'When Idoko died, a message was sent to Atiele to come to Idah, but the message did not reach Atiele in time. So when Atiele was not forthcoming as a result of his not receiving the message, the royal title was conferred on Ayegba, the younger brother of Atiele. After this incident, Atiele was advised to go back to where he had come from'.

Like the biblical story of Esau and Jacob, Atiele was inadvertently stripped of his legitimate right to kingship as a result of a breach in communication gap. There was, therefore, an implicit psychological distance between Atiele and his brother Ata Ayegba, who had incidentally become the elder by the virtue of his ascendancy to the throne.

The cold war between the two brothers later developed into an intra-ethnic feud until recently. This unfortunate incident developed into confrontation with the constituted authorities over the years. Ogwuchekwo's rebellious stance to the members of his social group as recorded by Aminu (1984) which is cited in Attah (2011:275) is a case in point. For in that write up, Ogwuchekwo was described as being: 'Very wicked, hostile and stubborn and never respected anyone except his father'. The historical interpretation that can be readily given to Ogwuchekwo's behaviour is that he was not confrontational but rather reacting to the social system of his time. His father had lost the venerable seat. Thus Ogwuchekwo's aspiration was dashed because he could no longer lay claim to the royal throne as a result of the hereditary typicality of the system. But fortunately enough, Ogwuchekwo was to found a royal dynasty, thus his royal inclination to rule was partially satisfied. As the afore-mentioned researcher aptly puts it, 'Agbaji (his uncle) gave up his title and later Ogwuchekwo went to Idah and was given beads by the Ata'.

The singular act of Ogwuchekwo that was of historical importance is that he maintained the traditional bondage by acknowledging the authority of the Ata at Idah, when he went there to be beaded by him. This action had further enhanced the status of Ankpa among other towns to the extent that Okwoli (1973) as cited in Attah (2011:276) submits: 'Historically, Ankpa has been an important town in Igala for it was the traditional seat of the Ata's powerful provincial governor, the Onu of Ankpa based at Ankpa Ofoke'. From the foregoing, it is clear that Ankpa is a royal subordinate to Idah, politically and spiritually, but both of them have a common pro-dynastic ancestor-Idoko. The subordinate position is as a result of the histo-cultural expedience that states that the Ata has the whole of Igala land as his constituency; that the Atta has the monopoly of power and authority; and that his seat cannot be rotated, neither can there be two headquarters of the kingdom.

Therefore, in conclusion, Idah and Ankpa are

kindly inseparable. They are royal magnates. The question of superordinate and subordinate in the royal hierarchy is a natural phenomenon, which must be culturally absorbed and regarded as a historical accident. The sole expectation of the two royal giants is to evolve a new life of peaceful co-existence in the spirit of give and take, mutual understanding and cooperation in our march towards the new social order.

✓ **The Èjẹ Chieftdom**

As expressed by Attah (2011:276) the Èjẹ chieftdom came into being as a result of an age long agitation by the Ankpa people for a separate Local Government Area with a recognized traditional ruler and its council. Thus, Èjẹ chieftdom was created in August, 1970. The first Eje, Alhaji Yakubu Adaji, MON, was a second class chief from Abba sub-klan of the royal house. His successor, Alhaji Amodu Yakubu with first class status is a descendant of Abba royal home. He is late now. He joined his ancestors in November 2016. Since his demise, another Èjẹ is however yet to be appointed. The Èjẹ chieftdom, which was confined to Ankpa Local Government Council, has since been decentralized. Thus, we now have Eje with first class status at Ibaji, Ofu, Dekina and Olamaboro Local Government Councils. However, other traditional Chiefs like Ètẹmáhi of Igala-mela, Òjògbà of Ife and Ónú of Egwume with first class status prefer to retain their traditional titles as Ètẹmáhi, Òjògbà and Ónú respectively.

• **Major Igala Towns**

❖ **Ankpa**

Ankpa is the seat of Eje Ankpa and is also the capital of Ankpa Local Government Area. The town is an important junction, which serves as the gateway to Igala land and other parts of the country. The strategic location of Ankpa and the presence of modern facilities such as commercial banks, standard hotels, electricity and pipe borne water, account for its expansion and rapid growth in commercial enterprises. Ankpa is however beset by erosion menace, which has had catastrophic effects on houses, roads and farmlands.

❖ **Anyigba**

Anyigba, a convergence point on the roads from Idah, Ankpa and Shintaku/Dekina, is a fast growing town in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State. Anyigba serves as the natural nerve center in Igala land because of its role as the conventional venue for important meetings or conferences in recent times. Anyigba's growth is enhanced by the siting of the Anyigba Agricultural Development Project (AADP) as well as the influx of businessmen, government workers and students to this area following the establishment of Kogi State University in the town. Among the social

amenities contributing to the rapid growth and urbanization of Anyigba are banking facilities, hotels, hospitals and electricity.

❖ **Idah**

According to Attah (2011:278), Idah, which literally means “the end of the struggle” (èmi ì da), is one of the historic towns in Nigeria. It was founded at about 12th century AD. Idah is the center of Igala cultural heritage, the traditional Headquarters of the Igala kingdom and the seat of Ata Igala. Egwuda (1984) as cited in Attah (2011:278) creatively describes the unique and significant position of Idah in a poetic language as follows: ‘This ancient capital city, her fingers spread North, South, East and West as the mother of all kingdoms, the core of the tribe, i.e.

I - Idah

D - Dekina

A - Ankpa

H - Headquarters of her kingdom’.

