

# LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND USE IN SOME SELECTED STATES IN NIGERIA

*Dr. S. N. Oranusi and Dr. N. Okoli*

## **Abstract**

This study set to survey Language Diversity and use in some selected states in Nigeria. It was discovered that there are quite a number of states that are heterogeneous such as Abia, Ekiti, Kano, Kaduna and Osun. The further grouping of the states shows that five(5) states were monolingual for instance. Abia, Ekiti, Imo, Lagos, and Osun. Bilingual states include Ebonyi, Kanu, Kats in, Ondo and Zamfara, while multilingual states include Borno, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Bauchi, Cross Rivers, FCT, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kwara, Kogi, Niger, Sokoto, and Yobe. Based on this, some recommendations were made among which is that the adequate time for field work should be considered for future plans, as well as enough time for feedback, corrections, verification and confirmation of claims by respondents.

Language is a means of promoting interaction in any given society. The provision of section I on Philosophy and goals of Education (2004) reveals that Government appreciate the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesion; and preserving cultures. The policy therefore ascribed roles to the language of the immediate environment....the three Nigerian languages. Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba....and the desirability to speak French in addition to English.

The sociolinguistic survey of Language Diversity and language use in Nigeria started as the National language survey project in the early eighties. It was conceived, proposed and promoted by the former National Language Centre, now, Language Development Centre of the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Centre (NERDC). It was worthy to note that the Federal Ministry of Education and the Nigeria government was proud of this project that they presented it to UNESCO under the World Decade for Cultural Development (WDCD) Programme, (1988-98). Ihebuzor and Junaidu (1994).

## **Purpose**

The main purpose of this work is to provide demographic data on some selected states in Nigeria languages. This should be achieved through identification, and classification of the languages, their locations and spread, and the number of speakers of each language as a first, second or third language.

## **Specific Objectives**

The specific objective of this study includes:

- a. To describe the level of development of some Nigerian language in some selected states using such parameters as orthography, literature and dictionary development and use in mass media, cultural activities, religion and education.
- b. To identify the location of each language or dialect spoken in Nigeria by the selected states.

## **Method**

The study covered the entire states, but due to financial inadequacies, out of the thirty-seven states (37) in Nigeria, twenty five (25) states were randomly selected. Six (6) informants per local government area were designed for the study. The sampling technique involved in the survey can be described further as quota sampling. Six (6) respondents were randomly selected from each local government area of the selected states of the federation. These were later reduced to three (3) respondents.

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The instrument used for the survey was a questionnaire developed and validated by experts in the Faculty of Education who review and approved it based on the objective of the study. The design of the instrument was done to secure answers to questions which the respondent fills in himself. The questionnaire were structured into four(4) sections A—D.

Section A covers the person data of the respondent such as sex, age, level of education, occupation, places of residence/work and origin of state, LGA, town villages and length of stay.

Section B takes care of the languages of origin of the respondent, and other languages spoken by him or understood but not spoken. Other languages in the L.G.A and language of spouse if married.

Section D searches for the level of development of the language(s) of the respondent. Questions are on books written in the local language, newspaper available, whether used for radio TV broadcast and teaching in primary classes.

Answers provided by the respondents would meet the specific objectives of the study when they are analyzed and discussed.

In each state selected, three (3) researchers were chosen making seventy-five (75) researchers in all. They were trained on the purpose, the methodology and the intended utility of the study. This measure was taken to ensure that all seventy five of them would behave in the prescribed standard manner as they survey the language diversity and the use in each state. At the end of overall period of 1 year (2009-2010) for the field work, the trained researchers returned the completed summary of the questionnaire which was analyzed for the work.

Data collected were from the following states:

1. Abia State	14. Kebbi State
2. Akwa-Ibom State	15. Kogi State
3. Bauchi State	16. Kwara State
4. Bayelsa State	17. Lagos State
5. Borno State	18. Niger State
6. Cross Rivers State	19. Osun State
7. Delta State	20. Ondo State
8. Ekiti State	21. Sokoto State
9. Gombe State	22. Rivers State
10. Imo State	23. Zamfara State
11. Jigawa State	24. Yobe State
12. Kaduna State	25. FCT
13. Kanu State	

**Results**

Data was analyzed as the research questions demand. The research officers have endeavoured to collate and reflect some basics facts from the raw data collected from the field in their reports. The format employed to report such raw data on local government area basis contains:

- a. Local Government Area
- b. Name of language(s)
- c. Dialects
- d. Other names of the language
- e. Languages of the Home
- f. Languages of the place of work
- g. Languages of the market place
- h. Books written in local language(s)
- i. Language(s) use in newspapers

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- j. Languages used for broadcast
- k. Language(s) of instruction at school, Primary 1-3
- m. Languages for instruction at School, Primary 4-6
- n. Other language(s) spoken in the local government area.

