

Research Article

Intergenerational Perspectives on Language Endangerment in Nigeria: A Case Study of Tarok

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Abstract

Language endangerment has constituted a great threat to especially minority languages around the world. With several languages at the verge of extinction, the world is fast losing its rich linguistic and, of course, cultural diversity, leading to increasing resentment and mutual distrust among nations as glaringly displayed at almost all international negotiations. While native speakers of the dominant languages are comfortable with this trend, the speakers of the dominated languages get even more apprehensive because their languages are getting lost. This research investigates the attitudes of the young and old generations of native Tarok towards the endangerment of their Tarok language. It finds out the differences and similarities in the young and old generations' attitudes of the native Tarok towards the endangerment of the Tarok language and identifies the contributing causes of the Tarok endangerment, proposing potential solutions for its preservation. The study employs the qualitative design with participants purposively selected from both generations through community organizations. Some significant differences between the young and old generations' attitudes are revealed by the results, basically indicating that the young Tarok speakers focus on the present effects of globalization, urban migration, and education, while old Tarok speakers emphasize the impact of industrialization, technological changes, and cultural erosion on future generations. However, both generations share concerns about the loss of cultural identity and heritage associated with language endangerment, stressing the importance of parental teaching and community-driven efforts to preserve the Tarok language. Apart from the emphasis that findings exact on the urgent need to preserve the Tarok language, the comparison between young and old generations of the native Tarok speakers underscores the importance of inclusive and community-driven preservation initiatives. The findings have also deepened the understanding of the psychosocial factors involved in language endangerment phenomenon and offer valuable insights for policymakers, educators, community leaders in their collaborative work of language preservation initiatives. Because of the emphasis made by the both the old and young generations on educational system as a key factor contributing to language endangerment, the need for conscious efforts should be made to incorporate Tarok language into school curricular, particularly at primary and secondary levels. Language lessons should be intensified by not only using Tarok as metalanguage but also as a target language in early education to help younger generations develop proficiency in using the Tarok language. The study highlights the need for multifaceted approaches to language revitalization, balancing tradition with modernization, and leveraging education and technology to foster intergenerational language transmission. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and community leaders engaged in efforts to revitalize and preserve the endangered Tarok language for the sustenance of the Tarok cultural heritage.

Keywords

Language Attitude, Language Endangerment, Language Extinction, Language Revitalization, Language Preservation, Tarok Language, Culture

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background Information

Formation of attitude to language spontaneously occurs in speakers during conversation (Trudgill, 2000) [1]. Such attitude formation towards language is also naturally extended towards speakers based on their use of the language (Ladegaard, 2000) [2]. Where two or more languages are involved, with one language being endangered by others, Crystal (2003) [3] describes such attitude of speakers towards their endangered language as resentment. Native speakers of the endangered language become resentful because they feel that, been 'owners' of the endangered language, they are duty bound to revitalize and preserve 'their' endangered language against 'sleeping' and eventual extinction.

Language endangerment represents a significant threat to cultural diversity and heritage. In Nigeria, a nation characterized by its linguistic richness, with over 500 languages (Adebite, 2010; Odumuh, 1987) [4, 5], the preservation of this diversity becomes crucial. The gradual extinction of indigenous languages, especially the minority ones, has become topical not only among linguists, but also anthropologists and cultural advocates. For example, Krauss (2007) [6] predicts that by the end of the 21st century, as many as ninety percent of the world's languages may be supplanted by dominant languages, potentially reducing the current estimate of approximately 7,000 languages to fewer than 700. Contributing factors to this phenomenon include urbanization, globalization, and the predominance of major languages such as English and Hausa (Moussa 2016) [7].

Historically, languages have served as the principal medium through which cultures articulate their identity, values, and worldviews. The extinction of a language frequently indicates the concomitant loss of cultural knowledge and traditions that have been transmitted across generations (Cardinal 2002) [8]. For instance, the Yoruba language, which is spoken by millions in southwestern Nigeria, is replete with proverbs, folklore, and traditional practices. Nevertheless, the Yoruba language encounters significant challenges as younger generations increasingly favor English or pidgin in their daily communications (Adebija, 2016) [9]. In northern region of Nigeria, the Hausa language is extensively utilized and functions as a lingua franca. However, there are ongoing concerns regarding the preservation of local dialects and languages within the Hausa-speaking areas. The phenomenon of Linguistic homogenization poses, a risk to the survival of smaller, less dominant languages (Abubakar & Bello, 2018) [10]. The Igbo language, which is predominantly spoken in southeastern Nigeria, faces significant challenges related to language shift. There has been a noticeable decline in the use of Igbo language, particularly among younger generations. This shift is exacerbated by educational systems that prioritize English over indigenous languages (Eze & Obiegbu, 2017)

[11]. In central Nigeria, the Tiv language exemplifies a language that is currently facing endangerment. Despite possessing a rich cultural heritage, the encroachment of English and pidgin, along with prevailing migration patterns, has adversely affected the utilization of Tiv language among younger generations (Jibo & Tertsua, 2019) [12]. Being one of the languages in central Nigeria, Tarok faces similar situation with Tiv language.

1.2. Significance of Study

In recent years, the Tarok language has witnessed a decline in usage among the young generation. This shift can be attributed to the influence of dominant languages and the appeal for modernity to be embraced. Fwatshak and Nyam (2019) [13] note a significant gap in the intergenerational transmission of the Tarok language, indicating that the diminishing use of Tarok in daily communication poses a substantial threat to its survival.

The insufficient institutional support for the Tarok language intensifies the issue. Educational systems primarily prioritize English, thereby providing minimal opportunities for indigenous languages such as Tarok to flourish. For example, Shagaya and Wuyep (2021) [14] emphasize the necessity for policies that incorporate Tarok into the educational curriculum to facilitate its preservation. The lack of such initiatives has resulted in a disconnection between the younger generation and their linguistic heritage.

