Journal of Afroasiatic Languages, History and Culture

Volume 10, Number 1, 2021

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A POSITION PAPER

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Abstract

Ecological and social resources which are accumulated in and transmitted through indigenous languages and cultures are important pillar in the national development scenario if they are properly mobilized. This presupposes the complementary nature of correlation between national development and linguistic diversity. However, this correlation has not caught adequate attention to the level that it deserves. Besides, linguistic heterogeneity is perceived to impede economic advancement and political stability. The concern of this position paper is, therefore, to critically discuss if linguistic and cultural diversity contributes to, or rather hold back national welfare, and take position. To organize this paper, data were gathered from relevant secondary sources which argue both in favour of and against the role of linguistic and cultural pluralism for the welfare of a nation, critically reviewed, and systematically discussed and argued based on the evidences and justifications provided. The relevance and authenticity of the sources in relation to the issue under consideration was carefully examined. From the discussion, it was concluded that language is a historical heritage and is an intimate means of expressing one's deepest thoughts and personality, and signifies identity and inalienable human rights. It is also the means of accessing knowledge, ideas and beliefs of the past that are bases for societal development of today. Furthermore, multilingualism by itself is not the cause for economic and political instability in a society; rather, these problems attribute to other social

factors and political power inequalities between different groups. Therefore, so as not to disregard these resources and exclude large number of population from the national development agenda, linguistic diversity needs to be preserved and promoted.

1. Introduction

Language resources and their place in national development are unrecognized and little documented or researched in the context of development agenda. Most of the existing development programs are mainly underpinned by approaches drawn from such disciplines as economics, sociology and politics. Two diametrically opposed perspectives are observed in relation to the presence of many languages in a nation vis-à-vis national welfare. The first perspective is one that views the existence of many languages in negative light, linking them with such problems as ethnic conflicts, political tensions, underdevelopment, and social instability. This school of thought also considers language diversity as a cause for economic backwardness and as cost ineffective, particularly when considered in the context of the amount of resources needed to promote the use of multiple languages in different social domains. On the other hand, the existence of one language for the whole nation is associated with economic prosperity and political stability which leads to discouragement for the use of and respect for multiple languages.

These arguments have been counter-argued by other scholars, however. It is argued that plurilingualism in itself is not a cause of problems mentioned, but that it all depends on what people do with it. Rather than being a costly obstacle to development, national unity, political integration and social cohesion, linguistic diversity is considered to be an asset. This second view about linguistic diversity is inspired by the desire to recognize and accommodate all languages and language groups, regardless of size and socio-political status. Therefore, this position paper attempts to critically review secondary data and reflect on issues of linguistic diversity in relation to national development.

The main objective of this paper is to examine the relationship between linguistic diversity and national development. In particular, the paper is intended:

i. to assess the adverse effects of the endangerment of world languages,
ii. to examine the argument that favours the negative correlation between the linguistic diversity and national development,
iii. to assess the argument in favour of the contribution of linguistic and cultural diversity to national welfare and take position.

To organize this position paper pertaining to the objectives designed, data were gathered from relevant secondary sources. Sources which argue both in the favour of and against the role linguistic and cultural pluralism play for the well-fare of a nation were critically reviewed. The relevance and authenticity of the sources in relation to the issue under consideration was also carefully examined. The contradicting ideas were systematically discussed and argued based on the evidences and justifications provided. Propositions from the sources were paraphrased, quoted where necessary, and cited properly. Finally, concluding remarks were drawn from the arguments.

2. Conceptualizing Language

Every social organization requires some means of communication through which the members could transfer messages with one another and achieve some degree of mutual understanding. While sub-humans use natural signs and are therefore said to lack formal language since they cannot abstract a concept from a particular concrete context, human beings communicate by means of conventional sings or symbols called language. Language is a means of communication as well as symbol of identity. According to Crystal (1992, cited in Mahadi & Jafari, 2012:231), it is "the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self expression." Hence language enables people to develop a shared set of meanings and it is only

when this consensus exists that people are able to act together. Stern (1983:126) also describes language as 'a system of relationships or as an elaborate structure of mutually supporting parts, arranged in some hierarchical order.' This shows that it uses conventional signs composed of arbitrarily patterned sound units arranged into larger units like morphemes, words, sentences, utterances. Ended, language, in order to convey meaning, is not restricted to using purely verbal expressions but includes other symbols like written words, gestures and facial expressions, devices, materials etc.

