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An Overview of the Language Planning Situation in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines language planning and policy frameworks in multilingual Nigeria, where English operates alongside indigenous languages in the herculean task of nation-building. The adoption of English as lingua franca in the country, in spite of its alien origin and non-conformity with the socio-cultural nuances of communication therein, is informed by the benefits of the language to the nation, particularly when comprehensive and forward-looking language planning and policies are evolved for the country. In critical domains of nationhood, including social media, conventional media, education and governance, English is functionally potent in individual and group communication. Language planning in Nigeria reveals the sociolinguistic dimensions and implications of language issues; in this regard, phenomena such as the suppression of indigenous languages, language attitudes, divisive potential of language, ethnic resentments, government apathy, criticisms on language policy frameworks, dominance of major Nigerian languages over minority ones, marginalization of languages and ethnic groups, proposals for good language planning/policies, fear of language loss, etc are brought to the fore. Exploring Morgan's Speech Community Theory as a framework, this study concludes that language planning and policies in Nigeria should not only accommodate Nigeria's multilingual realities, but should also be implemented with sincerity of purpose in line with the prospects and constraints.

Keywords

language planning, language policy, overview, multilingualism, Morgan's Speech Community Theory

1. Introduction

In Nigeria, language planning and policies are conscious of the significance of a national language in fostering national cohesion/integration and national development, particularly in a situation of multiculturalism, multi-ethnicity and multilingualism which are typical of nations with large geographical size. Nwankwo Nnamdi Victor (2018, p. 158) reports that 'Nigeria has no one single language that can be regarded as a national language. Different communities or groups of countries have

one language or the other peculiar to them and such languages are held and guarded jealously. The numerous languages have no place in official and educational matters although official recognition is accorded three major languages that represent the three major geographical regions ... Hausa in the Northern part, Igbo in the South Eastern part, and Yoruba in the South Western part. Even then, the so-called regional language in each region is in most cases, not mutually intelligible or not widely accepted in their respective regions as other linguistic groups continue to affirm the supremacy of their languages. For example, in the Eastern part, other languages being promoted by their speakers apart from Igbo include Efik, Ibibio, Ijaw, etc., and in the North although Hausa is known to have a very wide range of speakers, outside the region, many tribes would not allow the Hausa supremacy to becloud the existence and importance of their indigenous languages. These include Fulani, Igala, Nupe, Epira, Chamba, Bachama, Fulfude, etc.’

The significance of language in society remains the basis of language planning in any country. The different definitions of language in the literature of sociolinguistics accentuate the claim that language is a significant component of human society. Language is a means of communication that is composed of sounds (vocal symbols). By being an instrument of communication, language is used in written and spoken communication by individuals or group of people (speech community/society). Language is a God-given heritage to humans. Through language, human beings and nations cope with daily activities. Scholars align with the view that language is a vehicle of culture and symbol of identity. Through language, the social nature of human beings is actualized. Smith Jr. (1979, p. 9) defines language as ‘a learned, shared, and arbitrary system of vocal symbols through which human beings in the same speech community or sub-culture interact and hence communicate in terms of their common cultural experience and expectations’. A deliberate step towards solving language problems, language planning is systematic, procedural and comprehensive. It is undertaken by specific organizations or governments that have the expertise to do so. An overview of language planning and policy in Nigeria is essentially an investigation of the frameworks, prospects and constraints of Nigeria’s post-colonial language planning efforts, and this is the thrust of this study.

2. Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the study of language and society. Given the fact that human society is composed of value systems and norms, the study of society from the perspective of language is immersed in wide range of social phenomena. Crystal (1971) asserts that ‘the systematic conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self-expression.’ Sociolinguistics examines reasons, dimensions and manner in which individuals and groups use language. Defining sociolinguistics, Bosede Sotiloye (1992) submits that ‘sociolinguistics is a field of study which relates societal problems to linguistic/language problems. It answers the question: how do our social and cultural backgrounds affect our use of language? It is a branch of linguistics which tries to answer questions like who says what to whom, when, where, how and why? One of the major aims of sociolinguistics is the

study of the use of language in its social and cultural contexts. It studies the norms of the society at large and examines how the individual exploits his awareness of the society's norms in order to achieve particular effects.' In a similar vein, Abiodun Sofunke (1992) posits that 'sociolinguistics ... is another major area of applied linguistics. The sociolinguistic aspect of applied linguistics is concerned with issues which indicate the interaction between language and society. Society is in general divided along class and occupational lines, these divisions being in most cases reflected in language. The elucidation of the nature and use of these socially stratified speech forms is the business of sociolinguistics.'

