

Contributions of Ahiajoku Lecture Series in Creating Awareness and Preservation of Indigenous Language in South East, Nigeria.

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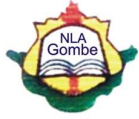
Abstract

This paper investigated the contributions of Ahiajoku lecture series in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East, Nigeria. In this contemporary world, the need for indigenous languages for lifelong learning in any society is germane. The ability to communicate clearly is a key function for all people. The study was guided by five research questions. This study adopted web-based survey research design using Google form questionnaire designed on a four-point rating scale as the instrument for data collection. The total population of this study was 320 consisting of one hundred and fifty (150) staff in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts, and one hundred and seventy (170) staff in the Ministry of Information and Strategy. The entire population was adopted as a sample. Out of the 320 copies of the Google form sent, 200 responses were received. Data obtained from respondents were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) and 2.50 was the midpoint. Findings of the study revealed that: Ahiajoku lecture series have contributed in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East Nigeria to a high extent; and there are so many challenges facing the contributions of Ahiajoku lecture series in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East, Nigeria which include the problem of integrating it into education system in South East, Nigeria. The study recommends that every effort should be made to make the creation of awareness and preservation of indigenous language through Ahiajoku lecture series to a very high extent and policies should be put in place to have Ahiajoku Institutes in universities in South East, Nigeria and abroad and furthermore, have the lecture series documented and deposited in libraries.

Keyword: Ahiajoku, Lecture, Awareness and Preservation, Indigenous Language, South East, Nigeria

Introduction

The ability to communicate clearly is a key function for all people. Being able to communicate effectively in an individual's first or home language connects a person to their ethnic group and helps to shape a person's identity. Anyakoroma, (2017) states that Indigenous Language (IL) is one of the most basic and veritable media of communication for lifelong learning, and a vehicle that drives culture. A people's culture is inseparable from



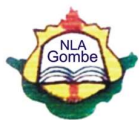
their indigenous language because it is vital in explaining their norms and values, thus aiding in the social, economic, and technological advancement of given societies. Cultural heritage and knowledge is passed on throughout each generation by language. Indigenous language in South East Nigeria is Igbo Language. South East covers the entire Imo, Enugu, Anambra, Abia, and Ebonyi States. Igbo language is one of the major languages recognized by Nigeria's language policy in South Eastern Nigeria. Igbo language functions as a tool for cultural revival, research, teaching, and learning in South East academic institutions and in the world at large (Nwaoke, 2019).

In Igbo land, most indigenous identity strongly follows a traditional language identity. In view of this Yusuf, Bello and Obafemi (2016) opined that language is the primary vehicle through which human culture is acquired, shared and transmitted. Language is a treasure of culture and self-identity. Without language, there is bound to be problem in the society for thoughts, ideas, information, and the society would become incommunicado. According to Olaoye (2013), language is a distinctively human system of communication based on oral and written symbols. It is the vehicle through which a people's culture is transmitted. Language is central to the sustenance of a group of people, for it is the vehicle through which other constituents of cultures are communicated. United Nations (2012) posits that language and culture is the promotion and protection of the rights and identity of indigenous peoples. The importance of language is summed up in the following quote,

Language is an essential part of, and intrinsically linked to, Indigenous people's ways of life, culture and identities, language embodies many indigenous values and concepts and contains indigenous people's histories and development. They are fundamental makers of indigenous peoples' distinctiveness and cohesiveness as a people.

The most effective engine of a people's culture is their mother tongue. This is a language a child first came in contact with in life. It is the language of the immediate environment. Oscar cited in Ogbudinkpa and Oluwalola (2023) considers the mother tongue as a tool which every human being relies on for learning and for self-expression Indigenous languages are treasures of our culture and self-identity. In other words, it is an indicator of history and self-identification. The number of young Nigerians becoming non-speakers of their mother tongue (MT) is increasing and if not checked, possibly through the introduction of mother tongue based bilingual education, may continue to endanger the local languages. Language shift is therefore, a changing trend in language choice in Nigeria particularly among young people (Igboanusi, cited in Uzo-Nwanebu, 2024).