Other than serving the purpose of communication, language is an important component of one's identity. From this perspective, Terry and Irving (2010::111) define language as 'a means of communication that shapes cultural and personal identity and socializes one into a cultural group.' It is the main instrument through which the major human cultural elements such as knowledge, values, aesthetics, beliefs, norms, ideology and other intangible aspects of that culture are acquired, developed and passed on to new members. Hence all the agents of socialization in any social institutions require language to socialize individuals in the proper ideals of the society (Zeleza, 2006). Thus language is not only communication tool, but it is the socializing instrument and symbolic identity of its native individual or a group.

3. Development Theories and Linguistic diversity: Laying the Framework

3.1 Theories of Development

The concept 'Development' has been a major area of controversy as it is associated with diverse meanings and interpretations. Its concept received attention mainly from the mid-20th century as the result of the fluctuation of outlooks with regard to human development. Most scholars define the term as an evolutionary process in which the human capacity increases in terms of initiating new structures, coping with problems, adapting to continuous change and striving to attain new goals (Du Pisani, 2007). It is understood as a social

condition within a nation, in which the needs of its population are satisfied by the rational and sustainable use of natural resources and systems. Development is also defined as a multidimensional process that involves major changes in social structures, attitudes, and institutions, as well as economic growth, reduction of inequality, and eradication of absolute poverty (Du Pisani, 2007; Elliott, 2006).

These conceptual convergences and the widening gap between developed and developing countries is believed to trigger the development theorists to come up with different theories that explain the concept of development at different times. While some theories lie on internal characteristics of a society, others place more importance on external economic forces and relations.

3.1.1 Modernization Theory

Modernization theory of development evolved from two ideas about social change developed in the 19th century: the conception of traditional vs. modern societies and positivism. From the point of view of tradition vs. modernity, this theory advocates that cultural changes would become the most important elements in the process of creating prosperity. It argues that the traditional societies are entangled by norms, beliefs and values, which are hampering their development. Thus, in order to become modern, the traditional societies must imitate the culture of modern societies, which is characterised by accumulation of capital and industrialization that are compatible with development. That is underdeveloped nations should rationalize the resource allocation, and eliminate the internal traditional, institutional and organizational backwardness that impede their development. From positivist evolution perspective, all societies would pass through the same set of steps that Western societies passed, from traditional to modern society. It determined development to be a linear process which every country must go through (Mensah & Casadevall, 2019; Shareia, 2015; Elliott, 2006).

Generally, based on liberal values, Modernization Theory advocates substituting indigenous and traditional systems with Western practices, creating new political elites, centralising the

political structures, aligning the political, social, and institutional entities with economic goals and a like. In this theory, development meant assuming the mental models of the West (rationalization), the institutions of the West (the market), the goals of the West (high mass consumption), and the culture of the West (worship of the commodity). According to this framework, the world was divided into First World, Second World, and Third World (Rheede, 2009; Du Pisani, 2007).

Modernization theory of development was criticised for its failure to make distinction between countries, regions, and structural conditions. It ignored specific historical experiences and phases of prosperity in a society and assumed that only one culture and one path were ways of development (Davids, 1998). This theory was also criticised mainly for disregarding the cultural values, indigenous languages, traditional practices and institutions, and freedoms as well as self-esteem of the traditional societies in the development issues.

3.1.2 Dependency Theory

In response to the shortcomings of Modernization Theory, social development theories such as dependency theory appeared in 1960s. These theories were basically neo-Marxist socialism in approach which focuses not only on economic progress, but also on the totality of society and relations of production. According to Dependency Theory, there are two objectives of development process. The first was developing countries' position in the international system referred to as either *peripheral* (underdeveloped) or the *core* (developed). Development for peripheral countries implied a gaining of national independence and self-centred economic growth that did not *depend* on the core countries. The second objective was developing internal characteristics of their societies that referred to as the role of local *elites* or the governments. Therefore, for dependency theory, development for peripheral countries implied a change in the role of the local elites consistent with self-centred economic growth (Du Pisani, 2007; Elliott, 2006).

