Language Endangerment: Threat of the Hausa Language on the Ngizim Language

Umar Muhammad-Gombe & Salisu Alhaji Yusuf

Abstract

This study investigates the phenomenon of language endangerment, with focus on the threat to the Ngizim language spoken in the Southern and Eastern regions of Potiskum Local Government Area, Yobe State, Nigeria, by a dominant Hausa language. Crystal's insights and predictions for the future, alongside Fishman's causes of language endangerment, provide a theoretical foundation for the study. Data are obtained from different Age Grades in Yerimaram and Arikime localities speaking Ngizim through oral interview and observation methods. Wurm's classification of levels of language endangerment forms basis for data analysis. The findings reveal a concerning trend of language shift from the Ngizim language to the Hausa language, especially among the younger generation. There is need to preserve and revitalize Ngizim through community support, development of good language policy, and media promotion. The study has contributed to a broader understanding of language endangerment dynamics and provided insights for developing strategies to safeguard endangered languages, including Ngizim, in the face of linguistic assimilation and cultural influences.

Key Words: Endangerment, Linguistics, Socio linguistics, Ngizim, Hausa.

1)   Introduction

Language functions as the essential vehicle for effective communication within any given society. This study investigates the phenomenon of language endangerment, specifically examining how dominant or "imperial" languages can pose a threat to minor languages. It places a particular focus on the Ngizim language.

Language endangerment is a pressing concern within the field of linguistics, particularly in the realm of sociolinguistics. It is widely acknowledged that over 50% of world's languages are at risk of disappearing, with varying degrees of endangerment. However, some languages are more resilient and have a better chance of survival than others, as observed by some linguists such as Crystal (2000) and Lewis (2009). Hausa, a language closely related to Ngizim within the Chadic language family, plays a pivotal role in this context as the universal lingua franca in the area. This linguistic connection is grounded in the Afro-Asiatic group of African language classification, as identified by scholars such as Greenberg (1963) and Newman (1977). Sociolinguistics, as outlined by Trudgill (1974), is a subfield within macro linguistics that investigates language as a social and cultural phenomenon. Consequently, sociolinguistics is primarily concerned with investigating the intricate relationship between language and society, as elucidated by Jidda (2004). In essence, no society can exist without its culture, and no culture can thrive without its language.

The Ngizim language finds its roots in Yobe State, Nigeria, specifically in the eastern and southern regions of Potiskum, which happens to be the largest town in Yobe State. The language is notable for its lack of significant dialectal variations, with only a few minor lexical differences found among different villages (Schuh,

1978). Over time, Ngizim has been known by various names, courtesy of historians and anthropologists. These names include Nguzum, Ngwazim, Ngojen, Ngazim, Nkizam, Ngazar, Nkazara, Ngizam, Ngasum, and so forth. It is worth noting that each of these names refers to the same Ngizim people (Whilteley, 1918). According to Palmer (1936), the Ngizim people were originally identified as inhabitants of the FITTIR region of Kanem-Borno around 1259 A.D. It was the amalgamation of the Kayi clan (comprising the Zaghawa) with the Ngizim during this period that gave rise to a distinct political entity emerging in the FITTIR region around 1350 A.D. This political entity was referred to as the Bulala or the kingdom of Gaoga (a realm famously linked to Leo Africanus).

Moreover, like many other Chadic languages, Ngizim traces its origins back to Yemen in the Middle East. There is also a significant historical connection between the Ngizim people and Teshinawa (an extinct language) in the Katagum region (Bedu, 2002). Teshinawa, in turn, was related to Dagare, both of which exhibited linguistic similarities with Ngizim, even though the language is gradually fading away. In another historical tradition, the Ngizim, Bade, "Badu" (herdsmen), and Kanuri people intermarried with the Kayi (or Amakitam), forming a substantial portion of the Bulala population. In the Bornu region, the presence of Ngizim is another testament to their historical influence within the old Kanuri-Borno Empire. Key figures in the empire, such as Waziri Kabir Kursu Ibn Haruna and the commander-in-chief Mai Idriss Alooma (1517-1583), along with Nasiru Bultu, were identified as full-blooded Ngizim (Bubaram, personal communication, May 20, 1995). By the 16th century, a significant concentration of Ngizim people had settled in the southwest of Birnin Ngazargumo. Some historical accounts suggest that Ngizim

arrived in the Potiskum region in two distinct migratory waves, following different routes around 1718 A.D (Palmer, 1936). The contact between Ngizim and the Hausa people dates back centuries, with Laver (1976) reporting a substantial population of Hausa, mainly in Potiskum town, numbering around 30,050 according to the 1963 census, a number that has likely increased significantly since then.

