

Toward an Effective Teaching and Learning of the Igbo Tone

B.M. Mbah

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

Abstract

This paper is a pedagogic study of the Igbo tone. It is a descriptive research. It identifies tone as one of the most problematic aspects of the Igbo language teaching and learning. Conceptually, it associates the main problem of learning tone with its being a prosodic feature. It is superimposed on the segments in all its forms. This characteristic makes the identification of the pitch level of each tone in a word problematic for the teacher and student. In addition, the tone pattern of some words varies from dialect to dialect, and therefore from dialect to the Standard Igbo. This fact makes it necessary that both the teacher and the learner have to be abreast with the tone pattern of each lexical item in the particular variety concerned to get the tone mark right. Furthermore, the tone patterns of the Igbo words change when the words bearing them occur together in a grammatical construction. The paper provides answers to questions regarding how to identify the tone pattern of individual words and words in associative constructions in the Igbo language in a teaching learning situation. It further provides a didactic step by step procedure for marking tone in the Igbo language grammar bearing in mind the available tone marking conventions in the literature. The teacher no doubt needs to know this procedure as a working tool for effective teaching and learning of tone in particular and Igbo grammar in general. The learner needs it even more to have a firm grasp of it and Igbo grammar generally.

Introduction

It is believed that the general contribution of linguistics to knowledge lies in the establishment of an explicitly principled therapy to linguistic problems (Ingram (1990)). Haas (1963) asserts that when there is an accurate diagnosis of the child's phonological problem (and by extension the whole language system), it becomes easy to know where his problems lie. He sums up the above assertion in the following way:

The contribution of linguistics is chiefly diagnostic. A linguistic diagnosis will contribute towards working out a rational sequence of therapeutic steps: i.e. a sequence which is adapted to the requirements of the individual case and which embodies a scale of priorities according to the relative seriousness of the defects to be treated (p. 246)

Learners of all categories are deficient in one aspect of learning or the other. It is therefore necessary to understand the learner's needs and the process of providing remedy for such problems. Ingram (1990) has concluded from his research that in language, the learner does not acquire sounds in isolation and cannot therefore deal with isolated sounds but rather with general processes of sound vocalisation. In this case, the general process becomes the targets of therapy (teaching). In some other cases as in the case of tone, the problem is how to teach individual problems of tone for instance, tone is basically a part of a word (Welmers (1973), Ladefoged (1975), Emenanjo (1978), Oluikpe (1979), Goldsmith (1990), Nwachukwu (1995) and Mbah (1999)). The problem associated with it is therefore not a problem involving the whole processes of sound production but that of identifying and marking only tone which is just a part of the whole. Crompton (1970) appears to wonder if it is possible to teach anyone part of a sound process with the expectation that once the problem associated with a specific problem is solved, the rest of the system will be correct. This contention has come to be referred to as the General Hypothesis in issues of phonological problems and remediation in linguistics. Furthermore, the sounds in a linguistic system operate on the basis of contrasts. Ingram (1990) identifies another target of therapy or teaching. This is when in a tone system the learner's own system lacks the systematic contrast. To effectively tackle this species of problem, the teaching shall be focused on the instability of the child's production of tones and the elimination of misconception in the error prone areas in his output. After focussing on the problem areas, attention is paid to the normal learner who though without learning deficiency needs to be taught what the curriculum requires of him to learn within a given academic calendar.

In a formal learning situation, the problems of the learners are many and varied. This situation calls for the teacher's specific attention to individual problems. But the ideal is hardly ever attainable in any educational system. The general approach in the Nigerian education system is to admit the learners with various learning problems together unless the learning deficiency is so pronounced to amount to impairment. Personal experience from teaching and learning has shown that there are cases where some learners with visual or speech defects have run the same programmes with the learners without such handicaps. These cases present a mosaic of intricate problems to the teacher. The teacher is expected to feed the needs of the different classes of learners at the same time by teaching in such a way that learners with different learning problems grasp the subject matter at approximately the same time. There are many problems associated with teaching or learning in this kind of learning setting. The problems are beyond the scope of this paper. The scope of the paper is therefore limited to

