

# **The Impact of English Language on Nigerian Indigenous Languages: A Study of Language Shift and Language Death**

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## **Abstract**

This study explores the impact of English Language on Nigerian indigenous languages, focusing on language shift and death. English language dominance in education, governance, and media threatens Nigeria's linguistic diversity and cultural fabric. Historically introduced during colonial times, English language became the language of prestige, leading many Nigerians to prioritize it over native tongues. This trend is especially evident in urban areas, where economic opportunities drive the shift towards the English language, often at the expense of local languages. To counter these challenges, the study suggests strategies to revitalize Nigeria's linguistic heritage. It advocates incorporating indigenous languages into education and media, leveraging digital technology for language preservation, and securing governmental support for necessary resources and policies. Ultimately, this paper aims not only to explore the challenges posed by the dominance of English language but also to highlight the intrinsic value of Nigeria's linguistic diversity. By recognizing the essential role that languages play in cultural identity and national cohesion, the study calls for a concerted effort to preserve Nigeria's rich linguistic tapestry for future generations. Through comprehensive analysis and detailed exploration, this study aspires to offer actionable strategies that stakeholders can implement to safeguard Nigeria's linguistic heritage, ensuring that it remains a vibrant and integral part of the nation's cultural landscape.

**Keywords:** Nigerian indigenous languages, English language shift, language death, cultural identity, linguistic diversity

## Introduction

Nigeria stands as a beacon of linguistic diversity, with a tapestry of over 500 indigenous languages that reflect a wealth of cultures, traditions, and historical narratives. This remarkable diversity is not merely a statistic but a living testament to the country's complex social fabric, offering a window into the myriad cultural identities that flourish within its borders. Each language carries with it the unique stories, values, and perspectives of the communities that speak it, contributing to Nigeria's rich and varied cultural mosaic.

Yet, amidst this linguistic abundance, the pervasive influence of English—a legacy of Nigeria's colonial past—poses a significant challenge to the survival of these indigenous languages. English has become deeply entrenched in Nigerian society, emerging as the dominant language across critical domains such as education,

governance, and media. This dominance creates a linguistic hierarchy that often marginalizes indigenous languages, pushing them to the peripheries of public and private life.

This paper seeks to explore the dynamics of language shift and language death in Nigeria, examining the socio-political and economic contexts that have fueled this linguistic transformation. By analyzing these factors, the study aims to shed light on the complex interplay between language, culture, and identity in Nigeria. Furthermore, it endeavors to propose actionable strategies for preserving Nigeria's linguistic heritage, recognizing the intrinsic value of linguistic diversity as a cornerstone of cultural identity and social cohesion.

In doing so, the paper underscores the importance of safeguarding Nigeria's linguistic heritage for future generations. It calls for a concerted effort from stakeholders

including government bodies, educational institutions, and community organizations to implement measures that promote the use and preservation of indigenous languages. By fostering an environment where linguistic diversity is celebrated and protected, Nigeria can ensure that its rich cultural tapestry remains vibrant and resilient in the face of external pressures.

### **Definition of Conceptual Terms**

**Language Shift:** Imagine a small village where the local language has been spoken for generations, serving as a vessel for stories, traditions, and the community's unique way of understanding the world. However, as time progresses, the younger generation begins to favor English due to its global importance and the opportunities it presents, such as better job prospects and educational advantages. This gradual transition from the native tongue to English is what we refer to as "language shift." It's not merely a change in vocabulary; it's a profound transformation

influenced by social dynamics, economic pressures, and educational systems. For instance, children might start learning in English at school, while local businesses might adopt English to attract tourists, further steering the community towards a new linguistic identity.