Hausa is among the most prevalent languages in West Africa which is considered as the most widely spoken language across the entire African continent. Several languages undergo rapid decline as a result of the overwhelming influence of the Hausa language (Jaggar, 2009). Jaggar notes that Hausa has over thirty million native speakers, and its speakers outnumber the speakers of all other individual languages in Africa south of the Sahara, while some of such languages speedily disappear due to linguistic dominance of Hausa. Likewise, it becomes evident that the Ngizim language could be categorized as an endangered language, primarily owing to the pervasive dominance and imposition of Hausa. The Ngizim language is under the constant threat and pressure exerted by the dominant Hausa language. This pressure is observable through various avenues, including political, cultural assimilation, and economic influence.

It is used in the region as a link language by minority tribes or minority language speakers to communicate in social activities. Hausa is spoken as lingua franca and language for commercial, educational and governmental purposes in northern Nigeria and Niger (Newman, 2002). Its threat on Ngizim is what this study discusses.

2) Literature Review

Crystal (2000) brings attention to the precarious state of many of the world's languages, noting that only around 600 out of approximately 6,000 languages are not currently facing the threat of extinction. In 1996, there were an estimated 6,703 distinct languages spoken worldwide. This linguistic diversity was distributed as follows: 1,000 languages in the Americas, 2,011 in Africa, 225 in Europe, 2,165 in Asia, and 1,320 in the Pacific, including Australia. However, these figures should be interpreted with caution due to the lack of comprehensive and up-to-date information about many languages, as well as the blurred distinction between languages and dialects. Nevertheless, most linguists generally agree that there are over 5,000 languages spoken globally. Predictions for the future are concerning, with expectations that many of these languages may become extinct within the next century. Some linguists anticipate a 50% reduction in the number of languages, while others believe that only a few hundred may survive. Major global languages like English, Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Indonesian, Arabic, Swahili, and Hindi are likely to supplant the majority of these endangered languages, as they are spoken by larger populations. In fact, estimates suggest that up to 90% of the world's languages could vanish within the next century. Language loss can occur gradually, often as a natural process.

However, external factors, such as the struggles of minority communities against dominant societies, can also play a role. The decline of a language typically begins within homes or can originate from government policies or aristocratic influences. A common cause of language death is known as "language shift," where a monolingual community gradually adopts a new language. Initially, the community becomes bilingual, retaining their native tongue, but

over time, they increasingly use the new language until their native language falls into disuse (Jidda, 2004). A language is considered dead when there are no native speakers left (Lewis, 2009). This can occur through various processes, but ultimately, if there is only one person who fluently speaks the language as their native tongue, it is deemed dead. Even if other community members understand the language or can speak it to some extent, if there are no fluent native speakers, the language is considered extinct. This often happens when elders in the community refuse to pass down their native tongue to the younger generation (Bello, 2010).

Language endangerment, on the other hand, refers to languages at risk of fading into disuse as speakers dwindle or shift to another language. Graddol (1997) asserts that language endangerment typically arises when smaller languages are under pressure from larger, dominant languages. If this pressure continues, the endangered language may give way to the dominant ones (Bello, 2010). This is evidenced by a decline in the number of speakers, the loss of cultural ties, or younger generations failing to carry the language forward into a dominant role. Pressures on endangered languages can be political, social, economic, or a combination of these factors. When a language's speakers hold social or political influence over speakers of other languages, it can attract new speakers. Once such dynamics are in play, the influence of the smaller language begins to wane. Presently, out of an estimated 60 to 70 thousand languages spoken globally, over half are considered endangered (Wurm, 1998). Crystal (1997) asserts that approximately 20% of the global languages are viable, and less than a dozen languages dominate more than half of the global population. This means that the twenty most common languages, spoken by over 50 million speakers each, are typically spoken by minority communities, most of which have fewer than 10,000 speakers.

