

## **MY TONGUE SEEMS TO HAVE FAILED ME: LANGUAGE AS AN EXCLUSION PARAMETER IN TRANS-NATIONAL MIGRATION**

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### **Abstract**

*Language is considered a vital tool for identification, existence, survival and functioning of man in a given society. In other words, it is meant to be eco-friendly. However, language becomes an instrument of exclusion when an individual finds himself in an environment where the language used is alien to him. This paper, thus, links language to migration drawing signpost of tongue failure and of exclusion as problematics of language for migrants. Interactivism and functionality defines an individual's effectiveness, however where there is loss of tongue, it dwindle the individual's dialogicity, functionality and productivity thus leading to total exclusion from the society. The paper highlights various instances where language excludes migrants' access to employment opportunities, social justice and health facilities. It is of the view that in trans-national migration, because of linguistic distance, migrants are excluded from basic rights of living and participation in the society. Although the language policy of most host countries have provided free tuition for language learning to solve this problem of exclusion for migrants, this seems to be a long term goal. To this end, the paper recommends that the services of translators and interpreters are needed for immediate response to the problem of language exclusion.*

**Keywords:** Language Exclusion, Tongue Failure, Trans-national Migration and Linguistic Distance.

### **Introduction**

Language and migration are two notions that are seemingly dispersed at face level but in actuality have a relationship of interconnectivity when given deep rooted scrutiny. These phenomena are rooted in the humanities and constitute basics of the features of man. Man uses speech (language) which aids him in all his activities including mobility (migration) as he navigates the waters of life

within and outside his domain. Thus, language and migration are intertwined because, in migration as in all other activities of man, language comes handy as a tool. Humans are naturally mobile. Man's mobility stems from a lot of reasons chief among which is to ensure that the basic needs of life are met. This movement, henceforth, migration may be within his locality, ethnicity, and country or beyond and across his country or continent. Whatever be the type of movement man makes, he has ease of access, because he can employ the vehicle of language to create pathways for himself.

Scholarly literature is replete with explications on language and migration and their areas of convergence as well as divergence. Language, which the online Encyclopedia Britannica views as being functional in communication, expression of identity, imaginative expression, and which is purposeful in facilitating inter personal exchange of information and the expression of local or national identity, is unarguably man's blueprint for effectiveness and survival in any society. This implies that man uses the language he knows to carve out his existence and presupposes that lack of knowledge of a language can make man afunctional in a society where such language alien to him is in use. This presupposition is actually what plays out in international/transnational migration.

Migration is one phenomenon that interlinks the globe and, has thus, attracted global debates. The movement of people from one region, country or continent to another has witnessed an escalated rise in recent times. The Population Information Network of The United Nations Population Division has used the term spatial mobility to denote migration and has the summation that since after the industrial revolution, the phenomenon has witnessed a change in balance as Europe, a country of emigration has turned into a migrant's nest. Statistical records indicate that there is an influx of millions of people into America and Europe due to reasons ranging from political instability to harsh economic realities. This movement is usually fraught with difficulties as a result of linguistic diversity (uncommon language).

As has been established, migration leads to the contact of cultures and by extension languages. In international migration especially, the lack of commonality of language between migrants and their host societies result in linguistic divergence/differences. As language transports communication, communication becomes difficult in situations where people do not understand one another's language. This issue is re-echoed by The Encyclopedia of World

Problems and Human Potentials in its summation that multiplicity of languages is a major dividing factor in world societies for it reinforces geographical, political, socio-economic as well as ideological separatism. This summation leads us to language exclusion in migration which is the thrust of this paper and which is a resultant effect of tongue failure.

Language exclusion has emergent social problems as one who does not have mastery of the language of one's host society cannot become integrated so as to participate in the structures of that society. Someone who has travelled millions of miles away from his comfort zone and whose language/tongue has lost its functioning because it is not spoken at his destination loses his dialogicity and becomes cut off from the system, given that he does not have mastery of the language that functions in his host society. This is the problem that this study investigates with the aim of examining and identifying new trends and key issues related to migration and integration and ascertaining how exclusion has affected and is affecting migrants whose languages/tongues have failed.