There exists a notable disparity in attitudes towards the Tarok language between its young and old generations of native speakers. The old generation frequently regards the language as an essential component of their identity, whereas the young generation may perceive it as less notable in the context of modernity. This divergence in perception, as highlighted by Zwalnan and Jatau (2022) [15], constitutes a significant obstacle to the preservation of language. Addressing these challenges necessitates a thorough understanding of the factors that influence the language attitudes of both the young and old generations. Such knowledge will also facilitate the development of effective strategies for language preservation and revitalization.

It is estimated by linguists that a language becomes extinct approximately every two weeks somewhere in the world and projected that due to the global phenomena of language endangerment and extinction, approximately 3,000 languages may vanish within the next fifty years (Tabouret-Keller and Varro, 2000) [16]. If these estimations and projections are reliable enough, the endangered Tarok language is also getting extinct, emphasizing the need for it to be investigated, preserved and revitalized against the dominating forces of globalization, leading to loss of peoples' identity.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

From subsection 1.2, this research:

- (i) investigates the difference in attitudes of young and old generations of Tarok speakers towards the endangerment of their language.
- (ii) observes the similarities in attitudes of young and old generations of Tarok speakers towards the endangerment of their language Tarok.
- (iii) identifies the causes of the endangerment of Tarok language.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Language and Community

Language, serving as both a medium of communication and vehicle for the transmission of cultural heritage among ethnic groups and across generations, is inherently dynamic rather than static. Its vitality is sustained through the continuous use by the community, which facilitates sustainable growth. Language in use is alive, vibrant, and dynamic; it grows and survives (Emenajo & Bleambo, 2009) [17]. The survival of language is jeopardized, potentially leading to language shift and eventual loss if the language ceases to be utilized by its native speakers. Because of the common place of non-utilization of several languages in communities around the world, language endangerment has become a significant area of concern among linguists, psychologists, sociologists, educators, and philosophers (Himmelman 2008) [18]. This is because language is a major identity and expression of a people's culture, which Balogun (2013) [19] specifies that language embodies individuals' worldviews, customs, lifestyles, and histories. Consequently, when a language is lost, the affected community may find itself overshadowed by the identities and cultures of others.

2.2. Language Endangerment

2.2.1. Definition of Language Endangerment

Language endangerment refers to the increasing, decaying state of any language without its preservation in documents, possibility of its revitalization but experiencing rapid decrease in use (Crystal, 2002) [20]. Native speakers of such an endangered language eventually consider it no more beneficial to them and their coming generation (Woodbury 1924) [21], leading to the people giving up the use of their mother tongue to overcome the unbearable linguistic discrimination meted out to them (Granadillo & Orcutt- Gachiri, 2011) [22]. These are accounted for by both internal factors such as induced feeling of shyness and inferiority while interacting in their endangered language and external factors such as foreign aggressions linked to religion, economy, education and pacifications.

2.2.2. Stages in Language Endangerment

Grimes (2001) [23] delineated various stages of language endangerment in a community. He identified six distinct stages: critically endangered languages are characterized by a very limited number of speakers, all of whom are 70 years of age or older, typically great-grandparents. Severely endangered languages have speakers who are predominantly 40 years old and older, typically grandparents. Endangered languages are spoken by individuals who are 20 years and older, typically parents. Eroding languages have some speakers among children and older individuals, although other children do not acquire the language. Stable but Threatened languages are spoken by all children and older individuals, albeit in limited numbers. Finally, Safe languages are not considered endangered and are anticipated to be learned by all children and members of the ethnic group. The current research is not focused on categorizing endangered languages in terms of their extent of endangerment as Grimes established, rather it uses the Grimes' classical categorization as a motivation to unearth the psychosocial perspectives the intergenerational Nigerians hold about their endangered language.

Similarly, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) (2001) [24] categorizes languages into five levels endangerment. These classifications are as follows: Vulnerable, where the language is spoken but not by children outside the home; Definitely Endangered, where children no longer learn or speak the language; Severely Endangered, where the language is spoken only by the oldest generation; Critically Endangered, where the language is spoken by only a few elderly individuals, often with limited proficiency and Extinct, which denotes a language that is no longer spoken at all.

An alternative classification scheme is given at a conference by Krauss (2017) [25], viewing language as "Safe" if it is anticipated that children will likely continue to speak the language in 100 years; if it is unlikely that children will speak language in 100 years (with approximately 60.8% of languages falling into this category); and if children are not currently speaking the language. It follows a general consensus that the loss of languages adversely affects the cultural diversity of the world. Numerous initiatives are currently underway aimed at preventing or mitigating this loss by revitalizing endangered languages and promoting education and literacy in minority languages. This explains why language endangerment has since emerged as a significant concern that has garnered the attention of linguists and language planners globally over the past several decades (Woodbury 1924) [21]. Organizers of conferences have taken this issue into account in their efforts to preserve Nigerian and African languages that are on the brink of becoming endangered or are already classified as such (Mathias 2009) [26]. Although the need to organize conferences to bring to awareness the danger of endangering languages in Nigeria, the need to examine the attitudes and ideologies of the native speakers of those endangered Nigerian languages equally need to be methodo-

logically conducted to provide results and recommendations to the policy makers and educators who will use it as bases for language policy. This research represents seeks to represent the part of the foundation upon which Nigerian language policy will be formed.

Although the exact number of languages that will disappear remains a topic of considerable debated, the more pessimistic forecast, such as those presented by Krauss (1992) [27], suggest that over 4,000 of the world's languages may cease to be spoken. This decline is particularly evident among communities that have historically engaged in political, economic, or colonial relationships that favoured the use of one or more dominant languages or language varieties (Mufwene 2002) [28]. This raises the question of minority languages, about which Nelde et al. (1996) [29] states that it does not rely on empirical measures but rather, on power dynamics. Specifically, these language groups are understood as social entities, characterized by a distinct language or culture, existing within broader societies and states.

