

# The Endangerment Vulnerability of Minority Languages in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT): A Case Study of Ganagana Language

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## Abstract

This study examines the endangerment vulnerability of Ganagana, a minority language spoken principally in the Kwali and Abaji Area Councils of Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory. Despite growing scholarly concern about the declining vitality of minority languages, limited empirical attention has been devoted to the combined sociolinguistic, institutional, and community factors affecting Ganagana. The study was anchored in UNESCO's (2003) framework for assessing language vitality and endangerment, with particular attention to intergenerational transmission, domains of language use, response to new media, governmental and institutional attitudes, community attitudes, and the quality of language documentation. A qualitative research design was adopted. Data were collected from 35 adult participants across selected Ganagana-speaking communities through focus-group discussions, in-depth interviews, and participant observation. The data were transcribed, coded, and analysed thematically. The findings revealed that Ganagana is highly vulnerable to endangerment because of the dominance of Hausa and English, declining intergenerational transmission, negative community attitudes, inadequate governmental and institutional support, limited use in education and public life, absence from emerging digital and media domains, insufficient documentation, and weak community-based language-maintenance initiatives. The study concludes that although Ganagana is experiencing substantial decline in vitality and functional relevance, its endangerment is not irreversible. It recommends sustained intergenerational transmission, educational inclusion, expansion into traditional and digital domains, positive language-attitude campaigns, comprehensive documentation, community-led revitalization programmes, and stronger collaboration among the speech community, government agencies, linguists, and educational institutions.

## Keywords:

Endangerment vulnerability, Ganagana language, language endangerment, language vitality, minority languages, intergenerational transmission

## Introduction

The Gana-Gana people are historically associated with the Dibo people and are believed to have a migration history that traces their origin to Egypt. They are recognized as one of the earliest inhabitants of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and are distributed across the five Area Councils of the Territory. With an estimated population of between 169,000 and 215,000 inhabitants occupying approximately 45 villages, the Gana-Gana people speak the Ganagana language as their indigenous

means of communication. In addition, they are characteristically multilingual, demonstrating varying levels of proficiency in Nupe, Hausa, Gbagyi, and English, particularly among the younger generation due to inter-ethnic marriages and sustained contact with neighbouring ethnic groups.

Language endangerment has emerged as a critical global linguistic challenge, particularly among minority languages. It refers to the condition in which a language is at risk of declining in use and eventually becoming extinct for a variety of sociolinguistic, political, economic, and cultural reasons. Although varying degrees of language endangerment have been recorded across different historical periods, contemporary scholars have expressed growing concern over the increasing rate at which minority languages become vulnerable before eventually disappearing. In this regard, Krauss (2001) observes that approximately 3,000 of the estimated 6,000 languages spoken worldwide are used primarily by adults who make little or no effort to transmit them to younger generations. Similarly, Agbedo (2011) contends that the world's linguistic diversity is steadily shrinking and cautions that many minority languages may disappear before the end of this century if deliberate preservation measures are not implemented.

Against this background, the present study is motivated by the need to enhance the vitality of minority languages, with particular reference to Ganagana, and thereby reduce their vulnerability to endangerment and eventual extinction. The significance of this endeavour extends beyond language preservation. As languages disappear, humanity loses invaluable cultural diversity, indigenous knowledge systems, collective memory, distinctive worldviews, and ethnic identities that have been developed and transmitted across generations.

Furthermore, the extinction of a language inevitably results in the erosion of the cultural and ethnic identity of its speakers. Benard (1992) maintains that when a language dies, its speakers experience the irreversible loss of their original cultural identity alongside valuable historical and ecological knowledge embedded within the language. Several factors have been identified as contributing to the vulnerability of minority languages, including negative language attitudes among speakers, disruption of intergenerational language transmission, weak language loyalty, unfavourable governmental attitudes and policies, and the absence of adequate literacy materials. Collectively, these factors accelerate language decline and increase the likelihood of language endangerment. Consequently, sustained collaborative efforts involving linguists, governments, and indigenous speech communities remain indispensable for safeguarding endangered languages and promoting their long-term vitality.

Nigeria presents a particularly complex linguistic landscape characterized by extensive linguistic diversity and fragmentation. The country's languages are generally classified into three broad categories. The first comprises the major languages—Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba—each with over ten million speakers. The second category consists of languages that enjoy considerable functional importance within individual states, while the third includes minority languages whose functions are largely confined to their immediate speech communities. Ganagana belongs to this latter category and therefore faces a comparatively higher risk of language endangerment.