Dependency theory demystifies the tenets of the Modernization Theory and asserts that industrialization in the developed countries rather subjects poor countries to underdevelopment as a result of the economic surplus of the poor countries being exploited by developed countries. It states that underdeveloped countries could not follow the same path of development as the industrialised ones. The linkages between the two worlds are conceptualized as a set of externally imposed, exploitative, and dependent economic relationships incompatible with development. The basic message of this theory is that Western development is predicated on the active underdevelopment of the non-European world. Supporters of this theory suggest a solution that developing countries should break their linkages with Western capitalist countries so as to follow an autonomous, independent path of development (Mensah & Casadevall, 2019; Du Pisani, 2007; Davids, 1998).

Dependency theories, however, did not formulate a clear model on how to achieve the desired internal, self-centred economic progress and how to change the role of the elites within the society. It also fails to clarify the dependency of the less developed countries on the metropolis in terms of how the developed countries secure access to the economic surplus of the poor countries. This led to the emergence of another development theory.

3.1.3 World Systems Theory

This Theory, which measures the differences of development achievement in the world system, emerged as a variance of the dependency school of thought. It first studies the basic features of the world global system, followed by the analysis of the individual countries. Individual developmental prospects depend more on the nature of the global system than on their internal structures; and the incorporation of a developing economy into a world system is important for its internal development. Though it accepts that there is one single underlying set of processes in the world system that applies to all economies, the worldwide system consists of three

zones: the core, the semi-periphery and the periphery (Elliott, 2006; World Bank, 2004).

As an alternative to the Modernization model, World Systems Theory asserts that international trade specialization and the transfer of resources from less developed countries to "core' countries inhibits national development in the less developed countries by increasing their dependence on the developed countries and by promoting their "peripheralization". An individual country can change its position in the global hierarchy both upwards and downwards, but the framework for such shifts is set by the structures and prevailing conditions of the world system. Advocates of world-systems theory, like that of dependency theory, recommend a disunity of developing countries with the Western capitalist countries, and an autonomous, independent path of development movement as a solution (Mensah & Casadevall, 2019; Du Pisani, 2007).

This theory was also not without limitation. It has been criticized for its exclusion of cultural resources and the role of the internal state in its development explanations as well as for overemphasising the world market while neglecting forces and relations of production.

3.1.4 Globalization Theory

The term "Globalisation" contains two major concepts. While one concept deals with the concept as an event when a sense of interdependence occurs throughout different nations in different aspects of communication, trade, and finance, the other considers it as a theory of economic development with the supposition of widespread unification among nations (Shareia, 2015). As a theory of development, similar to the World System Theory, Globalisation Theory of development originates from the global mechanisms of deeper integration with particular emphasis on the sphere of economic transactions among the countries. Its feature is the spread of capitalism around the globe. This integration is believed to have an effective influence on the development of economies and on the improvement in social indicators.

However, apart from the economic ties, other key elements for development interpretation, as far as globalisation is concerned, are the cultural links among nations. In this cultural orientation, one of the cardinal factors is the increasing flexibility of technology to connect people around the world. Therefore, open and easy communication among nations has created grounds for cultural homogenisation, thereby creating a single global society. Political events no longer take local character but global character. Thus, globalisation is underpinned by political, economic, technological and socio-cultural factors and orientations (Mensah & Casadevall, 2019).

Though development theory has paved the way for the current global development concepts and paradigm, there are challenges to its supposed universal benefits. The disparity in global incomes among countries is one of the probable consequences of globalization which leads to the fact that developing countries are going to become less powerful and lose their position. Probable international or even local instability can be considered as another side effect of Globalisation which itself is the result of the worldwide interdependency of economies. It may be the case that an economic instability in one country can trigger global effects, which threatens the economic control of self-governing, independent countries. This is why the leaders of some developing countries think that Globalisation means their imprisonment in the hands of powerful international forces. The severe sense of instability of every kind in addition to a harsh type of national devotion are manifestations of the negative side of Globalisation, and can lead to a sudden national reaction and a probable rise of traditionalism in politics (Mensah & Casadevall, 2019; Shareia, 2015).