### **Language: Meaning, Features, Functionality And Problematics**

Language, man's distinctive feature, has continued to receive scholarly debates that border on its meaning, functionality and by extension problematics. Language is specie-specific as humans are the species whose biological conditioning has empowered with speech enablement and, man uses language to weave his life into a coordinated whole. Language is used as a means of interaction between people who share in the knowledge of that language. Thus, interactivism anchored on dialogicity captures the ideals of language.

Literature is replete with explorations into the meaning, function and problems of language in any given society. Attempts have also been made by language scholars in their definitions of language to heighten the characteristics and distinctive features of language. The Online Encyclopedia Britannica defines language as "a system of conventional spoken, manual or written symbols by means of which human beings as members of a social group and participants in its culture express themselves". This source also made a summation that language functions in communication for the expression of identity, imagination and emotion. Key terms in this definition are conventional, system, social group, participants, culture, identity and expression. These terms are elements in the features of language. Conventionality of language means that each social group or speech community has its own way of making linguistic choices in language use and, by extension, understanding those choices. Deducible from it also is

that this system of expression and participation in a social group affords man the integration rights in its culture. Participation becomes possible only when one has all the affordances and, impossible when the affordance of mastery of the language is lacking.

In furtherance of the explication of the concept language, Armstrong (2010:1) postulates that language is rooted in communication where it has a strong interplay with the people that use it. It is the understanding and recognition of this interplay that paves way for effectiveness in communication. Armstrong goes further to say that language functions to express ideas, values, beliefs and attitudes of members of a speech community. This implies that we use language to communicate our individual thoughts, as well as the beliefs and practices of our speech community or any other community we associate with if we have learnt their language. Therefore, when one's language is not used in a speech community where one finds oneself and, one has not mastered the use of the language of that speech community; one encounters the problematics of tongue failure and language exclusion.

Before delving more into the functionality and problematics of language, we consider some other definitions of language. Essien (2006) as cited in Ubong (2016:40) writes:

Language is a system of structured vocal symbols by means of which human beings make meaning and communicate and interact with each other in a given community. Put more simply, language is a system of rules and principles in which sound, structure and meaning are integrated for communication.

Again, Rice- Johnson (2008) in Ubong (2016: 40) see language as "the process or set of processes used to ensure there is agreement between the sender and receiver for meanings assigned to the symbols and schema for combining them used for each communication". Essien's definition pinpoints interactivism as the hallmark of language use in communication. On his own part, Rice-Johnson sees all processes of establishing agreement in communication as language functionality.

When one undertakes an analytical exploration of the definitions above, one finds out that in dialogicity and interactivism, language functions in communication to connect users in one strong bond of agreement. In agreement,

participants in a communication event convey information, ask for clarification, request for services at different times and situations. Thus, language has engaging and conveying functions and is an information content resource (Armstrong and Ferguson, 2016). In line with the foregoing, the researchers have undertaken to attempt the definition of language. To them, language is that phenomenon domiciled in the biological functioning of man, which, when used in the confines of its speech community and natural environment, becomes functional in man's ability to navigate the waters of life.

This language which is so encompassing and gives man the affordances of taking charge of his life can also be a source of man's afunctionality in the society. This happens when man encounters an alien language. This brings us to the notion of problematics of language. Language is, no doubt, a vital and indispensable tool for integration. This means that one who knows and, by extension, uses a language spoken in a locality one finds oneself becomes included but becomes excluded, on the other hand, if one cannot function in the language of his immediate environment. The problematic of language in trans-national migration is the subject matter of the discourse in this paper. Giving credence to the notion of language problematic in migration Rolezzi and Wilson (2019) posit that getting successfully integrated in a new social context requires an appreciable mastery of the target language as its skills are essential in the engagement and interaction with the host community and, lacking in those skills doubles as barrier in accessing opportunities in all sphere of life- Instrument for exclusion.

