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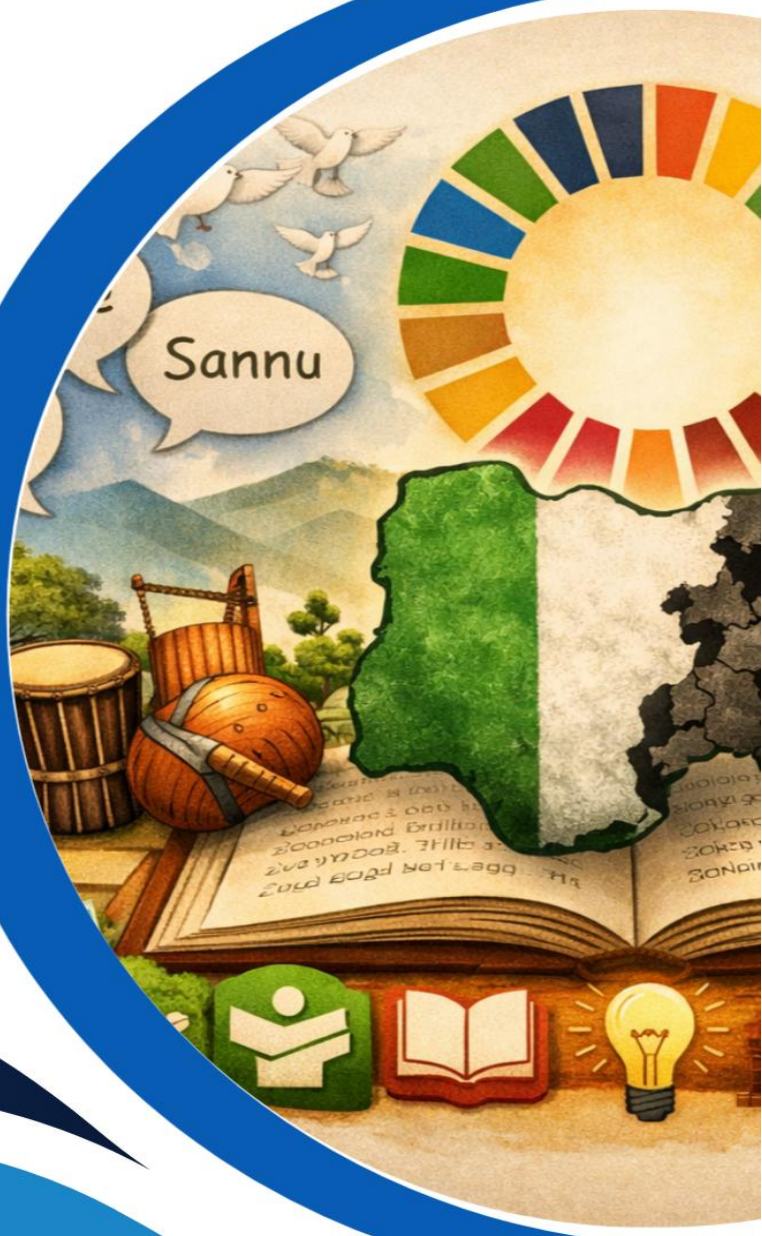
LIN205

NIGERIAN LANGUAGES AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ THE SDGS



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Course code: LIN 205
Course title: Nigerian Languages and National Development/ the SDGs

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Nigerian Languages and National Development

Series 2: Language Policy, Education, and Governance

Series 3: Language in Security, Integration, and Social Inclusion

Series 4: Globalization, Technology, and the Future of Nigerian Languages

Series 5: Sustainable Development Goals and Linguistic Dimensions of Trade and Development

Proposed Outline for Series 1

Part .1 Conceptual Foundations of Language and Development

- 1.1.1 Meaning of language in the Nigerian context
- 1.1.2 Defining development and national development
- 1.1.3 Dimensions of the relationship between language and development

Part .2 Nigerian Languages in the Context of Development

- 1.2.1 Historical overview of Nigerian languages and development
- 1.2.2 Role of indigenous languages in socio-economic growth
- 1.2.3 Challenges of multilingualism in national development

Part .3 Critical Linguistic Challenges in Nigeria's Development

- 1.3.1 Language and corruption
- 1.3.2 Language and social exclusion
- 1.3.3 Language endangerment and death

Part .4 Language and Development Frameworks

- 1.4.1 Nigerian languages and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- 1.4.2 Language in economic and trade policies
- 1.4.3 Language in healthcare, safety, and inclusion

Introduction

Language is more than a tool for communication, it is a vital instrument for shaping identity, fostering unity, and driving development. In Nigeria, where hundreds of languages coexist, the

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role of language in national development cannot be overstated. From education and governance to social inclusion and economic growth, the way languages are used and valued has a direct impact on the nation's progress. This Series invites you to reflect on how Nigerian languages contribute to development and how they also face challenges in the process.

The aim of this Series is to equip you with the ability to analyse the relationship between Nigerian languages and national development, to evaluate the challenges posed by multilingualism, and to examine how language can be harnessed within development frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

We shall commence this Series by exploring the conceptual foundations of language and development, clarifying what these terms mean and how they intersect. Next, we will examine Nigerian languages in the context of development, considering their historical role and the opportunities and challenges of multilingualism. Following that, we will analyse critical linguistic challenges such as corruption, exclusion, and language endangerment. Finally, we will wrap up by studying how Nigerian languages interact with development frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals, trade policies, and social inclusion strategies. This progression will provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the place of language in Nigeria's national development journey.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 1.1** define the concepts of language and national development, and explain their interrelationship,
- **SLO 1.2** analyse the role of Nigerian languages in historical and contemporary development contexts,
- **SLO 1.3** evaluate the challenges posed by multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Nigeria's national development,
- **SLO 1.4** examine critical linguistic challenges such as corruption, exclusion, and language endangerment,
- **SLO 1.5** assess the contribution of Nigerian languages to development frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals and trade policies.

1.1 Conceptual Foundations of Language and Development

1.1.1 Meaning of language in the Nigerian context

Language is a structured system of communication that uses sounds, symbols, or written forms to convey meaning. In Nigeria, language is not only a means of everyday communication but also a marker of identity, culture, and belonging. With over 500 languages spoken across the country, each language reflects the history, traditions, and worldview of its speakers. Nigerian languages therefore serve as vehicles for transmitting knowledge, values, and social norms.

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Language is also a tool of power. The choice of which language is used in governance, education, or trade can determine who is included or excluded from opportunities. For example, when English is used as the sole medium in official settings, speakers of indigenous languages may feel marginalised.

Fill in the blank: Nigeria is home to over _____ languages, each contributing to its cultural diversity.

Figure 1.1 Map of Nigeria highlighting major language groups

1.1.2 Defining development and national development

Development refers to the process of improving the quality of life of individuals and communities through economic growth, social progress, and political stability. It encompasses access to education, healthcare, infrastructure, and opportunities for participation in society.

National development is the collective advancement of a country in terms of economic strength, social cohesion, political stability, and cultural vitality. It is measured not only by gross domestic product but also by indicators such as literacy rates, healthcare access, and social inclusion.

In Nigeria, national development is closely tied to how effectively languages are used to mobilise citizens, disseminate information, and foster unity. A nation that neglects its linguistic diversity risks weakening its social fabric.

Fill in the blank: National development is not only about economic growth but also about _____ and _____.

Dimension	Indicator	What it Measures
Education	**Literacy Rate**	The percentage of the population aged 15+ who can read and write.

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Dimension	Indicator	What it Measures
Health	**Life Expectancy**	The average number of years a newborn is expected to live, reflecting healthcare quality.
Economy	**GDP per Capita**	The total economic output divided by the population; a proxy for average income.
Infrastructure	**Access to Electricity**	The reliability and reach of the national power grid to households and industry.
Social Inclusion	**Gender Parity Index**	The balance of access to education and jobs between men and women.
Environment	**Carbon Intensity**	How much CO2 is emitted per unit of GDP, measuring sustainable growth.

Box 1.1 Key indicators of national development

1.1.3 Dimensions of the relationship between language and development

The relationship between language and development can be seen in several dimensions:

- **Educational dimension**: Language determines access to learning. When children are taught in their mother tongue, they grasp concepts more effectively.
- **Economic dimension**: Language facilitates trade and business. Shared languages reduce transaction costs and improve communication in markets.
- **Political dimension**: Language shapes participation in governance. Citizens who understand the language of government policies are more likely to engage actively.
- **Social dimension**: Language fosters inclusion and unity. It can also be a source of division if certain languages are privileged over others.

In Nigeria, these dimensions intersect in complex ways. For instance, while English provides a common platform for national communication, indigenous languages remain crucial for grassroots mobilisation and cultural preservation.

Fill in the blank: The _____ dimension of language relates to how citizens participate in governance and decision-making.

Dimension	Role in Development	Impact on Progress
Educational	Medium of instruction and literacy.	Facilitates cognitive development and improves learning outcomes when Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) is used.

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Dimension	Role in Development	Impact on Progress
Economic	Access to markets and employment.	Enables trade, labor mobility, and participation in the global economy; language skills directly correlate with earning potential.
Political	Policy making and civic participation.	Ensures inclusivity in governance; using national or local languages in legal and state affairs allows citizens to understand their rights.
Social	Cultural identity and social cohesion.	Preserves indigenous knowledge and promotes peace by fostering mutual understanding among diverse ethnic groups.

Table 1.1 Dimensions of language and development

Pilot questions 1.1

1. Define language and explain its significance in the Nigerian context.
2. What is national development, and how does it differ from general development?
3. Identify two indicators of national development.
4. List and briefly describe the four dimensions of the relationship between language and development.
5. Which language is often used as Nigeria's official medium of communication, and what challenges does this pose?

1.2 Nigerian Languages in the Context of Development

1.2.1 Historical overview of Nigerian languages and development

Nigeria's linguistic landscape is deeply rooted in its history. **Indigenous languages** are those spoken by ethnic groups native to the country, and they have long served as the medium for transmitting culture, oral traditions, and community values. Before colonial rule, these languages were central to governance, trade, and social organisation.

With the advent of colonialism, English was introduced as the language of administration and education. This created a dual system where indigenous languages continued to thrive locally, while English became dominant in official and national spaces. The legacy of this shift still shapes Nigeria's development today, as English is often seen as a gateway to modernisation, while indigenous languages remain vital for cultural preservation and grassroots communication.

Fill in the blank: The introduction of _____ during colonial rule created a dual system of language use in Nigeria.

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Figure 1.2 Historical trajectory of language use in Nigeria

1.2.2 Role of indigenous languages in socio-economic growth

Indigenous languages play a crucial role in **socio-economic growth**, which refers to the combined advancement of society and economy. They enable effective communication in local markets, facilitate agricultural extension services, and support community-based development projects. For example, when farmers receive training in their mother tongue, they are more likely to adopt new practices successfully.

Moreover, indigenous languages strengthen social cohesion by fostering trust and inclusivity. They also contribute to creative industries such as music, film, and literature, which are significant drivers of Nigeria's economy.

Fill in the blank: Training delivered in a farmer's _____ tongue increases the likelihood of adopting new practices.

Plate 1.1 Community development training in indigenous language

1.2.3 Challenges of multilingualism in national development

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Multilingualism is the coexistence of multiple languages within a society. While it enriches Nigeria's cultural diversity, it also presents challenges for national development. One challenge is the difficulty of creating inclusive policies that accommodate all language groups. Another is the cost of translating official documents and educational materials into multiple languages.

Multilingualism can also lead to social fragmentation if certain languages are privileged over others. For instance, when English dominates official communication, speakers of minority languages may feel excluded from national discourse. Balancing unity and diversity therefore remains a critical issue in Nigeria's development.

Fill in the blank: The coexistence of multiple languages within a society is known as _____.

Advantages	Challenges
Cultural Richness: Preserves the unique heritage, oral traditions, and indigenous knowledge of hundreds of ethnic groups.	**National Integration:** Difficulty in fostering a single national identity when linguistic loyalties often trump national ones.
Cognitive Benefits: Research shows that multilingual individuals often exhibit better problem-solving skills and mental flexibility.	**Language Endangerment:** Dominant languages (English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo) often overshadow smaller "minority" languages, leading to their gradual extinction.
Economic Opportunities: Facilitates cross-border trade with neighboring Francophone and Anglophone countries through local and official languages.	**Education Barriers:** High costs associated with developing curriculum materials and training teachers for Mother Tongue-Based education.
Social Inclusivity: Allows for localized governance and grassroots communication, ensuring rural populations aren't left behind.	**Communication Gaps:** High reliance on Nigerian Pidgin or English as a *lingua franca* can still leave those without formal education marginalized.

Table 1.2 Advantages and challenges of multilingualism in Nigeria

Pilot questions 1.2

1. What role did indigenous languages play in Nigeria before colonial rule?
2. How did the introduction of English during colonialism affect language use in Nigeria?
3. Explain how indigenous languages contribute to socio-economic growth.
4. Define multilingualism and identify one challenge it poses for national development.
5. Why might speakers of minority languages feel excluded in Nigeria's national discourse?

1.3 Critical Linguistic Challenges in Nigeria's Development

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1.3.1 Language and corruption

Corruption refers to dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, often involving bribery or misuse of resources. Language plays a subtle but significant role in perpetuating corruption. For instance, ambiguous wording in policies or contracts can be exploited to conceal malpractice. Similarly, when official documents are not translated into indigenous languages, citizens may struggle to hold leaders accountable.

In Nigeria, corruption thrives partly because communication is not always transparent. Clear, accessible language is essential for accountability and trust.

Fill in the blank: Ambiguous wording in official _____ can be exploited to conceal malpractice.

Linguistic Mechanism	Impact on Accountability	Example in Practice
Legal/Bureaucratic Jargon	Obscures the true meaning of terms in public contracts or laws.	Using "legalese" in procurement documents to hide kickback clauses from public oversight.
Monolingual Policies	Excludes the majority who only speak indigenous languages from civic processes.	Publishing budget allocations or land rights policies only in English, preventing rural communities from verifying fund usage.
Deliberate Ambiguity	Allows for multiple interpretations of a single rule or regulation.	Writing tax codes or fines with vague wording so officials can solicit bribes for "lenient interpretations."
Non-Translation	Limits access to whistleblowing or reporting mechanisms.	Anti-corruption hotlines or forms available only in English, discouraging reports from non-English speakers in local markets.
Elite Codeswitching	Creates "closed circles" of communication during negotiations.	High-level officials switching to a specific dialect or language to exclude others in the room from sensitive (often illicit) discussions.

Box 1.3 Examples of language-related corruption practices

1.3.2 Language and social exclusion

Social exclusion occurs when individuals or groups are denied access to resources, rights, and opportunities. Language can be a major factor in exclusion. For example, when education is

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delivered only in English, children from rural communities who speak indigenous languages may struggle to succeed. Similarly, minority language speakers may be excluded from political participation if they cannot understand official communication.

Language inclusion is therefore critical for equitable development. Policies that promote multilingual education and translation of government information can reduce exclusion.

Fill in the blank: When education is delivered only in _____, rural children may struggle to succeed.

Plate 1.2 Classroom setting with indigenous language instruction

1.3.3 Language endangerment and death

Language endangerment occurs when a language is at risk of falling out of use, while **language death** refers to the complete disappearance of a language. In Nigeria, many minority languages face endangerment due to urbanisation, migration, and the dominance of English and major regional languages such as Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo.

When a language dies, cultural heritage, oral traditions, and unique knowledge systems are lost. This weakens national development by eroding diversity and reducing the richness of Nigeria's intellectual resources. Efforts such as documentation, revitalisation programmes, and community-based education are essential to prevent language death.

Fill in the blank: The complete disappearance of a language is known as language _____.

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Figure 1.3 Stages of language endangerment and death

Pilot questions 1.3

1. Explain how ambiguous language use can contribute to corruption.
2. What is social exclusion, and how does language contribute to it in Nigeria?
3. Define language endangerment and language death.
4. Identify one major cause of language endangerment in Nigeria.
5. Why is the loss of a language considered a threat to national development

1.4 Language and Development Frameworks

1.4.1 Nigerian languages and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are a set of 17 global objectives adopted by the United Nations to promote peace, prosperity, and sustainability. Language is central to achieving these goals because it determines how information is communicated, understood, and acted upon. In Nigeria, indigenous languages can make the SDGs more accessible to citizens by ensuring that policies and initiatives are explained in familiar terms.

For example, campaigns on health, education, and gender equality are more effective when delivered in local languages. This builds trust and encourages participation, thereby advancing national development.

Fill in the blank: The SDGs are a set of _____ global objectives adopted by the United Nations.

Figure 1.4 Role of language in achieving the SDGs

1.4.2 Language in economic and trade policies

Economic policies are strategies adopted by governments to manage national resources, while **trade policies** regulate the exchange of goods and services across borders. Language plays a vital role in both areas. Clear communication of policies ensures that citizens, businesses, and international partners understand regulations and opportunities.

In Nigeria, the dominance of English in trade policies facilitates international commerce but may limit participation of local entrepreneurs who are more comfortable in indigenous languages. Translating trade information into local languages can expand economic inclusion and empower small-scale businesses.

Fill in the blank: Translating trade information into local _____ can expand economic inclusion.

Trade Level	Primary Language(s)	Role and Impact on Development
International Trade	**English**	**Global Standardization:** Facilitates legal contracts, international shipping manifests, and digital banking. It connects Nigeria to the Commonwealth and global investors.
Local / Informal Trade	**Indigenous Languages** (Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, etc.)	**Trust and Social Capital:** Essential for negotiations in traditional markets (*Oja/Kasuwa*). It allows for credit-based

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Trade Level	Primary Language(s)	Role and Impact on Development
		systems (like the Igbo Apprenticeship System) that rely on cultural nuance.
Regional Trade (West Africa)	**Nigerian Pidgin / French / Local Dialects**	**Cross-Border Fluidity:** Enables small-scale traders to move goods across borders (e.g., Seme or Maigatari) where formal English may not be the shared tongue.

Table 1.3 Language use in economic and trade policies

1.4.3 Language in healthcare, safety, and inclusion

Healthcare communication is most effective when patients understand instructions in their own language. Miscommunication can lead to poor health outcomes. Similarly, **safety information** such as emergency alerts must be delivered in languages that reach diverse communities.

Language also promotes **social inclusion**, which means ensuring that all groups have equal access to opportunities and services. In Nigeria, using indigenous languages in healthcare campaigns, safety warnings, and community programmes strengthens trust and participation.

Fill in the blank: Healthcare communication is most effective when patients understand instructions in their own _____.

Plate 1.3 Healthcare communication in indigenous language

Pilot questions 1.4

1. What are the Sustainable Development Goals, and why is language important in achieving them?

2. How does the use of English in trade policies benefit Nigeria, and what limitation does it create?
3. Explain how indigenous languages can promote economic inclusion.
4. Why is language critical in healthcare communication?
5. Give one example of how language supports safety and inclusion in Nigeria.

Series Summary

This Series has highlighted the importance of Nigerian languages in shaping national development, showing how they influence education, governance, social inclusion, and economic growth. Beginning with the conceptual foundations, we examined the meaning of language and national development and explored their interrelationship. We then moved on to consider Nigerian languages in the context of development, tracing their historical role, their contribution to socio-economic growth, and the challenges posed by multilingualism. Following that, we analysed critical linguistic challenges such as corruption, exclusion, and language endangerment. Finally, we studied how Nigerian languages interact with development frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals, trade policies, and healthcare communication.