Idah is essentially the home of the Igala people until their recent dispersion to their present respective locations in the land. The following names belong to the founding fathers of Igala towns and villages that migrated from Idah

Atiele the founder of Ankpa

Idoko Eje the founder of Imane

Ogala Abutu the founder of Odolu,

Ohiemi Agbaji the founder of Emekutu,

Okwabida the founder of Ogwugwu,

Ogado the founder of Dekina.

Idah is a combination of the cultural and the contemporary features of a city. It has a network of communication systems, both within and outside this world.

Igala Traditional Music (Élí)

Igala people also have rich cultural and traditional heritage in music. Music can be defined as an arrangement of sounds in a pleasing sequence or composition to be sung or played on instruments. In addition, Merriam Webster Dictionary defines music as follows: (a) the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity; (b) vocal, instrumental, or mechanical sounds having rhythm, melody, or harmony. Music can also be defined as the art of combining vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion. According to a popular saying, music is referred to as the food of the human soul. The Igala people have a variety of music that are sung or performed for various purposes according to their culture. Discussed below are some of them:

➤ **Ágálí Music**

This is an important Igala song usually performed with specialised instrument called drum or ùbà in the language. It is usually sung during special and great occasions in Igala land like festivals, luncheons,

rallies, chieftaincy coronation, annual gathering, traditional gathering or remembrances (e.g. ákwú and óji élé), etc. Ákpítí kéké (ákpítí kéké kí a tògíjò àgbèdò i.e. a small ant that stings an elder at the centre of his chest) is one of the performers of this music, though he did not produce many albums. But the most renowned and legendary performer or singer of this music is Alhaji Mohammed Paul Ònaló, popularly known as Òdí or Òdí Málímà till his death in 1996. His songs are often adroitly beautified with rich proverbs both for warning and wisdom coupled with his naturally endowed golden or sweet voice. In addition, despite his old age before leaving this world, he could dance glamorously to the appreciation of his viewership or listenership while performing. As far as history is concerned, this man stands the best singer of this music that has ever emerged. After his demise, some of his musical children or ọmá élí like Ádẹbọ Àyà, Yusuf Èlùbẹ̀lù, etc. have tried to follow his steps but not as perfect or inspiring as their master. Even though the Ágálí music is at the verge of extinction, the voice of Òdí Málímà still lives on as many of his albums are being circulated in Igala land. As a matter of fact, Radio Kogi Ochaja, Radio Nigeria Ibadan and Abuja stations still play the music of this legend. As the younger generation continue to listen to his songs, who knows whether one like him or greater than him could emerge in the near future.

➤ **Àgbáka Music**

This music is named after a masquerade called àgbáka. The music is extremely crucial as it is sung during crucial occasions such as the ones mentioned earlier on. Naturally, it is the men folk that are involved in singing this song but not exclusive as women could also join if they wish to. Instruments used include drums or òkèlègwú, which comprise a medium and a small one as well as a locally made flute or ifélè/úfélè. This flute is expertly and adeptly blown by a man who uses it to initiate or raise songs for others to follow. Apart from this, he also blows it to match or tally with the tune of the beating of the drum. Furthermore, the flute blower is the performer or song leader but the àgbáka masquerade, usually of small or medium stature gleefully and skillfully dance to entertain the onlookers or spectators. In fact, this masquerade could climb a nearby tree and turn upside down or even somersault as well as throwing an object far into the air and catching it when coming down, while performing or dancing!

➤ **Ágwóm Music**

This music is very special to the Igala people as it is usually sung during second burial or remembrance ceremonies in the Igala land. The main instrument for the music is the special drum or òkèlègwú, usually played by two men – a bigger and a small one. The well-known performers of this music are Atabọ

Ikèlèkwù and Alhassan Idágó. Atabọ Ikèlèkwù's album(s) is still being circulated. These men's songs are inspiring as they are beautified with proverbs and idiomatic expression. This music is on the verge of extinction as it is not clear at the moment whether anyone has emerged.

➤ **Álọ Music**

This music has assumed a crucial position in Igala tradition. One unique feature of it is that the performer sings and plays a small gong or ágógó all alone by himself without any distraction. This music is appreciated among the Igala people due to the fact that it is awash with deep idiomatic expressions and proverbs. The legendary or famous performer of this music remains Joseph Abuh. He is believed to have been endowed with the inspiration of this music by some spirits called íchékpá, who took him as a child, gave him this gift and released him. This accounts for the reason why he started performing at a very early age. His albums are in circulation all over the Igala territory and beyond, and played also in radio stations.

➤ **Ìbèlè Music**

Ìbèlè is a kind of Igala traditional music that is highly valued among the people due to its richness in proverbs, inspirational utterances as well as idiomatic expressions. In performing this music, the only instrument required is a locally made flute or Òkpàchínẹ, which is sweetly and dexterously blown by a man. The only legendary singer of this music remains Ìlábijá Ògbàjẹ, who is highly revered for his adroit use of proverbs and idiomatic expressions coupled with his golden voice. For the time being, we are not aware of anyone who has emerged to perform like Ìlábijá Ògbàjẹ, as far as this music is concerned. Ìlábijá Ògbàjẹ, who hails from Dekina Local Government Area, is still alive but cannot sing now due to old age.

➤ **Íchábadà (Sabada) Music**

This also is a significant music in Igala land. Just like others, the performer is usually invited to perform during important occasions such as second burial ceremonies or ùbì/ákwú luncheons, annual gatherings or get-togethers, etc. Specially designed drums which include òkèlègwú (big and small) are normally played by two or three persons. To the best knowledge of the researcher, the performers are of male gender. Both the performer and his musical children (or ọmá éli) often dance glitzy to the excitement of their viewership or audience. Some of them (performers) include Abdul Àyọkì, Ibe, Hollando, etc.

