

## **From Sparation To Synergy, Divide To Dividends: Inclusion of Multilingualism For Productivity In Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** This paper examines separation as a state of being disconnected or divided with its attendant characteristics in human interactions such as the state of cultural (language, arts, customs, habits, belief, values) ethnic, tribal, religion, racial, governmental or gender separation. Nevertheless, it is proper to synergise these features with a view to advancing the course of the Nigerian States. This is germane in the present polarised polity where the needed stability, peace, harmony, tranquility, progress and development have been evasive. The paper makes use of Conflict and Social Interaction Theories based on the firm concepts of ‘Separation and Synergy’ the framework for outreach to build social relationship and synergistic collaboration with persons or group of person within Nigeria is proposed and that this can only be achieved through collaborations with other language fraternities of the world. It further deals with the language aspect of the National Policy on Education (NPE) that is providing sustainable efforts using the three major languages in Nigeria (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba and English language also) in promoting brotherhood philosophy of founding fathers. The paper also takes a jaunt into the Nigeria language policy, language, multilingualism and the benefits that can be derived from multilingualism. The paper argues for multilingualism policy that takes into account the different tiers of major languages in Nigeria. This paper observes that linguistic diversity in Nigeria is one of the reasons why there is a growing intolerance, killings of people and destruction of lives and property amongst ethno-religious groups. It, therefore, recommends that multilingualism as enshrined in 1981 and revised in 1998 National Policy on Education (NPE) and the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria should be repackaged on the altar of synergetic inclusions for the nation to harness the dividends inherent in multilingualism.

**Keywords:** Separation, Synergy, Divide, Dividends, Repackaging, Multilingualism, Productivity.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Linguistic diversity is one of the better-known attributes of Nigeria, a fact recognised by the composers of our original national anthem who agreed that “tribe and tongue” differences exist in Nigeria but “in brotherhood we stand.” Since ethnic divisions are often along linguistic lines, it is assumed that the existence of many languages means the existence of many basically antagonistic ethnic nationalities trying to form a nation (Elugbe, 1990:1). Ajayi (2007) describes Nigeria, as a divided society in terms of ethnic and cultural pluralism which has over the years been confronted with varied crises. A few of the crises had rocked the foundation of its unity and corporate existence. Olanipekun (2017) traces the trajectory of Nigeria’s internal, sectarian years of dissatisfaction with the status quo and a growing intolerance amongst ethnic and religious groups in the country thus:

No one will forget in a hurry, the days of ‘**Operation Wetie**’ in Western Nigeria in the aftermath of the First Republic Election; the **Maitasine Sect** and the carnage left in its wake; the frequent conflicts in **Kano** between Southern/Igbo traders and their Hausa Filani hosts; the **Aguleri/Umuleri** community crisis in Imo State; the Hausa/Yoruba clashes in **Agege** and **Ketu** areas of Lagos State; the **Ife/Modakeke** crisis; the **Zangokataf** conflict. The killing of dozens of security agents by the **ombatse** cult group in Nasarawa State, the **2011 Post-Election** violence; the rampage of the **O’dua Peoples’ congress** in Western Nigeria and the **Bakassi Boys** in Eastern Nigeria; the activities of militants and vandals in the Niger-Delta under the aegis of the **Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)**; **Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVE)**; **Niger Delta Avengers**; the bombing campaigns by Boko Haram against the East of Nigeria and Federal Capital Territory (FCT); the recent uprising and clamour by followers of Shrite Muslim Cleric **El-Zakzaky**, and the unrelenting clamour for independence/secession by the **Independent People of Biafra (IPOB)**.

The recent situation that readily comes to mind was the invasion of villages in Guma and Logo Local Government at night and dawn on January 1, 2018 killing people on farm and in their homes by herdsmen (The Nation, 2018). The invasion of Kinere, Simba and Shure in the Song Local Government Area of Adamawa where gruesome murder of people were carried out by some herdsmen was also reported (The Punch, 2018: 18). The series of violence enumerated above showed that all is not well with Nigeria. This paper examines the meaning of separation, synergy, divide, dividends, repackaging, multilingualism and productivity; while the latter part proffers remedial actions for dividends of multilingualism.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The kind of analysis we carry out in this paper is basically sociolinguistic in nature as it covers studies of people interaction and its attendant effects such as separation/conflict. Sociolinguistics refers to the study of the relationship between language and the society. Posigha & Oghuvwu in Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) view conflict as an activity that is almost totally negative and has no redeeming qualities; while other school of thought accepted it as dysfunctional, destructive, and the same time as a catalyst for change, creativity and production.

