

The Need for Primary School Subject-Specific Dictionaries in the Igbo Language

Juliana Mgbekikwere Okeke
Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe University, Ideato
julieokeke80@yahoo.com

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Abstract

School subject-specific dictionaries (SSSDs) are reference books specially designed to help students understand the specified vocabulary, terminologies and concepts within a particular subject area. The 2022 edition of the National Language Policy states that the Mother Tongue (MT) or Language of the Immediate Community (LIC) shall be used as the medium of instruction from Early Childhood Care and Development Education to the six years of primary education; and that Registers in Nigerian languages for the various school subjects shall be developed. This implies that there shall be textbooks and related materials in all subjects written in the various Nigerian languages. Certainly, the requirements of the National Language Policy with respect to primary education include availability of textbooks for all school subjects in various Nigerian languages in addition to school subject-specific dictionaries (SSSDs). This study looks at the availability of school subject-specific dictionaries in the Igbo language in the Primary schools as one of the major tools for fulfilling the National Language Policy. The theoretical framework adopted for the study is the Substance over Form approach which focuses on types of data that actually exist in different sections of a dictionary. Data for the study were collected from randomly selected twelve primary schools in Anambra, Enugu and Imo States and from three Igbo school dictionaries identified to be in use. Analyses of the available Igbo Primary school dictionaries reveal that there are no school subject specific dictionaries in the Igbo language. Having identified the ideal features of this dictionary type, and observed its importance for effective teaching and learning in our primary schools, especially for fulfilling the requirements of our National Language Policy, this paper recommends the development of school subject-specific dictionaries in the Igbo language for our primary schools.

Keywords: *dictionary, Igbo, language policy, primary schools, subject-specific*

1. Introduction

The 2022 Edition of the National Language Policy of Nigeria chapter 4 (18) under Application and language use in Education: (A) Basic Education states that,

To ensure effective delivery of instructions and attendant positive learning outcomes, Mother Tongue (MT) or Language of the Immediate Community (LIC) shall be used as the medium of instruction from Early Childhood Care and Development Education to the six years of Primary education...

(NLP, 2022:17)

This policy on the medium of instruction for children at the primary education level aligns with the view of authors like Schleppegrell *et al* (2004) and Civil (2008) who believe that children from a home background where the Mother Tongue or language used at home differ from the language of instruction at school are disadvantaged. In their opinion, such children get less involved in classroom discourse and contribute less frequently to class activities.

Another implication of the above stated policy is that the Igbo language, like other Nigerian languages should not just be learned as a school subject by children at the primary school level, but should be used as the medium of instruction for all school subjects for the six years of primary education, beginning with the Early Childhood Care. From the statement of this policy, we see the importance of not just school subject textbooks in our various indigenous languages, but also school subject-specific dictionaries in our indigenous languages for the Primary schools.

The ministry of education in various states provides materials and textbooks for the teaching of the Nigerian languages. However, more needs to be done in the area of Igbo language dictionaries. This is in line with the demands on chapter 4(23) of the National Language Policy which states that “Efforts shall be made to develop orthographies and metalanguages for the teaching and learning of all Nigerian languages”. Again, chapter 4(25) also states that

Efforts shall be made to develop and produce educational materials in the various Nigerian languages. Registers in Nigerian languages for the various school subjects shall be developed.

(NLP, 2022:18)

The Research Problem

There is a general underdevelopment of Igbo lexicography and more of the Pedagogical lexicography whose major concern is dictionary for language learning. This underdevelopment is more at the primary school level. No meaningful language acquisition can take place without enough vocabulary of the language being made available to learners. We cannot talk about developing registers in the Igbo language for various school subjects as implied by the National Language Policy (NLP) without talking about school subject-specific dictionaries. The unavailability of school subject-specific dictionaries in the Igbo language poses some difficulty for the actualization of the 2022 edition of the NLP.

Objectives/Significance

The objectives and significance of this study are: to identify the ideal features of school subject-specific dictionaries, which are essential tools for achieving the demands of the National Language Policy on the medium of instruction in primary schools. It identifies available Igbo primary school dictionaries and analyse them to see if they are subject-specific or general purpose in nature. It also looks at how the availability of school subject-specific dictionaries in the Igbo language will enhance the actualization of the National Language Policy.

