

The Efik Language: A Historical Profile.

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Abstract

The Efik language which is spoken in the Southern part of Nigeria is one of the first languages to be written and studied in Nigeria. The profile of the language was very high before the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Nigeria. Missionaries developed the orthography, the lexicon, the grammar, and the literature of the language. We are determined to analysis the language looking at it from a historical perspective, specifically from the diachronic angle. The paper is searching for historical facts which is nothing more than a scholarly interest in truth. Our sources are mainly from classified materials and documents. Also the instrument used to generate the performance data from the subjects comprised of structured questions. The samples used in this paper aids us determine the dependent variables. We are therefore trying to gain a clearer perspective of the present using the past as it concerns Efik. This paper benefits from Whorfian theory in the sense that linguistic determinism and cultural relativism are both socially and culturally bound. The study discovers that the profile of Efik is at its lowest ebb like most minority languages the world over. The paper notes that Efik which had very early contact with English when compared to most other Nigerian languages is gradually losing its security because of lack of encouragement from parents, teachers, government and the native speakers themselves. Therefore, there is an agitation by the language owners to revitalize the language.

Keywords: Contact, culture, language classification, orthography, Whorfian hypothesis,

1. Introduction

This paper gives an overview of the range of diachronic and synchronic analysis of the Efik language. A look is taken at the distribution of the various developmental stages. Also the classification of the language into genetic language family is analyzed. The reason for. this analysis is to ascertain how fairly the language is doing and to track if Efik is being eroded..

Crystal (2003) estimated that the total number of languages in the world was 6,809, and Efik is obviously one of them. 90% of these languages are spoken by less than 100,000 people. Between 200 and 150 languages are spoken by more than a million people, and our language of study falls within this range. There are 357 languages which have less than 50 speakers. The Cambap language (central Cameroon) has 30 speakers; the Leco language (Bolivian Andes) has about 20 speakers. Mati ke (in Northern Australia) had four speakers in 2003. A total of 46 languages have just a single speaker. Between 2003 and now, so many things must have happened with the languages of the world

Language development as it concerns interference, communication, contact, convergence and attitude calls for research all over the world. Regrettable, in Europe and the Americas, with less diverse linguistic glossogamy, there is a concerted momentum in the attitude of research investigation in this area. According to Ojukwu (2003), Africa and indeed, Nigeria is a different story, a pathetic one at that. And what with Grimes' (2001) statistics of Nigerian linguistic situation:

The story becomes more lamentable, viz:

Number of living Nigerian languages	-	505
Number spoken "as second languages	-	2
Number of extinct Nigerian languages	-	8
Total number of Nigerian languages	-	515

(Grimes 2002).

With the above statistics, we can understand why English is the official language of Nigeria and why English has influenced all Nigerian languages. Also, of these statistics, we will be able to determine why the Efik language is

different considering the past, the present and the future. Looking at the statistics above which indicates that the total number of extinct Nigerian languages stands at eight. Two out of these eight languages are found in the same geographical area with Efik. These languages are Efut and Kiong. These statistics serves as a statement of problem for this paper. The solutions of the problems as we progress in the analysis of this study elicited the topic chosen. Sapir (1924) maintains that, over the last 500 years, 5.4% of the world's described languages have disappeared, and more would continue to disappear. Our business is therefore, to create awareness and sensitize the Efik people as it concerns their language and other minority language group.

2. The Efik people

There are five hundred thousand (500,000) first language speakers of Efik and two million, four hundred thousand (2,400,000) language users, (Ethnologue: 2005). However, the 2006 population census puts the figure at three hundred and eighteen thousand and ninety nine (318,099), (Wikipedia). The five hundred thousand users that have the language as their L_1 are found in the coastal areas of the Cross River, which comprise of Calabar Municipality, Calabar South, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Odukpani, parts of Akamkpa Local Government Areas in Cross River State. There are also first language users of Efik found in parts of Itu Local Government Area in Akwa Ibom State and also parts of South Western Cameroon that boarder the Bakassi Peninsular. Where the Efik people migrated from is shrouded; however, there have been some speculative accounts that they started their journey from Philistine through different. parts of the globe and eventually settled at their present homeland. Aye (1967:14) indicates that the Efik people migrated across the Sudan to West Africa. Ganduanu (1970:54) confirms this position when he admits that:

...the origin and migration of the (Efik people) are without doubt, well ascertained from recent research. In fact, the Efik people as we now know had migrated into Nigeria from the Orient, possibly Ethiopia or ancient Nubia.

