



Multilingualism an Asset to National Development: Nigeria in Focus

Lilian Oluchi^{1*}, Udushirinwa Ijeoma Onyinyechi², Nnani Henrietta Nonye³

Department of English Language and Literature, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: Lilian Oluchi duruoluchi1234@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Linguistic diversity in the world today has been an issue of growing social importance because a majority of all living languages are threaded in their continued existence. This brought about this research work: "Multilingualism as an asset to national development, a study of Nigeria". The main aim of this research work is to appreciate the idea that multilingualism may be an asset of national development or a liability, to find a way of supporting it, the equilibrium points between multilingualism and national development, to give it some valuable suggestions which might be of help in language planning in a multilingual and multicultural setting like Nigeria. To bring this to the limelight, some research works were carried out as the researcher shared out some questionnaires, of which the respondents were a total of one hundred copies were collected for the research, the respondent is the students of English department and from other departments in Madonna University Okija. With a percentage and a frequency table, the data were properly analyzed. The outcome or result obtained showed that multilingualism or linguistic diversity did not project or promote disintegration in the country; rather the linguistic diversity in Nigeria has been a national resource that helped to move the country forward and not take multilingualism to be an instrument for national disintegration. In conclusion, the researcher made some recommendations that both the people at the helm of affairs should help in promoting national development through the use of multilingual policy in the country and the dissemination of information materials to the public like newspapers, posters, computer applications and programs to promote multilingualism.

INTRODUCTION

It is generally believed that every human survives with different activities with the help of different languages that are well handled. Languages can also be taken as a mere vehicle of thought. Language is also characterized by a set of arbitrary symbols. That is, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the object and the symbols which stand for it. The meaning attached to any object in any human society is purely arbitrary. For instance, the fact that an object is referred to as a book in English does not mean that there is something special about it that makes it a book. The same object is called "two" in Yoruba. Human language is conventional.

This means that a symbol acquired meaning by convention or written agreement within a speech community. There is no inherent or obvious relationship between a symbol "key" and what it stands for. It is simply that the English society agrees that such an object be called "key" the same agreement makes the Hausa. For instance, to call the same object "amakulli".

Man uses language to communicate his thoughts, inner feelings and personal psychological experiences. To establish social relationships language is used, for instance, to greet the function is phatic rather than informative it does not contribute anything to the content of the ongoing discourse but only serves as a means of structural discourse. One of the important concepts developed in the process of studying the sociology of language is the speech community and the notion of language is the speech community and the notion of speech functions or speech acts and the notion of speech functions or speech acts. In order words, he explored the type of community.

For instance, issues like language of the social class and the relationship between language and culture were differential. In addition, the sociology of language looks at all forms of interactions that go on within a society and the stages, procedures and procedures characteristics of such interactions. The term multilingual means speaking or using several different languages, in a multilingual nation. "Multilingualism is a co-existence of many languages in one nation" For instance in Nigeria certain languages are characterized as major while others are tagged as minor. Similarly, some languages are characterized as national, or official while some are regarded as lingua franca or regional.

The attitude of society to each of these languages determines the functions assigned to them. Thus, the English language, for instance in Nigeria is considered a national language of some sort while Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo are considered as other forms of national languages. It also determines what language is second or foreign and which is the language of politics, trade commerce and of course science and technology. It is also believed that there are no monolingual states because even homogenous nations such as Poland and Japan have citizens whose main language varieties or linguistic diversity is one of many valuable attributes of the nation.

Since Nigeria is the study of this work, we have estimated the number of about four hundred to four hundred and fifty ethnic languages and more than that number of idiolects. For instance, in Nigeria today, there is a language policy, document which also stipulates planning of such available languages in the country. For example, the policy states that education during the early years

should be in the mother tongue, while the English language should be taught as a subject. In carrying out this policy, planning is taken into consideration. That is making provisions for teachers, equipment and other necessary things required for carrying out the moth tongue education policy.

Having language variants should not be seen as a problem but we should see “multilingualism in Nigeria as an essential quality which can be effectively harnessed for national development” language policy and planning which consider language problems of nations, language in education and language selection and graphication.

Each language in any society ought to have its standard form; hence we have standard Igbo, Efik, Hausa Yoruba and English in speech communities where they are used. Nigeria English for instance, is expected to have its standard which will be acceptable not only to the Nigerian community of users but also to the wider international communities of English users.

To this end, certain sociolinguistic factors must be taken into consideration in an attempt to attain the goal of standardization. Nigeria is a multilingual society that cuts ethnic boundaries that correspond to other languages.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nature of Multilingualism

Language differs from community to community concerning a nation that has homogeneous languages. Thus, no human speaks all the languages of the world. Sociolinguistics is a discipline that provides answers to such questions as who speaks what language to whom and when and what end. In addition, it seeks to provide an answer to the question of what accounts for differential changes in the social organization of language use and behavior towards language. It also tries to explain why and how this organization and behavior have become selectively different in the same social network or communities on two different occasions. For instance, it explains why one particular speaker addresses a semi-literate audience in pidgin and another audience an elitist one, in impeccable English.