the problems associated with tone in the teaching and learning of the Igbo language. The paper discusses how the teacher can identify a tone bearing unit in the phonological system of the grammar. It also gives a general tonotactic pattern (how the tones follow one another in a system of patterning) in the language which will help the learners to rule out certain sequential patterns even in cases where such learners do not figure out the tone pattern of particular words. This approach will reduce potential errors and systematically guide the learner to the prediction of correct tone patterns. Tone as we shall soon see is a tricky phenomenon in the sense that producing it poses little or no problems to the speaker but differentiating one tone from the other is so difficult that many teachers avoid teaching it and even when it is taught the learners hardly attempt questions on it in tests and examinations.

The following tables show the distribution of students who attempted questions on tone in the course(s) under review in the Department of Linguistics, Igbo and other Nigerian Languages of University of Nigeria, Nsukka from 2007-2011. The examination is chosen because we believe that students prepare themselves well to put in their best in their course of study. Let us examine the following table:

Table 1

Year	Category of Student	No of Students	Course IGB 308	No of Question	No of Question on Tone	No of Students who Attempted Questions on Tone
2007	Regular	56		5	1	9
	Sandwich	51		5	1	12
2008	Regular	36		5	1	9
	Sandwich	44		5	1	8
2009	Regular	31		5	1	8
	Sandwich	60		5	1	9
2010	Regular	51		5	1	6
	Sandwich	18		5	1	9
2011	Regular	30		5	1	5
	Sandwich	44		5	1	10

We have chosen one course (Igb 308: Syntax II) to ensure that the same set of students is not assessed twice within the five year period¹. The technique of sampling is cluster sampling technique, namely where the informants for the study are drawn from the population clustered in the study area. We have chosen all the students offering the course which is above mentioned. Secondly, the syllabus for this class of students lays emphasis on the teaching and learning of tone. Thirdly, it has helped to generate data for the study. We also chose to draw our data from the regular and sandwich students. The sandwich students were necessary because majority of them were teachers whose attitude towards tone would implicitly correlate with teaching or avoiding teaching it in their schools. We speculate that it is most likely that if a teacher does not attempt questions on tone, chances are that he or she does not have a firm grasp of it or positive attitude towards it and may not be teaching it to their own students. We also wish to find out how the test fares between the regular and sandwich students.

Table 2

Year	Category of Student	No of Students	Course IGB 308	No of Students who Attempted Questions on Tone	No of Students with Pass Grade in Question on Tone	No of Students with Fail Grade in Question on Tone
2007	Regular	56		9	3	6
	Sandwich	51		12	8	4
2008	Regular	36		9	4	5
	Sandwich	44		8	3	6
2009	Regular	31		8	5	3
	Sandwich	60		9	3	6
2010	Regular	51		6	2	4
	Sandwich	18		9	3	6
2011	Regular	30		5	2	3
	Sandwich	44		10	5	5

In view of the results got in the above two tables, the paper consequently believes that tone is perceivably difficult or imagined to be so by many of the students. This contention is a hypothesis that is supported by the above data. The phenomenon of tone is vital to the teaching of Igbo grammar. It therefore becomes very necessary that steps are taken to simplify its teaching and learning. The objective of this paper is to provide a simplified way of predicting how tones co-occur with one another in associative constructions in the

Igbo language. The result of the structural variation of tone may be seen in the different functions of tone in the grammar. The paper also presents some classification of nouns with respect to whether they change their tone patterns either as the first or the last word in an associative construction. These objectives will help to lead the student and the teacher by the hand through the problem that teachers and students alike have in its teaching and learning.

Toneme

The first step towards the learning and teaching of the Igbo tone is to be able to distinguish between tone and intonation. Tone and intonation originate from the use of pitch of voice to discriminate meaning. Thus, the pitch of voice is manipulated to get meaning in intonational and tone languages (see Ladefoged (1975)). However, the difference between them is that while tone is based on the syllable, intonation is based on structures higher than the syllable. Tone languages get different meanings from words that have the same phonemic composition (or in a layman's term letters of the alphabet), e.g.