Some scholars (e.g. Fishman 1968; Swiggers 2007; Tsunoda 2006) have in the past identified causes of language endangerment in various regions, countries and continents. Fishman (1968) identifies factors responsible for language endangerment as:

i.   Physical and/or demographic dislocation.
ii.   Social dislocation.
iii.   Political/Economic dislocation.

Physical/demographic dislocation occurs when a sizable population experiences a demographic imbalance. In this scenario, physical harm has been inflicted upon the community's speakers, leading to a reduced number of speakers. Demographic dislocation refers to the transformation from having a significant number of speakers (e.g., hundreds of thousands) to only a few remaining speakers (e.g., a thousand or less). This transformation can result from various causes, including natural diseases, conflict, or coercion. Furthermore, demographic dislocation can be categorized into two distinct factors: (a) Natural disease, and (b) The man made.

a. **Natural disease:** Indeed, a situation of demographic dislocation can arise from natural disasters, such as heavy rainfall that occurs as an act of nature, resulting in significant loss of life and leaving only a few survivors.

b. **The man-made factor** can also occur due to human conflicts that lead to wars. As per Fishman (1968), social dislocation refers to a situation where the entire community of language speakers no longer holds a significant social position and lacks influence. Additionally, Fishman highlighted that economic and political dislocation pertains to cases where speakers of a language no longer engage in commerce or wield economic influence, thereby seeking goods and services from other languages.

Swiggers (2007, 27-28) also identifies the following causes of language death and endangerment.

(a) Factors affecting the biological and physical integrity and safety of the speech community: natural catastrophes; epidemics, infections and diseases; famine and drought; genocide; war; repression; slavery; destruction of the habitat (e.g. desertification, deforestation, total irrigation).

(b) Factors affecting the social and demographical structure of the speech community: endo/exogamy; ethnic mixture; birth regulation practices; resettlements; metropolitan societies; social disintegration

(c) Factors affecting the economic situation: globalization; open market economy; industrialization; work patterns; perspectives of economic advancement.

(d) Factors affecting the culture and the collective psychology of a community: mobility; tourism; mass media; religious practices; cultural assimilation (acculturation); feeling of ethnic identity (or loss of it); strength or weakness of the solidarity and intimacy feelings with one's language; degree of cultural prestige; centralization and language policies.

(e) Factors relating to the language system, or to its perception by the speakers: it is sometimes claimed that a language losing parts of its structure and of its communicative potential can accelerate the process of its proper extinction. Both native speakers of the language and other speakers may see it as becoming inadequate, poor or backward, leading to stigma.

Similarly, Tsunoda (2006, 57-59) presents nine causes of language endangerment as:

(1)   Dispossession of the land: This may be due to invasion, conquest, colonization, settlement, and/or grazing.

(2)   Relocation of the people: People may be relocated to an unfamiliar - and often inhospitable - environment for resettlement. Relocation may be voluntary, as in the case of migration. But in most cases relocation seems to be imposed on the people, often executed by force.

(3)   Decline or loss of the population: This may be caused in a number of ways, for example, (i) natural catastrophes such as volcanic eruption, earthquakes, droughts, floods, and famine, (ii) diseases, in particular, imported and epidemic diseases, such as sexually transmitted disease.

(4)   Breakdown in isolation and proximity to towns

(5)   Dispersion of the population

(6)   Mixing of speakers of different languages This may be caused by, e.g., (i) boarding schools, (ii) reservations/settlements, (iii) military service, conscription, and (iv) intermarriage. In such situations, there were cases where people could not understand one another's languages and consequently were forced to learn a common means of communication, often the dominant language, such as English.

(7)   Socio-economic oppression, economic deprivation, exploitation, oppressive domination, discrimination, exclusion from political participation, social control, abuse. If people recognize no economic value in their language, due to the lack of job opportunities, then they will be likely to switch to the dominant language, and not to teach their language to children.

(8)   Low status/low prestige of the group and its language: denigration, shame, stigma Due to factors such as those listed above, an ethnic group will have low status in society.

(9)   Language attitude Language attitude is one of the crucial factors regarding the fate of endangered languages. It can be divided into the following two types: attitude towards their own language, and attitude towards other groups' languages. Language attitude may also be classified as follows: negative attitude, positive attitude, and indifferent attitude. In the language endangerment situation, negative attitude such as stigmatization seems by far the commonest. Negative evaluation of a given language may lead to its demise. Negative attitude: while speakers of a minority language often evaluate their own language negatively, speakers of the dominant language, too, often have a negative view of the minority language.

