

Identified Pattern of Needs in Learning Basic Igbo Language Skills: An Empirical Report

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Abstract

This article focuses on pattern of needs for basic Igbo skills as identified by teachers and learners of General Igbo courses (Igbo for General Studies: Igbo GS) in Nigerian tertiary institutions. With one research question, one null hypothesis, the article creates awareness on the importance of needs-based course designs on/of Nigerian languages for GS for greater learner effectiveness. The article was culled from the 2015/2016 study of Igbo GS programme of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. With survey design, data were collected from a sample of 2 Igbo native-speaking teachers and 200 non-Igbo indigenous undergraduates in Igbo GS/L2 cluster. Validated structured questionnaire with open and closed ends formed instrument of data collection administered to respondents. Data were descriptively analysed with statistical package of social sciences version 20.0 to get mean, standard deviation, correlation and *t*-test. Findings: For students, order of importance of basic Igbo skills is: listening, speaking, reading and writing. For lecturers, the order is: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Lecturers' and students' results correlated significantly with no significant difference. There were implications for pedagogical enhancement. The article advocates for implementation of findings and recommendations from Nwankwere (2019) in establishing Nigerian languages as GS/L2 courses in tertiary institutions for optimal national development.

Keywords: Second Language Learning; General Igbo; Course Designs; Needs Analysis; National Development.

Introduction

Language teaching is a universal human activity, which has existed since time immemorial and has continued to expand as people from different geographical and linguistic divides and backgrounds get affected through contact. This human contact has given rise to the search for mutual understanding in order to bridge the resultant communication gaps through various modes both unofficially and unconsciously (language acquisition), and, officially and consciously (language learning). Language experts like Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) and Spolsky (1990) describe the conscious process as second language (L2) learning; that is, learning a language through formal instruction after a first language (L1) has been acquired. For over ten years now, a number of Nigerian tertiary institutions including Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK) (Nnamdi Azikiwe University, (2011); Chukwemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli; Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe and Federal Poly-technique, Oko all in Anambra State; University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Institute of Management and Technology both in Enugu State; Federal University of Technology, Owerri in Imo State; and recently, Imo State University, Owerri and Abia State University, Okigwe; Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Imo State, among others, have established a Nigerian language, Igbo, as general courses learnt by all newly admitted undergraduate students. However, only UNIZIK has two streams of Igbo GS: Igbo GS/L1 for all undergraduate students who are of Igbo origin and Igbo GS/L2 for all students who are not of Igbo origin. Though Nigeria's National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) does not provide for teaching any Nigerian language for general purposes, particularly for tertiary education, teaching Nigerian languages, for example, Igbo, as general courses at tertiary level of education is viewed by this article as second language teaching. In consonance with this view, Bhatia (2010, 417) says that this type of context is known in adult language acquisition research, where "the term second language is used in a wider sense to include both the acquisition of a second language which may or may not be foreign to a country".

It became necessary to examine the Igbo GS/L2 programme to be abreast of its progress or achievement level. Since UNIZIK's Igbo GS is the most developed, Nwankwere (2019) chose UNIZIK as a case study. To meet an important demand in an initial needs analysis (NA) study, a development needs analysis (DNA) of UNIZIK's Igbo GS was done to understand the Igbo learners' needs for basic Igbo skills and the knowledge of these skills they identify as necessary for them to perform their communicative roles in Igbo more

effectively. According to Eslami-Rasekh & Valizadeh (2004), GS courses are seen to be learner-centred and include all stakeholders' voices, particularly the learners, in the programme from the onset. This also implies employing an evaluative activity called needs analysis (NA), to assess such a language programme continuously, in order to ensure its usefulness to a particular set of learners. In Igbo linguistics, a number of needs-based studies in the teaching and learning of Nigerian languages like Igbo has been carried out, including Agbedo (2002), Ahamefule & Mbah (2013) and Ahamefule, Okoye & Babarinde (2013), which are all small scale private research papers. However, Nwankwere (2019) is the pioneer NA study of a Nigerian language, Igbo, as a GS course in an institutionalised, independent context as well as the study of a full Igbo GS/L2 programme studies by all undergraduate students who are not of Igbo origin.