1. a. (i) ákwá - cry
(ii) ákwà - cloth
(iii) àkwá - egg
(iv) àkwà - bed

The examples in 1 show that the words look alike except in their tone pattern. The difference in their tone patterns has given rise to the difference in the meaning of each of them. In 1a, each of them has the letters akwa. The difference in their meanings is not therefore as a result of these common elements. 1a (i-iv) has high high, high low, low high and low low respectively. It is these tonal differences that generate the contrast in meaning in the words. The term toneme refers to an article of tone which brings about a change in the meaning of a word or words.

Another important guide for a teacher and learner of the Igbo tone is to identify the types of tone in the Igbo language. There are three contrastive tones in the Igbo language, namely the high ($\acute{}$), downstep ($\grave{}$) and low (\flat) tones. The teacher as well as the learner should be able to identify the tone pattern that is associated with every word. It is difficult to teach the individual tone patterns of words. The easier way to identify them is to whistle or hum the words with the pitches of the tones which the words bear. The pitch of the high tone is higher than that of the step tone while the pitch of the step tone is higher than that of the low tone. Another teaching guide is that each of the tones has a pattern of distribution in relation to the other tones. They include the following sequences:

High Tone

It has an acoustically high pitch. It is usually represented by the acute diacritic mark ($\acute{}$). It can:

2. (a) begin a word or sentence e.g. a $\acute{}$ ka
(b) come in the middle or at the end of a word e.g. a kw $\acute{}$ kw \flat (book)
(c) be final in a word or sentence – a $\acute{}$ kwa $\acute{}$ - cry
(d) be reduced a little but not as low as to the level of a low tone, e.g. a $\acute{}$ ka + chi = a $\acute{}$ ka
chi – hand of god

Low Tone

It has a low pitch level. It is marked by the grave accent ($\grave{}$). It can:

3. (a) begin a word or sentence e.g. a $\grave{}$ la – land
(b) come in the middle of a word e.g. a $\acute{}$ z $\acute{}$ za – story
(c) come last in a word or sentence e.g. a $\acute{}$ ku ku – way
(d) get raised to a step when it falls in between two high tones across word junctures e.g. $\acute{}$ lo + òké – $\acute{}$ lo òké
(e) can be transformed to high when it occurs in a series and at syntactic junctures e.g.
a $\acute{}$ la I $\acute{}$ gbo \longrightarrow a $\acute{}$ la I $\acute{}$ gbo

Step Tone

It is a reduced high tone. It is usually marked with either an acute accent following a high tone or a raised macron over the letter ($\acute{}$). It

4. (a) cannot start a word or sentence in Igbo
(b) can occur in the middle of a word e.g. náān $\acute{}$ (only), nīl $\acute{}$ (all)
(c) can occur at word final positions e.g. é $\acute{}$ g $\acute{}$ (money), m $\acute{}$ m $\acute{}$ r $\acute{}$ i (water)
(d) when it comes in between a series of high tones it can get raised or promoted to a high tone e.g. é $\acute{}$ g $\acute{}$ + élé – é $\acute{}$ g $\acute{}$ élé
(e) cannot follow a low tone.

Another guide for the teacher of Igbo grammar is to have a grasp of how tone is distributed in the Igbo sound system and the generalisation that is made from such distributions. In other words, sometimes, the difference between two or more words may be one or more contrasts whether such a contrast is tonal or segmental or a combination of both. When the difference between two or more words is just one whether it is based on tone or segment, such a difference is minimal and the words upon which the finding is made is called a minimal pair, e.g.