3.1.5 Micro-theories of Development

Theories of development before 1970s could be characterized by increased capital, process of change towards material well-being measured by the standards of the industrial societies, while all the other problems facing a nation were believed to be solved as the

direct consequence of this goal. These theories did not consider other components of social factors like self-reliance, developing and using linguistic, cultural and social resources and strategies to identify their needs and impact their environment concerning their lives. From 1970s onwards, however, this concept of development has begun to be questioned for various reasons. Some reasons include the failure of nations to achieve the intended sustainable economic development and prosperity and to achieve some level of social harmony and national stability with the help of the existing economic models. This led to the need for further analysis of development (Pieterse, 2010; UNESCO, 2000).

As the result, various international institutions in the area of development and culture began to look for a broader framework within which the question of how to secure the most effective and sustained development could be answered. Consequently, Micro-theories (community-oriented development theories) came into existence during late 1980s and early 1990s. In these theories, the focus and concept of development has shifted from capital accumulation to multi-faceted community empowerment, self-reliance, and social sustainability via mass participation in the whole development process. According to Micro-theories of development, any development process and policy formulation should take cognitive and cultural constructs of diversified societies like people's indigenous faith, values, perceptions, needs, skills, knowledge, and past experiences as a starting point (Rheede, 2009; Elliott, 2006).

With the emergence of these theories, the concept of national development began to be conceived as a holistic improvement in socio-cultural, political and economic systems of a particular society to meet its basic needs. This new development premise has necessitated paying more attention to people's culture-specific indigenous resources and using them as benchmarks to empower communities economically, politically, and socially.

At this juncture, it is felt to conceptualize national development, of which, like the concept of development, there is no universally acceptable definition. In the context of a nation, three major factors

must be considered in any discussion on development- economic growth, self-reliance, and social factors. Development here is a qualitative change, which entails changes in the structure of the economy, social environment, and political disposition. The overall object of national development is human development, the purpose of which is to improve the social well-being of citizens of the entire nation (to enlarge people's choices) in terms of indicators of development predicated on minimum standards of living. These indicators of minimum standards of living include a reasonable standard of better health and housing facilities, food security, greater access to knowledge and employment, political and cultural freedoms, security against crime and physical violence, life expectancy (reduction of infant mortality and improvement of maternal and reproductive health), and a sense of participation in community activities (Thioune, 2003).

The effective mobilisation of the masses for national development so that they can become trained, skilled, knowledgeable and effective agents of change in the national development enterprise requires the democratisation of access to and transmission of knowledge, technology, skills and techniques not in other's language but in languages the people know best. The fact that the sum total of these elements required for national development are best acquired and transmitted in a native language of a society necessitates a need to develop and use indigenous languages of diverse societies in various social domains. In other words, in nation building, the national development enterprise, to be effective, requires that the languages of different communities in the nation need to be developed, revitalised, revalorised and instrumentalized. Otherwise large number of population are literally marginalised and excluded from the development equation (Chumbow, 2009).

In the implementation of these schemes, ideological issues, among others, have become challenges. The most pervasive ideological issues have to do with belief and attitudes towards diversity, multilingualism, pluralism and power in relation to social and economic development. Though one of the most daunting

challenges to the enterprise of national development is the very fact of linguistic and cultural diversity which makes the cost of multicultural development in a pluralistic ideology relatively high, the arguments in favour of multilingual and multicultural development of nations stem from the arguments in favour of the conservation of linguistic and cultural diversity which is to be discussed in the next section.

3.2 Linguistic Diversity and the Endangerment of World Languages

Linguistic diversity refers, in a broad sense, to the range of variations exhibited by human languages that could be defined in at least two ways. The most common definition uses a simple count of absolute number of languages in a country: the more languages, the more linguistic diversity. However, according to Skutnabb-Kangas (2002), ranking the degree of linguistic diversity should also be based on the percentage of the population speaking any single language. Thus the country where the largest language group represents the smallest proportion of the population would be deemed as the most linguistically diverse, since all the other language groups would represent yet smaller percentages. Both ways of assessing linguistic diversity are useful measures for different purposes.