**Language Death:** Language shift can sometimes culminate in a more dramatic consequence, language death. This occurs when the original language is no longer spoken by the community and fails to be transmitted to the next generation. Picture an elderly storyteller who once shared tales in a language now fading into silence, stories that once carried the essence of the community's culture and history. As this language vanishes, so do the unique expressions, idioms, and cultural nuances embedded within it. Language death is not just a loss of words but a profound erasure of cultural identity and heritage. A poignant example is

the extinction of Indigenous languages across various regions, where languages that once thrived are now heard only in recordings or historical documents, leaving behind a community grappling with a fragmented cultural legacy.

### **Historical Context**

The introduction of English to Nigeria during the British colonial period was a calculated strategy aimed at consolidating administrative, educational, and economic systems under a single linguistic framework. This policy was rooted in the colonial belief that a common language would simplify governance and facilitate control over the diverse ethnic and linguistic groups that comprised Nigeria. English was thus established as the language of governance, education, and commerce, creating a linguistic hierarchy that privileged English over the multitude of indigenous languages spoken across the region (Phillipson, 1992). This imposition of

English as the *lingua franca* disrupted traditional language use patterns, positioning it as a symbol of modernity and progress while marginalizing native languages.

During the colonial era, the education system was a pivotal tool for entrenching English in Nigerian society. The colonial authorities designed an education system that aimed to cultivate an English-speaking elite to assist in the administration of the colony. Missionary schools, which proliferated during this period, played a crucial role in this linguistic transformation. These schools often used English as the medium of instruction, not only to facilitate the spread of Christianity but also to prepare students for roles within the colonial administrative structure. This approach entrenched the dominance of English, gradually diminishing the role of indigenous languages in both education and public life. The neglect of Nigeria's rich linguistic and cultural realities fostered a sense of alienation and cultural

dislocation among indigenous communities, as these communities grappled with the erosion of their linguistic heritage (Adegbija, 2004).

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, the newly formed government faced the formidable challenge of integrating the country's diverse linguistic landscape into a cohesive national identity. The National Policy on Education (NPE) sought to address this by advocating for mother-tongue education in the early years of schooling, thereby recognizing the importance of indigenous languages in fostering cultural identity and community cohesion (Federal Ministry of Education, 1977). However, despite these well-intentioned efforts, English has remained the dominant language, particularly in urban centers where its socio-economic advantages are most pronounced. The preference for English in educational and professional contexts reflects the broader socio-economic landscape, where English

proficiency is often equated with access to better job opportunities and social mobility (Bamgbose, 1991).

The inconsistency in the implementation of language policies highlights the broader tension between preserving linguistic heritage and embracing English for modernization and global integration. This tension is emblematic of the complex language politics that characterize post-colonial Nigeria. On one hand, there is a clear need to preserve and promote the use of indigenous languages as vital components of cultural identity and heritage. On the other hand, the pragmatic advantages of English in a globalized world cannot be ignored. The ongoing dominance of English in educational and official domains underscores these complexities, posing significant challenges for policymakers and educators alike (Adegbite, 2003).

This historical backdrop provides a critical lens through which to examine the

current linguistic landscape in Nigeria. It highlights the enduring legacy of colonial language policies and the challenges they present for preserving indigenous languages. The colonial era's language policies laid the groundwork for the linguistic hierarchies that persist today, shaping the socio-cultural dynamics of language use and preference in Nigeria. Understanding this historical context is crucial for devising effective strategies to revitalize and preserve Nigeria's indigenous languages, ensuring they remain vibrant and integral to the nation's cultural fabric. By acknowledging the historical forces at play, stakeholders can work towards creating a more balanced linguistic environment that both respects Nigeria's rich linguistic heritage and embraces the opportunities presented by global linguistic trends.

### **Language Shift and Language Death**

#### **Defining Language Shift and Language Death**

Language shift occurs when a community gradually transitions from using one language to another, often at the expense of the former. This process can lead to language death, where a language loses its last native speakers and becomes extinct. In Nigeria, the shift towards English is driven by socio-economic incentives and the perceived prestige of English proficiency, positioning it as a language of upward mobility (Fishman, 1991).