Indigenous language describes cultural attachment to place, cultural heritage items, and puts meaning within cultural activities that people do. It is a phenomenon that fosters communication and enhances national development as it enables interactions for economic, educational, social, religious and political purposes (Benson, Okere & Nwauwa cited in Benson, Anyalebechi & Ariole, 2017). According to Nwadike cited in Anunobi (2023) indigenous language is the key to the heart of the people, if the key is lost, the people's heart is lost but if it is treasured and kept safe, it will unlock the door to untold riches which cannot be guessed out from the other door. She further stated that indigenous language helps in cultural sustainability. Cultural sustainability is the efforts to ensure that future generations can enjoy the same cultural experiences and traditions that the present is enjoying. It involves preserving the way of life of a people and preventing it from extinction and infiltration (interference) by other cultures. The antidote to that is propagation of the IL



through which a culture is expressed and presented. IL is a vehicle for cultural sustainability since through IL knowledge, skills, attitude and messages are passed from one generation to the other.

The inauguration of Ahiajoku lecture series in 1979 was to keep Igbo people connected to culture and strengthen feelings of pride and self-worth in Igboland. Ahiajoku lecture series is the symbol of Igbo people's cultural ideals in South Eastern Nigeria. Also it is one annual cultural celebration in which all the Igbos are united including the Diaspora Igbo in the West Indies and other places (Obioha, 2019). It also binds the Igbo people together in unity building relationships, and leading to the sustainable growth and development of the society generally.

However, there is need to have these lecture series in the library so that people can have access to them and so doing, awareness is created and the lecture series preserved. According to Olaifa (2014), the importance of libraries in language preservation and development is huge because libraries provides information in either written, electronic or audio visual form, which play a key role in creating literate environments and promoting literacy by offering relevant and attractive reading material for all.. Library can play a significant role in the documentation of indigenous language. Language documentation which is the recording in writing and audio-visual recording of grammar, vocabulary, and oral traditions (e.g. stories, songs, religions text) of endangered languages (Ani, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

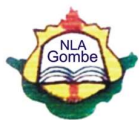
The language of the people is their root and identity. If this is lost, the people will continue to live in the shadow of other people's identity and culture. In Nigeria today, our indigenous languages has been relegated to the background hence the adoption of English as the official language. This is maintained by Adedji (2014) who noted that indigenous languages are not highly esteemed just like in Nigeria, where English and western education remain the vehicles of power and progress in life. There is need to reduce this neglect for indigenous language before it goes into extinction.

The Ahiajoku lecture series was instituted in Igboland to help in the sustenance of the indigenous language and culture. The researchers wonder if the Ahiajoku lecture series has been able to help create awareness and preserve the indigenous language in South-East, Nigeria. It seems that the library is left out in this great objective. This is the crux of this study.

Objectives of the Study

The general aim of the study was to investigate the contributions of Ahiajoku lecture series in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous languages in South East Nigeria. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Ascertain the ways through which Ahiajoku lecture series contribute in creating awareness of indigenous language in South East, Nigeria..
2. Examine ways through which Ahiajoku lecture series contribute for preservation of indigenous language in South East, Nigeria.



3. Determine the extent to which Ahiajoku lecture series has contributed in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East, Nigeria.
4. Identify the challenges of Ahiajoku lecture series in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East, Nigeria.
5. Identify the strategies for improvement of Ahiajoku lecture series in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language South East, Nigeria