Methodology

In terms of methodology, a qualitative research design is adopted for this study. This involves the collection of data at two stages, the first is from the randomly selected primary schools, and secondly from the identified available Igbo primary school dictionaries in use. Data from the primary schools were collected through interview method, while data from the dictionaries were collected using the review method. Presentation and analysis of data includes the use of tables and descriptive method.

The paper is organised in four sections: section one is the introduction; section two – the literature review, which is made up of five different subsections. Section three is the data presentation, and finally section four is the summary and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

This section discusses literature and concepts that are related to the subject matter, and is divided into the following subsections: school subject-specific dictionaries, importance of school subject-specific dictionaries, features of school subject-specific dictionaries, the National Language Policy and the theoretical framework.

2.1. School Subject-Specific Dictionaries (SSSDs)

School dictionaries have been defined by different authors as reference works designed for school children/learners for their school work. Hartmann and James (1998) see it simply as a dictionary written for school children. Tarp (2012) defines it as a dictionary with the genuine purpose to assist users that are school learners to find solution to problems related to their school work. Language for specific purpose dictionaries are considered reference works that define or describe a language variety used by experts and professionals in a particular subject field (Okeke and Uchechukwu, 2023). Therefore, a school subject-specific dictionary can be described as a reference work specifically designed for a particular school subject to assist learners understand the

registers, terminologies, concepts, jargons, etc, that are uniquely associated with such a subject. Tarp (2011), arguing on the need for school subject-specific dictionaries, notes that the dictionary is useful, not just in learning native and foreign languages, but needful in all school subjects. Qadir (2020) is of the view that school dictionaries consist of a number of entries as lexicographic units found in the school curriculum of various stages of study. He therefore opines that dictionaries be composed for every stage of school, rather than having a single dictionary designed for all stages of studying. Tarp and Gouws (2012), in their own perspective think that the purpose behind composing a school dictionary is to have a type of dictionary confined to be used in schools at different levels to explain the meaning of ambiguous terms existing in course books. We cannot talk about course books or text books without referring to specific school subjects. Sorsak (2015) believes that the dictionary is useful in all school subjects, for learning terminologies that are peculiar to such subjects, and not just in learning native or foreign languages.

2.2. Importance of School Subject Specific Dictionaries

In discussing the importance of school subject-specific dictionaries Ufer and Bochnik (2020) opine that they are crucial for understanding the specified vocabulary and concepts within a particular subject area. They assert that the development of mathematics skills is linked to students' language skills, adding that knowledge of subject specific vocabulary is of great importance for students' academic performance. Furthermore, they explain that school subject-specific dictionaries offer precise definitions, historical usage, and how terms are applied within that specific discipline, which is often different from general language usage. Civil and Plana (2004) believe that weak language skills might exclude students from meaningful participation in classroom discussion in different subjects. They further stress on the importance of school subject-specific dictionaries for enhancing students' participation in the classroom. They argue that when students have in-depth understanding of various concepts associated with different subjects, they can boldly discuss, argue and even gain more knowledge. It also encourages independent study, they add. Furthermore, they opine that when a child has dictionaries particularly designed for subjects like Mathematics, Physics, Biology, etc that clearly explain the unique terminologies that make those subjects scary, he can easily study and understand by consulting the dictionary.

Ufer and Bochnik (2020) cite the South African Lexicography landscape which has developed to the point of having school subject-specific dictionaries. They assert that the task is effectively executed by the South African National Lexicography Units (NLUs). Ufer and Bochnik (2020) went further to analyse the importance of school

subject-specific dictionaries for enhancing teaching in the areas of deepening understanding of subject-specific terminology. They opine that school subject-specific dictionaries provide in-depth definitions, etymologies, and usage examples of technical terms within a particular field. They emphasise that this allows learners to grasp the nuances of concepts and vocabulary that are not typically covered in general dictionaries. They gave an example about a biology student using a subject-specific dictionary to learn the precise meaning of "endoplasmic reticulum" beyond a simple definition.