➤ **Ìgbà Music**

This is also an important Igala music performed or sung with special instrument (drum) known as Òkèlègwú in the language. Two men usually play the drums – a bigger and a smaller one. This music is performed at different occasions such as the ones

mentioned above. Some of the performers include Yusuf Òtíwẹ (or Tódíwẹ mà kpùlòkò), Òtúlúkpé Agbógòdò. These two have tried and have produced albums. However, the well-known performer of this music is Ikani Àjábìtì from Ugwọlawo. His songs are also adorned with proverbs, and he could also dance to the admiration of his audience while performing coupled with his naturally sweet voice. At present, he is no more performing as he has taken a chieftaincy title. However, few singers have emerged but yet to be as inspiring as that of Chief Ikani Àjábìtì. Furthermore, as far as Ìgbà music is concerned, no one has emerged yet that can perform like Chief Ikani Àjábìtì, for the time being. Also, his albums are still in circulation in Igala land, and played by some radio stations within and outside Igala land.

➤ **Òbèlẹ (Íya-òye)**

Unlike all the music listed above, this is not sung arbitrarily or on ordinary days except when an elderly man or woman dies in a community. Here the artist or singer (usually a woman) performs throughout the night along with two or three people who play drums (òkèlègwú and òkàgá). Some of them include Àchétu Uhiẹ, Mulamu Abojonyẹ, Áchàná Ọmakpẹ, etc. Certain masquerades like òwùná, éjùmádèlẹ or yáyo, égwú-ichékpá and égwú-agwénýa do appear to dance admiringly to the music. In addition, carved images called èchichà are dressed and lined up during this occasion. Note that the number of children and grand-children or great-grand-children of the deceased normally determines the number of both masquerades and èchichà that is recorded.

➤ **Òdéchi Music**

This music constitutes an important traditional song in Igala. It is initially believed to be the song usually sung for the Ata or other revered traditional rulers in Igala land. It is also sung during second burial ceremonies as well as important ceremonies to coronate a chief or ruler of traditional significance. Furthermore, òdéchi music could also be organised during yearly kinfolk/clan remembrance of the dead or òkwúlá. The instruments used include a big drum or òkàgá and a flute or òkpàchínẹ, usually blown or played along. An early performer of this song known to the researcher is Èbilọmá Uhiẹ. Unlike other performers, he did not produce any album. Since his departure from this world, it is not yet clear to us if somebody has emerged of late.

➤ **Ògbá Music**

This music is highly valued among the men folk in a typical Igala society. This is because it is strictly performed by the men, and in some cases, women are disallowed to participate especially when organised during a traditional remembrance called ákwú. However, when organised as a watch night gathering or get-together to usher in Christmas celebration,

women may be allowed to be part of the audience. The music does not have an outstanding artist or performer but rather, it is the men that initiate songs and do the singing all by themselves. In addition, certain people are usually selected or bidden to dance to this music, which is done turn after turn. These dancers often dance adeptly to the excitement of the audience or viewership. The playing instruments for this music include a drum or *òkàgá* and locally fabricated wooden device, which is beaten by one or two persons with a sense of responsibility and commitment.

➤ **Òlélé Music**

This music is also a very important one, and it is usually sung or performed by females. The instrument used in performing is a special drum called *ùbà*. Just like the two music above, it is performed in special occasions such as the ones mentioned before. The renowned performer of this music is Rekiya Ànwèrè. In the course of performance, Rekiya could also dance to the excitement of her audience or viewership. Other performers or artists of this music include Hajjia Jèné, Rabi Alijenu, Nana Edibo, Baba Tokwula (a female), Hajjia Kàkà Odogomu and Èké Madam, and all of them could dance skillfully to the admiration of their spectators.

➤ **Ìgworò (or Ìgworò) Music**

Before its conversion and admission into the Igala tradition, the Ìgworò or (Ìgworò) music was usually sung during Sallah or Òwò from house to house early in the morning for pecuniary benefits. The instrument used for performing here is specialized drums or *òkèlègwú*, usually played by two men – a bigger and a smaller one. Sometimes, a small gong (*ágógó*) or bottle (*ùjógò*) is used. The famous artists of this music remain Audu Inachalu, Yahaya Ògbògódó or Yahaya Qmafù and late Shehu Èbilòmà. Their albums are still in circulation in Igala land, and are played within and outside the State on radio stations. Although both Yahaya Qmafù and Shehu Èbilòmà could be described as legends in ìgworò music, Shehu Èbilòmà is however rated higher by many. This is not unconnected with the fact that his songs are often awash with proverbs, inspirational utterances and idiomatic expressions coupled with his naturally endowed golden or sweet voice. Apart from the duo, few younger ones have emerged in this music.

The Dynamism of Language (The Living Language)

The notion of the dynamism of language is upheld in the belief that languages are non-static. A living language is equated with living organisms. To this end, Meso (2016:10) notes that languages are born, they grow through lexical expansion, they develop through proper status and corpus planning, and they die when there are no speakers to speak or use them. In addition, we may conceive of languages as being more or less distantly related to one other because they have parents and sisters, and they share no genetics

with unrelated languages. Only languages such as Latin, Sanskrit, Kasabe, etc. that have ceased to 'live' are static and fossilised. Living languages are in a continuous motion, adapting to the social contexts in which they are used. They take form as different registers or dialects, they appear in the written or spoken mode, and above all, they move with time, changing chronologically. In other words, they are ever changing in terms of their vocabulary, sound systems and many other features even though such changes occur too slowly to be readily observed across adjacent generations of speakers (Minger, 2017) as cited in Omachonu (2017:26).