In Nwankwere (2019), both UNIZIK students and lecturers identified the order of importance of the four basic language skills in L2 learning, which synchronises with the natural order of L1 acquisition of these basic language skills. Importantly, Nwankwere (2019) reveals that by so doing, both students and lecturers identified the pattern of needs for the four basic Igbo skills and the need to teach all the four skills from the onset, thus, admitting the current poor status of the programme. Though UNIZIK Management emphasises focus on the Igbo L2 learners' spoken ability in Igbo, Nwankwere (2019) further reports that in actual practice in the Igbo GS/L2 classroom, due to lack of vocabulary teaching or development through listening to facilitate the speaking skill, in the programme learners' oral performance is weak. The learners want to be actively involved in class, for example, they want get opportunities to speak in class or do class presentations/speeches in Igbo because they understand that practice makes perfect. This article attempts to make Nwankwere's (2019) findings public with regard to the need for the four basic Igbo skills in the Igbo GS/L2 courses. The article creates awareness and advocates for the implementation of the findings of Nwankwere (2019) in the Igbo GS/L2 programme. This position is in line with experts' views for enhanced learner effectiveness, and, language and societal development.

The study uses needs analysis (NA) to examine the teaching and learning of the Igbo GS/L2 in order to discover the pattern of needs for the basic Igbo language skills and the order of importance of these skills as identified by students and lecturers. A hypothesis, there is no significant difference between the pattern of needs for basic Igbo skills identified by students and lecturers, was used to test the level of significance in any difference that may

exist in the views of both respondents. Being the first needs-based investigation of a Nigerian language, Igbo, as a GS course, awareness is raised on the need to establish at least Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba as GS courses, not just at tertiary level, but at all levels of education in Nigeria. Doing so would lead to taking numerous developmental steps, like, enhancing the engineering of copious vocabulary in all areas of human life yielding various school disciplines. Such bold attempts would, among other benefits, definitely pave way to content teaching of all school disciplines in Nigerian languages; establishment of dictionaries, etc. On this note, it is worthy to state that Nigeria is now awake to this need as many of her organs/agencies, e.g., Tertiary Education and Trust Fund (TETFUND), have started disbursing grants for projects to develop Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba metalanguages in various disciplines, like Engineering, Physics, ICT, Linguistics, etc. An example is the grant for 2020 National Research Tertiary Education Fund (TETFUND) won by Professor Harrison Adeniyi of Lagos State University and former President of Linguistic Association of Nigeria (LAN), for Developing Functional Metalanguage for the 21st Century Needs of the Nigerian National Languages. These moves are highly invaluable in elevating Nigerian languages and their teaching and learning towards languages for specific purposes.

Literature review

According to experts, language teaching both for general or basic (see Canale & Swain, (1980) for a full discussion) and specific purposes (LGP/LSP) at tertiary level of education consists of developing four basic or primary or essential language skills in learners to enable them perform effectively (see Aydoğan & Akbarov (2014) on the need to teach the four basic language skills at the university level). The experience of learners who are encountering the target language (TL) for the first time, especially in their first two to four weeks of Igbo GS/L2 lecture, should be likened to human babies acquiring their mother tongue (MT) or L1. This task goes in a sequential manner, starting with development of the verbal/oral receptive skill of listening which bequeaths adequate vocabulary load to learners. This foundation then facilitates the verbal/oral production skill of speaking for effective linguistic output or performance or communication. So, for the learners to speak, a lot of linguistic input is required through exposure to several valuable hours of listening to spoken language on different TL contexts. This amount and manner of exposure is what Krashen (1985) calls comprehensible input. For the Igbo L2 learners, the resultant output ensures appropriate interaction in Igbo with the teacher and fellow learners, right from the classroom to the real world interaction with native and non-native speakers of Igbo in the

Igbo community of practice outside the classroom context. These two verbal/oral skills lead to onset of the literacy skills, which start with the receptive skill of reading. Here, the learners are guided to read several TL texts in various general contexts to expose them to different types of written texts and styles of writing. The knowledge acquired here enables them through regular practice to exhibit desired writing activities, the production skill for literacy. As Nwankwere (2019) observes, the Igbo GS/L2 programme as it is today, only emphasises the learners' ability to speak Igbo in order to communicate with the Igbo people in the Igbo speech community. According to the Senate of Nnamdi Azikiwe University (2012), the focus is not on literacy but on the learners' ability to speak Igbo to promote the use of Igbo in the Igbo speech community. Consequently, a type of what could be called partial immersion (see Grenoble, 2010 for details) is being practiced in the classroom. Here, Igbo is taught as what Grenoble (2010, 123) calls 'secondary subject', which "requires a small commitment of time and resources" and as such achieves only a minute range of uses. This situation is counter developmental.

