

SOCIOLINGUISTIC FACTORS IN THE TRANSLATION OF IGBO PROVERBS INTO ENGLISH

Augustina Ngozi Eze, PhD

Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

Christopher Chinedu Nwike, PhD

cnwike@noun.edu.ng
Department of Linguistics, Foreign and Nigerian Languages,
National Open University of Nigeria

Abstract

This study investigates the sociolinguistic factors influencing the translation of Igbo proverbs into English, with a particular focus on those directed at children. Proverbs serve as vital cultural tools for imparting values, discipline, and social norms in Igbo society. However, their translation into English often poses challenges due to differences in cultural context, linguistic structure, and communicative function. Using a qualitative descriptive design, the study analyses a purposively selected corpus of Igbo proverbs and their English translations through sociolinguistic and thematic frameworks. Data were collected from bilingual texts, oral sources, and key informant interviews with native speakers and experienced translators. The analysis reveals that translation strategies such as literal rendition, dynamic equivalence, and paraphrasing significantly impact the retention of cultural meaning and social intent. The study concludes that an awareness of sociolinguistic context is essential for culturally sensitive and effective translation of indigenous proverbs into global languages.

Keywords: Igbo proverbs, translation, sociolinguistics, cultural meaning, children's education

Background to the Study

Language functions not merely as a tool for communication but as a cultural archive through which the identity, history, beliefs, and values of a people are encoded and transmitted across generations. In Africa, particularly in Nigeria, a country with over 500 languages, language plays a dual role as a marker of ethnic identity and a channel for intercultural expression. In this dynamic linguistic environment, translation becomes a complex but necessary bridge between languages and cultures, especially between indigenous African languages and ex-colonial languages like English (Ede, 2020).

Among the Igbo people of Southeastern Nigeria, proverbs (*ilu*) form a central part of everyday discourse. As Achebe (1958) aptly noted in *Things Fall Apart*, "Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten." They serve not only as rhetorical tools but also as carriers of wisdom, morality, and societal values. A proverb like "Nwata bulie nna ya elu, ngwongwo na ngwongwo ayochie ya anya" (If a child lifts his father high, his eye will be covered with different unfriendly things) teaches moderation and respect for balance in relationships. Another, "Egbe bere ugo bere..." (Let the kite perch, let the eagle perch...), encourages peaceful coexistence and justice.

However, translating these proverbs into English is not a straightforward process. Literal translations often fail to capture the rich cultural context and intended meanings of the original. For instance, translating "Ife onye metalu, ya mere ya" as "Whatever a man does to himself is what affects him" loses the layered implication of personal responsibility and fate deeply embedded in Igbo cosmology. According to Nwike (2022 and 2023) and Nwike and Eze (2025), translation in African contexts must go beyond the linguistic level to include cultural and pragmatic equivalence, especially when working with oral traditions, metaphors, and culturally embedded expressions. He argues that translation is not only a linguistic transfer but a moral and cultural negotiation, particularly in African indigenous languages.

Sociolinguistic factors, such as age, gender, educational attainment, geographic location, and cultural exposure, play a crucial role in how Igbo proverbs are understood and translated. For example, an

elderly man from a rural community in Nsukka or Orlu is more likely to understand and accurately interpret a proverb like “Otu onye tua ibu, o buba ya” (If one person carries a heavy load alone, it crushes him) than a university undergraduate raised in Lagos with limited exposure to traditional Igbo speech patterns. Research by Okeke and Mbah (2015) supports this view, highlighting how rural-urban differences and generational shifts affect linguistic competence in Igbo and the effectiveness of translation into English.

Furthermore, the postcolonial Nigerian educational system, which privileges English as the language of instruction and official communication, has contributed significantly to the gradual marginalisation of indigenous languages. Many young Nigerians today speak a diluted form of their native languages or rely more heavily on Nigerian Pidgin and English, thereby weakening their grasp of traditional expressions like proverbs (Eme & Uba, 2016). In such cases, the translator’s sociolinguistic background directly influences the fidelity, tone, and cultural relevance of the translated text.

Nwike's (2021 and 2022) study on subtitling in Igbo films observes that many subtitled translations into English omit or oversimplify traditional expressions, thereby losing cultural flavour and depth. He insists that audiovisual translators must be culturally competent in both source and target languages to avoid distorting the intended message of the original dialogue. This reinforces the broader point that understanding the sociolinguistic environment is essential for effective and ethical translation.