Again, Ufer and Bochnik (2020) assert that school subject-specific dictionaries improve precision and communication by enabling students to express themselves more accurately and clearly within their chosen field. They think that this is particularly important for academic writing and presentations where precise language is essential. They buttress their argument by citing an instance of a history student that can use a dictionary to differentiate between "liberalism" and "progressivism" to accurately convey their understanding of political ideologies. Furthermore, Ufer and Bochnik (2020) explain that school subject-specific dictionaries can help students develop their critical thinking and analytical skills by encouraging them to compare and contrast different terms, explore synonyms and antonyms, and analyse the relationships between concepts. They cite an example of a literature student using an SSSD to explore the various interpretations of a literary device through which he gains deeper understanding of the text and its themes. Ufer and Bochnik (2020) also posit that school subject-specific dictionaries empower students to become more independent learners by providing them with the tools that will enable them to research and understand new concepts on their own. They further state that by consulting these dictionaries, students can take ownership of their learning and reduce their reliance on the teacher for every clarification. In their opinion, the consistent and thoughtful use of school subject specific dictionaries contributes to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of specific subject matter in every field of study. Ufer and Bochnik (2020) strongly believe that the use of school-subject specific dictionaries enable students become more familiar with the specialised vocabulary and concepts; through it they build a stronger foundation of knowledge, which is essential for advanced study and research within their chosen field.

2.3. Structure and Features of School Subject Specific Dictionaries

Generally, every dictionary has a structure which refers to the order of, and the relationship between, the components of the dictionary. The three major structures are

the megastructure, the macrostructure and the microstructure. There are other minor structures of the dictionary, including the iconstructure which is prominent in children's dictionary. The macrostructure is the order of and relationship between the headwords (lemmas) that make up the lemma list. Sorsak (2015) opines that a strict alphabetical macrostructure will be most ideal for a school dictionary. This is because alphabetical ordering is a normal part of children's daily activities. While for the microstructure which is simply the order of information in a dictionary entry, he thinks that etymological information is not crucial for children, and therefore should not be included in primary school dictionary. However, Ufer and Bochnik (2020) see etymological information as very crucial for a school subject-specific dictionary for the secondary school level. Furthermore, Sorsak (2015) expresses the view that in addition to a careful selection of grammatical information on the lemma, the most important sections of a primary school dictionary entry are definitions, examples of use, and illustrations. The most ideal definition style for school subject-specific dictionaries is the full-sentence definition design (Okeke, 2024, Sorsak, 2015 and Svensen, 2009).

The iconstructure refers to the pattern and order of use of pictures and illustrative examples in a dictionary. It is a major structure in children's dictionary. It is as important as the microstructure in other dictionary types designed for adult users. Svensen (2009) explains that learning effect is enhanced by a picture, and that a picture, quite differently from verbal description is able to appeal to the reader's previous experience of the word and to provoke the 'aha' reactions. According to Svensen (2009), pictorial illustrations are indeed very useful part of the dictionary middle matter, but they are regarded as more important in children's dictionary.

Some of the features of school subject-specific dictionaries based on the works of Tarp (2012), Qadir (2020), Ufer and Bochnik (2020) and Okeke (2024) include:

- i. Controlled vocabulary as gotten from the subject curriculum, textbooks and related materials
- ii. Lemma list being made up of technical terms that are particular to the school subject
- iii. The front matter should contain a preface and a rich/simplified user's guide
- iv. A well defined target user, with the class/educational level clearly stated
- v. In-depth definition of the lemmata as it applies to the school subject, preferably using the full-sentence definition model.
- vi. Providing etymological information (for secondary school dictionary)
- vii. Sufficient examples on the use of the headword

- viii. Synonyms and antonyms of the lemmata
- ix. Very rich iconstructure with full colour for the junior primary
- x. Exercises at the back matter

