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Evolution of the Igbo Novel

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Abstract:

The emergence of the Igbo alphabets gave hope for a real literature in Igbo language. Contemporary Igbo writers may not have known the struggle that gave way for writings in Igbo language, thus the Igbo novel. This study looked at the evolution of Igbo novel and also considered the major phases the Igbo literature in general had undergone before the emergence of the Igbo novel. Igbo writers struggled with orthography controversy which at some point hindered publication of Igbo books, this was later resolved, and it gave way for major writings in Igbo language, thus the Igbo novel. For this study, accounts of various scholars in the field were collected as data and considered. It is discovered that the Igbo novel has been there even before literature in other languages became popular. It is believed that this research will bring to the fore the beauty of the Igbo novel and the determination of its writers to make its impact permanent.

Keywords: Evolution, Igbo novel, orthography, Omenxkq, Igbo Literature

1. Introduction

Over the years, Igbo language had no recorded writings or alphabets with which Igbo writers could write with, even if they had wanted to write. It was the coming of the missionaries in Onitsha that created the awareness for Igbo writings. The missionaries were in need of an acceptable and generally understood Igbo language with which they could preach the gospel to the Igbo man. This search gave way for the formation of central Igbo which is a well 'garnished' version of Igbo language which every Igbo man could understand. With this development, the first Igbo novel *Omenụkọ* was written in 1933 by Pita Nwana. Since then, many Igbo writers started writing and as a result, the Igbo novel emerged.

1.1. Evolution of Igbo Novel

Igbo novel cannot be talked about without considering the circumstances surrounding the introduction of the Igbo alphabets which necessitated the writing of Igbo novels. There were no Igbo alphabets initially for writing Igbo words rather what was used were Nsibidi Symbols which are drawings used to represent so many concepts like marriage, pregnancy, boy, etc. This to a large extent hindered the development of Igbo written literature. Therefore, the researcher looked into the development of Igbo written literature before the birth of Igbo novels. This study therefore, shall be considered based on the accounts of Chinua Achebe, Chukwuma Azuonye, Inno Nwadike and Onuegbu Martina respectively on the development of Igbo written literature which necessitated the emergence of Igbo novel.

1.2. Achebe's Account

It began one hundred and twenty years ago when the people of the C.M.S. (Christian Missionary Society) sent out a young minister called T. J. Dennis to join those who were spreading the gospel in Onitsha. Dennis reached Onitsha in the year 1894, and entered the work the C.M.S. had begun in Igboland in 1857. Thus, the C.M.S. had been there for 37 years when this man Dennis came to help them. Dennis was a man who had heard the call of Jesus in his heart, and was also a very hard-working person. His family was poor and this made him not to be educated as he wanted. But they were people who tried, and were followers of Christ. Dennis was born in the year 1869. On the very day that he was twenty, he gave himself to the C.M.S. people to work, to spread the gospel in Africa. The C.M.S. people received him, trained him for four years in the seminary, made him a deacon in 1893, and then sent him to Freetown, Sierra Leone, where he stayed for one year before going to Onitsha in 1894. Dennis did not know the Igbo language when he came to Onitsha, but he was very interested in learning it.

However, after a year had passed, he could not understand one word in hundred in the word of God spoken in Igbo. Perhaps he thought that as soon as he set foot in Onitsha, he would start to speak Igbo like the natives. In spreading the gospel, it is important to put the Bible and other books in the languages of the people who were being taught. The people of the Niger Mission (as the C.M.S. in Onitsha was called at first) had made a slow start in this task. The one who began the work was a man called J. C. Taylor, who came to Onitsha along with Crowther in 1857. Taylor was a Sierra Leonean, but his parents were Igbo who had been repatriated from slavery. Taylor did not know Igbo well when he came