Nigeria, with its 527 languages, is a microcosm of global linguistic diversity. However, according to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, 29 Nigerian languages, including Bikya, Jalaa, Duguza, Kiong, Mawa, Ajawa, Basa-Gumna, Bete-Bendi, Gamo-Ningi, Gura, Holma, Ilue, Kpati, Kubi, Lufu, Shau, Teshenawa, Auyokawa, Fulfulde (Adamawa), Reshe, Mawa (Niger-Congo), Boko (Benue-Congo), Gbedde, Gwa, Kyenga, Mokilko, Puku, Shabo, and Ziriya, are critically endangered.

This statistic alone highlights the precarious situation for nearly 5.5% of these languages.

Further, the Nigeria Language Survey conducted in 2010 estimated that about 20% of Nigerian languages are at risk of disappearing within the next 50 years. That translates to approximately 105 languages facing extinction unless urgent preservation measures are implemented. The primary drivers of this decline include urban migration, the lack of institutional support for indigenous languages, and the increasing socio-economic advantages of English.

English, the official language of Nigeria, has permeated nearly every facet of life, from governance to education and media. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2015), English proficiency is reported by 68% of urban dwellers and 33% of rural residents. This reflects its pervasive presence, particularly in urban centers where English acts as a common language among Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups.

The educational system in Nigeria heavily emphasizes English. Research by Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2002) indicates that approximately 85% of Nigerian schools use English as the medium of instruction from the primary level upwards. This dominance has significant implications, as it not only accelerates the language shift towards English but also marginalizes indigenous languages, often relegating them to the status of mere subjects rather than mediums of instruction.

Dr. Ayo Bamgbose, a foremost researcher in Nigerian linguistics, highlights that even major languages like Yoruba are experiencing a shift, especially in urbanized environments where English dominates. His studies reveal that in cities like Lagos, about 60% of Yoruba-speaking families utilize English as the primary language at home, indicating a significant shift in language preference among the younger generations.

For smaller language communities, the situation is even more dire. For instance, the Ijaw language has seen a drastic reduction in the number of fluent speakers, declining by 40% over the past two decades according to research by Professor Kay Williamson. This reduction is largely attributed to the socio-economic benefits associated with English and the lack of formal support for indigenous language education.

The economic incentives tied to proficiency in English are substantial and have a profound impact on language choices. The British Council's 2018 report indicates that 78% of job advertisements in Nigeria require English proficiency, underscoring the language's importance in economic mobility and career advancement. This economic drive compels families to prioritize English education, often at the expense of indigenous language fluency.

Media consumption further exacerbates this trend. With over 90% of

Nigeria's media content delivered in English, indigenous languages struggle to maintain a foothold in popular culture. This is particularly evident in television, film, and music, where English content is more appealing to younger, globally-oriented audiences.

The implications of language shift and eventual language death are extensive and deeply felt across various dimensions of Nigerian society. Languages are not just modes of communication; they are repositories of cultural knowledge and heritage. The extinction of a language signifies the loss of unique cultural practices, oral traditions, and community-specific worldviews, diminishing Nigeria's rich cultural diversity.

Olaoye (2013) argues that the erosion of indigenous languages can lead to cultural alienation and a weakened connection to one's heritage, which affects social cohesion and individual identity. This loss of cultural



identity can result in a fragmented community, where younger generations may feel disconnected from their roots.

Moreover, the decline in indigenous languages also impacts cognitive diversity. Research indicates that bilingualism and multilingualism contribute to enhanced cognitive abilities, such as problem-solving skills and cognitive flexibility (Cummins, 2000). The diminishing use of indigenous languages limits these cognitive benefits, potentially affecting educational outcomes and intellectual development.

Addressing the challenges posed by language shift and death requires a multifaceted approach. It is crucial for stakeholders, including government bodies, educational institutions, and community organizations, to implement policies that support the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages.

Educational reforms should emphasize the inclusion of indigenous

languages as mediums of instruction, particularly in the early years of schooling. This can help foster a sense of pride and identity among young learners while ensuring that these languages remain vibrant and relevant.