Therefore, this study investigates how sociolinguistic factors influence the translation of Igbo proverbs into English. It seeks to identify how variables such as age, gender, level of education, linguistic environment, and cultural orientation affect both comprehension of Igbo proverbs and the ability to translate them meaningfully. By grounding the research in real Nigerian contexts and using practical Igbo examples, the study aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on African translation studies, sociolinguistics, and indigenous language preservation.

Objectives of the Study

- a. To identify and analyse the sociolinguistic factors that influence the translation of Igbo children’s proverbs into English.
- b. To evaluate the impact of cultural context and language variation on preserving the meaning and communicative function of Igbo children’s proverbs in English translation.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses on the sociolinguistic factors affecting the translation of selected (children's) Igbo proverbs into English. It examines how cultural norms, social context, and language use influence the meaning and interpretation of these proverbs during translation. The research is limited to children’s proverbs commonly used in Igbo-speaking communities and does not extend to proverbs for adults or other Igbo dialects. The study concentrates on translations into Standard English, highlighting challenges such as loss of cultural meaning, figurative language, and communicative intent. Data will be collected primarily from Igbo-speaking educators, translators, and native speakers within southeastern Nigeria.

Related studies

Many scholars have carried out related studies in this area, trying to dissect the intersection of sociolinguistics and translation in Igbo proverbs into the English equivalent, while maintaining its meaning and ethical concerns. It is on this premise that Chiamaka and Chigozie (2024) conducted a study on “postproverbials in Igbo: an anthropo-linguistic overview.” This study examines the emergence of “postproverbials,” modern variants of traditional Igbo proverbs influenced by globalisation and social change. Through interviews with both older and younger Igbo speakers, the authors found that while elders maintain traditional proverbs, younger generations often adapt them, reflecting dynamic language use. This work highlights the sociolinguistic evolution of proverbs and the implications for their translation, as the meaning and usage can shift across generations.

Igono (2018) studied "translation of selected Igbo proverbs and idiomatic expressions: implications for curbing economic recession." Igono's research focuses on the challenges of translating Igbo proverbs and idioms into English, especially those related to economic behaviour. By analysing specific proverbs, the study demonstrates how cultural nuances and metaphorical meanings can be lost or misinterpreted in translation. The work underscores the importance of understanding cultural contexts to preserve the intended messages of proverbs in translation.

Onwuchekwa (2013) conducted a study on "philosophy in indigenous Igbo proverbs: cross-cultural media for education in the era of globalisation." This paper explores the philosophical underpinnings of Igbo proverbs and their role in education. Onwuchekwa argues that proverbs encapsulate communal values and ethical teachings, making them effective tools for cross-cultural education. The study emphasizes the need for translators to grasp the philosophical and cultural contexts of proverbs to convey their full meanings accurately in other languages.

Nwosu (n.d) studied "proverbs and idioms: multilingual approach in language teaching, learning, and documentation." Nwosu's work investigates the pedagogical use of proverbs and idioms in multilingual education settings. The study highlights the challenges students face when translating culturally specific proverbs, such as discomfort or misunderstanding due to cultural taboos. It advocates for teaching strategies that address these challenges by providing cultural context and encouraging open discussions about the meanings and uses of proverbs in different languages.

In all of the above studies, it is obvious that the studies focused on the different areas of proverbial studies, but none focused on the sociolinguistic factors in the translation of Igbo proverbs into English; hence, the need for this study.

Methodology

To examine the sociolinguistic factors influencing the translation of Igbo proverbs into English, particularly children's proverbs, a qualitative research methodology grounded in descriptive and interpretive paradigms is most appropriate. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the interplay between language, culture, and meaning in both source and target contexts. Data collection methods were purposive sampling of proverbs, involving 40 widely used Igbo proverbs directed at children, covering themes like discipline, respect, humility, hard work, and identity. Proverbs were drawn from oral traditions, published collections, folktales, interviews with elders, and Igbo educational texts. The data analysis technique was the adoption of a sociolinguistic analysis framework, focusing on cultural norms, social context, and language use. There was thematic coding where each proverb and its English equivalent were aligned with communicative functions.

Presentation of data

This section presents the (children's) proverbs used for this study, in line with their literal translation and equivalence in English.