3. Language Planning and Policy in Nigeria

Language planning and policy frameworks are informed by the belief that language plays crucial roles in human existence. Language planning in Nigeria does not ignore the country's multilingual structure. Dada (2010, p. 418) reports that 'the recent 2005 Ethnologic Data listed 521 languages for Nigeria. Of these, 510 are living languages, 2 are second languages without mother tongue speakers, and 9 are extinct.' According to Brain 1992, cited in Dada (ibid), Nigerian languages are grouped as major languages, state languages and local languages based on their status as dominant languages, their territorial spread and the population that speaks them. Commenting further on Nigeria's heterogeneous structure, Dada (ibid) reports that 'indeed, going by the Ethnologic Data report for Nigeria, some of these five hundred and ten living Nigerian languages have as low as 400-100 speakers. Examples include: Janji, Benue-Congo, language spoken in Bassa LG, Plateau State, Jibe, Afro Asiatic language spoken in Borno State, Ndunda, Nigerian-Congo language spoken in Taraba State etc. Thus, such languages can be rightly categorized without sounding derogatory anyway as minor language used mainly at home, village and local community levels. About 75 percent of the total figures of the Nigerian indigenous languages belong to this core.' The essence of considering a country's multi-ethnic and multilingual realities in planning language issues is to achieve intended objectives. Igboanusi (2001, p. 13) notes that 'Nigerian languages are classified into major and minor ones based on: population of speakers, educational consideration, geographical expanse of speaking territories and publications in different disciplines.' After Nigeria's independence in October 1960, different language policies have been evolved to tackle language-related problems in nationhood. Weinstein (1980, p. 56) defines language planning as 'a government authorized long term sustained and conscious efforts to alter a language.' For Koul (2006, p. 27), language planning 'denotes a deliberate attempt in resolving language-related problems necessary for the development of a particular language.' In a similar vein, Akindele and Adegbite (1999, p. 59) cited in Egwuogu, (2017, p. 51) posits that language planning 'a set of deliberate activities systematically designed to select from, organize and develop the language resources of a community in order to enhance the utilization of such resources for development. Language planning is necessitated by the multilingual states ... to integrate the region or country and promote encompassing development.' The criticism of the language policy evolved by the 1991 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is based of its lack of clarity on certain stipulations. The two paragraphs below respectively capture Sections Fifty One and Ninety One:

The business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English and Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made.

The business of a House of Assembly shall be conducted in English but the House may in addition to English conduct the business of the House in one or more other languages spoken in the state as the House may by resolution approve.

Three perspectives that have been evolved as far as language policy in Nigeria is concerned are as follows (cf. Morakinyo, 2015, p. 51):

The Nationalist Orientation

Proponents of the Nationalist Orientation argue that engaging Nigerian language as a National Language to replace English is a nationalist move – an expression of national pride in Nigeria's sovereignty and socio-cultural nuances.

The Internationalist Perspective

Those who contend for this perspective hold the view that English is neutral and satisfactorily developed to perform two roles: unite the people of Nigeria and cope with the challenges of globalization. The critics of this view believe that the dominance of English in Nigeria is inimical to the future of indigenous languages in the country.

The Neutralist Position

The Neutralist view is advocated, with the suggestion of Nigerian Pidgin as a National Language due to its neutrality, communicative potential in casual discourses and potency in national cohesion. However, some scholars do not think Nigerian Pidgin is suitable as Nigeria's National Language, given its stigma as sub-standard language.

Language policies in Nigeria have not been feasible. Egwogu (ibid:56) cites Farinde and Ojo (2005:47) who examine language policies that have been proposed for Nigeria:

The African Option

Swahili was proposed by Wole Soyinka in 1977 at the International Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC). Unfortunately, critics of this proposal hinge their criticism on the fact that Swahili is not a Nigerian language.

The Artificial Option

There is the belief that an artificial language is ethnically neutral, and can therefore perform a unifying role in multilingual Nigeria. Unfortunately, an artificial language cannot cope terminologically owing to its limited vocabulary.