to Onitsha, but he was an Igbo at heart. Another helpful thing was that there was another Sierra Leonean called Jonas who came along with Crowther and Taylor, and who spoke Igbo well. It was Taylor who, one might say, laid the foundation for the C.M.S. church in Onitsha. There were a few books in the New Testament that he had put into Igbo language, that the Niger Mission used in the church when Dennis came to Onitsha in 1894. It took Dennis a long time to say that Taylor's interpretations did not fit well because he did not know English very well. What Dennis wanted was to be the person who would translate the Bible into the Igbo language. So, Dennis girded his loins to set straight some things that the earlier people had done. While doing this, he also translated the remaining books of the Bible. In the year 1910, those who printed the Bible in the white man's land brought out the completely New Testament in the Onitsha dialect, what was called in English the Niger Ibo New Testament. Dennis discovered that Igbo was spoken in various dialects. The various dialects that the Igbo spoke disturbed his sleep. Then he thought of bringing together a few Igbo people from Bonny, Onitsha, Uwana (Afikpo), and Owerri to meet in Egbu Owerri and think about a new Igbo not belonging to any particular person, but belonging to all of them as a group, which was Union Igbo, Igbo Njikọkọ. One thing he thought was of importance to the C.M.S. support of Union Igbo was that it was easier to have one Bible everyone could read, rather than to have three or four. It would also cost less. One C.M.S. department located in Bonny, called Niger Delta Pastorate (NDP), and their director, Mr. Crowther, did not agree with the translation of the Bible that was being done in Onitsha. They then started to translate their own in the Isuama dialect. Dennis, with Bishop Tugwell's support, then began to undermine them by going to the Bible printers and telling them to wait a while until after a meeting of various churchmen of the NDP, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Qua Ibo (kwa igbo) who were spreading the gospel all around Igboland. This meeting was called in August 1904, but Dennis was unable to get to Onitsha for it. Those at the meeting then agreed that translating the Bible in Onitsha dialect as well as in Isuama dialect would be a good thing. In 1905 he called another meeting in Asaba; being careful about his support, he saw to it that Bishop Tugwell himself would come and preside. The place Dennis selected to be the headquarters was Egbu Owerri. In October, 1906, he left Onitsha and went to Egbu, where he and his helpers began to put the Bible into the language, he called Union Igbo which is the Igbo language that Dennis hoped the Igbos would speak in the future. What Dennis did was to go to one area of Igboland and take a word, go to another area and take an additional word, go to a third place and take another one to add. The three areas they emphasized most were Onitsha, Bonny, and Uwana, because no Bible translation had been started in these dialects. The year 1913 was the year that those who printed the Bible in London brought out the poor-quality testament called the Union Igbo Bible. In the year 1918 G. T. Basden, who was secretary for the C.M.S. in Onitsha, sent out questions about the Union Igbo Bible, in order to find out the thoughts of the C.M.S. workers--the whites, the Igbo pastors, the West Indians. Even though all these people were there at the meeting, they were afraid to state their minds in papers. Only Basden spoke strongly against Union Igbo. But, Dennis defeated Basden.

1.3. *Azuonye's Account.*

It is perhaps too early to attempt to impose any rigid periodization on Igbo literary history at the present time. However, one factor seems to have played the most vital role in the determination of the course of development of written Igbo literature from the very beginning, and this is the search for an appropriate and widely acceptable koine or standard literary language in the face of a confusing multiplicity of dialects. Viewed in the light of this search, the history of written Igbo literature falls neatly into four major periods, each of which is characterized by experimentation in literary production in the particular koine after which it is named.

The three periods are as follows:

- The Isuama Igbo Period, 1857-1905
- The Union Igbo Period, 1905-1941
- The Central Igbo Period, 1941-1973

In the Isuama and the Union Igbo periods, literary production was sponsored by the Christian missions purely for evangelical purposes. But in the Central Igbo period, the chief sponsor was the colonial government in pursuit of the provisions of the 1926 Education Ordinance which recognized the value of the use of the mother tongue in the education of the child, in contradistinction to the Education Ordinance of 1882 which specifically discouraged the use of indigenous languages in favour of the English language. In the fourth and ongoing period - the Standard Igbo period - the disappearance of alien patronage, coupled with the socio-political developments of the post-colonial era, has given rise to the production of an Igbo national literature sustained by a cultural nationalist fervour which was forged during the Biafran war of independence.

1.4. *The Isuama Igbo Period, 1857-1905*

The Isuama period was dominated by attempts to create Igbo literature in what was mistakenly assumed, by its missionary sponsors, to be "the leading dialect of the Ibo nation". However, as the missionaries later discovered, the Isuama dialect, was an expatriate form of Igbo which had evolved in Sierra Leone among the community of liberated Igbo slaves there. Although it has been described as a kind of "esperanto", it was by no means an artificial language; it was rather a natural, compromise form of Igbo arising from the efforts of Igbo expatriates from different dialect areas to communicate with one another in their own native language. It is very likely that owing to distance from home created by the experience of slavery and the predominant use of English as the language of every communication, Isuama developed features which made it somewhat awkward and far removed from Igbo dialects of the homeland, a fact which was not discovered until more than a quarter of a century of frustrating literary use. Three main factors hindered the discovery of the inadequacy of Isuama as a literary standard Igbo. They are:

- The early involvement of highly patriotic Isuama-speaking Sierra Leonean Igbo expatriates in evangelical work in Igboland
- The absence of any other incentive than the missionary enterprise for the development of Igbo literature.
- The absence of concrete and reliable information on the true linguistic situation in Igboland in early ethnolinguistic works available to the early missionary linguists.