The foregoing has made certain establishments. Language is man's tool to navigate the ocean of life. Language is synonymous with tongue. That is why one's native language is called mother tongue. Again, this language which serves man in enormous ways can also impede his functioning and effectiveness when he does not understand such language in use. When this happens, and he cannot function in his own language due to geographical distance, he faces the problem of exclusion. Tongue failure due to geographical distance and linguistic diversity is the root cause of exclusion in migration. The notions of migration and language exclusion will be discussed subsequently.

### **Migration: Functional Discourse**

The concept of migration has in recent years become a subject of global debate and enquiry. There is a global migration crisis, so to say, that results from reasons ranging from unemployment, political instability and uprising, harsh

and unfavorable economic realities of especially third world countries. Research interests on migration centre on meaning, types and reasons for migration. Migration connotes human mobility within and across borders. Mesurier (2012) gives this summation that “migration is a process of moving either across an international border or within a state”. The source further states that migration encompasses all manner of human movement, its length and causes. Migration means the semi-permanent or permanent relocation to another country or region (Bhugra and Becker, 2005). The 2018 World Migration Report of the United Nations International Organization for Migration sees migration as a “term that encompasses a wide variety of movements and situation involving people from all works of life”.

Research evidence shows that there is a global migration crisis. More and more people are leaving their countries of birth to travel millions of miles away. The third world countries lose majority of their work force to this new wave of migration. Many people abandon home and travel illegally. King and Lulle (2016) submit that there is a migration crisis in Europe as thousands of people travel legally and even illegally across the Mediterranean and the Eurochannel to enter Europe. The authors recount gory stories of drowning at sea and boarding lorries at Calais into Europe. The European Commissioner’s 2015 Document reechoes this when it talks about the unfolding human tragedy in the Mediterranean which calls for all member states, international organizations and third world countries to work together, combining approaches to adopt policies aimed at curbing the tragedy. To this end, The European Commission has developed a European Agenda on Migration with guidelines to develop well managed opportunities for legal migration, improve effective management of boarders and the reduction of the incentives for irregular migration. (King and Lulle, 2016: 12).

Statistical data abound about the facts and figures of migration especially in Europe. King and Lulle (2016:14) have noted that presently, 232 million people are living outside the country they were born in. The International Organization for Migration, an agent of the United Nations in her 2018 World Migration Report stated that there were 244 million international migrants in 2015 and 208 million in 2017. There is even a projection for 2030 which has made them develop a 2030 agenda for the management of migration and its attendant problems. Still on statistics, King, Black, Collyer, Fielding and Skeldon (2000,104-111) have noted that Europe is not the only part of the world with high population of migrants as data indicates as follows; Qatar- 86.4%, United Arab Emirates -

70.0%, Kuwait 68.8%, Bahrain- 39.1%, Singapore- 40.7%. The statistics could go on and on. The authors also state that in 2014, non natives living in Germany were 7 million, 5 million in the UK, 4.9 million in Italy, Spain had 4.7 million while France recorded 4.2 million. All these statistics point to the fact that, indeed, the human race has been caught in an incredible migration matrix.

As the number of migrating people increases, so also reasons and types of migration abound. Individuals leave the shores of their land and travel millions of miles away because of a varying degree of reasons. King and Lulle (2016:10) citing the Eurobarometer Reports of 2014 and 2015 indicate reasons for migrating to include unemployment, economic situation, rising prices of inflation and cost of living, terrorism or political instability. The New Dictionary of the History of Ideas (2005) has indicated that two basic factors necessitate movement with the intention to settle. The first, the push factor indicates/connotes being prejudiced about the place of origin while the pull factor connotes the potential attractiveness of the destination with all its alluring attractions. The push and pull factors could be said to oscillate and metamorphose into King and Lulle's (2016:25) desirability to migrate paradigm which relates to perceived positive social and economic expectations and life opportunities in host societies on one hand, and negative views of the home country's economy at the other end. Another reason for migration is the global competition among western states for skilled labour. King and Lulle (2016:35) call this the global race for talent where the global economies like Europe, America, Australia and the Gulf States of China and Singapore compete to attract the brightest, not only of qualified workers but of international students who invariably are future's highly qualified work force.