3)   The Levels of Language Endangerment

As of Wurm's observations in 1996, our world was home to an estimated 60,000 to 70,000 languages. Unfortunately, a somber reality emerged—more than half of these languages were predicted to face extinction by the year 2100. Crystal (1997) similarly acknowledges this situation and highlights the varying degrees of endangerment among these languages. Consequently, it becomes evident that some languages possess a greater likelihood of survival than others. Wurm (1996) classifies the levels of endangerment into five distinct categories, as outlined below:

1. Potentially endangered language
2. Endangered
3. Seriously endangered

    4. Moribund
    5. Extinct

1)   Potentially Endangered language: These languages find themselves under the influence of social, political, and economic pressures exerted by more dominant languages, resulting in a gradual decline in the number of young speakers.

2)   Endangered: These are languages devoid of child speakers, with their youngest speakers being young adults.

3)   Seriously Endangered: These are languages spoken exclusively by individuals aged fifty (50) years and above, as described by Wurm (1996).

4)   Moribund: These are languages that have become exceedingly challenging to learn efficiently. As per Wurm (1996), these languages are sustained by a dwindling number of speakers, most of whom are elderly, typically aged 70 years and above, contributing to the preservation of these languages.

5)   Extinct: In technical terms, a language is considered extinct only when the last speaker of that language passes away. However, in practical terms, such a language can effectively become extinct long before the death of its last speaker. This is because when a language dwindles to the point where only one speaker remains, its status as a viable means of communication is essentially null and void, rendering it functionally extinct or "dead."

According to Wurm's classification of language endangerment levels, the Ngizim language may be categorized as belonging to the second level of endangerment. This assessment is based on observations made during interviews conducted in the

Yerimaram area of Potiskum, where a significant population of Ngizim native speakers resides. It was noted that the majority of Ngizim speakers in this area are young adults. In practical terms, any language that falls within the boundaries of being potentially endangered or endangered has already entered the realm of obsolescence over time. Such a language may continue to exist in written records, but it is gradually losing its currency due to the preference of its speakers for more socially accepted languages. However, Fishman (1997) emphasizes that the endangerment of a language is not solely a result of its absence from school curricula or official status. Instead, languages become endangered primarily because they lack informal intergenerational transmission and daily-life support. Fishman (2002) further argues that a language serves as a symbol representing both material and non-material aspects of the associated traditional culture.

Consequently, like all symbols, languages are susceptible to politicization. Additionally, language is an integral part of a culture, interconnected with laws, religious practices, education, humor, music, blessings, curses, greetings, and more. These elements are not isolated occurrences but rather interconnected components of a culture. In line with Fishman's (2002) explanation, the Ngizim language appears to have adopted both the material and non-material attributes of the traditional associated culture, thus becoming symbolic of the Hausa culture rather than maintaining its unique identity. As a result, activities that were traditionally conducted in Ngizim, such as folk tales, songs, jokes, riddles, and greetings, have shifted towards using the Hausa language. This shift is likely to contribute to the gradual loss of native Ngizim speakers over time.

4)   **Methodology**

In conducting this research, the research participants were drawn from residents in two wards of Potiskum town: Arikime and Yerimaram. Recognizing the challenges of obtaining responses from the entire population, a random sampling technique was employed to ensure equal opportunities for every member of the population to be selected.

Data were gathered from two distinct groups of Ngizim speakers: individuals with limited or no formal education, unable to read or write, and educated native speakers. The latter group was interviewed—using unstructured approach to facilitate open-ended conversations with participants—to gain insights into their language communication practices. Data collection methods included the utilization of a tape recorder for interviews, consultation of books and journals at the library, and the use of radio as an observational aid.

The use of questionnaires was deemed impractical due to the scattered locations of educated Ngizim native speakers. As a result, the study focused specifically on Potiskum town. A total of 258 native speakers, encompassing both males and females spanning ages 11 to 80 years, participated in the interviews. The inclusion of a broad age bracket served the purpose of examining language shift rates from Ngizim to Hausa. This approach aimed to determine whether the language shift is more pronounced among younger Ngizim speakers in comparison to their elderly counterparts or if the shift is more prevalent within the older age group.