No.	Igbo Proverb	Literal Translation	Meaning/Advice to Children
1	Nwata kụọ aka, a kporọ ya okenye.	When a child washes his hands, he dines with elders.	Good behaviour earns respect.
2	A sị nwata juọ ụzọ, ọ sị na ọ ma ebe a na-ga.	Tell a child to ask for directions, and he says he knows where he's going.	Pride leads to mistakes.
3	Nwata na-akpọ mkpu, a sị ya zuru ike.	When a child cries too much, he's told to rest.	Don't overreact or exhaust yourself.
4	Nwata na-ege nti, na-amụta ihe.	A listening child learns.	Listening is the key to wisdom.
5	Nwata na-echu mmiri, na-amụta esi.	A child who fetches water learns to cook.	Helping others teaches you valuable skills.
6	Ọ bụ nwata ziri ezi ka eze na-achị.	A king rules based on the guidance of the youth.	Youth contributions matter; be wise.

No.	Igbo Proverb	Literal Translation	Meaning/Advice to Children
7	Nwata na-agba ọsọ na-enweghị isi, na-akpọ ihe ọdachi oku.	A child who runs without direction invites disaster.	Act with purpose and caution.
8	E kwuoro nwata, ya nuru.	If a child is warned, let him listen.	Heed advice when given.
9	Nwata a na-akụ ihe adighi ama na a na-akụ ya mma.	A child being beaten may not know it's for his good.	Correction is for growth.
10	Nwata na-eri nri na-echeta nna ya, a gaghi emechi ya ọnu.	A child who eats and remembers his father is not denied.	Be grateful and loyal.
11	Onye nūuru, ya gbaa ọsọ.	Whoever hears danger should flee.	Be alert to warnings.
12	E ji nwata ama ama.	A child is a symbol of identity.	Children should be upright.
13	Nwata a zuru adighi egbu egbu.	A well-trained child doesn't bring shame.	Good upbringing prevents disgrace.
14	Nwata a maghi ihe, e zi ya.	A child who doesn't know should be taught.	Accept guidance with humility.
15	Nwata na-amaghi ihe, amaghi ugwu.	A child who knows nothing knows no honour.	Ignorance limits respect.
16	A si nwa mee ngwa, o mee nke oma.	If a child acts quickly, he does it well.	Promptness leads to success.
17	Nwata nweghi ndumodu, na-asọ oyi.	A child without direction wanders aimlessly.	Have goals and guidance.
18	Nwata ruo aru, a kpoo ya aha nne ya.	A misbehaving child brings shame to his mother.	Your actions reflect on your family.
19	Ihe a na-amu n'ulo ka e ji aga ama.	What is learned at home is taken outside.	Home training is your foundation.
20	E kwere ka nwata gbaa egbe, o gbuo mmadu.	Letting a child misuse a gun leads to tragedy.	Don't tolerate bad habits.
21	Nwata gbalia, chi ya enyere ya aka.	A child who tries gets help from his spirit.	Make an effort, help will come.
22	Nwata choro igwu mmiri, amuta iku aka.	A child who wants to swim must learn to paddle.	Learn before you act.
23	A hu nwa n'anya, a zuo ya.	A child who is loved is trained.	Love includes discipline.
24	Nwata juru nduzi, na-agho onye ogbenye.	A child who rejects guidance ends up in poverty.	Follow wise counsel.
25	Onye na-adighi agba aka, na-ala n'iyi.	He who doesn't strive drowns.	Laziness leads to failure.
26	O bughị kwa ntị na-anụ ihe.	Not every ear hears.	Learn to truly listen.
27	Nwata nyekwa aka, a kwanyere ya ugwu.	A helpful child earns respect.	Helpfulness earns recognition.
28	Ebe onye dara, ka chi ya kwaturu ya.	Where one falls is where his god humbles him.	Accept the consequences and grow.
29	Onye na-anaghi atu egwu, na-apu n'ulo n'abalị.	He who knows no fear goes out at night.	Be cautious and wise.
30	Onye e nyere aka, ya nyere onwe ya.	He who is helped should help himself.	Don't waste opportunities.

