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## Towards A Realistic Language Policy for Educational and Technological Development of Nigeria: A Retrospective and Perspective Appraisal

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### Abstract

This paper appraises unclear Language policy in Nigeria, the reality of the use of English and the indigenous languages in our schools, and their implication for educational and technological development and national transformation. One of the major questions this paper seeks to answer is which of the Languages in Nigeria is much needed or appropriate as the midwife of Educational and technological transformation of Nigeria. The paper reviews the views and proposals of scholars on the need for proper language policy and planning in Nigeria, the past and present language curriculum and language policies in National Policy on Education (NPE) and the prospect of Nigeria educational and technological development in the face of such linguistic realities. The paper concludes that until Nigeria continues to teach, speak, and think about technology in the mother tongues, science and technology will remain foreign to Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Language, Education, Technology, Development, Language policy

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## **Towards A Realistic Language Policy for Educational and Technological Development of Nigeria: A Retrospective and Perspective Appraisal**

### **Introduction**

Language is basically, a tool for communication among humans. It is widely acknowledged as a tool for conveying ideas, emotions, and desires (Sapir, 1921). However, its significance in human society extends far beyond mere communication. In its social relevance, language serves as a foundation for interpersonal and intergroup collaboration and underpins social actions. According to Bamgbose (2000), 'language also facilitates or hinders citizens' participation, holding the key to achieving genuine democracy and equality within a nation'. This submission by Bamgbose brings to the fore that language is deeply intertwined with culture. and that no meaningful development can take place within a specific cultural context without the growth and utilization of the culture's language.

In contemporary Nigeria, as in other developing nations, the government's focus on education prioritizes mathematics, science, and technology. Government and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) support is predominantly directed toward students pursuing science and technology, with little consideration for language planning and cultural development or arts generally. However, policymakers and leaders often overlook the critical role of the humanities, especially language, in advancing technology. This raises the question of which language within a child's linguistic repertoire can effectively provide "a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking," as emphasized in the National Policy on Education (NPE).

As Engholm (1964:15), quoted in Adegbiya (1991), aptly states, "Language is the key to the heart of a people. If we lose the key, we lose the people. If we treasure the key and keep it safe, it will unlock the door to untold riches, riches which cannot be guessed at from the other side of the door." Language is essential to nation-building, influencing socio-cultural development as well as scientific, technological and economic progress. Adeniran (1990) further underscores this by describing language as a vehicle that propels and directs societal growth.

As African nations approached independence, former colonial languages became symbols of economic advancement, higher education, and social prestige (Babatunde, 2001). In the case of Nigeria, this led to the widespread adoption of the English language. Today, English serves as the official language, the medium for business and commerce, and the primary language of instruction in schools, despite the country's rich linguistic diversity (Ayoola & Bankole, 2017).

It is important to highlight, however, that Nigeria's educational policies have acknowledged and assigned roles to indigenous languages. The *National Policy on Education* (1981) specifically states that "Government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community and at a later stage, English." According to the policy, the language used for instruction in pre-primary education and the first three years of primary school should be the child's mother tongue or the dominant language of their local environment.

Nigeria, being a multiethnic and multilingual nation with over 400 indigenous languages (Adegbiya, 2004a), faces challenges in fostering interethnic communication. This linguistic diversity has contributed to the dominance of English, which functions as a neutral language that bridges communication gaps between ethnic groups. Consequently, English has become the nation's official language. Since the colonial era, it has been accorded a central role in education, maintaining its status as the primary language of learning and instruction (Ayoola & Bankole, 2017).

It is on this background that this paper takes an evaluative approach to appraise unclear Language policy in Nigeria and the reality of the use of English and the indigenous languages in our schools as

well as their implication for educational and technological development and national transformation. One of the major questions this paper seeks to answer is which of the Languages in Nigeria is much needed or appropriate as the midwife of educational and technological transformation of Nigeria and how prepared is the government to take the bull by the horns in ensuring the existence as well as the implementation of proper language policy.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to do the appraisal of the scholarly proposers on Language policy in Nigeria and the trends in Nigerian schools regarding the language policy. This is done with the view to justify the need for a language policy that will indeed enhance educational and technological development in Nigeria. By way of appraisal, the paper seeks to answer the question of which of the Languages in Nigeria is much needed or appropriate as the midwife of Educational and technological development and transformation of Nigeria. To add credence to this paper, we took time to find out what is obtainable in Nigerian school curricula at various levels regarding language teaching and learning and its implication for the educational and technological development of Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Technological Development and the Role of Language**