Most countries of the world are multi-lingual and even the few mono-lingual countries are increasingly becoming multi-lingual and multi-cultural as a result of the mobility and migration factors. Africa in particular is the most linguistically diversified continent. Therefore, multi-lingualism is normal and mono-lingualism is exceptional worldwide. In fact multilingualism is paralleled by multi-ethnicity (the multilingual nations are by default multi-ethnic). Multilingualism also implies multiculturalism as language is a vector of culture and are intimately related though there are instances where there is not a one-to-one correlation between language and culture for permeability of culture (Chumbow, 2009).

The exact number of languages in the world is not known because of the lack of studied resources and lack of clarity of the border

between languages and other varieties, e.g. dialects. Nonetheless, more than 7,000 languages are estimated to be spoken by the world's population today. Regarding the number of L1 speakers across languages, Mandarin Chinese is ranked first with over 1 billion speakers, followed by Spanish and English while English takes the first rank if L2 speakers are considered. On the other hand, the top ten languages in the world in terms of number of speakers, which represent only 0.10 - 0.15% of the world's languages, are estimated to be spoken by 50% of the world's population. It has been further reported that about 94-97% of the world's population speaks 4-5% of world's languages, that is only 3-6% world population speaks 95-96% of world languages. Moreover, over 95% of the world's languages have fewer than 1 million native users, and more than 1500 languages have less than 1000 speakers (Lewis et al. 2013; Ansah, 2008; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002).

In terms of the distribution of languages across regions, Africa and Asia share about one third of the world languages each. The distribution of languages across countries amazingly ranges from very few languages to several hundreds in a country. According to Ansah (2008), for example, 50% of the world's languages are spoken in 8 countries only, namely Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Nigeria, India, Mexico, Cameron, China and Australia with the number of languages ranging from 820 to 231. These data show that few, well-developed and widely spread languages are dominating the world, while very large number of languages is spoken by very few people. This entails that large number of languages are in danger of extinction.

According to some scholars, great number of world languages is not at the safe condition. A language is threatened if it has few users and a weak political status, and, especially, if children of the linguistic group are no longer learning (in) it, i.e. when the language is no longer transmitted to the next generation. So far among the world's languages, about 17% of world languages are claimed to be dead or dying. While some linguists estimate that half of today's spoken languages may have disappeared in a 100-year time, others

pessimistically estimate that only 10% of today's oral languages may remain safe in the year mentioned. This shows that many languages are unlikely to exist more than a century for lack of speakers and official support (Benjamins, 2013; Lewis et al. 2013; Shaeffer, 2008; Stuknab-Kanga, 2002). Thus, globalization and modernization are real threats to linguistic diversity in the world today and more so in the future.

4. Linguistic Diversity: Threat or Opportunity for National Development?

The linguistic diversity issue is always found to become the source of debate. Ideologically, two conflicting positions arise; the view in favour of Cultural/linguistic Assimilation and of Cultural/linguistic Pluralism. Linguistic Assimilation refers to the assimilation of minority languages and cultures by a majority dominant language and culture that results in the loss of the former. It is the instrument by which multilingual communities can become monolingual. Cultural Pluralism, on the other hand, is an ideology which seeks to maintain each linguistic and cultural heritage within a nation favouring linguistic and cultural diversity. There is a need to understand facts of linguistic diversity so as to treat them as incontrovertible reality and distinguish these from ideological position and attitudes towards these facts (Chumbow, 2009; Ansah, 2008).

From the assimilationist point of view, there are arguments that linguistic diversity is believed to cause the retardation of development, both political and economic. This school of thought advocate the diminution of multilingualism and multiculturalism by the cultural and linguistic assimilation. According to this view, linguistic diversity is claimed to aggravate political sectionalism and hinders inter-group cooperation, national unity, and regional multinational cooperation. It is also claimed that linguistic diversity impedes political support for authorities, and political participation of people, by way of holding down governmental effectiveness and political stability. Furthermore, the argument asserts that linguistic

diversity slows economic development, by, for example, braking occupational mobility, reducing the number of people available for mobilization into the modern sector of the economy, decreasing efficiency, and preventing the diffusion of innovative techniques (Robinson, 2006; Wolff, 2002).

Other than this, in linguistically diversified nations, language choice for national/official role and for medium of instruction, together with the high cost it requires when standardizing and using several languages has become point of argument for advocates of linguistic uniformity. It is claimed that the standardization and use of several minority languages in education, media, communication, business, administration and other social domains is very costly because of the linguistic development costs vis-à-vis the often very small number of that linguistic community (Robinson, 2006; Kuper, 2003; Ouane, 2003).