By engaging with these discussions, you should now be able to define key concepts of language and development, analyse the role of Nigerian languages in historical and contemporary contexts, evaluate the challenges of multilingualism, examine issues such as corruption and language endangerment, and assess the contribution of Nigerian languages to development frameworks. These abilities directly align with the Series Learning Outcomes and provide you with a strong foundation for understanding the linguistic dimensions of Nigeria's national development.

Glossary of Terms

- **Corruption**: Dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, often involving bribery or misuse of resources.
- **Development**: The process of improving the quality of life of individuals and communities through economic growth, social progress, and political stability.
- **Economic policies**: Strategies adopted by governments to manage national resources and guide economic activities.
- **Indigenous languages**: Languages spoken by ethnic groups native to Nigeria, often used for cultural transmission, local communication, and community identity.
- **Language death**: The complete disappearance of a language when it is no longer spoken by any community.
- **Language endangerment**: A situation where a language is at risk of falling out of use, often due to social, economic, or political pressures.
- **Language inclusion**: Ensuring that all language groups have equal access to opportunities, services, and participation in society.
- **Language policy**: Official decisions and regulations about which languages are used in governance, education, and public life.

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- **Multilingualism**: The coexistence of multiple languages within a society, which can enrich cultural diversity but also pose challenges for national unity.
- **National development**: The collective advancement of a country in terms of economic strength, social cohesion, political stability, and cultural vitality.
- **SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)**: A set of 17 global objectives adopted by the United Nations to promote peace, prosperity, and sustainability.
- **Social exclusion**: The denial of access to resources, rights, and opportunities to certain individuals or groups, often due to language barriers.
- **Socio-economic growth**: The combined advancement of society and economy, often measured by improvements in education, healthcare, and income levels.
- **Trade policies**: Regulations that govern the exchange of goods and services across borders, shaping both local and international commerce.

Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

Objective questions

1. Which of the following best defines national development? a) Increase in gross domestic product only b) Collective advancement in economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions c) Expansion of international trade alone d) Growth of urban centres (Linked to SLO 2.1)
2. Nigeria is home to over _____ languages. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
3. The complete disappearance of a language is referred to as: a) Language decline b) Language death c) Language endangerment d) Language extinction (Linked to SLO 2.4)
4. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consist of how many global objectives? a) 10 b) 12 c) 15 d) 17 (Linked to SLO 2.5)
5. Multilingualism refers to: a) The dominance of one language in society b) The coexistence of multiple languages within a society c) The replacement of indigenous languages by English d) The disappearance of minority languages (Linked to SLO 2.3)

Short-answer questions

6. Define language endangerment and explain one cause of it in Nigeria. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
7. Identify two ways indigenous languages contribute to socio-economic growth in Nigeria. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
8. Explain how ambiguous language use can contribute to corruption. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
9. State one advantage and one challenge of multilingualism in Nigeria. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
10. Why is language critical in healthcare communication? (Linked to SLO 2.5)

Long-answer questions

11. Analyse the historical role of indigenous languages in Nigeria before and after colonial rule, and evaluate their relevance to national development today. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
12. Assess the impact of language exclusion on education and governance in Nigeria, and propose strategies for promoting inclusion. (Linked to SLO 2.3, SLO 2.4)

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13. Evaluate the contribution of Nigerian languages to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, with examples from health, education, and trade. (Linked to SLO 2.5)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

Objective questions

1. b) Collective advancement in economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions
2. Over 500 languages
3. b) Language death
4. d) 17
5. b) The coexistence of multiple languages within a society

Short-answer questions

6. Language endangerment is when a language is at risk of falling out of use. One cause in Nigeria is urbanisation, which leads communities to adopt dominant languages.
7. Indigenous languages support local markets by enabling communication and strengthen creative industries such as music and film.
8. Ambiguous language in policies or contracts can conceal malpractice, making corruption harder to detect.
9. Advantage: Cultural diversity. Challenge: Difficulty in creating inclusive policies.
10. Language ensures patients understand instructions clearly, reducing miscommunication and improving health outcomes.

Long-answer questions

11. **Basic response**: Before colonial rule, indigenous languages were central to governance, trade, and cultural transmission. After colonialism, English became dominant in administration and education, marginalising indigenous languages. Today, they remain relevant for grassroots mobilisation and cultural preservation. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may highlight how indigenous languages can be revitalised through multilingual education, media representation, and policy support, thereby strengthening national identity and development.
12. **Basic response**: Language exclusion in education and governance marginalises rural and minority communities, limiting participation and success. Strategies include multilingual education and translation of government information. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may propose innovative approaches such as digital platforms in indigenous languages, community radio, and inclusive policy frameworks to ensure broader participation.
13. **Basic response**: Nigerian languages contribute to the SDGs by making health campaigns, education initiatives, and trade policies more accessible to citizens. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may provide examples such as mother-tongue literacy programmes advancing SDG 4 (quality education), indigenous language health campaigns supporting SDG 3 (good health), and local trade communication enhancing SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth).

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 1]

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Part 1.1 Conceptual Foundations of Language and Development

- Language is a structured system of communication that conveys meaning and identity in Nigeria.
- National development is the collective advancement of a country in economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions.
- Indicators of national development include literacy rates, healthcare access, infrastructure, and social inclusion.
- The four dimensions are educational, economic, political, and social.
- English is Nigeria's official medium of communication, which can marginalise indigenous language speakers.

Part 1.2 Nigerian Languages in the Context of Development

- Indigenous languages were central to governance, trade, and cultural transmission before colonial rule.
- The introduction of English created a dual system where English dominated official spaces and indigenous languages remained local.
- Indigenous languages contribute to socio-economic growth by supporting local markets, agriculture, and creative industries.
- Multilingualism is the coexistence of multiple languages within a society, which can challenge unity and policy inclusivity.
- Minority language speakers may feel excluded when English dominates national discourse.

Part 1.3 Critical Linguistic Challenges in Nigeria's Development

- Ambiguous language use can conceal malpractice, enabling corruption.
- Social exclusion occurs when individuals are denied access to opportunities, often due to language barriers.
- Language endangerment is when a language is at risk of falling out of use, while language death is its complete disappearance.
- Major causes of language endangerment in Nigeria include urbanisation, migration, and dominance of major languages.
- The loss of a language threatens national development by eroding cultural heritage and diversity.

Part 1.4 Language and Development Frameworks

- The Sustainable Development Goals are 17 global objectives adopted by the United Nations. Language makes them accessible to citizens.
- English in trade policies benefits international commerce but limits participation of local entrepreneurs.
- Translating trade information into indigenous languages promotes economic inclusion.
- Language is critical in healthcare communication because patients understand instructions better in their mother tongue.

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- Safety and inclusion are supported when emergency alerts and community programmes are delivered in indigenous languages.

References and Attributions [Series 1]

General References

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Illustrations and Suggested OER Sources

- **Figure 1.1 Map of Nigeria highlighting major language groups** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Map of Nigerian languages OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a labelled map of Nigeria showing major language families and regions where they are spoken."
- **Box 1.1 Key indicators of national development** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "National development indicators OER". AI prompt used: "Create a simple table listing indicators of national development such as literacy, healthcare, infrastructure, and social inclusion."
- **Table 1.1 Dimensions of language and development** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Language and development dimensions OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a table with four columns showing educational, economic, political, and social dimensions of language in development."
- **Figure 1.2 Historical trajectory of language use in Nigeria** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "History of language in Nigeria OER timeline". AI prompt used: "Create a timeline diagram showing indigenous language use before colonialism and English dominance after colonialism."
- **Plate 1.1 Community development training in indigenous language** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Community training indigenous language Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate an image of a rural Nigerian workshop where participants are learning in their native language."
- **Table 1.2 Advantages and challenges of multilingualism in Nigeria** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Multilingualism in Nigeria advantages and challenges OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a table with two columns listing advantages and challenges of multilingualism in Nigeria."

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- **Box 1.3 Examples of language-related corruption practices** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Language and corruption Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a table listing examples of how language use can enable corruption, such as ambiguous contracts or untranslated policies.”
- **Plate 1.2 Classroom setting with indigenous language instruction** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Mother tongue education Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Generate an image of Nigerian rural children learning in their native language classroom.”
- **Figure 1.3 Stages of language endangerment and death** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Language endangerment stages OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a flowchart showing stages of language endangerment from decline in use to extinction.”
- **Figure 1.4 Role of language in achieving the SDGs** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “SDG icons OER United Nations”. AI prompt used: “Generate a diagram of the 17 SDG icons with a highlight on language accessibility in Nigeria.”
- **Table 1.3 Language use in economic and trade policies** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Language and trade policy Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a table showing how English supports international trade and how indigenous languages support local trade.”
- **Plate 1.3 Healthcare communication in indigenous language** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Healthcare communication indigenous language Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Generate an image of a Nigerian healthcare worker explaining treatment to a patient in their native language.”

Course code: LIN 205
Course title: Nigerian Languages and National Development/ the SDGs

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Nigerian Languages and National Development

Series 2: Language Policy, Education, and Governance

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Series 4: Globalization, Technology, and the Future of Nigerian Languages

Series 5: Sustainable Development Goals and Linguistic Dimensions of Trade and Development

Proposed Outline for Series 2

Part .1 Foundations of Language Policy

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- 2.1.1 Definition and scope of language policy
- 2.1.2 Historical evolution of language policy in Nigeria
- 2.1.3 Objectives and principles of language policy

Part .2 Language Policy in Education

- 2.2.1 Medium of instruction and mother-tongue education
- 2.2.2 Language policy and literacy development
- 2.2.3 Challenges of implementing multilingual education

Part .3 Language Policy in Governance

- 2.3.1 Language use in administration and lawmaking
- 2.3.2 Language and citizen participation in governance
- 2.3.3 Language barriers in public service delivery

Part .4 Contemporary Issues in Language Policy

- 2.4.1 Globalisation and its impact on language policy
- 2.4.2 ICTs and language use in governance and education
- 2.4.3 Policy gaps and recommendations for improvement

Introduction

In the last Series, we explored how Nigerian languages contribute to national development, highlighting their role in education, governance, social inclusion, and economic growth. Building on that foundation, this Series turns to the question of **language policy**, which determines how languages are managed and used in key areas of national life. Language policy is particularly important in Nigeria, where multilingualism presents both opportunities and challenges for education and governance. Understanding how policies are formulated and implemented will help us appreciate their impact on development and citizen participation.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the principles and practices of language policy in Nigeria, and to equip you with the ability to analyse its role in education and governance, as well as evaluate contemporary issues that influence policy decisions.

We shall commence this Series by examining the foundations of language policy, including its definition, scope, and historical evolution in Nigeria. Next, we will focus on language policy in education, considering the medium of instruction, literacy development, and the challenges of multilingual education. Following that, we will move on to language policy in governance, exploring how language is used in administration, lawmaking, and citizen participation. Finally, we will wrap up by addressing contemporary issues such as globalisation, ICTs, and policy gaps, while also discussing recommendations for improvement. This progression will provide you with

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a comprehensive understanding of how language policy shapes education and governance in Nigeria.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 2.1** define language policy and explain its scope and historical evolution in Nigeria,
- **SLO 2.2** analyse the objectives and principles that guide language policy,
- **SLO 2.3** evaluate the role of language policy in determining the medium of instruction and promoting mother-tongue education,
- **SLO 2.4** assess the impact of language policy on literacy development and multilingual education,
- **SLO 2.5** examine how language policy shapes administration, lawmaking, and citizen participation in governance,
- **SLO 2.6** identify language barriers in public service delivery and propose strategies for overcoming them, and
- **SLO 2.7** appraise contemporary issues such as globalisation, ICTs, and policy gaps, and recommend improvements for language policy in Nigeria.

2.1 Foundations of Language Policy

2.1.1 Definition and scope of language policy

Language policy refers to the official decisions, principles, and practices that determine how languages are used, promoted, or restricted within a society. It covers areas such as education, governance, media, and public life. In Nigeria, language policy is particularly significant because of the country's multilingual nature, with over 500 languages spoken.

The scope of language policy includes the choice of official languages, the medium of instruction in schools, the languages used in governance, and the preservation of minority languages. It also extends to how languages are managed in relation to national identity, unity, and development.

Fill in the blank: Language policy refers to official _____ that determine how languages are used in society.

Policy Area	Key Provisions & Status	Objective
Education	**English is the sole medium of instruction** from pre-primary to tertiary levels (as of 2025).	To standardize learning assessments (WAEC/JAMB) and improve global competitiveness.

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Policy Area	Key Provisions & Status	Objective
	Indigenous languages are taught only as school subjects.	
Governance	The **Constitution (Section 55)** states that the business of the National Assembly is conducted in English, plus Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba (when arrangements permit).	To ensure national integration while maintaining an efficient "lingua franca" for administration.
Media	The **NBC Code** mandates local content quotas. Broadcast stations must provide news and programming in indigenous languages.	To promote cultural heritage and ensure information reaches non-English speaking populations.
Minority Languages	All 500+ languages are theoretically "equal," but focus is on developing orthographies for smaller groups to prevent language death.	To preserve linguistic diversity and protect the rights of minority ethnic groups.
Legal/Judiciary	English is the primary language of the High Courts, but Customary and Sharia courts often operate in indigenous languages.	To ensure that traditional and local justice systems remain accessible to the community.

Box 2.1 Key areas covered by language policy

2.1.2 Historical evolution of language policy in Nigeria

Nigeria's language policy has evolved through different historical phases. During the colonial era, English was introduced as the language of administration and education, creating a hierarchy where indigenous languages were relegated to informal use. After independence, efforts were made to recognise major indigenous languages such as Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, alongside English.

Subsequent policies attempted to balance national unity with linguistic diversity. For example, the National Policy on Education emphasises the use of the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community in early education, while English remains the official language for administration and higher education.

Fill in the blank: The National Policy on Education emphasises the use of the _____ tongue in early schooling.

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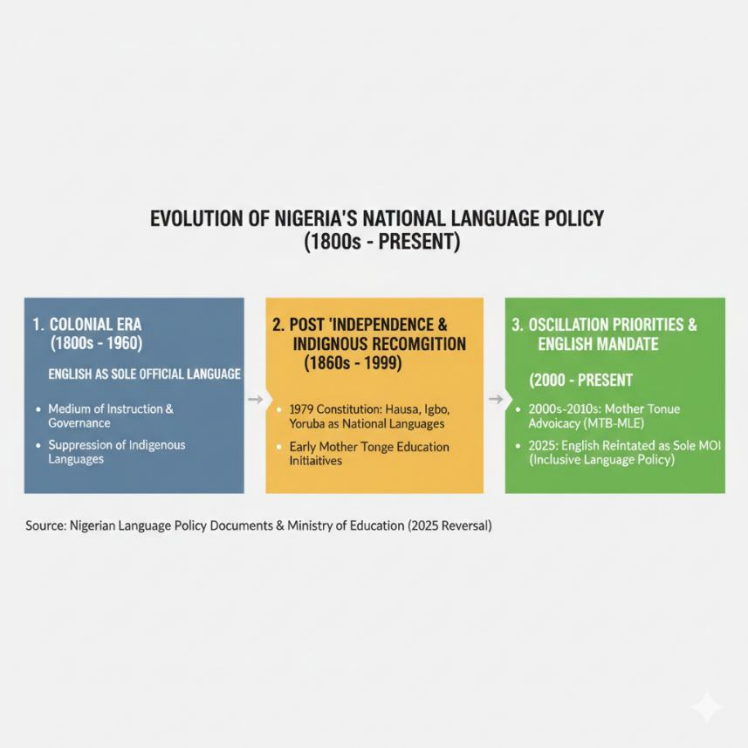

Figure 2.1 Historical evolution of language policy in Nigeria

2.1.3 Objectives and principles of language policy

The objectives of language policy in Nigeria include promoting national unity, ensuring effective communication, supporting education, and preserving cultural heritage. Policies aim to strike a balance between the practical need for a common language and the cultural importance of indigenous languages.

The principles guiding language policy often include inclusivity, equity, and functionality. Inclusivity ensures that minority languages are not ignored, equity promotes fairness in language use, and functionality ensures that chosen languages serve practical purposes in governance and education.

Fill in the blank: One principle of language policy is _____, which ensures minority languages are not ignored.

Policy Objectives	Guiding Principles
National Unity: Fostering a sense of belonging among 250+ ethnic groups by promoting major languages as symbols of national identity.	**Inclusivity:** Ensuring that no ethnic group is marginalized and that minority languages have a recognized place in the national fabric.

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Policy Objectives	Guiding Principles
Effective Communication: Establishing English and Nigerian Pidgin as functional tools for governance, trade, and cross-regional interaction.	**Functionality:** Prioritizing languages that offer the greatest utility for economic advancement and administrative efficiency (e.g., the 2025 English mandate).
Educational Excellence: Utilizing language as a tool to improve literacy rates and ensure students can compete in the global knowledge economy.	**Equity:** Providing equal access to government services and justice, regardless of the citizen's primary language or level of formal education.
Heritage Preservation: Protecting indigenous languages from extinction through documentation, media quotas, and cultural festivals.	**Sustainability:** Developing policies that can be realistically implemented with available resources, such as teacher training and textbook production.

Table 2.1 Objectives and principles of language policy in Nigeria

Pilot questions 2.1

1. Define language policy and explain its scope.
2. Describe how Nigeria's language policy evolved from the colonial era to independence.
3. What does the National Policy on Education recommend for early schooling?
4. List two objectives of language policy in Nigeria.
5. Identify one principle of language policy and explain its importance.

2.2 Language Policy in Education

2.2.1 Medium of instruction and mother-tongue education

The **medium of instruction** refers to the language used to teach learners in schools. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education recommends that the **mother tongue**, or the language of the immediate community, should be used in the early years of schooling. This approach helps children grasp concepts more easily, as they learn in a language they already understand.

However, English is introduced as the medium of instruction from upper primary school onwards, reflecting its role as Nigeria's official language. While this transition supports national and international communication, it can also create challenges for learners who are not yet proficient in English.

Fill in the blank: The National Policy on Education recommends the use of the _____ tongue in early schooling.

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Plate 2.1 Early education in mother tongue

2.2.2 Language policy and literacy development

Literacy development refers to the process of acquiring reading and writing skills. Research shows that children learn to read and write more effectively when they begin in their mother tongue. This is because they can connect spoken language with written symbols more naturally.

In Nigeria, language policy aims to promote literacy by encouraging mother-tongue instruction at the foundational level. However, the dominance of English often overshadows indigenous languages, leading to uneven literacy outcomes across regions.

Fill in the blank: Children learn to read and write more effectively when they begin in their _____ tongue.