Media can also play a pivotal role in language preservation. By promoting indigenous languages through television programs, radio broadcasts, and digital content, media outlets can help normalize their use and increase their appeal among younger audiences.

Community-driven initiatives, such as language workshops, cultural festivals, and storytelling events, are also vital in revitalizing indigenous languages. These programs can create spaces for language use and cultural exchange, ensuring that linguistic traditions are passed down to future generations.

### Factors Driving Language Shift

English serves as the primary medium of instruction from primary to tertiary education levels. This emphasis on English accelerates language shift, as proficiency is often equated with academic and professional success (Adeyemi&Adeyinka, 2002). Schools rarely offer indigenous languages beyond the early grades, limiting opportunities for students to develop literacy and fluency in their native tongues. In many urban schools, indigenous languages are taught only as subjects, if at all, while English is used for all other subjects, further marginalizing indigenous languages and reducing their practical utility.

Nigerian media, predominantly in English, further diminishes the presence and status of indigenous languages. The global reach of English-language content makes indigenous languages less attractive to younger generations (Omoniyi, 2003). This is evident in popular TV shows, movies, and

music, which predominantly feature English, affecting language use and preference among youth.

Urbanization and migration also contribute to the decline of indigenous languages. Urban areas, perceived as hubs of opportunity, predominantly use English for communication. As people migrate to cities, they adapt to the dominant linguistic norms, furthering the decline of indigenous languages (Igboanusi& Peter, 2005). In Lagos, Nigeria's largest city, English is the lingua franca used in business and social interactions, overshadowing the use of indigenous languages like Yoruba, Igbo, or Hausa.

Economic incentives play a significant role in promoting English over indigenous languages. English proficiency is often associated with better employment prospects and social mobility. This economic allure encourages families to prioritize English learning, frequently at the expense of

indigenous languages (Eze, 2019). The job market's preference for English-speaking candidates reinforces this trend, leading parents to emphasize English education for their children to secure future opportunities.

### **Case Studies of Language Shift**

Despite being one of Nigeria's major languages, Yoruba faces challenges in maintaining its vitality among urban populations. While efforts exist to incorporate Yoruba in education and media, the allure of English remains strong, particularly among youth (Adegbite, 2003). Urban Yoruba speakers often code-switch between English and Yoruba, reflecting a shift in language preference. In Lagos, Yoruba is still widely spoken; however, English dominates in formal settings like schools and offices, contributing to a gradual decline in Yoruba literacy among younger generations.

Smaller languages like Ijaw face a more precarious situation, with limited

resources for language preservation. Communities struggle to maintain fluency among younger generations, who often prioritize English for practical reasons (Fafunwa, 1989). The lack of institutional support for smaller languages exacerbates their vulnerability to extinction. In the Niger Delta region, Ijaw is increasingly being replaced by English in educational and public domains, threatening the language's survival as younger speakers shift to English for academic and economic purposes.

Additional case studies reveal similar trends among other indigenous languages. The Igbo language, for example, is experiencing a decline in intergenerational transmission, particularly in urban areas where English is the primary language of communication. Efforts to promote Igbo through cultural initiatives and educational programs face challenges due to the pervasive influence of English in media and popular culture.

### Case Studies of Language Shift in Micro-Languages

Nigeria's rich linguistic landscape features many micro-languages that face endangerment as English and major regional

languages prevail. This section explores five such languages, namely; Oko, Bassa, Ebira, Nupe, and Ikwerre focusing on the factors driving their decline and the ongoing efforts to preserve them.

