

MULTILINGUALISM, NATIONAL AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES IN NIGERIA AND INDIA

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Abstract

Multilingualism is a common phenomenon in most nations of the world. It is a situation where more than two languages exist. In many countries like Nigeria and India, there are hundreds of languages. When there are too many languages in a nation, it is usually very difficult to have a single working indigenous language as a national language. This is the situation in Nigeria and India, where English language is the official language and it dominates the other indigenous languages including the national languages. In this paper, we are going to set a background for the study, define multilingualism, national language and official language, then list the recognized indigenous languages in Nigeria and India, discuss national and official languages in Nigeria and India, and finally draw a conclusion.

Keywords: Nigeria, India, Multilingualism, indigenous language, national and official language

Background to the study

Nigeria is officially known as Federal Republic of Nigeria, she is a federal constitutional republic comprising 36 states and its Federal Capital, Abuja. Nigeria is located in West Africa and shares borders with Republic of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. According to Toyin and Matthew (2008:2):

'Nigeria is a large country in the west African region. Covering 356,668 square miles, Nigeria is roughly twice the size of California and three times the size of the United Kingdom. The country is bordered to the south by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, which are on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. On the west Nigeria is bordered by Benin, on the north by Niger, and on the east by Cameroon. In its extreme northeastern corner, Lake Chad separates Nigeria from the country of Chad. Nigeria stretches roughly 700 miles from west to east and 650 miles from south to north, covering an area between 3_ and 15_E longitude and between 4_ and 14_N latitude'.

Nigeria is a Federal Republic modeled after the United States, with executive power exercised by the president with overtones of the Westminster System model in the composition and management of the upper and lower houses of the bicameral legislature. The president's power is checked by a Senate and House of Representatives, which are combined in a bicameral body called the National Assembly. The Senate is a 109-seat body with three members from each state and one from the capital region of Abuja; members are elected by popular vote to four-year terms. The House contains 360 seats and the number of seats per state is determined by population.

Nigeria was a former British colony; she got her independence from Britain in 1960. Northern and southern Nigeria was amalgamated in 1914. The name Nigeria was taken from the Niger River running the country. This name was coined by Flora Shaw, the 'girl friend' of Lord Lugard, a British colonial administrator of Nigeria in 19th century. In 1967, Nigeria had a civil war which

lasted until 1970. Nigeria civilian government has been interrupted by military rule. The emergence of democracy in Nigeria in May 1999 ended 16 years of consecutive military rule. According to Toyin and Matthew (2008:6-8):

'The borders of the modern state of Nigeria were established in 1914 when the British colonial government amalgamated the northern and southern protectorates of Nigeria to form a unified colonial state...Nigeria gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1960...Currently Nigeria is in its Fourth Republic, and is experiencing its longest uninterrupted period of civilian rule ever. For most of the period since independence in 1960, however, the Nigerian polity has been wracked with instability'.

Nigeria has an extensive history. Archeological evidence shows that human habitation of the area dates back to at least 9000 BCE (Wikipedia, online). There are more than 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria with more than 400 languages. The three largest and most influential ethnic groups and languages in Nigeria are the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Nigeria has population of about 150 million. In terms of religion, Nigeria is roughly divided into two, Muslims in the north and Christians in the south. A very small population practice traditional religion. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, the seventh most populous country in the world, and the most populous black-race country in the world. She is rich in natural resources, her oil reserve have brought great venues to the country. It is listed among the fastest developing economies and also a member of the Common wealth of Nations.

Because Nigeria is a multicultural and multilingual nation, she has problem of ethnocentrism, tribalism, 'corruptionism' and recently terrorism. Since 2002, there have been clashes, particularly in the north of the country, between government forces and the Islamist, militant and jihadist group called Boko Haram. Nigeria also has a problem of national language among other problems. Toyin and Matthew (2008) put it this way, 'Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and the world's eighth largest oil producer, but its success has been undermined in recent decades by ethnic and religious conflict, political instability, rampant official corruption, and an ailing economy.

