

Broadening Native Language Curriculum for Cultural Preservation in Nigeria

Nweke, Emmanuel Onyekachi PhD¹, CHINWE GODWIN UDOM² & Chiemeka Doris Obasi³

¹Department of Office Technology and Management, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Email: emmanuel.nweke@portharcourtportpoly.edu.ng. Orcid Id: <http://orcid.org/000-0003-3507-2285>

²Department of Foundation and General Studies, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic Rumuola, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Email: wendu_2002@yahoo.com

³Department of Library and Information Science Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education. Email: chiemeka.obasi@alvanikoku.edu.ng.

*Corresponding Author: Nweke, Emmanuel Onyekachi PhD

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23489592>

Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>The paper examined Broadening Native Language Curriculum for Cultural Preservation in Nigeria. It adopted the desk study approach involving content analysis wherein academic materials were sought from internet, journals, verbal interactions, public view, text books. The paper limited its discussion on broadening local language curriculum, cultural preservation, need for curriculum capture and Importance of Language Preservation. It based its theory on the Academic Associated Role Theory in the Preservation of Culture by Bogucki. Bulk of discourse of the article centred around the need to incorporate local languages into Nigerian education curriculum and to preserve the culture of both the major and minor cultural groups in Nigeria. It concluded that Nigerian education authorities incorporating local or native languages into education curriculum would ensure cultural preservation. It also stated that enshrining native languages into its curriculum would ensure the preservation and respect for minority groups in the Nigeria socio-political system. The paper therefore posited that local language should be learnt by the young and adult in order to preserve linguistic and other cultural components of the Nigerian people. Its suggested among other items, that Nigerian Political system should consider the need to sustain the culture of every culture group of the Nigerian people and that Parents and families should learn to speak their local languages at home.</i> Keywords: Education curriculum, Native language, Nigeria, Culture, Preservation, Groups.
Received: 19-08-2026	
Accepted: 25-09-2026	
Published: 20-10-2026	
Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited. Citation: Nweke, Emmanuel Onyekachi PhD, CHINWE GODWIN UDOM & Chiemeka Doris Obasi. (2026). Broadening Native Language Curriculum for Cultural Preservation in Nigeria. UKR Journal of Education and Literature (UKRJEL), 2(5), 144-147.	

Introduction

Language is a very veritable conveyor of the culture of a people. Native Language is the means of or medium of communication by a cultural group. Native language as a component of a people's culture is a major requirement for the preservation of the culture of a people. The need for the preservation of culture arises when a means of passing such culture becomes weak. Language as a means of cultural transmission becomes weak when the native language is threatened into extinction. Cultural preservation is the sustenance of a people's language in a way that is transmissible to generations.

Culture is a component of learning. Culture according to sociological perspective is learned through sociological activities. Amaele (2022) classifies sociological activities to include interactions from families, schools, society and

among peers. A major sociological enclave about language in this study is school. The school has been viewed as a major centre for sociological engagements. Native languages in Nigeria, have in recent times suffered threat to its existence. It is disheartening to find that Nigeria official language (English Language) has twistingly taken the first or mother tongue of most persons. Most children or students or even teachers are steadily losing touch with their local languages. Native or local language, according to Frank (2021), a linguist argues that in the coming years, parents may need to hire language consultants to teach their children local languages.

The need to broaden the Nigerian curriculum to accommodate native language draws from the intention of encouraging speaking of local languages in the families,

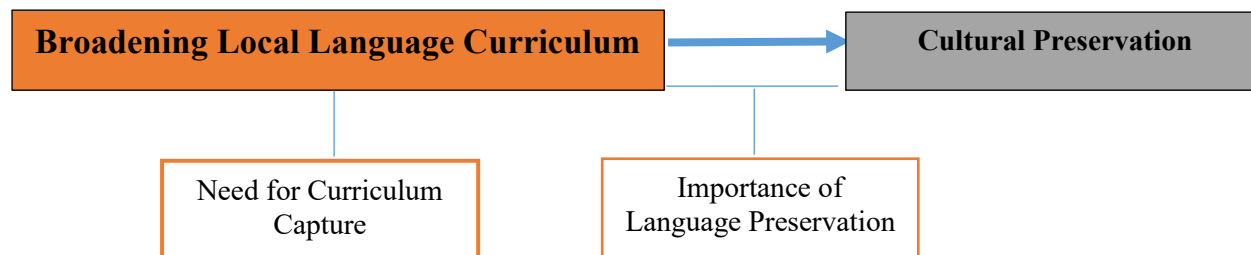
schools and general society in Nigeria. Udiomunu & Nweke (2023) opine that dearth of local languages draws from the level of frequency of use. That if native language is spoken in families, schools, and in the public, it will be easier to sustain the culture of a people. The paper contemplates that incorporating native or local languages into the Nigerian curriculum would be of a nurture into retaining the culture of various tribes or cultural groups in Nigeria.