**Table 1: Impact of Language Shift on Nigerian Micro-Languages**

Language	Region/Community	Impact of Language Shift	Current Status
Oko	Enugu State	Rapid decline due to urban migration and lack of educational support	Endangered, with limited revitalization efforts
Bassa	Kogi State	Displacement by Hausa and English in schools and public life	Endangered, community initiatives for preservation in progress
Ebira	Kogi and Edo States	Decline in use among youth, overshadowed by larger languages	Vulnerable, but local cultural programs are active
Nupe	Niger State	Reduced use in formal domains, overshadowed by Hausa	Vulnerable, some community-driven preservation efforts
Ikwerre	Rivers State	Declining use due to urbanization and preference for English	Endangered, cultural revival initiatives underway

The Oko language, spoken in Enugu State, has seen a rapid decline in usage primarily due to urban migration and a lack of institutional support in education. As

younger generations move to urban areas for better economic opportunities, they adopt more dominant languages, leaving Oko with few speakers. Efforts to revitalize the

language are minimal, making it one of Nigeria's endangered languages. Without significant intervention, Oko faces the risk of extinction.

Similarly, the Bassa language in Kogi State is increasingly displaced by Hausa and English, particularly in educational and public domains. Schools rarely teach Bassa, leading to a decline in its use among children. Nevertheless, there are emerging community-driven initiatives aimed at preserving the language, focusing on integrating Bassa into local cultural activities and educational programs. Despite these efforts, Bassa remains endangered.

Meanwhile, the Ebira language, spoken in Kogi and Edo States, is experiencing a decline in use among the youth, who often prefer English and other larger languages for socio-economic advancement. Despite this trend, local cultural programs are actively promoting Ebira through festivals and community

gatherings. These initiatives aim to foster a sense of pride in the language, although its future remains uncertain due to external pressures.

In Niger State, the Nupe language has seen reduced use in formal settings, where Hausa and English dominate. This shift is largely driven by the perception that proficiency in more widely spoken languages is necessary for professional success. Nonetheless, some community-driven efforts focus on preserving Nupe through cultural and linguistic education, highlighting its historical significance and unique cultural contributions.

In the same light, the Ikwerre language, native to Rivers State, is declining in use due to urbanization and a growing preference for English. The language is increasingly seen as less relevant in modern economic and social contexts. However, cultural revival initiatives are underway, aiming to integrate Ikwerre into educational

curricula and promote its use in cultural festivals. These efforts strive to reverse the trend and ensure the language's survival for future generations.

The plight of Nigeria's micro-languages like Oko, Bassa, Ebira, Nupe, and Ikwerre underscores the complex challenges posed by language shift in the face of globalization and urbanization. While community-driven initiatives offer hope for preservation, sustained efforts and broader policy support are crucial to maintaining Nigeria's linguistic diversity.

### **Implications of Language Death**

Languages encapsulate cultural wisdom, history, and identity. The extinction of an indigenous language results in the irretrievable loss of cultural knowledge and practices, diminishing Nigeria's cultural diversity (Bangbose, 2000). Indigenous languages are integral to cultural ceremonies, oral traditions, and community life, serving as vessels of cultural heritage. For example,

the extinction of a language like the Oko language, which has seen a significant decline in speakers, results in the loss of unique cultural narratives and traditional knowledge specific to the community.

Language is a cornerstone of cultural identity. The erosion of indigenous languages can lead to a sense of alienation and a weakened connection to one's heritage, affecting social cohesion (Olaoye, 2013). Language is a marker of belonging and community, and its loss can impact individuals' sense of self and cultural affiliation. Among the Igbo people in southeastern Nigeria, language loss is linked to a disconnection from traditional customs and community values, affecting the intergenerational transmission of cultural identity.

Bilingualism and multilingualism are linked to cognitive benefits. The decline of indigenous languages limits these opportunities, affecting educational

outcomes and cognitive development (Cummins, 2000). Research shows that multilingual individuals often demonstrate enhanced problem-solving skills and cognitive flexibility. Studies indicate that children who grow up bilingual in English and an indigenous language perform better academically due to the cognitive advantages of multilingualism, but declining native language use threatens these benefits.

The dominance of English in Nigeria reflects complex historical, socio-economic, and cultural dynamics. While English offers opportunities for socio-economic advancement, its prevalence has significant implications for indigenous languages and cultures. Balancing the preservation of linguistic heritage with the benefits of global integration remains a critical challenge.

