

**JALINGO JOURNAL OF LINGUISTICS AND
LITERARY STUDIES
(JAJOLLS)**



Volume 7 No. 1, 2024
ISSN: 2488-9067

**A Publication of the
Department of Languages and Linguistics
Faculty of Arts
Taraba State University, Jalingo**

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Volume 7 No. 1, 2024

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Printed in Nigeria by:

MacroNet Consults & Multi-Links Limited

Suite 7, Investment Shopping Complex

Jalingo – Nigeria

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EDITORIAL

Every academic environment is sustained by learning through rigorous methods. Research is one and the focal point for assessment. A serious member of the academic community is measured by the quality and number of academic articles.

In spite of the desire to acquire many research reports, this edition has insisted on standards and quality. It is important to note that many articles have been rejected for not meeting our requirements.

The first and most obvious task of our journal is to provide a level playing field for researchers all over the globe in language-related disciplines, which is the vehicle for conveying knowledge. In this edition, seventeen (17) articles have undergone academic scrutiny from our blind reviewers.

To our esteemed contributors and readers, thought-provoking articles are expected and we are ready to publish them in the next volume.

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The “Jalingo Journal of Linguistics and Literary Studies” (JAJOLLS) is a publication of the Department of Language and Linguistics, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria. This journal publishes reports in relation to all aspects of linguistics, literary and cultural studies.

Manuscripts Submission

Three hard copies of the article with text, charts, tables, figures, plates or any other original illustration should be sent to the editor-in-chief JAJOLLS, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Taraba State Nigeria. Submission should either be in English, French, Hausa, or Arabic languages. Articles should be typed in double line spacing with a wide margin on each side only on A4 sized paper not exceeding 15 pages including abstract with not more than 6-7 keywords. Articles are to be submitted with Five Thousand Naira (N5,000) assessment and handling charges. By submitting an article to JAJOLLS, the author(s) agree that the exclusive rights to produce and distribute the articles to the publisher.

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The Role of Indigenous Language in National Development

Abstract

This paper explores the role of language, particularly indigenous languages, in national development. Descriptively, it uses the Communication Accommodation Theory to analyze language dynamics, focusing on how social identity, interpersonal motives, situational norms, and communication outcomes influence language choices and behaviors. Also, the paper emphasizes the importance of considering educational, political, social, and cultural perspectives. Additionally, the article highlights the significance of indigenous languages in a group's identity, cultural expression, and societal development. It references Nigeria's National Policy on Education, mandating their use in literacy education, and introduces the Language Recovery Triangle strategy for language understanding and appreciation. Besides, the paper discusses the challenges faced by indigenous languages, such as endangerment, colonization, and neglect, and emphasizes the importance of language documentation to counter language death and its impact on societal values. Furthermore, the article urges stakeholders to protect and preserve indigenous languages, recommends a proactive linguistic policy, and advocates for a reevaluation of priorities to ensure their potential for mass literacy and sustainable national development.

Keywords: Role, Indigenous, Language, National and Development

Received: 08/01/2024 **Accepted:** 30/01/2024 **GSM:** +2348036213145

Corresponding Author: Ali A. A. **Email:** meetaliahmadi@gmail.com

Article Citation: Alkali, A. A. and Gambo, S. I. (2024). The Role of Indigenous Languages in National Development. *Jalingo Journal of Languages and Literary Studies (JAJOLLS)*. 7 (1) pp. 90-101.

Publishers: Department of Languages and Linguistics, Taraba State University, Jalingo. **ISSN:** 2488-9067

1.1 Introduction

The paper will at first starts with the definition of the concept language which will serve as background. Language is essentially an important tool which we use to communicate with human beings. It is the principal medium vehicle of communicating ideas, emotions, attitudes and information Makinde (2002) says, Language is a vehicle of thinking that helps child to understand whenever knowledge is being imparted to him. It is also a means of expressing a people's culture and it is expedient to know that our most effective vehicle of communication (language), is a cultural trait.

Language which is the basic instrument of all forms of human communication plays a major role in the development of any nation. It is the indispensable medium for the

education and training of skilled manpower needed in the national development process. Since language is the medium through which human thought are expressed, it deserves a proper treatment from educational political, social and culture perspective (Alkali and Zakam, 2009).