Approximately fifty percent of the world's languages are spoken by fewer than 10,000 individuals, with 548 languages having fewer than 100 speakers (Grimes, 2000) [23]. Several of these languages are at risk of extinction, and the rate of language loss has escalated significantly over the past few centuries (McCormack & Wurm, 1991) [30]. According to the most pessimistic estimates, more than 4,000 languages may become extinct by the conclusion of the 21st century (Krauss, 1992) [31].

2.3. Language Endangerment in Nigeria

Nigeria, the focus of this study, is home to the Tarok society, which utilized the Tarok language. Dawulung, Emenajo and Bleambo (1999) [32], estimated that Nigeria has between 395 to 400 languages, excluding numerous dialects and foreign languages such as English, French, German. However, current statistics indicate that Nigeria possess 514 indigenous languages, totaling 521 when accounting for the first and second official languages (English and French respectively), and other foreign languages. The coexistence of such linguistics diversity in Nigeria, creates an environment conducive to diglossic discourses among its myriad ethnic groups, leading to diglossic conflicts that give rise to various sociolinguistics phenomena, including code-switching and code-mixing, which can sometimes result in language death. Interestingly, three of Nigeria's 514 native languages -Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba-serve as the country major languages while the remainder are classified as minority languages. Examples of these minority languages include Tarok, Tiv, Gworok, Efereferere, Birom, Ishan, Igala, Idoma, Ibibio, etc. many of which remain uncodified and exist primarily in oral form. In contrast, the three major Nigerian languages have undergone codification and standardization. A significant number of Nigeria's minority languages are considered endangered. Dawulung, Emenajo and Bleambo (1999) [32] highlights that

in Plateau State, Nigeria, indigenous languages, including those spoken by minority groups, are facing a high risk of extinction due to their endangered or disadvantaged status, which poses a threat to their survival in the near future.

2.3.1. Reasons for Language Endangerment

Haruna (2007) [33] found out that marriages or partnerships where one parent speaks a minority language and the other only the majority language can have a negative influence in the retention of the minority tongue by the children. The tendency is to adopt the majority language only. For example, Fulfulde (a language spoken in Nigeria) is under threat because of intermarriage with speakers of other languages in the state of Gombe (Mufwene, 2002) [34].

Hale (1992) [35] suggest that the choice of language reflects the workings of the market. People choose a language that will benefit them in the long run. For Grimes (2001) [23], there is an agreement that language shift, brought about by migration, difference in culture, education system and modernization cause language endangerment.

2.3.2. Consequence of Language Endangerment in Nigeria

In Nigerian discourse, it is common to refer to individuals by their ethnic affiliations, such as a Tiv man, an Idoma man, an Igbo man, or a Yoruba man, particularly when one wishes to avoid using the individual's name or is unfamiliar with their given name. For instance, the Tarok people communicate in the Tarok language, the Igede people utilize the Igede language, and the Yoruba people converse in the Yoruba language, among others. Therefore, when a language is endangered to the point of extinction, the loss of such a language is equated to the erosion of cultural identity. When the language of a community becomes endangered, it jeopardizes not only cultural practices but also their worldview and overall way of life.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

The theory within which this research is conducted is language attitude, which seeks to explain how and why individuals and groups develop specific feelings, beliefs and predispositions towards different languages or language varieties. This view is held by Ladegaard (2000) [2], who further describes Language attitude consisting of three components: affective, cognitive, and behavioural. Ladegaard refers to the affective component as the emotional responses individuals have towards a language, ranging from positive feelings such as pride and love to negative emotions like disdain and fear. The cognitive aspect involves beliefs and thoughts about a language, including its perceived prestige, usefulness, or difficulty, which are often shaped by societal narratives and personal experiences. Finally, the behavioural component refers to the tendency to act in certain ways based on these attitudes, where positive attitudes may encourage language

learning and use, while negative attitudes may lead to language avoidance or disuse.

This theory is grounded in several foundational concepts and interdisciplinary perspectives, primarily from sociolinguistics, social psychology, and education. Language attitude refers to an individual's belief regarding language and linguistic objects, which influence their reactions based on personal enjoyment. Crystal (1992) [36] considers language attitude as the feeling people have about their own language or the language of others. These are primarily categorized into two: positive and negative attitudes. According to Baker (1988) [37] attitudes are complex constructs; there may be both positive and negative feelings attached to a language situation. Because the attitudes of a people towards the state of their endangered language are generally negative, predominantly characterized by resentment and apprehension which result from its getting extinct, this research dwells on the part of this negative attitudes.

2.4.1. Categories of Attitude

Language attitudes can be categorized into two types: positive and negative. A positive attitude reflects the enthusiasm of individuals or groups from specific ethnicities or countries in preserving their language. Conversely, a negative attitude indicates a lack of pride in one's language among individuals or groups from certain ethnic backgrounds. Several factors can influence negative attitudes, including ethnicity, the perceived difficulty of using the language, and its associated prestige. In other words, language attitudes encompass feelings people have about their own language or the language of others (Crystal, 1997) [38].

2.4.2. Components and Characteristics of Language Attitudes

Furthermore, Lambert (1967) [39], posits that attitudes comprise three components: the cognitive, affective and conative components. The cognitive component pertains to an individual's belief system, the affective component relates to emotional responses, and the conative component encompasses the inclination to act in a particular manner as dictated by the attitude (Gardner 1985) [40]. Additionally, Garvin and Madelein (1968) [41], identify the characteristics of language attitude as including language loyalty, language pride and awareness of the Language Norm".