Unfortunately, when Crowther returned to the Niger in 1853 with his Sierra Leonean Igbo assistant, he called a language conference at Onitsha and apparently influenced by the enthusiasm of the Isuama-speaking Igbo evangelists and catechists in his party, "that conference decided that the dialect to be used in writing Igbo should be Isuama. And thus the Isuama period of Igbo written literature. All literary productions of this period were evangelical and pedagogic.

The first, *Isuama Ibo Primer* (1857) was a 17-page collection of "words, sentences, Lord's prayer, Decalogue and scripture verses" translated into Igbo by Crowther, reprinted in 1859. A revised and enlarged version prepared by Taylor was published in 1860 (or 1861) and formed the basis of subsequent primers by F.W. Smart (1870), and Simpson (1887 and 1890) which, at the turn of the present century, evolved into the famous Green Book (Azx ndx) which has been described as one of the most powerful seminal influences on the emergence of written Igbo literature. Because of the seminal impact of the *Primer*, Crowther, though a Yoruba, has been described as the father of modern Igbo literature. But it would seem that the Sierra Leonean Igbo missionary, John Christopher Taylor, can lay a better claim to that title not only because his *Isuama Ibo Sermon* (1860) is the first original and individual work in Igbo, but also because of his dominant role in every facet of the linguistic labours of the Isuama Igbo period. Taylor was pre-eminent in all the major translation efforts of the period. The departure of Taylor brought to a sudden end, the experiment in literary production in Isuama. In the years following, up till the emergence of Union Igbo, translation work was done in the dialects of four areas in which various missionaries were active. These include

- The Uwana dialect (By the United Presbyterian Church),
- The Onitsha and Owerri dialects (by the Church Missionary Society).
- The Bonny dialect (by the Niger Delta Pastorate Church).

1.5. *The Union Igbo Period, 1905-1941*

With the growth of Igbo Christian populations at Onitsha, Owerri, Uwana and the Niger Delta, at the turn of the century, the need for a common language in which the whole Bible and other Christian literature would be translated became critical. Both the laity and the clergy were sharply divided over the two options available to the missionary translators, namely, the selection and promotion of one dialect as a koine as had been done in the case of the Yoruba or the creation of an esperanto combining the features of the four dialects already in use. The dominant and articulate Onitsha laity (led by G.N. Anyaegbunam) pressed the case for the Onitsha dialect with acrimony, resting their claims on the headstart of Onitsha over other areas in literacy and the reception of Christian education. Besides, a great deal of Christian literature already existed in the dialect. But, in due course, the clergy chose the path of compromise, and following decisions taken at the famous Asaba language conference of August 14, 1905 and a series of workshops at Onitsha and Egbu Owerri, Union Igbo was born, thanks largely to the efforts of Rev. T.J. Dennis of the Niger mission. Between 1905 and 1913 this new esperanto was put to use in the translation of the whole Bible. Rev. Dennis later died in a shipwreck off the coast of Liverpool while taking the MS of the Igbo Bible to England for publication, but in one of those mysterious turns of events often associated with the intervention of the divine powers in the affairs of men, the MS was washed ashore where it was picked up by a fisherman and ultimately restored to what in hindsight can be described as its preordained publishers.