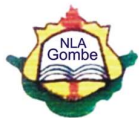
Review of Related Literature

A people 's culture is expressed in their agriculture, medicine, intellectual reasoning, moral values, attire, cuisine, kinship, marriages, work ethic, customs, beliefs, burials, social norms, religion, social and material traits, folktales, proverbs, myths, native wisdom ,etc., and language is the vehicle used to communicate these cultural components to the present and succeeding generations. How a culture survives depends on the people's capacity to transmit it to the succeeding generations. Languages is one of the indispensable resources of man, necessary for his day to day transaction and activities, language lives and dwells with the people, and the perception of the real world is construed by the language habit of the people or group of speakers (Emeka-Nwobia, 2015). According to Ivers (2023) indigenous peoples/ language are distinct social and cultural groups that share their natural resources where they live, occupy or from which they depend are inextricably linked to their identities, cultures, livelihoods, as well as their physical and spiritual well-being. Indigenous languages/communities celebrate diversity in learning and see this global support for teaching traditional forms of knowledge as a success.

Simply put, indigenous language is synonymous with native language, mother tongue and first language, a language that is original to a people, native to a locality and part of its culture is considered to be an indigenous language (Anumudu, 2014). There is no gainsaying the fact that, indigenous languages are very essential in giving children the opportunity to develop their native ability; rather they shy away from using them, and placing preference on foreign languages at the expense of our local languages. As it were, Anyakoroma (2017) identified that globalization has made people believe that it is when you speak the English language that you belong, which is not the case. This does not take cognizance of the fact that children are very impressionable at a tender age and once the love for indigenous languages is imbibed in them, they will take pride in such languages and want to promote everything that comes with it.

On the indigenous ways of knowing, learning and instructing, teaching, and training have been viewed by many postmodern scholars as important for ensuring that students and teachers whether indigenous or non-indigenous, are able to benefit from education in a culturally sensitive manner that draws upon, utilizes, promotes, and enhances awareness of indigenous traditions beyond the standard western curriculum of reading, writing, speaking, and arithmetic. Gaining an awareness of an indigenous language offers both indigenous and non-indigenous Igbos a good opportunity to better understand our combined history and to gain an understanding of Igbo's indigenous heritage of languages and culture. It is a positive way to help close the gap. According to Yen (2022), indigenous languages that underpin these methods contribute directly to biological and cultural diversity, poverty reduction, conflict resolution, food security, and ecosystem health.

Ahiajoku lecture series is an institution that describes indigenous ways of learning in different cultures in South East, Nigeria. Virtually, for all the communities in South East

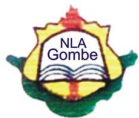


Nigeria, Igbo is the language of tradition and cultural communication in all sorts of formal and informal gatherings. It is learned at home, schools, colleges, and tertiary institutions. The Ahiajoku lecture series was instituted at Imo State being the heart of Igboland and the government agreed to recognize the feast of Ahiajoku as worth celebrating. It is a state of very wise and learned people; it is also a state which takes its slowest care before public recognition to gods and people (Echeruo, 1979). The inauguration of Ahiajoku lecture series was on culture and civilization of Igbo people in honour of the god of yam for cultivation, fertility, and harvest. Ahiajoku lecture series have transcended that ritual to embrace the projection of Igbo worldview through an annual intellectual harvest on some aspects of life in Igbo land including agriculture, education, economy, philosophy, art, religion, and politics. Ahiajoku lecture series can be regarded as one of the noblest achievements of the former Executive Governor of old Imo State, the Igbo icon and Elder Statesman, HE Sam Onunaka Mbakwe. During the celebration he ordered that the “ikoro – the biggest wooden slit-drum – remembering an ancestral pride, celebration, ceremony and war” be sounded in this respect to reawaken Ndi Igbo’s consciousness to their proud heritage, deserve an eternal place of honour for his vision and courage to pursue same.