Language attitudes are characterized by three key elements: language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of the norm (Garvin & Madelein, 1968) [41]. Language loyalty refers to an attitude that motivates speakers to preserve the viability of their native language in the face of the adverse effects of foreign languages. In other words, it reflects the speaker's desire to maintain and sustain their language. It is essential to safeguard the language from the influences of other languages and to mitigate the interference caused by foreign languages. The speaker's loyalty to using and maintaining their language

signifies a positive attitude towards its preservation.

Language pride refers to an attitude that motivates individuals or groups to regard their language as a symbol of personal or collective identity. This pride can serve to differentiate them from other groups. When speakers exhibit pride in using their language, it reflects a positive attitude towards it. Conversely, if speakers feel ashamed or reluctant to use their language, they may be perceived as exhibiting a negative attitude towards it. Awareness of language norms constitutes an attitude that promotes the careful, corrective, and polite use of language by speakers. It encourages individuals to utilize language in accordance with established norms. This awareness manifested through a Sense of responsibility, attitude, and appreciation for the language, which fosters a willingness to cultivate and develop it further language awareness is a critical factor in influencing language usage. Confirmation of the descriptions of such language loyalty pride are demonstrated in the responses of the research participants in the way that redefines the description given above by Garvin and Mathiot.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts qualitative design, necessitated by the subject of language attitude which requires an interview to reveal it. Language attitude researchers must inquire from speakers to understand what they feel about variants of the same language (Meyerhoff et al., 2015) [42]. They are also required to inquire from speakers of a language (Llmas et al., 2007) [43], such as Tarok, before understanding what the speakers feel about their endangered language. Such use of interview instrument enables the selected Tarok speakers to express their attitudes without being unnecessarily limited by options as obtained in using questionnaire (Stark et al., 2013) [44]. It helps to understand complex issues, such as why people feel the way they do about their language, and provides information specific to the people and places being studied (Crano & Prislín, 2011; Shahsavar & Tan, 2012) [45, 46].

Although qualitative research typically involves a small number of participants, limits the generalization of findings, has limited scope, is subjective and time consuming and depends on the skills and expertise of the researcher, it is considered suitable for this study as it helps to understand a complex and difficult-to-measure phenomenon such as attitude.

3.2. Sample and Sampling

This study consists of ten participants, purposively selected to represent the various perspectives within the Tarok-speaking community. Although the sample size is small, it is justified, mainly by the purposive sampling technique used. Since competence was the main criteria used for se-

lecting the participant, the competent responses the interviewees gave ensured validation and reliability of the small sample size. The consistency witnessed in their qualitative responses was the factor used to determine the saturation point after interviewing the ten against the twenty persons initially intended to be interviewed. The young generation was represented by five participants, comprising of four females and one male, aged between 18 and 30 years. They are all educated, with four holding first degrees and one holding a second degree. They reside in both rural and urban areas including Jos and Langtang North. All are native and fluent speakers of Tarok.

The old generation is also represented by five participants, consisting of one female and four males, aged 40 years and above. They have varying levels of education, with three holding first degrees and two holding second degrees. They reside in both rural and urban areas, including Langtang, Jos, and Kaduna. All are native and fluent speakers of Tarok. To minimize the degree of bias inherent in the purposive sampling technique used, identified community members, cultural experts, and fluent Tarok speakers through local organizations were used to identify the competent participants used.

3.3. Instrument and Data Collection

Interview was the instrument used for data collection. This allowed the researcher to unearth the participants' in-depth attitudes and experiences. The interview was considered suitable for this research primarily because of the qualitative design that was used, which demanded for qualitative responses to be elicited using a set of semi-structured questions.

The data were collected using face-to-face interviews as it was recorded and afterwards transcribed. Interviews were conducted in a quiet, private space, lasting approximately 20-30 minutes. Recordings were made with permission, and notes were taken to supplement the recordings. Due to geographical constraints, some interviews were conducted via phone calls, allowing for the inclusion of participants from distant locations, such as Kaduna. This approach ensured the capturing of a diverse range of perspectives. Despite careful planning, the challenges of time constraints, equipment malfunctions, difficulty in accessing old participants, and participants' reluctance were encountered. These challenges were resolved through careful planning, rescheduling interviews, having backup equipment. Some individuals declined to participate due to busy schedules, which compelled an alternative, purposive selection of participants.

4. Results

4.1. Presentation of Data for Research Objective 1

The first research objective was to determine the differences in attitudes between the young and old generations of Tarok language speakers towards the endangerment of the

Tarok language. Based on this objective, the following results were obtained from the participants interviewed, comprising 5 from the young generations of the Tarok speakers and 5 from the older generation of Tarok speakers.

When asked about their feelings regarding the endangerment of the Tarok language, participants from both age groups expressed fear and apprehension about the impending loss of the language. However, a notable difference in how they expressed these apprehensive feelings is that the young generation is more concerned about the present effect of the endangerment on their own lives, while the older generation is more concerned about the effect of the language's endangerment on the subsequent generations. For instance, Participant 5 from the young generation stated, "The younger generations are not able to speak the language fluently, and I feel sad because it will soon go into extinction." On the other hand, Participant 4 from the old generation shared, "If our language disappears, our traditions, customs, and history will be lost forever."

When asked about the causes of the endangerment of the Tarok language, the two generations exhibited a notable divergence in their perspectives. The young generation attributed the decline to external factors globalization and urbanization, whereas the older generation pointed to internal societal changes, such as industrialization and technological advancements. This contrast reflects fundamentally different understandings of the forces driving language decline. The younger generation's emphasis on external influences suggests a concern with global connectivity and cultural homogenization, while the older generation's focus on internal changes highlights the impact of modernization on traditional ways of life. For example, Participant 5 from the young generation noted, "I feel globalization is one of the causes of language endangerment. The world has come closer, making Tarok language, which was supposed to grow slowly, go into extinction." In contrast, Participant 3 from the older generation observed, "Industrialization and technology have changed the way of life. Previously, farming united our community and facilitated Tarok language use. Now people leave villages for city jobs, making it harder to use and pass on Tarok language."