The concept of development has been interpreted differently by various scholars. Some perceive it as change, while others equate it with growth. Adeniran (1990) combines these views, suggesting that "development is growth plus change." It can be understood as progress or transformation that enhances the quality of life and enables the full realization of human potential. Broadly, development encompasses social, cultural, political, technological, and economic dimensions. Adediji (1992) describes it as a "constant and appreciable improvement in the economic, social, technological, political, and cultural aspects of people's lives." Following this perspective, it is crucial to examine the role of language in fostering education and technological progress in a multilingual nation like Nigeria.

Technology, on the other hand, has become deeply integrated into nearly all facets of modern life. Adegbiya (2004b) notes that modern language, education, social interactions, agriculture, healthcare, and even basic activities such as sleeping and walking are shaped by the pervasive influence of technology. He emphasizes that technology introduces transformative changes, shaping human thought patterns, interpersonal relationships, and approaches to life. Moreover, it has become central to contemporary existence, influencing virtually every domain. Nations such as Japan, Germany, England, France, and the United States owe much of their rapid advancement to technological innovation. This type of progress is a goal for many countries worldwide.

Today, schools increasingly integrate technology into learning, encouraging the use of online resources and providing platforms for submitting assignments, checking grades, and collaborating with peers (Al-Sharqi & Abbasi, 2020). However, for such technological advancements to be effective and sustainable, the role of language must not be overlooked. As scholars have argued, language factors in Africa should no longer be dismissed as a sign of underdevelopment. Historically, technologically advanced nations have developed and adapted their languages to support and sustain technological progress (Owino, 2001).

#### **Language and Technological Development**

Education is central to development. There is no gain in saying the fact that there is a strong link between education and development (both national and individual). Education is basic to any form of development. In recent times, the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals claim that education is poverty alleviation. In the Nigerian Education Policy( National Policy on Education, 1977,1981,2004), certain fundamental objectives are set which present education as an intellectual catalyst for development. These Include:

- a. The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy, and the ability to communicate effectively;
- b. The laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- c. citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.
- d. character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes;
- e. developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment;
- f. giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity;
- g. providing basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

(*National Policy on Education* 1977)

### **What role can language play in science and technology?**

Bamigbose (1991) argues that efforts to transfer technology are unlikely to succeed without a technological culture, as they will lack the necessary foundation to thrive. He suggests that one way to cultivate such a culture is by teaching science and mathematics in a child's native language during the early stages of education. Similarly, Owino (2001) emphasizes the importance of developing African languages to effectively convey modern scientific and technological concepts, enabling Africans to make significant contributions to global culture.

Babatunde (2001), referencing Ayeni's (1997) advocacy for teaching mathematics in African languages, notes that "while the medium of instruction may not directly influence the creation of mathematics, it plays a critical role in comprehension and accessibility". He highlights that mathematics originated in Egypt and points out that countries like Russia and China teach mathematics in their native languages. Babatunde (2001), aptly observes that "if these nations can achieve this, there is no reason why Nigeria cannot do the same".

Ehuasani (2005) reinforces this perspective by attributing part of the developmental success of Asian countries to their commitment to preserving and using their indigenous languages. Babatunde (2000) further asserts that learning in one's native language fosters better understanding compared to learning in a foreign language, as familiarity with the language enhances comprehension.

### **Language Policy in Nigeria**

Nigeria cannot be said to have a well-defined language policy. What exists are merely fragmented references within the Nigerian Constitution and the *National Policy on Education* (NPE), which address certain language-related aspects. The *National Policy on Education* (1977, 1981, and revised in 2004) outlines the government's stance on education in the country. Linguistics scholars, such as Acheoah and Olaleye (2019), have highlighted various reasons why Nigeria lacks a comprehensive language policy despite its significant linguistic diversity.

One pertinent question is whether the government intentionally avoids prioritizing language policy. However, this discussion is beyond the scope of this paper. Regardless, the provisions within the NPE can still be regarded as a foundational framework, particularly since education plays a crucial role in national development.