The first inaugural lecture was delivered by Emeritus Professor of English, Michael, J. C. Echeruo titled “A matter of identity” – “Ahamefule”, and every Igbo of age and reason, knew the pod of knowledge on all facets of the Igbo world has been exploded (Obioha, 2019). The annual series is instituted as an intellectual harvest, hence its title, AHIAJOKU LECTURES. This title is an Igbo conceptual reference to cultivation, fertility, and harvest, yam being the prestige and culturally important crop of the Igbo people that is, its cultivation and harvesting are traditionally linked with Ahiajoku which is also variously called in Igbo land *Ufiejoku, Ifejioku, Njokuji, Ihirijoku, Ahajoku, Ahiajoku, Fejioku, Ajoku, Aja Njoku, or Ajaamaja* as it projects Igbo culture (Obioha, 2019). Ahiajoku remains the veritable symbol of Igbo cultural ideal, in fact, it is one annual cultural celebration in which all the Igbos are united including the Diaspora Igbos in West Indies and other places.

Ahiajoku is a prestigious annual event aimed at promoting and preserving Igbo culture and language. The series brings together scholars, intellectuals, and enthusiasts to discuss and celebrate various aspects of Igbo heritage. Its envisaged functions include to organize the annual Ahiajoku lecture series, providing a programme of cultural events for the state and ensure that the state’s cultural potential are properly harnessed and celebrated, engagement in cultural diplomacy by promoting the study of Igbo language and culture abroad as well as encouraging international cultural exchanges and relations, also exchange of films, music, theatre, and literature etc. This incorporated indigenous culture and language learning in schools teaches all Igbos about indigenous culture and language and develops respect within the school community. However, despite its noble objectives, the Ahiajoku lecture series faces significant challenges in creating awareness and preserving indigenous language in South East, Nigeria.

In recent years, the series has struggled with issues such as, dwindling attendance, inadequate funding and support from the government and other stakeholders, lack of interest and engagement from the younger generations, and integrating into education system etc. Ahiajoku may also face challenges in terms of inclusivity and diversity. In today’s fast-paced world, where technology and social media dominate our daily lives, it can be challenging to engage young people in traditional cultural events like the Ahiajoku lecture series. Many young people may not see the relevance of attending a lecture on Igbo culture when they can

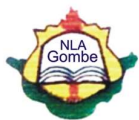


easily access information online. Nwabueze (2015) in his work highlights the difficulties faced by the organizers of the Ahiajoku lecture series in reaching a wider audience and engaging the younger generation in the preservation of indigenous language. He further explores the challenges of preserving indigenous languages in the face of globalization and the dominance of European languages. The author argues that the loss of indigenous languages can have negative consequences for the cultural identity and heritage of communities, and the role of Ahiajoku is the symbol of cultural identity, and its importance of preserving it for future generations. Madlela (2023) emphasizes that integrating into the education system can be a challenge, as seen in the case of integrating Indigenous knowledge Systems (IKS) that some of the challenges include the lack of government commitment to review education policies, lack of IKS study material in schools and extinction of IKS. Re-establishing our identity is a challenge that all facets of Igbos to have to put in place.

Preserving indigenous languages can be the solution to putting an end to the discrimination of indigenous people and strengthening the link between culture, language, and identity. The rights of indigenous people to their own language, land, and traditions need to be prioritized and given more validity. Saving indigenous language is crucial to ensure the protection of the cultural identity and dignity of indigenous peoples and safeguard their traditional heritage (Megan, 2016). In this era of ICT, there should be initiatives to revitalize indigenous languages through Information and Communication Technologies, such as: WhatsApp, online karaoke songs, social media, web tools in indigenous language. Nwankwere, Mmadike, and Eme, (2017) observed that the survival of Igbo language is in the hands of Igbo parents and Igbo children. They argue that if parents, especially those in Diasporas use Igbo language in their daily activities and in their respective homes, it would give their children the opportunity to acquire/learn the language. It is obvious that if the Igbo race loses the Igbo language, they automatically lose their identity as a people: Igbo is Igbo; the language and the people are inseparable (Nwaoke, 2019). Adzer (2012) supports the above assertion when he said the survival of the language of a people is very vital to the people's survival on the whole. Hence this served as a reminder to the people to protect, promote, preserve, and revitalize their own language which in turn protects their culture and identity as a people.

