

Language as an Impediment to Immigrants' welfares and Development: A Case Study



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ABSTRACT: Language is a vector of development. "Considered like privileged vehicle of transfer of knowledge and ideas, the language plays an irreplaceable role (...) in all the process of scientific and technological development" (Diki-Kidiri, 2004: 27). It is the means of expressing or communicating ideas which provide the capacity to communicate, thus making it a tool crucial to social organization and technological development. Indeed, language and development are intimately and incontestably linked that no country in the world could develop under using a language other than that of the concerned population. On the other hand, migration is not a new phenomenon: humans are migratory species. For economic or security reasons, people migrate. They moved to new location and new language ecologies where they come in contact with speakers of a specific set of other languages. These changes in the linguistic environment are not without consequences. At this juncture, it is worth noting that to reach their own objectives, immigrants as well as the developers: partners, animators, sensitizers, NGOs agents are in need of language of communication as the development constitutes a process in the center of which the language is.

This paper focuses on the utility of language in action in order to understand how can language blocs, impedes immigrants in their daily interaction as it is inconceivable for man to do almost any activity that he does without the use of language. The research utilizes qualitative research methodology by incorporating structured interviews. Another research instrument I use is obtrusive observation to find out which of the second language acquisition, code switching, code mixing or even translation can help immigrants overcome language barriers and experience successful economic and social integration in the host country.

KEY WORDS: Migration Language Barrier Development Social and Economic Integration Impediment

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a key to human lives which basic, primary function is to transmit important factual information and to convey essential command. Language is social by nature and thus inseparably connected with people it grows and develops together with the development of society. As Stalin in Kerswill(2017:2) observes about language, "It arises and develops with the rise and development of a society. It dies when the society dies. Apart from society there is no language." Man uses his language as a tool for thinking and planning and, ultimately for communication. Language is therefore the main means of communication and that without communication individuals become socially isolated. Communication requires language as a medium and channels. It is the means of expressing or communicating ideas which provides the capacity to communicate thus making it, a tool crucial to social organisation and technological development.

Thus, it goes without saying, language, communication and development are closely linked that language happens to be 'the index of the progress of society'. (page 16)

Then people migrate voluntarily and or unvoluntarily, for one (influential) reason or another Ravenstein calls 'Push' and 'Pull' factors. They moved to new location and new language ecologies where they come in contact with speakers of a specific set of other languages. While to entertain any kind of social order, people must communicate. It is through communication that a social system is held together. That is, all communication and society is possible only through language which is also the major means of communication in which the rest of the community culture is embedded(Nana, 1996). UNESCO believes that there is nothing in this world which promotes understanding between people better than communication.

Finally, one can share Norman's (1969: 149) view point that (...) language is the chief instrument (...) with which man integrates himself, both internally and externally and both as a functioning individual and as an active participant in a human group, member of human society. Thus, the success of development depends on language and effective communication Rut(2008:218)

This study was conducted to investigate the role played by Language in the immigrants development and welfare. The theoretical models considered for the data analysis in this study include that of Raveinstein and Mirdal..

This paper first examines the theories that have included language as being among factors to keep in mind in the study of migratory movements

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As this paper contends that Language, communication, integration and development and migration go hand in hand, it then looks at the relationship between language and immigrants development in the country in which they settle

In order to achieve the primary aim of this study that is the role of Language as an impediment, the study focuses on the importance of language and seeks answers to the following questions: What role does language and communication play in the social integration and development of the immigrants? in what way can language impede migrants welfare and development? In particular, it discusses: How do refugees cope with the eventual linguistic blockade Do (forced) migrants or refugees experience development in terms of Nixon(2011) that means modernisation transformation of human beings because of effective communication via language with their host.

The fields of language and migration have a long standing literatures examining migration and language contact(Garett 2004, Mendiza-Denton 1996, Urciuoli 1995)in Hilry(2017) . But there is a lack of empirical research on migration particularly forced migration in African context. As De Haas put it: African migration research is haunted by the lack of reliable official data and the absence of appropriate sampling frameworks in the form of census or survey data. Therefore, this study tries to provide empirical basis in understanding how vital language is as well as an impediment to migrants development. This study will also fill the gap with concern literature on language and migration especially with regard forced migration (refugees/ asylum seekers) in African context.