No.	Igbo Proverb	Literal Translation	Meaning/Advice to Children
31	E jiri nwata hụ ihe, a gwakwa ya.	When a child sees something, he's told what it means.	Explanation helps understanding.
32	Onye maara ihe, na-egbo mkpa.	He who knows finds what he needs.	Knowledge solves problems.
33	Nwata chọghị ịmụta, a hapụ ya.	A child who doesn't want to learn is left behind.	Learning is a choice.
34	Onye juru igo nti, e gbuo ya, o juo ihe kpata ya.	He who refuses to listen asks questions in death.	Ignoring advice leads to regret.
35	O di mma igbo nti, tupu e kee isi.	It's better to obey than be punished.	Listen early to avoid suffering.
36	Nwata na-azu anu, na-amuta ihe.	A child who rears animals learns.	Responsibility teaches wisdom.
37	Nwata ghara ilu ogu, a gaghị enye ya ihe.	A child who doesn't fight won't be rewarded.	Fight for what matters.
38	A mụo Nwata na mba, a kuziere ya omenala.	A child born abroad is taught the culture.	Learn your roots, no matter where you are.
39	Nwata na-eji uche eme ihe, na-ama ihe.	A thoughtful child learns.	Wisdom starts with thought.
40	Onye choro idi mma, ya kpebie.	He who wants to be good must choose it.	Goodness is intentional.

Analysis of the findings

This section of the study was conducted by focusing on the objectives of the study to elucidate the essence upon which this study is carried out. This will be done by picking, in no particular order, some proverbs that will represent the whole data used for this study.

Identification and analysis of the sociolinguistic factors that influence the translation of Igbo children's proverbs into English:

1. *Nwata kuo aka, a kporo ya okenye.*

Literal Translation: When a child washes his hands, he dines with elders.

Sociolinguistic Analysis:

- Cultural Norms: Cleanliness symbolizes moral readiness or social decorum. Dining with elders is not just literal, but a metaphor for being accepted into a mature society.
- Social Context: Encourages children to behave well to earn social privileges.
- Language Use: Idiomatic in Igbo. In translation, metaphor is preserved but may require cultural interpretation for clarity.

2. *A si nwata juo uzọ, o si na o ma ebe o na-ga.*

Literal Translation: Tell a child to ask for directions, and he says he knows where he's going.

Sociolinguistic Analysis:

- Cultural Norms: Emphasizes humility and the dangers of pride.
- Social Context: A warning against youthful arrogance.
- Language Use: Igbo expresses sarcasm subtly; English translation risks losing the tone unless context is added.

5. *Nwata na-echu mmiri, na-amuta esi nri.*

Literal Translation: A child who fetches water learns to cook.

Sociolinguistic Analysis:

- Cultural Norms: Domestic tasks are foundational for later responsibilities.
- Social Context: Reinforces communal learning through participation.
- Language Use: The imagery is culturally situated; English translation may obscure the gendered or communal role implications.

10. *Nwata na-eri nri na-echeta nna ya, a gaghi emechi ya onu.*

Literal Translation: A child who eats and remembers his father is not denied.

Sociolinguistic Analysis:

- a. Cultural Norms: Gratitude is a moral and social expectation.
- b. Social Context: Emphasizes family honour and responsibility.
- c. Language Use: English may require explicating the link between gratitude and social reward.

18. *Nwata ruo aru, a kpoq ya aha nne ya.*

Literal Translation: A misbehaving child brings shame to his mother.

Sociolinguistic Analysis:

- a. Cultural Norms: Upholding family dignity is vital. Mothers are often seen as moral anchors.
- b. Social Context: Highlights the gendered burden of child-rearing.
- c. Language Use: Translation maintains literal clarity but may need sociocultural framing to explain maternal shame.

19. *Ihe a na-amu n'ulo ka e ji aga ama.*

Literal Translation: What is learned at home is taken outside.

Sociolinguistic Analysis:

- a. Cultural Norms: Home is the first school.
- b. Social Context: Affirms the role of family in moral education.
- c. Language Use: Simple and translatable, but deeper value in Igbo as a communal reminder.

24. *Nwata juru nduzi, na-agho onye ogbenye.*

Literal Translation: A child who rejects guidance ends up in poverty.

Sociolinguistic Analysis:

- a. Cultural Norms: Respect for elders and advice is central to success.
- b. Social Context: Implies social and economic consequences of disobedience.
- c. Language Use: Translation is accurate but may lack cultural urgency unless interpreted with African communal values.

30. *Onye e nyere aka, ya nyere onwe ya.*

Literal Translation: He who is helped should help himself.

Sociolinguistic Analysis:

- a. Cultural Norms: Self-effort is tied to communal assistance.
- b. Social Context: Promotes reciprocal responsibility.
- c. Language Use: Translation is effective but may underplay the communal obligation embedded in the original.

34. *Onye juru igu nti, e gbuo ya, o juo ihe kpatara ya.*

Literal Translation: He who refuses to listen asks questions in death.