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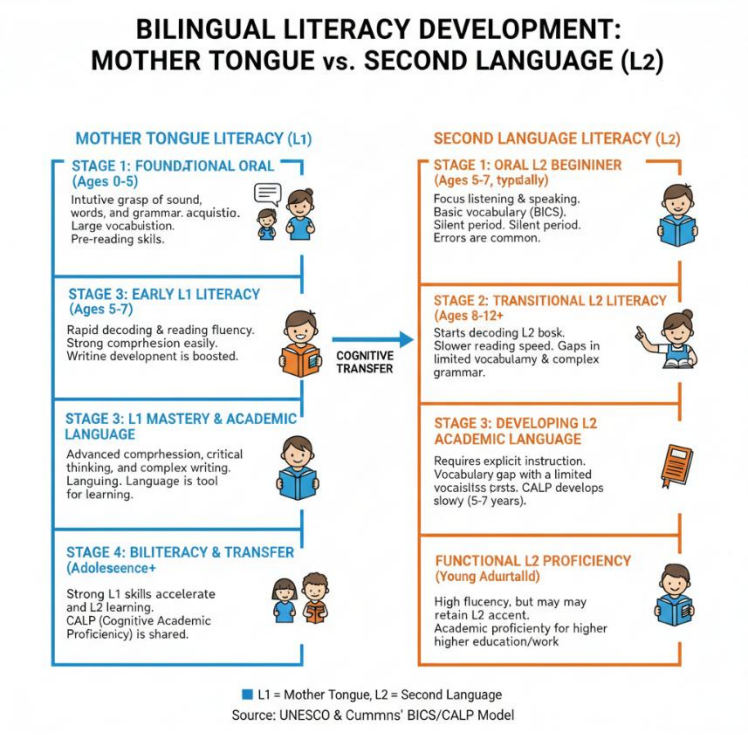

Figure 2.2 Literacy development in mother tongue and second language

2.2.3 Challenges of implementing multilingual education

Multilingual education is the use of more than one language in teaching and learning. While it reflects Nigeria's linguistic diversity, it faces several challenges. These include inadequate teaching materials in indigenous languages, shortage of trained teachers, and resistance from parents who prefer English for its perceived economic advantages.

Another challenge is policy inconsistency, where recommendations for mother-tongue education are not fully implemented. This results in a gap between policy and practice, limiting the effectiveness of multilingual education.

Fill in the blank: One challenge of multilingual education in Nigeria is the shortage of trained _____.

Challenge Category	Specific Obstacles	Impact on Development
Material/Logistical	**Lack of Standardized Orthographies:** Many of Nigeria's 500+ languages lack a written system, making it impossible to produce textbooks.	Stalls literacy development in minority groups and prevents the preservation of indigenous knowledge.

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Challenge Category	Specific Obstacles	Impact on Development
Human Capital	**Specialist Teacher Shortage:** There is a critical lack of teachers trained in multilingual pedagogy or fluent in the specific local "language of the environment."	Leads to "code-switching" in classrooms where neither English nor the mother tongue is taught effectively.
Policy/Institutional	**Policy Inconsistency:** The 2025 reversal—reinstating English as the sole medium of instruction—highlights the struggle to find a stable long-term strategy.	Creates confusion for curriculum developers and discourages long-term investment in indigenous language materials.
Socio-Economic	**Parental Preference for English:** English is seen as the "language of upward mobility." Many parents perceive mother-tongue education as a step backward for their children's careers.	Undermines community support for bilingual programs, even when research shows they improve foundational learning.
Linguistic Complexity	**Highly Mixed Classrooms:** In urban centers like Lagos or Abuja, a single classroom may contain students speaking 20 different mother tongues.	Makes it nearly impossible to select one "mother tongue" for instruction without marginalizing other students.

Table 2.2 Challenges of implementing multilingual education in Nigeria

Pilot questions 2.2

1. What does the National Policy on Education recommend as the medium of instruction in early schooling?
2. Why is mother-tongue education important for literacy development?
3. Identify one challenge of implementing multilingual education in Nigeria.
4. Explain how the dominance of English affects literacy outcomes.
5. What is meant by multilingual education?

2.3 Language Policy in Governance

2.3.1 Language use in administration and lawmaking

In governance, **administration** refers to the management of public affairs, while **lawmaking** involves the creation of rules and regulations by legislative bodies. In Nigeria, English is the

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official language used in administration and lawmaking. This ensures uniformity across diverse linguistic groups, but it also creates barriers for citizens who are not proficient in English.

Indigenous languages are sometimes used at local government levels, but their role in national administration remains limited. This imbalance highlights the tension between practicality and inclusivity in language policy.

Fill in the blank: In Nigeria, _____ is the official language used in administration and lawmaking.

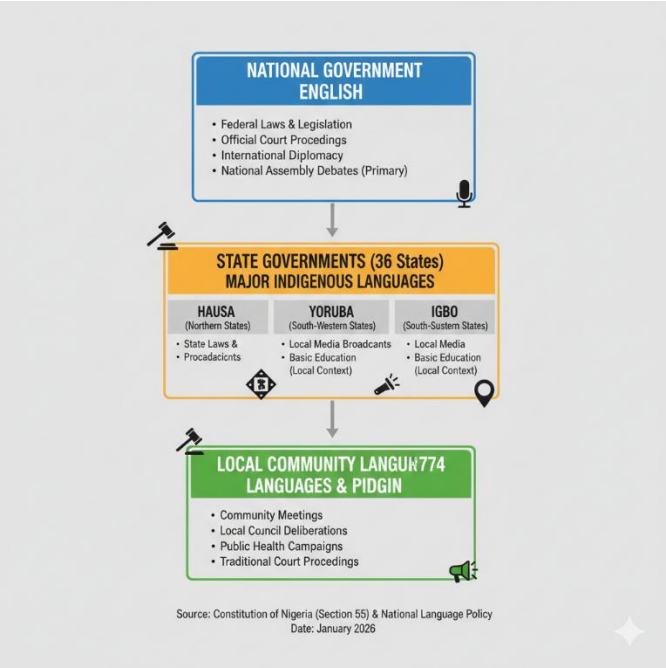

Figure 2.3 Language use in Nigerian governance

2.3.2 Language and citizen participation in governance

Citizen participation refers to the involvement of people in decision-making processes and governance activities. Language plays a crucial role in enabling or restricting participation. When government information is communicated only in English, many citizens may feel excluded from political discourse.

Using indigenous languages in campaigns, public debates, and community meetings can strengthen democratic participation. It ensures that citizens understand policies and can contribute meaningfully to governance.

Fill in the blank: Using indigenous languages in governance strengthens _____ participation.

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Plate 2.2 Citizen participation through indigenous language use

2.3.3 Language barriers in public service delivery

Public service delivery refers to the provision of essential services such as healthcare, education, and social welfare by the government. Language barriers occur when citizens cannot access these services due to communication difficulties. For example, patients may struggle to understand medical instructions if they are given only in English.

Language barriers reduce efficiency, trust, and inclusivity in governance. Addressing them requires translation services, multilingual staff, and policies that prioritise accessibility.

Fill in the blank: Language barriers reduce efficiency, trust, and _____ in governance.

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LANGUAGE BARRIERS IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICES

Source: National Language Policy & Ministry of Education (January 2026)

Sector	Language Barriers
	Misnustandaings in patient-doctor communication due lack lack of a shared language (e.p. nderstanding dosage instructions).
	Lack translated medical documents or consent forms
Healthcare	Inability of frontile health warkers to speak not-tnadtinal dieedtal terms when in rural areas
	Inability of frontlinet wareters to speak local dileets, especially in Englies
	Stigma or tustust associated non-traditional medical terms expalalimed in English
	Education
Education	Students struggling to understand English-oly texboks or exams, leading of high dopobotdut rates and poor performance (e.e. (e.p, after the 2025 environment" resulting effective instruction
	Teachers not . proficient in in the local "language of the enviromive instruction
	Information about public materials or in campaigns or voter registration not not reaching pracking or miniority indiginous languages langunties
Social Welfare	Parents unable to participae to school meetings or help velp with hoework du language gaps
	Exclusion from legal or jucess goverment aid or sograms because applicasthat that operaty non-English without adequate translation services
	Challenges in disaster relief communication, where critical preetion neecal information primarly quiselish disnissseate quickly in multiple local languages

Table 2.3 Examples of language barriers in public service delivery

Pilot questions 2.3

1. What language is officially used in administration and lawmaking in Nigeria?
2. How does language affect citizen participation in governance?
3. Give one example of how indigenous languages can strengthen democratic participation.
4. What is meant by public service delivery?
5. Identify one way language barriers affect governance.

2.4 Contemporary Issues in Language Policy

2.4.1 Globalisation and its impact on language policy

Globalisation refers to the increasing interconnectedness of countries through trade, technology, and culture. In Nigeria, globalisation has strengthened the dominance of English as a global lingua franca, making it essential for international business, diplomacy, and education. However, this trend often sidelines indigenous languages, creating tension between global competitiveness and local identity.

Language policy must therefore balance the need for international relevance with the preservation of cultural heritage. Policies that promote bilingualism or multilingualism can help Nigeria remain globally competitive while safeguarding its linguistic diversity.

Fill in the blank: Globalisation has strengthened the dominance of _____ as a global lingua franca.

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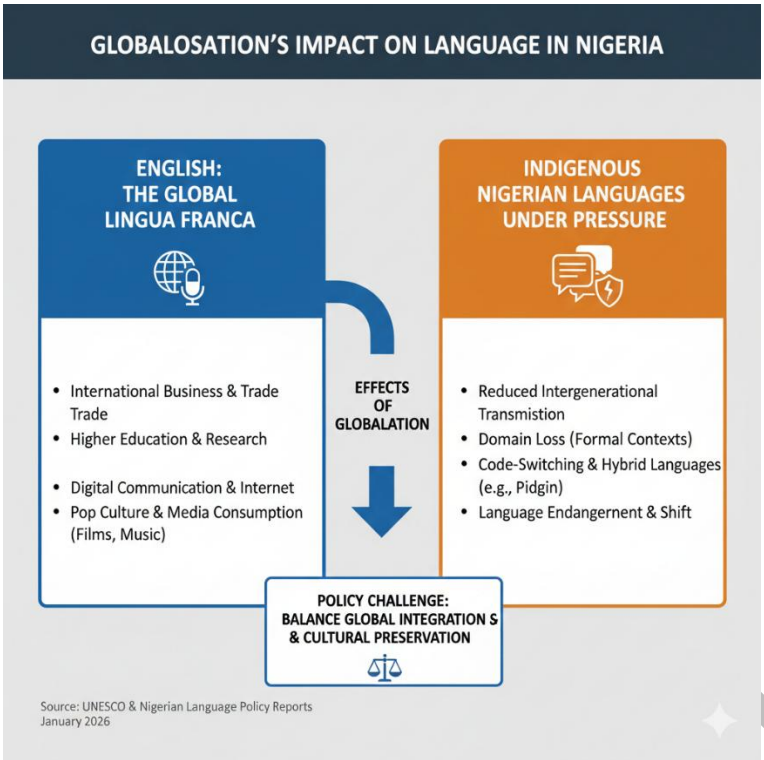

Figure 2.4 Globalisation and language use in Nigeria

2.4.2 ICTs and language use in governance and education

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are tools such as computers, mobile phones, and the internet that facilitate communication and information sharing. ICTs have transformed governance and education in Nigeria by enabling faster communication, online learning, and digital service delivery.

Language policy must adapt to ICTs by ensuring that digital platforms support indigenous languages. For example, community radio, mobile apps, and e-learning platforms can be developed in local languages to increase accessibility and participation.

Fill in the blank: ICTs such as computers and mobile phones have transformed _____ and education in Nigeria.

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Plate 2.3 ICTs supporting education in Nigeria

2.4.3 Policy gaps and recommendations for improvement

Despite existing frameworks, Nigeria's language policy faces several **policy gaps**, including inconsistent implementation, inadequate resources, and limited recognition of minority languages. These gaps hinder effective communication, equitable education, and inclusive governance.

Recommendations for improvement include strengthening mother-tongue education, expanding translation services in governance, investing in teacher training, and integrating indigenous languages into ICT platforms. Such measures can make language policy more inclusive and effective in promoting national development.

Fill in the blank: One recommendation for improving language policy in Nigeria is strengthening _____ education.

Category	Current Policy Gaps	Actionable Recommendations
Education Policy	**The "2025 Reversal":** Sudden shift back to English-only instruction (MOI) due to mass failures in national exams (WAEC/JAMB), ignoring the cognitive benefits of L1 foundational learning.	**Bilingual Transition Model:** Adopt a "Late-Exit" bilingual model where indigenous languages transition gradually to English, rather than a total abandonment.

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Category	Current Policy Gaps	Actionable Recommendations
Logistics & Materials	**Resource Deprivation:** Massive shortage of textbooks and digital curricula in indigenous languages; many of Nigeria's 500+ languages lack standardized orthographies.	**Orthography Documentation:** Fund linguistic research to standardize written forms for minority languages and create Open Educational Resources (OER) in local dialects.
Technology / ICT	**The Digital Divide:** Most ICT tools (educational apps/AI) used in Nigerian schools are English-centric, further alienating non-native English speakers.	**ICT Indigenous Integration:** Develop "Locally Intelligent" AI and apps (e.g., Igbo Amaka) that allow students to learn STEM subjects in their mother tongue while building English proficiency.
Human Capital	**Specialist Deficit:** Teachers are often posted to regions where they do not speak the local "Language of the Environment," leading to ineffective communication.	**Localized Teacher Posting:** Prioritize teacher placement based on linguistic proficiency and provide mandatory bilingual pedagogy training for all primary educators.
Public Sentiment	**Prestige Bias:** Parents often view indigenous language instruction as "inferior" or a barrier to their children's global career prospects.	**Awareness Campaigns:** Use mass media to highlight the cognitive and economic value of multilingualism, positioning it as a "Global+Local" advantage.

Table 2.4 Policy gaps and recommendations for language policy improvement

Pilot questions 2.4

1. How has globalisation affected language use in Nigeria?
2. What role do ICTs play in governance and education?
3. Give one example of how ICTs can support indigenous languages.
4. Identify one policy gap in Nigeria's language policy.
5. Suggest one recommendation for improving language policy in Nigeria.

Series Summary

This Series has focused on the role of language policy in shaping education and governance in Nigeria, highlighting its importance for national unity, effective communication, and inclusive development. We began by exploring the foundations of language policy, including its definition, scope, historical evolution, and guiding principles. We then examined language policy in education, looking at the medium of instruction, literacy development, and the challenges of

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multilingual education. Following that, we considered language policy in governance, analysing its influence on administration, lawmaking, citizen participation, and public service delivery. Finally, we addressed contemporary issues such as globalisation, ICTs, and policy gaps, along with recommendations for improvement.

By engaging with these discussions, you should now be able to define and analyse language policy, evaluate its role in education and governance, identify challenges such as language barriers and policy gaps, and appraise contemporary influences like globalisation and ICTs. These abilities directly align with the Series Learning Outcomes and provide you with the skills to critically assess how language policy can support inclusive governance and educational development in Nigeria.

Glossary of Terms

- **Administration**: The management of public affairs and government activities, often carried out through official structures and processes.
- **Citizen participation**: The involvement of people in decision-making and governance activities, such as voting, debates, and community meetings.
- **Globalisation**: The increasing interconnectedness of countries through trade, technology, and culture, which influences language use and policy.
- **ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies)**: Tools such as computers, mobile phones, and the internet that support communication, learning, and service delivery.
- **Language barriers**: Difficulties in communication that occur when people cannot access information or services due to differences in language.
- **Language policy**: Official decisions, principles, and practices that determine how languages are used, promoted, or restricted within a society.
- **Literacy development**: The process of acquiring reading and writing skills, often influenced by the language of instruction.
- **Lawmaking**: The creation of rules and regulations by legislative bodies, usually carried out in Nigeria through the English language.
- **Medium of instruction**: The language used to teach learners in schools, which in Nigeria is the mother tongue at early levels and English at higher levels.
- **Mother tongue**: The first language a person learns at home, often used in early education to support learning and literacy.
- **Multilingual education**: Teaching and learning that involves the use of more than one language, reflecting Nigeria's linguistic diversity.
- **Policy gaps**: Weaknesses or shortcomings in existing policies, such as poor implementation or lack of resources.
- **Public service delivery**: The provision of essential services such as healthcare, education, and welfare by the government.
- **Scope of language policy**: The areas covered by language policy, including education, governance, media, and preservation of minority languages.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**: A set of 17 global objectives adopted by the United Nations to promote peace, prosperity, and sustainability.

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Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 2]

Part 2.1 Foundations of Language Policy

- Language policy is the official decisions, principles, and practices about language use in society.
- Nigeria's language policy evolved from colonial reliance on English to post-independence recognition of indigenous languages.
- The National Policy on Education recommends the use of the mother tongue in early schooling.
- Objectives include promoting national unity and effective communication.
- One principle is inclusivity, which ensures minority languages are not ignored.

Part 2.2 Language Policy in Education

- The National Policy on Education recommends the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in early schooling.
- Mother-tongue education is important because it supports literacy development by helping children connect spoken language with written symbols.
- One challenge of multilingual education in Nigeria is the shortage of trained teachers.
- The dominance of English often overshadows indigenous languages, leading to uneven literacy outcomes.
- Multilingual education means teaching and learning in more than one language.

Part 2.3 Language Policy in Governance

- English is the official language used in administration and lawmaking in Nigeria.
- Language affects citizen participation by enabling or restricting involvement in governance processes.
- Indigenous languages strengthen democratic participation by ensuring citizens understand policies and debates.
- Public service delivery is the provision of essential services such as healthcare, education, and welfare.
- Language barriers affect governance by reducing efficiency, trust, and inclusivity.

Part 2.4 Contemporary Issues in Language Policy

- Globalisation has increased the dominance of English, often sidelining indigenous languages.
- ICTs play a role in governance and education by enabling faster communication, online learning, and digital service delivery.
- ICTs can support indigenous languages through community radio, mobile apps, and e-learning platforms.
- One policy gap is inconsistent implementation of mother-tongue education.
- One recommendation for improvement is strengthening mother-tongue education and integrating indigenous languages into ICT platforms.

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General References

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- Emenanjo, E. N. (1990). *Multilingualism, minority languages and language policy in Nigeria*. Agbor: Central Books.
- United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved from https://sdgs.un.org/goals

Illustrations and Suggested OER Sources

- **Box 2.1 Key areas covered by language policy** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Language policy scope Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Create a table listing key areas covered by language policy such as education, governance, media, and minority language preservation."
- **Figure 2.1 Historical evolution of language policy in Nigeria** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "History of language policy Nigeria OER timeline". AI prompt used: "Generate a timeline diagram showing colonial language policy, post-independence recognition of indigenous languages, and current policy emphasis."
- **Table 2.1 Objectives and principles of language policy in Nigeria** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Objectives of language policy Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a table with two columns listing objectives (unity, communication, education, heritage) and principles (inclusivity, equity, functionality)."
- **Plate 2.1 Early education in mother tongue** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Mother tongue education Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate an image of Nigerian primary school pupils learning in their native language classroom."
- **Figure 2.2 Literacy development in mother tongue and second language** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Literacy development mother tongue Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Create a diagram comparing literacy development stages in mother tongue and second language learning."
- **Table 2.2 Challenges of implementing multilingual education in Nigeria** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Challenges of multilingual education Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a table listing challenges of multilingual education such as lack of materials, teacher shortage, and policy inconsistency."
- **Figure 2.3 Language use in Nigerian governance** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Language use in Nigerian governance OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a diagram showing English at national level, major indigenous languages at state level, and local languages at community level."