India

The name India is derived from Indus, which originates from the Old Persian word Hindu. The latter term stems from the Sanskrit word Sindhu, which was the historical local appellation for the Indus River (Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University, retrieved 17 July, 2011, as quoted in Wikipedia online). India is officially known as the Republic of India, she is a country in South Asia. She is the world most populous democracy, the second most populous country after China with over 1.2 billion people, the seven-largest country by geographical area. She shares border with Pakistan to the west; China, Nepal and Bhutan to the north-east; Burma and Bangladesh to the east and bonded by the Indian Ocean on the south, the Arabian Sea on the south-west, and the Bay of Bengal on the south-east. Also, India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands share a maritime border with Thailand and Indonesia.

India is a home to the ancient Indus Valley Civilization and a region of historic trade routes and vast empires, with India subcontinent was identified with her commercial and cultural wealth for much of her long history. The four of world's major religions; namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism; originated from India. India was a colony of Britain like Nigeria. Gradually annexed by and brought under the administration of the British East India Company from the early 18th century and administered directly by Britain from the mid 19th century. She got her

independence in 1947 after a struggle for independence that was marked by non-violent resistance which was led by Mahatma Gandhi.

India is a federal constitutional republic governed under a parliamentary system consisting 28 states and 7 unions territories. She is a constitutional republic and representative democracy in which 'majority rule is tempered by minority right protected by law. The constitution of India, which came into effect on 26 January 1950, states in its preamble that India is a sovereign socialist, secular, democratic republic. India is a pluralistic, multilingual and multiethnic nation like Nigeria. The Indian economy is the world's tenth-largest by nominal GDP and third-largest by purchasing power parity (PPP). India is one of the fastest growing economies but not without some challenges including linguistic problem.

Definition of terms

Multilingualism

The term multilingualism is from Latin words, *multi* (many) and *lingua* (tongue or language). According to Fasold (1984: 9), there are four different kinds of historical patterns that can lead to societal multilingualism. These patterns are migration, imperialism, federation and border area multilingualism. According to the Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (1996), 'Multilingualism is (1) ability of a speaker to express himself/herself in several languages with equal and native-like proficiency; (2) coexistence of several languages with a politically defined society as, for example, in India, Canada, or Switzerland'. Multilingualism is a step ahead of bilingualism. An understanding of the concept of bilingualism will help in understanding what multilingualism is all about. It cannot be said that everybody is bilingual or multilingual but most people are either bilingual or multilingual. A bilingual or multilingual is not a person who speaks two or more languages perfectly like natives. Some believe that a bilingual or multilingual understands, speaks, reads and writes in two or more languages like a native speaker. Therefore, it is very hard to define bilingual and multilingual as well as bilingualism and multilingualism. There are both narrow and broad definitions of the concepts. Some researchers have a narrow definition of bilingualism and multilingualism, and argue that only those people who are very close to native speakers in two or more languages should be considered bilinguals and multilinguals respectively. This definition is not generally accepted by linguists, scholars, language experts and researchers. They argue for a broad definition that view bilingualism and multilingualism as a common human condition that makes it possible for an individual to function, at some level, in more than one or two languages. From this definition, a bilingual or multilingual is not necessarily an individual with native-like competency or proficiency in two or more languages. There can be classifications of bilingual and multilingual person. Some bilinguals or multilinguals possess high, mid, and low levels of proficiency in two or more languages respectively.

Contrary to what many people believe, most people around the world speak or use more than one or two languages. Linguistics diversity- multilingualism- is, according to Mahapatra (1990:1) found in most present-day nations. In the Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English language (1996:940), a multilingual person defined as one 'able to speak more than two languages with approximately equal facility'. Kachru (1986:159) describes multilingualism as the 'linguistic behavior of the members of a speech community which alternatively uses two, three or more languages depending on the situation and function'. For Cook (2002:23), multilingualism is the natural potential available to every normal human being rather than an unusual exception: 'Given the appropriate environment, two languages are as normal as two lungs'. Multilingualism is a situation in a community or nation where more than two languages are in use. In a

multilingual society or nation, not everybody is multilingual. A multilingual person is one who has some level of proficiency in more than two languages. Multilingualism exists in both Nigeria and India.

National language and Official language

The concept of national and official languages is used interchangeably in some countries, hence their definitions are confusing. National and official languages are common features in multilingual nations like Nigeria and India. In such countries, there are sections of population speaking languages different from the one that has been adopted as national or official languages as they are spoken by a majority of people (but not always, for instance Urdu is a national and an official language in Pakistan though with only 7% native speakers of the population).