This study describes the general pattern of language use within a monolingual or multilingual speech community to show the systematic nature of the alterations between one variety and another among individuals who share a repertoire of varieties. In monolingual speech communities, the linguistics repertoire of particular social groups may consist of sexual social class varieties, and regional varieties of the same language. For instance, within the Igbo English speech community distinction has been made between administrators or teachers who speak Igbo, English and patty traders who speak the same variety.

From the above statement, we have been able to discover that Nigeria is a multilingual country. Although the term multilingualism has many definitions or an ambiguous definition, it can be seen as the ability of an individual to use or speak more than two languages in a state or country. For example, a middle-aged woman who is of Yoruba parents was born and bred in Eastern Nigeria (Owerri) and had her early education there. This woman may settle in Kano

(Northern Nigeria) for her working life with her association and interaction with the major languages group, she can fluently or effectively speak the three major languages as well as English.

This however should be distinguished from an illiterate who is merely enlightened in several languages but is not proficient in them. In this case, such an individual is an ideal example of a multilingual individual. Furthermore, coming in contact with people of diverse tongues and the need to communicate makes the individual to be competent in a language.

Nigeria is believed or known to be a linguistically plural state with many Indigenous languages such as Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Efik, Igala, Idoma, Tiv, Ibibio, and Kanuri among each functioning as a first language: a native mother tongue and a variety of English which in most cases is acquired as a second language. Multilingual individual can be observed to switch indifferent situation from one language at school or at work (official), switch to another while taking lunch with friends even when communicating, doing some shopping, etc. For national or inter-ethnolinguistics community individual Nigerians (especially educated ones) tend toward multilingualism.

Multilingualism and National Development

Nigeria is a multilingual nation with an estimated number of about 500 languages Akindele (2019) each one plays a very significant role in the community where it is used. Existing proposals for national languages can be categorized into two terms: the unilingual and multilingual approaches Akindele (2019).

The unilingual category, on the one hand, contains various suggestions such as combining different languages to make up a word: "Wazobia" and "Gusoa", English, a major indigenous language selected from Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, a minor indigenous language such as Swahili. On the other hand, the multilingual category features mainly the suggestion of the three major languages of Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba as national languages with English retaining its present official status Coleman (2017).

Some scholars, however, believe that even the multilingual arrangement mentioned here could be a gradualist process of moving towards multilingualism in an indigenous language. Meanwhile, the current position of the federal government of Nigeria is in support of multilingual arrangement, as stated in section 51 of the 1979 constitution and paragraph 8 of the 1077 (revised 1981) National policy on education (Chapter 7) Multilingualism as general towards the national unity. The different suggestions above, although argued have received various criticisms, Coleman (2017) expresses this view:

"Of the possible candidates for selection as a unilingual model, some can be dismissed out of hand. In this group, include pidgin and artificial language, any pan-African languages and minority languages".

Pidgin English is an unlikely candidate for national language because it lacks prestige. Even though it serves as a lingua franca among groups in Nigeria, mostly in the southern part of Nigeria, it has a low social status as it is

associated with semi-literate members of the society. The variety is not associated with educated usage because it is non-standard.

But the emergence of Yoruba as a language of commerce even of officially a lingua Franca in Ibadan. It is easier to have a lingual Franca or national language in a multilingual setting than in some bilingual. The economic cooperation among speakers of different languages, just like the way we teach agriculture in English while our farmers farm in Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Edo, Efik, Nupe, Kanu, etc. Results not in us under development but in enhanced economic prosperity.

The economy's prosperity is the result of tolerance and this even manifests in politics. For instance, it was the same tolerance and national interest that mobilized the party congress to form a national body for the pursuance of a collective political interest that can be applied to the various languages to mobilize them towards a common language goal for national development.

Even looking at our original National Anthem, multilingualism is a fact recognized in that "though tribe and tongue may differ" and though the linguistic division is popular along ethnic lines, these languages can be developed for national integration and unity so that "in brotherhood, we stand" (Nigeria national Anthem). Thus, national integration is promoted and speakers of the language will have participation roles in the development of the nation.

Multilingualism: An Asset in Nigeria

It is generally accepted or believed that Nigeria is a multilingual country. The number of Nigerian languages has been put at different figures by different authorities. This has been also made explicit in Nigeria's first National Anthem "Though tribe and tongue may differ". The aspect of this work gives a clear role of the Nigerian Language in national unity and development. Multilingualism can be used as a powerful force for national building and national development contrary to serve beliefs. The government recognizes the whole language or language of the immediate environment to be used in the first stage of the social and educational life of human development.

The unique and possibly the most valuable attributes and behavior which characterize human beings' language is so important in every individual's life that there is hardly any situation where it is not involved. "Meaning as intended here refers not only to the individual or collective interpretational values of signs (verbal or non-verbal) but also implicational derivational meaning but also which the masking prosperities of language make possible" Onuigbo (2018).

It is worth mentioning that without language, the most cherished Nigerian languages could not be inexistence. It is also clear that Nigerian languages play vital roles in Nigeria. Like in the case of national development, there can be doubt that Nigerian languages have helped in building national consciousness among various segments of Nigerian society. Bilingualism is a situation in which a language community has a sufficient number of its citizens and speaks more than one language. The individual is theoretically an ideal

bilingual when he has a full range of competence in both languages that of a native

Different scholars have defined bilingualism in different ways. Haugan defines bilingualism as “the practice of two or more languages” also Paul Christopher in Bilingualism has defined the term as “the knowledge of two languages with approximately the same addition of perfection as unilingual speakers of these languages”. In addition, Olateju (2010) Bilingualism as a behavioral pattern that involves the moderation of individual or community linguistic patterns varying in degree function and interference.