Sociolinguistic Analysis:

- a. Cultural Norms: Obedience is a survival strategy.
- b. Social Context: Proverbs often deliver warnings via exaggeration or stark imagery.
- c. Language Use: Hyperbole in Igbo carries weight; English may tone it down unless the cultural context is explained.

38. *A muo nwata na mba, a kuziere ya omenala.*

Literal Translation: A child born abroad is taught the culture.

Sociolinguistic Analysis:

- a. Cultural Norms: Cultural preservation is non-negotiable.
- b. Social Context: Reflects Igbo concern about diaspora identity erosion.
- c. Language Use: Literal translation works, but cultural significance may be missed without commentary.

Summary of influential sociolinguistic factors:

In cultural norms, many proverbs embed moral, spiritual, and communal values central to Igbo child upbringing (e.g., respect, gratitude, learning). Proverbs reflect expectations of children's roles in family and society, and the communal consequences of their actions in a social context, while in language use, Igbo often uses metaphors, hyperboles, and idioms. But literal English translations may miss tonal nuances or moral depth unless explained.

Evaluation of the impact of cultural context and language variation on preserving the meaning and communicative function of Igbo children's proverbs in English translation:

Igbo proverbs are deeply rooted in the culture, values, and worldview of the Igbo people. In child socialisation, they serve as tools for instruction, moral guidance, discipline, and identity formation. However, when these proverbs are translated into English, cultural context and language variation significantly affect how their meanings and communicative functions are preserved or altered. This evaluation focuses on how cultural specificity, metaphorical density, and linguistic economy inherent in Igbo proverbs pose challenges to translation into English, often necessitating contextual interpretation to retain their original pragmatic force. The evaluation is as follows:

1. Cultural context: a framework of meaning

Cultural context is critical in shaping both the meaning and function of Igbo children's proverbs. In Igbo society:

- a. Proverbs are not merely ornamental; they are instruments of instruction and correction.
- b. Children are expected to learn values indirectly through metaphors and wise sayings.
- c. Concepts such as family honour, communal responsibility, elder respect, and industriousness are embedded in the proverbs.

Examples:

- a. “*Nwata ruo aru, a kpoo ya aha nne ya.*” (A misbehaving child brings shame to his mother.) The communal implication of child discipline and its reflection on maternal honour is culturally significant. In English, the proverb can be misread as simply blaming the mother, unless the African kinship values are explained.
- b. “*A mụọ nwata na mba, a kuziere ya omenala.*” (A child born abroad is taught the culture.) This reflects the Igbo emphasis on cultural continuity, which is vital for identity. The English version preserves the message, but cultural urgency and emotional weight may be diluted.

Impact: In translation, unless the target audience shares or is educated on the cultural assumptions, the moral and pedagogical force of the proverb may weaken.

2. Language variation: lexical, structural, and stylistic differences

Igbo and English differ significantly in:

- a. Lexical economy: Igbo proverbs are often compact and metaphor-rich.
- b. Syntax: Igbo uses elliptical and rhythmic structures.
- c. Stylistics: Many Igbo proverbs employ imagery, symbolism, and indirectness.

These features are difficult to replicate in English without losing conciseness or poetic resonance.

Examples:

- a. “*O bu nwata ziri ezi ka eze na-achi.*” (A king rules based on the guidance of the youth.) Here, a literal translation may fail to convey the respect for youth wisdom expressed subtly in Igbo.
- b. “*Nwata na-echu mmiri, na-amuta esi.*” (A child who fetches water learns to cook.) On this premise, the Igbo metaphor links everyday chores to life skills. In English, it may sound mundane without explanatory context.
- c. “*Onye juru igo nti, e gbuo ya, o juo ihe kpatara ya.*” (He who refuses to listen asks questions in death.) This proverb uses hyperbole and irony. Literal English can seem excessively grim or unclear unless reframed.

Impact: Literal translation often strips the proverbs of their aesthetic and communicative power, while over-interpretation risks didacticism or verbosity, weakening the proverbs' natural resonance.

3. Communicative Function: Instruction, Warning, Identity Building

Each proverb functions beyond its literal meaning; it advises, warns, rebukes, and educates. These functions are deeply linked to their form and context in Igbo.