5. (a) (i) élú - high
(ii) èlù – palm kernel pomade
- (b) (i) úkwù - waist
(ii) úkwú – big

In example 5(a) above, the segments or letters of the word (e-l-u) are the same. The difference in meaning is therefore not from this difference. The other property capable of meaning is the tone. However, the tone pattern of the two words are equipollent. Each syllable has a tone which the other lacks. The first word (elu) has a high high tone pattern while the second one has a low low tone pattern. Though the tone difference is the cause for the difference in meaning, the tone difference is not minimal. The two segments have high and low respectively. The set of words is not therefore regard as a minimal pair. Let us examine 5b. and compare it with 5a. In this example, the letters of the words are the same. So the difference in meaning is attributed to the difference in the tone pattern. The first syllable has a high tone in the set of examples. But the second syllable (kwu) has a low tone in the first syllable and a high tone in the second one. This difference is said to be minimal and the set of words is called a minimal pair of Mbah and Mbah (2000).

The teacher of the Igbo tone should be abreast of the segments in Igbo that bears tone, that is, capable of bearing the peak of prominence of the syllable. Any unit of the syllable that bears the peak of prominence carries the tone mark in the syllable. All the Igbo vowels bear the peak of the prominence in syllables where they occur and therefore carry tones, e.g.

6. (a) ùdé - pomade
(b) ólú - neck/voice
(c) ányá - eye

The teacher should be wary. This precaution is because it is not always the case that the vowel carries the tone. In such situations, where there is secondary articulation, there are superimpositions of secondary articulation on the primary place of articulation. The early scholars who devised the orthography did not make provisions for this phonetic phenomenon. They have therefore erroneously used vowels to symbolise the secondary articulations. Sometimes, two vowels appear in a syllabic unit in which the first vowel does not carry any tone, e.g.

7. (a) pǎá - flog
(b) hǎá – twist
(c) bǎá - come
(d) rǎá - suffer from

In the above example, each word is a syllable. In other words, the speaker cannot pause while producing the word without losing the meaning of the word. The first vowel (ǎ) results from the superimposition of the raising of the root of the tongue on the production of the voiceless bilabial plosive - /p/. Consequently, it is not regarded as a vowel; it does not bear tone. It is because of the fact that it is not a vowel that some contemporary linguists write the above words as follows:

8. (a) pyá - flog
(b) hyá – twist
(c) byá - come
(d) ryà - suffer from

The use of (y) in the place of (ǎ) avoids the confusion that is seen in 4. The teacher of tone in Igbo should also note that sometimes some consonants carry tone. But it is only [m, n] that behaves this way. Furthermore, the teacher should be aware that it is not everywhere that these sounds occur that they bear tone. They bear tone only in such positions where they form a syllable. Usually, it is either that a consonant follows them or in the case of [m], it can occur on its own, e.g.

9. (a) m̄ - I
(b) m̄má - beauty
(c) n̄né - mother
(d) n̄nà – father

In example 9a, [m̄] is alone and has a meaning. In 9b, it is followed by another [m]. In 9c –d, [n̄] co-occurs with another consonant. Mbah (2006) has argued that the [m̄] and [n̄] are one and the same sound which has adjusted its shape depending on the next sound following it. This adjustment is called homorganic adjustment. If a teacher or student of Igbo is not abreast with this distribution, he or she will always get the locus of tone marking wrong.

Tone Rule

Another feature of the Igbo tone which the teacher or learner should master is that tones may change their inherent tones when they are used in association with some other tones. However, when he or she has mastered the individual tone patterns of words, it is easier for him or her to determine what forms they may assume in construction. The way tones change in associative constructions has come to be called tone rules. See Green and Igwe (1963), Emenanjo (1978), Nwachukwu (1995), Mbah (1999) and Mbah and Mbah (2000). The tone rules include the following:

- a. If the first noun (a disyllabic noun) ends in a High Low (HL) tone pattern and the second word also a disyllabic word ends in a LH tone pattern, the second tone of the first and the first tone of the second word are promoted or raised to step tones, e.g.
- 14 (a) ɯ kà + Èké – ɯ k̄ā E ké
worship + proper Name – Eke's worship
(b) ɯ lɔ + ɔ sá – ɯ lɔ ɔ sá
house + squirrel – house of squirrel

In 14a-b, each of the first words ends in a low tone while the second word begins with a low tone. The two low tones are bordered by high the high tone. The two low tones in-between the high tones get raised to step tones. Another tone change goes as follows:

- b. If the first noun ends in (LL) and the second word also has or starts in LL tone pattern, the last tone of the first word changes to a high tone while the others maintain their inherent low tones, e.g.
- 15 (a) àlà + Ígbò – àlá Ígbò
land + Igbo – Igboland
(b) èbù + àlà – èbù àlá
wasp + land – wasp of the land

Each of the examples in 15 has three consecutive low tones. The low tone in the middle changes to a high tone. Another change in tone pattern in an associative construction goes as follows:

- c. If the first word ends in HL tones and the second word ends in HH or is a monosyllabic high tone noun, the first word changes to HH following rule 2 while the last word changes to a high step tone, e.g.
- 16 (a) ɯ lɔ + éwú - ɯ lɔ éwū
house + goat – goat house
(b) égwù + Chí – égwú Chī
fear + God – the fear of God

One point is worthy of note here. A close look at 14b above shows that the last tone of ɯlɔ has changed to a step tone. As we noted earlier, in discussing the characteristics of the step tone, a step tone cannot follow a low tone. The last segment of the first word in 16b has changed from low to a high tone. This change is to enable the step tone of chi to have a bearing. When the tone of the last syllable of the first word is high, there is no problem because a step tone can follow a high tone. Another tone rule states as follows:

- d. If the first noun ends in two low tones and the second noun has a LH tone pattern the second low tone of the first noun raised to step while the initial low of the second word is raised to a step tone, e.g.
- 17 (a) èbù + ɔ sá - èbù ɔs á
wasp squirrel – wasp of squirrel
(b) àlà + Èké – àlá E ké
land market – Eke market land

As we saw in tone rule (b), when a low tone is found in-between two low tones across a syntactic juncture, it is raised to a high tone. This is what has happened in rule (d). After the application of this tone rule, the low tone of the second word, that is, the tone of the first syllable comes in-between two high tones. As we saw in tone rule (b), when a low tone is in-between two high tones across a syntactic juncture, it is raised to a step tone. This, consequently, gives us the tone pattern we have in (d) (see also rule (e))

- e. If the first noun ends either in LH or HH and the second noun has a LH tone pattern, the initial low of the second noun is raised to a step e.g.
- 18 (a) áká + ɔ sá aka – áká ɔ sá
hand squirrel – hand of squirrel

- (b) ísí + ọ kụ kọ - ísí + ọ kụ kọ
 head + chicken – head of a chicken

In rule (e), a low tone that finds itself in between high tones across a syntactic juncture is always raised to a step tone

- f. If the first noun ends in a step tone and the second noun begins with any tone at all, the step tone is raised to a high tone while the initial tone changes or retains its tone depending on the inherent tone pattern or the word with which it is used, e.g.
- 19 (a) élū + ósísí – élú ósísí
 top tree – tree top
 (b) éǵō + m – éǵó m
 money + I – my money

The teacher or learner may be able to detect the tone changes if he or she knows the individual tone patterns of the elements comprising the associative construction. Even if he does not know the tone patterns but he has an exercise in which the individual words have been tone marked, he can determine their changes in associative constructions. The following are helpful guides in marking the Igbo tone correctly in construction. When:

1. two or more words in an associative construction end in two or more high tones, the last high tone is lowered to a step tone. See example 16a
2. a high tone finds itself in-between two step tones, it is lowered to a step tone, e.g. éǵō (money) + éǵō (money) – éǵō ēǵō (full of money), nwókē + nwókē –nwókē nwókē
3. a low tone finds itself in-between two high tones, it is raised to a step tone. See example 18
4. a low tone finds itself in-between two low tones, it is raised to high tone. See example 17
5. a step tone finds itself in-between two high tones, it is raised to high tone. See example 19
6. two low tones find themselves in-between two high tones, they change to step tones. See example 16
7. when a monosyllabic high tone comes last in an associative construction, it lowers to a step tone. See example 19(b)