This evidence supports a popular school of thought that traces the origin of the Efik to the Philistine. Jeffrey (1935) maintains that the Efik people were initially known as Eburutu, who first settled among the Aros in Arochukwu from where they migrated to live among the Uruan in the Ibibio land of Akwa Ibom State. They lived together for a long time sharing a common language, culture and religion until a crisis was precipitated which culminated in a war popularly known as "Uruan affair" (Fuller, 1996). This ultimately led to the expulsion of the Efik people from Uruan thus marking a continuation of their quest to seek permanent settlement elsewhere, which they eventually found in their present homeland. The Uruan history seem to be more realistic from the point of view of the researcher. However, more studies will be carried out to ascertain the exact history of the migration of the Efiks.

The Efik people have a history of a strong government. This strong government was controlled and exerted by the Ekpe society. The Ekpe was a strong and peaceful "political organ headed by the Obong of Calabar who controlled the entire Efik people. Before modern day government, the machinery of government which constituted the executive, judiciary and legislative organs were performed by the Ekpe society. In spite of the modern day government roles, the Efik people still maintain their traditional government and are still ruled by their Obong.

In the late 17th century and early 18th century, the slave trade business was really booming in the West African coast. Calabar was one of the trading points; this exposure accelerated the Efik people's economy compared to their neighbours in the hinterlands. Their Obong and the influential businessmen made so much wealth. History has it that at the abolition of the slave trade in the late 18th century, the wealthy businessmen resorted to trading in palm oil, hunting, farming and fishing. This was possible because of the coastal location of Calabar (the Efik capital). The early missionaries described it as 'a land filled with milk and honey'. Aye (1967:4) describes it as having "...one of the longest unbroken contacts with Europe when compared to any part of the West African coast. It was a flourishing emporium of trade..." . The Efik people are generally hospitable and accommodating. They take a lot of pride in their leisure. This make people refer to them as lazy people. However, because of their early contact with the Christian missionary, they imbibed education early enough.. That is why the Efik people were amongst the first to hold key and sensitive positions in Nigerian. Before Christianity, the Efik worshipped a water -goddess called Ndem. Even though Christianity has taken over from the worship of other deities, some traditionalists still worship these Ndem up till date. The very strong educational spread and Christian worship make the land more peaceful.

2.1 The Efik language

Compared to neighboring languages around the South Eastern coast of Nigeria, the Efik language is blessed with language contact. The early contact with the slave traders and later with Christian missionaries influenced the development of the language. Even though the missionaries met with the indigenes who were illiterate as at when they arrived at Calabar, they were able to study the local language and did the best they could to put it into writing. The Efik language share a lot in common with Ibibio, Annang, Eket, Oron amongst others. The lexicons are similar, the phonemes are very close, the syntactic structures are not different, but what has made the Efik language stand out was the early contact with the European languages. The Scottish missionaries were the first to attempt to reduce the language into writing. Using the English orthography, a Jamaican, Reverend Hope Waddell introduced the writing system of the Efik language; this in turn aroused their interest in written language. These missionaries taught the Efiks to read and write their language. This they did, so that a good medium for disseminating the gospel was created. This started in 1820. (Aye 2000).

The Efik language has the history of being the first language to be reduced to writing in Nigeria. It enjoyed a reputable literacy tradition and scholarship which made administration, education, commerce and religion easily acceptable by the people. In 1874 Rev. Hume Goldie produced the first dictionary in a Nigerian language which was published by the United Scottish Mission. This was the first authoritative documentary material in the language. It was followed by the monumental translation of the Bible into Efik, the second Nigerian language to achieve this feat (after Yoruba). Also many religious tracts, hymn books and prayer pamphlets were produced in Efik to facilitate the evangelization of the people.

The Efik language over the years has developed to a level that it dominates other languages spoken around Cross River State. A language like the Kiong language spoken by the Okoyong people is extinct because its speakers have imbibed the Efik language over the years. The same is also said of the Efut language spoken by the Efut people in Calabar South, Apart from being the language that is spoken by a third of Cross River State as an L₁, it is the L₂ or L₃ of most Cross River indigenes. For the purpose of advertising, the language is most used after English in the state. Television and Radio commercials are aired everyday in different spheres, In politics the language is used by all in the Southern senatorial and parts of the Central Senatorial Districts of the State. In education, there is a primary and secondary curriculum of Efik in schools. In the development of linguistics, it is studied at the undergraduate level in the University of Calabar.