It is said that anything worth doing at all is worth doing well. As such, the current condition under which Nigerian languages, like Igbo are being taught as GS could be seen as myopic or parochial and contrary to the position of experts (see Lewis, n.d.; Milne, 2017; EnglishMate, 2017; TranslateDay, 2018; Ramadan, 2019 on this point). For instance, Lewis (n.d.) proposes learning the four basic language skills simultaneously from the beginning because they complement each other. He further explicates that the skills work in pairs; hence, the importance of focusing more on listening to facilitate the speaking abilities of learners of a new language. Similarly, to facilitate learners' writing abilities, more focus should be on reading texts written on different TL contexts. This implies that learners must consume (Lewis, n.d.) TL first by listening and comprehending what they listen to in order to produce by speaking. Similarly, they must consume TL by reading and comprehending what they read in order to produce by writing in the TL.

What the above named experts say about English can be generalised to most other languages, including the Igbo language. For instance, Ramadan (2019) states the importance of teaching and developing the four language skills in learners to enable them achieve high level TL comprehension and production. Supporting this view, English Mate (2017) adds that a learner cannot be a well-rounded communicator without being proficient in the four language skills which open up opportunities of creating contexts in which to use the language confidently for various purposes. Columbia Gorge Community College (n.d.)

assents to the foregoing by saying that in language teaching, it is necessary to address or teach the four skills and whenever possible, activities that integrate all four skills should be used since each skill reinforces the other. To further buttress this view Lewis (n.d.) describes the four basic language skills as the four foundational skills of language learning. This he says is because without building upon them learners would not be well-rounded speakers of the TL. These opinions support the position of this article that teaching all skills to language learners, particularly in an academic setting like that of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, a tertiary institution, is a necessity if the learners must acquire high level of proficiency in the TL as they desire. Furtherance to this position, apart from interaction with Igbo native speakers, the undergraduate students from diverse disciplines usually come in contact with Igbo data for purposes of analysis, among others, in the course of their studies.

Further reasons from the literature in support of the foregoing, that is, the four basic Igbo skills should be taught simultaneously in the Igbo GS/L2 classroom, are that the class of learners in the study, undergraduates in tertiary institutions, fall under West Virginia Department of Education's (WVDE) (2013-14) adult learners who can learn TL faster than children because they have already developed proficiency in another language. Again, their native language literacy, or literacy in L1 where L1 is not native language of some of the learners, affects second language learning and serves to shorten the time it takes such learners to become proficient in a TL. This being the case, the subjects of this study should be exposed to all basic skills since they are literate in English; and, supposedly in their L1 or MT, and probably, in addition to another Nigerian language which is not their L1 or MT. This assertion is made because some students told the researcher (informally) that they learnt either Hausa or Yoruba or any other Nigerian language at the lower levels of education because they were lucky to attend schools that implemented the language provisions of the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004). Another reason which the researcher noted during classroom observation is that the students need to write down their notes in Igbo during lectures. For their notes in class, many students write mostly the English explanations and translations supplied by the teachers, while a few write the Igbo as written on the whiteboard by the teachers. As well, they need to read and understand the Igbo GS course books, which are all in Igbo medium. Their lecturers usually ask them to read certain portions of their texts at home and ask them questions in class the subsequent lecture period on what they were asked to read. Most importantly, in order to perform well and pass the courses, the students need to read and comprehend their end of semester exam

questions, which are also solely in Igbo medium. Many students stated and decried this particular point of lack of comprehension of the exam questions that are all in Igbo as causing their failure and repeat of the Igbo GS/L2 courses for two or three sessions. In learner-centred L2 teaching, experts recommend mixed code medium or what Lewis (n.d.) calls dual language for the benefit of early L2 learners to facilitate comprehension, which leads to greater effectiveness. Another major advantage of the Igbo GS/L2 programme is that it is being done in Igbo speaking environment. One of the major setbacks experienced by L2 learners is that of being millions of kilometres away from the native speakers of the TL. But, in the case of Nigerian languages like Igbo, the Igbo GS/L2 learners are in Igbo land and should be made to get all the advantages offered by the proximity of Igbo native speakers to them.