1.5.1. *The Central Igbo Period, 1941-1973*

The Central Igbo period was a period of applied linguistic exercises in the practicalization of Ward's proposals rather than a period of imaginative literary creativity. Numerous guide books aimed at Adult literacy classes were sponsored by Adult Education Departments and Translation or Literature Bureaux of the period. These include:

- *Xzq e si azx xmxaka* (E.N. Amaku and KAchinivu, Ifeolu Printing Works, Lagos).
- *Ihe Kwes[r] Oriri* (Eastern Regional Literature Bureau, 1950),
- *Ihe Kwes[r] ka mmadx mara* (Philip, son and Nephew Ltd., n.d.).
- *Ihe mmxta Kwes[r] {r[ba ama* (CMS, 1943)
- *Ibi xmx nwaany[ugwu jqgburu onwe ya* (Christian Council / Eastern Regional Literature Bureau, 1950)

A number of translations from European literatures established themselves as compelling reading materials at school and in the home. These include:

- *Akxkq Ifo Ufodu* by Dorothy Irvine (Eastern Regional Literature Bureau, ERLB, 1950).
- *Okwu Xfqdx Aggrey Kwuru* by C. Kingsley Williams (ERLB, 1950).
- *Enwe a na-akpq Candu* (Thomas Nelson, 1951)
- *Onye Amamihe Qzq si n'Qwxwa Anyanwu Pxta* by Henry Van Dyke (ERLB, 1950),
- *Nkapi Anya Ukwu* by Evelyn Powell Rice (Nelson' and Sons Ud., 1955),
- *Akuko ifonke si n'Africa* by J.O. Iroaghanachi (Longman, 1952).

The Christian missions cooperated by producing numerous popular tracts in Central Igbo and between 1950 and 1954, a Central Igbo magazine, *Amamihe*, sponsored by the colonial government, flourished. Igbo literature continued to develop in the varieties of natural union .

The slow pace of development of Igbo literature during the Central Igbo period, has been blamed in part on the problems of the multiplicity of dialects and that of arriving at an acceptable standard orthography. This is true only in the sense that the Central Igbo experiment tended to discourage union Igbo, which had established itself as the most credible medium of Igbo literature. Also religious politics led to a situation in which the Roman Catholic Church insisted on the use of the Onitsha dialect in schools and churches, while the Protestant Missions adopted Union Igbo and embraced the Central Igbo experiment and also allowed literature in the union Igbo to be taught in schools. There was no real threat from pure dialect writing at this time. More important obstacles were those of orthography and negative Igbo attitudes towards their language and culture. The birth of Biafra, in May 1967, was the start of a new Igbo nationalism. At the end of the war, a new Igbo consciousness had been born

2. Nwadike's Account

2.1. *The Freetown/Sierra Leone Studies Period (1828-1857)*

The Freetown Studies of Igbo covered a period of about 30 years, from 1828 when the first wordlist in Igbo appeared in Freetown to 1857 when such studies shifted to Onitsha in Igboland. It all happened during the Niger Expeditions. Having liberated the slaves in its territories, the British Government founded Freetown in Sierra Leone in 1787 as a home for the liberated Africans. The greatest achievement of this era was the establishment of in 1832 an Igbo girls' primary school in Charlotte village by Mrs Hannah Kilham of the Quaker Mission. The version of Igbo used during this period was Isuama/Isoama, an esperanto – the brand of Igbo fashioned out and used by the emancipated Igbo slaves in Freetown. It will be remembered that Schon collected the greatest number of wordlist in Igbo – 1600 words, which, if they were published, could have been the first Igbo dictionary by 1840.

2.2. *Onitsha/Isuama Studies Period (1857-1900)*

In 1857, the seat of Igbo studies shifted to Onitsha, in Igboland, when the CMS on the Niger was founded. To prepare for the Onitsha Mission and Igbo education, Crowther, the head of the Mission with the help of Simon Jonas, a liberated Igbo grandchild, wrote the first ever book in a lower-Niger-Benue language. This was the Isoama – Ibo Primer in 1857. The Isuama studies crumbled when it did because of the following reasons:

- The exit of Taylor, the engine power house of the mission, in 1871.
- The death of Crowther, the spirit and founder of the mission in 1891.
- The disastrous fire of 1867 which engulfed the entire mission and the loss of many academic and church materials.
- The use of Isuama dialect which was only used in the school and church premises.
- The attitude of Igbo people who preferred English to their mother-tongue
- The ill-fated British Education Ordinance of 1882 which made English language the medium of instruction in schools and discouraged the use of indigenous languages.
- The Sierra Leonean returnees were disappointed at the attitude of their brothers in Igbo homeland who did not want to accept and integrate them into their fold as the Yorubas did to Crowther and his fellow returnees. With the exception of a few who stayed back to form the Saro Quarters of Onitsha today, the rest returned to Freetown in frustration and disappointment.