When asked about the consequences of Tarok language endangerment, both generations expressed concern. However, their concerns differed significantly. The young generation is concerned about language loss as a barrier to progress and development, whereas the old generation viewed it as a threat to cultural continuity and heritage. For instance, Participant 4 from the young generation stated, "language endangerment leads to underdevelopment, hindering progress, growth, and improvement in the Tarok community." In contrast, Participant 5 from the old generation notes, "If we lose our language, vital cultural aspects, such as traditional medicine and rituals, will be lost forever."

When asked what could be done to address the endangerment of the Tarok language, both generations expressed their

views. However, the difference in their suggestions is that the younger generation sees language preservation as a collective effort, utilizing modern media and technology. While the older generation believes that educational institutions and parents should take responsibility. For example, Participant 5 from the young generation suggested, "The Tarok people need to organize more cultural events and consider establishing their own film industry similar to the Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani industries to promote Tarok culture and traditions through movies." In contrast, Participant 1 from the old generation suggested that, "Tarok language should be taught in primary schools."

When asked if they wanted the Tarok language to return to

its original form, both generations expressed their views. However, the difference in their responses is that the younger generation prioritizes cultural preservation and takes pride in the original form, while the older generation recognizes the need for language adaptation and evolution. For example, Participant 1 from the younger generation responded, "Yes, I want Tarok language to return to its original form because it brings pride." In contrast, Participant 2 from the older generation suggested, "No, I want Tarok language to change, expand and develop. There are new things that need names, like computers, Facebook, WhatsApp, phone, laptop, email, noodles, biscuits, pizza and others."

Table 1. The Differences in Attitudes between the Young and Old Generations of Native Tarok towards the Endangerment Tarok Language.

Interview questions	Young generations	Old generations
(1). What do you feel about the endangerment of Tarok language?	The effect of the endangerment is on the present young generations.	The effect of the endangerment is on the subsequent generations.
(2). What are the causes of endangerment of Tarok language?	Young generation view globalization as a more significant threat due to their exposure to modern technologies and global connectivity.	Old generation emphasis on industrialization/technology reflects their experience of societal changes and urbanization.
(3). What are the consequences of the endangerment of Tarok language?	Young see language loss as barrier to progress	Old see it as threat to cultural continuity.
(4). What can be done to correct the endangerment?	Young generations suggest more innovative and creative solutions (film industry, cultural events).	Old focuses on traditional methods (teaching in schools, writing books).
(5). Do you want Tarok language to return to its original form?	Young prioritize cultural preservation.	Old recognize the need for language adaptation and evolution.

4.2. Presentation of Data for Research Objective 2

Research Objective 2 was set to investigate the similarities in attitudes of young and old Tarok language speakers towards the endangerment of the Tarok language.

When asked about their feelings toward the endangerment of Tarok language, participants from both generations expressed sadness and concern for the potential loss of their language, recognizing its importance to their cultural heritage and identity. This shared emotional attachment highlights a common concern for language preservation across generations. For example, Participant 5 from the young generation stated, "The younger generations are not able to speak the language fluently, and I feel sad because it will soon go into extinction." Similarly, Participant 5 from the old generation expressed, "I feel helpless, like I am watching the language slip away and I don't know how to stop it."

When asked about the causes of the Tarok language's endangerment, both generations identified education and a lack

of parental interest in teaching the Tarok language as significant contributing factors. They highlighted the impact of an education system prioritizes dominant languages. According to participant 3 from the younger generation, "Education prioritizes dominant languages like English, neglecting the Tarok language, which contributes to its endangerment." Similarly, Participant 5 from the older generation noted, "The educational system doesn't encourage the use of Tarok language, causing children to forget their mother tongue." Participant 4 from the younger generations noted, "parents are not teaching Tarok language to their children. Elderly people are dying taking Tarok knowledge with them." Similarly, participant 2 from the older generations noted that "Parents are not interested in teaching their children the Tarok language anymore, and the children are not ready to learn."

When asked about the consequences of the Tarok language's endangerment, both generations shared similar concerns emphasizing the language's significance to their cultural identity, history, and community. They recognized the crucial role the language plays in preserving cultural heritage and expressed deep anxiety about losing their native language.

Participant 2 from the younger generation stated, "Losing the Tarok language means losing our cultural identity. Our language is deeply tied to our culture and history; it's a part of ourselves." Similarly, Participant 1 from the older generation noted, "The loss of Tarok language would result in the loss of Tarok identity." These perspectives highlight the shared understanding of the Tarok language's importance across generations, underscoring its vital role in maintaining cultural continuity.

When asked what can be done to address the endangerment of the Tarok language, both generations expressed a shared desire for preservation. Participant 4 from the younger generation suggested, "Celebrating Tarok culture through events showcasing our traditions, music, and art can help preserve the language." Similarly, Participant 5 from the older generation recommended, "Taking children to the village during holidays to learn about the culture and language can

revive it. Visiting our locality can help restore the language."

When asked if they wanted the Tarok language to return to its original form, both generations expressed a desire to preserve the language and culture while acknowledging the need for adaptation. They recognized the importance of balancing tradition with modernization. The younger generation suggested modifying the language to suit contemporary needs, while the older generation concurred, emphasizing the benefits of revival for the development of Tarok land. Additionally, they advocated for updates to incorporate modern terminology, such as words for technological advancements. For example, Participant 5 from the younger generation stated, "Yes, I wish a modified way of speaking the language could be established." Similarly, Participant 4 from the old generation agreed, "Yes, returning it to its original form will help develop Tarok land, but I also want the language to evolve to capture modern concepts, like 'phone'."