II. LANGUAGE AND MIGRATION: WHY DO PEOPLE MIGRATE?

Migration and language interact in a complex, yet transparent way. In the same vein as Adeola and Fayomi(2012:1) quoted by Ebri(2017), we can see Migration in terms of people moving from one place to another for various reasons; it is an essential part of man's nature. Else, humans are migratory species.

But, before going any further distinction should be made between types of migration as for example, voluntarily(economic) and forced (asylum and refuge seekers) migration eventhough there is no clear cut between the two because of the complex motivations in an individual case.

Coleman (1997:13) points out that these two types may be the (automatic) result of socio-economic and demographic "attributes" related to education, income and occupation type while Boyle et al. (1998:36), state that:"Different sub-groups of the population have different migration propensities". Base on this last statement a line can be drawn between the two types: that voluntarily(economic) migrants moved out because they have the ambitions and resources to make this happen. In this case migration can be seen as a function of people's aspirations and capabilities to migrate. The second type that is forced (asylum and refuge seekers) migrants would not have moved under normal conditions or peace and security. Labelled International Forced Migration or Asylum International Migration, this type is practiced by asylum seekers that seek refuge in a destination nation state due to frustration and push factors such as insecurity, kidnapping for ransom, terrorists' attacks , political problems that turn into lack of security, exclusion and many other problems they confronted in their home countries. They are individuals in need of help and refuge. They are internationally refugees, internally/transborders displaced persons who claim refugee status It is worthnoting that, otherwise, many would not have moved.

So they were forced to move, to migrate. With regard the latter, we rather are of the same opinion as Myrdal and Prothero who opines that only "Push" factors are responsible for international migration that is the scope of this study.

The literature confirms that economic migrants are more proficient in the host country language than refugees, Adsera(2016:352). So to say emigrants from a country are far more likely to move to a destination country which speaks the same language as the emigrant's country: This is, because an insufficient command of the host language is a stressor for successful adjustment in a new culture or as Brickson (2000); Nkomo and Cox (1996) put it 'not being able to identify with other cultural groups may lead to negative attitudes towards such groups' (Bartel, 2001).

In the case of forced immigrants, L2 skills are poor as having a common language does not seem to determine the final choice. L2 skills are rather found among voluntarily immigrants with primarily economic motivations, Of course, being able to communicate in the host country's language plays a key role in the successful integration into labour markets and society, and influences a number of non-economic outcomes. It goes without saying, language proficiency means easier assimilation in the host country.

III. AFRICA AND MIGRATION

Migration is widespread in Africa that makes Africa seen as a continent of mass displacement and migration. Amongt the main drivers of, especially forced migration are violent conflict, warefare, security problem; Else, African migration is high and increasing, defined as security problem associated with trafficking and terrorism eventhough most african migrations are rather towards other African countries have stated Schoumaker et al,(2015), Sander & Mainbo(2003)

Africa has 18.6 million migrants, including 3.7 million refugees (forced migrants) and 11.8 million internally displaced persons out of a total population of 1.1 billion people. Only 11.4 million African migrants live outside the continent. 9% of the world migrants are Africans

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Broadly speaking Iliffe (1995:131) asserted that “ The best known case of forced migration is that of the estimated 10-12 million Africans who were sent as slaves to the Caribbean, the West Indies and the Americas in the 16 th-19th centuries” Kerswill(2006: 12)

In the 20th century, forced migration is again widespread, with an estimated 20 million of 100 million international migrants in 1992 being involuntary, as a result of persecution, war, environmental change and development projects. Boyle et al. (1998:32). These types of migrants are called refugees and “Africa contains some 47% of all refugees, though many of these migrations are short-lived Boyle et al.(1998, 32).

According to official data, refugees and ‘people in refugee-like situations’ represented 2.4 million or 14 per cent of international migrants in Africa (UNHCR, 2011).

IV. LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION AND (CONTEXT) DEVELOPMENT

The primary purpose of language is communication. Communication is an important prerequisite of development and this is manifested through language. Where there is no language there is no development, and this is a fact. Betty(2014: 213)

The Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary (2013) defines development as “when someone or something grows and becomes more advanced”.