2.4. The National Language Policy

A National Language Policy is an officially mandated set of laws, regulations and practices established by a government to determine how languages are used, taught and promoted within a nation. It is also defined as in the NLP (2022) as “a body of ideas, laws, regulations and practices intended to achieve planned language change in societies” and as “an officially mandated set of rules for language use and form in a nation-state”. The objectives of these policies typically include promoting national unity and identity, setting standards for education and literacy, and enhancing language preservation. The Nigerian National Language Policy has been developed over the years, with different editions coming up as they are reviewed. This paper looks at the 2022 edition which was the current version in use at the time of the research. Its statements in Chapter 4 - Application and Language Use in Education, Section: ‘A’ Basic Education, subsections (18), (23), and (25) as cited above all point to the facts and implications that:

- Mother Tongue (MT) or Language of the Immediate Community (LIC) is to be used as the medium of instruction from Early Childhood Care and Development Education to the six years of Primary education.
- The Igbo language, like other Nigerian languages should not just be learned as a school subject by children at the primary school level, but should be used as the medium of instruction for all school subjects for the six years of primary education, beginning with the Early Childhood Care
- Efforts shall be made to develop orthographies and metalanguages for the teaching and learning of all Nigerian languages, which includes the Igbo language.
- Efforts shall be made to develop and produce educational materials in the various Nigerian languages. Registers in Nigerian languages for the various school subjects shall be developed. Meaning that there shall be textbooks and related materials in all subjects written in the various Nigerian languages.

The implications of these statements as it affects the need for school subject-specific dictionaries in the Igbo language at the primary level in particular form part of the concerns of this study.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the ‘Substance over Form’ approach proposed by Nielsen (2011). It is an approach which focuses on what type of data actually exists in a given section of a dictionary, how they are accessed, presented and how they support the functions of the dictionary. Nielsen (2011) believes that dictionary reviews should not be merely descriptive, but should contain thorough analyses, evaluation and reflection of their object. Therefore, he proposes the ‘substance over form’ approach with its principles based on his previous work and that of other renowned lexicographers like Herberg (1989), Nielsen (1994), Chan and Taylor (2001) and Kirkpatrick (1989).

The principles guiding the ‘Substance over Form’ approach include, a faithful representation of the lexicographic elements of the surface features of the dictionary, their organisation and presentation, as well as the underlying features which include the data types and structure presented by the dictionary. The dictionary under this principle is considered a true research object to be analysed, described and explained. Furthermore, analysis under the ‘Substance over Form’ approach is based on the standard requirements or ideal features of the dictionary type or dictionary section being analysed.

3. Presentation and Analysis of Data

The presentation and analysis of data in this section is done in three stages: first is a tabular presentation of data showing the identified Igbo primary school dictionaries that are in use in twelve randomly selected schools in three Igbo speaking States. The second and third stages of the analysis are done based on the theoretical framework for this study. The second stage is a general description/examination of each of the identified dictionaries to see the types of data contained therein; the third stage is the analysis of the dictionaries through a comparative table that looks at the features of the dictionaries side by side the ideal features of school subject-specific dictionary from which conclusion on the study is drawn.

Table 1: Igbo Dictionaries in use in some Primary schools in Anambra, Enugu, & Imo States

S/N	State	Zone	Name of School	Igbo School Dictionary in Use
1.	Anambra	Aguata	Community Primary School Ekwulobia	Nil
2.	Anambra	Nnwewi	Umudim Central School, Nnewi	Nil

3.	Anambra	Otuocha	Oraka Central School, Anam	Nil
4.	Anambra	Onitsha	Central School, Atani	Nil
5.	Enugu	Agbani	Bishop Otubelu Jubilee Nursery and Primary School	Mbanefo (2016) <i>Okowaokwu Igbo Umụaka</i>
6.	Enugu	Enugu	Artizan Primary School, Asata	Nil
7.	Enugu	Nsukka Central	Model Primary School, Nsukka	Nil
8.	Enugu	Udi	Community School ObinaguAmaeke, Nachi	Nil
9.	Imo	Okigwe	IkpaekweOwerreOkwe Community Primary School	Mgbemenna <i>et al</i> (2017) <i>Igbo-English Bilingual Dictionary</i>
10.	Imo	Orlu	State Primary School, Atta	Nil
11.	Imo	Orlu	Angels' Inspiration Academy, Arondizuogu	Ukabam (2000) <i>Okwákwū Ògòchámaka Umuntakiri</i>
12.	Imo	Owerri	Town School Umuanunu, Nguru	Nil