Based on the above statement, languages, like human beings have factors that contribute to their growth and death as well as their survival on earth. They are born, grow and die like individuals. Individuals need food and shelter to survive. Likewise languages need speakers who will feed them to grow and become stronger and keep growing. Individuals who are without food suffer from malnutrition and die suddenly. The same applies to a language without speakers.

There are different factors that contribute to people's death such as sicknesses, although some die due to natural causes and others by murder. Some languages disappear because of various reasons such as economic, political, speakers' negligence or attitudes and natural death. A language dies when its speakers give up speaking it in favour of some other languages. Such a situation occurs when two or more languages come into contact with another language that is considered more prestigious. Some speakers of African languages believe that English is a language of business, and a passport to success in the wider world. For this reason, many African parents in Africa use English to communicate with their own children in their families, giving rise to a situation where their children grow up with gross inability to speak their own native languages even when both parents in a family are native speakers of a particular language.

Borrowing in Language

Borrowing is a situation whereby a language adopts the words of another language into its vocabulary for use. Borrowing requires that the borrowing language and the source language come in contact with each other. Buhari (2006) says that every language is the product of change, and continues to change as long as it is spoken. This is based on the contention that living languages never hold still. According to Atadoga (2011:101), borrowing is a common morphological phenomenon in all languages. It is one of the implications of languages in contact. Languages of the world tend to borrow lexical items or even phrases that are absent in their lexicon. The Igala language is assumed to have borrowed the following from English, Hausa and Igbo respectively, as outlined below:

a. English	Igala
bible	Ìbáfbùlù
school	Ìchèkwùlù
table	Ìtébùlù
church	Ìchòchì

b. Hausa	Igala
gaskiya	ògècha 'truth'
lafiya	òlàfià 'health/healthy'
sadaka	ohídàka/ochídàka 'sacrifice'
c. Igbo	Igala
ntali	itàli 'cane'
abada	itàli 'cane'
akpa	ikpà 'bag'.

Introduction to General Linguistics

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. This introductory course deals with the basic concepts, distinctions, and methods that linguists apply in describing linguistic phenomena, and with the theories that organise and explain their observations. The patterns of language and the ways we use it are complex and many-layered, and linguists have found it useful to approach some of the parts and layers separately, while also recognising connections among them. Accordingly, linguistics is conventionally divided into several subordinate sciences:

- **Phonetics** - the study of the physical properties of speech sounds and the mechanics of their production;
- **Phonology** - the study of the ways in which speech sounds are regimented, distinguished, patterned, and structured in languages;
- **Morphology** - the study of individual words and their internal structure;
- **Syntax**, the study of how words are combined and arranged to form larger linguistic structures (phrases, clauses, and sentences);
- **Semantics** - the study of meaning and reference;
- **Pragmatics** - the study of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used;
- **Historical linguistics** - the study of how languages change over time;
- **Psycholinguistics** - the study of how linguistic knowledge is represented and applied in the minds of speakers; and
- **Dialectology** - study of variation in the lexical and structural components of language (Britain, 2010:2);
- **Sociolinguistics** - the study of the relationship between language and society.

The structure of this course in the study of language actually reflects this division

Introduction to Ajamias a Medium of Writing

According to Ngom (2010:1), Ajami ('ajamī or a'jami) comes from the Arabic word for non-Arab, or foreigner. It also refers to the practice of writing other languages using a modified Arabic script. Although written records are rarely regarded as part of sub-Saharan Africa's intellectual heritage, important bodies of Ajami literature have existed in Oromo, Somali, Tigrigna, Kiswahili, Amharic, and Malagasy in East Africa, and Bamanakan, Mandinka, Kanuri, Yoruba, Berber, Hausa, Wolof, and Fulfulde in West Africa for centuries. In South Africa, the first written record of Afrikaans was produced in Ajami by Muslim Malay slaves (Pah, 2008) as cited in Ngom (2010:1). Ajami

developed in communities with a long history of practising Islam, and who sought to adapt the Arabic alphabet to their own tongues, first for religious purposes such as prayers, writing magical protective devices, and disseminating religious materials and edicts, and later for secular functions such as commercial and administrative record-keeping, writing eulogies and family genealogies, recording important events such as births, deaths and weddings, and writing biographies, poetry, political satires, advertisements, road signs, public announcements, speeches and personal correspondence. There are also Ajami documents describing traditional treatment of various illnesses, the properties of plants and ways of using them and occult sciences; translations of works from Arabic into African languages; and texts on administrative and diplomatic matters (correspondence between Sultans and provincial rulers), Islamic jurisprudence, behavioural codes, and grammar. This adaptation of the Arabic script to write African languages was not easy; the Arabic consonants and vowels reflected by the Arabic script do not necessarily correspond to those in specific African languages. Therefore scholars within each community devised systems of transcribing their languages by modifying the Arabic script, thereby allowing speakers to learn to write, read and recite Ajami texts. The early development of Ajami in African Muslim societies is not well documented, but is thought to have its roots in the pedagogies for teaching the Qur'an and other religious texts in the local mosques which typically served both as places of prayer and debate and as important learning centers in disciplines other than religious sciences (Hassane, 2008) as cited in Ngom (2010:1).

