

'dialect' where there are 'different names given to the same language(s) by different people'; where many of these languages exist in different states; or where most of the people wish to maintain a separate linguistic identity?"

The Official Language Politics

Rewena (2019) describes an official language as the state-designated language for use in government documents, parliamentary actions, court proceedings, and other contexts. The national and official language or languages have de jure status when they are specified in legal documents like the constitution, but they are also de facto national and/or official when their use is established via function or use but is not legally specified. The use of English in Australia is one example of both a de facto national and official language. The use of English in Australia is one example of both a de facto national and official language. English is not indigenous to Nigeria, but it is the official language of the country. According to Ajiboye (2002), it has been designated as an official or second language due to its use as a communication tool in the nation's official affairs. As Nigeria's official national language, Ogunmodimu (2015) reiterates the importance of English as it continues to play significant roles in the country as the language of education, the media, religion, politics, governance, and law. The elites speak it, and for some Nigerians, it is their first language.

The issue of official languages has often been described according to Pool (1991, 495), "as one that resists peaceful, stable, or satisfying resolution." According to him, interests clash when governments, businesses, associations, and international organizations specify which languages they require or allow to be used in official activity. While these conflicts are sometimes politically motivated, it is safe to also say that they are products of the influence of the colonization of Nigeria by Britain and the subsequent adoption of the English language as the official language of Nigeria. The general expectation of most Nigerians, especially the elitist class who make laws or policies, is that everyone should speak or understand the English language. So, instead of supporting or encouraging other languages, this influences the laws and policies they make, which have only continued to reinforce the use of English to the extent of discriminating against non-English speakers in some cases. Examples include section 4(19)(f) of the NPE (2004, 9), under the primary education, where it was

Indigenous Language Politics

According to Adetugbo (1979) cited in Ogunmodimu (2015, 154), "language is a principal source of individual identity," while indigenous languages are treasures of culture and self-identity (Akachukwu and Udeze 2021). As indigenous language is a language that is native to a region and spoken mainly by those in that region, Nigeria as a multilingual and multicultural entity involves the use of indigenous languages like Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Efik, Isoko, Ishan, and so on (Akindele et al. 2022).

Because an indigenous language can also be construed to mean a language spoken or belonging to or connected with a particular place or area which one is talking about or with the place where one lives (Adedeji 2015), the National Policy on Education (2004) in Nigeria states that every child should be taught in the language of his or her immediate environment during the first three years of elementary education. We find this to be a politically motivated statement, and we assume that the drafters of the policy are not unaware of its impossibility in a country where the present language ethnography records over 521 languages and ethnic groups (Ogunmodimu 2015). Since its political independence in 1960, Nigeria has adopted several language policies to safeguard its indigenous languages. But the politics behind these policies is the proclamation of Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo as national languages, elevating their status to the detriment of over 500 other languages. Below is a text as written in section 10(a) of the National Policy on Education (2004):

Government appreciates the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesion; and preserving cultures. Thus, every child shall learn the language of the immediate environment. Furthermore, in the interest of national unity, it is expedient that every child shall be required to learn one of the three Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. (NPE 2004, 4)

Some may want to argue that the government has reversed or corrected itself in its NPE (2013, 2) where it states that: "Every child shall be taught in the mother-tongue or language of the immediate community for the first four years of basic education. In addition, it is expected that every child shall learn one Nigerian language."

But, how is the above possible in a situation where it is alleged by the NLP (2022, 3) that we have "the problem of differentiating between 'language' and