Table 2. *The Similarities in Attitudes of the Young and Old Generations of Native Tarok towards the Endangerment of Tarok Language.*

Interview questions	Young generations	Old generations
(1). What do you feel about the endangerment of Tarok language?	Express sadness and concern for language loss.	Express sadness and concern for language loss.
(2). What are the causes of endangerment of Tarok language?	They recognize educational system and lack of parental interest in teaching Tarok language to contribute to language endangerment.	They recognize educational system and lack of parental interest in teaching Tarok language to contribute to language endangerment.
(3). What are the consequences of the endangerment of Tarok language?	They shared concerns over the loss of cultural identity, erasure of cultural heritage and threat to community continuity.	They shared concerns over the loss of cultural identity, erasure of cultural heritage and threat to community continuity.
(4). What can be done to correct the endangerment?	They suggest language revitalization through tradition and community based initiatives.	They suggest language revitalization through tradition and community based initiatives.
(5). Do you want Tarok language to return to its original form?	They recognize the importance of adapting Tarok language.	They recognize the importance of adapting Tarok language.

4.3. Presentation of Data for Research Objective 3

Research Objective 3 aimed to identify the causes of the Tarok language's endangerment. When the participants from the younger generation were asked about the causes of this endangerment, they cited various factors including intermarriages, urban migration, exposure to other languages, prioritization of dominant languages like English in education, lack of parental teaching and loss of elderly knowledge, and globalization. For instance, Participant 1 noted, "intermarriages contribute to the endangerment of the Tarok language." Participant 2 added, "Living outside our Tarok community and moving to cities for better opportunities exposes the youth to other languages, contributing to the language endangerment." Participant 3 emphasized, "Education prioritizes

dominant languages like English, neglecting the Tarok language." Participant 4 lamented, "parents are not teaching the Tarok language to their children" and elderly people are dying, taking their knowledge of Tarok with them." Finally, Participant 5 attributed the issue of globalization stating, "I feel globalization is one of the causes of language endangerment. The world has become more connected, making Tarok language, which was supposed to grow slowly, face extinction."

Similarly, the participants from the older generation identified several causes of Tarok language endangerment. Participant 1 observed, "Foreign language interference, particularly with English and Hausa becoming the mother tongues of many migrant Tarok people, contributes to the decline". Participant 2 noted, "A lack of parental interest in teaching the language combined with children's unwillingness to learn Tarok, plays a significant role." Participant 3 added, "Industrialization and technology have changed our way of life. In

the past, farming brought our community together and helped us speak the Tarok language. Now, people must leave their villages to find work in cities, where they encounter speakers of different languages. This makes it harder to use and pass on the Tarok language." Participant 4 remarked, "Transcultural

marriages further erode the use of the Tarok language, as children are often raised speaking non-Tarok mother tongues. Finally, participant 5 emphasized, "The educational system's failure to promote the use of the Tarok language causes children to forget their mother tongue."

Table 3. *The Causes of the Endangerment of Tarok language.*

Interview questions	Young generations	Old generations
What are the causes of the endangerment of Tarok language?	The young generation emphasis intermarriage	The old generation emphasis foreign language interference e.g. English/ Hausa languages.
	The young generation emphasis urban migration and language exposure.	Old generation highlight lack of parental interest and children unwillingness.
	Young generation highlight prioritization of dominant languages e.g. English in Education.	Old generation emphasis industrialization and technological changes.
	Young generation emphasis lack of parental teaching and loss of elderly knowledge.	Old generation emphasis transcultural marriages.
	Young generation emphasis external influence e.g. globalization.	Old generation emphasis educational systems failure to promote Tarok language.

5. Discussion

5.1. Discussion on Data Presentation for Research Objective 1

The findings revealed significant differences in attitudes between younger and older generations regarding the endangerment of the Tarok language. While the younger generation focuses on the immediate effects of language loss emphasizing globalization as a major contributing factor, the older generation is more concerned about the long-term consequences, pointing to industrialization and technological changes as central factors. These findings align with existing literature, particularly Crystal (2000), who noted the profound impact of globalization on language endangerment. Similarly, Harrison (2007) emphasized the significant role of industrialization in language decline. The study confirm that modernization has a profound influence on language use, with globalization and industrialization exerting distinct pressures on language preservation. This generational divide underscores complexity of language endangerment, highlighting the need for preservation strategies that address both immediate and long-term concerns.

5.2. Discussion on Data Presentation for Research Objective 2

The study revealed notable similarities between the

younger and the older generations regarding the Tarok language endangerment. Both generations expressed concerns about language loss and recognized educational system's contribution to its decline. They also emphasized the need for language revitalization through traditional and community based initiatives, highlighting the importance of collaborative efforts in Language preservation. These findings align with Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) framework, which characterizes language attitudes as comprising language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of the norm. Specifically, both generations demonstrated language loyalty, attaching importance to the Tarok language for cultural identity. They also exhibited language pride, valuing the language for its cultural heritage. Furthermore, both generations showed language awareness recognizing the languages significance in maintaining cultural identity and continuity. Corresponding with Cacippo's (1981) definition of a positive language attitude the convergence of language attitudes across generations underscores the potential for collective action in preserving the Tarok language.