The development of Ajami probably also reflected a desire to put cultural traditions in writing, and to have a practical mode of written communication. The local language, being grounded in local realities, was a better vehicle for these purposes than Arabic. Evidence suggests that most of these Ajami literatures sprung up some 300 years ago; there is evidence, however, that the Touareg of the Sahara and Sahel developed an Ajami system for writing their language some 500 years ago. The recent discovery in Niger of a 500-folio Tamasheq Ajami manuscript dating from the 10th/16th century may be one of the most significant of the past decade. Together with other Tamasheq Ajami documents, the manuscript raises a number of interesting questions for historians – questions regarding 16th century desert society, Touareg culture, and the state of politics and trade in the Southern Sahara during a pivotal period in Saharan history. The manuscript deals with pharmacopoeia and other topics, and the work calls into question the assumption that Ajami was used exclusively for the purpose of proselytizing. More Hausa and Tamasheq Ajami documents are available at the Human Science Research Institute (IRSH) in Niamey. Gutelius (2000) as cited in Ngom (2010:1) notes that the most recent find in Niger, combined with other Tamasheq manuscripts (both Ajami and Tifinagh, another Touareg indigenous writing system), provide an unparalleled opportunity for scholars piecing together pre-modern Saharan history from the perspective of nomadic and semi-

nomadic Tamasheq speakers. Gutelius correctly notes that when used in conjunction with the extensive collections of oral histories collected over this century, these manuscripts can help describe changes in Saharan societies over time from a different perspective – a perspective that is most often denigrated in the Arabic manuscripts of the region. According to Hunwick (2006), as cited in Ngom (2010:1), Kanuri, the language of the people of the Kanem-Bornu Empire surrounding Lake Chad, is also said to be one of the first African languages to have been written in Arabic script, followed by Fulfulde, Hausa, Wolof, and Yoruba.

As reported by Ngom (2010:1), Usman dan Fodiyo (1754-1817), who established the Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria (1804-1903), effectively used Hausa Ajami to make the Sokoto jihād a mass movement. His daughter, Nana Asma'u Fodiyo (1793-1864), was also a revered Ajami poet and teacher whose work is regarded by some as exemplifying the potential role of women in education within an Islamic society. While the most celebrated intellectual literary tradition in West Africa is that of Timbuktu, little attention has been given to other centers of learning that thrived in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa in which Wolof, Hausa, Fulfulde, and other black African scholars developed rich Arabic and Ajami literary traditions. The insights in Robinson et al.'s (1994) translation of excerpts from a Fuuta Tooro Pulaar Ajami manuscript dealing with the war campaign of AlHājj Umar Taal (1797-1864) is illustrative of the significance of Ajami in investigating African history, as cited in Ngom (2010:1). Robinson, Hunwick, and Mack and Boyd's works on Ajami underscore the need for further studies of this largely neglected terrain of human knowledge that is at the heart of knowledge production about Africa and the world.

Unfortunately, although Ajami has a long tradition in Muslim societies of sub-Saharan Africa, stretching from Senegambia in the West to the Horn of Africa, it has been largely overlooked in teaching and research outside the region. Although it continues to serve as a primary means of spreading Islam into non-Arabic speaking areas and an important tool for written communication, American scholars and students have no direct access to the rich materials written in Ajami. The neglect of Ajami in academia is due to a number of factors, including the lack of an Ajami public depository, the limited number of individuals with the linguistic skills and cultural background required to analyse Ajami documents, and a lack of interest on the part of the few qualified scholars. Ngom (2010:2) quotes Kane (2002) as saying that the writings of black African authors have long been neglected due to prejudice, as both Europeans and Arab scholars with the necessary linguistic competence to study their works have often deemed their insights of little or no scholarly interest or benefit, and most assume that sources of knowledge on Africa are either oral or written in European languages. These are some of the principal reasons for the current dearth of scholarship on Ajami literatures of Islamic Africa.

In West Africa, waves of Fulani religious revivals swept across the region in the 18th and 19th centuries, fostering the emergence of local Arabic and Ajami literary

traditions. The first Muslim revival (of the 18th century) produced a renaissance of writing in the Arabic language; the second wave (of the 19th century) resulted in the emergence of Ajami writing. These movements produced centers of Islamic learning where both Arabic and Ajami were used for mnemonic, devotional, and didactic purposes. Ngom (2010:2) reports that the best known communities where Arabic was used alongside Ajami were among (1) the Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria; (2) the Fuuta Jalon – Fulani in Guinea in the area of the ancient Islamic theocratic state founded during the jihād of 1727; (3) the Adamawa Fulani in Northern Cameroon; (4) the Tooroo Fulani in Senegal and the Wolof, particularly the Murīds; and (5) the Hausa and Jula traders in Northern Ghana. Ajami offers a unique window into the way the Islamic faith has been Africanised for centuries and the local historical, cultural and political perspectives of Muslim communities in West Africa.

The exact literacy rate in Ajami throughout Islamic Africa is unknown, but the available evidence suggests that it is much higher than the literacy rate in Latin scripts, especially in rural and religious areas. Ngom (2010:2) quotes Cissé (2006) as noting that about 80% of people in Hausa areas can read and write Ajami. Many Hausa speakers from rural and religious areas who are illiterate in the Latin script, European languages or Arabic are literate in Ajami. However, they are regarded as 'illiterate' because 'literacy' has been arbitrarily equated with proficiency in colonial European languages or Arabic. Alidou (2006) as cited in Ngom (2010:2) asserts that the Latin script inherited from colonial languages severely under-valued the pre-existing forms of literacy practices, and continues to place them at the bottom of the literacy pyramid. Ajami users acquire Ajami writing skills through their exposure to the Arabic script in Qur'ānic schools, the primary and often the only institution of learning in their rural and religious communities. Government and international aid-funded literacy and education programs in Hausa-speaking areas continue to exclude this important segment of the population, which has no vested interest in learning the promoted Latin-based scripts for their language because they already have their own system deeply rooted in their traditions and used effectively for their written communication needs for centuries.