Tone Group

The teacher and learner ought to know that the Igbo nouns have been classified on the basis of whether they change their tone patterns as the first or last word of an associative construction. The words, which belong to tone group 1 include those words that do not change their tone patterns when they are the first in an associative construction but change their tone patterns as the last word of an associative construction. On the other hand, the tone group 2 words are those words, which do change their tone as the first words of associative constructions but do not change their tone patterns as the last words of an associative construction. Generally, they are summarised as follows:

1. Words ending in high tones do not usually change their tones when they are the first words of an associative construction but they do change their tone patterns when they come last. Refer to 16a.
2. The words which end in the step and low tones change their tone patterns when they come first in an associative construction but they do not change when they come last in associative constructions. See 19.

It is worthy of note however that these tone rules can only take place in associative constructions. Though the tone exists across word boundaries, the speech has to be rapid such that there is no pause in-between the word boundary. If there is any pause, the tone rule may not hold. The tone changes are not immutable or sacrosanct. A speaker may change the normal tone pattern to some other tone patterns to achieve some modal or stylistic effect.

Function of Tone in Igbo

A teacher of Igbo grammar needs to be abreast with the functions of tone in Igbo grammar. It is these functions that are responsible for some of the tone changes that have been pointed out above. As has been observed in the foregoing, tone is an indispensable feature of the Igbo language. Their functions include the following functions:

1. They differentiate meanings of words that have the same phonemic composition, e.g.

- 20 (a) ákwá - cry
 ákwà - cloth
 àkwá - egg
 àkwà - bed

- (b) ájà - sand
 àjà - encouraging
 àjà - sacrifice

The example of 20 does not imply that every Igbo word with its own tone pattern has just one meaning. There are polysemous words despite the unique tone patterns of the Igbo lexical item. The following constitute genuine polysemous words in Igbo.

- 21 (a) i. àjà - sacrifice
 ii. àjà - kingdom, are of jurisdiction
 iii. àjà - a kind of nocturnal bird

2. Tone can also distinguish between an interrogative and a declarative statement, e.g.

- 22 (a) i. Ọ bjàrà - He/She/it come
 ii. Ọ bjàrà? - He/She/it come?
 (b) i. Í siri n rí - You cooked food
 ii. I siri n rí? - You cooked food?

In example 22, the subjects which happen to be pronouns have high tones in the declarative statements but are low in their interrogative counterparts. This sort of tonal behaviour can only occur with pronouns. When there are referential expressions (nouns called by names) in the subject position of this construction type, the referential expressions yield resumptive pronouns to bear the low tone in the interrogative form, e.g.

- 23 (a) i. N gọ zị bjàrà - Ngozi came
 ii. N gọ zị ọ bjàrà? - Did Ngozi come?
 (b) i. Ọ bà dị mmá - Enugu is beautiful
 ii. Ọ bà ọ dị mmá? - Enugu, it is beautiful?

In example 23, the subjects of the sentences namely Ngozi and Oba have yielded pronouns which are their pronominal copy to form the questions. With the pronouns, 22 and 23 look alike except for the subject nouns. The third function of tone is that it distinguishes the cardinal from the ordinal numbers.

- 24 (a) i. mmádu isì - six persons
 ii. mmádu isì - sixth person
 (b) i. áká àtọ - three hands
 ii. áká ātọ - third hand

While 24a-b (i) are cardinal numbers – revealing the number of the nouns, 24a-b (ii) are ordinal numbers telling the positions of the noun in series of numbers.

There is the usually confusion about the tone patterns of both the cardinal and the ordinal numbers, especially among those learning Igbo as a second language. However, the ordinal constructions are contracted form, e.g.

- 25 a (i) ónyé n ké isì - sixth person
 b (ii) áká n ké ātọ - third hand

The addition of ‘n kè’ between any two associated nouns makes the later noun have the features of the former; ‘n kè’ marks possessiveness. The tone pattern of ‘n kè’ is low low. However it may change depending on the nature of the tone pattern of the noun it is associated with and the position of such a noun.