5.3. Discussion on Data Presentation for Research Objective 3

The study's identification of various causes of language endangerment, such as intermarriage, foreign language interference, and lack of parental interest in teaching the Tarok language, underscores the complexity of the issue. These interconnected factors necessitate a multifaceted approach, to address language endangerment. This finding is supported by existing literature, which highlights the negative impact of

intermarriage on minority language retention, as noted by David and Nambiar (2003). Additionally, Crystal (2000) identified urbanization and the subsequent adaptation of dominant languages as significant contributors to language endangerment. Grimes (2001) similarly observed that educating pupils in national language has led to language shifts in several countries. Notably the study's results also emphasize the critical role of parental involvement, as many parents fail to introduce their children to the Tarok language at an early age. This oversight perpetuates language endangerment, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to promote language preservation.

The discussion, revealed factors that diverge from existing literature, contrary to Baker's (1988) emphasis community-based efforts for language preservation, this study found that the younger generation advocates for collective efforts utilizing modern media and technology, the older generation suggests educational institutions and parents should take responsibility. Additionally, whereas Cacippo (1981) stressed language preservation, the older generation recognizes the need for language adaptation and evaluation. Furthermore, Garvin and Mathiot's (1968), concept of language loyalty as crucial aspect of language attitudes and endangerment while this study's focus on external factors, globalization and urbanization, which influence language attitudes.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study findings emphasize the urgent need to preserve the Tarok language. The differences and similarities between young and old generations highlight the importance of inclusive and community-driven preservation initiatives. By addressing the complex factors contributing to language endangerment, towards revitalizing the Tarok language and preserving the cultural heritage of the Tarok people. The study also contributes to knowledge by emphasizing the differences and similarities between the younger and older generations' attitudes towards Tarok language endangerment. The results stress the need for collaborative preservation efforts that balance tradition with modernization. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of language endangerment and offer valuable insights for policymakers, community leaders, and language preservation initiatives.

The study recommends that the research findings highlight the need for collaborative, community-driven efforts to revitalize the Tarok language. Both younger and older generations expressed concern about the endangerment of Tarok Language, underscoring the importance of working together. Cultural organizations, local government authorities, and community leaders should collaborate to promote the Tarok language through cultural events, festivals, and gatherings that celebrate Tarok heritage. Such initiatives will strengthen communal ties and encourage language use within and beyond the Tarok-speaking community.

The educational system was identified by both generations

as a key factor contributing to language endangerment. To address this, there should be efforts to incorporate the Tarok language into school curricular, particularly at primary and secondary levels. Introducing language classes or using Tarok as a medium of instruction in early education could help younger generations develop proficiency in using the Tarok language. Additionally, supporting bilingual education programs where Tarok is taught alongside other languages will reinforce the importance of maintaining the Tarok Language.

A major finding of the study was the lack of parental involvement in teaching Tarok to their children. Parents play a crucial role in language transmission, and community programs should be developed to encourage parents to speak the Tarok language at home. Workshops and campaigns that emphasize the importance of preserving the language within families can raise awareness among parents and motivate them to teach their children the Tarok language and culture.

Intermarriage and urban migration were identified as significant causes of language endangerment. To address this, there should be initiatives targeting Tarok-speaking families, especially those living in urban areas, to maintain and promote the language. Language courses and cultural activities should be organized in cities to ensure that displaced Tarok communities remain connected to their linguistic heritage. Programs encouraging the use of Tarok in multilingual households could also help mitigate the effects of intermarriages on language use.

Promoting cultural pride is vital for language preservation. Both generations in the study recognized the link between language and cultural Identity. Public awareness campaigns and media initiatives can be used to promote pride in the Tarok language. Tarok films, music, literature, and art should be produced to encourage language use and foster a sense of pride in the community's heritage. By highlighting the cultural and historical significance of the language, these efforts can create a renewed sense of identity among the Tarok people.

Support from government bodies and non-government organizations (NGOs) is essential for the success of language preservation efforts. Financial and institutional backing can help fund language research, develop resources, and organize cultural events. Stakeholders should prioritize the preservation of minority languages like Tarok to ensure that they are not lost to future generations.

Parents are to immediately return to the traditional practice of narrating stories and singing songs to their children at home. Through this process, the children will spontaneously grow to appreciate their language and cultural heritage with positive attitudes. This will in turn leads them to using the Tarok language with pride and competence.

Regular competitive exercises in speaking and writing in Tarok should be organized for the young Tarok speakers to determine the best performers and reward them accordingly. Doing this will engender passion for the Tarok language and eliminate the imposed prejudice on the Tarok people against their language.

In this revitalization and preservation processes, the media should be made one of the major factors in championing the courses, by documenting in reading news in Tarok for the information, entertainment and education of the young generation of Tarok, especially.

Parents, whose children are found to be competent enough in using Tarok, should be rewarded accordingly. As a requirement for establishing a media station, government and private television and radio stations are to create time on daily basis for transmitting in Tarok. Technology presents an opportunity to engage the younger generation in language preservation. The development of mobile apps, online courses, and digital content in the Tarok language can encourage younger speakers to learn and use the language. Tarok language achieves, including recorded oral histories, cultural stories, and digital dictionaries, can serve as valuable resources for future generations. Using social media platforms to promote Tarok language content will also help raise awareness among tech-savvy youth.

All the recommendations made above are actionable, requiring community-based intervention to be undertaken. Formulating a language policy on revitalizing and preserving the endangered Tarok language, for example, requires the active engagement of the Tarok native speakers, whose lives and language will be affected by the implementation of such policy. Since the language policy is expected to reflect the Tarok attitudes towards their language, a policy needs to be first established to create positive attitudes towards the programmes of revitalizing and preserving the Tarok, otherwise it will be resisted by the Tarok people. With this foundation formed, the policy makers will effectively command the behaviour of the Tarok people who will be actively engaged to cooperate with the language policy makers.

Abbreviations

NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations

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Author Contributions

Hosanna Hussaini Wakkai: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Writing – review & editing

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ogy, Project administration, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the outcome of this research work has been reported in this manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Appendix

The Interview Questions and the Participants' Responses.
Young Generation (18-30 years)

Question 1: What do you feel about the endangerment of Tarok language?