Methodology

This study adopted survey research design. The total population of this study was three hundred and twenty (320) consisting of one hundred and fifty (150) staff in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts, and one hundred and seventy (170) staff in the Ministry of Information and Strategy in Imo State. Imo State being the centre of the institute was chosen for this research. The entire population was adopted as the sample as the population was manageable enough. Instrument for data collection was a web-based structured questionnaire (Google form) designed on a four-point rating scale of SA(4), A(3), D(2), SD(1). Out of the three hundred and twenty (320) copies of the questionnaire sent, two hundred (200) responses were received. This shows a 63% return rate for the instrument. Analysis was based on the number returned and data obtained from the respondents were organized and analyzed using mean(x) with 2.50 as the criterion mean).



Presentation and Discussion of Results

Table 1: Ways through which Ahiajoku Lecture Series Contribute in Creating Awareness of Indigenous Language in South East, Nigeria.

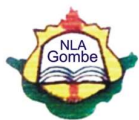
S/N	Question Items	Mean(x)	Decision
1	Annual lecture series	3.5	Positive
2	Celebration of new yam festival in Igbo land	3.7	Positive
3	Signpost on Igbo culture and civilization	3.4	Positive
4	Igbo world-view and total human development	3.8	Positive
5	Defining aspects of indigenous language (IL) in Igbo culture	3.7	Positive
6	Establishing a diachronic linguistic in Igbo land	3.6	Positive
7	Using social media to promote indigenous language	3.9	Positive
8	Ensuring the continuation and transmission of culture	3.5	Positive
9	Through government	3.5	Positive
10	Professional organizations	3.4	Positive
11	Honouring indigenous sons of Igboland	3.7	Positive
12	Through Igbo's festivals and ceremonies	3.4	Positive
13	Web tools	3.8	Positive
	Grand mean	3.6	

Table 1 shows the ways through which Ahijoku lecture series contribute in creating awareness of indigenous language in South East, Nigeria. All were positively rated with a mean score of 3.4 and above. Using social media to promote indigenous language received the highest mean rating of 3.9.

It was found that there are ways put in place for Ahiajoku lecture series to contribute to the creation of awareness of indigenous language in South East Nigeria. This agrees with Megan (2016) opined that initiatives to revitalize indigenous languages can be through Information and Communication Technologies, such as using WhatsApp, online karaoke songs, social media, and web tools in indigenous language.

Table 2: Ways through which Ahiajoku Lecture Series Contribute to the Preservation of Indigenous Language in South East, Nigeria

S/N	Question Items	Mean (x)	Decision
1	Through government gazette	3.7	Positive
2	Educational systems	3.2	Positive
3	Professional organizations	3.3	Positive
4	Libraries/Archives	3.7	Positive
5	Museums theatre	3.6	Positive
6	Local communities	3.4	Positive
7	Printed non-printed and digital libraries	3.5	Positive
8	Storytelling, songs, dances, plays, local practices, and folklore	3.6	Positive
9	Memories of elders	3.5	Positive
10	Oral communication and traditional practices	3.4	Positive
11	Igbo idioms and proverbs	3.7	Positive
12	Multimedia's	3.6	Positive
12	Online database	3.7	Positive



13	Mother tongue education	3.5	Positive
14	Recognition of Igbo’s festivals and ceremonies	4.2	Positive
15	Social media	3.5	Positive
16	Web tools	3.4	Positive
Grand mean		3.8	

Table 2 presents the result of the ways through which Ahiajoku lecture series can contribute for preservation of indigenous language in South East Nigeria. They were all positively rated with mean scores of 3.2 and above. This implies that Ahijoku lecture series contributes a lot in the preservation of indigenous language in South East Nigeria.

The ways through which Ahiajoku lecture series can contribute for preservation of indigenous language in South East Nigeria was also found that indigenous language is a vehicle that drives culture, it is therefore part of Igbo heritage and should be preserved, promoted, and revitalized. This finding aligns with the assertion of Megan (2016) that saving indigenous language is crucial to ensure the protection of the cultural identity and dignity of indigenous peoples and safeguard their traditional heritage. Montiel (2016) stated that the importance of language cannot be undervalued. It is the preservation of invaluable wisdom, traditional knowledge and expressions of art and beauty, and we have to make sure all that we do not lose this.