Arcandi. (PP 4-5) in Kerswill(2006) sees development as

a multidimensional process that can be measured along a plethora of dimensions. Maternal and infant mortality, access to clean drinking water, the prevalence of infectious diseases, the empowerment of women, literacy or school enrolment rates, measures of the incidence of poverty or access to sufficient calorie and protein intake, life expectancy at birth – these and other indicators are all “sold” by various constituencies as the “best” indicator of economic development

Indeed, language and development are intimately and incontestably linked that no country in the world could develop under using a language other than that of the concerned population we can dare say that the success of development depends on language and effective communication.

V. LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

African migration has not been greatly searched; literature is patchy. So, we consider what has been said on the European, American, Australian domain to frame our context.

If we consider contemporary migration, language seems to take on importance. So that we can assume that knowing language is important not only for succeeding in the labour market but also for integration. In the EU, UK, US for instance, language has been recognised as an essential element in the process of integrating immigrants. As x put it “host countries seem to attach more and more importance to the question of language. They are establishing new language-related requirements in different stages of the process of settlement or integration, or new tools designed to ensure that immigrants know the local language. Once again language emerges as a factor that contributes to successful integration into the labour market. Alicia(2002:11)

The importance of language in the process of integration featured specifically in the Common Basic Principles (CBP) on Integration. Its fourth principle says ‘basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration’

More precisely concerning the UK for example, The Commission on Integration and Social Cohesion, created in the UK after the terrorist attacks of July 2005 to advise the government, presented a report (in February 2007: 13), in which it said “the inability to speak English is the greatest barrier that keeps immigrants from integrating successfully in the UK and that if immigrants do not learn English shortly after arriving they never will. If you can’t speak English you are on path to isolation and separation.

Because it fulfils a number of functions, language has a particularly significant role to play in the process of individual and societal integration. It constitutes both the medium of everyday communication and a resource (...). Betty(2002: i)

VI. GEOGRAPHICAL AREA AND POPULATION OF THE STUDY

At a cross-roads of migratory route, Niger Republic is the hub to West-African migrants for decades. For a time, Niger neighbours following the example of Mali and Nigeria are confronted with terrorism and trafficking of all sorts. Nigeria particularly experiences various insurgencies associated with security problem due to boko haram attacks. (Idio et al, 2015). So, kidnapping for ransom, murdering, experiencing many forms of attack, etc. has made their residents migrate whichever way to Niger. These situations are responsible for the massive cross-border migration of mostly peasants, along the border with Nigeria in the East and Mali in the South. Among those forced migrants, those coming from Maiduguri constitute our population.

The Niger Nigeria border runs for one thousand, four hundred and ninety kilometers (1490).

Borno and Diffa are both situated at the extreme North East and South East of Nigeria and Niger Republic. People in the Borno area are the Fulbe, The Hausa and the Kanuri. On the other side, Diffa people are mostly Kanuri and Fulbe. On both side Kanuri predominates and includes the varieties of Manga, Mobbar and Kanembou on the part of Maiduguri and Kanembu, Tumari, Manga, Mobeur, Dagra Kubria Suugurti etc, in Diffa eventhough, as Bulakarima and Opaku (1989: 76) in Abubakar (51) showed “Hausa

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is now taking the dominant position that Kanuri occupies in Borno State.” They asserted, “It has been discovered that the Kanuri speak Hausa today (...).”

Most of our population come along from Damasak, Daji, Gashegar, Malamfatori where Hausa is said to be known as especially the language of contact between people of different ethnolinguistic backgrounds.

So Hausa is the lingua franca of northern Nigeria and dominant language in Niger Republic. So because of Islamist attacks, people forcibly migrate to Niger. They are about 31826 in Diffa Region.

Refugees aged 18 to 59 are 14130 in number distributed as follows: site de Awaridi (1678) and Djori Koulo (3222) and 296 asylum seekers (UNHCR 31 Jan 2021).

VII. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is on the premise of different models beginning with the assumption that emigrants from a country are far more likely to move to a destination country which speaks the same language and UNODC (2010) stipulates that a migrant choice of destination can be traced to the language of communication (854) that “The inability to speak language is the greatest barrier that keeps immigrants from integrating successfully in the host society.” Whereas language, integration and development are interrelated; that there is no development without language

Another model used, as migration and language are closely related is The “Push” and “Pull” factors Migration theory first revealed by Ravenstein (1885) in his (writing) “law of migration” xianjing,(2001: 14) a theory that explains the “how” and “why” of migration within a territory or across borders (.....) in Haas (2008:57/8).