Criticisms

There is no longer a doubt that multilingualism is a global reality because there are about 600 languages in about 200 countries Adejare (2012). Nigeria is a West African black country with a population of about 140 million people. It covers an area of 923,755 square kilometers with over 200 different ethnic groups. Presently, the country is composed of 36 states with Abuja as the federal capital territory. It is estimated that 400-450 languages are spoken in Nigeria.

Adejare (2012) has this to say, “every language which is indigenous to Nigeria which has a definite location and is part of an indigenous culture is a Nigerian Language and that Nigeria is thoroughly a multilingual country. Adejare sees multilingualism as one of our known attributes of Nigeria which is recognized by the composition of our national Anthem and agrees that “tribe and tongue” differences exist in Nigeria. From this view, he does not hold language responsible for unity in Nigeria. He then adopts the classification of Nigerian languages into three phyla (Afo-Asiatic Nigeria, Kordofanian and Nilo Saharan).

To him, he believes that original languages can become hundreds. On this level, Olateju (2010) challenged the fact that despite the numerous languages in Nigeria, Nigeria should see only a few groups and that the ancestral ties between scores (even a hundred) can be exploited to show Nigeria that they have a common history.

We also have some cases where the languages are not in any way related but can be united through common and non-linguist aspects of culture such as religion, trade, agriculture, etc. An example, of excellence is that of the Hausa-Fulani unity. Elugbe delineates that antagonism has its root not in linguistic differences or diversity but rather in mere modern political and economic rivalry. But the truth, he reinstates that:

“Linguistic should not scare us, it does not automatically spell doom and the kind of political system in operation in a country will not determine the successful or other involvement of national language and national development”.

The contribution of some authors can be neglected in the case of multilingualism. To some, they take multilingualism to be either the language

use or the competence of an individual or the language situation in an entire society.

Language and Education in Nigeria

Language has been defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as "the system of communication in speech or area" The use of language makes it easier for us to understand every other field and person in the society. The National Policy on Education (1970 revised 1989) provided that for further lifelong education, all Nigerian languages should be used.

The language provision of the (1977) National Policy on Education is presented thus:

- a. In addition to appreciating the importance of language in the educational process and as a means of preserving the people's culture the government considers it to be in the interest of national unity each child should be encouraged to learn the three major languages other than his / her mother tongue. In this connection the government considered the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba (N P E Para 8).
- b. To achieve the above objectives, the government will ensure that the medium of instruction will be principally the mother tongue nor the language of the immediate community; to this effect, the government will.

Develop the orthography for many more Nigerian languages and produce textbooks in Nigerian languages (N P E paragraph (3) pre-primary education). The government will see to it that the medium of instruction in primary school is initially the mother tongue nor the language of the immediate community and at a later stage English (NPE paragraph 15(14). The junior secondary school will be prevocational and academic -the curriculum should be structured as follows: in learning two Nigerian languages of their area in addition to any three main Nigerian languages, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba subject to availability of teacher (NPE paragraph 1914).

The critical discussion on the provision above is done mainly under three subsubheadings:

- a. language policy and national objectives
- b. Language policy and social attitude and
- c. Language policy and education

Other related discussions on the policy provision later follow these headings.

Language Policy and National Objectives

To a great extent the provisions above related to Nigeria's political and educational objectives in the opening of this section.

Provision A above states expressly the national objectives to which it relates, viz preservation of culture and achievement of national unity. That

language serves to preserve people cultures cannot be doubted since culture itself is transmitted via language. And obviously, the indigenous Nigerian language is the best candidate that can help transmit and preserve the Nigerian culture. While the link between language and cultural preservation is direct that between language and unity is less direct and rather tenuous. When human beings speak a common language and understand other people's languages, there is bound to be a created level of social cooperation and integration among them.

But language uniformity is not a sufficient condition for forging unity among Nigerians. In other words, the fact that three major indigenous languages do not suggest that there will be unity in the society. Even within individual families, disunity may exist despite the languages and other things members may share. To achieve unity in the Nigerian nation, the communication gap and mutual distrust between them and the people.

Provisions B and C support the desire for the development of the appropriate skills, and abilities as well as the mental and physical competence of the Nigerian child to enable him or her to live in and contribute to the development of his society (N.P.E paragraph 5 (4).

Lastly, provision D can be linked with two objectives of NPE provided in paragraph 5(2,3): the first seeks to inculcate in the pupil the right type of values and attributes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society and the second seeks to train his mind in the understanding of the world around. By learning one or more indigenous languages in the course of his studies, the government not only expects him to; learn to appreciate the positive and negative values and attitudes recorded in such language to recognize the prospects and problems of developing the pupils' immediate environment.

Language in Pre-Primary Education

The provision of the medium of institution for pre-primary education is clear from the policy. Just as the policy provides, the mother tongue ought to be the medium of instruction for children who are still on the mother's lap. It will help to bridge the gap between the non-formal education which the child encounters at school. Using the mother tongue at nursery school will complement children's acquisition of the language at home and thus help them to further learn about the environment and social norms through it.