For statistical analysis of data, responses were processed using the R package in R Studio (2023), allowing for the calculation and comparison of the rates of the Hausa influence on Ngizim among the four speaker groups.

### 5)   Data Presentation and Analysis

Interviews were conducted to assess and document the usage of the Ngizim language in the localities of Potiskum, specifically Yarimaran and Arikime. The resultant data will be presented in two distinct sets, each corresponding to its respective domain, as illustrated in the following tables and figures.

5.1 Presentation and Analysis of Data from Yerimaram locality

Table 5.1: Frequency of using Ngizim language in Yerimaram locality: four speaker groups

Frequency of using Ngizim	11-18yrs	19-32yrs	33-61yrs	62-80yrs	Total Frequency of use	Percentage of use
A = All the time	4 (17%)	5 (22%)	4 (22%)	6 (6%)	19	11.3%
B = Sometimes	5 (28%)	6 (26%)	6 (33%)	65 (60%)	82	49%
C = Rarely	3 (22%)	11(48%)	8 (44%)	15 (14%)	37	22%
D = Never	6 (33%)	1 (4%)	-(0%)	22 (20%)	29	17%
Total per group	18	23	18	108	167	

Figure 5.1: Frequency of using Ngizim language by four speaker groups in Yerimaram locality
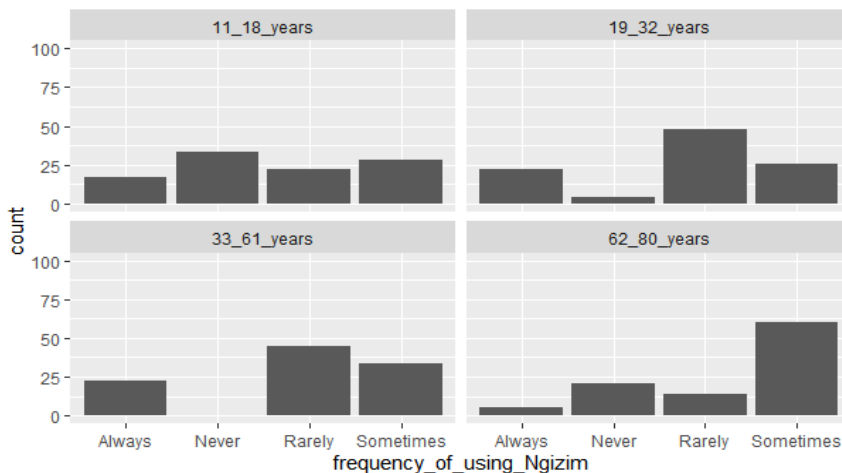
According to column D in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1, it is evident that 33% of Ngizim native speakers aged between 11 and 18 years do not use the language at all. This percentage is notably higher than the language usage rates observed among all other speakers in the same age bracket. Conversely, only three individuals within this age group, constituting 17%, are consistent users of the language. Column C in Table 5.1 reveals that within the age group of 18 to 32 years, 48% of Ngizim native speakers seldom use the language, whereas only 22% use it consistently. Likewise, as per column C, it is observed that among speakers aged between 32 and 62 years, 44% rarely engage in the use of the language, in contrast to the 22% who use it consistently. Turning to column B of Table 5.1, it becomes evident that within the age group of 62 to 80 years among Ngizim native speakers, 60% employ the language only

sporadically, whereas a mere 6% maintain regular usage, as shown in column A of Table 5.1.

Excluding those who never use the Ngizim language, it is notable that the fraction of individuals who use the language consistently is at its lowest across all four age groups of speakers. Conversely, the highest percentage (33%) of individuals who do not use the language at all belongs to the youngest age group, i.e., those aged 11 to 18 years. This percentage surpasses those who occasionally or infrequently use the language. This observation strongly indicates an ongoing language shift from Ngizim to Hausa, with the trend being most pronounced among the youngest age group. Consequently, Ngizim native speakers tend to utilize the Hausa language for their business activities and as a lingua franca. Moreover, a significant portion of Ngizim natives exhibits a higher level of fluency in Hausa as opposed to their own native language, Ngizim. Nevertheless, as indicated in Table 5.1, only 6.7% of individuals consistently use the Ngizim language, while 49% use it to some extent, 19.63% use it infrequently, and 17.8% never use it. This data underscores the fact that the majority of Ngizim natives predominantly employ the Hausa language in their daily interactions, rather than their native Ngizim language.

