

# Review of: "African languages and COVID-19: Translations and interpretations of COVID-19 information in rural communities in Igbo land, Nigeria"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Dear authors,

This research sheds light on a key issue in risk communication science which is the way people understand their own risk, but I'd like to point out some issues that can improve your article:

Firstly, you need to set some point of comparison to the group described in your research, especially since we don't know when you interviewed the participants, and how these results can be compared with the Nigerian reality; we neither know their socioeconomic description. Any of them would help to understand where the problems in the information are provided. In the first case, if the interviews were conducted at the first stage of the pandemic, is natural to find misconceptions or problems with scientific results, especially when these findings were revealed while we were coping with COVID. On contrary, if were conducted after a year of pandemic, these results are concerning, but can't tell since we don't have access to that information. For example, at the beginning of the pandemic, there was thought that there was a race-based resilience to the virus, or was recommended to take off your shoes and clean all the things you bought before getting back home. In the second case, if we were able to compare this group with the Nigerian population, we can see whether authorities, the scientific community, and the media were able to give people proper information to take care of themselves and their communities. The question here is who oversaw the translation. Was it people who knew the Igbo culture? Did someone with a broad knowledge of COVID do it? Finally, if we were able to know more about people interviewed, for example, their ages, educational level, income, or even their knowledge about HIV (which is used to compare COVID), the result of your research would be much richer.

Another improvement for your work is related to the right translation expected: As a reader, we need to have a threshold that helps us to understand in a normative way. For example, when talking about risk communication, we're not expecting to turn people into experts in some topic; we talk about giving people information that helps them to change their behavior to get protected and to protect others. From that, we should not expect to people know how the virus interacts at a molecular level, but to know that is recommended to wash their hands, wear masks, get isolated, and so on. What would you expect?

Lastly, to evaluate the impact of these translations in how people incorporated any protective measure is needed to go deeper into their material conditions: Taking care of us and our families need to understand the risks that surround us; the will to cope with them; and have the physical possibility of doing it. When it comes to new risks -especially one of this kind,

with a lot of new information and tons of uncertainty- science is not necessarily the last word. We must trust people's knowledge and believes.