The format adopted to report these raw data in states basis for discussion contains the following:

- 1. State population
- 2. Number of local government areas
- 3. Number of language(s)
- 4. Books written in local language(s)
- 5. Language(s) used for newspapers
- 6. Language(s) used for broadcast
- 7. Language(s) of instruction in schools Primary 1-3
- 8. Language(s) of instruction in schools Primary 4-6.

For the limitation of this work, the beautiful objectives which would have involved extensive field work of interviewing and elicitation of data were reduced because of finance. The duration of data collection that is, 2009 to 2010 has imposed some longitudinal effect on the survey of particularly when the dynamism of languages is considered. Also limited time did not give room for extensive confirmation of claims of respondents. Some of the respondents exhibited limited understanding of some expressions used in the questionnaire.

**Findings**

This survey shall limits its coverage to reflection of raw data discovered from the various field trips and give account of such on state basis. It shall not discuss the raw data or comment on these extempore, rather it shall present the findings thus, and the states in alphabetical order.

<b>Abia State</b>	
1 State Population	-2,833,999
2 Number of Local Government Area	17
3 Number of Languages	1
4 Books written in local languages	Igbo
5 language(s) used in newspaper	Igbo
6 Language(s) used in broadcasting	Igbo, English
7 Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Igbo, English
8 Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	Igbo, English
<b>Akwa Ibom State</b>	
1 State Population	3,920,208
2 Number of Local Government Area	31
3 Number of Languages	8
4 Books written in local languages	(Oron, Ibibio, Eket, Efik, Annang)
5 language(s) used in newspaper	1 (Efik)
6 Language(s) used in broadcasting	Andoru, Ibibio, Eket, Annang, Oron, Okobo, Itu, Mbonum, Ibeno, Efie, Pidgin, English, Mbo, Eyagan, Obolo, French
7 Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	English, Ibibio, Okobo, Efik, Oron, Annang, Eket, Oro, French
8 Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Ibibio, Oron, Annang, Eket, French, Andoni, Ibeno, Mbo, Itumbonuso, Okobo

<b>Borno State</b>		
1	State Population	4,151,193
2	Number of Local Government Area	27
3	Number of Languages	30
4	Books written in local languages	Kanuri, Higgi, Marghi, Bura, Shuwa (5)
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Kanuri,
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	Kanuri, Shuwa, Nioghi, Hausa, Bura, English, Dadhodai, Fulfuds Waha (Madara), Kana, Kuru, Margumi
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Kanuri, Hausa, Marghi, English, Bura, Kibaku Arabic
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	Kanuri, English, Marghi, Hausa, Arabic
<b>Bauchi State</b>		
1	State Population	4,676,465
2	Number of Local Government Area	20
3	Number of Languages	51
4	Books written in local languages	(2) Hausa, Fulfude
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Hausa, Fulani
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	Hausa, English, Fulfulde, Jaranchi, Kanuri, Warjawa, Sayauwa, Gerawa, Jarawa
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Hausa, English, Fulfude, Arabic, Sawaya, vi-zar
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	Hausa, English, Zar
<b>Bayelsa State</b>		
1	State Population	1,703,358
2	Number of Local Government Area	8
3	Number of Languages	6
4	Books written in local languages	Izon, Ogbia
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Osoma, Egberi
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	Nembe, French, English, Ijaw, Kolokuma, Pidgin
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Nembe, French, English, Ijaw, Kolokuma, Koroba, Epie, Okodia
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	Nembe, French, English, Ijaw
<b>Cross River State</b>		
1	State Population	2,888,966
2	Number of Local Government Area	18
3	Number of Languages	28
4	Books written in local languages	Ejagham, Efik, Bokyi
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Belte, Yala, Membe, Kukele
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	English, Bekwara, Efik, Ejagham, Pidgin, English, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	English, Kolumeno, Legbo, Pidgin, English, English, Lekwuleku, Efik, Afika, Mbule, Bokyi, Etungi, Aban Likwo,