5.2 Presentation and Analysis of Data from Arikime Locality

Table 5.2: Frequencies of using Ngizim language by four age groups

Frequency of using Ngizim	11-18yrs	19-32yrs	33-61yrs	62-80yrs	Total usage	Percentage of use
A = All the time	NIL (0%)	NIL (0%)	NIL (0%)	NIL (0%)	0	0%
B= Sometimes	11 (30%)	8 (24%)	20 (33%)	34 (50%)	73	37%

C = Rarely	15 (42%)	25 (76%)	15 (25%)	34 (50%)	89	45%
D = Never	25 (42%)	NIL (0%)	10 (28%)	NIL (0%)	35	18%
Total per group	51	33	45	68	197	

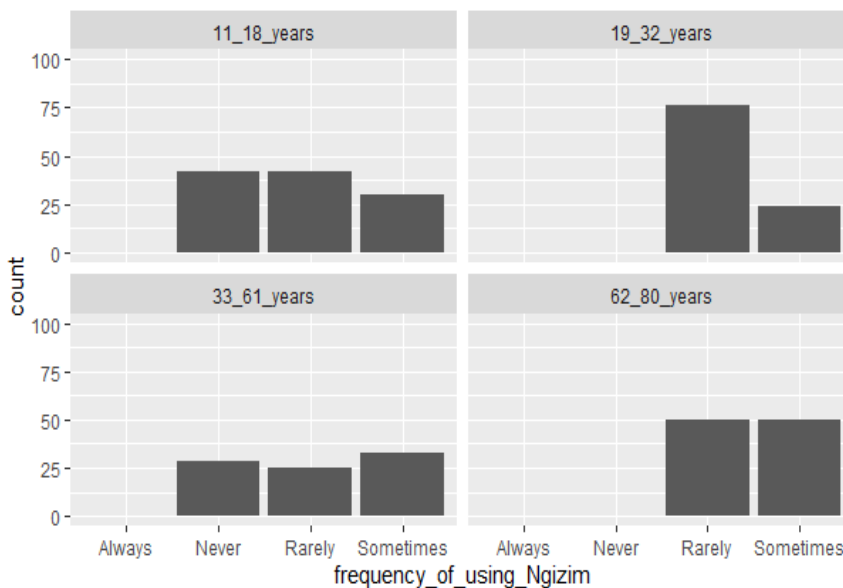Figure 5.2: Frequency of using Ngizim language by four speaker groups in Arikime locality

Table 5.2 reveals that none of the Ngizim natives utilize their language exclusively in the Arikime area. Instead, a significant majority, precisely 45%, employ Ngizim only occasionally. Astonishingly, around 37% of them seldom engage in conversations

using their native language, in stark contrast to the 18% who never use it at all. Figure 5.2 provides further frequencies of utilizing the language.

In the Arikime locality, it is noteworthy that none of the Ngizim native speakers within the age group of 11 to 18 years employ the language on a regular basis. As illustrated in column D of Table 5.2 and Figure 5.2, 42% of them abstain from using the language entirely. Furthermore, a substantial portion, exceeding 40%, rarely engages in conversations in the language. Likewise, as indicated in column A of Table 5.2, among individuals aged 19 to 32 years in the same area, none of them utilize the language regularly. The majority, comprising 76% of this age group (19-32 years), only occasionally employ the language.

6)   Discussion of Findings

The available empirical evidence underscores a concerning trend among Ngizim native speakers in Yarimaran, Potiskum. It reveals that the predominant language of choice for interactions with individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds is Hausa, with a substantial majority of Ngizim natives achieving fluency in Hausa, surpassing their proficiency in their native Ngizim language. Notably, a mere 11% of individuals in Yarimaran consistently use Ngizim, while in Arikime, the usage is even lower, with none consistently employing Ngizim. In contrast, a significant portion, approximately 49% in Yarimaran and 45% in Arikime, seldom engage in conversations using their native language, and a concerning 17% in Yarimaran and 18% in Arikime have altogether ceased using Ngizim.