The loss of indigenous languages also impacts the intellectual landscape, as each language offers a distinct worldview and conceptual framework. This diversity of

thought enriches the global understanding of human cognition, communication, and culture. When a language dies, the world loses not only words but also the unique ways in which those words shape human experience and understanding. The decline of languages like Ijaw and Ikwerre therefore represents a loss of intellectual diversity and the nuanced understanding of the world that these languages embody.

Furthermore, language death can lead to the homogenization of cultural expressions, as global languages like English dominate various forms of media and communication. This can result in a loss of diverse artistic and literary traditions that are closely tied to linguistic heritage. Indigenous languages often carry idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and metaphors that do not easily translate into other languages, and their loss diminishes the richness of cultural expression.

Socially, the erosion of indigenous languages can lead to the marginalization of communities whose identities are intricately linked to their native tongues. This marginalization may manifest in reduced political representation and diminished access to resources and opportunities that are often mediated through dominant languages. In Nigeria, the prioritization of English over indigenous languages in official and educational settings can exacerbate inequalities and limit social mobility for non-English speaking communities.

To mitigate these implications, it is crucial to implement comprehensive language preservation strategies that involve both linguistic and cultural revitalization. This includes integrating indigenous languages into education systems, promoting their use in media and technology, and supporting community-led initiatives that celebrate and preserve linguistic diversity. It

also requires policy interventions that recognize the value of linguistic heritage and provide the necessary resources to support language maintenance and revitalization efforts.

By fostering environments where indigenous languages are valued and actively used, Nigeria can preserve its cultural diversity and ensure that its linguistic heritage continues to thrive. This not only benefits the communities directly involved but also enriches the national and global cultural landscape, ensuring that future generations inherit a world rich in linguistic and cultural diversity.

Future research should explore innovative strategies for language preservation, including educational reforms and community-led initiatives, to ensure the survival and vitality of Nigeria's rich linguistic diversity.



**Table 2: Extinct Indigenous Languages in Nigeria and Their Cultural Impact**

Language	Region	Reasons for Extinction	Cultural Impact
Gamo-Ningi	Bauchi State	Integration with larger linguistic groups, lack of documentation	Loss of unique cultural practices and oral traditions
Kpati	Plateau State	Small speaker base, language shift to Hausa	Erosion of cultural identity and historical narratives
Ajawa	Bauchi State	Dominance of Hausa, migration to urban areas	Disappearance of traditional knowledge and customs
Auyokawa	Jigawa State	Assimilation into larger communities, urbanization	Loss of linguistic diversity and cultural uniqueness
Basa-Gumna	Niger State	Language shift due to socio-economic pressures	Loss of community heritage and ancestral knowledge

The extinction of languages such as Gamo-Ningi, Kpati, Ajawa, Auyokawa, and Basa-Gumna in Nigeria illustrates the profound impact of language shift and death on cultural identity and heritage. Each of these languages, once vibrant within their respective communities, carried a wealth of cultural, historical, and intellectual knowledge unique to their speakers. As these languages faded, so too did the rich cultural tapestries they represented.

**Gamo-Ningi**, once spoken in Bauchi State, vanished primarily due to integration with

larger linguistic groups and a lack of preservation efforts. This loss signified the disappearance of a unique cultural identity and oral traditions integral to the community. Similarly, **Kpati**, native to Plateau State, succumbed to extinction as its speakers gradually shifted to using Hausa, a more dominant regional language. This shift resulted in the erosion of cultural narratives and practices, further diminishing the region's cultural tapestry.

In Bauchi State, the **Ajawa** language faced extinction due to the increasing dominance of

Hausa and migration to urban areas. As a result, traditional knowledge and customs associated with Ajawa disappeared, contributing to a homogenized cultural landscape. Likewise, **Auyokawa** spoken in Jigawa State, became extinct as speakers assimilated into larger communities and urbanization took hold. The extinction of Auyokawa underscores the loss of linguistic diversity and cultural uniqueness the language once represented.