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8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	Membe, Bette, Loke, Yakurr Ejagham, Etung, Bako, Akparabong, Yada, Ikom, Nkome, Ololume, Olulu-mo- Okuni, Mbembe, Loke
<b>Delta State</b>		
1	State Population	4,098,391
2	Number of Local Government Area	25
3	Number of Languages	(5)
4	Books written in local languages	Igbo, Urhobo, Izon, Isoko, Itsekiri (5)
5	language(s) used in newspaper	
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	English, Igbo, Urhobo, Izon, Itsekiri, Pidgin, English, Isoko
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	English, Igbo, Izon(Ijaw), Urhobo, Isoko, Itsekiri
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Izon, Urhobo, Isoko
<b>Imo State</b>		
1	State Population	3,934,899
2	Number of Local Government Area	27
3	Number of Languages	1
4	Books written in local languages	Igbo
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Igbo
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	Igbo
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Igbo, English
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	Igbo, English
<b>Jigawa State</b>		
1	State Population	4,348,649
2	Number of Local Government Area	21
3	Number of Languages	9
4	Books written in local languages	Hausa, Fulfude (2)
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Hausa
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	Hausa, Fulfude, Kanuri, English, Arabic
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Hausa, English, Arabic
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	Hausa, English, Arabic
<b>Kaduna State</b>		
1	State Population	6,066,562
2	Number of Local Government Area	23
3	Number of Languages	27
4	Books written in local languages	Hausa, Koroh, Jaba, Kataf
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Hausa
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	English, Hausa, Fulfude, Kaje, Koroh, Adara, Kataf, Jaba, Bajju, Gwari, Arabic, Ikulu, Ninsom
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Hausa, Koroh
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	Hausa, English
<b>Kano State</b>		
1	State Population	9,383,682

2	Number of Local Government Area	44
3	Number of Languages	Hausa, Fulfude (2)
4	Books written in local languages	Hausa
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Hausa
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	Hausa, Fulfude, Yoruba, Igbo, Arabic
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Hausa, Fulfude, English
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	Hausa, English

**Kebbi State**

1	State Population	3,238,628
2	Number of Local Government Area	21
3	Number of Languages	28
4	Books written in local languages	Hausa, Fulfude (2)
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Hausa
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	Hausa, Fulfude, English, Zabarma, Dikarci
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	English, Hausa, Fulfude, Arabic
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Hausa, Arabic, Fulfude

**Kogi State**

1	State Population	3,278,487
2	Number of Local Government Area	21
3	Number of Languages	18
4	Books written in local languages	Ebira, Igala, Yoruba, Nupe, Oko (5)
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Igala, Yoruba
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	Bassa, Ebira, Egbira, Koto, Igbala, Hausa, Nupe, Yoruba
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Ebura, Igalla, English, Yoruba, Bassange, Oko
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Yoruba, Ebira, Igala, Oko

**Kwara State**

1	State Population	2,371,089
2	Number of Local Government Area	16
3	Number of Languages	7
4	Books written in local languages	Yoruba, Nupe, Gwari (3)
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Yoruba, Nupe
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	English, Nupe, Yoruba, Hausa, Baturu, Fulfude, Bariba, Igbo
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	English, Yoruba, Nupe, Arabic, Balonu, Gwar, Igbo, Hausa
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Yoruba, Hausa, Nupe, Arabic, Batoru, Gwari, Igbo

**Lagos State**

1	State Population	15,000,000
2	Number of Local Government Area	20
3	Number of Languages	1
4	Books written in local languages	Yoruba
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Yoruba