The Efik language cannot be separated with the culture of the people. The Whorfian theory has made it possible for us to justify easier what has happened to the Efik language over time. Since language, thoughts, ideas and the society are interrelated, the Efik linguists are ensuring that their language that was once up there is revitalized. Not just for the sake of the language but also for the sake of the Efik culture. In spite of all these strong points the language has, it is still wanting in several areas. Few people are interested in studying it as a course. Materials are not developed in the language as it was done before. The owners of the language, apart from a very few of them, have not been able to develop the literature, the history, the structure and the orthography of the language. The majority of works in the language were carried out by the missionaries. According to Noah (2004:587), "Efik is one of the first Nigerian languages to have been reduced to writing. In its about 160 years of written history, there have been about a dozen attempts to perfect the orthography, without any remarkable success". A group of Efik linguists (Mensah 2010 in collaboration with NERD) attempted to propose a more phonemic orthography that would overcome inadequacies that are ambiguous. That would represent the orthography used for this research. Noah's (2005) proposal of the orthography is useful. In addition to ensuring a standard orthography, the development of the language is vital in a study of this nature. The concepts of the behavioural aspect of language is important. This brings into play the relationship of the culture of the people and the culture of the language borrowed. Efik has borrowed several words from English, and the English culture has infiltrated into the Efik culture. Certain concepts are more meticulously differentiated in one culture with several vocabulary items than in others. Efik has experienced this over a period of time. The concept by Sapir and Whorf will serve as the application which reflects this study.

2.2 The Classification of Efik

Language classification is one area not many linguists have delved into. The foremost scholar, Greenberg (1963) was one of the first who classified languages according to their family and genealogical branches. He classified the Efik family as he did with several other languages in Africa. Other scholars like Faraclas (1989), Essien,(2000), Williamson and Blench (2000) also classified Efik accordingly. Greenberg (1963) classified Efik under the Niger-Congo family of the Niger-Kordofanian phylum. Within this phylum is the Benue-Congo family

which is made up of five sub-classifications including Cross River. Cross River is classified into two major groups; Delta-Cross and Bendi. The Delta-Cross group is divided into three sub-groupings; West, Central and East. Efik belongs to one of the Eastern Delta Cross languages.

Another scholar, Faraclaus (1989) carried out a comprehensive classification of Cross River languages. He classified Efik under the Lower Cross sub-group of the Delta-Cross, which is an off-shoot of the enlarged Cross River group that is a major constituent of the Benue-Congo sub-family.

From very close examination of the two scholars' classifications of Efik, we notice that Greenberg recognized Niger-Congo as the source from which every other language originated. Faraclaus on the other hand names Benue-Congo as the apex of his classification. Greenberg divides his Benue-Congo family into Efik sub-group. Faraclaus has twelve sub-groups under his Benue-Congo group. However, the two classifications identify Delta-Cross as the immediate group that gives birth to Lower Cross of which Efik is a member.

Mensah (2002) who quotes Essien (2001) says Efik is a member of the Lower -Cross subgroup of the Delta group of the Cross River sub-branch of the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo sub-family, of the Niger-Kordofanian language family. He further indicates that Efik family can be traced to the Niger-Congo group, which gives rise to many sub-families including the, Cross River. It belongs to the Lower Cross group which together with the Upper-Cross group among other groups constitutes the Delta-Cross families, an immediate sub-family of the enlarged Cross River group of languages. From Williamson and Blench, Cross River (where Efik belongs) is a group which has survived from Greenberg's classification with only internal rearrangement. Greenberg according to them subdivided it into Cross River 1, 2 and 3. These different languages in their various families and societies have different cultures. These further besets the Whorfian theory.

3. Methodology and theoretical framework

The approach of eliciting the data for this study hinges on historical methodology, which has qualitative variables. Historical problems have been recognized as it concerns the language over time. Relevant information is gathered from when the language had contact with English up until the present. We gathered facts from library sources, crossed-checked information from oral informants in chronological format. This aided us establish general facts and principles through the evolution of words from what it was and what it is presently. The choice of this method is to aid record what has happened to the language over time. Efik was one of the first language used in writing in Nigeria. It had an orthography in the 1800s, but today, it is fast losing its vitality. Why? The researcher is intuitively involved in trying to unravel what is happening to the language. Efik has added so much to its vocabulary through borrowed words. This has added to a coloration of the culture of the people. Change in culture is noticeable among the Efik people so much that, there is a parlance which is used by them, 'Efik edi makara' meaning the Efik people are Europeans. Here it is strongly believed that the English culture and language has really influenced the Efik people. As earlier mentioned, oral interviews were arranged with old Efik speakers who are seventy and above. We subjected them to read Efik written documents by Huge Goldie and Rev. Hope Waddell and also to read current literature by recent literary writers. We had to do this so that we will compare their pronunciation with that of the younger generation. The socio-biographical data on the subjects used covered age, occupation, educational background, religion etc. We also investigated if they noticed the change over time in their language and their culture. Change looks obvious because of the influence of English on Efik.