National language and official language are best understood as two concepts or legal categories with ranges of meaning that may coincide, or may be intentionally separate. Some languages may be recognized popularly as national languages, while others may enjoy a high degree of official recognition. Some languages may enjoy both the status national language and official language like Urdu in Pakistan and Hindi in India. The term national language is used differently in different countries. In some countries, it is the main language, the language used in legislation, court, politics, education, etc at the national level, like Hindi in India unlike Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba in Nigeria.

Every country of the world has a national language that reflects its collective identity to the world at large. A national language is often given prominence over other languages in use inside the country by the people. In fact, the language getting the honour of national language is often (but not always) one that is spoken by the majority of the population of the country. National language of a country is the one in which the government corresponds with international organizations such as UN and other countries (this is not the case in Nigeria). A national language is a language (or language variant, that is, dialect) which has some connection- *de facto* or *de jure*- with a people and perhaps by extension the territory they occupy. The term is used variously. A national language may for instance represent the national identity of a nation or country. National language may alternatively be a designation given to one or more languages spoken as first languages in the territory of a country (this is a case in Nigeria). Brann (1994) classified national languages in Africa into four:

1. Territorial language
2. Regional language
3. Language-in-common or community language
4. Central language

An official language is a language that has been declared by a government of a country, with a legal backing, to be the language of the government. An official language is patronized by the government and used widely, not just for communication, but also for correspondence. This is status and function of English language in Nigeria. According to Fasold (1987:73), 'Official languages are in place primarily for nationalist reasons, those concerned with the day to day practical tasks of governing. The nationalist function is concerned with nationalist motivations, the unifying and separatist functions, the link with the glorious past, and authenticity'.

Indigenous languages in Nigeria and India

Languages of Nigeria

Nigeria is a country which is very rich – not only in terms of natural resources and human potential, but also in terms of languages and cultures. According to reference books like the *Ethnologue* (Grimes ed. 1996) and the *Index of Nigerian Languages* (Crozier & Blench 1992), there are about 500 languages spoken in Nigeria today. There are some major languages like Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Fulfulde, or Kanuri, which are spoken by millions of first and second language speakers, but most Nigerian languages are minority languages with only a small number of speakers. Nigerian languages belong to the following language families: Adamawa-Ubangi, Benue-Congo, Chadic, Gur, Ijoid, Kwa, Mande, Saharan, Semitic and West Atlantic. Some Nigerian languages have developed orthographies and written traditions, but most are pre-literate until now. Some Nigerian languages are taught in Primary and Secondary Schools and in Universities in Nigeria and even abroad, but most have hardly been documented. Many Nigerian languages are endangered, due to external influences and lack of interest in their use and development.