Translation (Theory and Practice)

There are many languages and cultures all over the world, and they are distinct and peculiar with each having its peculiar code of expression. In this case, one thing that is a taboo here may be an accepted norm in another culture and vice-versa. Given the fact that the world is becoming a global village, and the need for communication among these varied languages and cultures as well as the crave for knowledge; theory and practice of translation therefore has become a necessity. Even within the same Country, State and Local Government Area, the importance of translation cannot be overemphasised, since they house many languages. The interdependence on one another in business, trade or commerce, education, music, art and entertainment makes translation vital in the life of any speech community.

By definition, Peter Newmark (1988) says translation can be defined as a craft, which consists of an attempt to replace a written message in one language by the same message in another language. Also, Darbelnet (1977) looks at translation as the operation which consists of transferring from one language to another all the elements of meaning of a passage, and only these elements, while ensuring that they retain in the target language their totality, and also taking into account the relative differences presented by the cultures to which both the source and the target languages correspond respectively. Furthermore, the New Encyclopedia Britanica (1973) defines translation as the act or process of rendering what is expressed in one language or a set of symbols by means of another language or set of symbols.

Theories and Practice of Translation

According to Newmark (1988:9), translation theory with practice is concerned mainly with determining appropriate translation methods for the widest possible range of texts or text-categories. It also provides a framework of principles, restricted rules and hints for translating texts and criticising translations, a background for problem solving. Any theory should also be concerned with translation strategies adopted to address difficulties and problems in certain complicated texts. Discussed (in brief) below are some of them, as propounded by Nida (1976) and other translation theorists.

1. Philological theories

Philological theories rely upon 'philology' as the study of the development of language, and the classical literary studies. They are mainly concerned with the comparison of structures in the native and foreign languages, especially the functional correspondence and the literary genres in addition to stylistics and rhetoric. The philological theories of translation are, of course based on a philological approach to literary analysis. They simply go one step further; in place of treating the form in which the text was first composed, they deal with corresponding structures in the source and receptor languages and attempt to evaluate their equivalences. Philological theories of translation are normally concerned with all kinds of stylistic features and rhetorical devices.

2. Philosophical Theories

The most prominent proponent of these theories is George Steiner, who claims that his book *After Babel* (1975) is the 'first systematic investigation of the theory and practice of translation since the eighteen century.' He primarily emphasizes the psychological and intellectual functioning of the mind of translator. He elucidates that meaning and understanding underlies the translation process, averring that a theory of translation is essentially a theory of semantic transfer from source language (SL) into target language (TL). He defines his 'hermeneutic approach' as "the investigation of what it means to 'understand a piece of oral speech or written text, and the attempt to diagnose the process in terms of a general model of meaning."

3. Linguistic theories

Linguistic theories of translation are based on a comparison of the Linguistic structures of the source texts (STs) and target texts (TTs), rather than a comparison of literary genres and stylistic features of the philological theories. Their development is due to two factors: first, the application of the rapidly expanding linguistics, the scientific study of language, to several fields such as cognitive anthropology, semiotics, pragmatics, and teaching translation/interpreting skills; and second, the emergence of Machine Translation (MT) which has provided a significant motivation for basing translation procedures on linguistic analysis as well as for a rigorous description of SL and TL. It is only a linguistic translation that can be considered 'faithful', because it is one which only contains elements which can be directly derived from the ST wording, avoiding any kind of explanatory interpolation or cultural adjustment which can be justified on this basis.

4. Text-type Theory

This theory is built on the concept of equivalence, which is the milestone in linguistic theories, the text, rather than the word or sentence, is deemed the appropriate level at which communication is achieved and at which equivalence must Be sought.

5. Translational Action Theory

This theory views translation as purpose-driven, product-oriented or outcome-oriented human interaction with special emphasis on the process of translation as message-transmission or a 'translational action from a source text, and as a communicative process involving a series of roles and players the most important of whom are the ST producer or the original author, the TT producer or the translator and the TT receiver, the final recipient of the TT. The theory stresses the production of the TT as functionally communicative for the reader, i.e., the form and the genre of the TT, for instance, must be guided by what is functionally suitable in the TT culture, which is determined by the translator who is the expert in the translational action and whose role is to make sure that the intercultural transfer takes place satisfactorily. This is just to mention but a few.

Development of the Orthography

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines orthography as (a) the art of writing words with the proper letters according to standard usage; (b) the representation of the sounds of a language by written or printed symbols. Based on this definition, orthography is made up of the sounds and symbols of a language. In other words, it comprises the vowels and consonants of a language. Omachonu (2011:48) reports that the Igala language has twenty-three consonant and seven vowel sounds respectively. According to Szczegieliński (2001:12), consonants are sounds produced with some restriction or closure in the vocal tract. In other words, consonants are sounds in which the air stream meets some obstacles in the mouth on its way up from the lungs. These are described, classified and lexically exemplified below:

(1) i. **Plosives**

Word Initial	Word Medial
/p/ pú 'to bend'	òpá 'groundnut'
/b/ bí 'to give birth'	ébi 'hunger'
/t/ tò 'to urinate'	àtè 'bed'
/d/ dọ 'to call'	ádú 'slave'
/k/ kọ 'to write'	úkọ 'cough'
/g/ gá 'to sew,	àgó 'waist'
/kp/ kpa 'to kill'	àgó 'waist'
/gb/ gbọ 'to hear'	àgbò 'plantain'
/kw/ kwà 'to shout'	úkwú 'death'
/gw/ gwá 'to greet'	úgwá 'greetings'

ii: **Nasals**

/m/ mà 'to know'	ùmà 'knowledge'
/n/ ná 'to know'	úná 'fire'
/p/ nyá 'to bargain'	ànyà 'bicycle'
/ŋ/ ngọ 'to pack'	ángejẹ 'tortoise' òun '3sg'
/ŋw/ nwà 'to measure'	ànwàgó 'exam'

iii. **Fricatives**

/f/ fù 'to germinate'	àfẹ 'shirt'
/h/ hì 'to cook'	ìhìlò 'catarrh'

iii. **Affricates**

/tʃ/ chẹ 'to do'	/dʒ/ jẹ 'to eat'
/dʒ/ jẹ 'to eat'	ájì 'river'

Approximants/Semi vowels

/r/ rẹ 'to vomit'	érẹ 'leg'
/l/ lù 'to smell'	élẹ 'python'
/l/ lù 'to smell'	ùyọ 'joy'
/w/ wú 'to uproot'	ìwá 'dirt'

Furthermore, the seven vowels of Igala (*a, e, ɛ, i, o, ɔ, ʊ*) are presented, described and exemplified thus:

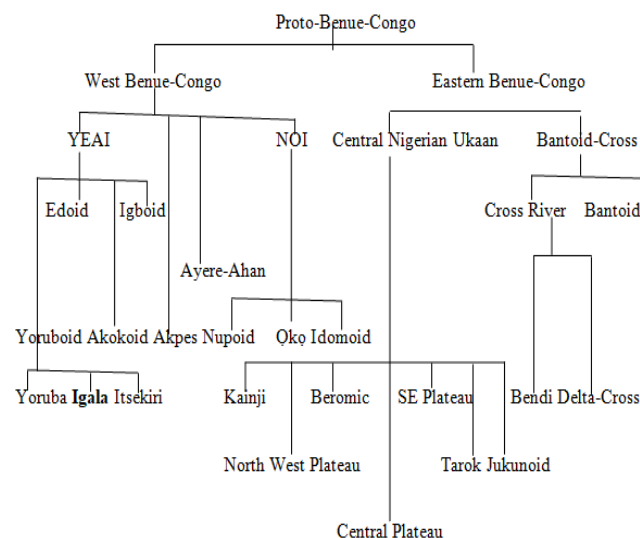
Vowel	Word Initial	Word Medial	Word Final
/a/	álu 'mouth'	ùkpálu 'tongue'	ùchà 'pot'
/e/	éjú 'eye' èlú 'five'	ìbénú 'witness'	àlẹ 'poverty'
/ɛ/	ìwọ 'pains'	ùfẹdọ 'love'	àtẹ 'bed'
/i/	ójí 'head/theft'	òjima 'honour'	éli 'song'
/o/	ùlẹ 'journey'	àmónẹ 'people'	éwó 'goat'
/ɔ/	ọma 'child'	àmọma 'children'	èjọ 'eight'
/u/	ùlẹ 'journey'	àduwa 'prayer'	óchù 'moon'.

Typology, Dialects and Registers of the Language**Typology**

Typology is the study of the classification of languages according to their structural and functional features that they share in common. As reported by Negedu (2003:116), Igala as one of the African languages, belongs to the Kwa subgroup of the Niger Congo language family. The Niger Congo languages constitute one of the world's major language families and Africa's largest in terms of geographical area and number of speakers.

Igala is a language of the Yoruboid branch of the Defoid. The Defoid languages constitute a branch of the

present Benue Congo language family. The name (Yoroboid branch of the Defoid) derives from its most widely spoken number, Yoruba. It is therefore note-worthy, at first instance, that the Igala and the Yoruba almost share the same view in their notion of God. There is a very thin line in pronunciation of words that depict divinities with their qualities. Research has shown that the concept of the *Ata* may have relational connection with a Yoruba word used to refer to kings both in Ayede Ekiti and Oshogbo respectively. Below is a family tree of Benue-Congo languages clearly showing the position of Igala:

**Igala Dialects**

Over the years, many linguists have given scholarly definition of dialect, as follows: Solano-Flores (2006:2360) defines a dialect as a variety of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by its pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, discourse convention, and other linguistic features. Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2011:252) say that the language of a group of people may show regular variation from that which is used by another group. They illustrate this with example that English spoken in different social groups shows systematic differences. Such groups are said to speak dialects of the same language. According to Bowen (2011:1), a dialect is a sub-categorization of a language, linguistically differentiated via grammar, lexis, and in terms of speech – phonology. He also goes further to define dialect as manner of speaking, especially a manner of speech peculiar to, or characteristic of a particular person or class. Furthermore, Raven (1969) and Ikekeonwu (1985, 1986 & 2001) as cited in Omachonu (2011:38) say that a dialect can be defined as the specific form of a given language spoken in a certain locality or geographical area showing some degree of differences sufficient to distinguish it from standard or literary form of that language as to pronunciation, grammatical construction and idiomatic usage of words to be considered as distinct entity, yet not so sufficiently different from other dialects of the language to be regarded as a different language. Crystal (1991:102) defines dialect as regionally or socially distinctive variety of a language, identified by a particular set of words and grammatical

structures. Spoken dialects are usually also associated with a distinctive pronunciation, or accent. In addition, he says that any language with a reasonably large number of speakers will develop dialects, especially if there are geographical barriers separating groups of people from each other, or if there are divisions of social class.