The theoretical assumption that underpins this work is the central component of Whorf's (1941) hypothesis that is expressed by Olaoye (2007), which indicate that a language does not have a word for an item which it does not have in its culture. The language has to borrow the word it does not have. The word usually comes with the culture of the donor language. However, borrowed words are usually prone to adaptability. It demonstrates the dynamic fluid and varied nature of relativism and determinism. For the purpose of analyzing this study, we are using the Whorfian hypothesis as our theoretical framework to articulate the content of history and the social perception of Efik language. Edward Sapir (1884-1939) the first person who articulated this idea contends that we are prisoners of our own language.. The idea was improved by Benjamin Whorf (1897-1941). This theory known as Whorfianism states that language is not only socially bound but also historically and culturally bound. Whorf contends that language is the shaper of ideas and that we dissect nature along the lines laid down by our native language. It is Whorf's view that the linguistic patterns (of different languages) themselves determine what the individual perceives in this world and how he thinks about it. Certain concepts are more meticulously differentiated in one culture with several vocabulary items than in others. Also language is the primary medium for cultural expression and transmission of culture, (Olaoye:2007). The overview of the range of diachronic and synchronic analysis of the Efik language justifies the use of Whorfian theory. Over the

years the Efik language has developed through borrowing, coinage and contact. Most of the words borrowed by Efik are from English. The linguistic patterns of the languages are basically different, and there is the tendency of the culture of English infiltrating the culture of Efik. For Sapir (and Whorf), we assume that different languages just use different labels for the same concepts, but rather that different language users have a different conceptual scheme and live in different worlds. The culture of the language being borrowed infiltrates the fabrics of the culture of the speakers that borrow the language.

We will now want to know if there are advantages in contact between Efik and English? If Efik benefitted from the contact in its vocabulary and its culture? if the language is endangered? If there has been a change as the language is studied diachronically? And perhaps, if it requires maintenance and revitalization?

4. Language change

Obviously, there is a language contact between Efik and English. This means there is a cross-linguistic influence at all levels of language which include lexical borrowing and code-mixing on the part of Efik bilinguals. Most of the bilinguals we observed, their written and oral discourse in Efik had English words. It varied from direct borrowing to sound transfer. Efik language has been more of the beneficiary because the borrowed words are mostly from English to Efik. Lets view some examples of lexical items transferred:

English Lexical Items	Efik Equivalent
Saturday	Satide
Window	windo
Curriculum	korikulum

Language changes with time. To compare Chaucer's English, Shakespeare's English and modern English show how a language can change over several hundred years. Words and grammar used in Britain, America and even Nigeria differ because of geographical positions of their countries.

When groups of people speaking the same language are separated, in time their language will change along different paths. First they develop different accents; next some of the vocabulary will change (either due to influences of other languages or by natural processes). When this happens, a different dialect is created; the two groups can still understand each other. If the dialects continue to diverge, there will come a time they will be mutually unintelligible. At this stage the people will be speaking different languages.

Compared to other Nigerian languages, the Efik language has a chequered history. This is a language that had king Eyo Honesty the first, an Obong of Calabar, encouraging the reducing of it into writing in the 18th century before any Nigerian language was written. This writing process was of course different from what we have today. The contact between English and Efik dates back to 1750. This was established when the King tried to record, some Efik words like *erboir* for eboa meaning dog, wang for nwan meaning woman, erto for eto meaning stick and hecat for Ikot meaning bush. If King Eyo Honesty tried recording these words and other words below, then the contact must have been even before 1812. For him to have had the knowledge to put down the following words below, then 1790-1800 must be a more appropriate date. The changes noticeable in Efik between the 1700s and now can be seen in the following words:

Past (1790)		Present	English	
Hittan	for	itam	'hat'	
Hecat	for	ikot	'bush'	
Hekong	for	ikang	'gun'	
Nenung	for	inung	'salt'	
Hequo	for	ikwo	'song'	
Heubok	for	ubok	'hand'	
Heuper	for	ukpa,	'can wood'	
Heuwong	for	Unwong	'tobacco'	
Heufok	for	ufok	'house'	
Heuneck	for	unek	'dance'	(Aye, E. U. 1991).