Interactionism theory could be traced to scholars like Georg Herbert and Charles H. Cooley. These scholars were of the view that the basis units of analysis are the people who are interacting-responding to one another and adjusting their behaviour accordingly. "Social Interactionist theory is an explanation of language development emphasizing the role of social interaction between the developing child and linguistically knowledgeable adults. It is based largely on the socio-cultural theories of Soviet Psychologist, Le Vygotsky" ([https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social...](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_interactionism))

In sociology, interaction is a theoretical perspective that derives social processes (such as conflict, cooperation, identity formation) from human interaction. It is the study of how individuals shape society and are shaped by society through meaning that arises in interaction. The Micro Sociologists perceive interaction as a process by which we influence one another among human beings as a fundamental social process. Since human interaction consists primarily of communication and that through language, including body language/mannerisms actions, signs and gesture, we communicate with control in the interaction in order to attain the information we are seeking in order to control the perception of one's own image.

It could therefore be said that conflict ensues from human interaction in the context of incompatible ends and where one's ability to satisfy needs or ends depends on the choices, decision and behaviour of others. This explains why Imobigbe (1997) defines conflict as a condition of disharmony or hostility within an interaction process which is usually the direct result of clash of interests by the parties involved. In contrast with the above definition of conflict, Okpara, Nnamdi and Chukwu (2011) note that conflict should not be seen as inherently evil. They argue that:

...conflict is a positive force when it leads to constructive problem solving, when it brings about positive change, innovations and creation of wealth and healthy living. On the other hand, conflict can be a negative force when it brings about negative experience/effects and divert people's interest from set goals or standard; when it escalates to crisis, deplete resources, demean ego and values and affect people's psyche that they act inhumanly (p168). Thus, members of groups may have to accept the norms, goals and values of their groups. The above attributes could only be expressed and understood through languages of the groups.

### **Separation Theory**

Separation theory was developed by Firestone. According to him, separation represents a broadly based, coherent system of concepts and hypotheses that integrate psychoanalytic and existential systems of thought. This theory explains how early trauma leads to defense formation and how these original defenses are reinforced as the developing child gradually becomes aware of his or her own mortality.

A common definition of separation is that it is the advocacy of a state of cultural, ethnic, tribal, religious, racial, governmental or gender separation from the larger group. While it often refers to full political secession, separatist groups may seek nothing more than greater autonomy, while some critics may equate separatism with religious segregation, racist segregation or sexist segregation, most separatists argue that separation by choice may serve useful purposes and is not the same as government enforced segregation (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separatism>).

Separatist groups practice a form of identity politics or political activity and theorizing founded in the shared experiences of injustice visited upon members of certain social groups such groups believe attempts at integration with dominant groups compromise their identity and ability to pursue greater self-determination. However, economic and political factors usually are critical in creating strong separatist movements as opposed to less ambitious identity movements; for example, the Biafran war in the 1960s among Igbos, Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba, today ethnic and oil-related conflict in the Niger Delta of Nigeria.

### **Separation and Divide versus Synergy and dividends in Nigerian Political Landscape**

Separation, divide and Synergy and dividends in Nigerian political and economic spheres have been issues of discourse in the last two decades. Separation is defined as “the art or process of separating; division or state of being disconnected; on the other angle of the discourse, synergy is defined as “combination and correlated force, united action, extra energy power, success etc. that is achieved by two or more people or companies working together, instead of on their own (Hornby, 2006).

With every geo-political zone clamoring for separation probably as a result of lopsidedness in the appointments or distributions of social amenities, highest display of hypocrisy or agenda against the general interest of the nations that made up of this geographical expression called Nigeria. From the above definitions, it is clear that separation and synergy are behavioural pattern which are inevitable outcome of human and group relations involving two or more individuals which can be inter-personalities, inter-groups, inter-organisations and inter-states.