The Endoglossic Option

A well-developed Nigerian language – in terms of lexicon, grammar and literary publications – is believed to be suitable as a National Language. However, there are those who contend that all Nigerian languages have divisive potential.

Pidgin Option

Proponents of Nigerian Pidgin as a National Language strongly hold the view that Pidgin is neutral and is widely spoken across social class. Many scholars agree that it plays vital roles in national cohesion and nation-building.

The Exoglossic Option

Scholars who contend for an exoglossic option as a language policy for Nigeria, want English to be entrenched as Nigeria's National Language because apart from being void of ethnic sentiments, its vocabulary and grammar are extensively developed. But critics think English remains a colonial heritage, and a danger to Nigerian languages.

The Indexop Option

Another language policy proposed for Nigeria is the Indexop Policy. Egwogu (2017:56) contends that this policy gives equal opportunities to endoglossic languages in status and corpus planning.

Despite the language policy evolved for Nigeria, English studies have not been impressive. The view has been expressed that failure to use indigenous languages effectively as medium of instruction in schools, is responsible for poor teaching of various subjects including English. The National Policy on Education (1977) which was revised in 1981 and 2004 legislated the use of the three major Nigerian languages alongside English at different levels of formal education. The role of English was legislated clearly in formal education, but the role of indigenous languages is continually de-emphasized. Below are some of the flaws of the National Policy on Education as cited in Dada (ibid: 421):

- i) Don't the statements on language constitute just a statement of intent rather than a serious programme for implementation?
- ii) If the mother tongue (MT) or the language of the immediate community is considered so important at the pre-primary level as an integral part of the child's culture and the link between the home and the school, why should it be "principal" and not "solely" used at this level?
- iii) How do people identify the language(s) of the immediate community in pluralistic settings like urban centres or international communities like universities?
- iv) Aren't the pronouncements on the three major languages vague and effeminate?
- v) Further on the choice of language, by whom and at what level is the choice of one of the three languages to be made? By the Federal, State or Local Government? By the parents, the school, or the pupils?
- vi) If the government is serious about implementing the policy, shouldn't there be a definite chrogram for all states to follow in the implementation of the language provisions couched in cautious escape phraseology: 'subject to the availability of teachers'?

- vii) If the government considers the learning of the three crucial for national integration, where are the legal and other sanctions for defaulting Federal, State and Local Governments or their agencies?
- viii) Practically, all Nigerian languages can be used as mother tongues or language(s) of immediate communities. Is it pedagogically feasible to organize initial literacy in 400 odd languages?
- ix) How do just three or the major languages serve the need of the educational process and become the media for preserving the people's cultures?
- x) The total number of teachers required in 1988 for the three major Nigerian languages was 55, 237. Only 6, 383 or 11.6 % of these were available. How and where are the remaining 48, 854 teachers to be produced? Is the recruitment or training of these teachers to be by chance or to a coordinated programme involving all agencies concerned?

Dada (ibid:422) reports strategies of the Federal Government of Nigeria for the implementation of the National Policy on Education:

- L1 Primary School Curricula (NERC, 1982-3);
- L2 and L1 JSS Curricula (NERC, 1982-4);
- L1 SSS Curricula (NERC, 1975-6);
- L1 TTC Curricula (NTI 1986);
- Primary Science Terminology (NLC, 1980-3);
- Legislative Terminology (NLC, 1980-88);
- Metalanguage for the three major Nigerian languages (NERC, 1981);
- Braille Orthography (NERC, 1981-4);
- Orthography Manuals and Pan-Nigerian typographic resources (NLC, on-going);
- L1 Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba SSC Exam Syllabus (WAEC, 1985-6; 1991).

Lack of tenacity in the actualization of corpus and status planning for Nigerian languages is worrisome. Adegbija (1994) cited in Dada (ibid:418) states that 'corpus planning includes aspects such as the preparation of orthographies, the commissioning of primers, and the publishing of newspapers in indigenous languages through processes such as compounding, derivation, combination of compounding and derivation, a borrowing in a phonologically adapted form, expansion of meaning of existing words from dialects, lexical change, and spontaneous formation of new words.' Language planners in Nigeria should explore more insights from different sources for the promotion of Nigerian languages, although there are efforts in this regard. For example, scholars have evolved proposals for expanding the lexicon of Nigerian languages (cf. Owolabi, 2006, pp. 20-22):

- (i) A Glossary of Technical Terminology for Primary Schools in Nigeria (henceforth, GTTPSN).