The number of languages listed for Nigeria is 521. Of those, 510 are living languages, 2 are second language without mother-tongue speakers, and 9 are extinct. (Source: Gordon, Raymond G., Jr. (ed.), 2005. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Fifteenth edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. The following is an alphabetical list of Nigerian languages: Abanyom, Abon, Abua, Abureni, Acipa Eastern, Acipa Western, Aduge, Afade, Agatu, Agoi, Agwagwune, Àhàn, Ajawa, Ake, Akpa, Akpes, Akuku, Akum, Alago, Alege Alumu-Tesu, Ambo, Amo, Anaang, Áncá, Arabic Shuwa, Arigidi, Ashe, Asu, Atsam, Auyokawa, Awak, Ayere, Ayu, Baan, Baangi, Baatonum, Bacama, Bada, Bade, Bakpinka, Bali, Bangwinji, Barikanchi, Basa, Basa-Gumna, Basa-Gurmana, Bassa-Kontagora, Bata, Batu, Bauchi, Beele, Begbere-Ejar, Bekwarra, Bena, Berom, Bete, Bete-Bendi, Bile, Bina, Biseni, Bitare, Boga, Boghom, Boko, Bokobaru, Bokyì, Bole, Bo-Rukul, Bu, Bukwen, Bumaji, Burak, Bura-Pabir, Bure, Buru, Busa, Cakfem-Mushere, Cara, Cen, Centúúm, Che, Cibak, Cinda-Regi-Tiyal, Cineni, Cishingini, Ciwogai, C'lela, Como Karim, Cori, Daba, Dadiya, Dass, Daza, Defaka, Degema, Dendi, Deno, Dera, Dghwede, Dibo, Dijim-Bwilim, Diri, Dirim, Doka, Doko-Uyanga, Dong, Duguri, Duhwa, Dulbu, Dungu, Duwai, Dza, Dzodinka, Ebira, Ebughu, Edo, Efai, Efik, Efutop, Eggon, Ehueun, Ejagham, Ekajuk, Eki, Ekit, Ekpeye, Eleme, Eloyi, Emai-Iuleha-Ora, Engenni, English, Enwan, Epie, Eruwa, Esan, Esimbi, Etebi, Eten, Etkywan, Etulo, Evant, Fali, Fali of Baissa, Fam, Firan, Fulfulde Adamawa, Fulfulde Benin-Togo, Fulfulde Nigerian, Fum, Funghwa, Fyam, Fyer, Gaa, Ga'anda, Gade, Galambu, Gamo-Ningi, Ganang, Gbagyi, Gbari, Gbaya, Northwest, Gbiri-Niragu, Geji, Gengle, Gera, Geruma, Ghotuo, Gibanawa, Giiwo, Glavda, Goemai, Gokana, Gude, Gudu, Guduf-Gava, Gun, Gupa-Abawa, Gurmana, Guruntum-Mbaaru, Gvoko, Gwa, Gwamhi-Wuri, Gwandara, Gyem, Hasha, Hausa, Hausa Sign Language, Hide, Holma, Hõne, Horom, Huba, Hungworo, Hun-Saare, Hwana, Hya, Hyam, Ibani, Ibibio, Ibilo, Ibino, Ibuoro, Iceve-Maci, Idere, Idesa, Idoma, Idon, Idun, Igala, Igbo, Igede, Iguta, Igwe, Ihievbe, Ija-Zuba, Ijo Southeast, Ika, Iko, Ikpeshi, Iku-Gora-Ankwa, Ikulu, Ikwere, Ilue, Irigwe, Isekiri, Isoko, Ito, Itu Mbon Uzo, Ivbie North-Okpela-Arhe, Iyayu, Iyive, Izere, Izi-Ezaa-Ikwo-Mgbo, Izon, Izora, Janji, Jara, Jarawa, Jere, Jiba, Jibu, Jilbe, Jimi, Jiru, Jju, Jorto, Ju, Jukun Takum, Kaan, Kadara, Kagoma, Kaivi, Kakanda, Kakihum, Kalabari, Kam, Kamantan, Kami, Kamo, Kamwe, Kaningkom-Nindem, Kanufi, Kanuri, Kanuri Central, Kanuri Manga, Kapyà, Karekare, Kariya, Khana, Kholok, Kinuku, Kiong, Kir-Balar, Kirike, Koenoem, Kofa, Kofyar, Kohumono, Koma, Kono, Korop, Kpan, Kpasam, Kpati, Kubi, Kudu-Camo, Kugama, Kugbo, Kukele, Kulere, Kulung, Kumba, Kupa, Kurama, Kushi, Kutep, Kutto, Kuturmi, Kwa, Kwaami, Kwak, Kyak, Kyenga, Labir, Laka, Lala-Roba, Lamang, Lame, Lamja-Dengsa-Tola, Lamnso, Laru, Leelau, Legbo, Lemoro, Lenyima, Lere, Leyigha, Lijili, Limbum, Lokaa, Longuda, Loo, Lopa, Lubila, Lufu, Luri, Maaka,