Participant 1: I feel sad because I think about the stories and history that will be lost.

Participant 2: I feel angry because I think the world is ignoring our language.

Participant 3: I feel bad because The Tarok youths are adopting the habit of speaking other languages, which might cause their own language to disappear someday.

Participant 4: I feel the language is not progressing and it makes me angry because the language is depreciating.

Participant 5: the younger generations are not able to speak the language fluently and I feel sad because it will soon go into extinction.

Question 2: What are the causes of the endangerment of Tarok language?

Participant 1: intermarriages contribute to the endangerment of Tarok language.

Participant 2: Living outside our Tarok confined, moving to cities for greener pastures exposed the youths to other languages this contribute to Tarok language endangerment.

Participant 3: Education is one of the causes of language endangerment, prioritizing dominant languages e.g. English neglecting Tarok language.

Participant 4: parents are not teaching Tarok language to their children, elderly people are dying taking Tarok knowledge with them.

Participant 5: I feel globalization is one of the causes of language endangerment. The world has come closer making Tarok language which is supposed to grow slowly go into extinction.

Question 3: What are the consequences of the endangerment of Tarok language?

Participant 1: If the younger Tarok generations don't learn their native language, its value will depreciate. As the older generations pass away, the language will be lost if the younger ones aren't conversing in it, leading to a decline in its usage and importance, ultimately threatening the survival of the

Tarok language.

Participant 2: Loss of cultural identity, our language is deeply tied to our culture and history. Losing Tarok means losing a part of ourselves.

Participant 3: One of the consequences is disunity. Disunity can lead to internal conflicts.

Participant 4: One of the consequences is underdevelopment, lack of progress, growth or improvement in Tarok community.

Participant 5: one of the consequences is that Tarok language in the nearest future will go into extinction and we won't have fluent Tarok speakers again.

Question 4: What can be done to correct endangerment of the Tarok language?

Participant 1: Teach others, parents should put more efforts in teaching their children Tarok language.

Participant 2: Document Tarok language, record and document Tarok stories, songs and cultural practices to preserve them for future generations.

Participant 3: Engage with elders learn from and involve Tarok elders in language preservation efforts, their knowledge.

Participant 4: celebrate Tarok culture, organize and participate in cultural events that showcase Tarok traditions, music and art.

Participant 5: The Tarok people need to organize more cultural events and consider establishing their own film industry, similar to the Yoruba and Hausa/ Fulani industries. This would promote Tarok culture and traditions through movies, showcasing their rich heritage to a wider audience and preserving it for future generations.

Question 5: Do you want Tarok language to return to its original form?

Participant 1: Yes, I want Tarok language to return to its original form because it brings pride.

Participant 2: Yes, Of course. I want it to return to its original form because what our parents used to know should be continued.

Participant 3: Absolutely, my participation will be through teaching young children.

Participant 4: Yes, because I want Tarok people to be united forever.

Participant 5: Yes, I wish a modified way of speaking the language should be established.

Old Generation (40 years and above)

Question 1: How do you feel about the endangerment of Tarok language?

Participant 1: It's disheartening because younger generations are increasingly using dominant languages, neglecting their mother tongue.

Participant 2: I wish I had more to teach my children and grandchildren the language when they were young.

Participant 3: I feel very sad because our language is the soul of our culture, and its loss would leave a gap in our identity.

Participant 4: Fear, if our language disappears, our traditions, customs and history will be lost forever.

Participant 5: I feel helpless, like I am watching the language slip away and I don't know how to stop it.

Question 2: What are the causes of the endangerment of Tarok language?

Participant 1: English/ Hausa becoming mother tongue of migrant Tarok people (foreign language interference).

Participant 2: Parents are not interested in teaching their children the Tarok language again furthermore, the children are not ready to learn.

Participant 3: Industrialization and technology have changed the way we live. In the past, farming brought our community together and helped us speak our Tarok language. Now, people must leave their villages to find work in cities. There, they meet people who speak different languages. This makes it harder for people to use and pass on the Tarok language.

Participant 4: Transcultural marriage, it's common which set a ground for the children to be raised with mother tongue that is not Tarok.

Participant 5: Educational system doesn't encourage the use of Tarok language, it makes the children forget their mother tongue.

Question 3: What are the consequences of the endangerment of Tarok language?

Participant 1: Loss of Tarok identity.

Participant 2: Lost of unity.

Participant 3: loss of history, our language holds our history stories. Without it our past is forgotten.

Participant 4: inability to influence the world through our positive cultural practices.

Participant 5: if we lose our language, we risk losing vital aspects of our culture, such as traditional medicine and rituals forever.

Question 4: What can be done to correct endangerment of the Tarok language?

Participant 1: Tarok language should be taught in primary schools in Tarok land.

Participant 2: Parents should encourage their wards to learn Tarok language.

Participant 3: Books should be written to teach the kids. Translate dictionary, Bible stories for kids, alphabet and other essential documents to Tarok language.

Participant 4: Encourage entertainment production in Tarok language.

Participant 5: Take the children to the village for holidays to learn more about the culture and language. Visiting our locality can revive the language.

Question 5: Do you want the Tarok language to return to its original form?

Participant 1: Yes, I want Tarok to return to its former form.

Participant 2: No, I want Tarok language to change, expand and develop. There are need for new things to be named e.g. computer, Facebook, WhatsApp, phone, laptop, email, noodles, biscuits pizza etc.

Participant 3: yes, because it will bring love.

Participant 4: yes, because returning it to its original form will help in developing Tarok land. But I want the Tarok language to improve so that it can capture recent things for example phone.

Participant 5: The Tarok culture should bounce back and return to its original form. Cultural days in schools should be encouraged.

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