### **An Overview of Language**

Linguists have not been able to agree on the origin of language. However, they agreed that spoken language developed before written language. Yule in Lawal (2002:2) noted that a variety of sources have been used to explain these, such are: divine source which focuses on biblical injunctions, the natural sound source which sees a number of words in any language as being onomatopoeic (echoing natural sounds) are the oral-gesture. Whichever source one is looking at for the purpose of expounding the origin of language, aim of language is to interact, communicate knowledge, skills, entertain and inform. 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 (Dada 2010:417). Tinuoye (1994:6) defines language as the complex and subtle activity that human beings engage in, using the vocal cords in interactive communication. Bamisaye (2006:2) defines language as a means of communication between individuals, and between groups. This implies that, the development of man-politically, language can be used in inter-personal communication as well as inter-group communication. There can also be intra-personal and intra-group communication that is communication with the same person and the same group respectively. In a nutshell, language is without change the medium made used of during communication.

In view of the fact that language is culturally transmitted, it is an integral part of culture, a reflection of many features of a given culture (Akindele and Adegbite, 2000:2). Thus, language facilitates directly or indirectly context and acculturation.

### **Multilingualism**

Multilingualism is a common and increasing phenomenon in present day society which can be studied from different perspectives. Multilingualism is considered as the use of three or more languages by a society or speaker. Gumperz in Bamisaye (2004:218) asserts that multilingualism exists:

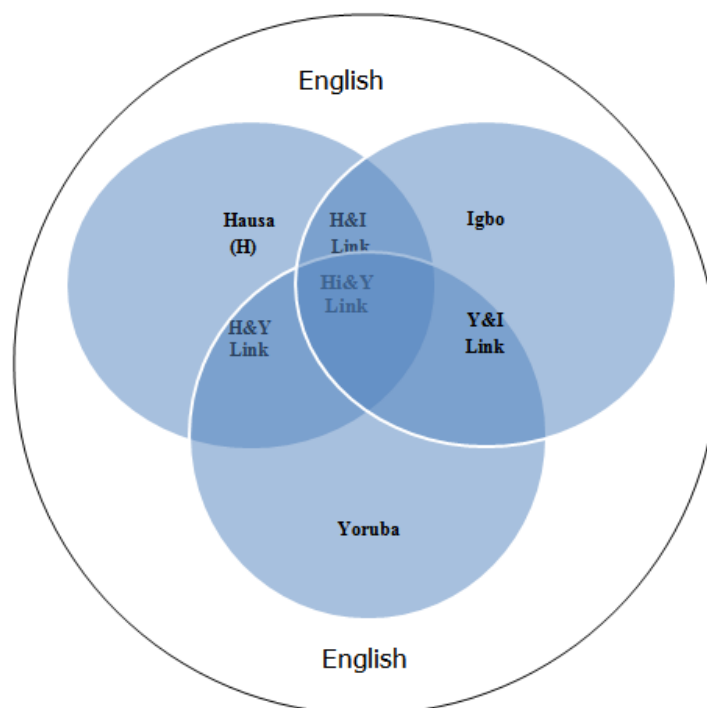
where population of widely different cultural and linguistic backgrounds

live in close geographical proximity, subject to the same political authority, attend the same schools, exchange services and cooperate in many other joint activities by means of not one, but a variety of languages.

The basic distinction when discussing multilingualism is between the individual and societal level, multilingualism refers to the speaker's competence to use three or more languages co-existing in a given nation. In other words, functions are shared among the various languages in such a nation. According to Mansor (2005) there is a growing concern over the treatment of multilingualism in education, especially in many countries that were once colonized. Nigeria happens to be one. Some states prefer incorporating different languages in order to help students learn better by giving them diverse perspectives. Bamisaye (2004:218) reports that Nigeria is a multilingual, multicultural and even multi-ethnic nation (for example, Bamgbose 1971, Hansford et al 1976, and Brann 1980). Amongst the languages in Nigeria include: Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Tiv, Ebira, Ijaw, Biron, Edo, Baruba, Ogori, Nupe, Nupe, English, Ibibio, Munshi, Fulani Kanuri etc. From the above, it could be concluded that Nigeria is a nation within nations.

### **The Linkage of Languages**

From the foregoing clarification one could posit that multilingualism is a vehicle of preserving the togetherness, and mutual co-existence of Nigeria in the face of undaunted religious, political challenges confronting the nation in achieving self actualization national unity social, cultural, economic, political and educational advancement for its collective benefit. However, the position of this paper is that there is a strong relationship among the four languages (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and English also). This is shown in figure I below which represents the web of interaction among the languages.