3. Tone also distinguishes between a sentence and a noun phrase containing a relative clause e.g.

- 26 (a) (i) N gọ zị bjàrà - Ngozi came
 ii. N gọ zị bjàrá ... - Ngozi who came...
 (b) i. Ọ bà dị m má - Oba is good
 ii. Ọ bà dị m má? - Oba which is good...

The downstep tone marks the relative clause in Igbo. The verb which marks the relativised noun bears the step tone. In other words, whereas the verb of the declarative sentence is the main verb, that of the relative clause is the verb of the sub-ordinate clause.

4. It distinguishes noun in associative constructions from possessive construction, e.g.

- 27 a (i) ùdù n tị - eardrum
 (ii) ùdú n tị - Nti's drum

When tone distinguishes meaning of individual words, its function is said to be lexical while if it functions within phrases and clauses to bring about change in meaning, the function is said to be a grammatical function.

Summary of Finding and Conclusion

From the study, it is discovered that though tone is vital to the speaking, learning and teaching the Igbo language, students generally avoid questions on tone. Some of those who attempt questions on tone do not perform well. Upon the above finding, the paper has provided a step by step method of appreciating, learning and teaching tone in a typical formal learning context. These steps include identifying the types of tones in the Igbo language. Secondly, the teacher and the learner ought to identify the way each of the tones follows one another in the phonology of the language. Furthermore, the teacher should be able to identify the units of syllable that bears tone in the language. Again, he should appreciate the ways that tones change in associative constructions and the tone patterns that change as the first or final words of the associative construction. If the teacher or learner grasps this step, then he automatically understands the classification of the Igbo noun based on the above tone behaviour. Finally, it is imperative that a teacher should be abreast with the competing tone conventions in the language. This is essential because all the tones are not marked in the language in its literature.

By way of conclusion, though tone is a tricky linguistic phenomenon, they contract a systematic relationship with the segment and its members. The above guides if dutifully followed will eliminate or minimise the problems associated with the learning and teaching tone in Igbo.

End Note

1. It is to be noted that there were students who failed in their first attempt. These students were unavoidably assessed twice. It is interesting to note that only seven of the “carry-over” cases attempted any questions on tone within the five year period.

References

- Abraham, R. C. (1967). *The Principles of Ibo. Occasional Publications*. No. 4. Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.
- Clark, M. (1989). *The Tonal System of Igbo*. Dordrecht: Foris Publication
- Eme, C. A. (2008). *Parameters of Intersegmental Co-ordination in Speech: Insights from Igbo*. Awka: Amaka Dreams Ltd.
- Emenanjo, E.N. (1978). *Elements of Modern Igbo Grammar*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press.
- Green, M.M. and G.E. Igwe. (1963). *A Descriptive Igbo Grammar*: London: Academie-Verlag.
- Goldsmith, J. (1990). *Autosegmental and Metrical Phonology: A New Synopsis*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Haas, W. (1963). “Phonological Analysis of a Case of Dislalia”. *JSHD*. 28. 239-46
- Ingram, D. (1990). *Phonological Disability in Children: Studies in Disorders of Communication*. London: Whurr Publishers Ltd
- Mbah, B.M. (1999). *Studies in Syntax: Igbo Phrase Structure*. Nsukka: Prize Publishers.
- Mbah, B.M. (2006). *GB Syntax: Theory and Application to Igbo*. Enugu: Cross River State Chapter of the Association of Nigerian Authors.
- Mbah, B.M. and E.E. Mbah. (2000). *Topics in Phonetics and Phonology: Contribution from Igbo*. Nsukka: AP Express.
- Nwachukwu, P.A. (1983). *Readings on the Igbo Verb*. Onitsha: African-FEP.
- Nwachukwu, P.A. (1995). *Tone in Igbo Syntax*. Nsukka: Igbo Language Association.
- Oluikpe, B.O. (1979). *Transformational Syntax: The Ngwa Example*. Onitsha: Africana-FEP.
- Welmers, W.E. (1973). *African Language Structures*. Los Angeles: University of California Los Angeles Press

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

Academic conference: <http://www.iiste.org/conference/upcoming-conferences-call-for-paper/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