There have been several scholarly inputs on native language speaking and its preservation. For example, Udiomunu & Nweke (2023) carried out a research on “The Dearth of Native Languages and Cultural Sustenance in

Rivers State”. Ademola (2019) equally carried out a research on Nigerian languages going extinct. Chukwu (2020) equally did a research in (2021), “All Nigerian Languages are dying”. However, none of the studies or positions has presented native language as an academic unit of study or a component to be enshrined into the Nigerian school curriculum. The present article seeks to close this gap and to advocate that native languages be incorporated into Nigerian school curriculum from primary to tertiary level.

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarifications



Broadening Local Language Curriculum

The Nigerian Curriculum at various levels, according to Sadiq (2025) already captures what it contemplates as major tribal languages such as Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. There are even professors and academic majors in these areas. However, the contemplation of this paper is that the curriculum should be expanded in a way that languages spoken in various states of Nigeria should be allowed to be taught in primary and secondary schools. Its position equally includes suggesting that local languages be included as General Studies Courses in various tertiary institutions in Nigeria, and also the languages spoken in the host states. According to Subian, Makhrus & Fauzan (2023) Local languages are invaluable cultural assets that reflect a community's identity and represent local wisdom passed down through generations and that this wisdom is knowledge that should be transmitted to generations. The existence of local languages is crucial from a linguistic perspective and as a means of preserving a people's cultural diversity. However, in recent decades, local languages in Nigeria and world over have experienced a significant decline.

This postulation cannot be accomplished if language learning is not made part of the school experience. They also added that factors like globalization, technological advancement and urbanization are also important in the reduced use of local languages by the younger generations and that revitalization of local languages via education and enhancement of the curriculum is very important to sustain this cultural heritage, otherwise, they could be extinct in a

few generations. Such revitalization should be conducted through an integrated approach to the educational curriculum, which can instill love and pride in local languages.

Cultural Preservation

United Nations (2025) agrees that most liberal aims of language and culture preservation are accepted, which will enable us to enjoy the whole human experience and protect the cultural units from being wholly swallowed by a bigger or more powerful group thus enhancing knowledge and respect to our fellow man. However, there is less consensus on the state obligations regarding the best way to enforce these policies. The need of cultural preservation is based on the notion that culture survives on a system of continuation. According to Udiomunu & Nweke (2023), cultural preservation is the process of supporting the continued existence of a people to current and future generations. Language, being a major component of culture, has to be preserved as a form of knowledge for generations unborn to benefit or harvest from. If a people's language becomes extinct as a result of western interferences, there will exist a world of vacuum which would lead to loss of diversity. In many counties of the world, including Nigeria, the essential question of policies is how to protect languages and preserve cultures. For example, religious institutions, hospitals, markets could be encouraged to transact in local languages of the places where they operate. Such innovations could inform people to begin to pay attention to their local languages.

Need for Curriculum Inclusion and Implementation

Dewi (2022) affirms that including local languages in educational curriculum would ensure that people of any group learn indigenous languages at school and practice as assignment at homes where local languages are not spoken. This will help to emphasize the need to incorporate local or native language in the day to day transactions or interactions. Hamied & Mushafa (2019) aligns with Dewi (2022) stating that educational curriculum enshrines learning into a going concern. It evolves from the fact that learning is documented in a syllabled procedure and this engagement ensures that learners understand the essence of the content of the subject. Curriculum in education solves the problem of learning truancy.

It gives an opportunity of examination and certifications. Introducing the local languages in Nigerian curriculum would also enable the younger generation to be able to learn in order to preserve their culture. The Nigerian educational curriculum is one of the ways of solving this problem. As (Dewi, 2022) has explained education is one of the main factors in the sustainability of the local languages. Students can learn, acknowledge and use their local language by introducing regional language materials in the curriculum. A curriculum based on the regional cultural wealth can also help students in understanding the cultural diversity of the nation. It is therefore important to come up with a curriculum that teaches local languages theoretically and also enables students to use their languages in daily life. This culture-based education can enable students to understand why it is important to preserve regional languages from extinction.