Language in Secondary Education

The NPE does not state explicitly what the medium of instruction is for secondary education. But one can infer from the provision of paragraph 15(4) that the government intends that English should be the medium. In line with our discussion on the NPE, this intention can be accepted, but with the provision that the language will be replaced by an indigenous language as soon as the latter can adequately fulfill this role.

About the subject to be taught, all three languages that occur as subjects in the primary school curriculum should also be featured. It was stated earlier that rather than learning this language only during three years of junior secondary education, it will not be adequate for proper mastery. Instead of

learning this level L2 more properly at the senior secondary school, pupils may abandon it and revert to their mother tongue since only one indigenous language is listed as a core subject at his level and none as an elective at senior secondary school, one is not sure that many pupils will learn it. If this local L2 were introduced as a third language in primary school, there is no doubt that by the time pupils finish junior secondary school, they would have fully mastered it.

At the senior secondary school, the policy lists one indigenous language and English as part of the core subjects and does not list an indigenous language as an elective. Again, it is expected that both the mother tongue and English ought to be compulsory while the local L2 should be an elective.

Language in Higher Education

The NPE is surprisingly silent on what should be the role of language in higher education in Nigeria although this stage like all the other ones is very crucial to language and educational development in the country. This laps notwithstanding, the role of language as media of instruction and subjects can be examined. It is inevitable that for a long time to come, English will disputably be the medium of instruction in higher education in Nigeria. It has no rival among the indigenous languages which are still far from being able to accommodate the expression of modern scientific and technological concepts.

As a subject in higher education, English ought to serve in two different contexts, viz: the primary academic context Adejare (2012). The primary academic context refers to the question where English constitutes the subject matter of obtaining a certificate or degree in another academic field. The first context from the point of view of the University undergraduate program could take the form of a single Honours or combined Honours Degree program.

In contrast, the second context from the same point of view of the University undergraduate program is what has been called the use of English or "General studies course in English". Although these contexts or programs of English studies feature prominently in higher schools many of such programs are plagued with also inadequate provision of infrastructure, equipment and materials.

Unlike English studies which are given some prominence in Higher education, the indigenous languages are not recognized in the system. Olateju (2010) observes that not only are the major languages in some Nigerian universities, but the languages in some are grossly inadequate for the effective utilization as media for acquiring education.

Also, Akinwumi Ishola in his valedictory lecture in 1991 laments that up till the present moment there has been no possession in the university system for inaugural lectures to be given in Yoruba. And Oyeleye (2014) gives some suggestions that are necessary for the promotion of indigenous studies in higher education as follows:

- a. Department of Linguistics and African (Nigerian languages should be encouraged to step up the production of graduates in linguistics and Nigerian languages.

b. Every Nigerian child who goes to the University or any other Institution of higher learning to study linguistics and or a national language that is not his and which he does not already speak should be given a bursary.

Indeed, the government must show more commitment to indigenous languages. Then it has in higher education then it has been doing so that education can have the desired positive effect on the social, economic, political and technological development of Nigeria.

Language in Teaching Educating

There is no doubt that the formulation of the NPE has a lot of implications for teacher education in Nigeria. Teachers have to be provided to impart the required knowledge and skills to learners at the various levels of the educational system. Not only well trained to be able to impart sound knowledge to the pupils.

Here we shall put behind us the myriad of problems about language teaching and language in teacher education in Nigeria, Osuagwu (2019) press and make a few comments on the teacher education policy for the country. Paragraph 59; the NPE gives a list of six institutions that are required to give the required professional training to trainees. The first institution is the Grade II teachers' college. The program in the institution is now being reviewed as a result of the universal primary Education (UPE) scheme and the 3-3 secondary system.

The second institution is the advanced teachers' college and college of education. In the ultimate policy, this institution will award NCE to trainees who have completed a 3-year training following a 6-year secondary education. Teachers will be expected to teach in pre-primary and primary schools. The institutes of Education in the universities will be expected to train education graduate, graduates who will later teach in secondary and technical schools.

In the secondary kind, the institutes will offer courses in education for non-education graduates who intend to become teachers. In the third kind, the institutes were expected to mount courses for teachers for higher institutions of learning to increase their efficiency as teachers. As of now, so such courses are mounted for these teachers, which makes many of them deficient in the profession.

The National Teachers' Institute is expected to coordinate the work of the Institute of Education and the state ministries of Education in the implementation of schemes recommended in the Blueprint. The institute is also expected to finance the up-grading for teachers and also to carry out the certification of Grade II teachers in collaboration with the Institute of Education. Having identified the institution of teachers training above and the program they run, shall now examine the language courses in the programs and the contents of such courses.

It is expected that trainee teachers who will teach indigenous languages or use them as a medium of instruction of any level should be trained to have true capabilities of teaching and expression in such indigenous languages. They should normally be trained to be able to teach their mother tongue, a second foreign language to learners and they should able to vary program according to

the language background of the learner. On the language content, potential language teachers, whether indigenous or English language teachers, ought to have undergone courses in the language they intend to teach, apart from the education-oriented courses. The basic components that such language courses should contain are listed thus:

- a. The practice of (English /Hausa/Yoruba, etc) language use
- b. Linguistics, comparative linguistics and stylistics
- c. Literature and comparative literature
- d. Applied linguistics, including Sociolinguistics and Discourse studies.