Methodology

The study primarily used survey design or quantitative paradigm with questionnaire. The design allowed for collection of data either from only a few people, or from a relatively large number of people serving as a representative sample of the total population under study (Sasidharan, 2012). Also, using a small sample enabled the researcher to attempt making generalisation about the population of the study. The study's validity and reliability were enhanced by using triangulation of methods and sources (Long, 2005) or mixed method approach (Rasinger, 2010), which as well served to reduce bias and deal with the incomplete nature of a single method.

The study used a target population of nine Igbo lecturers and 9211 first year undergraduate regular students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, South-east Nigeria, who enrolled for Igbo GS in the 2015/2016 academic session (SGS Registration Report, 2016a). An accessible population of 768 non-Igbo students, from the 14 faculties (8.3% of 9211), in the Igbo GS/L2 class and their two Igbo lecturers were identified. Employing voluntary ethical condition (see Miles & Huberman, 1994; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012; *Educational Research for Social Change*, 2015 and others for detailed explanation), 237 (30.85%) were selected as the representative population from 768 non-Igbo students in the Igbo GS/L2 class, together with the only 2 lecturers of the Igbo GS/L2 class. These 237 students from the 14 faculties attended GS examinations and voluntarily participated in the survey as ethically stipulated. Thus, a 100% return rate was achieved since 237 questionnaires distributed were received on the spot. Later, following data reduction principle of Miles & Huberman (1994), a sample population of 200 non-Igbo students, 97 males and 103

females, was selected for analysis. The 200 filled questionnaires (84.4% of 237 and about 26% of the accessible population of 768) were selected by screening the 237 questionnaires and removing the ones with scanty information. This sample population of 200 students assured a more accurate statistical figure for analysis. A mixed method (Rasinger, 2010) sampling technique was used. It is a form of triangulation of aspects of different sampling techniques: stratified sampling (SS), stratified random sampling (SRS) and cluster sampling (CS). In so doing, each faculty was viewed as a stratum while each Igbo GS class was an independent cluster: the Igbo GS/L1 cluster of Igbo indigenes and the Igbo GS/L2 cluster of non-Igbo indigenes. Stratified random sampling applied because all non-Igbo students from all faculties had equal chances of participation. However, the questionnaire was administered to only non-Igbo students who volunteered to participate in the study. Note that the study did not use sociological factors as variables. The reason is that generally speaking, needs analysts are mostly interested in human persons, males and/or females (even if it is one person representing a group) that identify the needs for a particular language skill(s) for whatever purpose(s); and, the effect(s) of the identified needs on the development of such a language.

The instrument for data collection was the structured questionnaire with sections for both closed and open questions. The questionnaire was mainly based on Seedhouse (1995), Sasidharan (2012) and Tzotzou (2014), which were modified and adopted to suit the study. The questionnaire has three major sections: background of the respondents, the closed questions and the open questions. The closed questions have six subsections, the first of which is on the basic skills, which answers research question (RQ) 1, on which this article is based. This subsection required the respondents to choose the four basic skills according to the order of importance of each skill to them by writing ordinary code numbers 1-4 (and not scales) as in: 1 for 'Most Important', 2 for 'Very Important', 3 for 'Important' and 4 for 'Least Important'. This subsection of the questionnaire was based only on frequency and percentages, while the other five subsections were based on 4-point Likert scales. The questionnaire was validated at various stages by experts in Linguistics and Education. As well, the issue of validity was consolidated by using multiple methods and sources of data, as stated earlier on. The instrument was piloted at the end of the second semester of 2014/2015 academic session with 30 second year undergraduate students and two teachers of the same department with the students at the research site. That session, the two lecturers taught the 30 students different Igbo courses, which were not Igbo GS courses. Then, further advice was sought from the supervisor and the other experts about the final draft of