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- **Plate 2.2 Citizen participation through indigenous language use** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Citizen participation indigenous language Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate an image of a Nigerian community meeting where discussions are held in a local language."
- **Table 2.3 Examples of language barriers in public service delivery** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Language barriers public service Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a table listing examples of language barriers in healthcare, education, and social welfare services."
- **Figure 2.4 Globalisation and language use in Nigeria** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Globalisation and language policy Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Create a diagram showing English as global lingua franca alongside indigenous languages under pressure."
- **Plate 2.3 ICTs supporting education in Nigeria** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "ICTs in Nigerian education OER". AI prompt used: "Generate an image of Nigerian students using laptops and mobile devices in a classroom."
- **Table 2.4 Policy gaps and recommendations for language policy improvement** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Language policy improvement Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a table listing policy gaps such as poor implementation and recommendations like mother-tongue education and ICT integration."

Course code: LIN 205
Course title: Nigerian Languages and National Development/ the SDGs

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Nigerian Languages and National Development

Series 2: Language Policy, Education, and Governance

Series 3: Language in Security, Integration, and Social Inclusion

Series 4: Globalization, Technology, and the Future of Nigerian Languages

Series 5: Sustainable Development Goals and Linguistic Dimensions of Trade and Development

Proposed Outline for Series 3

Part .1 Language and Security

- 3.1.1 The role of language in conflict prevention and resolution
- 3.1.2 Language use in law enforcement and military communication

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- 3.1.3 Challenges of miscommunication in security contexts

Part .2 Language and National Integration

- 3.2.1 Language as a tool for unity in diverse societies
- 3.2.2 The role of indigenous and official languages in integration
- 3.2.3 Case studies of language-driven integration efforts in Nigeria

Part .3 Language and Social Inclusion

- 3.3.1 Definition and dimensions of social inclusion
- 3.3.2 Language barriers and exclusion in public life
- 3.3.3 Strategies for promoting inclusive language practices

Part .4 Contemporary Issues in Language, Security, and Inclusion

- 3.4.1 Language in digital security and cyber communication
- 3.4.2 Multilingualism and migration challenges
- 3.4.3 Policy recommendations for inclusive and secure communication

Introduction

In today's world, language is not only a tool for communication but also a powerful instrument for peace, unity, and inclusion. Miscommunication can escalate conflicts, while inclusive language practices can foster trust and cooperation among diverse groups. For a multilingual country like Nigeria, the way language is used in security, integration, and social inclusion directly affects national stability and development. This Series therefore highlights the critical role of language in building safer communities, promoting unity, and ensuring that no group is left behind.

The aim of this Series is to equip you with the knowledge and skills to analyse how language influences security, national integration, and social inclusion, and to evaluate strategies that make communication more effective and inclusive in these contexts.

We shall commence this Series by examining the role of language in security, focusing on conflict prevention, law enforcement, and the challenges of miscommunication. Next, we will explore language and national integration, considering how both indigenous and official languages can serve as tools for unity, supported by case studies from Nigeria. Following that, we will move on to language and social inclusion, where we will discuss barriers to participation and strategies for promoting inclusive practices. Finally, we will wrap up with contemporary issues such as digital security, migration, and policy recommendations, rounding off the Series with practical insights into how language can strengthen security and social cohesion.

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Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 3.1** analyse the role of language in conflict prevention and resolution,
- **SLO 3.2** explain how language is used in law enforcement and military communication,
- **SLO 3.3** evaluate the challenges of miscommunication in security contexts,
- **SLO 3.4** describe how language serves as a tool for national unity in diverse societies,
- **SLO 3.5** assess the contribution of indigenous and official languages to national integration,
- **SLO 3.6** examine case studies of language-driven integration efforts in Nigeria,
- **SLO 3.7** define social inclusion and identify its key dimensions,
- **SLO 3.8** analyse the impact of language barriers on exclusion in public life,
- **SLO 3.9** propose strategies for promoting inclusive language practices,
- **SLO 3.10** appraise contemporary issues such as digital security and migration in relation to language use, and
- **SLO 3.11** recommend policy measures for inclusive and secure communication in Nigeria.

3.1 Language and Security

3.1.1 The role of language in conflict prevention and resolution

Conflict prevention refers to measures taken to stop disputes from escalating, while **conflict resolution** involves strategies used to settle disagreements peacefully. Language plays a central role in both processes. Clear communication helps parties understand each other's perspectives, while respectful dialogue reduces hostility. In Nigeria, the use of indigenous languages in peacebuilding initiatives ensures that messages reach communities effectively.

When language is misused, however, it can inflame tensions. Hate speech, misinformation, or exclusionary language often worsens conflicts. This is why language policy and practice in security contexts must emphasise clarity, inclusivity, and respect.

Fill in the blank: Language misuse, such as _____ speech, can worsen conflicts and increase hostility.

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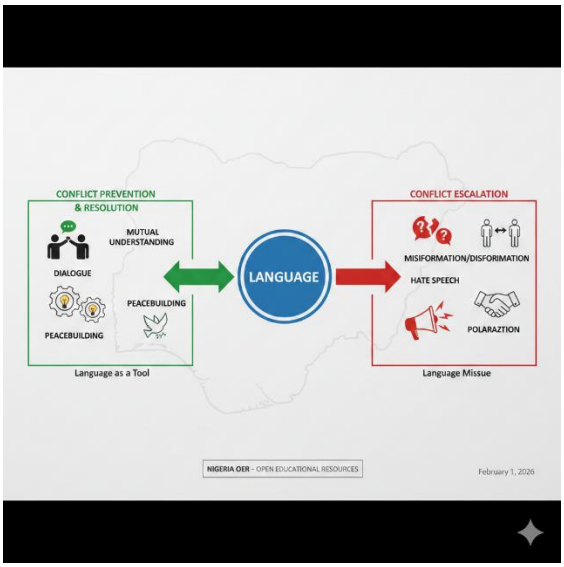

Figure 3.1 Language in conflict prevention and resolution

3.1.2 Language use in law enforcement and military communication

Law enforcement refers to agencies such as the police that uphold laws, while **military communication** involves the exchange of information within armed forces. In both contexts, language must be precise and unambiguous. Miscommunication can lead to errors, delays, or even loss of life.

In Nigeria, English is the official language used in law enforcement and military operations. However, officers often rely on indigenous languages when engaging with local communities. This dual use ensures both operational efficiency and community trust.

Fill in the blank: In Nigeria, _____ is the official language used in law enforcement and military operations.

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Plate 3.1 Law enforcement officers using indigenous language in community engagement

3.1.3 Challenges of miscommunication in security contexts

Miscommunication occurs when information is not conveyed or understood correctly. In security contexts, this can have serious consequences. For example, unclear instructions during an emergency may cause panic, while mistranslations in intelligence reports can lead to wrong decisions.

Common challenges include language diversity, lack of trained interpreters, and reliance on jargon that ordinary citizens may not understand. Addressing these challenges requires training, translation services, and policies that prioritise clarity in communication.

Fill in the blank: One challenge of miscommunication in security contexts is the lack of trained _____.

Challenge	Description	Impact on Security
Language Diversity	Over 500 indigenous languages make standardized communication difficult.	Can lead to accidental non-compliance and suspicion between officers and locals.
Lack of Interpreters	A shortage of neutral, trained linguists during field operations or interrogations.	Risk of "lost in translation" scenarios and potential violations of legal rights.
Use of Jargon	Reliance on complex legal codes or "police speak" that civilians do not understand.	Increases anxiety for civilians and creates a barrier to information sharing.

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Challenge	Description	Impact on Security
Socio-Linguistic Bias	Prejudices based on an individual's accent or specific dialect.	Leads to unfair profiling and a breakdown in community trust.

Table 3.1 Challenges of miscommunication in security contexts

Pilot questions 3.1

1. Explain how language contributes to conflict prevention and resolution.
2. What is the official language used in law enforcement and military operations in Nigeria?
3. Give one example of how indigenous languages support peacebuilding.
4. Define miscommunication and state one of its challenges in security contexts.
5. Why is clarity in communication important for law enforcement and military operations?

3.2 Language and National Integration

3.2.1 Language as a tool for unity in diverse societies

National integration refers to the process of bringing together people from different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds to form a cohesive society. Language serves as a powerful tool in this process because it enables communication, fosters mutual understanding, and builds shared identity. In Nigeria, where hundreds of languages are spoken, both indigenous and official languages play a role in promoting unity.

When citizens can communicate across linguistic boundaries, mistrust is reduced and cooperation is strengthened. This is why language policies often emphasise common languages that can serve as bridges between diverse groups.

Fill in the blank: National integration refers to bringing together people from different _____ backgrounds to form a cohesive society.

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Figure 3.2 Language as a tool for national integration

3.2.2 The role of indigenous and official languages in integration

Indigenous languages are those spoken by local communities, while **official languages** are those formally recognised by the state for governance and education. In Nigeria, English serves as the official language, while Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo are widely recognised indigenous languages.

Official languages provide a common platform for national communication, while indigenous languages strengthen cultural identity and local participation. Together, they contribute to integration by ensuring both national unity and community inclusion.

Fill in the blank: In Nigeria, _____ serves as the official language, while Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo are widely recognised indigenous languages.

Language Category	Primary Function	Role in National Development	Legal/Educational Context
Official Language (English)	**National Unity & Integration**	Acts as a "bridge" or *lingua franca* connecting over 500 ethnic groups.	The language of the National Assembly, higher education, and the legal system.
Indigenous Languages (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, etc.)	**Cultural Identity & Heritage**	Preserves ancestral values, fosters community trust, and provides a sense of belonging.	Mandated for early primary education and used in state-level dialogues.

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Language Category	Primary Function	Role in National Development	Legal/Educational Context
Nigerian Pidgin	**Informal Social Cohesion**	Serves as a popular, de facto unifying tool for grassroots communication and urban interaction.	Widely used in entertainment, media, and informal commerce.

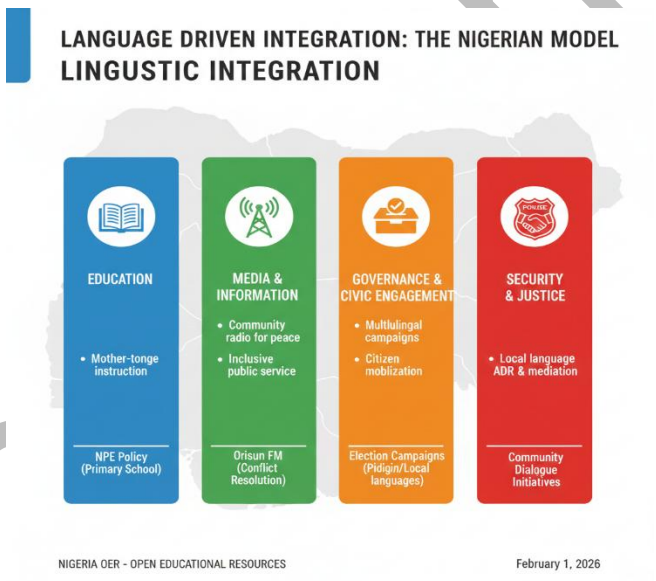
Table 3.2 Roles of indigenous and official languages in national integration

3.2.3 Case studies of language-driven integration efforts in Nigeria

Case studies provide practical examples of how language has been used to promote integration. For instance, community radio stations broadcasting in local languages have helped bridge gaps between government and citizens. Similarly, multilingual campaigns during elections have ensured wider participation across ethnic groups.

Educational initiatives that incorporate mother-tongue instruction also strengthen integration by giving learners a sense of belonging while preparing them for national communication in English. These examples show that language-driven efforts can reduce exclusion and foster unity.

Fill in the blank: Multilingual campaigns during _____ have ensured wider participation across ethnic groups in Nigeria.



Box 3.1 Case studies of language-driven integration in Nigeria

Pilot questions 3.2

1. Define national integration and explain how language contributes to it.
2. What is the official language of Nigeria, and name two widely recognised indigenous languages.
3. Give one example of how indigenous languages strengthen cultural identity.
4. Explain how multilingual election campaigns promote integration.
5. Identify one educational initiative that supports language-driven integration.

3.3 Language and Social Inclusion

3.3.1 Definition and dimensions of social inclusion

Social inclusion refers to the process of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background, have equal opportunities to participate fully in society. It involves removing barriers that prevent people from accessing education, healthcare, employment, and governance.

The dimensions of social inclusion include economic participation, political involvement, cultural recognition, and access to public services. Language is central to all these dimensions because it determines whether individuals can understand, engage, and contribute meaningfully.

Fill in the blank: Social inclusion ensures that all individuals have equal opportunities to _____ fully in society.

Dimension	Barriers for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	Barriers for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
Economic	Workplace discrimination and inaccessible infrastructure (no ramps/lifts) prevent employment.	Loss of ancestral lands and lack of "startup capital" for businesses in host communities.
Political	Polling units and campaign venues are often physically inaccessible to those with mobility issues.	Lack of permanent addresses or lost identification documents often prevents voter registration.
Cultural	Deep-seated stigma or traditional myths that view disability as a "curse" or "omen."	Social tension or ethnic segregation between displaced groups and their host communities.
Public Services	Hospitals and schools lack assistive technologies (braille, sign language) and trained personnel.	Exclusion from formal healthcare or school enrollment due to their temporary/unregistered status.

Figure 3.3 Dimensions of social inclusion

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3.3.2 Language barriers and exclusion in public life

Language barriers occur when individuals cannot access information or services because they do not understand the language used. In Nigeria, reliance on English in official communication often excludes those who are more proficient in indigenous languages.

This exclusion can affect participation in governance, access to healthcare, and involvement in education. For example, patients may struggle to follow medical instructions given only in English, or citizens may feel alienated from political debates conducted in a language they do not understand.

Fill in the blank: Reliance on _____ in official communication often excludes those who are more proficient in indigenous languages.

Sector	Nature of the Barrier	Specific Exclusion Impact
Governance	Legal documents, gazettes, and court proceedings are primarily in English.	Citizens who are not literate in English cannot fully understand their rights or engage in formal legal defense.
Healthcare	Doctors and nurses often use English or regional "lingua francas" (like Hausa) that patients may not speak fluently.	Higher risk of **misdiagnosis**, medication errors (e.g., "take twice daily" misunderstood), and patient anxiety.
Education	Transitioning from mother-tongue to English instruction too early (or skipping it entirely).	Leads to **"Learning Poverty"**—children can recite words but do not comprehend the concepts, leading to higher dropout rates.
Public Safety	Emergency alerts or mine-awareness campaigns in NE Nigeria translated poorly.	Vital safety information (e.g., distinguishing between types of explosives) is "lost in translation," putting lives at risk.

Table 3.3 Examples of language barriers leading to exclusion in public life

3.3.3 Strategies for promoting inclusive language practices

Inclusive language practices ensure that communication is accessible to all. Strategies include translating official documents into major indigenous languages, using multilingual media platforms, and training public officials in community languages.

Education also plays a role, as schools can promote inclusivity by teaching both official and indigenous languages. These strategies help reduce exclusion and strengthen social cohesion.

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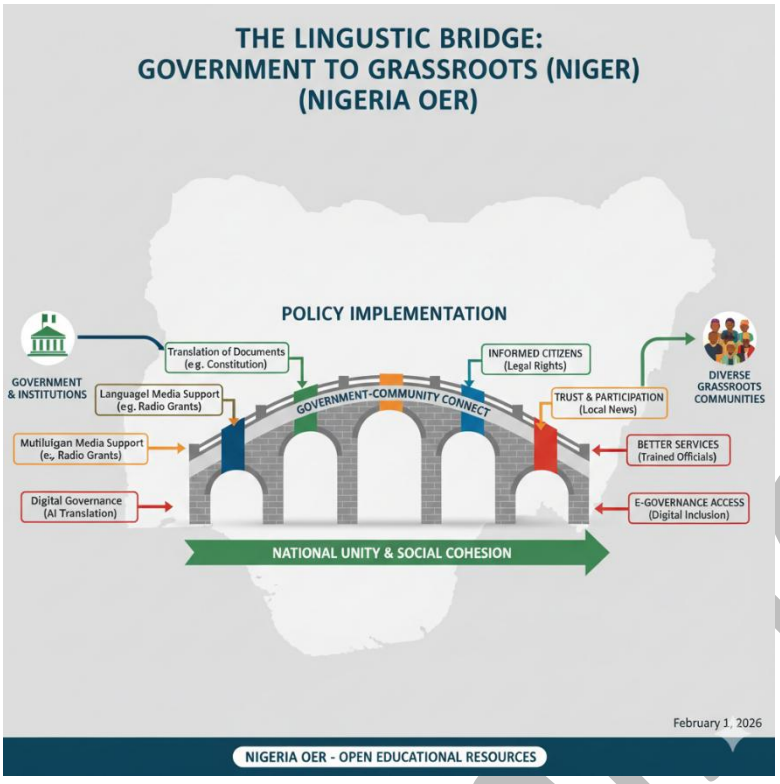
Fill in the blank: One strategy for promoting inclusive language practices is translating official _____ into major indigenous languages.



Box 3.2 Strategies for promoting inclusive language practices

Pilot questions 3.3

1. Define social inclusion and list its dimensions.
2. What is meant by language barriers in public life?
3. Give one example of how reliance on English can exclude citizens.
4. Identify one strategy for promoting inclusive language practices.
5. Explain how education can support social inclusion through language.

3.4 Contemporary Issues in Language, Security, and Inclusion

3.4.1 Language in digital security and cyber communication

Digital security refers to the protection of information and systems in online environments, while **cyber communication** involves the exchange of information through digital platforms. Language plays a critical role here because instructions, warnings, and alerts must be clear and accessible to diverse users. Misinterpretation of technical terms or poor translation can expose individuals and organisations to risks.

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In Nigeria, the increasing use of mobile banking, e-governance, and online learning highlights the need for multilingual digital platforms. Providing security information in indigenous languages can help citizens protect themselves against cyber threats.

Fill in the blank: Misinterpretation of technical terms in digital security can expose individuals and organisations to _____.

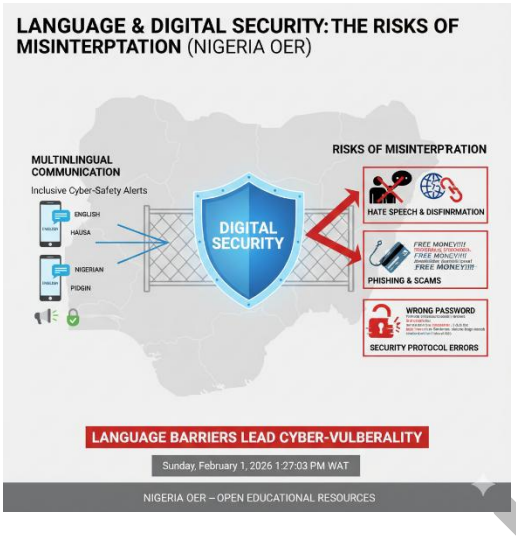

Figure 3.4 Language in digital security and cyber communication

3.4.2 Multilingualism and migration challenges

Multilingualism refers to the ability to use more than one language, while **migration** involves the movement of people across regions or countries. Migration often creates linguistic diversity, which can be both an asset and a challenge.

In Nigeria and other African countries, migrants may face exclusion if they cannot communicate in dominant languages. This affects access to jobs, healthcare, and education. Policies that support multilingualism can reduce these challenges by promoting translation services and inclusive communication.

Fill in the blank: Migration often creates linguistic _____, which can be both an asset and a challenge.