In "an" above, trainee teachers are expected to have acquired four basic skills of the language they study and they should have a sound knowledge of the sounds, structures and expression of meaning in the language, they should be able to relate the structure of the language to other languages by comparison or contrast and they should know the varieties of the language are exploited for communication purposes.

In "c" it is compulsory that trainees are familiar with the literature of speakers of a language and show some literature compared with the literature of the other speakers. Lastly, in "d" the trainees must be aware of the variation of patterns and use of the language in socio-political and cultural contexts; the trainee should also be familiar with current issues about language policy and planning.

Language in Adult Education

The objectives of adult and continuing education as contained in the NPE; paragraph 52 (a-c) are as follows:

- a. To provide functional literacy education
- b. To provide functional and remedial education for these young people who prematurely dropped out of the formal school system
- c. To provide further education for different categories of completers of the formal education system to improve their basic knowledge and skills.
- d. To provide in-serve job, vocational professional training for different categories of workers and professionals to improve their skills
- e. To give the adult citizens of the country the necessary aesthetic, cultural and civil education for public enlightenment.

Language and Culture in Nigeria

Language is the only creative property unique to human beings. "It is the only road to thinking that makes humans possible" Onuigbo (2018). It is also the key to the heart of people and consequently their knowledge and treasures Egbokare (2021). From Whorf's claim that linguistic structure influences people's development of their society, one could extrapolate that sociolinguistic structure influences people's development the languages of African actions must be well organized and developed from the societies to Elgin (2019).

Culture is the people's life language and is also a vehicle for the passage of cultural heritage from one generation to another. In other words, language is the custodian of the culture and customs of society. It suffices to claim that understanding a language is a government education policy that emphasizes teaching and learning the three major Nigerian languages.

The understanding of language will bring people closer to culture. Also, if one can understand the culture of a particular person, the tendency is that the person will be fully integrated into them. Taking a look at a case like Nigeria, if a Hausa man can speak Yoruba conveniently, he will understand the culture of the Yoruba and thus, make him socially fit into Yoruba society conveniently. Culture is a complex phenomenon which have myriad definitions. Culture is a common heritage of a society.

It cannot be genetically transmitted. It instructs society's perception of the other metaphorically speaking language as the "wheel" and "culture is the "hub". The material dimension of culture tools, arts and crafts, clothing and so on –as well as its non-material aspect: Philosophy, value, beliefs institutions and so on. Thus becomes the "spokes which connect- the hub to the wheel.

It is believed that language is a unifying factor. It is a weapon for peaceful coexistence. One of the apron strings that tie people together is language. It should be noted also that language is the pivot of culture, the two are inseparable. If human beings can explore, discover and extend knowledge through their languages and also if exploration, discovery and extension of frontiers of knowledge are the prerequisites for development, then the language of African nations must be well-organized and developed for the societies to blossom.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that language does not exist in a vacuum; it is as a vehicle of culture that language functions as an instrument of human development. Besides, a particular language is itself also an institution within a culture bit co-occurs with other institutions and activities shared by the people Akamajan (2010).

Thus, a discussion on the development of African nations through their language resources has to incorporate language and other cultural resources such as Politics, social life, Economics, Education, Science and Technology, Art and Music before it can be of social relevance. In other words, linguistic and cultural development have a symbiotic relationship. Where by cannot be pursued separately from the others, when discussing the (socio-cultural) affairs of a nation.

Lingual Cultural Varieties and Their Relevance for Development

A lingual-cultural policy for national development recognizes three fundamental needs of nationhood:

- a. The identification and positive development of the linguistic resources of a nation.
- b. The identification and positive development of the cultural resources of the nation

- c. An integrative (rather than separative) development of both the linguistic and cultural resources.

Three lingual-cultural varieties can be identified to serve the needs above monolingual-mono-cultural, bilingual-bicultural and multilingual-multicultural. The monolingual-monocultural variety typifies a society that has two predominant languages and cultures that originated functionally just along many lines.

The bilingual-bicultural society reflects either a balanced or unbalanced union of two monolingual communities in which the languages and cultures of both communities are recognized. In a society having balanced bilingualism the two languages of its different communities. For example, English and French in Canada, and French and Flemish in Belgium have equal official privileges irrespective of whether they are monolingual in either language or bilingual environment example. Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the status of the Irish Gaetic and Welsh languages are similar to that of English, which is the second language of Britain.

Although the bilingualism observed in many African nations is the non-balanced type. African countries generally are multilingual. But the numerous languages of the nations have been broadly categorized into two, types based on the "societal" rather than individuals or personal roles which they perform. In this respect, the indigenous languages such as Yoruba, Kikuyu and Zulu, which are largely assigned informal roles, are described as the "mother tongue in the various communities, while colonial languages such as English, French and Portuguese, which generally serve as official language (s) in the society other than those functionally recognize above has a "personal" rather than social relevance and is considered as "foreign" to the society. Example: French and Arabic in Nigeria.

Unlike the bilingual-bicultural society above, the multilingual multicultural society has more than two languages recognized officially and these languages serve various roles simultaneously without any restriction from the government. For example, a country like Singapore has so many languages e.g. English, Malay, Mandarin and Hokkien whose functions are not officially restricted to any domain, WardHaugh (2016). Due to the separate existence of language of integration, members of the different communities see languages other than their mother tongues as "foreign" rather than "second" language. Speakers thus learn other people's language for personal rather than social reasons.