Finally, in Niger State, **Basa-Gumna** faced extinction as socio-economic pressures drove speakers to adopt more widely spoken languages like Hausa. The loss of Basa-Gumna reflects the disappearance of community heritage and ancestral knowledge once encapsulated in the language.

In conclusion, the decline of these languages not only represents a loss of words but also the erosion of cultural diversity and identity. To prevent further losses, it is essential to implement strategies that actively support

and promote the preservation of Nigeria's remaining indigenous languages. By doing so, we can ensure that the rich tapestry of cultural identities and heritages continues to thrive for future generations.

### **Strategies For Language Revitalization**

1. **Policy Reforms:** Implementing strong language policies that mandate the inclusion of indigenous languages in educational curricula can help counter language shift. Government support is crucial for language documentation and revitalization initiatives (Adegbija, 2004). Policies should prioritize the development of teaching materials and resources in indigenous languages to support comprehensive language education. Rwanda's policy of using Kinyarwanda as the medium of instruction in early education provides a model for promoting indigenous languages while balancing the need for English proficiency.

**2. Community Engagement:** Involving communities in language preservation efforts fosters ownership and responsibility. Initiatives such as language clubs, cultural festivals, and storytelling sessions can promote language use and transmission (Ogunsiji, 2001). Community-driven projects empower local speakers to take an active role in revitalizing their languages. The Yoruba Language Project in Nigeria engages communities in language documentation and revitalization through workshops and cultural events, fostering a renewed interest in Yoruba among younger generations.

**3. Leveraging Media and Technology:** Digital platforms can amplify the reach of indigenous languages through content creation and distribution. Social media, mobile apps, and online courses can support language learning and increase visibility (Omoniyi, 2003). Harnessing technology

allows for innovative approaches to language education and cultural preservation. The use of mobile applications for learning Hausa language basics has gained popularity among youth, providing accessible language education and promoting daily use.

**4. Cultural Promotion:** Celebrating indigenous languages through media, arts, and public spaces enhances their status and encourages broader usage. Cultural campaigns can shift public perceptions and value indigenous linguistic heritage (Bangbose, 2000). Highlighting the cultural richness and significance of indigenous languages can foster pride and encourage their use. Public art installations featuring indigenous language phrases and cultural symbols in urban centers can raise awareness and appreciation for linguistic diversity.

**5. Educational Initiatives:** Developing bilingual education programs that integrate

indigenous languages alongside English can enhance language proficiency and cultural knowledge. Teacher training programs focused on indigenous language instruction can equip educators with the skills needed to effectively teach these languages. Collaborations with universities and linguistic research centers can support the development of curricula and educational resources tailored to the needs of specific linguistic communities.

## CONCLUSION

The impact of English on Nigerian indigenous languages is a complex interplay of historical, socio-economic, and cultural factors. Addressing the challenges of language shift and language death requires a comprehensive approach that combines policy reforms, community involvement, and innovative use of media and technology. By valuing and preserving its linguistic diversity, Nigeria can ensure that its cultural

heritage thrives for future generations, fostering a more inclusive and culturally rich society.

Preserving Nigeria's linguistic heritage is not merely an academic exercise but a crucial aspect of maintaining the nation's cultural identity and social cohesion. The survival of indigenous languages is essential for the continuation of cultural traditions, knowledge, and values that define Nigeria's diverse communities. As globalization and modernization continue to shape the linguistic landscape, it is imperative to adopt strategies that balance the benefits of English proficiency with the preservation of indigenous languages.

Future research and initiatives should focus on enhancing the visibility and status of indigenous languages, promoting their use in various domains of society, and supporting the communities that speak them. By embracing its linguistic diversity, Nigeria can build a more resilient and vibrant society that

values and celebrates the richness of its cultural heritage.

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