There are waves and even new waves of migration. These waves correspond to the types of migration. There is the local or national and the international or trans-national migration. Batram, Poros and Manforte (2014) postulate that international migration conventionally defined as the movement of people to another country for temporary or permanent resettlement has even birthed another type of human mobility. There is rise in asylum seeking as migrants flee war -torn and economically disadvantaged cities of the world. Traynox and Harding (2015) write that in 2015 alone, Germany recorded 860,000 asylum seekers. Benson (2011) has added another terminology – lifestyle migration that is premised on enhancing lifestyles and retaining better ways of living. Migration could also be involuntary when people are forced to migrate due to displacement, trafficking and other irregularities of life.

This section has undertaken an extensive purview of migration and its sub facets. It is pertinent to note that this research dwells on international migration and its attendant hitches as pertains to language. How a person migrates notwithstanding, there is usually the problem of integration and participation in the systems of the host society. Language makes for participation for it is the power house of communication. New migrants run the risk of exclusion due the divergence in their language conventions and those of their host societies and their inability to speak the language of their host society. Language exclusion is thus an agonizing and emergent issue in migration. The subsequent section will explore this in details.

### **Language Exclusion: My Tongue Has Indeed Failed Me**

Language is very vital to the existence and survival of human beings in a given society. It performs several functions ranging from emphatic function to affective function, transmission and preservation function, referential function as well as abnatural function. The abnatural function of language refers to the ability of a particular language user to hide information from non-users. They sometimes achieve this by the use of codes which are mutually intelligible to only the users. By a referential function, language is used to communicate information about something which can be seen, touched, understood or conceived of by the receiver. In emphatic communion, language is used to initiate and maintain peaceful co-existence amongst users by exchanging greetings and pleasant comments. By doing these, speakers are conscious of their choice of words when addressing the elders, the younger ones, as well as their contemporaries. In their conscious effort to relate well, the affective function of language is exercised.

Language is man's identity and helps him in survival and, in the development of his immediate environment and his nation at large. The beauty of language to man notwithstanding, it can be his source of marginalization, separation and exclusion. This happens when the tongue which is his identity and means of survival fails him totally when in a different linguistic environment. It leads to his exclusion from the systems that promotes functionality in that society. Exclusion according to the Cambridge English Dictionary is "the act of not allowing someone or something to take part in an activity or to enter a place". An intentional or unintentional refusal of someone to become an integral part of a system could be termed exclusion. There are definitely reasons for such exclusions. One of them is language. People can be excluded on the account of their inability to speak a particular language. Language exclusion, thus, can be

said to be that situation where the lack of knowledge of a particular language prevents an individual from participating fully and benefiting from his immediate environment. Speakers of a language find themselves being excluded from the activities and benefits in a society that is alien to their own. For their proper integration into the host communities, access to good opportunities in education, health care, career development, etc., these new comers must learn the new language.

People continually have reasons to move from one community to the other and from one nation to the other. And when they move, they encounter many problems in the new communities. Language exclusion can be witnessed in communities or nations where people move to. In these countries, they have the problem of communication. This is because their language is different from that of their host community. This lack of communication leads to the foreigners being totally excluded from the society. This is very common in migration where the migrants find themselves in a different linguistic domain especially at the trans-national level. During this trans-national migration, migrants discover that their tongues always fail them. They are excluded from enjoying the many benefits, and from participating in the society. They become an irrelevant part of that system. Every society has basic requirements that thrive in their system. The System Theory of Niklas Luhman which forms the theoretical foundation of this research states that inclusion is measured by being addressed by and being relevant to a system. And any individual that is addressed by a system becomes a relevant part of that system. Most migrants are not addressed by the systems they find themselves in because they lack the required linguistic competence of that system.

Rolezzi, Angouri and Wilson (2019) propose that most times, these migrants belong to the vulnerable group who pay linguistic penalty in their host communities. The penalty comes in amongst others, the exclusion from social and political knowledge and access to power structures. This means that language is not just core to communication but serves as a means of integration and right to participate in a system, a right which is only given to those who can function in that language. King and Lulle (2016:25) further state that there is an increasing risk of migrants' social exclusions. To this end, they believe that language exclusion is a precursor to social exclusion, definitely.