Having presented the lingual-cultural variety above, we now wish to suggest that the bilingual bicultural variety be utilized as a policy for national development for the following reasons:

- a. The variety like the monolingual-monocultural one, recognized the rich resources of indigenous languages which serve as the mother tongues of communities in the society.
- b. However, unlike the monolingual monoculture variety, it recognizes another functional lingua culture that complements the mother tongue

lingua-cultures above this second linguculture is identified as “second languages”.

- c. The variety can, given this diglossia propensity, operate in a multidialectal monolingual community to enhance the assignment of roles to local and standard dialects, it can also view its integrative property operates in a multilingual society to pool resources of languages hitherto kept apart together.
- d. Lastly, the variety is sufficient for national development but does not allow the individual(s) from developing self (ves) through learning local adjacent and foreign languages other than their mother tongues and the second languages.

In Nigeria, the bilingual-bicultural principle will involve the utilization of a mother tongue lingua culture. Examples: Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Efik and Kanuri on the other hand and English linguaculture on the other hand. Therefore, multilingualism in Nigeria has helped in propagating culture and the understanding and identifying of our cultural differences will bring national unity which can be achieved through the extensive use of the indigenous Nigerian Language.

Language and Religion in Nigeria

After the colonization of Nigeria by the British in the early 20th century, the political influence was parallel to Western British culture. The influence of Western culture on the people was both conscious and unconscious. The conscious influence arose via the numerous colonial policies, administrative systems and social behavior of the colonizers copied by Nigerians. The unconscious influence came through the various media of Western (formal) education and also through the gradual acquisition of Western attitudes and tastes. The English language was so valued that this led to the downgrading of indigenous languages by both their colonizers and the colonized.

The education system encouraged the dominance of English and the English culture to the extent that education was equated with English. There was a widening gap between the language of elite communication and that of mass comprehension. For example: while incentives were given to pupils, teachers and schools that excelled in the use of English, there was a penalty in schools for pupils who spoke the “vernacular”, pupils used to pay fines for breaching the code. As a key institution in the legacy of colonization, western (English-oriented) education holds the hope of advancement for people in an underdeveloped economy.

The scarcity and marketability of the commodities have made them a source of conflict and an object of competition. English is undoubtedly the language used for sophisticated commerce in the country. Sophisticated commerce includes trading that cuts across local and ethnic boundaries and takes place at the national level.

Business transactions worth millions and billions of naira are carried out via the medium of English. As an international language, English also provides the means of transactions for international trade in Nigeria. It is the language of

Nigeria's petroleum industry and many other industries of Nigeria's exported and imported goods. There is also no doubt that Nigeria's foremost trading partners are English-speaking nations. It has great connections with Anglophone nations of Africa, and it is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

However, Nigeria's socio-political economy is still very much tied to the spoons of Britain and the U.S.A. For example, in response to Western demand on Agriculture used as the mainstay of the Nigerians in the 1979s because the demands of the Western power dominated the world market. The petroleum industries in the country have, of course since then been controlled by foreign companies.

Language and Communication in Nigeria

Communication as we know it today has developed over several centuries. The sophisticated characterized human communication in the modern world as the result of a very long sustained effort by human beings to move of existence, Onuigbo (2018) referring to the evolution, Mac Bride communication has noted that "As the world has advanced, the task of communication has become even more complex..." in explaining this complexity Mac bride and colleagues Onuigbo (2018), has this to say:

"Throughout history, human beings have sought to improve their ability to receive and assimilate information about their surroundings and at the same time to increase the speed, clarity and variety of this method of transmission of information."

Communication is as old as humanity, the first human beings to inhabit the earth lived in caves, they cooked and behaved more like apes. The development of language was a turning point in the evaluation of communication.

The Language Policy Approach in Africa/Nigeria

A recognizable feature of language policies in independent African states is the extreme multilingualism in African nations where different functions are assigned to different languages in communities. The national official and international languages are mostly foreign. Examples are English in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, French in Zaire, Gabon, and Cote D' Ivoire; Spanish in Equatorial Guinea and Arabic in Sudan and Entrea. In some countries, two foreign languages are assigned national, official and international roles.

Examples are Arabic and French in Moroccan, Mauritania, Algeria and Tunisia; Arabic and English in Egypt and Libya French and English in Cameron and Arabic-speaking countries of Africa, and Arabic services for religious and poetical purposes. In some other countries, one or more indigenous languages are assigned national and international languages in Kenya and Uganda, Kirundi is the national language in Burundi, Amharic is the national language

in Lesotho; Afrikaans is the official language in South Africa and Hausa, is Yoruba, Igbo as official languages in Nigeria.

The above indigenous languages are prominent languages spoken by the largest population in the perspective countries. Other less prominent indigenous languages are restricted to informal everyday activities in the homes. In some of the African countries mentioned above, there is a clear formulation of language policy. Example: Tanzania, Ethiopia and Burundi, whereas in some others there is official equivocation and haziness. Example: Nigeria.