Mada, Mafa, Mághdi, Mak, Mala, Mama, Mambila Nigeria, Mangas, Marghi Central, Marghi South, Mashi, Mawa, Mbe, Mbembe Cross River, Mbembe Tigon, Mboi, Mbongno, Mbula-Bwazza, Mburku, Mingang Doso, Miship, Miya, Mom Jango, Montol, Moo, Mumuye, Mundat, Mvanip, Mwaghavul, Nde-Gbite, Nde-Nsele-Nta, Ndoe, Ndoola, Ndun, Ndunda, Ngamo, Ngas, Nggwahyi, Ngizim, Ngwaba, Nigerian Sign Language, Ningye, Ninzo, Njerep, Nkari, Nkem-Nkum, Nkoroo, Nkukoli, Nnam, Nshi, Numana-Nunku-Gbantu-Numbu, Nungu, Nupe-Nupe-Tako, Nyam, Nyeng, Nyong, Nzanyi, Obanliku, Obolo, Obulom, O'chi'chi', Odual, Odut, Ogbah, Ogbia, Ogbogolo, Ogbronuagum, Okobo, Okodia, Oko-Eni-Osayen, Okpamheri, Okpe, Oloma, Olulumo-Ikom, Oring, Oro, Oruma, Ososo, Otank, Pa'a, Panawa, Pangseng, Pe, Peere, Pero, Pidgin Nigerian, Piti, Piya-Kwonci, Polci, Pongu, Psikye, Putai, Putukwam, Pyapun, Rang, Reshe, Rogo, Ron Ruma, Samba Daka, Samba Leko, Sambe, Sanga, Sasaru Saya, Sha, Shakara, Shall-Zwall, Shamang, Shama-Sambuga, Shanga, Shau, Sheni, Shiki, Shoo-Minda-Nye, Shuwa-Zamani, Siri, Somyev, Sorko, Sukur, Sur, Surubu, Tal, Tala, Tamajaq, Tawallammatt, Tambas, Tangale, Tanjijili, Tarok, Tedaga, Tee, Teme, Tera, Teshenawa, Tha, Tita, Tiv, Toro, Tsikimba, Tsishingini, Tso, Tsvadi, Tula, Tumi, Tunzui, Tyap, Ubaghara, Ubang, Uda, Uhami, Ukaan, Ukpe-Bayobiri, Ukpet-Ehom, Ukue, Ukwa, Ukwuani-Aboh-Ndoni, Ulukwumi, Umon, Uneme, Uokha, Urhobo, Usaghade, ut-Ma'in, Uvbie, Uzekwe, Vaghat-Ya-Bijim-Legeri, Vemgo-Mabas, Viti, Vono, Voro, Vute, Waja, Waka, Wandala, Wannu, Wapan, Wāpha, Warji, Wom, Yace, Yala, Yamba, Yangkam, Yedina, Yekhee, Yendang, Yeskwa, Yiwom, Yoruba, Yukuben, Zangwal, Zari, Zarma, Zeem, Zhire, Ziriya, Zizilivakan, Zumbun.