Data collected from selected primary schools

From table 1 above, we have three available Igbo school dictionaries that are in use at various primary schools in the three states from where the data were collected. These dictionaries are namely, Ukabam's (2000) *Okwákwū Ògòchámaka Umuntakiri*, Mbanefo's (2016) *Okowaokwu Igbo Umụaka*, and Mgbemenna *et al*'s (2017) *Igbo-English Bilingual Dictionary for Basic Education*. These dictionaries are described and analysed below.

3.1. General Description of the Identified Dictionaries

This first stage of analysis of the identified dictionaries is a general description of each dictionary based on the principle of 'Substance over Form' which requires a careful examination of different sections of the dictionary to see the data types and how they are represented.

3.2. Ukabam (2000) *Okwákwū Ògòchámaka Umuntakiri*

Ukabam (2000) can simply be described as a two in one book, serving both as a book for learning Igbo words and a pictorial dictionary. It is a single authored dictionary/book and has a beautiful front cover design that is ideal for a children's

dictionary or school dictionary for pre-primary and primaries 1 – 3. The front matter of Ụkabam (2000), which is written in the Igbo language starts with a page on names and brief introduction of those that endorsed the book (*Ndibinyere aka n'akwukwọ a*). Next is the abbreviation used in the dictionary (*Ndebirindidin'akwukwọ a*) and the explanation on tone marks adopted in the dictionary (*akaraudaolundi e jirideepokwaokwu a*), which are contained on pages iii and iv. The 'Acknowledgements' (*NkwupurunaMkpupuru*) are on page v of the front matter, followed by the 'Table of contents' (*Ndinaya*).

The next page is titled 'Introduction (*Nkọwa*)'. In this section the author explains that the dictionary is designed as a special contribution to fight for the restoration, up building, and development of the Igbo language "...*ijitinye aka n' ụzọpuruichen'ogụ a na-aluijiweghachite, wulite ma kwalitekwaAsusu Igbo*"(p.ix). Furthermore, the dictionary is stated to be designed for children and all other persons as the target users "... *a haziri Okowaokwu a ka o ga-ekwe umuntakiri na ime riime mmadu ndinile ozọ nghota ma dikwa ha uto ogugu*" (p.ix). Therefore, it is not particularly designed to be a school subject specific dictionary. There is no mention of a specific source of vocabulary used in the dictionary. The author simply says they are Igbo words used within the Igbo speech community, and new words created by himself. The last page on the front matter contains the 'Preface' (*Okwubuuzo*), which explains that the dictionary has words explained from Igbo to English. It also gives a brief explanation on the type of information located in different chapters of the dictionary/book. The back matter contains the 'References' (*Edensibia*) as the only information on the dictionary back matter. It has no user's guide. A summary of the content of different sections of Ụkabam (2000) is reflected on table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of the Contents of Ụkabam (2000) *Okwákwú Ògòchámaka umuntakiri*

Front Matter (10 pages)	Macrostructure	Microstructure	Back Matter (1page)	Inconstruct ure
- Contributor s - Abbreviatio ns -Tone marks	Thematic presentation - <i>Igbo Amaka (egwu)</i> - <i>Asusu Igbo Amaka (egwu)</i> - <i>ChaatiOnuoguguN'olu Igbo</i> - <i>Onuogugu Ego Naira N'Igbo</i> - <i>AkukuAhụMmaduga</i> - <i>N'ulokawukwọ</i> - <i>UmuanumanunkeUlo</i> - <i>UmuanumanunkeOhia</i>	A pictorial dictionary section with: - Names of items as lemmas in Igbo and English (102 pages) Words and meaning section contains:	Reference s (<i>Edensibia</i> a)	- Pictures and illustrations -Full coloured