Importance of Language Preservation

UNESCO's Atlas Report (2022) indicates that top ten languages in the world are the primary dialects of half the world's population. Can language diversity be preserved, or are we on a path to becoming a monolingual species? Over the past century alone, around 400 languages. About one every three months – have gone extinct, and most linguists estimate that 50 percent of the world's remaining 6,500 to 7,000 languages will be gone by the end of this century. Some anthropologists and linguists believe the loss could be closer to 90 percent. Since there are so many imperiled languages, it is impossible to label just one as the rarest or most endangered, but at least 100 around the world have only a handful of speakers from Ainu in Japan to Yagan in Chile. UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger lists 576 as critically endangered, with thousands more categorized as endangered or threatened. The highest numbers occur in the Americas (<https://www.odu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/ib-3rd-languages-and-cultures.pdf>)

It is therefore essential to begin researches on the area of cultural preservation through language inclusion.

Languages that do not appear prominent are so because of the political credence given to the majority groups. Culture is should not be an element of super-imposition. International justice system premeditates global inclusion and this should not exclude the language of any people.

Theoretical Foundation

This paper bases its theory on the Academic Associated Role Theory in the Preservation of Culture by Bogucki (1958) and cited by Udiomunu & Nweke (2023). Its principles demonstrate how regional academic and research organizations can help field projects prioritize site investigations and to flag when and where contract projects are likely to turn up long-sought key data for regional synthesis. This present research draws and connects to this theory in the sense of academic and research organizations project priority. The content of capturing local languages into educational curriculum in Nigeria is a major crux of this research and it completely aligns with the principles of the Preservation of Culture by Bogucki.

Conclusion

This paper examined Broadening Native Language Curriculum for Cultural Preservation in Nigeria. Its position includes that Nigerian education authorities should incorporate local or native languages into the educational curriculum which would ensure cultural preservation. That Enshrining native languages into its curriculum would ensure the preservation and respect for minority or even majority groups in the Nigeria socio-political system. The essence of which would include elongating or preserving the culture of the people. Enshrining native languages into its curriculum would ensure the preservation and respect for minority groups in the Nigeria socio-political system. The paper therefore posits that local language should be learnt by both the young and old in order to preserve linguistic and other cultural components of the Nigerian people.

Suggestions

Based on the conclusion of the paper, the following suggestions have been made:

1. Nigerian political system should consider the need to sustain the culture of every cultural group in Nigeria.
2. Parents and families should learn to speak their local languages at home.
3. In situations where both parents come from different cultural background, either parents should speak their different languages to the children
4. State and Federal Government of Nigeria should incorporate local languages into its educational curriculum.

References

1. Dewi, R. (2022). Revitalisasi bahasa daerah dalam kurikulum pendidikan. *Journal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra*, 16(1), 45–60.
2. Frank, A. (2024). Ancaman pergeseran bahasa daerah dalam era globalisasi: Tinjauan kasus di Kabupaten Barru. *Journal Bastra (Bahasa dan Sastra)*, 9(4), 723–732.
3. Frank, H. (2020). Integrasi teknologi dalam pengajaran bahasa daerah di era digital. *Journal Pendidikan Teknologi*, 11(3), 98–105.
4. Hamied, F. A., & Musthafa, B. (2019). Policies on language education in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(2), 295–304.
5. Hidayati, N. (2021). Pengaruh pengajaran bahasa daerah terhadap identitas budaya siswa. *Journal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, 29(4), 112–125.
6. <https://www.odu.edu/sites/default/files/document/s/ib-3rd-languages-and-cultures.pdf>
7. <https://www.odu.edu/sites/default/files/document/s/ib-3rd-languages-and-cultures.pdf>
8. Nadar, F. (2020). Bahasa lokal sebagai identitas budaya: Studi literasi bahasa daerah. *Journal Linguistik Indonesia*, 18(2), 130–145.
9. Rahman, A. (2023). Revitalisasi bahasa daerah melalui pendidikan multikultural. *Journal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Multikultural*, 3(2), 76–90.
10. Sadiq, E. T. (2025). Barriers to local language preservation: Insights from English teachers in the Luwu context. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 12(2), 2221–2236.
11. Smith, A. (2019). The role of language in cultural identity. *Journal of Language and Society*, 21(1), 56–72.
12. Sulistyono, T. (2022). Strategi pengembangan kurikulum berbasis bahasa lokal. *Journal Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran*, 17(3), 213–225.
13. Suryadi, A. (2021). Peran bahasa Indonesia dalam kehidupan sehari-hari di era globalisasi. *Journal Linguistik dan Sastra*, 15(4), 101–114.
14. Udiomunu, V. & Nweke, E. O. (2023). Dearth of Native Languages and Cultural Sustenance in Rivers State. *African Journal of Humanities & Contemporary Education Research Vol. 13, No. 1 2023*