the teacher and the student copies of the questionnaire. The researcher personally administered the instrument on the lecturers. But, the researcher and six assistants administered the students' questionnaire to them on three consecutive days, according to their faculties and in three examination halls, on each faculty's specific day for GS examinations. These respondents were notified, during the last two weeks of lectures, of the questionnaire and their involvement and confidentiality, and were assured of their freedom to participate or not. The quantitative data were first presented in a table of frequencies and percentages. Then the descriptive statistics of the data were done with International Business Machine (IBM) statistical package of the social sciences (SPSS) (2012) version 20.0. Mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD or \pm) were used to report the answer to the research question (RQ). Note that with SPSS, a bench mark mean (\bar{X}) score of 2.500 is usually set. But, needs analysts do not necessarily attach much importance to such bench marks because in language learning, even one learner is highly cherished. The views of both lecturers and students were correlated with IBM SPSS (2014) Pearson correlation coefficient; while IBM SPSS (2017) Levene's *t*-test was used to test independent samples in order to test the hypothesis. Note that the views of both sets of respondent were the independent variables while the four basic Igbo skills were the dependent variables in the study.

Results

In order to gain an overall insight into the RQ, Table 1 below gives a summary of the students' voice (Eslami-Rasekh and Valizadeh, 2004) and the preference scale of the skills with regard to how they need each of the four basic Igbo skills in their order of importance to them. The analysis of this section of the questionnaire started with frequency and percentages. Key to abbreviations: MI = most important, VI = very important, I = important, LI = least important, TR = total responses, NR = no response, TSP = total sample population, T% = total percentage; \bar{X} = mean, SD or \pm = standard deviation; r = correlation value; P = probability value; p = level of significance; df = degree of freedom; CI = confidence interval. Note that in presenting the statistical results, only three decimal places are taken without approximation. As well, note that the 0.000 standard deviation (SD) of a result, as expressed below, indicates a unanimous agreement of all respondents about an item as was the case with both lecturers. However, according to statisticians, such SD of 0.000 can also be expressed as 0.001 to indicate that at some point, the decimal would always end with '.1'. Below is Table 1.

Table1: Importance of 4 basic Igbo language skills: Students

Skills	MI	%	VI	%	I	%	LI	%	TR	%	NR	%	TS	T	X	SD
													P	%		
Speaking	57	28.5	30	15	4	2	13	6.5	104	52	96	48	200	100	3.247	1.007
Listening	96	48	12	6	1	5	6	3	124	62	76	38	200	100	3.596	0.835
Writing	15	7.5	9	4.5	2	10.5	32	16	77	38.5	123	61.5	200	100	2.105	1.149
Reading	35	17.5	13	6.5	3	15	15	7.5	93	46.5	107	53.5	200	100	2.766	1.130

In terms of listening, (96/48%) students identified it as their *most important* skill, followed by (12/6%) students to whom listening is very important, (10/5%) to whom it is important and (6/3%) of them to whom it is least important in that order ($X 3.596 \pm 0.835$). It is followed by speaking with (57/28.5%) students who identified it as their *most important* skill, (30/15%) of them identified it as very important to them, (4/2%) of said it was important to them, while (13/6.5%) of them said it was of least important to them ($X 3.247 \pm 1.007$). The 3rd highest skill is reading ($X 2.766 \pm 1.130$), which is *most important* to (35/17.5%) students, *very important* to (13/6.5%) students, *important* to (30/15%) students and *least important* to (15/7.5%) students respectively. The 4th basic skill was writing ($X 2.105 \pm 1.149$), which was *most important* to (15/7.5%) students, *very important* to (9/4.5%) students, *important* to (21/10.5%) students and *least important* to (32/16%) students respectively. From this result, judging from the first column, the students recognised listening as the most important language skill, followed by speaking, reading and writing respectively. And this reality has strong pedagogical implications in teaching these skills. It is observed that several students did not respond to all aspects of this item, such that (76/38%), (96/48%), (123/61.5%) and (107/53.5%) of them did not respond to listening, speaking, reading and writing respectively. This scenario was attributable to 33% of the students who learnt Igbo at the lower levels and some others who said they are not

interested in learning Igbo. Again, many students just ticked only a skill which they believed to be most important to them; some ticked two skills; some simply wrote either 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 in any box of their choice. However, quite a good number responded very well to the question to yield the above results. The result from the two lecturers' responses is taken below.