Indeed, for transnational migrants, their tongues may continue to fail them as long as they are not able to meet the linguistic requirements of their host

communities. These requirements are always there to ensure inclusion into the system. To buttress the above assertion, the Common Basic Principles (CBP's) of the European Commission (EC) 2005 Document stipulate the following requirements which are policies binding on migrants. They are: employment as part of integration and basic knowledge of the host's society's language.

### **Theoretical Framework: Niklas Luhmann's System Theory**

The analytical framework of this research is anchored on Niklas Luhmann's System's Theory. In this theory, Luhmann cited in Hilt (2017) views inclusion as the basic requirements for participation proposed by a system, and exclusion accordingly as being unable to meet these requirements. In this theory, he opines that, for there to be inclusion, a person needs to be identified and addressed by a system. It is in this that he becomes relevant to such system. To be relevant, he must meet up with the requirements for inclusion in that system. In other words, a person becomes excluded from the system when he is unable to meet up with the stipulated requirements that should include him in that system. Migrants unfortunately are not identified by the system they find themselves in their host communities because they are unable to meet the requirements. This research identified language as this requirement of the system which excludes them. A system has its different requirements for inclusion and any person who is unable to meet the requirements is excluded (Luhmann, 2002 cited in Hilt, 2017)

This paper, therefore, using Luhmann's System's Theory as its theoretical lens, highlights the requirements for migrants to be part of a system. It points at the knowledge of language of the host community as one of the requirements. For this paper also, where this requirement is not met, it means that the transnational migrants will face the problems of exclusion. It is pertinent to note at this point that these systems could be political system, educational system, social system, labour market, judicial system, health system etc. It is also good to note that one's inability to meet with the requirements for inclusion entails that total exclusion. Although inclusion is mentioned more in this research, however, the mention of inclusion into a system presupposes that there will be exclusion as a result of not fitting into the system. Inclusion and exclusion are two conditions operating in a system. In Hilt (2017), "inclusion is identified with the conditions for participation set by a system. Exclusion is what remains unmarked when conditions are set; hence it is a side effect or 'logical shadow' of inclusion".

Therefore, the mention of inclusion should presuppose a resultant effect of exclusion in any system in a given society. Hilt (*Ibid*) in his diagram further validates this:

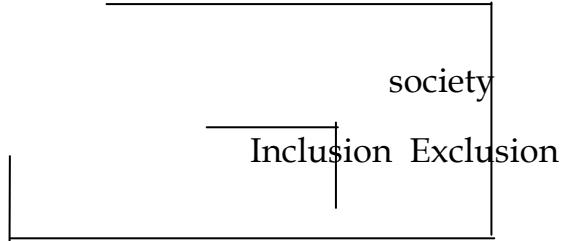


Fig.1. Inclusion is a two-sided form: Inclusion on one side and exclusion on the other side, made distinct by a mark. Everything social is always in society, and the final frame of an inclusive operation is therefore always society. 588. L.T. Hilt

### **Modes And Effects Of Language Exclusion In Transnational Migration**

There are several instances where modes of language exclusion have affected transnational migrants. They include:

#### **a. Neglect of migrants' language:**

People find themselves migrating as a result of displacement by wars or natural disaster. They also move in search of greener pastures. It is discovered that in their host communities, their language are never given attention to especially when communicating with them. These migrants are totally excluded by neglecting their indigenous languages. Language is one characteristic that makes man unique. It defines and identifies him in the community he lives. A separation of man from his identity reduces him to mere animal owing to the fact that language is an attribute that distinguishes man from animals. Their linguistic human right which is the right to use their native language is thus violated.

#### **b. Exclusion from access to the right information:**

In 2017, research report produced by the Translators Without Borders in the framework of Mixed Migration Platform (TWB), titled "Putting Language on the Map in the European Refugee Response", made the following observations: "*Communication is a fundamental component of effective humanitarian response, yet humanitarian organizations and policy makers are responding to complex crises without adequate information on: which language affected population speak, how well they understand the languages used by responder and which formats and channels will be most effective for communicating complex*" (4).