Languages of India

India is rich in languages. There are a quite a number of languages spoken in India. Some of these languages are accepted nationally while others are accepted as dialects of that particular region. The Indian languages belong to four language families namely Indo-European, Dravidian, Austroasiatic (Austic) and Sino-Tibetan. Majority of India's population are using Indo-European and Dravidian languages. The former are spoken mainly in northern and central regions and the latter in southern India. Some ethnic groups in Assam and other parts of eastern India speak Austric languages. People in the northern Himalayan region and near the Burmese border speak Sino-Tibetan languages. According to Lewis (2009) in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 'The number of individual languages listed for India is 452. Of those, 438 are living languages and 14 have no known speakers'. The following is an alphabetical list of Indian languages: Aariya, Adi, Adi Galo, Agariya, Ahirani, Ahom, Aimol, Aiton, Aka-Bea, Aka-Bo, Aka-Cari, Aka-Jeru, Aka-Kede, Aka-Kol, Aka-Kora, Akar-Bale, Allar, Amri Karbi, Anal, Andaman Creole Hindi, Andh, Angika, Apatani Pucikwar, Aranadan, Assamese, Asuri, A'tong, Awadhi, Badaga, Bagheli, Bagri, Balochi Eastern, Balti, Bareli Palya, Bareli Pauri, Bareli Rathwi, Bateri, Bauria, Bazigar, Bellari, Bengali, Bhadrawahi, Bhalay, Bharia, Bhatola, Bhatri, Bhattiyali, Bhilali, Bhili, Bhojpuri, Bhunjia, Biete, Bijori, Bilaspuri, Birhor, Bishnupriya, Bodo, Bodo Parja, Bondo, Braj Bhasha, Brokskat, Bugun, Buksa, Bundeli, Byangsi, Chakma, Chamari, Chambeali, Changthang, Chaudangsi, Chaura, Chenchu, Chetti Wayanad, Chhattisgarhi, Chin Bawm, Chin Falam, Chin Haka, Chin Khumi, Chin Mara, Chin Matu, Chin Paite, Chin Tedim, Chin Thado, Chinali, Chiru, Chodri, Chug, Churahi, Darlong, Darmiya, Deccan, Degaru, Deori, Desiya, Dhanki, Dhanwar, Dhatki, Dhimal, Dhodia, Dhundari, Digaro-Mishmi, Dimasa, Dogri, Domari, Dubli, Dungra Bhil, Duruwa, Dzungkha, Eravallan, Gadaba, Bodo, Gadaba Mudhili, Gadaba Pottangi Ollar, Gaddi, Gahri, Gamit, Gange, Garasia Adiwasi, Garasia Rajput, Garhwali, Garo, Gata', Godwari, Gondi, Gondi Northern, Gondi Southern, Gowlan, Gowli, Groma, Gujarati, Gujari, Gurung Western, Hadothi, Hajong, Halbi, Haryanvi, Hindi, Hinduri, Hmar, Ho, Holiya, Hrangkhol, Hruso, Idu-Mishmi, Irula, Jad, Jangshung, Jarawa, Jaunsari, Juang, Juray, Kachari, Kachchi, Kadar, Kaikadi, Kalanadi, Kamar, Kamta, Kanashi, Kanauji, Kangri, Kanikkaran, Kanjari, Kannada, Karbi, Kashmiri, Katkari, Khaling, Khamba, Khamti, Khamyang, Khandesi, Kharia, Kharia Thar, Khasi, Khirwar, Khovar, Kinnauri, Kinnauri, Bhoti, Kinnauri Chitkuli, Kinnauri Harijan, Koch, Koda,

Kodaku, Kodava, Koirang, Kok Borok, Kolami Northwestern, Kolami Southeastern, Koli Kachi, Koli Wadiyara, Kom, Konda-Dora, Konkani, Konkani Goan, Koraga, Korra, Koraga Mudu, Korku, Korlai Creole Portuguese, Korwa, Koya, Kudiya, Kudmali, Kui, Kukna, Kulung, Kumaoni, Kumarbhag Paharia, Kumbaran, Kunduvadi, Kupia, Kurichiya, Kurmukar, Kurumba Alu, Kurumba Attapady, Kurumba Betta, Kurumba Jennu, Kurumba Kannada, Kurumba, Mullu, Kurux, Kuvi, Ladakhi, Lambadi, Lamkang, Lepcha, Lhomi, Limbu, Lish, Lisu, Lodhi, Lohar Gade, Lohar Lahul, Lyngngam, Magahi, Magar Eastern, Mahali, Maithili, Majhi, Majhwar, Mal Paharia, Mala Malasar, Malankuravan, Malapandaram, Malaryan, Malasar, Malavedan, Malayalam, Maldivian, Malvi, Manda, Mandeali, Manna-Dora, Mannan, Marathi, Maria, Maria Dandami, Marma, Marwari, Mawchi, Meitei, Merwari, Mewari, Mewati, Miji, Miju-Mishmi, Mina, Mirgan, Miri, Mizo, Monpa Kalaktang, Monpa Tawang, Mru, Muduga, Mugom, Mukha-Dora, Munda, Mundari, Muria Eastern, Muria Far Western, Muria Western, Muthuvan, Na, Naga Pidgin, Naga Angami, Naga Ao, Naga Chang, Naga Chokri, Naga Chothe, Naga Inpui, Naga Kharam, Naga Khezha, Naga Khiamniungan, Naga Khoibu, Naga Konyak, Naga Liangmai, Naga Lotha, Naga Makuri, Naga Mao, Naga Maram, Naga Maring, Naga Monsang, Naga Moyon, Naga Mzieme, Naga Nocte, Naga Northern Rengma, Naga Phom, Naga Pochuri, Naga Poumei, Naga Puimei, Naga Purum, Naga Rongmei, Naga Sangtam, Naga Southern Rengma, Naga Sumi, Naga Tangkhul, Naga Tarao, Naga Tase, Naga Thangal, Naga Tutsa, Naga Wancho, Naga Yimchungru, Naga Zeme, Nagarchal, Nahali, Nahari, Nefamese, Nepali, Newar, Nicobarese Car, Nicobarese Central, Nicobarese Southern, Nihali, Nimadi, Nisi, Noiri, Oko-Juwoi, Öñge, Oriya, Oriya Adivasi, Pahari Kullu, Pahari Mahasu, Pali, Paliyan, Panchpargania, Pangwali, Panjabi Eastern, Panjabi Western, Pankhu, Pao, Pardhan, Pardi, Parenga, Parsi, Pathiya, Pattani, Pengo, Phake, Phudagi, Pnar, Powari, Purik, Rabha, Rajasthani, Ralte, Rangkas, Ranglong, Rathawi, Ravula, Rawang, Rawat, Reli, Riang, Rongpo, Ruga, Sadri, Sakachep, Samvedi, Sansi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sartang, Saurashtra, Sauria Paharia, Savara, Sentinel, Seraiki, Shekhawati, Shendu, Sherdukpen, Sherpa, Shina, Sholaga, Shom Peng, Shumcho, Sikkimese, Simte, Sindhi, Singpho, Sirmauri, Sora, Spiti Bhoti, Stod Bhoti, Sulung, Sunam, Surjapuri, Sylheti, Tamang Eastern, Tamil, Telugu, Teresa, Thachanadan, Thangmi, Tharu Chitwania, Tharu Dangaura, Tharu Kathoriya, Tharu Kochila, Tharu Rana, Thulung, Tibetan, Tinani, Tiwa, Toda, Toto, Tshangla, Tukpa, Tulu, Turi, Turung, Ullatan, Urali, Urdu, Vaagri Booli, Vaiphei, Varhadi-Nagpuri, Varli, Vasavi, Vishavan, Waddar, Wagdi, War-Jaintia, Yakha, Yerukula, Zakhing, Zangskari, Zou, Zyphe.