- Acknowledgements -Contents Introduction *Purpose Target users *vocabulary -Preface	- <i>Umukahuhuna Otapiadiicheiche</i> he - <i>Umunnuninke Ulonanke Ohia</i> a - <i>Umunnun Mmirina Azu</i> - <i>Ihendi a naEyiN'ahu</i> - <i>Ihendia na-ahu</i> - <i>N'usqekwuna N'okpokoro Eri</i> imeri - <i>Ihendi a na-eri Eri</i> - <i>Mkpuruosisi,</i> - <i>Mkpuruakukuna Akwukwonri</i> i - <i>Ihendidi N'ulo</i> - <i>Laturonni kiganansu Mkparit</i> auka - <i>Ugbọ Ogbugba di icheiche</i> - <i>Osise (odidi, odidihe)</i> - <i>na Ucha (agwa) diicheiche</i> - <i>Nsu Egwuregwu</i> - <i>Ngwaorudiicheiche</i>	-list of Igbo words and their English equivalents (<i>Mkpuruokwunank owa ha na Bekee</i>) Having 2,127 words in 22 pages.		
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Ukabam (2000)

3.3. Mbanefo (2016): *Okowaokwu Igbo Umaka*

Mbanefo (2016) is a single authored print children's dictionary which has an online version. Its cover design and title show it to be a children's dictionary with over one thousand, one hundred and forty (1,140) headwords. Information on the front matter of the dictionary begins with a page on appreciations; followed by a table of contents, then the acknowledgements page (the front matter pages are not numbered). The page containing information for the dictionary user is also not numbered, but has the title "preface for teachers and parents". This page explains that *Okowaokwu Igbo Umaka* is a modern and simple dictionary designed to help children (and may be adults) acquire essential Igbo language skills. Added information in that page is that the dictionary is particularly useful for the 6year olds and above. On the vocabulary used, the dictionary says that it includes words from computing and everyday modern life, with some dialectal variations. It is also explained that the Igbo alphabet is shown on every page, with the particular letter for the lemmas in bold. A summary of the content of different sections of Mbanefo (2016) is reflected on table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary of Mbanefo (2016) *Okowaokwu Igbo Umuaka*

Front Matter (6 pages)	Macrostructure	Microstructure	Back Matter (6 pages)	Iconstructure
Preface -Target users - Vocabulary - Manner of presentation -Scope of usage - A concise User's Guide	Alphabetical order	Entries -The lemmata (headwords) - Examples (295 pages)	Numbers (Cardinal and ordinal) - Time - Words and Opposite	Pictures and illustration consistently provided -No colours

Mbanefo (2016)

3.4. Mgbemena *et al* (2017): *Igbo-English Bilingual Dictionary for Basic Education*

Mgbemena *et al* (2017) can simply be described as a co-authored bilingual pedagogical dictionary. It is a project of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The title and its front cover design suggest that it is a dictionary for Basic Education in Nigeria. It also has an inscription that says “NOT FOR SALE”. The front matter of the dictionary provides some good information on its contents under a heading titled ‘introduction’ from pages iv to ix. Information under the introduction include: first, purpose of the dictionary, which is to provide English meaning of Igbo words that are in common use in basic education. Additional information on the purpose is that the dictionary is intended to contain words not above secondary education. Secondly, in discussing the vocabulary used, it is explained that the dictionary contains four thousand (4,000) vocabulary items, which are not only original Igbo words, but also appropriately Igbonised loan words that relate to basic education. A summary of the content of different sections of Mgbemena *et al* (2017) is reflected in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Summary of Mgbemena et al (2017) *Igbo-English Bilingual Dictionary for Basic Education*

Front Matter (11 pages)	Macrostructure	Microstructure	Back Matter	Iconstructure
-Purpose of the dictionary -vocabulary coverage -Igbo variety -orthography *Letters *Spelling *Tone marking -Arrangement of vocabulary items -Word class -Examples and diagrams -Abbreviations	Alphabetical order	Entries -The lemmata (headwords) - Examples not consistently provided (282 pages)	Nil	-Pictures and illustrations not consistently provided