Because of the coastal nature of Calabar and other Efik speaking areas, the English slave traders had contact with the Efik people during the 17th and 18th centuries. At the end of the slave trade era, the

missionaries came in. They brought in Christianity and education and of course, the language had to be developed, translated and reduced to writing which eased communication. When the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland mission arrived in Old Calabar in 1846, Rev. Hope Waddell and Edgerley started recording Efik vocabulary having tried to write words as they perceived it. These Efik words were printed in their lithographic press and made ready in 1864. By 1874, Rev. Huger Goldie produced a comprehensive work on Efik - English dictionary.

In 1929, with the assistance of Westermann, Gaskin, Macgregor and Richard, they worked on the orthography for the Efik language in Calabar, under the Chairmanship of Falk. They decided that it was urgent to put up a new vocabulary for the Efik using the English orthography as a yardstick. Effiong, Ballantyne, Meehan, Henshaw, Westgarth, Amaku, Eyo, Akpayung and Nkanga played a great role in seeing to it that the Efik language benefited greatly from the English language. These scholars ensured that the culture of the Efik language was maintained in addition to preserving the language (Aye 2000).

Bearing in mind all the contributions of several linguists, scholars, historians and host of others, the Efik language has grown from strength to strength from the past to the present. The changes noticeable recently are mostly borrowed words from the English language. These words are sometimes assimilated or adapted into the language and over time, it has been difficult to notice if they were ever English words or Efik words. Examples of these assimilated words adapted into Efik are:

English lexical items	Efik equivalent
Tin	tian
Pound	bon
Soap	Suop
Glass	akrasi
Police	bodis
Teacher	titia
Television	television

The stress features found on the English words have been substituted with tone in the Efik language. The orthography is also changed to suit the Efik orthography; At this lexical level, the phonological systems of the two languages are different. The obvious natural classes of segments of Efik and English enable the speakers of Efik to adapt English words to fit the Efik phonology. Because of the level of interference between Efik and English, the Efik speakers have accepted several English words into their language. With advancement in technological development, several new words have been introduced in the vocabulary and lexis of Efik. All these are positive signs in favour of the language which shows that the language is growing stronger. The changes found in the language in the last 25 years are a natural phenomenon which will be found in any other language over time. New discoveries in the world today will always increase the vocabulary of the language (Offiong 2007). The Whorfian argument which blends with the phonological systems, underpins the sociolinguistic conception of the Efik language profile. The culture of the Efik people are embedded in the language used by the Efik bilinguals, especially in borrowed words. It captures the interference found between the two languages.

5. Efik future

The future of Efik language is bleak. As earlier discussed, Efik has a good past, a strong present but a future that is threatened. Efik was a language that was among the nine Nigerian languages used for news broadcast in the late 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s, in Radio Nigeria. But today, the language is not used for any national broadcasting. Efik was a West African Examination Council (WAEC) subject in the 1970s up until the late 1980, when it was dropped. Efik was the second language (L_2) in the Central and Northern senatorial district of Cross River State, Nigeria, but today, the language has lost that strong presence. Udoh and Okon (2008:68) confirms that:

A typical example is the Efik language which had been used along the Cross River Basin as a huge lingua-franca for trade, education etc. The language had an orthography, a dictionary and a full Bible translation in the 19th century. This was uncommon in most Nigerian languages. However, it is gradually being replaced by other local languages. These languages are even being used in churches where Efik had been in use, as some kind of liturgical language.

The language had teachers that were interested in teaching the language as a subject in primary and secondary schools, but, today there is dearth of teachers in this subject. In the early 2000s, the language was introduced in the University of Calabar as a course in the department of Linguistics, but today students are not admitted to do the course. Efik was taught in the then College of Education, Uyo, when Cross River and Akwa Ibom were one state, but today, the language is not taught at that level. Efik literature and grammar had authors like Akpayong, Nkanga, and Amaku amongst others who had the interest of writing in Efik, but today such writers are not available to add to the scholarship of the language. Another major problem that has been of concern to the language is the attitude of the speakers of the language.