The Language provision in the NPE shows the government's recognition of the role of Language in education and ultimately national development. In the face of the multilingual situation of the country, The NPE, in the interest of national unity, stipulates that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major Languages other than his mother tongue. The government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba. This has put into cognizance the role of language in development.

Several Nigerian linguists, including Bamgbose and Akere (1991: 3-8) and Awobuluyi (1991), have strongly criticized the adoption of English as the language of education. They advocated for its replacement with an indigenous language, arguing that many Nigerians struggle with comprehension and effective communication in English, which poses a significant barrier. According to Akindele and Adegbite (1999 p.111), ‘The position for the medium of instruction for pre-primary education is clear from the policy. Just as the policy provides, mother tongues ought to be the medium of instruction of children who are still on their mother’s laps’. They further asserted that introducing the mother tongue in nursery schools would reinforce children's language acquisition at home, enabling them to better understand their environment and cultural norms. However, a major counterargument is that no indigenous language currently possesses the linguistic resources necessary for the teaching subjects such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, and geography. But the reality is that “in Education, where the body of knowledge is generated and conveyed in a different language it would be difficult for a learner to grasp it easily”. (Kanana 2013).

Recent studies continue to highlight the significant impact of language policies on educational outcomes and technological advancement. A study by Ibrahim et al. (2023) explores the role of indigenous languages in promoting digital literacy in rural Nigerian communities, finding that students perform better in ICT-related subjects when instruction is provided in their mother tongues. Similarly, Alabi (2022) emphasizes the cognitive benefits of bilingual education, arguing that learners develop stronger problem-solving skills and conceptual understanding of technology when local languages are integrated into the curriculum.

Based on the above, this paper seeks to find out the level of compliance of school curriculum as well as stakeholders in Education with the provisions for languages stipulated in the National Policy on Education (NPE) in recent times. With this in focus, we shall look into the language provisions in the recently reviewed new curriculum by the Educational Research Development Commission NERDC (2005) to see if the practice will equip the child with the education needed for the technological development of the country. This paper takes into cognizance the insights of the previous studies as reviewed above, in reassessing Nigeria’s current language policies and practices and their effects on the nation's technological trajectory.

### **Appraisal of current Language Curriculum in Primary and Secondary Schools**

After the successful launch of the 9-year Basic Education Programme in 1999 by the Federal Government, the NERDC was instructed by the NCE during its December 2005 meeting in Ibadan to review, restructure, and align the existing primary and junior secondary school curricula. This revision aimed to ensure the curriculum met the objectives of the 9-year Basic Education Programme within the framework of National Economic Empowerment and Development.

Below is an excerpt from the curriculum review conducted by the Educational Research and Development Commission (NERDC) for Basic Education (Primary 1-3). Table 1 presents the language curriculum within the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum structure, outlining the relevant subjects for each level.

**Table 1: Language Curriculum for Primary Schools 1-3**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Explanatory Notes</b>
English Studies	i. Official National Language ii. Medium of Instruction in schools iii. The subject predisposes itself to the infusion of Road Safety Education, Disaster Risk Reduction Education, and Consumer Education. iv. Subject include Literature - in - English

Nigerian Languages	i. The National Policy on Education (NPE) stipulates that the medium of instruction should be the language of the child's immediate environment. ii. Schools are free to select such Nigerian Language to be taught
Arabic Language	optional

The curriculum, as reflected in the table above, designates English Language as the official language and the primary medium of instruction in schools. Regarding Nigerian languages, the National Policy on Education (NPE) states that instruction at the early stages should be conducted in the language of the child's immediate environment. However, this emphasis is somewhat diminished, as English remains the primary medium of instruction. Instead of mandating a specific indigenous language, schools are given the free will to choose any Nigerian language to be taught as a subject. Additionally, Arabic is included as an optional language subject to be taught but is not assigned any specific role within the educational system

**Table 2: The reviewed Language curriculum for Primary schools 4-6**

subject	Explanatory Notes
English Studies	i. Official National Language ii. Medium of Instruction in schools iii. The subject predisposes itself to the infusion of Road Safety Education, Disaster Risk Reduction Education, Consumer Education. iv. Subject include Literature - in - English
Nigerian Languages	ii. Schools are free to select such Nigerian Language to be taught
Arabic Language	optional

Here, the Nigerian languages are given no specific role; any of them can be taught as a subject.