Nigeria and India are similar in that both are multicultural and multilingual nations. It is likely assumed that both are facing the same problems of having too many ethnic groups with different cultures and languages. The next section will open us to the problems in choosing national and official languages in Nigeria and India. We will also see how English language dominates other languages in both nations due to colonial history. Nigeria and India were former British colonies and English language was inherited from the Britain.

Official and National languages in Nigeria and India

Nigerian official and national languages

Formal western type of education was introduced into the country by Christian Missionaries just before the middle of the nineteenth century. For about four decades after the initial date, both the nature and main thrust of Language Education in the country were completely left to those missionaries to decide (Taiwo 1980:10-11). And given the well-known belief of most such missionaries, first, that African child was best taught in his native language (Hair 1967:6). Quite the contrary, members of the then elite were widely of the view that the people turned out under that system of education were not well enough suited to the job market of those days, whose

unsatisfied needs were for persons with training in English rather than in the indigenous languages (Taiwo 1980:11). Over the years the policy changed so well that interest in language education in the country shifted gradually away from the indigenous languages towards English language, the language of the colonial master- Britain. Bamgbose (1976:12-13) affirms the above:

'Not only have some indigenous languages thus been taught in schools since formal western type of education was first introduced into the country, after the attainment of political independence in 1960, the wisdom of giving English so much importance in government and education also began gradually to be questioned. Thus, some people felt, and openly canvassed in Parliament for English to be replaced as official language by one of our indigenous languages some years after independence'.

As a result of this, the federal government began to see the indigenous languages as a veritable and practical means of communication and as a way of preserving the people's culture and national integration. For this to work, the federal government made it a law that every child in Primary School must study two languages, namely: i) mother-tongue (if available for study) or an indigenous language of wide communication in his area, that is, language of his immediate community, and ii) English language; in Junior Secondary School, every child must study three languages, viz: (i) mother-tongue (if available for study) or an indigenous language of wide communication in his area, that is, language of his immediate community, (ii) English language, (iii) any one of the three major indigenous languages in the country, namely: Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, provided the language chosen is different from the child's mother-tongue; and in Senior Secondary School, every student must study two languages, viz: (i) an indigenous language, and (ii) English language. This policy or law on language use in education in Nigeria was and still is not successful due to many factors. The teaching of these indigenous languages including the three major languages did not go well. Lack of suitable pedagogical materials, qualified teachers, adequate funding, good supervision, and negative attitude from the people resulted in the failure in implementing the policy or law. The dominance and popularity of English language is another factor affecting the implementation of this policy. Aito (2005) describes the dominance and popularity of English language this way:

'English has for well over a century has continued to enjoyed the pride of place in the nation's educational system. Thus, whereas indigenous languages are rarely given more than three lesson periods a week on the school time-table, English never has less than five periods, and may even be given as many as seven or eight periods particularly in schools that prepare students for the Oral English Examination. Avidly patronized by commercial publishers, the language enjoys a profusion of pedagogical materials, and in this respect contrasts sharply with the indigenous languages, the vast majority of which lack enough materials for teaching them as L1 even for a few years in primary school'.

Indian official and national languages

In British India, English language was the only language used for administrative purposes as well as well as for higher education purpose. When India became independent in 1947, the India legislators had the challenge of choosing a language for official communication among hundreds of ethnic groups with different languages. The choices available were: 1) Hindi, 2) English, and 3) Hindi and English. The India constitution in 1950, declared Hindi in Devanagari script to be the official language of the union (India). Unless Parliament decided otherwise, the use of English for

official purposes was to cease 15 years after the constitution came into effect, which is on 26 January, 1965. The idea of the changeover, however, led to opposition in the non-Hindi speaking areas, especially Dravidian-speaking areas in South India whose languages are not related to Hindi. As a request of the opposition by non-speaking Hindi Indians, Parliament enacted the Official Languages Act, 1963, which provided for the continued use of English for official purposes along with Hindi, till date. The individual states can adopt their own official languages, depending on their linguistic demographics. Articles 345 of the India constitution authorizes the several states to adopt either Standard Hindi or any one or more of the languages spoken in that state as 'official language' which people of the state can use in all dealings with all branches of the local, state and federal governments. The 'official languages' sometimes called 'national languages' are numbered twenty two at present. India has no single national language; neither the constitution of India nor Indian law specifies a national language. However, languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the India Constitution are sometimes referred to, without legal standing, as the national languages of India.

The Indian education system is truly multilingual in its character. Indian government has introduced the 'Three Language Formula' in its educational system, which requires every child to study two more languages other than their first language. This formula aims at developing and strengthening the multilingual character of India. The two languages are introduced simultaneously at upper primary level. At secondary level students are allowed to choose between Sanskrit and a foreign language like French, German, Arabic, etc. The whole system is complicated. Unfortunately the 'Three Language Formula' has not been successful. There are many problems in implementing the 'Three Language Formula'. For example, firstly, students are directly introduced to writing system without giving any exposure to spoken variety; secondly, there is no reference to the mother-tongue or home language in the formula; and finally, students never understand the purpose of learning these languages because they are not taught to use these languages meaningfully and very often the learning of these languages is considered a waste of time and energy. This negative attitude is only towards the indigenous languages unlike the English language. Sridhar (2002) thus said, 'English in India because of colonial history and its association with currently valued domain of higher education and administration, science and technology, international commerce, western culture and pop entertainment, is perceived as all powerful and ticket to upward mobility'.

Conclusion

Nigeria and India have many things in common historically, linguistically and otherwise. They were both colonized by Great Britain. Both nations have hundreds of languages and ethnic groups. English language plays a dominating role in Nigeria and India. Both nations are facing the problem of choosing a single national language out of their more than five hundred indigenous languages. Nigeria and India are democratic nations. However, they are different in some areas. India has more a billion people while Nigeria has only 1.5 million people. India has a parliamentary system of government like Britain while Nigeria has a presidential system like United States. Nigeria had a civil war and is still having some ethnic and religious crises. This is not the situation in India.

Multilingualism is a situation in a community or nation where more than two languages are in use. In a multilingual society or nation, not everybody is multilingual. A multilingual person is one who has some level of proficiency in more than two languages. Multilingualism exists in both Nigeria and India. Multilingualism is a common phenomenon in most nations of the world. Multilingualism has both advantages and disadvantages. In Nigeria and India, multilingualism is a problem rather than a blessing. The governments of both nations have a long way to go in order to achieve unity in diversity, if it will ever be achieved.

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