**Fig I. The web of interaction among languages (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and English).**

An exploration of linkages among languages (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and English) show that multilingualism will play a very significant role in a nation with language diversity. Language links one generation with the other; without it, no interchange of serious profession knowledge. Therefore, language remains a strong factor not only in the implementation of curriculum but in human interactions. According to Lawal (2002) Language is the bedrock of a people's, socio-economic and political experience.

From the submissions above, the potency or efficacy of multilingualism could not be overemphasised. Thus, the position of this paper is to reduce discrimination, marginalization, nepotism, inequality and political bickering plaguing the corporate existence of the nation through exploitation of multilingualism. Crystal (2000) gives five reasons to justify the importance of language diversity: (a) ecological diversity (b) languages express identity (c) languages are repositories of history (d) languages contribute to the sum of human knowledge and (e) languages are interesting in themselves.

The vitality of a language is related to several factors such as: status, demography and institutional support (Giles et al, 1997).

Ecological diversity can enlarge or expand linguistic diversity. The facts used to support linguistic diversity as highlighted by Crystal (2000) are:

- (a) the whole concept of ecosystem (Networks of relationships and damage to any one of the elements in an ecosystem) can result in unforeseen effects for the consequences for the system as a whole .
- (b) diversity is necessary for evolution and the strongest ecosystems are those which are more diverse.

Having known the meaning of these words, the focus of this paper is therefore on how the various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria can use language diversity to settle their differences as a nation with the view of living together peacefully, economically, politically and socially. However, changes in the vitality of a language have implication for individuals and societies. For proper understanding of linguistic and ecological diversity inspiration can be drawn from the 'language garden analogy' proposed by Garcia in Baker and Jones (1988:205). Garcia was of the view that if one travelled around the world and see that all gardens are of the same one-colour flower; it would be dull, boring and unattractive to behold. However, variety of flowers of different shapes, sizes and colours would make our visual and aesthetic experience rich, attractive and enjoyable. Thus, linguistic diversity also makes the world more interesting and colourful; nevertheless, as in the case of flowers it makes the garden more difficult to tend. Some languages, however, need planning and care and involve some actions such as:

- a. Adding flowers to the garden: Learning other languages can be an enriching experience.
- b. Protecting rare flowers: Protecting languages at risk through legislation and education.
- c. Nurturing flowers in danger of extinction: Intervention may be necessary and many imply positive economic discrimination.

d. Controlling flowers that spread quickly and naturally: Spread can be allowed if it does not kill other species. (Duck et al 2017)

Moreover, in terms of policy thrust, it can be said that Nigeria has taken some bold steps in identifying and specifying the languages needs of the Nigerian child as exemplified in the NPE. For example, NPE made provisions for language to achieve the following objectives (see Akere 1995:179):

- The need to foster national unity through the acquisition and use of indigenous national languages.
- Preservation of the people's diverse culture through the propagation and maintenance of the languages.
- Development and projection of Nigerian Languages.
- The need to aid the children's cognitive and emotional development by providing continuity between their home experience and school experience through the use of the mother tongues in the early years of their formal schooling.
- Enrichment of the children's ability to communicate effectively in a multilingual society.
- The desire to have access to modern developments in science and technological education, and to have a window on the world through the use of the English languages.

A novelty of the above objectives was enthused by Akinwamide (2013) that: language affects the thought and behavior of human beings.

The attitude of a person speaking more than one language is not the same as others who speak just one language.

The first person can comment on issues from different standpoints. He /she can see and evaluate the events in a much broader perspective. As knowledge gives insight, security, peace and confidence to human beings, ignorance causes suspicion, repulse and mistrust. Ability to converse in other people language means entering a world of interactive thinking, observing differently, accepting different life-styles, harmonizing and clarifying the obscurities which are the most cause of prejudice and prolonged conflicts.

Why multilingualism is good for economic growth (Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, 2017) she supported this assertion thus: If your strategy is to trade only with people that speak English that is going to be a poor strategy. In essence, language matters on a large scale national level at the level of smaller businesses. According to Gabrielle Hogan-Brun (2017):

The rise of ancient civilizations China, Egypt, Greece and Rome, came down to success in trade across cultures. Early traders already knew that they needed to understand their clients to produce a good economic return across language divides. Among them was Macro Polo, the successful multilingual Merchant doing business from the Mediterranean to China.

She went further to cite the example of Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook's founder) who is learning Mandarin a language from China in order to penetrate the huge **market-driven incentive** of China; The quotation presented above shows that if Nigerians can embrace their neighbours' languages and exploit the potential therein, Nigeria will be better for it economically and politically.