Table 3; Extent to which Ahiajoku Lecture Series has Contributed in Creating Awareness and Preservation of Indigenous Language in South East, Nigeria

S/N	Question Items	Mean (x)	Decision
1	Very High Extent	3.6	Positive
2	High Extent	3.5	Positive
3	Low Extent	2.0	Negative
4	Very Low Extent	1.9	Negative
5	Undecided	2.5	Positive
Grand mean		2.7	

The analysis in Table 3 shows the extent to which Ahiajoku lecture series has contributed in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East Nigeria. Details show that Very High Extent has 3.6., High Extent has 3.5., and Undecided has 2.5 which are positively rated. However, Low extent and very low extent have mean scores of 2.0 and 1.9 respectively which are negatively rated. The grand mean of 2.7 indicate that Ahijoku lecture series has contributed in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East Nigeria to a high extent.

The study also revealed the extent to which Ahiajoku lecture series has been contributing in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East Nigeria that the institution has contributed to a high extent. This finding corroborates with Obioha (2019) who stated that the inauguration of Ahiajoku lecture series in 1979 was to keep Igbo people connected to culture and strengthen feelings of pride and self-worth in Igboland. Ahiajoku lecture series is the symbol of Igbo people’s cultural ideal in South Eastern Nigeria. Also it is one annual cultural celebration in which all the Igbos are united including the Diaspora Igbo in West Indies and other places.

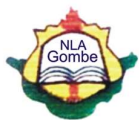


Table 4: Challenges of Ahiajoku Lecture Series in Creating Awareness and Preservation of Indigenous Language in South East Nigeria

S/N	Question Items	Mean(x)	Decision
1	Financial constraint by government	3.5	Positive
2	System of communication	3.2	Positive
3	Lack of local capacity building	3.5	Positive
4	Reluctant of reading culture	2.6	Positive
5	Negligent of indigenous language by South East government	3.0	Positive
6	Problem of integrating into education system	3.7	Positive
7	Problem of teaching a child in the family and communities	3.6	Positive
8	Non-use of mother tongue education	3.5	Positive
9	Lack of intergenerational transmission	3.5	Positive
10	Re-establishing our identity	2.8	Positive
11	Non-promotion and revitalization of indigenous language	3.5	Positive
12	Non-recognition of Igbo's festivals and ceremonies	3.4	Positive
Grand mean		3.3	

Analysis in Table 4 shows the following challenges of Ahiajoku lecture series in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East Nigeria. These are: financial constraint by government, system of communication, lack of local capacity building, reluctant of reading culture, negligent of indigenous language by South East government, problem of integrating into education system, problem of teaching a child in the family and communities, non-use of mother tongue education, lack of intergenerational transmission, re-establishing our identity, non-promotion and revitalization of indigenous language, non-recognition of Igbo's festivals and ceremonies. They all received positive mean scores of 2.6 and above. The highest rated was the problem of integrating it into the education system with a mean of 3.7. The grand mean of 3.3 actually shows that there are so many challenges of Ahiajoku lecture series in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East Nigeria.

The challenges of Ahiajoku lecture series in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East Nigeria were also found that much attention should be given to the institution by organizing the annual lecture series in order to avoid endangerment, but ensure that cultural potentials are properly harnessed and celebrated. Ofoegbu (1979) pointed out re-establishing our identity is a challenge that all facets of Igbos to have to put in place. Further, that these challenge requires community support, cultural revitalization, education, and a commitment to reclaiming and celebrating indigenous identities. Anyakoroma (2017) also identified that globalization has made people believe that it is when you speak the English language that you belong, which is not the case. Nwabueze (2015) in his work highlighted the difficulties faced by the organizers of the Ahiajoku lecture series in reaching a wider audience and engaging the younger generation in the preservation of indigenous language. Madlela (2023) emphasizes that integrating into the education system can be a challenge, as seen in the case of integrating Indigenous knowledge Systems (IKS) that some of the challenges include the lack of government commitment to review education policies, lack of IKS study material in schools and extinction of IKS.