2.3. *The Union Igbo Period (1901-1929)*

The Isuama period gave way to the Union period, a period characterized by greater and more scientific contribution to linguistic work in which many Igbo people of Igbo homeland participated actively. The period is referred to as Union Period because Union Igbo was in vogue, at least, within the Protestant circles. This time, the leadership of the mission was in the hands of European missionaries who had greater competence in linguistic dispensation.

This time, missionaries were charged with the collection of Igbo folklore. The result was that in 1927, Crowther's Isoama-Ibo Primer of 1857 was revised and enlarged to include 15 essays on secular topics, 14 short essays on Christian topics, and 18 folktales, and re-entitled: *Akwxkwq Ogxgx Ibo*, running into 66 pages, and was popularly called *Azx Ndx* (green cover). In addition, the missionaries translated some extracts of the *Arabian Nights*, *Tales From Shakespeare* and *Pilgrims Progress*. The man who championed the course of the new era was Archdeacon Thomas J. Dennis, 'a noted classicist and the most prolific Igbo Language Student'. At Egbu Owerri, from 1905-1909, Dennis surrounded himself with a team of mission translators from 5 distinct dialect areas of Onitsha, Owerri, Bonny, Arochukwu and Uwana (Afikpo), producing a bible in the CMS ideal Igbo dialect – the *Union Igbo Bible*. Certain constructions entered Igbo language via each of those dialects. For example, the wo/woro suffixes in Igbo, come from Uwana (Afikpo) and environs. O mewo ya. O meworo m ya. (He/she has done it for me).

In recognition of his meritorious and arduous linguistic work in Igbo, Oxford University awarded him an honorary Masters degree, and on his way to receive the award in 1917, he died in a shipwreck in the Irish Sea during the 1st World War. His other works which he intended to get printed and published on reaching England on that trip were his Igbo Dictionary which ran into thousands of words and a translation. Dennis' untimely death was the next and greatest tragedy to the cause of Igbo studies. This was the man Prof. Chinua Achebe castigated in his 1999 Odenigbo Lecture, accusing him of destroying the Igbo language.

2.4. *Igbo Orthography Controversy (1929-1961)*

The 1926 Education Ordinance and Code had immediate consequences. It led to the formation and inauguration in London of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures (IILAC), a body that had to promote African heritage in diverse ways. In 1929, this orthography was accepted for use in Nigeria but which caused a lot of damage in Igbo studies because, the CMS, which had a sizable literature in the old orthography, bluntly refused to accept and adopt it. This led to the Igbo Orthography Controversy that raged from 1929 to 1961 (32years). Consequences of orthography controversy on Igbo language studies.

- It limited the development of the literary language and the production of literature.
- Publishers refused to publish in Igbo.
- Worse than that, Messrs Longmans and Green published Igbo books in the new orthography but were unable to find enough buyers because of the divided loyalties to the orthographies.
- It scared would-be authors in Igbo, many of whom turned to English.
- The dispute created consciousness among the adherents of the Protestants and the Catholic Church.

3. The Central Igbo Studies Period (1929-1965)

The Central Igbo Period overlapped with the orthography period. With the failure of Union Igbo to satisfy the purpose for which it was structured, Igbo language was again at the crossroads, searching for a viable academic dialect to be adopted in the production of Igbo literature. The Central Igbo Studies period was the era of the emergence of Igbo creative literature when many Africans took part in IILAC's literary contest. In 1933, there were 17 entries in Igbo and Pita Nwana's *Omenuko* won the first prize, and was subsequently published that same year to become the first novel and first biography of the Igbo. Two years later, in 1935, D.N. Achara's *Ala Bingo* made its debut as the Igbo second novel. These two novels formed the archtypes and prototypes for other writers to emulate.

3.1. *The Standard Igbo Studies Period (1966- Now)*

What is Standard Igbo? In the words of Nwadike (1981), Standard Igbo is enriched Igbo capable of being spoken and understood by every Igbo person in all parts of Igboland. Standard Igbo started informally in 1966 during the mass return of Igbo people from various parts of Nigeria when the Nigeria/Biafra War clouds were gathering. From that period, many Igbo refugees penetrated various parts of Igboland for purposes of trade and settlement, and in the process, there was a cross fertilization and diffusion of dialects. It is the age of Igbometrics, Scientific and Technological Terminologies and Metalanguage. From 1973, Igbo discarded the old system of numeration (Ohu, Irineeri, Nnu) which was cumbersome and limited in scope, and emerged with the decimalization system resulting in Igbometrics. Onuegbu's Account.