**Table 3: Language curriculum for Junior Secondary School 1-3**

subject	Explanatory Notes
English Studies	i. Official National Language ii. Medium of Instruction in schools iii. The subject predisposes itself for the infusion of the following Road Safety Education, Disaster Risk Reduction Education, Consumer Education. iv. Subject include Literature - in - English
Nigerian Languages	Schools are free to select such Nigerian Language to be taught
Arabic Language	optional

Here also, there is no role for any of the Nigerian languages

**Table 4: The reviewed curriculum for Senior Secondary Schools 1-3**

subject	Explanatory Notes
English Studies	A compulsory subject all students. Each student is to take the four (4) compulsory cross-cutting subjects listed.

Mathematics	A compulsory subject. Each student is to take the four (4) compulsory cross-cutting subjects listed.
Civic Education	A compulsory subject. Each student is to take the four (4) compulsory cross-cutting subjects listed.
Trade/Entrepreneurship Studies	i. One of the compulsory subjects. For the Trade/Entrepreneurship subject, each student is expected to select one (1) Trade/Entrepreneurship subject from the list of 34 Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects listed.
Humanities	<p>i. This is a field of study. Each student may then choose two (2), three (3), four (4), or five (5) subjects from each of their preferred four fields of studies depending on their potential, interest and capability such that the minimum number of subject</p> <p>ii. If students select two (2) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select two (2) or three (3) subjects from any other field of study or from Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a minimum of eight (8) or a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>iii. If students select three (3) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select one (1) or two (2) subjects from any other Fields of Studies or Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a minimum of eight (8) or a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>iv. If students select four (4) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select one (1) more subject from any other fields of study or Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>v. If students select five (5) from a Field of Study, they have already selected a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p>
Science & Mathematics	<p>i. This is a field of study. Each student may then choose two (2), three (3), four (4), or five (5) subjects from each of their preferred Four Fields of Studies depending on their potential, interest and capability such that the minimum number of subject</p> <p>ii. If students select two (2) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select two (2) or three (3) subjects from any other Field of Study or from Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a minimum of eight (8) or a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>iii. If students select three (3) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select one (1) or two (2) subjects from any other Fields of Studies or Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a minimum of eight (8) or a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>iv. If students select four (4) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select one (1) more subject from any other fields of study or Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>v. If students select five (5) from a Field of Study, they have already selected a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p>
Technology	<p>i. This is a field of study. Each student may then choose two (2), three (3), four (4), or five (5) subjects from each of their preferred Four Fields of Studies depending on their potential, interest and capability such that the minimum number of subject</p> <p>ii. If students select two (2) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select two (2) or three (3) subjects from any other Field of Study or from</p>

		<p>Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a minimum of eight (8) or a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>iii. If students select three (3) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select one (1) or two (2) subjects from any other Fields of Studies or Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a minimum of eight (8) or a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>iv. If students select four (4) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select one (1) more subject from any other fields of study or Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>v. If students select five (5) from a Field of Study, they have already selected a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p>
Business (Senior)	Studies	<p>i. This is a field of study. Each student may then choose two (2), three (3), four (4), or five (5) subjects from each of their preferred Four Fields of Studies depending on their potential, interest and capability such that the minimum number of subject</p> <p>ii. If students select two (2) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select two (2) or three (3) subjects from any other Field of Study or from Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a minimum of eight (8) or a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>iii. If students select three (3) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select one (1) or two (2) subjects from any other Fields of Studies or Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a minimum of eight (8) or a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>iv. If students select four (4) subjects from a Field of Study, they can select one (1) more subject from any other fields of study or Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to make a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p> <p>v. If students select five (5) from a Field of Study, they have already selected a maximum of nine (9) subjects.</p>

Below are the list of subjects in each of the fields:

**Science and Mathematics**

1. Biology
2. Chemistry
3. Physics
4. Further Mathematics
5. Health Education
6. Agriculture
7. Physical Education (7 subjects)

**Technology**

1. Technical Drawing
2. General Metal Work
3. Basic Electricity
4. Electronics
5. Auto Mechanics
6. Building Construction
7. Woodwork
8. Home Management



9. Food and Nutrition
10. Clothing & Textiles (10 subjects)
- Art & Humanities:
  1. Christian Religious Studies
  2. Islamic Studies
  3. Visual Art
  4. Music
  5. History
  6. Geography
  7. Government
  8. Economics
  9. Literature-in-English
  10. French
  11. Arabic
  12. Nigerian Language (12 subjects)
- Business Studies:
  1. Stores Management
  2. Accounting
  3. Commerce
  4. Office Practice
  5. Insurance (5 subjects)

From the above, the Nigerian languages are now put as electives alongside the two foreign languages-French and Arabic. They are now subjects in the field of Arts and Humanities unlike before when one Nigerian language was made a compulsory subject for all students and they must register for WASSCE. Obviously, in this curriculum review, the major Nigerian Languages have not been given the right priority.