Among the models used to explain large-scale migratory movements, one of the best known is the *push-pull factors model*. It seeks to explain international migration by identifying the degree of influence of factors that push the population of certain territories abroad and those which pull people towards other countries. Rut(2008: 1)

Apart from Ravenstein, Haas (2008) asserted that other scholars also made several attempts in applying this theory. (2008: 35, 36). According to Donald

the forceful desire for opportunities and improvement of one's life most times influences and motivates international migration. Generally, when the “Pull” factors at the destination nationstate outweighs the “Push” factors at the individual's nation state of origin, International Migration often takes place.

Lee also posits that “.....migration is provoked by two factors which happen to be “Pull” and “Push”. He sees International Migration as a reaction to the “Pull” and “Push” factors. (.....). Sovani, Base, Trewartha in Haas (2008:40)58 stated that the combination of “Push” and “Pull” factors are responsible for the migrants decision in leaving his/her territory”

Contrary, Myrdal and Prothero opines that only “Push” factors are responsible for International Migration.

In this study I attempt to test the validity of Myrdal and Prothero proposition with concern forced migration.

VIII. METHODOLOGY

Research Instruments and Procedure

The present research, on Language as an Impediment to Migrants Welfare and Development is based on a structured interview with forced immigrants(refugees) based on questions such as:

- 1) Why did you leave your country of origin?
- 2) Did you face any language related-difficulties once settled in?
- 3) Is there any advantage for you as an immigrant to know the language of the host country? (page 1)
- 4) What role (if any) does language play in your relation with the developers, the host population and among you self as refugees

Structured interview and observation were the main instruments used in conducting the research. The researcher makes use of especially unobtrusive observation as this kind provided enough information especially helped find out what languages do people speak to break language barriers they are facing.

1) Sample

Random sampling method was used in collecting samples for this study. In this research, a total of 60 respondents were selected, regardless of sex but on the basis of age. All the participants are between 17 and 55 years; they are Kanuri and Fulbe native speakers from north eastern Nigeria.

The participants, in this study are particularly from various places of Maiduguri state of Nigeria who were forced to migrate. They vary in their status. The male-female ratio was evenly distributed as 50% of the respondents were male and the other 50% of the respondents were female. They were chosen because of their being readily available and accessible on two out of three camps.

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2) Procedure

A random sample of 60 help tailor the interview. The interview was conducted over a period of two weeks on the refugee camps in Diffa. Participation in the study was voluntary. In the end, 60 were interviewed. Respondents were given brief insights about the objectives of the research prior to the interview. Each interview lasts about 5 to 10/15. The participants were audio recorded. To ensure the quality of recording as well as the smooth transfer of data a special recorder was used which has an SD Card and the ability to transfer data into the computer file. The data were collected over a period of two weeks. The analysis of the study results is based on the final sample of 60 interviewees.

3) Ethical consideration

As to Mackey and Gass (2005: 38) "various troubling practices of the past have raised questions about the ethical treatment of human subjects in research. Accordingly, the confidentiality of the information supplied by the research subjects and the anonymity of respondents must be respected, Economics and Social Research Council (ESRC) (2006).

In the same vein Mac Daniel and Gates (2001:66) in Jalaludeen(2019:16)revealed that a high standard of ethics and professionalism go hand in hand. Ethical obligation that researchers have toward participants research include that participants should not be harmed or deceived but be willing, informed and be held in confidence. The participants in this research were well-informed from the very beginning and they were willing to participate inspite of their fear of boko haram. We tried our best to make them feel confident as they were willing to participate. The data they provided was confidential and processed anonymously.

4) Data Presentation

The core objective of this research was to explore to what extent is language an impediment to immigrants' welfare and development. So, this section presents the raw data collected for the present study, summarised in the Table below.