Note that Crystal's assertion above is exactly applicable to the Igala language. This is because there are about three million native speakers of Igala dispersed in different geographical locations within the whole of Kogi East Senatorial District. These Igala natives are actually separated by geographical barriers giving rise to different varieties of Igala. Thus, Ankpa dialect exists because Ankpa is separated geographically from Dekina, Akpanya dialect came to be due to the fact that Akpanya is distant from Idah and Ajaka, Ogwugwu dialect has occurred as

Ankpa and Ogwugwu communities are a bit far apart, Aloma/Ofabo dialect has emerged based on the fact that Aloma/Ofabo is separated from Ankpa and Dekina respectively, Ibaji dialect exists because Ibaji is distant from Idah, and lastly, Imane dialect has surfaced because Imane community is apart from both Ankpa and Ogwugwu municipal areas. Note that Imane is under Ankpa Local Government Area, the variety of Igala spoken there is slightly different from that of Ankpa. Arguably, it is obvious that the variety of Igala spoken in Idah, Igala-mela, Ofu and Dekina communities is similar. Therefore, we have categorised or classified the variety spoken in these four communities under the umbrella of central dialect. Here is a body of data (lexical items and sentences) showing some dialects of Igala, as collected by the lecturer:

Ánkpa	Central	Ìbàjí	Ògwùgwù	Ákpányá	Àloma	Gloss
Ùlẹ̀	òlùlẹ̀	ùliẹ̀/òlùlẹ̀	òlùlẹ̀	òlùlẹ̀	òlùlẹ̀	'cricket'
Háhàí	fafáí	fafáí	Fífáí	faífaí	fífáí	'a while ago'
Wèné	wéwe	nana	Nana	nana	nana	many/plenty'
Unòba	unòba	ákòba	ákòba	únòba	ákòba	'coconut'
Èlòfù	ùwédò	èdòfù	élòfù	ùwédò	ùwédò	'bad-temper/anger'
Ọfẹ	ọdọda	ọdọda	òlọfẹ	ọdọda	ọdọda	'outside'
Ìkẹtẹ	ẹkẹtẹ	ẹkẹtẹ	íkẹtẹ	ẹkẹtẹ	ẹkẹtẹ	'sand'
Yí	Lí	lí	Rí	lí	Lí	'see/find'
Dáwá/dáá	wá/liá	Wá	Wá	Liá	Wá	'come'
Ọlanyọ un	ílò ún	ílò ún	ílò ún	ílò ún	ílò ún	'he/she is sick'
Gwúma	gwámá	gwámá	Gwúma	gwúma	gwúma	'greet them'
Ógwugwu	áchíkwu/íkéké	áchíkwu/íkéké	Áchíkwu	íkékéá	chíkwu	'bone'
Agéun	Ébíjèùgéun	ólíẹ	ólíẹ	ébíjèòlíẹ	ébíjèùgéun	'needle'
Kúchá	Álé	Álé	Íkúchá	Álé	Álé	'nail'

According to Ikani (2010:17), language varieties should have some basic qualities for them to be deemed as dialects. One of such qualities is mutual intelligibility. By definition, mutual intelligibility can be defined as a relationship between languages or dialects in which speakers of different but related varieties can readily understand one another without prior familiarity or special effort. Or, it refers to different varieties or dialects of a particular language which are understood by all the speakers of that language. Similarly, it can also be defined as a situation in which two or more speakers of a language (or of closely related languages) can understand one another. Simply put, mutual intelligibility is a situation where speaker of A understands speaker of B, and speaker B understands A, where A and B are two speech forms. If there is mutual intelligibility, A and B are therefore dialects of the same language

✚ Registers

According to Wardhaugh (2010:48), registers are sets of language items (words, terms or terminologies) associated with discrete occupational or social groups. OR, register, in a more general sense, means the language used by a group of people who share similar occupation (work) or interests, such as doctors or lawyers. Hudson (1996:45) reports that register is widely used in sociolinguistics to refer to varieties according to use. He further says that your dialect

(a variety of your language) shows who (or what) you are, while your register shows what you are doing (your occupation). Note that jargon is an alternative term that is sometimes used for register. Occupationally, surgeons, airline pilots, bank managers, sales clerk, jazz fans, pimps, etc. employ different registers.

On one hand, register is the aspect of language that refers to formality or informality. It refers to language of a type that is used in a particular social situation. Formal language should be used in formal social situations, and informal language in informal situations. For example, when deciding on the vocabulary for your piece of writing or speech, you must be careful that you do not use very informal words in a piece of writing or speech that is formal, such as a company's report. Conversely, you must be careful not to use very formal words in a piece of writing or speech that is informal. Some dictionaries, particularly those specially designed for use by learners of English as a foreign or second language, often indicate which words are formal and which are informal.

On the other hand, Hudson (1996:47) states there is a point of similarity between dialects and registers, and that is that they overlap considerably – one person's dialect is another person's register. For example, the items which one person uses under all circumstances, however informal, may be used by someone else only on the most formal occasions. This is the relation between 'native' speakers of

standard and non-standard dialects. Forms which are part of the standard speaker's 'dialect' are part of a special 'register' for the non-standard speaker – a serious social inequality.

Factors Influencing Register

Michael Halliday (1978) as cited in Hudson (1996:46) distinguishes three different factors that can influence the use of register. They include: field, mode and tenor. According to him (Halliday), field is concerned with the purpose and subject-matter (topic or theme) of the communication; mode refers to the means by which communication takes place – either verbal, nonverbal or written; and tenor refers to the relationship between participants (interlocutors) in a communication. This slogan may help your memory: field refers to 'why' and 'about what' a communication takes place; mode is about 'how'; and tenor is about 'to whom', that is, how the speaker views the person addressed.

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