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6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	Egun, Igbo, Hausa
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Yoruba, English
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Yoruba
<b>Niger State</b>		
1	State Population	3,950,249
2	Number of Local Government Area	25
3	Number of Languages	39
4	Books written in local languages	Nupe, Gwan, Hausa (3)
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Hausa, Nupe
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	English, Hausa, Nupe, Gwari, Kadara, Kamaku
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Kambari, Hausa, English, Nupe, Yoruba, Borgu, Bisom, Gwari, Ingwai, Dukanci
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Hausa, Kambari, Nupe, Yoruba, Borgu, Bisom, Busa, Ingwai
<b>Ondo State</b>		
1	State Population	3,441,024
2	Number of Local Government Area	18
3	Number of Languages	2
4	Books written in local languages	Yoruba
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Yoruba
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	English, Yoruba, Izon
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	English, Yoruba, Izon
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Yoruba, Izon
<b>Osun State</b>		
1	State Population	3,423,535
2	Number of Local Government Area	30
3	Number of Languages	1
4	Books written in local languages	Yoruba
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Yoruba
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	English, Yoruba
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	English, Yoruba
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Yoruba
<b>Rivers State</b>		
1	State Population	5,185,400
2	Number of Local Government Area	23
3	Number of Languages	14
4	Books written in local languages	Eleme (Bible)
5	language(s) used in newspaper	
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	English, Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Ikwerre, Khana, Kolokuma, Kalabari, Pidgin, English, Ijaw, Ogoni, Obua, Opokoma, Etche, Kirike, Okuye
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	English, Etche, Kalabari, Pidgin, English, Degema, Gokana, Ikwerre, Mbem, Ogoni, Ogba, Okirika, Tai

8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Kalabari, Pidgin, English, Ikwerre, Mbem
<b>Sokoto State</b>		
1	State Population	3,696,999
2	Number of Local Government Area	23
3	Number of Languages	Fulfude, Arabic
4	Books written in local languages	Hausa
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Hausa
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	English, Hausa, Fulfude, Arabic
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Hausa, English, Arabic
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Arabic, Hausa, French
<b>Yobe State</b>		
1	State Population	2,321,591
2	Number of Local Government Area	17
3	Number of Languages	22
4	Books written in local languages	Hausa, Kanuri, Fulfude (3)
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Hausa, Arabic
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	English, Hausa, Kanuri, Fulfude, Bolewa, Kare-Kare
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Hausa, Kanuuri, Arabic, English, Fulfude
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	English, Hausa, Arabic, Kanuri
<b>Zamfara State</b>		
1	State Population	3,259,846
2	Number of Local Government Area	14
3	Number of Languages	Hausa, Fulfude (2)
4	Books written in local languages	Hausa
5	language(s) used in newspaper	Hausa
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	Hausa, English, Fulfude
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Hausa, English, Arabic
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	Hausa, English
<b>Federal Capital Territory (FCT)</b>		
1	State Population	1,405,201
2	Number of Local Government Area	6
3	Number of Languages	8
4	Books written in local languages	Gbagyi, Ebira
5	language(s) used in newspaper	
6	Language(s) used in broadcasting	English, Hausa, Ebira, Garagana, Igala, Yoruba, Igbo, Gwari
7	Languages of instruction in schools, Pri. 1-3	Hausa, Ebira, English, Yoruba, Garagana, Gbagayi
8	Languages of instruction in school, Pri. 4-6	Hausa, English

This report does not intend to discuss the imperative to take a cursory look at the objectives of the survey and the reflection of the raw data discovered so far in the achievement of the stated objectives.



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The data from the survey revealed that:

- a. Some of the states with bilingual or monolingual status have dialectal variations which are mutually intelligible amongst the citizenry.
- b. Correct names of every language and dialect spoken in some states of Nigeria had been obtained.
- c. Each language spoken in the local government areas, and the states of the federation had been identified, with their spread and location.
- d. A further analysis would ascertain attitudes of the various languages
- e. There are quite a number of states that are heterogeneous such as Akwa-Ibom, Cross Rivers, Borno, Kanu, Kogi, Kaduna, Niger etc. Tentatively 331 Nigerian languages have been identified in the selected states.

### **Conclusion**

Language is an important tool for the expression and communication of political, socio-cultural, economic belief system of the society. Every language is important and should be encouraged. Local language is a quicker way of getting to the masses at the grassroots.

### **Recommendation**

1. Language diversity and use should be encouraged in our country, especially the local languages.
2. Based on this work, adequate time for field work should be considered for future plans.
3. There should be enough time given for feed back, corrections, verifications and confirmation of claims by respondents.

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