Questions	Answers	Number of respondents	Percentage
1.Why did you leave your country origin? (push factors)	Insecurity, kidnapping for ransom, murder, attacks, flows, distress	60	100%
2.What were the influential (pull) factors that guided your choice of Diffa and surroundings: common language or family relationship? State if otherwise.	No common language/no family relationship. Search of serene environment/better life; geographically near	57	95%
3.Did you face any language related difficulties with the host population?	Language was a barrier, an impediment, an obstacle As to the Host population attitude: we are strangers; coming from somewhere representing a threat	60	100%
4. How do you communicate with the host population, developers and among yourselves?	No interrelation with host population; with developers and others through interpreters/translators Linguafranca: Hausa	60	100%
5.Do you think knowing the host population language would have been an advantage following what you experienced?	No doubt but as to now there is no opportunity to learn; even the kanuri communicate in Hausa	60	100%

5) Data Analysis

The analysis is based on the audiorecorded data obtained from the interview and obtrusive observation:

This study investigated and test the validity of the Myrdal and Prothero's 'Push' factors theory as opposed to Raveinstein theory 'Push' and 'Pull' factors.

The focus of the analysis focussed on impact of language with respect to the following:

- 1) the 'Push' factors and 'Pull' (if any) factors
- 2) the language used for inter-ethnic communication
- 3) the attitude of the host country population
- 4) the link between language and social integration and development

Follow is the result obtained from the anlysis of the data for the present study. It follows from the interview with participants on the camp.

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As results we found that contrary to economic or family migrants, forced migrants (refuges and asylum seekers) do not migrate voluntarily ; certainly, there were push factors. they are pushed around by factors such as violent conflict, kidnapping for ransom, murdering, lack of good governance resulting to insecurity, distress. At the end people feel there is any other viable livelihood option except to migrate; hence, they migrate in search of serene environment, looking for better life That under normal conditions or peace they even would not moved

From the outset, our findings also indicate that the influential factors among which having a common language did not determine their choice as an infinitesimal percentage of our participants answered yes while the majority definitely answered no contrary to Borneo in Kerswill(2017) who stated that in the context of migration,

Knowing or sharing a language is valued as one of the luring factors that draw migratory flows toward a particular country. In other words, the language that is spoken in a country is one of the features that a person willing to migrate takes into account when it comes to selecting a destination.

As Chiswik put it immigration results in the coming together of diverse peoples originally speaking a variety of languages. Then, immigrants found themselves in a kind of multilingual ecology where they have to come into contact to share commonness . Analysis reveals language as an obstacle, a barrier to communication as refugees do speak different languages and dialects According to many of them communication is very limited; that makes it a true statement that when a community with its language is in a situation where it must communicate with another community having different culture and language very considerable difficulties arise. Indeed there is always some lack of comprehension in communication by language from one community to another(...). How they overcome these language related problems let say barriers? They, in this context develop a strategy through the use of a lingua franca in this case the Hausa.

Results also shown language as a barrier that prevents refugees to come into contact with the host population who look at them, talk to them disdainfully and consider them as strangers, see them as a threat; Hence one could suspect that a great deal of internal,regional, international misunderstanding and world tensions derives in part from linguistic differences between people.

Due especially to language barrier, this negative attitude of the host population towards them can be interpreted as a result of their not being able to identify with themselves on the one hand and with host population as Brickson, 2000; Nkomo and Cox, 1996) put it 'not being able to identify with other cultural groups may lead to negative attitudes towards such groups' (Bartel, 2001). As a result, refugees are to live in conclave whereas ethnic concentrations hinder L2 acquisition. As a way out, refugees try to set up a medium of communication among themselves In this context, the dominant sociolinguistic effect appears to be the spread of lingua franca among others.. This is, migration has led to Hausa being used as such, particularly by L2 users, replacing the indigenous Kanuri and fulfulde. They make do with a lingua Franca language as learning a language before to communicate is a time taking activity. Another reason is that while using the lingua franca they still maintain their native language.

Again, language constitutes a barrier that is when communicating with developers/operational agencies, sensitizers, partners, animators, NGOs. In this context, impedes the capacity of either to communicate effectively. It is through communication that development can be achieved, whereas development is a process in the center of which the language is. For now, as solution, immigrants and their abovementioned partners go through interpreter/translator service.