What is indeed regarded document or language(s) in the country? Instead, it derives from the incidental occurrence of language provision in official documents on politics and education. For example, the Constitution and the National Policy on Education. Since most provisions of language policy are almost always considered within the framework of educational systems and politics. The educational language policy in English-speaking African countries, with a special focus on Nigeria, can be described in three periods, Viz.

The post-Independence Era

In the missionary era between (1850-1920), formalized education in Nigeria was generally missionary. Initially, the basic aim of education was to read the Bible and become pastors, catechists, etc. the missionaries that influenced the writing down of indigenous languages of Nigeria so that natives who were converts could read the Bible through them. The indigenous languages of the converted were also emphasized as the missionaries sought to understand them to communicate with the indigenous community. Toward the end of the 19th century, there was a new orientation concerning the aims of education.

The local populace had the desire to speak English like the white man, they wanted to learn to read books in English, particularly the Bible and they had the desire to get jobs in the mission. Thus, the education ordinance (1882) section 10.5 made English compulsory as a condition for the award of government grants to proprietors of private schools in the country. Also, the Education Ordinance Amendment ordinance of (1830) indicated that:

1. Many hours be assigned to English per week in the school curriculum and
2. There is the practical necessity to know how to read and write English for Economic advantage, increased status and religious motive.

The Colonial Era

The era which spanned (1920) and 1960) was an era of linguistic imperialism. Colonizers wanted only a limited spread of English among the social people, yet they had disregard for the indigenous languages. Merclaff, the first inspector of school in West Africa says:

“These said (native) languages- (are) only interesting to the comparative philologist and never likely to become of any practical use civilization-the

native must and will know English despite all well-meaning but diseased notions, it is the language of commerce."

Phelp Stroke Commission Report West Africa

The report above raises these issues:

1. First, the local languages should be used in the lower elementary schools.
2. Second, a lingua franca of African origin should be introduced in the middle classes of the school if the area is occupied by large native groups speaking diverse languages.
3. Third, the language of the European nation in control of a nation should be taught in the upper standards.

The British Government's Advisory Commission for Education in Africa

The document affirmed the rightful place of indigenous languages at the primary level of education but noted three problems:

1. Firstly, there was the multiplicity of dialects of the same language, without standard orthography for such a language.
2. Second, there are difficulties deserved in the training of teachers.
3. Thirdly, there was the possibility of providing textbooks in all these languages.

The document also observed that there was a clash of interest between the desirability of mother tongue in primary school education and the aspiration of parents for English-speaking children. It then recommended that the introduction of English in the curriculum should not be delayed, though it did not say exactly when the language should be introduced.

1946: Colonial African Language in African Education

The memorandum specified when English should be introduced into the curriculum. It specified that all education from primary 1-3 should be carried out in the mother tongue; English serves as a subject in primary 4 and English should serve as a medium of instruction for selected subjects in primary 6. English should serve as a medium of teaching all subjects in higher education. The content of the above policy was not followed because Africans wanted English to be introduced earlier. In cosmopolitan centers where large ethnic groups mix, English was sometimes introduced in primary 1.

1952: Unesco Conference on the use of African Languages in Relation to English -Jos, Nigeria: The conference reaffirmed the mother tongue as the ideal medium of instruction for a child, though there were social economic and multilingual problems that might mitigate the effective use of this medium. The conference proposed that English should be introduced as a subject at the later stage of primary 1 and used as a medium of instruction in primary 3.

1961: Makere- Common Wealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language: Several issues and topics vital to education were discussed

at the conference, including the purpose of education, levels of education, education and science/ technology, women in education, teacher education, etc- surprisingly; the elaborate report on the conference did not show language as a major feature in the proceedings which was quite unfortunate; language being the key to education. However, one of the various recommendations in the report stated that:

“The Nigerian primary school child should be well grounded in his mother tongue as well as learning English and from any other language as a third language” Adejare (2010).”

1970: Conference on High Level Teacher Training: Some presentations A at the conference outline development in the training of secondary school teachers of mother tongue, English and French. The recommendation of the conference, however, did not specifically mention any language.

1971: National Workshop on Primary Education: The report of the language group in Nigerian languages influenced the formation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) syllabus. The Grade II teacher's syllabus for ((UPE) was laid down at this workshop. Also laid down was a syllabus for teaching some languages and the methods- English, English language, Arabic, Edo, Erik, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. These form the background to the 1977 NPE which we shall dwell on later in this study.

METHODOLOGY

The linguistic borderlines and speakers inevitably have to acquire more than one particular language for survival. However, the principal languages in Nigeria are Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. But the phenomenon is not as simple as that. There are majority-minority indigenous languages.

The minority indigenous: gives a rough index of their number as 396. According to him, the major minority languages are about 12 in number: Fulani, Kanuri, Tiv, Nupe, Jukun, Ebira, Edo, Ibibio, Idoma, Ijaw, Efik and Uhobo. The population of the speakers of each of them is put as ranging between 2 to 8 million people.

a. Population: The research focused population on student's English department at Madonna University Okija, Nigeria. Out of the one hundred (100) copies of a questionnaire, all respondents responded to the questionnaire. From the hundred percentages (100%) the number of male respondents recorded forty (40) while that of the female was sixty (60). from the interaction and the outcome of the research work, there was no recording of any language barriers or difficulties.

b. Method of Data Analysis: The data gathered were arranged into frequency tables and later, sample percentages were used to analyze the results based on the question.