They are not proud of their language. The present generation has even made it worse by not communicating with their children using Efik language. The death of a language begins when a generation deliberately does not encourage the next generation to imbibe into. The theoretical assumption that underpins this aspect is the central component of Fishman's (1991) intergenerational transmission which surround reversing language shift (RLS) theory. It demonstrates the dynamic fluid and varied nature of intergenerational transmissions in the Efik language community under study. We are also finding out how crucial Fishman's model is to the theory and practice of minority language survival (King & Logan-Terry: 2008). Reyhner (2003) points out that Fishman believes that the intergenerational transmission of language in the home from parent to young children is the key to keeping indigenous languages alive; however, schools can play either a positive or negative role in supporting the efforts of indigenous parents and communities, (Offiong and Ugot:2012). The modern Efik parents are not transmitting the language to their children. This is creating a huge gap in the growth of the language. If nothing is done positively towards reversing the trend, then in two generation Efik language would have been extinct.

With all of these problems enumerated as it concerns the Efik language, it is obvious that the future of the language is in jeopardy. As mentioned earlier, the Kiong and the Efut languages in the same geographical location are extinct; it therefore behooves on the owners of the language to ensure that their language does not follow the path of extinction. A reverse of the situation is what this paper intends to propagate.

6. Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, our interest bothered on the historical profile of The Efik language looking at it from the diachronic and synchronic perspectives. This is done so that we can look at the trend from where the language started, how it evolved, how it developed, how it is presently and how the future will look like. We have noticed that the language is not too comfortable because of contact it has with the languages around its environs and the English language. Even the Nigerian Pidgin is a great threat to it. The level of direct and indirect interference is strong as it affects Efik. The people are fast losing their culture. This is because language is strongly linked with culture. The stronger a language, the stronger its culture. Offiong and Ugot (2012) have noted that the rate at which minority languages in Nigeria are shifting or gradually experiencing loss calls for this study. Language maintenance is crucial for the survival of these minority languages. This study clearly reveals evidence of loss of Efik and other Indigenous Languages, because of its contact with the more developed English used for business, education, governance and worship. Maintenance of these languages are too relevant at this point to avoid "total extinction", like Efut and kiong which are in the same domain as Efik that are already moribund.

We cannot afford to sit idly and watch the Efik language die. Presently, the language is suffering from linguistic malnutrition, and any linguistic group that does not stand up to ensure the development of its language, the group will surely loose. The National Institute of Education and Research Development Centre (NERDC) is doing a good job in ensuring that indigenous languages in Nigeria are developed. Presently, they are developing the lexicon/vocabulary of some Nigerian languages and Efik is one of them. The meta-language development of Efik is an encouragement. Until we cross this Rubicon (Essien 2003) - that is, ensuring that we propagate the study of Nigerian languages, particularly Efik - development in all its ramification will continue to elude us.

A language like Efik which had very early contact with English when compared to most other Nigerian languages is gradually losing its security because of lack of encouragement from parents, teachers, government and the native speakers themselves.

This paper also serves as a notice to formulate strong strategies so that the Efik language can survive amidst the high threat from the English language. Several native Efik speakers, linguists, Cross River State government and, Efik teachers at all the levels should heed to a wake up to call to prevent the total extinction of Efik language.

The culture and language of the society can be sustainable if the owners of the language have interest in their language. The Whorfian hypothesis which served as a synthesizer, predictor and a guide to facts used in this study stimulated authenticity which aided the flow of this research. The Efik language and cultural patterns will be on the verge of diminishing, but we are encouraging them to speak Efik instead of English so that they will not exchange their culture for the English culture.

7. Recommendations

This paper is a wakeup call to all stakeholders of Efik language to come together and ensure that the language is removed from the path of extinction. We are calling on Cross River State government to come to the aid of Efik and other indigenous languages in the state. The government should ensure that the language of the immediate community is taught in the schools were they are located. Also, machinery-should be put in place to ensure that Efik becomes an examination subject in both WAEC and NECO.

The Cross River State Ministry of Education should advice headmasters and principals of primary and secondary schools to include, Efik language, teaching in their curriculum. The Local Government Councils should award scholarship to students who are interested in studying Efik language. We are also recommending that the University of Calabar, the Cross River State University of Technology and the College of Education authorities should introduce and revive the study of indigenous language courses in their Universities. Finally, we are recommending that the State Government, corporate bodies and individuals should give grants to indigenous language writers who are prepared to develop the Efik language in terms of literature and grammar etc.

There is however, some cheering news. Efik is now being examined by NECO, and WAEC have concluded plans to start examining the language at the Senior secondary school level. The Efik Language Writers and Teachers Association is seriously working towards the maintenance and revitalization of the language. We are appealing to parents to communicate and interact in Efik language with their children. By this, the language and culture of the Efik people will not disappear or diminish.

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