The data collected from both localities indicate that the youngest group of Ngizim native speakers is most inclined to abstain

from speaking Ngizim, in stark contrast to the lower frequencies of usage observed in the other three older age groups. Interestingly, across all four speaker groups in Yarimaran (excluding those who abstain from using the language), there is a clear preference for occasional use of Ngizim over regular usage, with the youngest speaker group being the least likely to speak it consistently. In Arikime, none of the speaker groups speak Ngizim consistently. Moreover, there is no significant difference between the two localities concerning the rate of abstaining from using the language (17% in Yarimaran and 18% in Arikime). In both localities, the rates of abstaining from using the language are notably higher than those of consistent utilization.

This data suggests that both localities have transitioned into bilingual communities, with Hausa emerging as the dominant language while the native Ngizim language has gradually dwindled into a minority due to the loss of regular speakers. Although it's worth acknowledging the presence of educated Ngizim native speakers who can also communicate in English in these areas, such instances were not observed during the data collection process. This bilingual shift leaves Hausa as the sole alternative language in both communities, as other languages are rarely spoken. The research findings strongly imply that Ngizim is facing significant pressure from Hausa and is classified as an endangered language, as discussed in the introduction and literature review sections. It is alarming to note that the rate of adults abstaining from using the language is on the rise, and none of them frequently employ Ngizim. This confirms a substantial language shift from Ngizim to Hausa.

In Potiskum, many individuals are bilingual or even multilingual, proficient in both Ngizim and Hausa. This leads to frequent code-switching, where speakers seamlessly transition between the two languages during conversations. The dominance of

Hausa in various domains, such as trade, religion, and education in Potiskum, further contributes to its influence. People find it advantageous to learn and use Hausa for these purposes, which can accelerate the erosion of Ngizim's use in those contexts. This potential shift from Ngizim to Hausa is likely to occur through a bilingual transitional stage, allowing simultaneous use of both receding and replacing languages (Tsunoda, 2006), before ultimately culminating in a complete shift to Hausa. Additionally, it can be deduced from the findings that Ngizim parents appear to be inadvertently contributing to this language shift by not passing on their native tongue to their offspring, a phenomenon akin to "language suicide."

7)   Conclusion

The research has evaluated the level of endangerment confronting the Ngizim language in Potiskum town. The language is grappling with the pervasive dominance of the Hausa language in the region. This study primarily aims to examine how the dominant language, Hausa, asserts its supremacy over the minority language, Ngizim, especially concerning cultural assimilation and its role as the prevailing lingua franca. Hausa holds a dominant position in the northern regions of the country, serving as a universal lingua franca among various ethnic groups. As a result, the research findings highlight that the Ngizim language has undergone cultural assimilation, heavily influenced by the customs and culture of the Hausa language. This assimilation is particularly evident as most Ngizim speakers can fluently converse in Hausa, often at the expense of their native tongue, Ngizim. This shift is noticeable in various aspects such as songs, proverbs, and folktales. Furthermore, this study underscores that the Ngizim language is not only

endangered but also at significant risk of gradual extinction or fading away in Potiskum town. This predicament is exacerbated by Ngizim native speakers' preference for conducting their business and social activities in Hausa. Without careful measures in place, Ngizim is on the brink of disappearing.

To safeguard the Ngizim language from its current endangered status and prevent it from sliding into extinction or language death, proactive measures to reverse the shifting trend must be adopted. Boosting the morale of parents in Ngizim communities is crucial, achieved by sensitizing them to employ and rigorously enforce a language policy of speaking Ngizim at home and within their neighborhoods. The success of this initiative depends on the degree of loyalty individuals have toward their native language. In order to ensure the successful preservation and protection of endangered languages like Ngizim, it is essential for all stakeholders to contribute to the implementation of language policies. While a significant proportion of these policies should be introduced by the responsible government, other realistic policies can be initiated and enforced by native language speakers. Addressing the potential threats to Ngizim in Potiskum requires considering language revitalization efforts, which include language education programs, cultural initiatives, and community support. These efforts can assist Ngizim speakers in maintaining their language while also recognizing the importance of being multilingual in a diverse society such as Nigeria.

Through offering support for language activities, the government should incentivize native Ngizim individuals, communities, and organizations to actively engage in Ngizim language-related activities, particularly those involving folklore, culture, and literature. This support will help preserve and promote the richness of the language. Incorporating these recommendations

into language preservation efforts can contribute to the revitalization and protection of Ngizim, ensuring that it remains a vibrant and integral part of Potiskum's cultural heritage.