Examples:

- a. **Instructional Function:**
“*Nwata na-ege nti, na-amuta ihe.*” (A listening child learns.) Communicates obedience and attentiveness in a few words. English retains the message but lacks the rhythmic force of the original.
- b. **Warning Function:**

“E kwere ka nwata gbaa egbe, o gbuo mmadu.” (Letting a child misuse a gun leads to tragedy.) This is metaphorical and moralistic. In Igbo, the metaphor warns of indulging bad habits; in English, it may be taken literally unless culturally explained.

c. **Identity-Building Function:**

“E ji nwata ama ama.” (A child is a symbol of identity.) This reflects the Igbo view of the child as the bearer of lineage and community hope. This identity-linked role might not resonate as strongly in English without a cultural context.

Impact: The didactic and moral intentions of the proverbs are at risk of being diluted or lost in translation, unless care is taken to preserve the function, not just the form.

In line with the above, while navigating fidelity and functions, translating the Igbo children's proverbs into English requires more than linguistic equivalence; it demands intercultural competence. The challenges lie in:

- a. Preserving cultural depth in a language that may not share the same symbolic systems.
- b. Retaining brevity and poetic nuance without flattening meaning.
- c. Translating not just words but wisdom, context, and social roles.

So, to preserve their communicative function, translators must often choose between:

- a. Literal fidelity (which may confuse or dilute meaning), and
- b. Dynamic equivalence (which risks altering form but retains intent).

Conclusion

This study has critically examined the sociolinguistic factors in the translation of Igbo proverbs into English, which involves how cultural context and language variation influence the preservation of meaning and communicative function in the English translation of Igbo children's proverbs. Igbo proverbs are deeply embedded in the sociocultural fabric of the society, serving as vital tools for child socialisation, moral education, identity formation, and behavioural guidance. However, translating them into English is not merely a linguistic task but an intercultural challenge. The findings reveal that:

- a. Cultural context plays a pivotal role in how proverbs are understood, used, and interpreted. Without an awareness of the values and norms inherent in Igbo culture, such as communal responsibility, family honour, respect for elders, and moral discipline, the proverbs risk being misinterpreted or trivialised in English.
- b. Language variation, including differences in metaphor usage, idiomatic expressions, syntax, and stylistic choices, contributes to a loss of nuance, tone, and poetic economy in translation. While some literal translations maintain surface meaning, they often fall short of conveying the depth, emotion, and indirectness that characterise Igbo wisdom traditions.
- c. Communicative function, which includes instructing, warning, correcting, and affirming identity, is closely tied to both form and cultural usage. A loss in the original style or metaphor can reduce the effectiveness of the proverb's purpose, particularly in contexts unfamiliar with Igbo traditions.

In sum, translation of Igbo children's proverbs into English must go beyond word-for-word rendering. It should engage in culturally sensitive strategies that balance fidelity to the source and clarity for the target audience, preserving the spirit and didactic essence of the original expressions.

Recommendations

- a. Contextual translation approach: Translators should adopt a contextual or dynamic equivalence strategy that prioritises communicative intent and cultural connotation over strict literalism. This will ensure that the wisdom and function of the proverbs are preserved, even if the exact linguistic structure changes.
- b. Use of annotations and explanatory notes: When translating Igbo proverbs, especially for academic or educational use, footnotes or brief cultural explanations should be added. This can help readers understand the symbolic meanings and social relevance embedded in the proverbs.
- c. Incorporation into language and cultural curricula: Educational institutions, especially in multicultural or African studies programs, should include translated proverbs alongside their cultural interpretations in curricula. This will foster cross-cultural understanding and promote appreciation of African oral traditions.

- d. Training for translators in intercultural competence: Translators working with African languages should be trained in intercultural communication and ethnolinguistic sensitivity. Such training will equip them to handle the complexities of translating culturally rich expressions like proverbs.
- e. Promotion of indigenous language literacy: To reduce reliance on translation and preserve original meaning, there should be increased advocacy for the teaching and use of Igbo and other indigenous languages, particularly among younger generations.
- f. Documentation and bilingual collections: Scholars and cultural organisations should collaborate to document and publish bilingual collections of Igbo proverbs (Igbo-English), especially those directed at children. These collections should reflect both literal translations and culturally adapted versions, supported by commentary.
- g. Community-based research: Future research should involve native speakers, elders, and culture bearers in exploring variations of proverbs across dialects and communities. This will enrich translation accuracy and ensure cultural authenticity.

By implementing these recommendations, translators, educators, and cultural advocates can better preserve the profound moral and philosophical essence of Igbo children's proverbs in English translation, ensuring their relevance and vitality for future generations.

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