Today, what we have as pre-primary education is the kindergarten and nursery schools which nearly 80% of Nigerian children born in the 21st century will have to pass through, especially the children of enlightened and educated people while what used to be in the colonial era when pre-primary education schools were then the private and exclusive privilege of the children of colonial administrators and later their successors, Nigeria middle class (Adeniran 1991).

The practice in most of our nursery schools in Nigeria (owned by private individuals and organisations) is that the pupils are instructed mainly in the English language and introduced to numerals and the alphabets of English language without any attempt to teach any of the Nigerian languages.

At the secondary school level, the NPE lists English language and two Nigerian languages among the core subjects in junior secondary school (JSS) in contrast, the core subjects in senior secondary school (SSS) should include English and one Nigerian language. This makes a Nigerian language (preferably the child's mother tongue or the language of the community) a compulsory subject at the level of SSS. In recent times, it is no longer so. The compulsory Nigerian Language has been replaced with a mandatory vocational course; neglecting the language that can make vocational ideas practicable within the context of our culture.

The above, coupled with the various findings about the practices in various schools, shows that the language policy stipulated in NPE which most linguists had in the past called for its improvement was even compromised by the recent curriculum review by the Nigeria Educational Research Development Commission NERDC. Furthermore, it has just been established that the government is only paying lip

services to the proper implementation of its language policy. The curriculum designed for the schools and the practices at various schools contradicts the language policy stipulated in the NPE. This shows that the government lacks the political will to have a proper language policy that is implementable rather than fragments of NPE that stakeholders in education easily flout for selfish reasons without considering national development (Bangbose 2011). A recent study by Ayoola and Bankole (2017) claims that “the practice in most homes in Nigeria now is that the parents communicate with their children in English. Most children are flogged by their parents when they try to speak the Indigenous languages which they refer to as vernacular”

The government itself had not been fully committed to the full implementation of this policy. With the proliferation of private nursery, primary and secondary schools, proprietors do what they like. Thus, in most private schools in Nigeria, English is the medium of instruction from kindergarten to secondary school level. While some of the schools do not teach any of the indigenous languages at all. The reasons adduced to this are the lack of teachers of those languages and the fact that the school owners and parents as well do not see any need for the languages referred to as vernacular. *Egbe Akomolede Yoruba* (Association of Yoruba Teachers) had written letters to the relevant authorities on the implications of this action. Yet, no positive action has been taken by the relevant authorities.

In November 2022, The Federal government took a step that seemed to be in the right direction, to introduce a new National Language Policy mandating the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction throughout all six years of primary school. Even when an official document outlining the policy and its specifics has yet to be released, the then Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu, publicly confirmed its approval by the Federal Executive Council—the highest decision-making body in Nigeria—during a press conference on November 30th, 2022. He stated that the policy was compulsory and took immediate effect. At the launch of the National Language Policy on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2023, Adamu explained that the goal of the policy was to enhance the teaching and learning of reading in Nigerian languages at the basic education level and beyond. Additionally, Prof. Ismail Junaidu who was the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) emphasized that the policy aims to promote and preserve Nigerian languages. Listed among the service scope and achievements of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) (2024) were the following:

1. Development of bilingual dictionaries in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, Efik and Tiv for basic education
2. Development of orthographies (alphabetic writing system) in 57 national languages.
3. Development and production of a language map for Nigeria.
4. Development of Nigerian languages curricula for BEC in Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Izon, Efik, Egbira, Tiv, Kanuri, Fulfulde, Urhobo, Isoko, C'lela etc.
5. Development of English, French and Arabic language curriculum.
6. Development of meta-languages for Tiv, Kanuri, Izon, Efik, Fulfude and Edo)
7. Preparation of a Dictionary of Legislative Terms.
8. Development of basic expressions for tourists and learners in English, French, Arabic, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.
9. Development of glossary for primary science and mathematics in nine Nigerian languages.