But communication is the basis of social integration, then of development. Because of the lack of communication by language our participants feel desperate and abandoned to their fate, to some extent waiting for charity developers. They are aware of the importance of language concerning their situation as for instance that they cannot get the social benefits of language such as getting involved in the civic life, befriend etc.

6) Findings

The information gathered from structured interview and unobtrusive observation were analysed. Thus the findings clearly go against migration 'Push' and 'Pull' factors theory in that our results show that:

- Migration is not only a matter of poverty, economic incentives as all of the participants to our study stated firmly having resist to migrate; they were pushed to do so by factors such as insecurity, kidnapping for ransom, murdering, livelihood taking.
- With forced migration language was not the determining factor that pull people to a certain direction.
- Language proves itself an impediment with regards interrelation/interaction/communication between immigrants selves, between immigrants and host population, immigrants and developers, sensitizers, NGOs, agencies
- social integration is most difficult for forced migrants/refugees than to economic migrants as language is prerequisite to any social integration and well-being of immigrants.

7) Discussion

Language, communication and development are closely interrelated. Communication is an important prerequisite of development and this is manifested through language. Where there is no language there is no development, and this is a fact. Betty (2014:213). On the other hand men are migratory species. Migration, as to authors like Raveinstein, Lee, Sovani, Base, Trewartha in Haas

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(2008:40) is a reaction to 'Push' and 'Pull' factors; a theory that has included language as being among factors to keep in mind in the study of migratory movements This is true regarding voluntarily or economic migrants with prior economic motivations, who have matured their migrating ideas for long; chosen their final destination on the basis of language as stated by Borneo because they have the ambitions and may be, resources to make this happen. In this case migration can be seen as a function of people's aspirations and capabilities to migrate. Arcandi (in Kerswill) put it: "the most common reason to migrate is the search for better employment opportunities. On their part, Myrdal and Prothero opines that only "Push" factors are responsible for International Migration. We maintain the latter's stand in that our participants migrated due only to 'Push' factors that are Forced Migration or Asylum International Migration type is practiced by asylum seekers that seek refuge in a destination nation state due to frustration and push factors such as insecurity, kidnapping for ransom, terrorists' attacks , political problems that turn into lack of security, exclusion and many other problems they confronted in their home countries. Forced migrants moved in search of better and safer environment, looking for peace, security but language is "a central complement of integration of immigrants in their host societies. To both types of migration language skills is crucial and a must.

It is rightly assumed that emigrants from a country are far more likely to move to a destination country which speaks the same language; UNODC (2010) stipulates that a migrant choice of destination can be traced to the language of communication (854) This assumption is proven in connexion with economic migrants who do chose their destination on the basis of their fluency of the host language. With forced migrants having a common language does not seem to determine the final choice Ruth . SO, L2 skills are poor.

It noteworthy that whatever the type, language is sinequanone condition to experience easier assimilation and integration in the host country By the time they come to learn the host population language another difficulty will arise: that of language endangment or attrition. But, for this aspect time will show..

To sum up language acts as an impediment and has negative effects on both immigrants and host population due to the sort of tension between these actors. So to speak, the inability to speak language is the greatest barrirer that prevents immigrants from experiencing successful integration and development in the host society. Language proves itself not only as a medium of communication but also as a source of stress that generates negative, emotional and cognitive response as shown through our particiapnts responses.

Where language, integration and development are interelated proficiency in the host language proves itself a must and one if not the most important drivers to ensure successful social integration and development.

IX. CONCLUSION

The paper, through Myrdal and Prothero 'Push' factors theory. demonstrates that immigrants do not have the same 'propensies' to migrate. Contrary to employment or economic migrants, forced migrants resist to migration ; that when they have got to do under a very strong pressure of influencial/push factors they do no do it on the basis of language even though language is vitally important for migrants.

Based on qualitative to quantitative, this study assess how language can be an impediment to immigrants welfare and development while trying to find out some solutions.

This study also raises the issues of the negative attitude of the host population towards those immmgrants considered as a threat. Consequently, immigrants leave in a linguistic enclave where to cross liuinguistic boundaries they develop certain bi/multilinguism in addition to a use of a lingua franca in this case Hausa language as a medium of communication. Thus, integration, hence development and welfare becomes almost impossible because of language issue. There is no communication by language what seriously empede on their developpement. This is, because the success of development depends on language and effective communication.

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