Fishman is among the frontiers of the speculation about the relations between language diversity and national development. Fishman claims that linguistically homogeneous polities are usually economically more developed, educationally more advanced, politically more modernized, more peaceful and more stable. In views of these assertions, if language diversity contributes to underdevelopment, then language unification is an inevitable result of successful development planning in a linguistically heterogeneous society (Chumbow, 2009; Pool, 1972).

However, in contrast with the notion of language diversity's adverse correlation to national development, others take a position in favour of the conservation of linguistic and cultural diversity to assert indigenous languages and cultures as indispensable factors of personal, community and national development. In order to make close observation about linguistic diversity issue, it is crucial to assess why linguistic diversity is an issue of the date and what substantial arguments for supporting linguistic and cultural diversity exist.

4.1 The Heritage and Biodiversity Argument

Key argument is that linguistic and cultural diversities are the storehouse of historically developed knowledge, and the death of a language is a significant loss because they imply a loss of inherited knowledge. Linguistic and cultural diversity are connected to biodiversity, and the threats to them have adverse effect on national development. Research results indicate that there is a high co-relation between various kinds of indicators of biological mega-diversity and rich linguistic and cultural diversity, even if there are exceptions. Most countries with a high incidence of biodiversity also have a high level of linguistic diversity. Comparing the top 25 countries in terms of the number of endemic languages and the number of endemic vertebrates, Harmon (1995) finds a high degree of overlap. He has similar result when comparing languages and flowering plants, languages and butterflies, etc. Research also provides evidence for the hypothesis that the relationship might also be causal: the two types of diversities seem to mutually enforce and support each other (Maffi, 2001).

As bio-diversity is a normal situation in nature and has advantages in that it helps to maintain the stability and the equilibrium of the world ecological systems, nations have promised to safeguard and ensure its survival. Indigenous and minority communities are reservoirs of considerable knowledge about rare, threatened, and endemic species that has not to date been accumulated by Western-trained conservation biologists. Though it may be difficult for non-experts to discover how taboos, myths, etc. may support biodiversity by forbidding harvesting natural resources too much or too often, these community rituals can protect valuable natural resources considering them as sacred, or dangerous (Chumbow, 2009).

For instance, some trees are very valuable spiritually, commercially, nutritionally and medically in certain communities and are not customarily allowed to be destroyed. These conservation traditions and knowledge which are encoded in the many indigenous and minority languages, can be used both to promote sustainable use

of land and natural resources and to help guide the identification, management, protection, or recovery of habitats for threatened species. It is by pooling the resources of many understandings that more reliable knowledge can arise; and access to these perspectives is best gained through a diversity of languages (Chumbow, 2009; UNESCO, 2005; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002; Nabhan, 2001).

In fact it is believed that the strongest and most stable ecosystems are those which are the most diverse. Diversity contains the potential for adaptation whereas uniformity can endanger a species (including the human species) by providing inflexibility and inadaptability. Thus an ability which is born out of diversity enabled us to succeed on this planet by way of adapting to different kinds of environment over thousands of years. Thus language and cultural diversity maximizes chances of human success and adaptability. Relate to this, it is also believed that global linguistic diversity composes an intellectual web of life, or "logo sphere," that surrounds the planet and is as essential to human survival (Skutnabb-kangas, 2002; Baker, 2001).

Language Diversity is at risk more than biodiversity is. It is optimistically estimated that 2% of biological species but 50% of languages may be dead in a 100 years' time. For pessimists, this estimate rises to 20% and 90% respectively. Just as the extinction of any animal species diminishes our world, so does the extinction of any language. In fact, since much of Traditional Ecological Knowledge is encoded in the small languages of indigenous people, and because of the causal relationships between linguistic and cultural diversity and biodiversity, threatening the linguistic diversity hastens the loss of not only biological species and languages but also the knowledge about how to maintain biodiversity (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009; 2002; Nabhan 2001).