The GTTPSN comprises mathematical and scientific terms in Edo, Efik-Ibibio, Hausa, Igbo, Izon (a form of Ijo), Kanuri, Yoruba and Tiv. Areas covered by the work, which was sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Education, are sets, numbers, operations, geometry, measurement, physical science and biological science.

(ii) Metalanguage (henceforth, ML): There is ML for each of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba for the purpose of facilitating the teaching and learning of each of these three languages in its own medium. The terms cover various aspects of linguistics (e.g. phonetics, phonology, syntax, sociolinguistics, etc.) as well as stylistics, literature (including culture) and methodology. The project was sponsored by the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC), now (NERDC).

(iii) A Quadrilingual Glossary of Legislative Terms (henceforth QGLT): The QGLT is an assemblage of terms in English and their equivalents in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. The Project, which was facilitated by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), covers a wide range of areas which legislative discourse can be centred on (e.g. education, politics, revenue collection and allocation, industrial, commercial or agricultural development, information, sports, etc.).

(iv) Yoruba Dictionary of Engineering Physics (henceforth, YDEP): YDEP is a bilingual English-Yoruba/Yoruba English dictionary. Apart from its main entries on Engineering Physics, the dictionary also contains entries on physical laws, rules, theorems and principles as an appendix.

4. Theoretical Framework

Morgan's Speech Community Theory anchors this study. The theory captures the intra-regional and cross-regional significance of language in a multilingual speech community like Nigeria, where English and indigenous languages have to be promoted and used for the unique purposes they serve in nation-building. In this regard, language policy and language planning frameworks are not incidental; they acknowledge that the common history, beliefs and concerns of the different groups in society are useful components for language policy formulations and evaluations.

4.1 Morgan's Speech Community Theory

Sola Timothy Babatunde and Moses Adebayo Aremu (2017, pp. 99-100) present Morgan's Speech Community Theory

... Morgan's (2003) view is that a speech community does not simply focus on groups that speak the same language but rather that the concept takes as facts the notion that language represents, embodies, constructs and constitutes meaningful participation in society and culture. Morgan sees the study of the speech community as being central to the understanding of human language and meaning-making because it is the product of prolonged interaction among those who operate within shared beliefs and value

systems regarding their own culture, society and history as well as their communication with others. In this view, these interactions constitute the fundamental nature of human contact and the importance of language, discourse and verbal styles in the representation and negotiation of the relationships that ensue. Morgan goes further to submit that the concept of a speech community (which a global language indexes) does not simply focus on groups that speak the same language but it connotes that the common language represents, embodies, constructs and constitutes meaningful participation in a society and culture. Similarly, to Morgan, a homogenous community presupposes the existence of a mutually intelligible, symbolic and ideological communicative system among members.

5. Prospects and Constraints of Language Policy and Planning in Nigeria

This section examines prospects and constraints of post-independence language policy and planning in Nigeria.

5.1 Prospects

5.1.1 Cross-domain Functions of English and Nigerian Languages

It is often logical to link language planning with language policy. The two notions imply that in dealing with language problems or language-related problems in society, stakeholders formulate well-structured guidelines to address the use, structure and acquisition of (languages) within a region or country. The objectives, principles, goals and measures are often clearly defined as they relate to the concerned domains of society. Given the crucial roles of language in nations and its connotations, language planning and policy in multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multilingual nations remain very intriguing, demanding and fundamental. Exploring socio-economic and linguistic underpinnings in the analysis of data, Igboanusi and Lothar (2005) investigates the super-ordinate status of English in Nigeria and its implications on indigenous languages. The study acknowledges the need for an appropriate language policy that caters for the unequitable distribution of roles and functions to languages.