In light of the language overview provided above, let's examine the nations that have made efforts to protect and maintain their native tongues in light of their importance for both cultural growth and the survival of humanity. Here are a few illustrations:

The revitalization of Te Reo Maori in New Zealand has been a significant initiative, promoting bilingualism and preserving cultural identity. The Maori Language Commission has played a crucial role in these efforts, enhancing social bond and inclusivity (Waitangi Tribunal, 2011). Similarly, in recognition of the importance of indigenous languages for community resilience and cultural revival, Canada's Indigenous Languages Act promotes the preservation and revitalization of languages including Ojibwe, Cree, and Inuktitut. In addition, with the Sámi Parliament actively supporting language efforts, the promotion of the Sami language in Finland has had a good impact on the Sami people by protecting their cultural legacy and encouraging its incorporation into public life and education.

Conversely, in South Africa, efforts have been made to promote indigenous languages, including isiZulu, isiXhosa, and Sesotho. Bilingual education programs and language policy reforms aim to strengthen the use of indigenous languages in education and public discourse. The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) plays a role in advocating for linguistic diversity.

Likewise, Kenya recognizes the importance of indigenous languages, such as Swahili and various ethnic languages. Swahili, a widely spoken language, has been integrated into the education system. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) supports curriculum development that includes indigenous languages.

Furthermore, Ghana has taken steps to promote indigenous languages like Akan, Ga, and Ewe. Initiatives include incorporating indigenous languages into the educational curriculum and encouraging community-driven efforts for language preservation. The Bureau of Ghana Languages contributes to language development projects.

In Senegal places importance on preserving its indigenous languages, including Wolof, Pulaar, and Serer. The government supports bilingual education programs, and community-driven projects focus on language documentation and revitalization. The National Institute of Pedagogy (INP) works on language development initiatives. In contrast, Nigeria, with its rich linguistic diversity, has implemented policies to promote indigenous languages. The National Policy on Education emphasizes the use of indigenous languages in early education. Organizations like the Center for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) support initiatives to preserve and promote Nigerian languages.

To comprehend the significance of indigenous languages in national development, it's essential to consider the historical context of their use. Indigenous languages have played a foundational role in shaping cultural identities, fostering communication, and contributing to the development of nations. This historical background is exemplified by Nigeria, a country with a rich tapestry of linguistic diversity and a complex history of language policy.

Nigeria, home to over 250 ethnic groups, is characterized by a linguistic landscape that reflects its cultural diversity. Historically, indigenous languages have been the primary means of communication within distinct communities, serving as carriers of cultural heritage, values, and traditional knowledge.

During the pre-colonial era, indigenous languages were integral to governance, trade, and social values. Ethnic groups had well-established communication systems that facilitated economic activities, governance structures, and cultural practices. The use of indigenous languages in these contexts contributed to the development of harmonious societies with shared values.

The colonial period, marked by British rule in Nigeria, introduced a transformative phase for indigenous languages. English became the language of administration, education, and governance, leading to the marginalization of indigenous languages in official spheres. This shift had a profound impact on the status and use of indigenous languages, with English gaining dominance in formal settings.

After gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria recognized the importance of its linguistic diversity and implemented policies to restore the prominence of indigenous languages. The National Policy on Education, formulated in 1977 and revised subsequently, mandated the use of indigenous languages in early literacy education. Chika (2023) asserted that the Nigerian government recently formulated a new national language policy that would require elementary school students to be instructed in indigenous languages instead of English. In making the policy declaration, Nigeria's Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu, was quoted as saying that "the government has agreed now that, henceforth, instruction in primary schools, the first six years of learning, will be in the mother tongue." He noted that although the policy has taken effect theoretically with the announcement, the government needs "time to develop the material, get the teachers, and so on." That last statement credited to the minister will form the core of this essay. We shall examine certain fundamental policy actions necessary for the actualization of Nigeria's new language policy. Despite these efforts, challenges such as linguistic imperialism, neglect, and socioeconomic factors persist, affecting the vitality of many indigenous languages. However, ongoing initiatives, including the Language Recovery Triangle strategy, reflect a commitment to revitalize and preserve indigenous languages for future generations

Understanding the historical context of indigenous language is crucial for appreciating the ongoing revitalization efforts. In contemporary Nigeria, recognizing the historical role of indigenous languages is crucial for achieving sustainable national development. Efforts to integrate these languages into education, governance, and cultural practices contribute not only to linguistic diversity but also to the overall well-being of communities. Indigenous languages serve as bridges that connect people to their roots, fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity essential for national harmonic.

