

every social setting such as school, media and organisation and at individual level. This section interrogates some of the mainstream languages spoken in Africa for commerce, in institutions, among others. Some of the official languages include English, French, Arabic, Portuguese and Swahili.

AFRICAN COUNTRIES WHERE ENGLISH IS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

English Language is primarily language of majority of people in the world. It is also an official or semi-official language of many countries such as India, Nigeria, Pakistan and South Africa. Even in countries where English is not a primary or official language, it is taught as a foreign language and used as the language of technology and diplomacy.

Table 1: Examples of Countries where English is the mainstream language

S/N	Country	Official Language(s)	Capital
1	Liberia	English	Monrovia
2	Gambia	English	Banjul
3	Sierra Leone	English	Freetown
4	Ghana	English	Accra
5	Mauritius	English and French	Port Louis
6	Zambia	English	Lusaka
7	Namibia	English	Windhoek
8	Nigeria	English	Abuja

The Yoruba, Igbo and Efik languages are notable examples of this language group; standard Yoruba came into being due to the work of Samuel Ajayi Crowther, and owes most of its lexicon to the dialect spoken in Oyo and Ibadan.

AFRO-ASIATIC LANGUAGES OF NIGERIA

The Afro-Asiatic language of Nigeria is divided into Chadic, Semitic and Berber. The Chadic languages predominate, with 70 plus languages. Semitic is represented by various dialects of Arabic in the northeast and Berber by the Tuareg-speaking communities in the extreme northwest.

The Hausa language is the most well-known Chadic languages in Nigeria, though there is a paucity of statistics on native speakers in the country, the language is spoken by 24 million people in the west and is the second language of 15million people or more. Hausa has, therefore, emerged as a lingua franca throughout much of West Africa and the Sahel in particular. The language is spoken primarily amongst Muslims and the language is often associated with Islamic culture in Nigeria and West Africa on the whole. Hausa is the official language of a number of states in northern Nigeria and the most important dialect, which is the standard variety used for official purposes. Hausa is highly typical Chadic language, with a reduced tonal system and a phonology influenced by Arabic. This dialect includes some spoken in Zaria and Bauchi, the western one includes Sakkwatanchi spoken in Sokoto, Kastinanchi spoken in Kastina, Arewanchi in both Hobir and Adar, Kebbi and Zamfara.

LANGUAGE FAMILIES IN NIGERIA

Introduction

The major languages spoken in Nigeria are Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Fulfulde, Kanuri, Ibibio. Although the number of languages currently estimated and catalogued in Nigeria is 521, this