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Plate 3.3 Migration and multilingual communication

3.4.3 Policy recommendations for inclusive and secure communication

Policy recommendations are suggestions for improving existing frameworks. In the context of language, security, and inclusion, recommendations may include expanding translation services, integrating indigenous languages into ICT platforms, and training officials in multilingual communication.

Such measures can strengthen both security and inclusion by ensuring that all citizens understand critical information and can participate fully in society. Policies should also address emerging issues such as cyber threats and migration, making communication more adaptive and inclusive.

Fill in the blank: One policy recommendation for inclusive communication is expanding _____ services in governance and security.

Policy Recommendations for Language Security & Inclusion

- **Professional Translation & Interpretation Services**
    - **Action:** Establish a **National Registry of Certified Translators** for the major 500+ indigenous languages.
    - **Goal:** To ensure fair trials in courtrooms and accurate medical diagnoses in hospitals by removing the "English-only" barrier.
- **ICT Integration & Language Technology**
    - **Action:** Develop **localized digital interfaces** and AI-driven translation tools for government portals (e.g., *Renewed Hope* agenda platforms).

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    - **Goal:** To promote digital inclusion and ensure that cyber-safety alerts reach citizens in their primary language, including Nigerian Pidgin.
- **Functional Multilingual Training**
    - **Action:** Mandate **language immersion programs** for security personnel (Police, Army, NSCDC) and civil servants posted to linguistically diverse regions.
    - **Goal:** To build community trust, improve intelligence gathering, and reduce ethnic polarization through "Functional Multilingualism."
- **Preservation & Digital Archiving**
    - **Action:** Use AI to create **digital archives of endangered languages** and standardize orthographies (writing systems) for minority groups.
    - **Goal:** To safeguard Nigeria's cultural heritage and enable the development of instructional materials for mother-tongue education.
- **Inclusive Media Outreach**
    - **Action:** Provide subsidies for **community radio stations** to translate and broadcast critical health, election, and disaster-warning information into local languages.
    - **Goal:** To bridge the information gap for rural populations and non-literate citizens who are often excluded from English-centric media.

Box 3.3 Policy recommendations for inclusive and secure communication

Pilot questions 3.4

1. What is meant by digital security and cyber communication?
2. Why is language important in digital security?
3. Define multilingualism and explain how migration creates challenges.
4. Give one example of how migrants may face exclusion due to language barriers.
5. Suggest one policy recommendation for inclusive and secure communication.

Series Summary

This Series has examined the vital role of language in promoting security, national integration, and social inclusion, highlighting its importance for building safer communities and fostering unity in a diverse society. We began by exploring how language contributes to conflict prevention and resolution, as well as its use in law enforcement and military communication, before considering the challenges of miscommunication in security contexts. We then moved on to national integration, where we discussed the role of both indigenous and official languages in uniting diverse groups, supported by case studies of language-driven initiatives in Nigeria. Following that, we focused on social inclusion, defining its dimensions, identifying language barriers in public

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life, and outlining strategies for promoting inclusive practices. Finally, we addressed contemporary issues such as digital security, migration, and policy recommendations for inclusive and secure communication.

By engaging with these discussions, you should now be able to analyse the role of language in security, assess its contribution to national integration, define and evaluate social inclusion, and appraise contemporary challenges such as multilingualism and cyber communication. These abilities directly align with the Series Learning Outcomes and provide you with the skills to recommend strategies and policies that strengthen security, unity, and inclusivity in Nigeria.

Glossary of Terms

- **Conflict prevention**: Measures taken to stop disputes from escalating into violence or hostility.
- **Conflict resolution**: Strategies used to settle disagreements peacefully through dialogue and negotiation.
- **Cyber communication**: The exchange of information through digital platforms such as email, social media, and online messaging.
- **Digital security**: The protection of information and systems in online environments against threats such as hacking or fraud.
- **Indigenous languages**: Local languages spoken by communities within a country, often tied to cultural identity.
- **Law enforcement**: Agencies such as the police that uphold laws and maintain public order.
- **Military communication**: The exchange of information within armed forces, requiring precision and clarity to ensure effective operations.
- **Miscommunication**: A failure to convey or understand information correctly, often leading to confusion or errors.
- **Migration**: The movement of people across regions or countries, which often creates linguistic diversity.
- **Multilingualism**: The ability to use more than one language in communication.
- **National integration**: The process of bringing together people from different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds to form a cohesive society.
- **Official language**: A language formally recognised by the state for governance, education, and national communication.
- **Policy recommendations**: Suggestions made to improve existing frameworks or practices, often aimed at addressing gaps or challenges.
- **Security contexts**: Situations related to law enforcement, military operations, or conflict management where communication is critical.
- **Social inclusion**: Ensuring that all individuals, regardless of background, have equal opportunities to participate fully in society.
- **Translation services**: Professional or institutional efforts to convert information from one language into another to aid understanding.

Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

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Objective questions

1. Language misuse, such as _____ speech, can worsen conflicts and increase hostility. (Linked to SLO 3.1)
2. In Nigeria, _____ is the official language used in law enforcement and military operations. (Linked to SLO 3.2)
3. National integration refers to bringing together people from different _____ backgrounds to form a cohesive society. (Linked to SLO 3.4)
4. Reliance on _____ in official communication often excludes those who are more proficient in indigenous languages. (Linked to SLO 3.8)
5. Migration often creates linguistic _____, which can be both an asset and a challenge. (Linked to SLO 3.10)

Short-answer questions

6. Define conflict resolution and explain its importance in security contexts. (Linked to SLO 3.1)
7. State one challenge of miscommunication in security contexts. (Linked to SLO 3.3)
8. Identify one role of indigenous languages in national integration. (Linked to SLO 3.5)
9. Give one example of a language-driven integration effort in Nigeria. (Linked to SLO 3.6)
10. Define social inclusion and list two of its dimensions. (Linked to SLO 3.7)
11. Explain how language barriers affect access to healthcare. (Linked to SLO 3.8)
12. Suggest one strategy for promoting inclusive language practices. (Linked to SLO 3.9)
13. What is meant by digital security, and why is language important in this context? (Linked to SLO 3.10)
14. Identify one policy recommendation for inclusive and secure communication. (Linked to SLO 3.11)

Long-answer questions

15. Analyse the role of language in conflict prevention and resolution, with examples from Nigeria. (Linked to SLO 3.1)
16. Evaluate the contribution of indigenous and official languages to national integration. (Linked to SLO 3.5)
17. Assess the impact of language barriers on social inclusion, focusing on governance, healthcare, and education. (Linked to SLO 3.8)
18. Appraise contemporary issues such as digital security and migration, and recommend strategies for inclusive communication. (Linked to SLO 3.10, SLO 3.11)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Objective questions

1. Hate speech
2. English
3. Ethnic, cultural, and linguistic

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4. English
5. Diversity

Short-answer questions

6. Conflict resolution is the process of settling disagreements peacefully. It is important in security contexts because it prevents escalation and promotes stability.
7. One challenge is the lack of trained interpreters.
8. Indigenous languages strengthen cultural identity and local participation.
9. Multilingual election campaigns that ensure wider participation across ethnic groups.
10. Social inclusion ensures equal opportunities for all. Dimensions include economic participation and political involvement.
11. Patients may struggle to follow medical instructions if given only in English.
12. Translating official documents into indigenous languages.
13. Digital security protects information online. Language is important because unclear instructions can expose users to risks.
14. Expanding translation services in governance and security.

Long-answer questions

15. **Basic response**: Language helps prevent conflict by enabling dialogue and mutual understanding. In Nigeria, peacebuilding initiatives often use indigenous languages to reach communities effectively. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may highlight how multilingual peace campaigns reduce exclusion and propose integrating ICTs to support conflict resolution in diverse communities.
16. **Basic response**: Official languages provide a common platform for national communication, while indigenous languages strengthen cultural identity. Together, they promote integration. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may evaluate tensions between English dominance and indigenous language preservation, suggesting balanced policies that promote bilingualism.
17. **Basic response**: Language barriers exclude citizens from governance debates, healthcare instructions, and educational opportunities. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may propose systemic solutions such as multilingual public campaigns, community interpreters, and inclusive curricula.
18. **Basic response**: Digital security requires clear communication, while migration creates linguistic diversity that can lead to exclusion. Strategies include translation services and multilingual ICT platforms. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may recommend innovative approaches such as mobile apps in indigenous languages, international collaboration on migration policies, and adaptive frameworks for cyber communication.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 3]

Part 3.1 Language and Security

- Language contributes to conflict prevention and resolution by enabling dialogue, mutual understanding, and peaceful negotiation.

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- English is the official language used in law enforcement and military operations in Nigeria.
- Indigenous languages support peacebuilding by ensuring communities understand messages and feel included in dialogue.
- Miscommunication is the failure to convey or understand information correctly; one challenge is the lack of trained interpreters.
- Clarity in communication is important because it prevents errors, delays, and confusion in law enforcement and military operations.

Part 3.2 Language and National Integration

- National integration is the process of uniting people from diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds; language contributes by fostering communication and shared identity.
- Nigeria's official language is English, while Hausa and Yoruba are widely recognised indigenous languages.
- Indigenous languages strengthen cultural identity and local participation.
- Multilingual election campaigns promote integration by ensuring wider participation across ethnic groups.
- Mother-tongue education initiatives support integration by giving learners a sense of belonging while preparing them for national communication.

Part 3.3 Language and Social Inclusion

- Social inclusion is ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals to participate fully in society; its dimensions include economic, political, cultural, and access to public services.
- Language barriers in public life occur when individuals cannot access information or services due to communication difficulties.
- Reliance on English can exclude citizens who are more proficient in indigenous languages, for example in healthcare or governance.
- One strategy for promoting inclusive language practices is translating official documents into indigenous languages.
- Education supports social inclusion by teaching both official and indigenous languages, reducing exclusion.

Part 3.4 Contemporary Issues in Language, Security, and Inclusion

- Digital security is the protection of information and systems online, while cyber communication is the exchange of information through digital platforms.
- Language is important in digital security because unclear instructions or poor translation can expose users to risks.
- Multilingualism is the ability to use more than one language; migration creates challenges by introducing linguistic diversity that can hinder access to services.
- Migrants may face exclusion if they cannot communicate in dominant languages, limiting access to jobs, healthcare, and education.
- One policy recommendation for inclusive and secure communication is expanding translation services in governance and security.

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General References

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Illustrations and Suggested OER Sources

- **Figure 3.1 Language in conflict prevention and resolution** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Language and conflict resolution Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Create a diagram showing language as a tool for dialogue, understanding, and peacebuilding versus misuse leading to conflict."
- **Plate 3.1 Law enforcement officers using indigenous language in community engagement** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Law enforcement indigenous language Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate an image of Nigerian police officers speaking with community members in a local language."
- **Table 3.1 Challenges of miscommunication in security contexts** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Miscommunication in security contexts Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a table listing challenges such as language diversity, lack of interpreters, and use of jargon."
- **Figure 3.2 Language as a tool for national integration** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Language and national integration Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Create a diagram showing language connecting diverse ethnic and cultural groups into one cohesive society."
- **Table 3.2 Roles of indigenous and official languages in national integration** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Indigenous and official languages Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a table showing official languages as tools for national unity and indigenous languages as tools for cultural identity."
- **Box 3.1 Case studies of language-driven integration in Nigeria** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Language-driven integration Nigeria OER case studies". AI prompt used: "Create a box listing examples such as community radio in local languages, multilingual election campaigns, and mother-tongue education initiatives."
- **Figure 3.3 Dimensions of social inclusion** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Dimensions of social inclusion Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Create a diagram

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showing four dimensions of social inclusion: economic, political, cultural, and public services."

- **Table 3.3 Examples of language barriers leading to exclusion in public life** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Language barriers exclusion Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a table listing examples of language barriers in governance, healthcare, and education."
- **Box 3.2 Strategies for promoting inclusive language practices** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Inclusive language practices Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Create a box listing strategies such as translation of documents, multilingual media, and language training for officials."
- **Figure 3.4 Language in digital security and cyber communication** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Language in digital security Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Create a diagram showing multilingual digital security communication with risks of misinterpretation."
- **Plate 3.3 Migration and multilingual communication** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Migration multilingualism Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate an image of migrants in Nigeria engaging in multilingual communication in a community setting."
- **Box 3.3 Policy recommendations for inclusive and secure communication** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Policy recommendations language security inclusion Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Create a box listing recommendations such as translation services, ICT integration, and multilingual training."

Course code: LIN 205
Course title: Nigerian Languages and National Development/ the SDGs

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Nigerian Languages and National Development

Series 2: Language Policy, Education, and Governance

Series 3: Language in Security, Integration, and Social Inclusion

Series 4: Globalization, Technology, and the Future of Nigerian Languages

Series 5: Sustainable Development Goals and Linguistic Dimensions of Trade and Development

Proposed Outline for Series 4

Part .1 Globalisation and Nigerian Languages

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- 4.1.1 Definition and dimensions of globalisation
- 4.1.2 Impact of globalisation on language use worldwide
- 4.1.3 Effects of globalisation on Nigerian indigenous languages

Part .2 Technology and Language Development

- 4.2.1 Role of ICTs in language preservation and promotion
- 4.2.2 Digital platforms and multilingual communication
- 4.2.3 Challenges of technology-driven language change

Part .3 The Future of Nigerian Languages

- 4.3.1 Language endangerment and revitalisation efforts
- 4.3.2 Policy frameworks for sustaining Nigerian languages
- 4.3.3 Prospects for bilingualism and multilingualism in Nigeria

Part .4 Contemporary Trends and Recommendations

- 4.4.1 Global lingua franca and its implications for Nigeria
- 4.4.2 Emerging technologies such as AI and machine translation
- 4.4.3 Recommendations for safeguarding Nigerian languages in a globalised world

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, globalisation and technology are reshaping how languages are used, preserved, and transmitted. Nigerian languages, with their rich cultural heritage, face both opportunities and challenges in this evolving landscape. While globalisation strengthens the dominance of English as a lingua franca, it also places pressure on indigenous languages. At the same time, technological innovations such as digital platforms, artificial intelligence, and online learning provide new avenues for sustaining and promoting these languages. This Series therefore explores how global forces and technological change influence the future of Nigerian languages.

The aim of this Series is to equip you with the knowledge to analyse the effects of globalisation and technology on Nigerian languages, evaluate their future prospects, and propose strategies for safeguarding linguistic diversity in a rapidly changing world.

We shall commence this Series by examining globalisation and its impact on Nigerian languages, considering both worldwide trends and local effects. Next, we will explore the role of technology in language development, focusing on ICTs, digital platforms, and the challenges of technology-driven change. Following that, we will move on to the future of Nigerian languages, where we will discuss language endangerment, revitalisation efforts, and policy frameworks for sustaining bilingualism and multilingualism. Finally, we will wrap up with contemporary trends and recommendations, including the rise of global lingua franca, emerging technologies such as

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machine translation, and practical measures for safeguarding Nigerian languages in a globalised world.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 4.1** define globalisation and describe its dimensions in relation to language use,
- **SLO 4.2** analyse the impact of globalisation on Nigerian indigenous languages,
- **SLO 4.3** explain the role of ICTs in language preservation and promotion,
- **SLO 4.4** evaluate the contribution of digital platforms to multilingual communication,
- **SLO 4.5** identify challenges associated with technology-driven language change,
- **SLO 4.6** assess the risks of language endangerment and outline revitalisation efforts in Nigeria,
- **SLO 4.7** examine policy frameworks designed to sustain Nigerian languages,
- **SLO 4.8** appraise prospects for bilingualism and multilingualism in Nigeria's future,
- **SLO 4.9** analyse the implications of global lingua franca for Nigerian languages,
- **SLO 4.10** describe emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine translation in language development, and
- **SLO 4.11** recommend strategies for safeguarding Nigerian languages in a globalised and technologically driven world.

4.1 Globalisation and Nigerian Languages

4.1.1 Definition and dimensions of globalisation

Globalisation refers to the increasing interconnectedness of countries and communities across the world through trade, communication, culture, and technology. It influences how people interact, share ideas, and adopt practices beyond their local boundaries. The dimensions of globalisation include economic, cultural, political, and technological aspects, all of which affect language use.

Language is central to globalisation because it enables the exchange of ideas and information. English, for example, has become a global lingua franca, shaping education, business, and diplomacy. However, globalisation also raises concerns about the survival of indigenous languages, which may be overshadowed by dominant global languages.

Fill in the blank: _____ has become a global lingua franca, shaping education, business, and diplomacy.

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Figure 4.1 Dimensions of globalisation and language

4.1.2 Impact of globalisation on language use worldwide

Globalisation has led to the spread of dominant languages such as English, French, and Mandarin, while many minority languages face decline. **Language shift** occurs when communities gradually abandon their native language in favour of a more dominant one, often for economic or social advantage.

At the same time, globalisation has created opportunities for multilingualism, as people learn additional languages to participate in global networks. Digital platforms, international travel, and global trade encourage individuals to acquire new linguistic skills.

Fill in the blank: When communities abandon their native language for a dominant one, it is called language _____.

Impact Category	Positive Impacts (The "Global Bridge")	Negative Impacts (The "Cultural Erosion")
Communication	**Global Connectivity:** Enhanced ability to participate in international trade, science, and diplomacy using English.	**Language Shift:** Speakers abandon indigenous mother tongues in favor of English to gain social and economic status.
Diversity	**Growth of Multilingualism:** Nigerians often speak a mix of English, Pidgin, and local languages, leading to high cognitive flexibility.	**Language Endangerment:** Many of Nigeria's 500+ languages face "attrition" as younger generations stop learning them.

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Impact Category	Positive Impacts (The "Global Bridge")	Negative Impacts (The "Cultural Erosion")
Innovation	**Linguistic Hybridity:** Emergence of vibrant new forms like **Nigerian Pidgin** and "Nollywood English" that spread Nigerian culture globally.	**Linguistic Imperialism:** Dominance of Western linguistic norms in education and technology, marginalizing local knowledge systems.
Technology	**Digital Access:** Use of translation AI and social media allows for the rapid sharing of information and OER materials.	**Digital Divide:** Minority languages without standardized "digital footprints" are excluded from the AI and tech revolution.
Culture	**Cultural Exchange:** Nigerian music (Afrobeats) and literature are exported globally, increasing "soft power."	**Cultural Homogenization:** Loss of unique proverbs, myths, and worldviews that are only expressible in native dialects.

Table 4.1 Positive and negative impacts of globalisation on language use worldwide

4.1.3 Effects of globalisation on Nigerian indigenous languages

Nigeria is home to hundreds of indigenous languages, many of which are under pressure due to globalisation. The dominance of English in education, governance, and media has reduced the use of local languages in formal contexts. This trend contributes to **language endangerment**, which refers to the risk of a language becoming extinct when fewer people use it.

Despite these challenges, globalisation also provides opportunities. Nigerian languages can be promoted through digital platforms, films, music, and social media, reaching audiences both locally and internationally. The key lies in balancing global participation with the preservation of linguistic heritage.

Fill in the blank: The risk of a language becoming extinct when fewer people use it is called language _____.

Performance Area	Ife Project (Yoruba Medium)	Classic Schools (English Medium)
Cognitive Depth	Pupils demonstrated deeper conceptual understanding; able to relate science/math to lived experience.	Pupils often relied on rote memorization (parroting) without fully grasping underlying concepts.