The importance of the four basic Igbo language skills for lecturers

Both lecturers identified the four basic Igbo language skills as important to the learners. Both of them identified the order of importance with listening ($X\ 4.000 \pm 0.000$) as the most important basic Igbo language skill needed by the learners. The second most important skill was speaking ($X\ 3.000 \pm 0.000$), while reading ($X\ 2.000 \pm 0.000$) was the third most important skill and lastly, writing ($X\ 1.000 \pm 0.000$) was the fourth most important Igbo language skill needed by the Igbo GS/L2 learners at this stage. The analysis showed that both lecturers unanimously identified the order of importance of the four basic skills as presented. The above analyses clearly indicate that both students and lecturers share similar view on the need to teach the four basic skills to enable students to develop proficiency in them for higher communicative effectiveness. The result of Pearson's correlation test buttresses this claim and is presented below.

Table 2: Correlation of students' & lecturers' views on pattern of needs for four basic Igbo skills

		Correlations	
		STUDENT SKILLS	LECTURERS SKILLS
STUDENT SKILLS	Pearson Correlation	1	.990**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.005
	N	4	4
LECTURERS SKILLS	Pearson Correlation	.990**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.005	
	N	4	4

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The result of IBM SPSS Pearson *r* or correlation coefficient test showed that the views of students and lecturers correlated well on the order of importance of the 4 basic skills as follows: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Correlation was significant at the 0.01/0.010 level (with *r*-value: 0.990, and P-value: 0.005), meaning that both students and lecturers were of the same view that all the basic Igbo skills are needed. Hence, all the skills are relevant and need to be specifically taught and learnt. The result was 1-tailed, implying that the identified learners' needs for all basic Igbo skills runs contrary to UNIZIK Management's aim of teaching students only oral skills, which influences the current situation reflecting the need for teachers to teach all the skills. Thus, in terms of the causal relationship between the views of both sets of respondents, the students' identified need to learn the basic Igbo skills necessitates the need for lecturers to teach all the skills. Table 3a below shows the result of the *t*-test:

Table 3a: *t*-test for students' & lecturers' views on pattern of needs for four basic Igbo skills

Group statistics

	Variables	N (skills)	Mean	SD	Std. Mean	Error
Skills	Students' views	4	2.9325	.64531	.32266	
	Lecturers' views	4	2.5000	1.2909	.64550	

Table 3a is a summary showing the group statistics of the result of the *t*-test on the views of the students and lecturers on the order of importance of the four basic Igbo language skills. For the students, the mean was 2.932 with standard deviation of 0.645, with standard error of mean being 0.322; while the lecturers had mean of 2.500 with standard deviation of 1.290, with standard error of mean being 0.645. Table 3b below presents the *t*-test results in more details.

Table 3b: *t*-test of views of students and lecturers on pattern of needs for 4 basic Igbo skills

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differences	Std. Error Differences	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SKILLS	Equal variances assumed	2.416	.171	.599	6	.571	.43250	.72165	-1.33330	2.19830
	Equal variances not assumed			.599	4.411	.578	.43250	.72165	-1.49958	2.36458

As observed from Table 3b, the result of IBM SPSS Levene's *t*-test showed equal *t* value of 0.599 for both equal variances assumed and equal variances not assumed at 0.05 alpha levels and a 95% confidence interval (CI) of the difference. The degree of freedom (df) for equal variances assumed is 6, while df for equal variances not assumed is 4.411. This result implies that at *p* level (level of significance) of 0.571 for equal variances assumed and 0.578 for equal variances not assumed, there was no significant difference in the views of both sets of respondents. It implies that both students and lecturers had the same opinion or views. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. The result was 2-tailed, meaning that the views of both students and lecturers influenced each other. Again, the causal relationship between them indicates that the students' identified need to learn the four basic Igbo skills has a future expectation of pedagogical changes on the part of the lecturers. Realisation of this expectation will invariably influence learners' motivation to learn as well as their communicative effectiveness.

The identified pattern is: listening, speaking, reading, writing, i.e., receptive skill followed by or closely followed by production skill: listening versus speaking; reading versus writing. As methods and other pedagogical requirements improve, students get motivated and become more effective learners and users of Igbo and Igbo GS/L2 programme gets more developed from general to academic, professional and other specific purposes.