The media, encompassing radio and television broadcasts, as well as formal education, can play a significant role in promoting Ngizim language. The lack of active promotion of Ngizim in the media (radio and television) and formal educational domains could pose challenges in preserving its vitality. Preserving Ngizim culture and identity in the face of external influences, including Hausa, could greatly contribute to maintaining and safeguarding the Ngizim language. Other specific recommendations are:

Government-Sponsored Workshops and Seminars: The government should organize workshops and seminars aimed at facilitating advanced research on Ngizim language.

Digitization of Language Data: Data collected during research should be digitized and made accessible through a research center's internet platform, ensuring wider public access to linguistic information.

Promoting Native Language Usage: Encourage parents to communicate with their children exclusively in Ngizim throughout the day, as opposed to using Hausa. This will help revitalize the use of Ngizim within households.

Training Linguistics Professionals: Invest in training teachers and students from various linguistics fields to manage and document language data effectively. These professionals can also create valuable teaching materials and archives of linguistic data.

References:

Bedu, A.M. (2002). Aspect of Ngizim Syntax (WH-Movement). B.A. Thesis, University of Maiduguri.

Bello, B.M. (2010). *"Lecture note on Language Survey in Nigeria" Final Year Students' Note University of Maiduguri*. Department of *Languages &*Linguistics.

Bubaram, U. (1995, May 20). Personal Communication [Personal interview].

Crystal, D. (1997). English as a Global Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (1999). '*Language Death. Cambridge'*: Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (2000). *Language Death.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Graddol, D. (1997). V*anishing Voices; The Extinction of the World's Languages.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Greenberg, J. H. (1963). *The Languages of Africa.* Bloomington: Indiana University.

Fishman, J. (1968). *Handbook of Ethnic Identity* (ed) (p. 25-41). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fishman, J. (1997). *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundation and Assistance to Threatened languages.* Cleve don: Multilingual Matters.

Fishman, J. (2002). Protecting Endangered Minority Languages: Prospect for Sociolinguistic Research. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies,* 4 (2), 270-275

Jaggar, P. J. (2009). Chadic languages. In Concise Encyclopedia of languages of the world. Oxford: Elsevier.

Jidda, J. H. (2012). Linguistics, Socio-linguistics and non-versational characteristics in the frame of dominance and Non-dominance: University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. http/www.peterlang.com

Laver, J. (1976). *Principles of phonetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University
        Press.

Lewis, P. M. (2009). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (16thedn). Dallas: SIL International.

Newman, P. (1977). Chadic Classification and Constructions. *Afro-Asiatic Linguistics, 5, 1-42.*

Newman, P. (2022). *The Hausa language.* In A History of the Hausa language: Reconstruction and pathways to the present (pp. 1-5). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Doi:10.10117/9781009128070.002

Palmer, L. (1936). *The kinetics of simultaneous polymerization and ring formation*: http//en-wikipedia.org /wiki/peter.

R Studio Team. (2023). *RStudio: Integrated Development for R. R Studio,* PBC, Boston, MA URL http://www.rstudion.com.

Schu, R. (1978). *Introduction of morphology & syntax: Case studies in Afro-asiatic*-Google Books Result. http//books.goog/e.com.ng.

Swiggers, P. (2007). Two key concepts of language endangerment: language obsolescence and language death. *Linguistica,* 47, 21-33.

Trugill, P. (1974). *The social differences of English in Nor which*

(based on PhD thesis) Retrieved from: http//en-wikipedia.org /wiki/peter. Last edition 8th May.

Tsunoda, T. (2006). *Language Endangerment and Language Revitalisation: An Introduction.* Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110896589

Whiltely, D. A. (1918). *Linguistics in Language Teaching.* London: Edward Arnold Publishers Limited.

Wurm, S. (1996). *Atlas of the world's languages in Danger of Disappearing.* Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Wurm S. (1998). Methods of Language Maintenance and Revival with Selected Causes of Language Endangerment in the World. In K. Matsumura (Ed). *Studies in Endangered Languages*: Tokyo: Hituzi Syobo.

Umar Muhammad-Gombe
Department of English,
Yobe State University, Damaturu, Yobe State
umarmgombe@gmail.com

&

Salisu Alhaji Yusuf
Department of General Studies CABS,
Potiskum, Yobe state
salisumaiagogo@gmail.com