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Performance Area	Ife Project (Yoruba Medium)	Classic Schools (English Medium)
Literacy & Numeracy	Proficiency scores in literacy and numeracy reached as high as **65%–68%**.	Proficiency scores significantly lower, often averaging around **46%**.
English Language Skills	Pupils learned English as a subject and eventually **outperformed** peers in English fluency by Grade 6.	Pupils struggled with oral English and comprehension due to premature, forced exposure.
Classroom Engagement	High participation; pupils were more confident, creative, and willing to ask complex questions.	Low participation; "silent barrier" caused by fear of making grammatical mistakes in English.
Secondary School Success	Pupils had higher retention rates and better adjustment to secondary education.	Higher risk of "Learning Poverty" and dropouts during the transition to higher grades.

Box 4.1 Case studies of Nigerian indigenous languages under pressure from globalisation

Pilot questions 4.1

1. Define globalisation and list its dimensions.
2. Which language has become a global lingua franca?
3. What is meant by language shift?
4. State one positive and one negative impact of globalisation on language use worldwide.
5. Explain how globalisation affects Nigerian indigenous languages.
6. What is language endangerment?
7. Suggest one way Nigerian languages can be promoted in the era of globalisation.

4.2 Technology and Language Development

4.2.1 Role of ICTs in language preservation and promotion

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are tools such as computers, mobile devices, and the internet that facilitate the storage, sharing, and transmission of information. ICTs play a vital role in language preservation by providing platforms where indigenous languages can be documented, taught, and promoted. For example, mobile apps and online dictionaries help communities record and learn their native languages.

ICTs also promote languages by enabling their use in digital spaces such as social media, blogs, and online learning platforms. This visibility strengthens cultural identity and ensures that languages remain relevant in modern contexts.

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Fill in the blank: Mobile apps and online _____ help communities record and learn their native languages.

Figure 4.2 ICTs in language preservation and promotion

4.2.2 Digital platforms and multilingual communication

Digital platforms such as social media, streaming services, and e-learning sites provide spaces where multiple languages can coexist. They encourage **multilingual communication**, which refers to the use of more than one language in interaction. For instance, Nigerian users often switch between English and indigenous languages on platforms like Facebook or WhatsApp.

These platforms also allow communities to share cultural content in their own languages, reaching global audiences. This strengthens both local identity and international visibility.

Fill in the blank: Digital platforms encourage _____ communication, allowing users to interact in more than one language.

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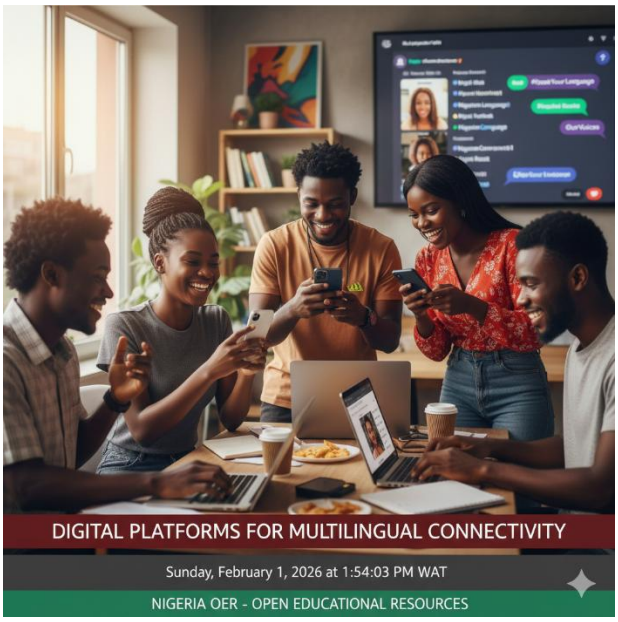

Plate 4.1 Nigerian youths engaging in multilingual communication on digital platforms

4.2.3 Challenges of technology-driven language change

While technology offers opportunities, it also poses challenges. One major issue is **language homogenisation**, where dominant languages overshadow minority ones in digital spaces. For example, English often dominates online content, reducing the visibility of indigenous languages.

Another challenge is the lack of digital resources for many Nigerian languages. Without apps, keyboards, or translation tools, these languages risk being excluded from technological development. Addressing these challenges requires deliberate investment in language technology and inclusive policies.

Fill in the blank: One major issue of technology-driven language change is language _____, where dominant languages overshadow minority ones.

Challenge Category	Specific Issues	Impact on Language Use
Linguistic Homogenisation	Dominance of **Global English** and **Nigerian Pidgin** in digital discourse.	Indigenous languages are "pushed out" of social media, leading to a loss of specialized vocabulary and traditional proverbs.
Digital Resource Gap	Lack of **standardized orthographies** and digital "corpora" for minority languages.	Languages without digital fonts or keyboard support cannot be used in formal emails, apps, or official e-governance.

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Challenge Category	Specific Issues	Impact on Language Use
Technological Exclusion	High cost of data and unreliable **power supply (epileptic power)** in rural areas.	Rural native speakers are excluded from the "digital revolution," creating a generational gap where only English-speakers access information.
Algorithmic Bias	AI and Machine Translation tools often provide **inaccurate translations** for complex Nigerian tonal languages.	Misinterpretation of safety alerts or legal documents, leading to "digital insecurity" for indigenous speakers.
Pedagogical Barriers	Shortage of **ICT-trained language teachers** and inadequate digital labs in schools.	Students view local languages as "analog" and English as "digital," reinforcing the social prestige of foreign tongues.

Table 4.2 Challenges of technology-driven language change

Pilot questions 4.2

1. Define ICTs and explain their role in language preservation.
2. Give one example of how ICTs promote indigenous languages.
3. What is meant by multilingual communication?
4. State one benefit of digital platforms for Nigerian languages.
5. Identify one challenge of technology-driven language change.
6. Explain what is meant by language homogenisation.

4.3 The Future of Nigerian Languages

4.3.1 Language endangerment and revitalisation efforts

Language endangerment refers to the risk of a language becoming extinct when fewer people use it, especially across generations. In Nigeria, many indigenous languages face this challenge due to the dominance of English in education, governance, and media. When children grow up without learning their mother tongue, the language gradually loses vitality.

Revitalisation efforts are strategies aimed at restoring endangered languages. These include community-based teaching, documentation projects, and the use of digital tools to record and share linguistic resources. For example, some Nigerian communities have developed mobile apps and radio programmes to encourage younger generations to learn their native languages.

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Fill in the blank: When children grow up without learning their mother tongue, the language gradually loses _____.

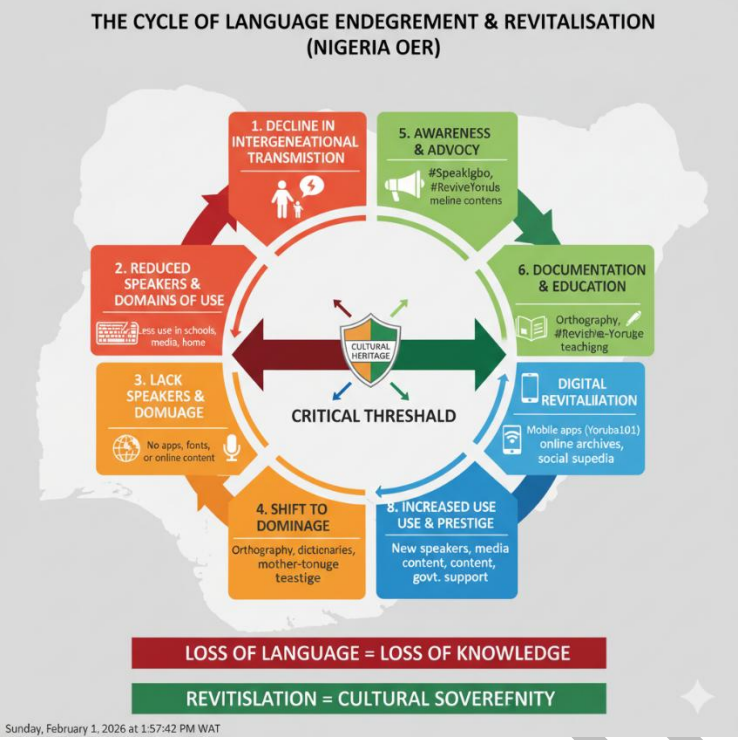

Figure 4.3 Language endangerment and revitalisation cycle

4.3.2 Policy frameworks for sustaining Nigerian languages

Policy frameworks are official plans and guidelines designed to protect and promote languages. In Nigeria, policies such as the National Policy on Education emphasise the importance of mother-tongue instruction at the early stages of schooling. These frameworks aim to ensure that indigenous languages remain part of formal education and public life.

However, implementation challenges often arise, including lack of resources, inadequate teacher training, and limited political will. Strengthening these frameworks requires collaboration between government, communities, and language experts.

Fill in the blank: The National Policy on _____ emphasises the importance of mother-tongue instruction at the early stages of schooling.

Era	Focus	Status of Indigenous Languages
Colonial (Pre-1960)	Administrative Control	Relegated to informal/religious use.

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Era	Focus	Status of Indigenous Languages
1977 – 2014	National Unity & Cognitive Ease	"Bridge" languages (used briefly, then discarded).
2022 – 2024	Cultural Sovereignty	Intended as primary media (heavy implementation gap).
2025 – 2026+	Global & Local Balance	"Subject" status with high digital preservation priority.

Box 4.2 Policy frameworks supporting Nigerian languages

4.3.3 Prospects for bilingualism and multilingualism in Nigeria

Bilingualism refers to the ability to use two languages, while **multilingualism** refers to the ability to use more than two. Nigeria is naturally multilingual, with citizens often switching between English and indigenous languages depending on context.

The future prospects for Nigerian languages lie in embracing bilingualism and multilingualism as strengths. This approach allows citizens to participate in global networks through English while maintaining cultural identity through indigenous languages. Encouraging bilingual education and multilingual media content can help sustain this balance.

Fill in the blank: Nigeria is naturally _____, with citizens often switching between English and indigenous languages.

Benefit Category	Bilingualism (e.g., English + Local Language)	Multilingualism (e.g., English + Hausa + Yoruba + Pidgin)
Primary Focus	**Global Participation & Competitiveness**	**Cultural Identity & Social Inclusivity**
Economic Impact	High access to international trade, science, and the "global digital economy."	Facilitates domestic trade across regional borders (e.g., a trader fluent in Igbo and Hausa).
Social Function	Provides a "unified voice" for official government and legal proceedings.	Promotes **inter-ethnic empathy** and reduces communal friction in diverse urban centers.
Cognitive Utility	Enables academic success in standardized national exams (WAEC, JAMB).	Enhances **metalinguistic awareness** and creative problem-solving through "code-switching."

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Benefit Category	Bilingualism (e.g., English + Local Language)	Multilingualism (e.g., English + Hausa + Yoruba + Pidgin)
Inclusivity	Connects the individual to the "elite" and professional Nigerian diaspora.	Ensures that **marginalized/minority groups** are not excluded from local governance and health services.
Digital Presence	Strong presence on global platforms (LinkedIn, academic journals).	Drives local content creation on social media and community-based OER.

Table 4.3 Prospects for bilingualism and multilingualism in Nigeria

Pilot questions 4.3

1. What is language endangerment, and why is it a concern in Nigeria?
2. Give one example of a revitalisation effort for Nigerian languages.
3. What is meant by policy frameworks in language preservation?
4. Which Nigerian policy emphasises mother-tongue instruction in early schooling?
5. Define bilingualism and multilingualism.
6. Explain why bilingualism and multilingualism are important for the future of Nigerian languages.

4.4 Contemporary Trends and Recommendations

4.4.1 Global lingua franca and its implications for Nigeria

A **global lingua franca** is a language widely used for international communication across diverse groups. English has become the dominant lingua franca, influencing education, business, and diplomacy worldwide. In Nigeria, this dominance has both advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, it enables Nigerians to participate in global networks. On the other, it reduces the use of indigenous languages in formal contexts, contributing to language shift and endangerment.

The challenge is to balance the benefits of English with the need to preserve Nigeria's linguistic diversity. Policies that encourage bilingualism can help achieve this balance.

Fill in the blank: A global _____ is a language widely used for international communication across diverse groups.

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Feature	Benefits (The Global Bridge)	Drawbacks (The Local Cost)
Social Mobility	**Participation:** Allows Nigerians to compete in the global labor market and tech industry.	**Language Shift:** Parents stop speaking native languages to children to "protect" their English fluency.
Academic Access	**Unified Curriculum:** Provides a single medium for science, medicine, and international research.	**Cognitive Gap:** Students struggle to learn complex concepts because they aren't thinking in their first language.
National Unity	**Neutrality:** Acts as a "bridge language" between Nigeria's 500+ ethnic groups to avoid tribal bias.	**Linguistic Imperialism:** Indigenous languages are viewed as "vernacular" or "inferior" in formal settings.
Digital Power	**ICT Integration:** Immediate access to global software, AI, and social media platforms.	**Homogenization:** Unique local philosophies and "untranslatable" proverbs are lost in translation.

Figure 4.4 English as a global lingua franca

4.4.2 Emerging technologies such as AI and machine translation

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as learning and problem-solving. **Machine translation** is the use of software to automatically translate text or speech from one language to another. These technologies are transforming language use by making multilingual communication faster and more accessible.

For Nigerian languages, AI and machine translation present opportunities for wider visibility. However, many indigenous languages lack sufficient digital resources, making them difficult to integrate into these technologies. Investment in language data and research is therefore essential.

Fill in the blank: _____ translation is the use of software to automatically translate text or speech from one language to another.

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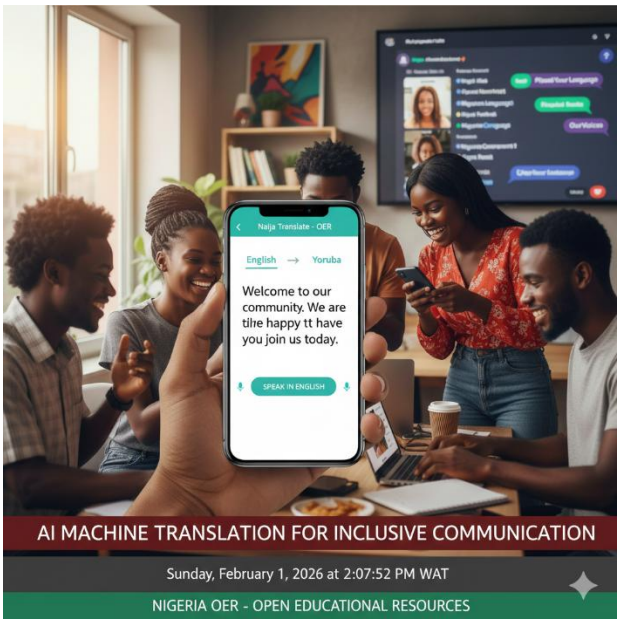

Plate 4.2 Machine translation in practice

4.4.3 Recommendations for safeguarding Nigerian languages in a globalised world

Safeguarding Nigerian languages requires deliberate strategies. These include expanding translation services, integrating indigenous languages into ICT platforms, and promoting bilingual education. Media and entertainment can also play a role by producing content in local languages for both national and international audiences.

Community involvement is crucial, as revitalisation efforts are most effective when supported by speakers themselves. Policymakers, educators, and technologists must collaborate to ensure Nigerian languages thrive in the globalised and digital future.

Fill in the blank: One recommendation for safeguarding Nigerian languages is promoting _____ education that values both English and indigenous languages.

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Box 4.3 Recommendations for safeguarding Nigerian languages

Pilot questions 4.4

1. What is meant by a global lingua franca?
2. Explain one implication of English as a global lingua franca for Nigeria.
3. Define artificial intelligence and machine translation.
4. Why do many Nigerian languages face challenges with AI and machine translation?
5. Suggest one recommendation for safeguarding Nigerian languages in a globalised world.

Series Summary

This Series has explored how globalisation and technology are shaping the future of Nigerian languages, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges they present. We began with an examination of globalisation, its dimensions, and its impact on language use worldwide, before focusing on the specific effects on Nigerian indigenous languages. We then moved on to technology, where we discussed the role of ICTs, digital platforms, and the challenges of technology-driven language change. Following that, we considered the future of Nigerian languages, looking at language endangerment, revitalisation efforts, policy frameworks, and the prospects for bilingualism and multilingualism. Finally, we concluded with contemporary trends and recommendations, including the implications of global lingua franca, emerging technologies such as AI and machine translation, and strategies for safeguarding Nigerian languages.

By engaging with these discussions, you should now be able to define globalisation and its dimensions, analyse its impact on Nigerian languages, explain the role of technology in language development, and evaluate both the risks and opportunities for the future of Nigerian languages. You should also be able to appraise contemporary trends and recommend strategies for sustaining

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Nigeria's linguistic diversity in a globalised and technologically driven world, directly aligning with the Series Learning Outcomes.

Glossary of Terms

- **Artificial intelligence (AI)**: Computer systems designed to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as learning and problem-solving.
- **Bilingualism**: The ability to use two languages effectively in communication.
- **Digital platforms**: Online spaces such as social media, streaming services, and e-learning sites where people interact and share content.
- **Globalisation**: The increasing interconnectedness of countries and communities across the world through trade, communication, culture, and technology.
- **Global lingua franca**: A language widely used for international communication across diverse groups, such as English.
- **ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies)**: Tools such as computers, mobile devices, and the internet that facilitate the storage, sharing, and transmission of information.
- **Language endangerment**: The risk of a language becoming extinct when fewer people use it, especially across generations.
- **Language homogenisation**: A process where dominant languages overshadow minority ones, reducing linguistic diversity.
- **Language shift**: When communities gradually abandon their native language in favour of a more dominant one, often for economic or social reasons.
- **Machine translation**: The use of software to automatically translate text or speech from one language to another.
- **Multilingual communication**: Interaction that involves the use of more than one language.
- **Multilingualism**: The ability to use more than two languages effectively in communication.
- **Policy frameworks**: Official plans and guidelines designed to protect and promote languages, often through education and governance.
- **Revitalisation efforts**: Strategies aimed at restoring endangered languages, such as community teaching, documentation, and digital tools.

Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective questions

1. _____ has become a global lingua franca, shaping education, business, and diplomacy. (Linked to SLO 4.1, 4.9)
2. When communities abandon their native language for a dominant one, it is called language _____. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
3. The risk of a language becoming extinct when fewer people use it is called language _____. (Linked to SLO 4.6)

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4. The National Policy on _____ emphasises the importance of mother-tongue instruction at the early stages of schooling. (Linked to SLO 4.7)
5. _____ translation is the use of software to automatically translate text or speech from one language to another. (Linked to SLO 4.10)

Short-answer questions

6. Define globalisation and describe one of its dimensions. (Linked to SLO 4.1)
7. State one positive and one negative impact of globalisation on language use worldwide. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
8. Explain the role of ICTs in language preservation. (Linked to SLO 4.3)
9. What is meant by multilingual communication, and give one example from Nigeria. (Linked to SLO 4.4)
10. Identify one challenge of technology-driven language change. (Linked to SLO 4.5)
11. Give one example of a revitalisation effort for Nigerian languages. (Linked to SLO 4.6)
12. Define bilingualism and multilingualism. (Linked to SLO 4.8)
13. Explain one implication of English as a global lingua franca for Nigerian languages. (Linked to SLO 4.9)
14. Suggest one recommendation for safeguarding Nigerian languages in a globalised world. (Linked to SLO 4.11)

Long-answer questions

15. Analyse the impact of globalisation on Nigerian indigenous languages, giving examples. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
16. Evaluate the contribution of ICTs and digital platforms to language preservation and promotion. (Linked to SLO 4.3, 4.4)
17. Assess the prospects for bilingualism and multilingualism in Nigeria's future. (Linked to SLO 4.8)
18. Appraise contemporary issues such as AI and machine translation, and recommend strategies for safeguarding Nigerian languages. (Linked to SLO 4.10, 4.11)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective questions

1. English
2. Shift
3. Endangerment
4. Education
5. Machine

Short-answer questions

6. Globalisation is the increasing interconnectedness of countries and communities. One dimension is cultural, which affects language use.