Discussion

Regarding the need for the four basic language (Igbo) skills and their order of importance identified by both lecturers and students, the result is seen to be in consonance with the natural process of first language acquisition proposed by experts. For instance, Krashen (1985) posits that exposure to comprehensible input at the listening stage (reception) facilitates the next stage in language acquisition, which is speaking ability (production). In this respect, the result which shows the identification of the need for the four basic skills is also seen to be in agreement with Canale and Swain's (1980) position that this class of language learners, usually called beginners, need oral or speaking skill most, to be able to survive in their new environment. As such, in the classroom they need a high level of listening and adequate basic vocabulary "for effective usage in everyday situations" (Sasidharan, 2012: 63). This means that the early development of both the listening skill and the basic vocabulary which would facilitate speaking is desirable. However, this primary need is noted to be at the initial stage, the point of arrival into the new community or onset of L2 learning. With time, L2 learners begin to desire knowledge of the 4 basic skills for various uses. For instance, in item 2D44 of the data, the students want to get opportunities to speak in class or do class presentations/speeches in Igbo ($X 2.745 \pm 1.098$). They want to read and comprehend their course materials which are in TL medium (item 2C29: $X 2.860 \pm 1.022$). As well, they want to write, read/comprehend lecture notes in Igbo (in item 2C30 ($X 2.865 \pm 0.995$), etc. Most importantly, they need to read and comprehend *their examination questions* (item no. 2C31: $X 2.760 \pm 1.052$), during the end of semester computer based test (CBT), in order to select the right options and perform well. This stand is buttressed by the result which shows that students identified listening as the most important basic Igbo skill (3.596 ± 0.835), followed by speaking (3.248 ± 1.007), reading (2.766 ± 1.130) and writing (2.105 ± 1.149).

Furthermore, the result also agrees with the literature on the notion that the receptive skills precede the productive skills at each stage of acquisition and/or leaning. Hence, for effectiveness in oral ability, listening (reception) precedes speaking (production); whereas

for effective literacy skills, reading (reception) precedes writing (production). This implies that for the receptive skills, listening needs to be profusely emphasised right from the beginning to enable learners' effectiveness in speaking. And for the production skills, a lot of training in the reading skill needs to be incorporated to enable learners advance in writing. Despite the low mean scores of some items under the basic skills, like reading (MS 2.766) and especially writing (MS 2.105), the results indicate that all the skills need to be more consciously taught to help the learners achieve more effectiveness. Thus, the result agrees with the literature that this class of L2 learners need to develop all the skills simultaneously. This need for the four basic language skills usually graduates into content-based language teaching (Short, 2010), an aspect of language for specific purposes, a very high stage of language development.

Talking about development of the TL, which is consistent with learners' development and effectiveness in TL, about 30% of the students are not only interested in learning TL for entertainment or enjoyment but also desire to be proficient in Igbo for more concrete achievements like, securing jobs that would demand the use of Igbo. They believe that learning Igbo well would provide prospects of working within or outside Nigeria in places like United States of America, China, and so on. Learning the four skills simultaneously is exactly the way Igbo people, other Nigerians should learn and use their languages. This way Nigerians and other nonnative speakers of different world languages, such as English, French, German, Chinese, and so on, learnt and still learn and use such languages in different contexts or works of life where they do not even use their own mother tongues. It becomes more worrisome that most Nigerians who are proficient in foreign languages do not have only oral ability in their MTs. However, there is good prospect for Nigerian languages because many of the undergraduates under study identified that learning Basic Igbo has motivated them enough. According to them, they are ready to further their learning Igbo to high proficient levels to be able to employ the knowledge gained in their individual disciplines. For instance, for item 2E74 (extending Igbo GS to year 3), students of Faculties of Engineering, Environmental, Health, Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, Physical and Social Sciences identify this need, each faculty scoring above X 2.660. In addition, students of Faculties of Agriculture, Environmental and Physical Sciences, with each faculty scoring above X 2.500, would like Igbo GS to be taught up to their final year; whereas, students of Faculty of Agric (X 3.250), and those of Faculties of Education and Health (X 2.500) would want to write 50% of their final year project in Igbo. These results give a clear indication of the need for content-based teaching. The students even want to be highly proficient in

Igbo to become writers and publishers in their disciplines using Igbo (item 2C42 with X 2.085 ± 1.008). This is another item that indicates content-based teaching of Igbo GS/L2.