The above excerpt asserts that the refugees who are perhaps the unwilling migrants face this communication barrier. This perhaps signifies that most times, these humanitarians do not take cognizance of the “tongues” of these migrants when disseminating important information to them. It then means that these refugees might not be disposed to the right information which may ensure their safety. Furthermore, they are not able to convey their thoughts, feelings and complaints to these people whose mission is to save them. In such a scenario, one positions the tongue failure which is the opium of this research. Their tongue which is their identity and which performs their referential function becomes useless to them. Referential function in this research means the ability to use language to communicate information about something. Lack of knowledge of the hosts’ languages leads to the migrants being excluded from information which might perhaps be life saving. A fact which also resonates in TWB (2017:4): “these language barriers have life -changing consequences at the heart of the European refugee response”.

Furthermore, recent research by REACH and UNICEF as stated by TWB (2017) has the following as instances of risks which the refugee and migrant children are faced with when they are not able to receive information in the tongue they are used to. They include the risk of making choices which might make them to drop out of their formal reception system, out of ignorance. They are also excluded from objective information as well as relying on the social media for information which after all might be mere rumours. All these justify the assertion of this paper that the tongues of migrants always fail them in transnational migration.

### **c. Social Exclusion**

Social exclusion as defined by Duffy (1995) is the inability to participate effectively in economic, social and cultural life and, in some characteristics, alienation and distance from mainstream society. In other words, social exclusion as one of the modes of exclusion entails the denial of migrants from taking active participation in the mainstream society. It further means the denial from being absorbed into the day to day socio-cultural engagements in the migrants’ new community between the migrants and their host communities. Given the origin of social exclusion and its rapid evolution across the globe, it is very inevitable that the concept of social exclusion has various meanings and usage at different times reflecting diverse political, institutional, historical and geographic contexts.

In transnational migration, social exclusion refers to a situation where these migrants, because of their lack of knowledge of the host nation's language, are denied access to participation in the socio-cultural and economic activities and benefits in the environment. The migrants feel so alien to the society. It excludes them from any fora where they would have been able to utilize the gains inherent in the emphatic function of language. They do not mix well in the society. They are unaware of their basic rights especially rights to government benefits, to employment, to social adaptation and integration.

**d. Exclusion from human capital development and career progression:**

In most of the host countries, the knowledge of the nation's language is a pre-requisite for accessing very good employment, attaining great heights in career development as well as skills acquisition. Transnational migrants are excluded from contributing their quota to the economic development of their society. They are also left without any meaningful means of livelihood.

**e. Exclusion from the education system:**

The concept of Luhmann's social system suggests that the two concepts of inclusion and exclusion must operate in a system. This system perhaps has many requirements which must be met to be included or not met to be excluded. Luhmann (2006) as cited by Hilt (2017) observe that the educational system is a global system with the function of career selection and making human beings into persons. For Hilt (2017), education is very vital for inclusion in several other systems. However, there are basic requirements to be met for this inclusion. One of them is still the knowledge of the language in which the process of education is achieved. This means that lack of knowledge of this language leads to the exclusion of the person from being schooled. This is the case with many migrants across the nations.

**f. Exclusion from human rights system:**

The knowledge of a language can mediate access to human rights. Likewise, the reverse invariably results in human right denial. This can be proven in many ways. However, the typical story of this Polish migrant into Canada will perhaps better elucidate the point of this section.

