

Abstract

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Ika is an Igbooid language spoken by the Ika people, who are mainly found in Ika South and Ika North East local government areas of Delta State and some parts of Edo state in Nigeria.

This work presents and describes the changes in the Ika language and linguistic community by using a holistic method, which combines the historical, sociolinguistic and structural linguistic approaches.

Chapter 1 focuses on the Ika community, its structure and the history of the various clans that make up the community. This is aimed at presenting a robust picture of the community in order to provide a better understanding of the linguistic changes taking place in the community. Also in this chapter, a hypothesis regarding migration and settlement into the Ika community is proposed. Chapter 2 presents a sociolinguistic overview of the Ika community. Chapter 3 contains a brief description of the phonological and syntactic structure of the Ika language. The changes that have taken place in the Ika language during the last fifty years are the subject of Chapter 4. The methodology used in the process of gathering the data used mainly in Chapter 6 and the problems encountered during the fieldwork are described in detail in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 presents the analyses of data on informants' reported language attitude, choice and use, and the consequences of the language shift on the proficiency of Ika speakers in the Ika language. Chapter 7 synthesizes some of the major issues raised in the first six chapters and summarises the findings in this work. Some of the findings are: (1) the Ika language is an Igbooid language which has been influenced by Edo particularly in the areas of phonology and vocabulary; (2) the Ika community was mainly organised much like other Igbo communities, but was altered because of political dominance by Edo; (3) the younger and more educated Ika speakers are preferring and using the English language more in their daily lives, and are becoming less competent in the Ika language than older and less educated Ika speakers; (4) the Ika language is facing a serious threat to its survival from the English language.