Conclusion

At the end of the study, it was concluded that both non-Igbo undergraduates who learnt Igbo L2 through the Igbo GS programme of UNIZIK and the teachers who taught them identified the pattern of needs for learning four basic Igbo skills. The pattern is in the order of: listening, speaking, reading and writing. They also identified the need to expose learners to all these four skills from the onset of teaching and learning to enhance learners' effectiveness. Thus, there is need to adopt learner-centredness by including learner voice in Nigerian languages' programmes through NA. Needs analysis, among other things, provides for continual evaluation processes to ensure appropriateness of such programmes to a group of learners.

Pedagogically, in order to meet the needs of the learners, there is need for proper review of current practices in such Nigerian languages like Igbo already existing as a GS course. A better way forward includes outright teaching of all the four basic language skills, inculcating other and more current and appropriate methods and materials, as well as including such appropriate materials as supplements to existing ones to improve the current situation. Concerning the students' needs in relation to the 4 basic Igbo skills, it is recommendable to plan for teaching all basic skills to address these identified needs as proposed for such adult L2 learners by experts. Several scholars (example, Iscan, 2017) recommend the use of eclectic methods in training learners to develop different skills in the TL. Again, L2 learners need to imbibe copious TL vocabulary before they can produce (receptivity vs. productivity). Listening (the verbal/oral receptive skill) is very essential for oral productivity whereas reading (the literacy receptive skill) is essential for writing and eventual literacy. Hence, at this very beginning, the Igbo GS/L2 learners need a lot of training in listening to spoken Igbo rendered through various media, using various techniques, both in and out of class to facilitate speaking.

There is need to focus students' attention on developing real-world listening in Igbo, such as listening to Igbo radio/TV programmes like discussions, plays, films, etc. Using Igbo strategies in the classroom: simulations of conversations; scrabble games (for example, *ítū òkwè* 'local seed game like draught or checker game'); scramble games (e.g., unscrambling picture or written story) and role plays (e.g., *ígū íhé ògūgū* 'reading out different texts',

ákúkó ùwà, ‘news casting’, *ákúkó ùghā* ‘formulated news/stories’); use of songs, tongue twisters, riddles and jokes; describing how to process palm products, different types of traditional drinks and food, how to prepare different delicacies such as *úkwà* ‘breadfruit’, *àbàchà/èbérébé* ‘tapioca’ and *ùgbá* ‘oilbean’ among others. In order to promote learners’ acquisition of basic Igbo skills as well as facilitate content teaching, it is always beneficial to lead learners on excursions into the Igbo communities to witness for themselves the Igbo ways of doing things; as well as to invite both educated and uneducated Igbo specialists to address learners in-class. Consequently, concerted efforts at learners’ vocabulary development and/or expansion are required.

From the foregoing, the inculcation of various techniques of modern methods of teaching all language skills in Igbo is implicated. On the issue of developing adult learners’ verbal skills (listening and speaking), especially at the university, results from the study agree with scholars’ views that emphasis needs to be given to their reading and writing skills which according to Sasidharan (2012) are inseparable. In summary, the article recommends in-service training for Igbo GS teachers as well as recruiting more teachers. Teachers of Igbo GS need to have knowledge of linguistics and current language pedagogical practices for enhanced productivity. Different aspects of oral technique of language teaching geared towards current learner-centredness should be adopted, e.g., conversational Igbo (Nwaozuzu, 2016). Since the major focus of the programme is for learners’ oral communication, oral-based evaluation processes suitable for basic learners (Canale & Swain, 2008; Wu, 2012) are desirable. Nigeria’s *NPE* (FRN, 2004: 19) supports this method, stating that Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba L2 “shall be taught with emphasis on orality”. ‘Orality’ could be understood as ‘oral’, described as “a term used to stress that a spoken form of language is used and taught as opposed to a written form, as in *an oral test, an oral examination*” (Richards, Schmidt, Kendrick and Kim (2002, 376). This provision suggests adopting formative assessment processes. In addition, supplementary materials should be specifically developed and used in line with current needs-based and learner-centred language teaching approaches. It is expected that addressing these issues and putting more productive measures in place

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