5.1.2 National Cohesion and Development

A product of language contact, English should be seen as a worthy colonial heritage to Nigeria.¹ In Nigeria, the English language is used for interaction (communication function), domain-based function, lingua franca status, nationalism/administration, symbol of identity, national cohesion and social mobilization. The roles of English in national cohesion can be construed within the context of ethnic resentment that is typical of heterogeneous countries. Ethnic resentment is inimical to language planning, and such resentment is linked to the fact that the language people speak shapes their thought patterns, mindset and attitudes. Capturing the multilingual reality of Nigeria, Nwankwo Nnamdi Victor (ibid:158) posits that 'the multiplicity of languages in Nigeria is so obvious and egregious that languages of people living between a 25-kilometre radius are massively different and incomprehensible to one another. The implication of this complex language situation is the absence of established effective communication

between the ethnic groups which becomes the basis not only for bigotry and hatred but for resorting to the use of English as a predominantly official language. It also implies that the choice of any of the three major indigenous languages as a national language certainly will deteriorate to disintegration or unpleasant feelings.' Yule (2007) submits that 'other reasons put forward for the adoption of a non-indigenous language as Nigeria's lingua franca include:

- 1) Fear of political domination, if any indigenous language is selected no matter how good intentioned.
- 2) Avoiding the India's experience where the choice of Hindi was reported to have led to riots in many non-Hindu speaking regions.
- 3) Lack of infrastructure, such as teachers, books, and other learning resources for any selected indigenous language.
- 4) Lack of political will to push through any of the indigenous languages arising from (1) above.
- 5) Finally, the language which has come to fill the bill, which is English, is seen by many as a unifying force in the turbulent linguistic terrain.'

In the era of globalization, Nigeria's choice of English as lingua franca, as entrenched in the Constitution, is appropriate. Through language policy frameworks, the productive of English and major Nigerian languages implies that the country can enjoy the benefits of English in the era of globalization, in which international communication is crucial.

5.2 Constraints

5.2.1 Lack of Financial and Material Resources

For African nations that are struggling with economic hardship, providing financial and material resources for the implementation of language policies is not easy. However, such countries try to cope with the situation because of the instrumentality of language in nation-building. Virtually all aspects of the fabrics of society is linked to language, including people's cultural identity and behaviour. Joshua Fishman (1996, pp. 81-82) submits that 'language and cultural identity are linked in three ways: indexically, symbolically and in a part-whole fashion. The symbolic link relates to identity, the sense of belonging to a community; the language stands for, or represents, the community of speaker.' In addition, Adeniran cited in Ayodabo (2013, p. 142) avers that 'language is part of the cultural heritage that is handed down from generation. It makes life experiences cumulative and makes cultural transmission possible.' Providing more insights on the sensitivity, significance and complexity of language, Dada (ibid) submits that 'language is a unique property that belongs to the human race. It is a means of communication between two or more people and to a very large extent, the development of man politically, socially, economically, etc., depends on the use of language. Indeed, language permeates all aspects of human endeavor. Language is an integral part of culture, a reflection of many features of a given culture thus, like culture itself, it is a leader of behavior, which can be enhanced through direct or indirect contact. The formal and functional complexity of language is such a distinctive human trait that

many scholars think the designation ‘homo loquat (man the speaking animal) to be a better way of identifying the species than any other simple criterion (Such as tool using) that has been suggested.’ In realization of the crucial roles of language in sustainable growth and development, nations tackle the financial and material lack that hinder result-oriented language planning. Nigeria should do the same. In this regard, there should be sincere and strong political will to ensure that language policies are executed towards achieving set goals. Thus, the teaching and learning of indigenous languages in Nigerian schools (language pedagogy) will not only enhance their status and roles, but will also reduce the over-dominance of English in the country. This proposal however, is quite capital-intensive and logistics-demanding. To standardize Nigerian languages, a lot of financial, material and human resources are involved. Standardizing Nigerian languages implies that they are being promoted through codification (institutionalized spelling forms, pronunciation and grammar). Wardhaugh R. and Janet M. Fuller (2015, p. 34) submit that ‘standardization refers to the process by which a language has been codified in some way. That process usually involves the development of such things as grammars, spelling books, and dictionaries, and possibly a literature ... We can often associate specific items or events with standardization, for example, Wycliffe’s and Luther’s translation of the Bible into English and German, respectively, Caxton’s establishment of printing in England, and Dr. Johnson’s dictionary of English published in 1755. Standardization requires that a measure of agreement be achieved about what is in the language and what is not.’