From the foregoing, it is abundantly clear that if the usefulness of language is well tapped by Nigerians the economic and political woes of the nation will be reduced drastically. Multilingual skills pool will be of great advantage for cross-border trade among ethnic nationalities. Gabrielle's submission is that any country that displays how to exploit its multilingualism as resources with exchange value will be better for it. Britain is estimated to lose out on the equivalent of 3.5% of its GDP every year because of its population relatively poor language skill. Switzerland for example, attributes 10% of its GDP to its multilingual heritage. The country has 4 national languages; German, French, and Italian an ancient Latin-based language called Romansh.

The best way to sell someone a service or product is by speaking their language a resource with exchange value will be better for it. Countries that actively nurture different languages reap a range of rewards, from more successful exports to be more innovative workforce. She concludes that "Language matters on a large-scale national level and at the level of smaller business" (Gabrielle Hogan-Burn, 2017)

Researchers have also highlighted the individual benefits of speaking more than one language. Languages boost earning power, and beyond immediate economic rewards, languages can help a country's workforce in more subtle, long-term ways.

Multilingualism has for example been shown to be good brain health, delaying the onset of dementia. It has also been associated with a better ability to concentrate and process information. Sophie Hardach (2018) citing Thomas Bak & Dnia Mehmedbegovic reports that "Even a one-week intensive language course improved attention and this effect remained stable nine months later in those who practiced five hours a week or more". Use the term "healthy linguistic diet" to describe a positive approach to language across a lifespan. "As well as using every opportunity to say: it is good for you opportunity to say: it is good for you to eat fruit and vegetables every day" schools should also say: it is good for you to speak, read and write in different languages" they suggest.

## II. CONCLUSION

The paper addresses the inevitability of separation, divide vis-à-vis synergy and dividends in a nation with language diversity. It enumerates the roles of language and multilingualism in enhancing peace, unity, progress and mutual co-existence of the nation. Multilingualism is seen as a means of providing or boarding the perspective of the populace through interactive thinking, accepting different life-styles, harmonizing and clarifying the obscurities which are causes of prejudice and prolong conflicts. Multilingualism is also seen as huge market-driven incentive and pathway to see Nigeria through her economic woes

There is no doubt that the agitation for separation is inevitable outcome of humans, groups and states interactions. Separation/conflict can be regarded as untoward and may lead to destruction of lives and property. However, Conflict has a positive force especially when it leads constructive problem solving, positive change innovations and, creation of wealth and healthy living. Thus, multilingualism ideology if is well explored the country will be better for it. Hence, it is being recommended that the Federal Government of Nigeria should refocus its responsibility of harmonizing educational policies and the roles of National Council of Education from the following documents: The 1999 Constitution as amended of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and National Policy on Education. These two documents recognize the importance of language diversity, multi-ethnic and multilingual nature of Nigeria. It noted some of the problems confronting the implementation of the policy of multilingualism. Based on the investigation and literature reviewed the inevitability of multilingualism in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasised. We therefore recommend that more energy should be put in place by government legislating in the encouragement of multilingualism to unlock the potential inherent in the language diversity.

Furthermore, government at all levels should re-awaken the thought of political leaders of the benefits inherent in multilingualism in Nigeria as a means of eradicating poverty and generating employment for unemployed youths across the country by unlocking the hidden fortunes in social, entertainment, political or socio-cultural of Nigeria, because language is critical to the actualization of peace and progress for any country. Nigeria as a country is in dire need of a culture of peace and non-violence and one simplistic approach to the problem is to actively encourage the culture of appreciating of each other's ethnic, socio-cultural and linguistic diversity by embracing multilingualism in our schools. It is a common saying that socio-cultural and political behavior influence language and vice-versa. Hence, the country National Assembly should ensure they legislate properly on the use of two or three indigenous languages in our school for the country's cohesion.

Moreover, since language has social functions of establishing social relationship which may eventually integrate, protect, enhance or speed up societal peace, harmony and tranquility. This may probably explain why when another tribe speaks one's language that person may feel secure to associate with that fellow. Therefore, if multilingualism is encouraged in Nigeria mutual understanding, respect for other people's culture would be enhanced. In other words, if we explore the language of our neighbours as it could be of high utility value for economic, political, social, cultural development that will be of immense benefits to all Nigerian and the unborn children.

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