The writing of literature in Igbo language came as a result of the activities of Western missionaries in Igbo land. The early missionaries faced with the dilemma of either to study Igbo language so that they can use it to impart the Christian religion into the Igbo people or to teach the Igbo people the English language in order for them to adapt in the study of the Christian religion, chose to study Igbo language (Emenyonu 1978:21). As a matter of fact, before 1766/67, Igbo language was unwritten and the Igbo people were stark illiterates in English language and in the Western form of writing. Then they wrote in the Igbo Nsibidi. With the help of the missionaries Nwadike (1990:69) noted that the writing of Igbo language began in Isuama dialect in between 1766 to 1900. It continued in Union Igbo orthography from 1900 to 1929. This study generated to the writing of Igbo words, which was the brainchild of a German missionary G.C.A. Oldendop. He wrote the first Igbo words in his book *Geshichte der Mision der Evangeliischen Bruder auf den carabischem* and it was published in 1777. Other works done in Igbo language writing includes that by Mrs Hanna Kilham in her book: *Specimens of African Languages Spoken in the colony of Sierra Leone* (1989).

In 1857, Rev. Ajayi S. Crowther produced the first work of importance which formed the basics of Igbo written literature because it was a primer and the extracts it contained formed the first literary creations in Igbo language. In 1927, the original primer written by Crowther was revised and enlarged to include nineteen essays on secular topics, a long narrative riddle about the sun, nine short essays on Christian tales. Emerged then, were the Onitsha market literature which was seen as translated versions of imported literature into Igbo language and adulterated versions of Igbo narratives.

The essence of considering these accounts from these scholars is to fully understand that first of all the Igbo people had to battle with the adoption of a particular Igbo dialect and then an accepted orthography. The missionaries at that time were instrumental to the development of Igbo novels because it was in the quest for a language that the Igbo man will understand that gave birth to the Igbo alphabets which writers later used to write Igbo novels. From these accounts, it can then be deduced that firstly, the Igbo novel emerged because there were no known alphabets for writing in Igbo language which was interestingly, made possible by white missionaries. The first Igbo novel *Omenuko* by Pita Nwana was written in 1933 followed by D.N. Achara's *Ala Bingo* in 1935. This is to say that Igbo novel is now 86years old judging from the date of the first novel.

Some Igbo novels published from then include:

<i>Ụkwa ruo oge ya</i>	-	Tony Ubesie	(1973)
<i>Mmiri qkụ e ji egbu Mbe</i>	-	Tony Ubesie	(1979)
Onye kpaa nku ahuhu	-	Inno Nwadike	(1989)
<i>Ọja dufuo Dike</i>	-	Ray C. Anene	(1991)
<i>Adaeze</i>	-	Inno Nwadike	(1998)
<i>Ulumma</i>	-	Chinedum Ofofomata	(2006)
<i>Mmụọ dara olulu</i>	-	Ogochukwu Ifeka	(2012)
<i>Ọchụpụrụ onwe ya n'ugbo</i>	-	Ogochukwu Ifeka	(2012)
Onye Chi ya Akwatugh{	-	Maduka, C. N.	(2012)
Qchx nwa Qkxkq new ada	-	Ogochukwu Ifeka	(2015)
Mmadx abx Chukwu	-	Nsolibe Obiageli	(2018)
Xwa bx nke onye	-	Nsolibe Obiageli	(2018)

Another significant thing in the present Igbo novel is difference in contents. The pre-war novels lack sufficient and well-grounded content and most of which are fictitious like *Elelịa Na Ihe O Mere* by D. N. Achara (1964) and *Ala Bingo* (1935). *Omenụko* (1933) was the only Igbo novel which portrayed the life of the Igbo race. Contemporary Igbo novels have the luxury of choosing from the many themes abound in the society today. These themes range from hatred, wickedness, hunger, death, famine, lifestyle, fashion, and so on.

4. Conclusion

The modern Igbo novel does not lack content as writers draw inspiration from the every day life in the society. Contents abound around us. With the invention of technology, computer and internet, the old written literature and novel is a far cry from what is obtained today. This is to say that Igbo novel has evolved over a reasonable period of time and survived the hard times, stood the test of time and is getting better. Again, Igbo novel in the past was ornamental in the sense that writers were restricted to certain way of writing which made them paint words in order not to erupt a moral war. This is dearly due to the missionaries as against the present novelists who are free to write in the way and manner they please. These days too, people are trained to write in Igbo language thereby creating employment for the people.

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