1.2 Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design. It was deemed appropriate because the nature of the study entailed finding the role of indigenous language in national development. The paper was purely a library research based with examples lifted from already existed work on indigenous language and national development. Theoretically, the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) was applied in this paper which was developed by Giles (1970s), which suggests that communication accumulation is influenced by social identity, interpersonal motives, situational norms and communication outcomes. To use this theory, you need to consider how these factors affect your communication choices and behaviors. Turner and West (2010) argue that when people interact, they adjust their speech, their vocal patterns

and their gestures, to accommodate others. They also used convergence and divergence for the national interest and integration in the national language. Giles and Smith (1979) state that convergence refers to the process through which an individual shifts his or her speech pattern in interaction so that they more closely resemble the speech patterns of speech partners. While the divergence is a linguistic strategy whereby a member of a speech community accentuates the linguistic differences between one and one's interlocutor.

2.1 Is language really important?

Language is one of the most powerful symbols of a group's identity. It shows who the people were in the past who they are presently and who they hope to be in the future. Much of the cultural, spiritual, political and economic life of a people are experienced through language. People pray and preach best with their language, greet more comfortably with their language, organize their ceremonies in the best way with their language (eg. Meehoo, Belee, farée e.t.c), express proverbs and humor in the most interesting way with their language, converse in a most interesting way with their language and quite importantly socializes in the most enduring way with their language. Even when people laugh, they do so in their languages. In many cases, laughing and crying are not one-track verbal expression they are interjected by words and sentences of one's language, especially celebration laughing and ceremonious cries.

In view of the above, people should do to language what the health personnel's do to maintain our health? That means we should become medical doctors, pharmacists, nurses, and paramedical of our languages. This is because if we lose the art of speaking these beautiful languages correctly or fluently, then we have let go an integral part of our values. Therefore, we should maintain the health of our language more effectively so that it does not go into any danger extinction.

On this ground, Nigeria Government recognizes the role language plays in human affairs. This led the Federal Government is come up with a policy statement on the status of different languages in the Nigerian educational system. This statement contained in the National policy on education published in 1977 and revised in 1981, 1998, 2005 has specific pronouncement in the teaching of language at the different levels of the school system. We are all aware that the language provision states among others that initial literacy (that is the pre-primary school level and the first three years of primary education as well as adult and non-formal education) should be conducted in the Mother Toque (MT) or the Language of the Immediate Community (LIC) or Indigenous language (IL). Thereafter, the child is to study this language as a school subject up till the junior secondary school III, level.

To ensure success of this direction, the federal government gives its support and commitment by stating in section 2, sub-section II (3) of the NPE as follows:

“..... and to this end will:

- a) Develop the orthography of many more Nigerian language: and
- b) Produce textbooks in Nigerian language---

With the publication of this policy, many more interest groups have emerged. This has made it possible for people to take up the challenge and responsibility of developing their languages.

3.1 Language Recovery Strategy (LRS)

To achieve the objective of language recovery strategy, we should adopt the idea of "change Begins with me", because is very relevant in the recovery process this is calling for. The change process should be anchored on what can be called language Recovery Triangle (NRT) as drawn below:

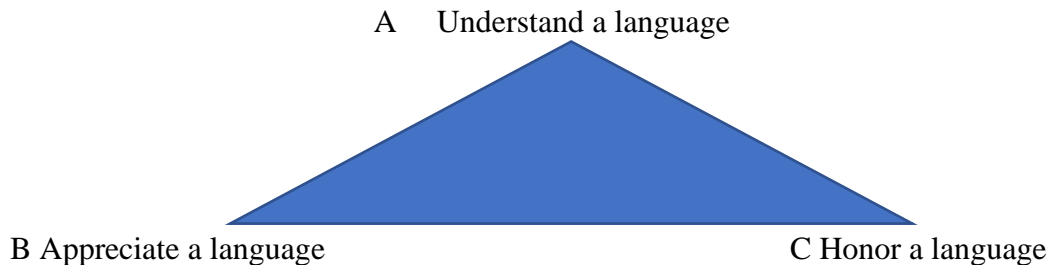


Figure1: Language Recovery Triangle (NRT)