Mgbemena et al (2017)

3.5. Analysis of the Dictionaries using the Substance over Form approach and the Identified Features of a School Subject Specific Dictionary (SSSD)

The principles of Substance over Form approach requires that contents of different sections of the dictionary should define its function and target users. This is because the theoretical framework (approach) views the dictionary as a utility product that is designed to satisfy specific human needs. Therefore its content should fulfill such function when compared with the standard, which in this context are the ideal features of school subject-specific dictionaries. This is done by analyzing the dictionaries based on their contents in comparison with the ideal features of school subject-specific dictionaries. The analysis is on Table 5 below.

Table 5: Analysis of the Identified dictionaries using the Substance over Form approach via the Ideal features of a School Subject-Specific Dictionary

Dictionary	Controlled vocabulary from subject curriculum/text books	Lemma list on a specific school subject	Simplified and rich user's guide	Clearly defined class/educational level	Subject specific definition	Exercises on the back matter	Very rich iconstructure	Sufficient examples on the use of the headword	Synonyms and antonyms of the lemmata
Ukabam (2000) <i>Okpwaokwu Igbo-Umaka</i>	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
Mbanefo (2016) <i>Okpwaokwu Igbo-Umaka</i>	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Mgbemenn et al (2017) <i>Igbo-English Bilingual Dictionary for Basic Education</i>	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

4. Analysis of the table by the Researcher

From the analysis of the dictionaries using Substance over Form approach and the identified features of school subject specific dictionaries on table 5, the (✗) indicates an unavailability of that particular feature in the dictionary, while the (✓) is an indication of its availability. The result of the analysis shows that over ninety percent of the ideal features of school subject-specific dictionaries are lacking in the identified Igbo dictionaries in use in our primary schools. Ukabam (2000) which is the only one having a very rich iconstructure with full colour pictorial illustrations is not a school dictionary from its general description. It has a preface, its target users are not clearly stated, no controlled vocabulary, no school subject specific lemma list, no user's guide, definitions not applicable to any subject area, no exercises on the back matter, no

synonyms/antonyms and no in-depth definitions of the headwords. From its general analysis it is more like a book for general learning of the Igbo language. The same is the result of the other two dictionaries. Mbanefo (2016) only has a user's guide which is not rich, but very brief and concise, a preface and pictorial illustrations that are not coloured. It lacks all other features of a school subject-specific dictionary. Mgbemena *et al* (2017) only has a preface, its target users are not clearly stated, pictorial illustrations not consistently used. It lacks all the features of a school subject-specific dictionary. Generally, the three dictionaries do not have the important and core features of the school subject-specific dictionaries (SSSDs) and therefore cannot be designated as such. They can rather be classified as General Purpose (GP) children's or school dictionaries if some of their features are amended.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has identified the ideal features of school subject-specific dictionaries (SSSDs) which are outlined under section 2.3 of this paper. These identified features with the instrumentality of the 'Substance over Form' approach were used in analysing the available Igbo dictionaries in use in our primary schools. The study also identified the urgent need for school subject-specific dictionaries in the Igbo language as an essential tool for achieving the requirements of the 2022 National language Policy on the medium of instruction for primary schools in the South East of Nigeria. Its findings show that there are currently no school subject-specific dictionaries (SSSDs) of the Igbo language. The available ones can better be described as General Purpose Dictionaries (GPDs).

This paper recommends that:

- i. Igbo lexicographers, linguists and educationists should collaborate to produce school subject specific dictionaries for the Igbo language. Co-authored dictionaries by professionals in different fields will always produce better results.
- ii. Such dictionaries to be developed should be based on the ideal features of school subject-specific dictionaries as identified in this study.
- iii. There should be a sensitisation and awareness on the importance of Igbo school subject specific dictionaries and its usage in our schools.
- iv. Government can sponsor Igbo school subject specific dictionary projects, and monitor their availability and use in our schools. These recommendations can be applicable to other Nigerian languages.

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Juliana Mgbechikwere Okeke
Department of Linguistics,
Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe University, Ideato