According to Piller and Takahashi (2009), Robert Dziekanski is a 40 year old Polish new migrant, who arrived Canada in October, 2007. He was to be met by his mother, an earlier migrant, at the Vancouver International Airport. Being

from Poland, his inability to speak English led him to spend about 10 hours in the restricted arrival area waiting for his mother to pick him up. He was stuck up there because he couldn't interact in English Language and, thus, was unable to navigate the arrivals section of the international airport. He became agitated. Kooner, (2007) in Piller and Takahashi said that the immigration officer described him as follows: "visibly fatigued and somewhat disheveled showing signs of impatience consistent with behaviour displayed after a long flight and frustrations due to lack English language skills. At no time did he display any signs of behaviour that would be cause for concern"(p.1). This frustration as well as long flight effect led to his agitation and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) was called to handle that situation. "*not speaking any English, Dziekanski remained oblivious to the officer's approach –an obliviousness that was interpreted as resistance by the officers*". ( Piller and Takahashi,2009:2). In the course of this squabble, the Polish migrant was shot with a teaser gun and pinned to the floor by four officers, few minutes after he gave up the ghost. The story went viral. Kooner (2007) cited in Piller and Takahashi (2017) reveals that his movement during these ten hours is available in a report released by the Canada Border Services Agency after his death.

This tends to be a long story, but this paper wishes to highlight this death to be language related. The inability of the Polish to speak the English language led to the violation of his basic human right which is the right to life. Many transnational migrants face specific communication challenges where they are excluded. Lack of proficiency in that language has led to the death of this Polish. This paper therefore posits that the linguistic profile of transnational migrants leads to their exclusion from the system which should protect their basic rights.

In all these, we are able to identify a common constant variable in the effects of these instances of language exclusion. It is the inequality reinforcement. Language is a key factor of all human capabilities to control or transform. The lack of linguistic human right leads to social discrimination of using language as pretexts for inequality reinforcement. These inequalities abound in access to participation in the mainstream of the society i.e. social exclusion, access to human right system, access to education attainment, employment and career development. These inequalities unfortunately come as exclusion to transnational migrants.

## **Conclusion**

Globalization as well as the increasing rate of transnational migration has continued to be the pre-occupation of developing countries. The quest for greener pasture, medicare, self development, emancipation as well as incidences of displacement and asylum, are ever indices leading to migration across nations, cultures and languages. Migrants willingly or unwillingly have continued to find themselves in the difficult situation of being reawakened to the realization of the real meaning of citizenship, participation and belonging to a particular community. They face different forms of discrimination, be it in their social right denial, limited access to quality medical attention, exclusion in the political processes and administration of the day to day activities of their host communities and nations. Reasons for them are not farfetched. Some of them are colour, race as well as language. In these host communities, a person's colour, which is the sole making of his creator, becomes an obstacle to his basic rights. His language, an identity he is proud of seems to limit his chances of survival.

The voice of narratives in this paper adds to the various narratives echoing from researches on language and migration. Working with the theoretical framework of Luhmann's Social System, this research situated language as the basic requirement for inclusion into the social systems of the host community according to the dictates of the social systems where transnational migrants find themselves. There exist multiple channels through which this linguistic distance affects the migrants' experience. For easy adaptation, inclusion and integration to the system, migrants must be proficient in the use of the language of the locals. In this system, they are able to navigate the local institutions and understand their rights to employment, education, information and government benefits etc.

At the time the language serves as a basic requirement for inclusion into these social systems, it also becomes a mode of exclusion from accessing these requirements. Consequently, the migrants' tongue fails them in these new communities. Their inability to speak their host community's language becomes a mode of exclusion from their basic rights. Even when these migrants are schooled in their host community's language, they may still not have the required level of comprehension and mastery of the language. The paper thus suggests that in the interim that is, before the gains of the learning of this new language is realized, which is a long term goal , there should be measures put in place to integrate these migrants into the social system. In view of this, the paper thus recommends the following.

First and foremost, there should be adequate language support data which will take into consideration the migrants' language options and communication preferences. This should be done when dealing with newly arrived migrants.

Secondly, data on migrants' country of origin as well as their linguistic diversity should be amongst the first assessment for migrants before any necessary information is given or obtained from them.

Again, adequate provision of language translators/interpreters who should be available round the clock at vital locations has become a paramount need. These locations include but not limited to the airports, hospitals, schools, etc.

Furthermore, the remuneration and re-training of these interpreters should be adequately taken care of.

More so, transnational migrants should be given enough time to learn the language of their host nations. During this process, their rights to inclusion and participation in the existing social systems should not be denied. There should not be any form of exclusion from the systems on account of their linguistic distance.

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