The triangle above is calling on people to strive by all means to; understand the language by way of having practical knowledge of it, appreciate the language by way of seeing its worth and importance, and honor it by way of speaking and writing it. The triangular practice should be conducted as follows:

1. Every parent should use himself or herself as a model, example of understanding, appreciating and honoring language.
2. Every family (parents and children should see their family as model family that should understand, appreciate and honor language.
3. All traditional rulers and their support chiefs should see themselves as leaders of implementing the recovery triangle in their domains.
4. Religious preachers such as Imams and Pastors should continue the promotion.
5. Experts and committed writers should continue their commitment in promoting literacy despite challenges.

3.2 Position of indigenous language

The backwardness of indigenous language is traceable to the era of slave trade and colonialism, under which we were made to feel inferior to the colonialists. Essien (1981) observed that one of the greatest problems confronting African languages in general is the external black mail. African nations are being blackmailed very subtly into maintaining the languages of the ex-imperial power that colonized them. They claimed that in multilingual nations a national language must be politically and cultural neutral.

4.1 The role of indigenous language in National Development.

The role of language in the society cannot be over emphasized. In summary. Language affords its user the opportunity to get across to each other in terms of ideas, feelings and desires Language is a formidable tool for human development. Language develops an average man or woman who later develops society. Language is an instrument through which members of a given society communicate. It is purely restricted to human beings, Language and society are interwoven and thus inseparable.

4.2 Indigenous Language and National Development

Language diversity is essential to the human heritage. Each and every language embodies the unique culture wisdom of a people. The loss of any language is thus a

loss for all humanity According to Ishima (2004), language is a vehicle of thought and expression of culture. It expresses a people's way of life, their perception of issues and their world view. This embodies their ideals, innovations, e.t.c which embraces respect of technological and scientific innovations. Language is an indispensable cultural legacy with all forms of human interaction is carried out. It is capable of destroying or amending relationships. Indigenous language is thus an indelible mark of people's identity.

National development is a gradual and advanced improvement or growth through progressive changes in the socio- political life of nation (Aziza, 1998) National development according to Olaoye, (2011) can be regarded as a situation whereby a nation harnesses the resources at its disposal for growth and meaningful life. This development ranges from growth in education (that is, intellectual growth, politics, economy, science and technology, and so on. In the educational process. Mother tongue is the main pillar through which man has to plan, instruct and evaluate activities. An aggregate of the development of individuals develops educationally. Socially, economically and culturally through their interaction with government agencies that disseminate ideas and policies through various media in the language that the individual best understood.

4.3 Indigenous Language and Child Development

UNESCO, (1953) cited in Olaoye (2011) defined indigenous language or mother tongue as the language in which the child first learns to love and respect the mental heritage of his people and culture. In child development, indigenous language performs the following functions as explained by Olaoye, (2009):

1. Instrumental Function: Mother tongue is used by the child to get things done. He uses his mother tongue to navigate life from childhood to maturity.
2. Interactional Function: The child uses his mother tongue to interact with his parents, siblings, neighbors, peer groups, classmates and the people he meets. He uses mother tongue to carry out speech act illocution, such as persuading, requesting, dissuading, apologizing, commanding, directing, warning, teasing or mocking and even abusing and praising. All these have elocutionary effects on what he does. He achieves international objectives. When the child interacts with speakers of his mother tongue, he learns more about the rules of speaking or socio- linguistic norms in the speech community, including of course the sanctions which go with breach of rules of speaking. He grows in native wisdom, knowledge and understanding
3. Regulatory Fiction: Indigenous language, particularly the child's mother tongue, is used through the following:
 - a. Prohibition: mother tongue is being used as a law enforcement agency to instill moral tenets or to mould people behaviors
 - b. Threat of reprisal, especially if the behavior is not stopped
 - c. Disapproval of behavior.
 - d. Emotional blackmail.
 - e. Categorization of behavior
4. Child-Rearing Function: indigenous languages are a powerful weapon of instrument for Child-rearing.