Example:

Response	100
Total number of respondents	1

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is based on the outcome of the questionnaire distributed, analyzed and discussion obtained from the response gotten from questionnaire administered.

Tabel 1. Question 1: How Many Nigerian Languages Can You Speak?

Options	Responses	Percentage %
1	0	0
2	40	40
3	40	40
4	20	20
Total	100	100

From the information shown above, it indicates that none of the respondents speak only one language, out of 100 responses, 40 (40%) speak only one language out of 100 responses, 40 (40%) speak two languages or rather are bilingual while 20 (20) respondents speak 3 languages and 20 (20%).

Tabel 2. Question 2: Which of these major languages belong to your tribe?

Options	Responses	Percentage %
Yoruba	40	40
Igbo	40	40
Hausa	20	20
Total	100	100

This analysis of the above data shows that the respondents represent the major three languages spoken in Nigeria. From the data, the Yoruba-speaking group has 40% which is 40 respondents, the Igbo-speaking group has 40 respondents which is 40% of the total respondents, while the Hausa group has 20. This illustration indicates that Nigeria is a multilingual nation where other people's language is recognized.

Tabel 3. Question 3: Who do you prefer?

Options	Responses	Percentage %
A monolingual	20	10
A bilingual	35	30
A multilingual	45	60
Total	100	100

The data analyzed above shows that the knowledge or ability to speak more languages in Nigeria helps in one's communication ability.

Tabel 4. Question 4: Is the Idea of Using More Languages of Advantage or Disadvantage?

Options	Responses	Percentage %
Advantage	90	80
Disadvantage	10	20
Total	100	100

The data indicates that it is detrimental to be monolingual since out of the 100 responses 90 (80%) agree that it is advantageous to be multilingual.

Tabel 5. Question 5: Is multilingual of any good to Nigeria?

Options	Responses	Percentage %
Yes	85	83.3
No	15	16.7
Total	100	100

The responses from the data above, show that in a country like Nigeria Multilingual has a good and vital role to play that a multilingual find him/herself more comfortable in the Nigerian situation that is why 85 out of 100 of the respondents agree to this. However, the 15 other respondents which makes up only 16.7% of the total respondents sees it otherwise.

Tabel 6. Question 6: Does it (Multilingualism) Make Any Sense in the Case of Religion?

Options	Responses	Percentage %
Yes	60	80
No	40	20
Total	100	100

The above data indicate that it is only 40 (20%) respondents that disagree with the idea that multilingualism makes sense in the study of religion. While 60 respondents affirmed this, which indicates that it makes people closer to their God in different ways.

Tabel 7. Question 7: Does Multilingualism Promote Nigeria Socially?

Options	Responses	Percentage %
Yes	90	70
No	10	30
Total	100	100

From the above data, a total amount of 70% of respondents say that multilingualism has a positive impact while 30% went against the idea that multilingualism does not promote Nigeria socially.

Tabel 8. Question 8: Does Multilingualism Promote National Unity in Nigeria?

Options	Responses	Percentage %
Yes	90	70
No	10	30
Total	100	100

The above data shows how multilingualism has in one way or another promoted national unity.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been believed and generally accepted that a country like Nigeria is a multilingual nation. due to the estimation, Adejare (2012) pointed out that there is no reason to require the planning of languages for national development to be based on the requirement of Western-style parliamentary democracy some of the successful decisions in the involvement of Nigerian languages in national development have been taken under peculiar and nondefinite style.

The study therefore highlighted the linguistic situations in Nigeria which made this imperative, especially within the context of the contemporary status of the English language and the indigenous languages. It found that the English language occupied a place of pride in all the Nigerian socio-economic educational lives of the country. We have all known and believe that our languages in Nigeria have always been great which many people have in one way or another spoken.

This research work aims to help us know the value of multilingualism in a specific country in the study of Nigeria and how multilingualism has helped in the development of our country. The importance of multilingualism in our contemporary age or time cannot be over emphasized. Although there are languages that have in one way or the other played some significant role in the upliftment of this country.

A major focus of cooperation and living a unity -the live intergroup relationship is what multilingualism in Nigeria is striving or aiming at, meanwhile it has been agreed by language experts that government is doing enough or meeting up to expected standard for Nigerian languages, the role of languages in any national development can be seen in form of the idea of

“banking” whereby the money is kept in your account the more interest it brings or like a businesswoman, the more she struggled to earn more money is her working hard. On the part of our government, they should try and invest in language by making people have proper planning, but also because of the social turmoil that can arise if ignored.

The process of searching for our political future lies in the examination that has revealed that the handling of the language problem has been grossly inadequate. Therefore, they should not just leave like that but rather should just be taken proper care of. Linguists and linguistics have a major role in bringing the total realization of the multilingual policy in Nigeria to the limelight. They should be given the correct assistance needed to mobilize in the development of the various gifted tongues in the form of standardization of orthographies, provision of pronunciation guides description of language at both phonological, syntactic and semantic levels and putting the languages into that can be written, this can only be possible through the mother tongue on indigenous languages.

FURTHER RESEARCH

This research still has limitations so further research needs to be done on this topic "Multilingualism an Asset to National Development: Nigeria in Focus".

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