In sum, everyone can sense that any language is a supreme achievement of a uniquely human collective genius, as divine and endless a mystery as a living organism. Many scholars warn that the continued decrease of biodiversity and cultural and linguistic diversity would hold back the historical flow of being itself, the

evolutionary processes through which the vitality of alllife has come down to us through the ages. Therefore, the same arguments in favour of bio-diversity justify interest in and commitment to the sustenance of linguistic and cultural diversity. It is argued that the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity is as important to world cultural and linguistic equilibrium as bio-diversity. The evolutionary significance of diversity not only in nature but also in culture and language is a way of keeping options alive for the future of humanity and the Earth.

4.2 Economic arguments

The economic argument in favour of developmental value of linguistic diversity could be seen from different perspectives. From the point of view of the Creativity and Innovation argument, commodities, services and ideas are analysed. In industrial societies, the main items produced are commodities and, in a later phase, services. In this context, the ones who do well are those who control access to raw materials and own the other prerequisites and means of production. When it comes to an information society proper, the main 'commodities' produced are knowledge and ideas, which are mainly transmitted through languages (and visual images). The creativity argument claims that in this kind of information society, those with access to diverse knowledges, diverse information and ideas, will do well (Skutnabb-kangas, 2002).

Compared to the countries with less diversity, the countries with mega-diversities have had more varied micro-environments to observe, analyse, and discuss, and all of these knowledges have been encoded in their many languages. This means that countries where there is a rich linguistic and cultural diversity, embodying diverse knowledges, have access to more varied knowledges, ideas, and cosmo-visions than countries with few languages and cultures. Even on tests measuring several aspects of 'intelligence', creativity, divergent thinking, cognitive flexibility and a like, high-level Pluri-linguals as a group do better than monolinguals (ibid).

From the perspective of cost-effectiveness when standardizing and implementing several languages in education and other domains to maintain minority languages, the adverse effect of linguistic diversity has become source of debate, as it was claimed earlier. In this view, both 'positive' and 'negative' cost-and-benefit arguments must be entertained. In regard with this, it is asked both what the costs and benefits are if minority languages are maintained and promoted, and what if are otherwise. The outcome is that diversity seems to be positively, rather than negatively, correlated with welfare, and the monetary costs of maintaining diversity are remarkably modest. It is also asserted that devoting resources to the protection and promotion of minority cultures and languages may help to stave off political crises whose costs would be considerably higher than that of the policies considered [the peace-and-security argument] (Skutnabb-kangas, 2002).

It is also argued from the point of view of the cost-benefit analysis and related debates of maintaining linguistic diversity through education in all children's mother tongue. These group of people disregard the account of the economic and socio-political consequences of drop-outs, repetitions, and failures of the vast majority of children as the result of exclusion from an early education in their mother tongue (Ouane, 2003). As individuals are very often emotionally linked to their mother tongue to the extent that it is the means of expressing one's innermost thoughts and one's ego, personality and ethnic identity, it should not be optional for children to be taught in their mother tongue. This could even be considered as a human right of the same level of importance as all other inalienable human rights (Chumbow, 2009). Thus, there are strong grounds to suppose that maintaining regional and minority languages and protecting and promoting linguistic and cultural diversity is a sound idea from cost benefit standpoint.

4.3. Political Arguments

The other most prevailing argument associated with language diversity is related to political assertion of national unity and

stability. The one-nation one-language myth which is likely to emerge from the colonial concept that a nation state requires a single unifying language advocates that the use of several local languages in the communication systems of those countries is considered to be against national unity. According to this assertion, formulating multilingual language policy and realizing the promotion of the linguistic diversity causes national fragmentation and societal divisiveness. This deep-rooted belief seems to be the result of the European first half of 20th century slogan 'Oneness' or 'Nationalistic Monomania' with the assumption that national unity can be promoted by the mutual understanding that shares a single language (Wolff, 2002; Robinson, 2006).

Various researchers have, however, refuted the national unity and stability-based argument against promotion of linguistic diversity claiming that research findings and practical situations show the opposite. One argument claims that one's identity should be sustained before claiming for national unity. 'People who discourage multilingualism (…) on the grounds that a country needs one common language for national unity do forget that as a person, one must be oneself first before one can join a group,' (Ogutu, 2006:45).