4.4 Indigenous Language on Literature, Culture and National Development.

There is no literature without language. Culture and language too are inseparable and the trio is intricately interwoven. They play vital roles in man's education and national development (Isyaku 2004).

Literature in indigenous language is an art which warns people of danger and instructs by opening people's eyes to a wide range of experiences and a better grasp of these experiences. According to Fatokun (1992), literature presents situation interactions and oppositions. It suggests a wide range of values and attitudes; it further explained that, in order to understand a people and their culture, one may have to turn to their oral and written narratives, their drama and poetry. A good piece of literature can be regarded as an authentic mirror-image of its society and time. Through satire, proverbs, and symbolism, literary artists communicate ideas, proffer lessons in prudence, generosity, patience and wisdom, which are indispensable to the guidance of mankind and the stability of society.

Indigenous languages are used by literary artists to condemn and correct anti-social behavior such as corruption, violence, marginalization, intolerance, oppression of the masses and other forms of injustice that take place in the society. Our knowledge of the society is widened through historical literature. According to Asade (2000), we learn from historical literature about seemingly immortal despots and their ignoble and sorrowful end. This knowledge helps people in charting new and humanistic socio-political and economics course, which leads to a new world order This is the contribution of literature to national development.

5.1 The Role of Hindrances to the Development of Indigenous Language

Nigeria is a plural society with a multiplicity of languages and dialects competing for recognition. One of the greatest challenges in the optimal recognition of indigenous language is endangerment. Language is endangered when it is on a path toward extinction, that is, when its speakers cease to use it, use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains, adults or children According to solanke, (2006), the nonchalant attitude of the speakers has struck the death knell of their indigenous languages. The first sure sign of the self-colonization is when one does not know enough of one's language.

Haruna, (2006) noted that there is serious desertification and deforestation of the linguistics landscape of mother region. There are cases of language death caused by what Yusuf (2006) calls suicide through over-borrowing from prestigious languages or murder through language policy. Something drastic has to be done to safeguard the endangered languages. Language documentation is the panacea to language death. It is incontrovertible that the loss or death of some indigenous languages is an irretrievable loss of the people's collection wisdom i.e culture, traditional occupations, medicine, technology, terminologies, etc. The richness of any nation, or any civilization, is a function of its language and culture.

6.1 Conclusion

Protecting and preserving our indigenous language are tasks before all stalk holders which must be accomplished. The language of each tribe must be having sacrosanct for all, to fully develop as a nation. Most developed countries what they are today as a result of the use of their mother tongue both home and in schools, such countries could include China, Singapore, Germany, Japan and Britain among others. When we all referred to today as development in those places are the results of the easiness with which learning in indigenous languages is identified with, especially at the earlier

stage of schooling. According to Nwadike, (2004), mother tongue is the key to the heart of the people. If we lose the key, we lose the people. If we treasure the key and keep it safe, it will unlock the door to wealth or/ and affluence Therefore, it is our root and heritage that we must never forget, as the saying goes "anyone who loses its roots has a lot of hardships to ponder on later in future".

Parents and guardians should cultivate the habit of communication with their wards in their indigenous languages for rapid national development. This is towards ensuring that our mother tongues do not die. Also, if we cultivate the habit of speak to our children in our mother tongue and facilitate the learning of indigenous language in schools, it will help in the attainment of national development.

6.2 Recommendations

The potentials of the indigenous languages for broad based mass literacy and knowledge acculturation have never been accessed much less exploited. There is this need for a proactive approach to the issue of development which must involve a sound linguistic policy that sees the utilization of indigenous languages as languages of instruction in our schools.

There is obvious the need to re-arrange or set our priorities straight. We must accept that we have a responsibility of not only preserving individual cultural and linguistic identities but that acculturation of knowledge and genuine progress and development. We must have to utilize our indigenous languages in the enterprise of education.

In this regard, the Nigerian language policy must be redirected towards improvement of indigenous languages and their proper utilization for the attainment of development goals. We must accept the potentials of indigenous languages for domestication of knowledge and broad-based grass root reach as against the English languages. Therefore, if English language brings unity, dialects hold the key to development.

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