As promising and intriguing as the aforementioned policy may sound, there remains no tangible evidence of its implementation on a national scale. As Obiakor (2024) aptly commented “this policy decision was made with limited information regarding the current implementation status and a scarcity of evidence on whether the available evidence supporting mother tongue instruction and its impact on

learning outcomes extends to Nigeria's multilingual landscape". This observation underscores a critical gap between policy formulation and its practical application within Nigeria's diverse linguistic context.

Despite the theoretical benefits of mother tongue instruction, particularly in improving comprehension and foundational learning, the policy's success hinges on careful contextualization. Nigeria's linguistic diversity presents unique challenges, including a lack of teaching resources, insufficiently trained educators proficient in local languages, and the logistical difficulties of implementing such a policy across a nation with over 500 distinct languages. Without clear strategies to address these issues, the ambitious policy risks remaining an idealistic aspiration rather than a transformative educational intervention.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

At this point, this paper wants to state categorically that the implications of the current trends are that:

- i. The departments of indigenous languages in our Universities and colleges of Education may soon close down. Since there will be no students with O'Level qualifications to feed them.
- ii. The Indigenous languages may eventually go into extinction since the majority of the elites are not interested in allowing their children to pick up the languages and there is no serious effort on the part of the government to get them taught in schools
- iii. Our rich culture and values will gradually be lost. Since language is an integral part of culture when a language is killed the culture is equally killed.
- iv. There will be no indigenous Technological ideology in the country. Technology will always remain a foreign activity, conducted in a foreign language and tongue; in a foreign heart, and in a foreign educational context. (Adegbija 2004b).
- v. Moreover, research in cognitive science supports the argument that students learn more effectively when instructed in their mother tongues during the early stages of education (Fafunwa 1982, Cummins, 2000). Fafunwa 1982 submits that "if the Nigeria child is to be encouraged from the start to develop curiosity, initiative, industry, manipulative ability, mechanical comprehension and co-ordination of hand and eye, he should acquire these skills and attitudes through his mother tongue; after all, this is the most natural learning medium". When students are educated in a language that is not their first, they may not fully develop the critical thinking skills required to innovate, especially in fields like science and technology. This is because the language of instruction plays a significant role in shaping cognitive frameworks and problem-solving abilities.

Based on the above, this paper recommends that the government should as a matter of urgency put in place a language policy in education that will provide Nigerian children with the education needed for the technological transformation of the country (Anyadiegwu 2019). Efforts must be made to care for the indigenous languages so that they do not go to extinction with the cultural heritage that is to be transmitted through them. (Ethnologue 2021). To this effect, the government must ensure the enforcement of the language policy stipulated in the NPE on schools – especially the private schools; and discourage the ideas of the elites "who prefer education in the imported language for their children". As Kanana (2013) has rightly said that "in Education, where the body of knowledge is generated and conveyed in a different language it would be difficult for a learner to grasp it easily. There are numerous countries we can cite: China, Japan, Turkey, Russia, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America which have all advanced technologically due to their policies that knowledge should be taught in the local languages".( Kanana 2013).

### **Conclusion**

Appraising the recent curriculum review for Nigerian primary and secondary schools, it is obvious that the focus of the government is on science, technology, and vocation without any commitment to a good language policy that can midwife the technological transformation of the country. When a child is instructed in a language alien to him, he grapples with both the language and the content of the subject at the same time. The language that can provide the child with the education needed for the technological development of the country is his mother tongue. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, no single mathematics and science books are written in the indigenous languages. Technological and scientific processes cannot be explained and taught in the mother tongues. Until we start to teach, speak, and think about technology in our mother tongue, science, and technology will remain foreign to us; we will continue to depend on transferred technology from Japan, China, and other countries with indigenous technology developed in their language. This corroborates Bamgbose (1991) that unless there is technological culture, "the speed of transferred technology will fall on barren ground and fail to germinate". From the foregoing, it is evident that language is an integral part of culture, and for any meaningful development to take place within the context of a particular culture; the language of the culture is needed and must also be developed. This study highlights how mother-tongue-based multilingual education could foster cognitive development, thereby improving students' ability to conceptualize scientific and technological concepts more effectively. Moreover, incorporating indigenous languages into technological discourse might encourage innovation that is culturally relevant and sustainable for Nigeria's socio-economic growth.

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