Language diversity is rarely in itself the cause of tension, conflict, disunity and war; rather, historical evidence shows that it is social, economic, religious and political power inequalities among linguistic communities, not the languages as such, which cause these problems. As response to the "national unity and stability" argument, some scholars put forth the reality of some African nations like Rwanda, Somalia and Burundi, which overwhelmingly have one national language and not so linguistically and culturally diversified, but are the ones which have faced most problems in preserving their national unity and stability (Chumbow, 2009; Batibo, 2005; Kuper, 2003). Therefore, it is strongly argued that what exacerbates instability throughout the world in reality is not the plurality of languages but non-linguistic conflicts of interest in conflicting messages.

The languages of a nation are its natural resources just like its material possessions such as its coffee, gold, diamond or petroleum. Like all natural resources, they have to be utilizd and used for national development. Given the inevitable existence of linguistic diversity in every nation, there is a need to make it possible for languages to be maximally utilised in the public sphere, such that each language community can conserve, preserve and maximise the development of its ethno-linguistic identity and ensure the optimal use of its language (Chumbow, 2009).

In general, in response to the assertions against the promotion of linguistic diversity and its contribution to national development, many justifications have been put forth. If, for political, economic or other reasons, a person is denied access to a language that is crucial to ensuring his/her upward social mobility, then that person's individual *right to language* will be violated and this constitutes a form of marginalization. Therefore, basic contemporary motivations related to ecological, socio-economic, political, pedagogical, and psychological factors are necessitating the issue of acknowledging linguistic diversity more than anything else. This could be realized through effective Language Planning using relevant models that recognize acting on attitude engineering, realizing the principle of functional complementarities necessary to assure the vitality and maintenance of the language and its contribution to the national development enterprise. However, if care is not taken to plan and implement, language diversity may become a source of tension and conflict within the nation-state.

5. Summary, Conclusions and the Way Forward

In this position paper, attempts have been made to provide readers with insights into the situation of linguistic diversity vis-à-vis national development. The paper has closely reviewed that languages serve as communication tool, socializing instrument and individual's and group's identity, and hence that endangerment of the massive number of world languages entails that linguistic diversity, like biodiversity, is at risk. The indispensability of ensuring

the maintenance of each existing language and culture as opposed to eliminating multilingualism and multiculturalism by means of ideological and cultural assimilation has also discussed.

The paper has critically reviewed that though the advocates of linguistic uniformity claim that plurilingual situations are threats to national unity and socioeconomic development, there are strong arguments in favour of the fundamental contribution of linguistic and cultural diversity from the point of view of environmental sustenance, economic advancement, political stability and psychological orientation. Therefore, from the reviewed observations, the following concluding reflections are drawn.

1. Language is a historical heritage and is an intimate means of expressing one's innermost thoughts feelings, personality and ethnic identity. It is the means of accessing knowledge, ideas and beliefs of the past. Furthermore, language is a right, as all other inalienable human rights.
2. Linguistic diversity and bio-diversity are causally correlated, and much of the knowledge, technology, skills and techniques needed to sustain bio-diversity to back national development are preserved and transmitted in the local peoples' native languages. Therefore, the same arguments in favour of revitalizing bio-diversity inspire the necessity of the sustenance of linguistic and cultural diversity.
3. From the economic perspective, the countries with a rich linguistic and cultural diversity are likely to have access to diverse knowledges, ideas, and cosmo-visions. In terms of cost-effectiveness to maintain minority languages, the monetary cost should be analysed against the economic and socio-political consequences of the exclusion of vast majority of children from an early education in their mother tongue. Hence devoting resources to the protection and promotion of minority cultures and languages help to minimize political crises whose costs would be considerably higher than otherwise.
4. From the political point of view, the co-existence of several languages is not in itself the cause of conflict and disunity within a nation provided that necessary care is taken to plan, develop and use them for national prosperity, like all other natural resources. On the contrary, historical evidence shows that it is economic, social, and political power inequalities among linguistic communities that cause conflicts, instability and hindrance to development.

Therefore, disregarding these resources is factually maximizing the exclusion of large number of populations from the national development agenda. Moreover, all languages have the right to exist and be developed. Thus all forms of linguistic discrimination should be discouraged and linguistically heterogeneous states need to establish workable language policies and control its implementation to preserve, protect and promote language diversity.

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