5.2.2 Attitudinal Problems

Language attitude is shaped by the strong bond that people have concerning their common ancestry, socio-cultural values and beliefs. People from the same ethnic origin share the same ethnic identity in which they have strong beliefs. In the literature of sociolinguistics, the term ‘nationalism’ is often used as a paraphrase of ‘ethnic group’. In Nigeria, language attitudes have to be addressed to make language planning successful, amidst ethnic resentments.² Such attitudes can either be positive or negative. While the former facilitates language planning, the latter hinders it. Bosede Sotiloye, cited in Ore Yusuf (1992:146-147) cites the following as language attitudes:

- i. Home Attitudes;
- ii. Ethnocentric Attitude;
- iii. Anomie;
- iv. Bilingual Setting Attitudes.

See Ore Yusuf (1992, pp. 146-147) for tips on each of these language attitudes.

Part of the objectives of language policy in Nigeria is assigning significant roles to the three major languages in the country (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) as a panacea to the domineering status of English.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This study reveals critical perspectives on language planning and policy in Nigeria. Language policy in Nigeria is quite immersed in the education domain of nationhood, where the fundamental principles for

the co-existence of English and Nigerian languages are stated for the achievement of specified goals and objectives. In a multilingual nation like Nigeria, MT (Mother Tongue) remains a problem to the teaching and learning of English owing to the possibility of interference. Unfortunately, English has to be taught in schools for career purposes. The view is commonly held that the continued dominance of English could culminate into language loss and loss of cultural identity, as many people desire mastery of English for social mobility and social class. Although the orthography of major Nigerian languages are developed compared to the orthography of minority languages in the country, it is worthy of note that in general, the vocabulary of Nigerian languages cannot cope with the cross-facet communication scope of the contemporary world. This is one of the factors that promote the dominance of English. The career relevance of English and its instrumentality in political appointments spurred people to learn it towards proficiency. In an ideal situation, language planning models deployed by a nation depend on the scheme of things in such a nation as far as language problems and language-based problems are concerned. Cooper (1989) posits that ‘types of language planning include status, corpus and acquisition planning. Status planning is concerned with the allocation of functions to languages or language varieties within a society. This includes decisions about languages, national languages and language use in government, education, media and other domains. Corpus planning focuses on developing and standardizing language forms, including spelling, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. This type of planning aims to create a unified language code, often for languages with multiple dialects or varieties. Acquisition planning deals with the promotion and facilitation of language learning and teaching. This includes language education policies, curriculum design, teacher training and assessment methods.’ As a speech community with common linguistic code, background and goals, Nigeria deserves an encompassing language policy framework. Scholars strongly believe that the dominance of English and redundant condition of Nigerian languages particularly the minority ones, could result in language shift, which is a situation in which a person’s strong language gradually becomes weak because it is not frequently used. Language loss or retention is often discussed in relation to language shift. Language policy formulators are conscious of these phenomena. The use of English in Nigeria is about language choice. Choice making in the use of language is informed by different factors including its economic importance and social mobility potential. A multilingual approach to language policy and planning in Nigeria accommodates the use of multiple languages including English, for nation-building. In this regard, it is necessary for linguists, private organizations and governments to evolve appropriate frameworks for tackling language problems. This study concludes that Nigeria’s language planning and policy frameworks should adequately accommodate the country’s heterogeneous realities, and there should be the ‘political will’ to implement them, considering the prospects of such language policies in nation-building.

Notes

Note 1. Christine Iyetunde Ofulue (2017:4) submits that ‘on the African content the implantation and localization of English was one of the major sociolinguistic outcomes of contact with Europe occasioned

by trading expeditions, missionary activities, and East Africa are major sites where English has thrived as a direct consequence of British colonization. Its postcolonial history is now more than half a century in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Tanzania...'

Note 2. Nwankwo Nnamdi Victor (ibid:158) asserts that 'ethnic as well as linguistic identity has further balkanized the country into more geopolitical zones from the former three regions with three linguistic identities. The country now has six geopolitical zones as follows: South East, South West, South South, North Central, North East, and North West. Although there is supposed to be a common linguistic code in the different zones, there are many languages and communities that are separated by just a few kilometers within the same geopolitical zone, supposedly divided along linguistic lines. In the South West zone that is seen to be the most linguistically homogeneous for example, there are still many minority language that are not mutually intelligible among communities that are separated by a mere walking distance.'

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