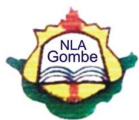


Table 5; Strategies for Improvement of Ahiajoku Lecture Series in South East Nigeria

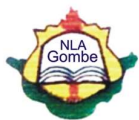
S/N	Question Items	Mean (x)	Decision
1	Protection of cultural identity	3.5	Positive
2	Ensuring dignity of indigenes peoples	3.5	Positive
3	Government participation of annual lecture series	3.4	Positive
4	Safeguard traditional heritage	3.8	Positive
5	Inclusion in education system	3.4	Positive
6	Partnership with libraries	3.5	Positive
6	Use of mother tongue education	3.5	Positive
7	Improvement of intergenerational transmission	3.4	Positive
8	Improvement of Igbo cultural heritage	3.6	Positive
9	Protection of norms from generation to generation	3.5	Positive
10	Promotion and revitalization of indigenous language	3.4	Positive
12	Improvement of South East Carnival	3.6	Positive
13	Web tools	3.5	Positive
Grand mean		3.5	

All items listed in Table 5 received positive mean ratings of 3.4 and above. This shows that strategies for improvement of Ahiajoku lectures series in South East Nigeria were the major possible strategies for improvement.

The strategies for improvement of Ahiajoku lecture series in South East Nigeria were found that the South East government has to engage in cultural diplomacy by promoting the study of Igbo/indigenous language and culture abroad as well as encouraging international cultural exchanges. This finding is in line with that Nwankwere, Mmadike, and Eme, (2017) who observed that the survival of Igbo language is in the hands of Igbo parents and Igbo children. They argue that if parents, especially those in Diasporas use Igbo language in their daily activities and in their respective homes, it would give their children the opportunity to acquire/learn the language. They further stated that it is the responsibility of every Igbo to see that the Igbo language is transferred from one generation to another so as to avoid every form of endangerment. Also Robinson (2019) was of the view that indigenous languages/communities celebrate diversity in learning and see this global support for teaching traditional forms of knowledge as a success

Conclusion

The study concluded that Ahiajoku lecture series contributed a lot in creating awareness and preservation of indigenous language in South East Nigeria as it keeps Igbo people connected to culture and strengthens feelings of pride and self-worth. The study revealed that there is an urgent need for promotion, preservation and revitalization of Igbo/indigenous language to the world view and overall human development. Ahiajoku lecture series ensures sustainability geared at making our indigenous languages functional and relevant to our linguistic need and mode of transmitting our cultural realities. The study also exposed the relevance and necessity of strategies for improvement of Ahiajoku lecture series that can be adopted to engage international cultural diplomacy exchanges. Thus, for culture to remain alive, preserving and improving Igbo/indigenous language is an all-important South East challenge that requires our urgent and collective responsibility. it was



discovered that the library which is a purveyor of knowledge has not been given its right place in the awareness creation and preservation of the lecture series.

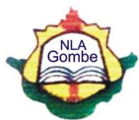
Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers recommend that:

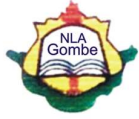
1. The ways of creating awareness should be enhanced further till everybody comes to the knowledge of the relevance of indigenous language.
2. The materials used to preserve indigenous language should be jealously guarded to ensure their longevity and transfer to the future generation.
3. Every effort should be made to make the creation of awareness and preservation of indigenous language through Ahiajoku lecture series to a very high extent.
4. The South Eastern government should adopt the Ahiajoku lecture series as a yearly event to be celebrated in all the states and ensure that the lecture series are documented and stored in the library.
5. The strategies identified should be adopted to sustain our indigenous languages and efforts should be put in place to have Ahiajoku Institutes in universities in South East, Nigeria and abroad.

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