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7. Positive: Encourages multilingualism. Negative: Causes decline of minority languages.
8. ICTs preserve languages by providing tools such as apps and online dictionaries to record and teach them.
9. Multilingual communication is interaction in more than one language. Example: Nigerians switching between English and Yoruba on social media.
10. One challenge is language homogenisation, where dominant languages overshadow minority ones.
11. Community radio programmes in indigenous languages are one revitalisation effort.
12. Bilingualism is the ability to use two languages, while multilingualism is the ability to use more than two.
13. English enables global participation but reduces the use of indigenous languages in formal contexts.
14. Promoting bilingual education that values both English and indigenous languages.

Long-answer questions

15. **Basic response**: Globalisation reduces the use of Nigerian indigenous languages due to the dominance of English in education and governance. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may highlight how globalisation also creates opportunities for Nigerian languages through films, music, and digital platforms, suggesting balanced policies to protect linguistic diversity.
16. **Basic response**: ICTs and digital platforms help preserve languages by providing apps, online dictionaries, and spaces for multilingual communication. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may evaluate how these tools also risk homogenisation, and propose investment in indigenous language technology to ensure inclusivity.
17. **Basic response**: Nigeria's future lies in embracing bilingualism and multilingualism, allowing participation in global networks while maintaining cultural identity. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may propose bilingual education policies and multilingual media initiatives as sustainable strategies for language preservation.
18. **Basic response**: AI and machine translation make multilingual communication easier but many Nigerian languages lack digital resources. Recommendations include expanding translation services and integrating indigenous languages into ICT platforms. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may suggest innovative approaches such as developing language corpora for Nigerian languages, creating mobile apps, and fostering collaboration between technologists and communities

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 4]

Part 4.1 Globalisation and Nigerian Languages

- Globalisation is the increasing interconnectedness of countries and communities. Its dimensions include economic, cultural, political, and technological.
- English.
- Language shift.
- Positive impact: Encourages multilingualism. Negative impact: Decline of minority languages.

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- Globalisation reduces the use of indigenous languages in formal contexts while also offering opportunities for promotion through digital platforms.
- Language endangerment.
- Nigerian languages can be promoted through films, music, social media, and digital tools.

Part 4.2 Technology and Language Development

- ICTs are tools such as computers, mobile devices, and the internet. They preserve languages by documenting and teaching them.
- Mobile apps and online dictionaries.
- Multilingual communication is interaction in more than one language. Example: Nigerians switching between English and Hausa on WhatsApp.
- Digital platforms allow communities to share cultural content in their own languages with global audiences.
- One challenge is language homogenisation.
- Language homogenisation.

Part 4.3 The Future of Nigerian Languages

- Language endangerment is the risk of a language becoming extinct when fewer people use it. It is a concern because many Nigerian languages are losing vitality.
- Community-based teaching, mobile apps, and radio programmes.
- Policy frameworks are official plans and guidelines designed to protect and promote languages.
- National Policy on Education.
- Bilingualism is the ability to use two languages, while multilingualism is the ability to use more than two.
- They are important because they allow Nigerians to participate in global networks while maintaining cultural identity.

Part 4.4 Contemporary Trends and Recommendations

- A global lingua franca is a language widely used for international communication across diverse groups.
- English enables Nigerians to participate globally but reduces the use of indigenous languages in formal contexts.
- Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems that perform tasks requiring human intelligence. Machine translation is software that automatically translates text or speech.
- Many Nigerian languages lack sufficient digital resources, making them difficult to integrate into AI and machine translation.

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- Promoting bilingual education, expanding translation services, and integrating indigenous languages into ICT platforms.

References and Attributions [Series 4]

General References

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Illustrations and Suggested OER Sources

- **Figure 4.1 Dimensions of globalisation and language** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Dimensions of globalisation language OER Nigeria". AI prompt used: "Create a diagram showing economic, cultural, political, and technological dimensions of globalisation connected to language use."
- **Table 4.1 Positive and negative impacts of globalisation on language use worldwide** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Impact of globalisation on language OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a table showing positive impacts (multilingualism, global communication) and negative impacts (language shift, decline of minority languages)."
- **Box 4.1 Case studies of Nigerian indigenous languages under pressure from globalisation** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Globalisation effects Nigerian indigenous languages OER case studies". AI prompt used: "Create a box listing examples such as reduced use of Tiv in schools, Yoruba in urban centres, and Igbo in media."
- **Figure 4.2 ICTs in language preservation and promotion** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "ICTs language preservation Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Create a diagram showing ICT tools such as apps, online dictionaries, and social media supporting language preservation."
- **Plate 4.1 Nigerian youths engaging in multilingual communication on digital platforms** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Digital platforms multilingual communication Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate an image of Nigerian youths using mobile phones and laptops for multilingual communication on social media."
- **Table 4.2 Challenges of technology-driven language change** Attribution: Suggested OER search string "Technology-driven language change Nigeria OER". AI prompt used: "Generate a table listing challenges such as language homogenisation, lack of digital resources, and exclusion from technology."

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- **Figure 4.3 Language endangerment and revitalisation cycle** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Language endangerment revitalisation Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a diagram showing language endangerment (decline in use) and revitalisation efforts (teaching, documentation, digital tools).”
- **Box 4.2 Policy frameworks supporting Nigerian languages** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Policy frameworks Nigerian languages OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a box listing policies such as the National Policy on Education and community-based language initiatives.”
- **Table 4.3 Prospects for bilingualism and multilingualism in Nigeria** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Bilingualism multilingualism Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Generate a table showing benefits of bilingualism (global participation) and multilingualism (cultural identity, inclusivity).”
- **Figure 4.4 English as a global lingua franca** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Global lingua franca Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a diagram showing English as a global lingua franca with benefits (global participation) and drawbacks (language shift).”
- **Plate 4.2 Machine translation in practice** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Machine translation Nigerian languages OER”. AI prompt used: “Generate an image of a mobile phone showing a translation app converting English text into Yoruba.”
- **Box 4.3 Recommendations for safeguarding Nigerian languages** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Safeguarding Nigerian languages globalisation OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a box listing recommendations such as translation services, ICT integration, bilingual education, and community involvement.”

Course code: LIN 205
Course title: Nigerian Languages and National Development/ the SDGs

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Nigerian Languages and National Development

Series 2: Language Policy, Education, and Governance

Series 3: Language in Security, Integration, and Social Inclusion

Series 4: Globalization, Technology, and the Future of Nigerian Languages

Series 5: Sustainable Development Goals and Linguistic Dimensions of Trade and Development

Proposed Outline for Series 5

Part .1 Sustainable Development Goals and Language

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- 5.1.1 Overview of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- 5.1.2 The role of language in achieving the SDGs
- 5.1.3 Case studies of language and SDG implementation in Nigeria

Part .2 Language and Trade

- 5.2.1 Importance of language in trade negotiations and agreements
- 5.2.2 Multilingualism in regional and international trade
- 5.2.3 Challenges of language barriers in trade and commerce

Part .3 Language and Development

- 5.3.1 Language as a tool for inclusive development
- 5.3.2 Language in education, health, and governance as drivers of development
- 5.3.3 Policy frameworks linking language to sustainable development

Part .4 Contemporary Issues and Recommendations

- 5.4.1 Globalisation, trade, and linguistic diversity
- 5.4.2 Emerging technologies and language in trade and development
- 5.4.3 Recommendations for integrating language into SDG strategies

Introduction

Trade and development are central to the progress of nations, and language plays a crucial role in shaping how these processes unfold. From international negotiations to local markets, the ability to communicate effectively across linguistic boundaries determines inclusivity, fairness, and sustainability. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a global framework for addressing poverty, inequality, and growth, cannot be fully achieved without recognising the linguistic dimensions that influence participation and access. This Series therefore highlights the intersection of language, trade, and development within the broader context of the SDGs.

The aim of this Series is to equip you with the knowledge to analyse how language contributes to sustainable development, evaluate its role in trade and commerce, and propose strategies for integrating linguistic diversity into development policies and practices.

We shall commence this Series by examining the Sustainable Development Goals and the role of language in their achievement, including case studies from Nigeria. Next, we will explore language and trade, focusing on its importance in negotiations, the role of multilingualism, and the challenges posed by language barriers. Following that, we will move on to language and development, where we will consider how language supports inclusive growth in education, health, and governance, as well as the policy frameworks that link language to sustainable development. Finally, we will wrap up with contemporary issues and recommendations,

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including the impact of globalisation, emerging technologies, and strategies for integrating language into SDG implementation.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 5.1** define the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and explain their relevance to language use,
- **SLO 5.2** analyse the role of language in achieving selected SDGs with reference to Nigerian case studies,
- **SLO 5.3** explain the importance of language in trade negotiations and agreements,
- **SLO 5.4** evaluate the role of multilingualism in regional and international trade,
- **SLO 5.5** identify challenges posed by language barriers in trade and commerce,
- **SLO 5.6** demonstrate how language functions as a tool for inclusive development,
- **SLO 5.7** assess the contribution of language to education, health, and governance as drivers of development,
- **SLO 5.8** examine policy frameworks that link language to sustainable development,
- **SLO 5.9** analyse the impact of globalisation on linguistic diversity in trade and development,
- **SLO 5.10** describe emerging technologies that influence language use in trade and development, and
- **SLO 5.11** recommend strategies for integrating linguistic diversity into SDG implementation and development planning.

5.1 Sustainable Development Goals and Language

5.1.1 Overview of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are a set of 17 global objectives adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to address pressing challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and peace. They provide a universal framework for countries to work towards inclusive and sustainable development by 2030. Each goal is interconnected, meaning progress in one area often supports progress in others.

Language plays a subtle but powerful role in the SDGs. It shapes how information is communicated, how communities participate, and how policies are implemented. Without effective communication in languages people understand, many of the goals risk being inaccessible to large populations.

Fill in the blank: The SDGs are a set of _____ global objectives adopted by the United Nations in 2015.

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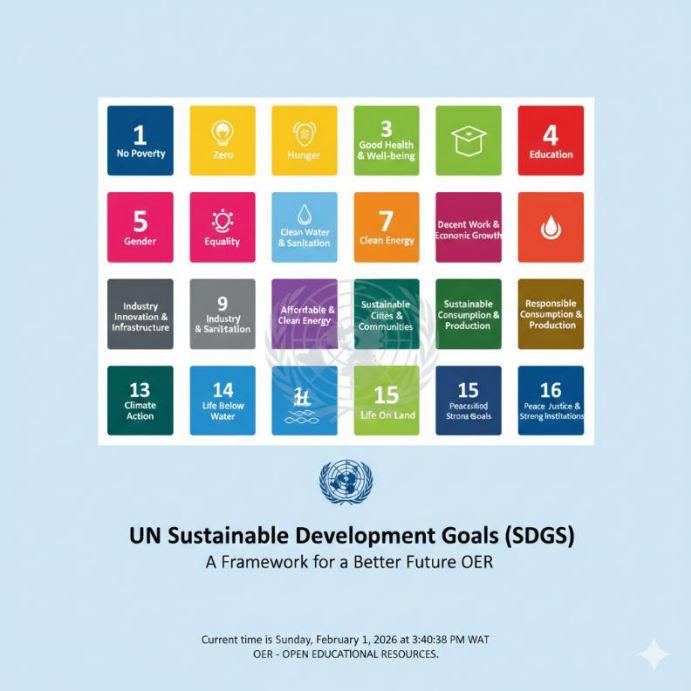

Figure 5.1 The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

5.1.2 The role of language in achieving the SDGs

Language is a system of communication using words, symbols, or sounds that enables people to share ideas and information. In the context of the SDGs, language is essential for awareness, education, and participation. For example, Goal 4 (Quality Education) cannot be achieved if learners are excluded due to language barriers. Similarly, Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) depends on clear communication between health providers and patients.

Language also ensures inclusivity. When policies and programmes are delivered in indigenous languages, communities are more likely to engage and benefit. This highlights the importance of multilingual approaches in achieving sustainable development.

Fill in the blank: Goal 4 of the SDGs focuses on quality _____, which cannot be achieved if learners face language barriers.

SDG	Focus	The Language Support Pillar	Impact on Achievement
Goal 3	**Good Health & Well-being**	**Health Literacy in Mother Tongue:** Translating medical advice and emergency alerts into local languages (e.g., Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo).	Reduces maternal mortality and infectious disease spread by ensuring rural communities understand prescriptions and safety protocols.

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SDG	Focus	The Language Support Pillar	Impact on Achievement
Goal 4	**Quality Education**	**Mother Tongue-Based Instruction:** Using indigenous languages as a "cognitive scaffold" in early childhood education.	Drastically reduces "learning poverty" and school dropout rates, as children grasp complex math/science concepts more easily in their first language.
Goal 5	**Gender Equality**	**Culturally Sensitive Advocacy:** Using local proverbs and songs to challenge harmful gender norms and domestic violence.	Increases the effectiveness of rights-based education by using the "emotional resonance" of a community's own language to drive social change.
Goal 16	**Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions**	**Linguistic Access to Justice:** Providing court interpretation and translating legal documents into regional dialects.	Ensures "equal access to justice" for non-English speakers, reducing social exclusion and fostering trust in government institutions.
Goal 17	**Partnerships for the Goals**	**Inclusive Multi-stakeholder Dialogue:** Ensuring that "bottom-up" partnerships include indigenous voices in their own tongues.	Bridges the gap between global policy and grassroots implementation, making sustainable development a shared community goal.

Table 5.1 Examples of SDGs and their linguistic dimensions

5.1.3 Case studies of language and SDG implementation in Nigeria

Nigeria provides practical examples of how language influences SDG implementation. In education, the use of mother tongue in early schooling supports literacy and aligns with Goal 4. In health campaigns, translating information into local languages improves awareness of issues such as maternal health and disease prevention, contributing to Goal 3.

In governance, multilingual communication enhances transparency and participation, which supports Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). These case studies show that language is not just a tool for communication but a driver of sustainable development.

Fill in the blank: Translating health information into local languages improves awareness of issues such as _____ health and disease prevention.

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Assessment Category	Mother Tongue (MT) Instruction	English-Only Instruction	The "Bridging" Effect
Early Grade Literacy	**Higher Proficiency (Avg. 65.4%)**	Lower Proficiency (Avg. 46%)	MT provides a "meaningful" start; children read faster when they know the words first.
Concept Comprehension	**High:** Students grasp Math/Science concepts in familiar vocabulary.	**Low:** Students often memorize sounds without understanding meanings.	Concepts learned in MT transfer easily to English later without re-teaching.
Transition to L2 (English)	**Accelerated:** Faster acquisition of English in later grades.	**Delayed:** Higher risk of "Learning Poverty" and grade repetition.	Learning to read once (in MT) makes learning to read in a second language purely a vocabulary task.
Gender Performance	**Higher for Girls (Avg. 68.3%)**	Marginal difference between genders.	MT instruction often keeps girls in school longer, especially in rural areas.
Student Engagement	**Active:** Higher curiosity, initiative, and manual dexterity.	**Passive:** Students may become silent or "shy" due to the language barrier.	Emotional and cognitive stability is higher when the school "speaks" like the home.

Box 5.1 Case studies of language and SDG implementation in Nigeria

Pilot questions 5.1

1. What are the Sustainable Development Goals, and when were they adopted?
2. How does language contribute to achieving the SDGs?
3. Give one example of how language supports Goal 4 (Quality Education).
4. Explain why multilingual approaches are important in sustainable development.
5. Provide one Nigerian case study showing the role of language in SDG implementation.

5.2 Language and Trade

5.2.1 Importance of language in trade negotiations and agreements

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Trade negotiations are discussions between parties aimed at reaching agreements on the exchange of goods and services. Language is central to these negotiations because it ensures clarity, builds trust, and prevents misunderstandings. When negotiators share a common language, agreements are more likely to be successful. Conversely, poor communication can lead to disputes or failed deals.

In international trade, the choice of language often determines who participates and how equitable the process is. English, French, and Mandarin are widely used, but the exclusion of local languages can marginalise smaller economies and communities.

Fill in the blank: Poor communication in trade negotiations can lead to disputes or failed _____.

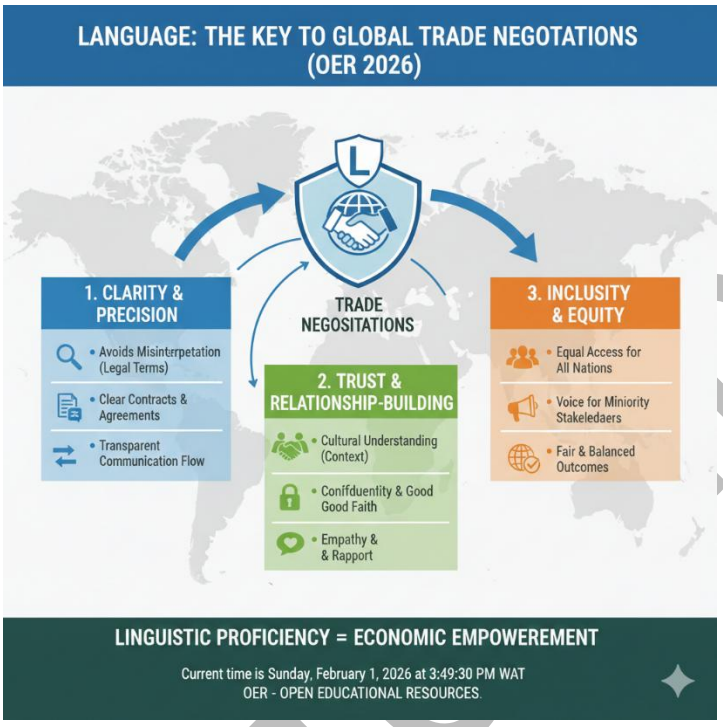

Figure 5.2 Language in trade negotiations

5.2.2 Multilingualism in regional and international trade

Multilingualism is the ability to use more than two languages effectively in communication. In trade, multilingualism is an asset because it allows businesses to expand across regions and engage diverse partners. For example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) operates in English, French, and Portuguese, reflecting the linguistic diversity of its member states.

Multilingualism also enhances inclusivity by ensuring that smaller traders and communities can participate in regional markets. It reduces barriers and fosters cooperation across borders.

Fill in the blank: ECOWAS operates in English, French, and _____, reflecting the linguistic diversity of its member states.

Multiunulalism in Global & Regional Trade Organizations (OER 2026)

Organization	Type	Working Languages
ECOWAS (Economic	Regional Trade Bloc	English, Portugese
(Economic Community of West State	English, French, Portugsee	English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Portugee, Swahli, Owali, Other African Languages
AU (African Union	Continental Union	
WTO	Global Trade Orgaization	English, French, Spanish
AfCFTA (African Continental	Global Trade Regulatior	English, Arabic
Continental Free-Trade Area	English, French, Swhali	Portuggee
United Nations (UNCTAD)	English, French, Spanish,	English, French,
Global Economic Body (Trade Focus)	Russian, Arabic	Russian, Chinee, Arabic

Ensuring lingiestic diversity fosters inclulsity and equiable partnerships.

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Table 5.2 Examples of multilingualism in regional and international trade

5.2.3 Challenges of language barriers in trade and commerce

Language barriers occur when people cannot communicate effectively due to differences in language. In trade, these barriers can cause delays, misinterpretations, and financial losses. For instance, contracts written in one language may be misunderstood by parties who are not fluent, leading to disputes.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often face greater challenges because they may lack resources for translation or interpretation. Addressing language barriers requires investment in multilingual documentation, translation services, and training.

Fill in the blank: Contracts written in one language may be _____ by parties who are not fluent.

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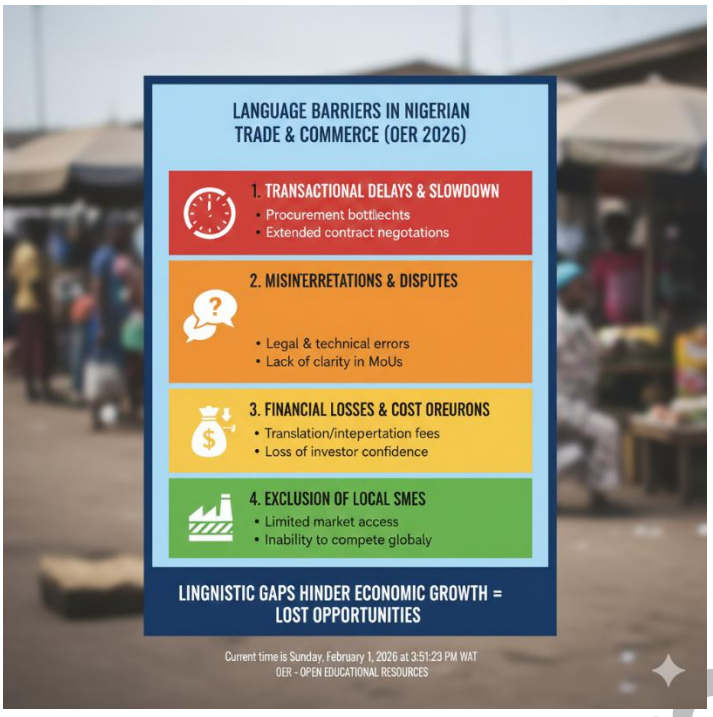

Box 5.2 Challenges of language barriers in trade and commerce

Pilot questions 5.2

1. Why is language important in trade negotiations?
2. Give one example of how multilingualism supports regional trade.
3. What are the working languages of ECOWAS?
4. Define language barriers in the context of trade.
5. State one challenge SMEs face due to language barriers.

5.3 Language and Development

5.3.1 Language as a tool for inclusive development

Inclusive development refers to growth that benefits all members of society, particularly marginalised groups. Language is a key tool in achieving inclusivity because it determines who can access information, participate in decision-making, and benefit from opportunities. When development programmes are communicated in indigenous languages, communities are more likely to understand and engage with them.

For example, agricultural extension services delivered in local languages help farmers adopt new techniques more effectively. Similarly, financial literacy campaigns in mother tongues empower rural populations to participate in economic activities.

Fill in the blank: Agricultural extension services delivered in local _____ help farmers adopt new techniques more effectively.

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Figure 5.3 Language as a tool for inclusive development

Diagram showing language as a tool for inclusive development (education, agriculture, finance, governance) AI prompt suggestion: “Create a diagram showing how language supports inclusive development in education, agriculture, finance, and governance.” Search string: “Language inclusive development Nigeria OER”

5.3.2 Language in education, health, and governance as drivers of development

Education, health, and governance are critical drivers of development, and language plays a central role in each. In **education**, the use of mother tongue in early schooling improves literacy and learning outcomes. In **health**, clear communication in local languages ensures that communities understand medical advice and public health campaigns. In **governance**, multilingual communication fosters transparency and citizen participation.

These sectors demonstrate that language is not just a cultural asset but a practical tool for achieving sustainable development.

Fill in the blank: Clear communication in local languages ensures that communities understand _____ advice and public health campaigns.

Table 5.3 Language in education, health, and governance as drivers of development

AI prompt suggestion: “Generate a table showing how language supports education (literacy), health (communication), and governance (participation).” Search string: “Language education health governance development Nigeria OER”

5.3.3 Policy frameworks linking language to sustainable development

Policy frameworks are official plans and guidelines designed to protect and promote languages within development strategies. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education emphasises mother-tongue instruction in early schooling, aligning with inclusive development goals. Other frameworks encourage multilingual communication in governance and health services.

Effective policy frameworks ensure that language is integrated into national development planning. However, challenges such as inadequate resources and weak implementation often limit their impact. Strengthening these frameworks requires collaboration between government, communities, and language experts.

Fill in the blank: The National Policy on _____ emphasises mother-tongue instruction in early schooling.

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Box 5.3 Policy frameworks linking language to sustainable development

Pilot questions 5.3

1. What is inclusive development, and how does language support it?
2. Give one example of how language promotes inclusive development in agriculture or finance.
3. Explain the role of language in education, health, and governance as drivers of development.
4. Which Nigerian policy emphasises mother-tongue instruction in early schooling?
5. State one challenge in implementing language-related policy frameworks.

5.4 Contemporary Issues and Recommendations

5.4.1 Globalisation, trade, and linguistic diversity

Globalisation refers to the increasing interconnectedness of countries and communities through trade, communication, culture, and technology. In the context of trade and development, globalisation often promotes dominant languages such as English, French, and Mandarin, which serve as global lingua francas. While this facilitates international commerce, it can also reduce the visibility of indigenous languages, leading to **linguistic diversity** being overlooked.

For Nigeria, globalisation presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, it enables participation in global markets. On the other, it risks marginalising local traders who cannot communicate in dominant languages. Balancing global participation with the preservation of linguistic diversity is therefore essential.

Fill in the blank: Globalisation often promotes dominant languages such as English, French, and _____.

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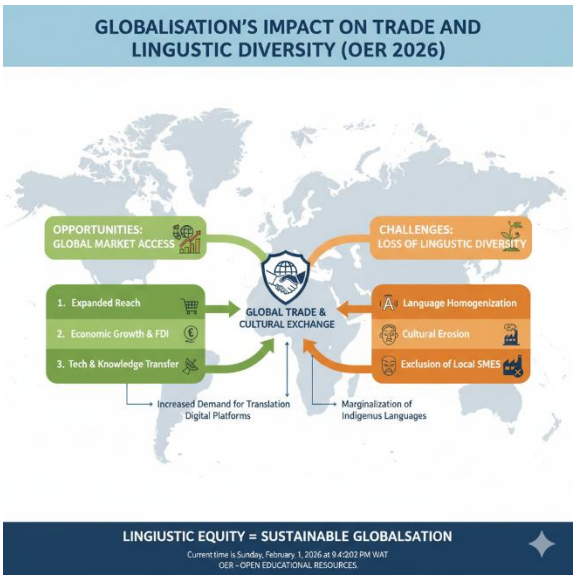

Figure 5.4 Globalisation, trade, and linguistic diversity

5.4.2 Emerging technologies and language in trade and development

Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine translation, and digital platforms are transforming trade and development. These tools make multilingual communication faster and more accessible, allowing businesses to reach wider audiences. For example, translation apps can help Nigerian traders communicate with partners in Asia or Europe.

However, many indigenous languages lack digital resources, making them difficult to integrate into these technologies. Without deliberate investment, smaller languages risk exclusion from technological progress.

Fill in the blank: Translation apps can help Nigerian traders communicate with partners in _____ or Europe.

Plate 5.1 Emerging technologies supporting trade communication

5.4.3 Recommendations for integrating language into SDG strategies

Safeguarding linguistic diversity requires deliberate strategies. These include promoting bilingual education, expanding translation services, and integrating indigenous languages into ICT platforms. Media and entertainment can also play a role by producing content in local languages for both national and international audiences.

Community involvement is crucial, as revitalisation efforts are most effective when supported by speakers themselves. Policymakers, educators, and technologists must collaborate to ensure Nigerian languages thrive in the globalised and digital future.

Fill in the blank: One recommendation for safeguarding Nigerian languages is promoting _____ education that values both English and indigenous languages.

Box 5.4 Recommendations for integrating language into SDG strategies

Pilot questions 5.4

1. Define globalisation and explain its impact on linguistic diversity in trade.
2. State one opportunity and one challenge globalisation presents for Nigerian languages.
3. Describe how emerging technologies support multilingual communication in trade.
4. Why do many indigenous languages face challenges with emerging technologies?
5. Suggest one recommendation for integrating language into SDG strategies.

Series Summary

This Series has examined the relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), language, trade, and development. We began by introducing the SDGs and highlighting the crucial role of language in their achievement, with case studies from Nigeria showing how communication in indigenous languages supports education, health, and governance. We then explored language and trade, focusing on its importance in negotiations, the benefits of multilingualism in regional and international commerce, and the challenges posed by language barriers.

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Next, we considered language and development, showing how inclusive growth depends on communication in education, health, and governance, and how policy frameworks link language to sustainable development. Finally, we addressed contemporary issues, including the impact of globalisation, the opportunities and risks of emerging technologies such as AI and machine translation, and practical recommendations for integrating linguistic diversity into SDG strategies. By completing this Series, you should now be able to analyse the linguistic dimensions of trade and development, evaluate their impact on the SDGs, and propose strategies for safeguarding Nigeria's linguistic diversity in a globalised world.

Glossary of Terms

- **Artificial intelligence (AI)**: Computer systems designed to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving.
- **Globalisation**: The increasing interconnectedness of countries and communities through trade, communication, culture, and technology.
- **Inclusive development**: Growth that benefits all members of society, especially marginalised groups, by ensuring equal access to opportunities and resources.
- **Language**: A system of communication using words, symbols, or sounds that enables people to share ideas and information.
- **Language barriers**: Difficulties in communication that arise when people do not share a common language, often leading to misunderstandings or exclusion.
- **Linguistic diversity**: The presence of multiple languages within a community, region, or country.
- **Multilingualism**: The ability to use more than two languages effectively in communication.
- **Policy frameworks**: Official plans and guidelines designed to protect and promote languages within development strategies.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**: A set of 17 global objectives adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to address challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and peace by 2030.
- **Trade negotiations**: Discussions between parties aimed at reaching agreements on the exchange of goods and services.
- **Translation apps**: Digital tools that automatically convert text or speech from one language into another, supporting multilingual communication.

Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

Objective questions

1. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations in _____. (Linked to SLO 5.1)

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2. Goal 4 of the SDGs focuses on quality _____. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
3. ECOWAS operates in English, French, and _____. (Linked to SLO 5.4)
4. The National Policy on _____ emphasises mother-tongue instruction in early schooling. (Linked to SLO 5.8)
5. Translation _____ are digital tools that automatically convert text or speech from one language into another. (Linked to SLO 5.10)

Short-answer questions

6. Define the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). (Linked to SLO 5.1)
7. Explain one way language contributes to achieving the SDGs. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
8. Why is language important in trade negotiations? (Linked to SLO 5.3)
9. State one benefit of multilingualism in regional trade. (Linked to SLO 5.4)
10. Identify one challenge posed by language barriers in trade and commerce. (Linked to SLO 5.5)
11. Give one example of how language supports inclusive development. (Linked to SLO 5.6)
12. Explain the role of language in health communication. (Linked to SLO 5.7)
13. What is meant by policy frameworks in language and development? (Linked to SLO 5.8)
14. State one opportunity and one challenge globalisation presents for Nigerian languages. (Linked to SLO 5.9)
15. Describe one emerging technology that influences language use in trade and development. (Linked to SLO 5.10)
16. Suggest one recommendation for integrating language into SDG strategies. (Linked to SLO 5.11)

Long-answer questions

17. Analyse the role of language in achieving selected SDGs, with reference to Nigerian case studies. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
18. Evaluate the importance of multilingualism in regional and international trade. (Linked to SLO 5.4)
19. Assess how language contributes to inclusive development in education, health, and governance. (Linked to SLO 5.6, 5.7)
20. Appraise contemporary issues such as globalisation and emerging technologies, and recommend strategies for safeguarding linguistic diversity in SDG implementation. (Linked to SLO 5.9, 5.10, 5.11)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

Objective questions

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1. 2015
2. Education
3. Portuguese
4. Education
5. Apps

Short-answer questions

6. The SDGs are a set of 17 global objectives adopted by the United Nations to address poverty, inequality, climate change, and peace by 2030.

7. Language ensures inclusivity by enabling communities to access information and participate in programmes.

8. Language ensures clarity, builds trust, and prevents misunderstandings in trade negotiations.

9. Multilingualism allows diverse partners to participate and fosters cooperation across borders.

10. Misinterpretations of contracts are a common challenge caused by language barriers.

11. Delivering agricultural extension services in local languages helps farmers adopt new techniques.

12. Clear communication in local languages ensures communities understand medical advice and public health campaigns.

13. Policy frameworks are official plans and guidelines designed to integrate language into development strategies.

14. Opportunity: Participation in global markets. Challenge: Marginalisation of indigenous languages.

15. Machine translation apps enable faster multilingual communication in trade.

16. Promoting bilingual education that values both English and indigenous languages.

Long-answer questions

17. **Basic response**: Language supports SDGs by enabling access to education, health, and governance. Nigerian case studies include mother-tongue education and health campaigns in local languages. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may highlight how multilingual governance initiatives enhance transparency and participation, and propose expanding language use in digital platforms to strengthen SDG implementation.

18. **Basic response**: Multilingualism supports trade by reducing barriers and fostering cooperation across regions. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may evaluate how multilingualism strengthens organisations like ECOWAS and WTO, and propose policies to support SMEs with translation services.

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19. **Basic response**: Language contributes to inclusive development by improving literacy in education, ensuring clear health communication, and fostering citizen participation in governance. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may assess how integrating indigenous languages into ICT platforms can further enhance inclusivity and propose reforms to strengthen policy frameworks.

20. **Basic response**: Globalisation promotes dominant languages while marginalising indigenous ones, and emerging technologies like AI and machine translation offer opportunities but exclude smaller languages. Recommendations include bilingual education and ICT integration. **Value-added response**: Outstanding learners may propose innovative strategies such as developing language corpora for Nigerian languages, creating mobile apps, and fostering collaboration between policymakers, technologists, and communities to safeguard linguistic diversity.

Answers to Pilot Questions [5]

Part 5.1 Sustainable Development Goals and Language

- The Sustainable Development Goals are a set of 17 global objectives adopted by the United Nations in 2015.
- Language contributes to achieving the SDGs by ensuring inclusivity, enabling communities to access information and participate in programmes.
- One example is the use of mother tongue in early schooling, which supports literacy and aligns with Goal 4 (Quality Education).
- Multilingual approaches are important because they allow diverse communities to engage fully in development initiatives.
- Translating health information into local languages improves awareness of maternal health and disease prevention.

Part 5.2 Language and Trade

- Language is important in trade negotiations because it ensures clarity, builds trust, and prevents misunderstandings.
- Multilingualism supports regional trade by allowing diverse partners to participate and fostering cooperation across borders.
- The working languages of ECOWAS are English, French, and Portuguese.
- Language barriers in trade are difficulties in communication that arise when people do not share a common language.
- SMEs often face challenges such as misinterpretations of contracts due to lack of translation resources.

Part 5.3 Language and Development

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- Inclusive development is growth that benefits all members of society, especially marginalised groups, and language supports it by enabling access to information and participation.
- One example is agricultural extension services delivered in local languages, which help farmers adopt new techniques.
- Language promotes literacy in education, ensures clear communication in health, and fosters citizen participation in governance.
- The Nigerian National Policy on Education emphasises mother-tongue instruction in early schooling.
- One challenge in implementing language-related policy frameworks is inadequate resources and weak enforcement.

Part 5.4 Contemporary Issues and Recommendations

- Globalisation is the increasing interconnectedness of countries and communities, and it impacts linguistic diversity by promoting dominant languages while marginalising indigenous ones.
- One opportunity globalisation presents is enabling participation in global markets, while one challenge is the decline of indigenous languages.
- Emerging technologies such as machine translation apps support multilingual communication in trade.
- Many indigenous languages face challenges because they lack sufficient digital resources for integration into emerging technologies.
- One recommendation for integrating language into SDG strategies is promoting bilingual education that values both English and indigenous languages.

References and Attributions [Series 5]

General References

- Bamgbose, A. (1991). *Language and the nation: The language question in sub-Saharan Africa*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Emenanjo, E. N. (1990). *Multilingualism, minority languages and language policy in Nigeria*. Agbor: Central Books.
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Illustrations and Suggested OER Sources

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- **Figure 5.1 The 17 Sustainable Development Goals** Attribution: United Nations SDG icons (openly available for educational use). AI prompt used: “Create a diagram showing the 17 SDG icons arranged in a colourful grid.” Search string: “UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals icons OER”
- **Table 5.1 Examples of SDGs and their linguistic dimensions** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “SDGs language dimension OER Nigeria”. AI prompt used: “Generate a table showing selected SDGs (e.g., Goal 3, Goal 4, Goal 16) and how language supports their achievement.”
- **Box 5.1 Case studies of language and SDG implementation in Nigeria** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Nigeria SDG implementation language case studies OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a box listing examples such as mother-tongue education for literacy, health campaigns in local languages, and multilingual governance initiatives.”
- **Figure 5.2 Language in trade negotiations** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Language role trade negotiations OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a diagram showing how language supports clarity, trust, and inclusivity in trade negotiations.”
- **Table 5.2 Examples of multilingualism in regional and international trade** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Multilingualism in trade organisations OER”. AI prompt used: “Generate a table showing organisations like ECOWAS, AU, and WTO with their working languages.”
- **Box 5.2 Challenges of language barriers in trade and commerce** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Language barriers trade commerce Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a box listing challenges such as delays, misinterpretations, financial losses, and exclusion of SMEs.”
- **Figure 5.3 Language as a tool for inclusive development** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Language inclusive development Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a diagram showing how language supports inclusive development in education, agriculture, finance, and governance.”
- **Table 5.3 Language in education, health, and governance as drivers of development** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Language education health governance development Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Generate a table showing how language supports education (literacy), health (communication), and governance (participation).”
- **Box 5.3 Policy frameworks linking language to sustainable development** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Policy frameworks language sustainable development Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a box listing policies such as the National Policy on Education and multilingual governance initiatives.”
- **Figure 5.4 Globalisation, trade, and linguistic diversity** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Globalisation trade linguistic diversity Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a diagram showing globalisation’s impact on trade with opportunities (global markets) and challenges (loss of linguistic diversity).”
- **Plate 5.1 Emerging technologies supporting trade communication** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Emerging technologies language trade Nigeria OER”. AI

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prompt used: “Generate an image of a Nigerian trader using a mobile phone translation app showing English and Hausa text.”

- **Box 5.4 Recommendations for integrating language into SDG strategies** Attribution: Suggested OER search string “Recommendations language SDG strategies Nigeria OER”. AI prompt used: “Create a box listing recommendations such as bilingual education, translation services, ICT integration, and community involvement.

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