Beyond examining the endangerment vulnerability of Ganagana and the role of community-based language maintenance efforts, this study contributes to broader scholarly discourse on language revitalization, minority language preservation, and the protection of cultural heritage and group identity within multilingual societies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the rich linguistic diversity of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), many minority languages continue to experience a steady decline in their vitality, with limited empirical attention devoted to understanding the factors responsible for their vulnerability to endangerment. As a researcher with sustained engagement in the linguistic landscape of the FCT, the author has observed a progressive reduction in the functional use of Ganagana across important communicative domains, particularly among younger generations. The increasing preference for dominant languages such as Hausa and English in homes, schools, commercial activities, and other social interactions appears to have weakened the intergenerational transmission of Ganagana and reduced its visibility within the speech community.

Furthermore, there is little observable evidence of coordinated community-based language maintenance initiatives, adequate language documentation, or effective implementation of language policies capable of safeguarding the continued vitality of Ganagana. These conditions have

heightened concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of the language. Although previous studies have examined language endangerment from broader national and international perspectives, empirical evidence focusing specifically on the endangerment vulnerability of Ganagana in the Federal Capital Territory remains limited. This knowledge gap necessitated the present study to investigate the factors responsible for the endangerment vulnerability of Ganagana, examine the implications of such vulnerability, and identify practical strategies for strengthening the language's vitality and ensuring its continued transmission across generations.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to examine the endangerment vulnerability of the Ganagana language in the Federal Capital Territory.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

- (i) identify the factors responsible for the vulnerability of the Ganagana language to endangerment;
- (ii) examine the consequences of the endangerment vulnerability of the Ganagana language; and
- (iii) determine appropriate strategies for reversing the endangerment vulnerability of the Ganagana language.

### **Research Questions**

The study addresses the following research questions:

- (i) Why is the Ganagana language vulnerable to endangerment?
- (ii) What are the consequences of Ganagana language endangerment vulnerability?
- (iii) How can the endangerment vulnerability of the Ganagana language be reversed?

### **Literature Review**

Language endangerment remains a serious concern in contemporary linguistics because it threatens linguistic diversity, cultural identity, indigenous knowledge systems, and humanity's collective heritage. Krauss (1992) describes language endangerment as a major threat to linguistic scholarship because it results in the disappearance of a considerable proportion of the linguistic varieties to which the discipline is devoted. In practical terms, language endangerment becomes evident when a language is no longer acquired by children and when members of its speech community gradually shift towards another language.

Where such languages are not adequately documented before they are abandoned, future generations may have little or no knowledge of their existence. Batibo (2003) similarly maintains that an endangered language is one threatened with extinction, either because its number of speakers is declining rapidly or because younger generations no longer learn, speak, or use it regularly within the community.

More recently, Olko and Sallabank (2021) observe that a substantial proportion of the world's approximately 7,000 languages may cease to be spoken before the end of the twenty-first century unless deliberate maintenance and revitalization measures are sustained. A language is therefore vulnerable to endangerment when a significant proportion of children within its speech community no longer acquire it, particularly because they prefer international languages or adjacent dominant languages associated with greater socioeconomic mobility.

Vulnerability is also evident where younger speakers use the language in an increasingly limited number of communicative domains, where it is excluded from schools and emerging media, and where its intergenerational transmission chain is gradually disrupted. Grenoble (2021) reinforces this position by arguing that language vitality should not be assessed exclusively through the numerical strength of speakers but also through the extent to which the language remains functional in homes, schools, cultural institutions, community activities, and emerging communicative spaces. Speakers' attitudes are equally fundamental to language survival. Onyenwe (2019) maintains that members of a speech community are rarely neutral towards their language, as their attitudes tend to be either positive or negative. When speakers perceive their language as essential to their unity, history, and cultural identity, they are more likely to use, promote, and transmit it.

Conversely, when they regard it as inferior, they may become ashamed of it, abandon it, or shift towards languages considered more prestigious. Dołowy-Rybińska and Hornsby (2021) similarly contend that language ideologies, linguistic discrimination, prestige, identity, and perceptions of

authenticity significantly influence whether minority languages survive or continue to decline. Thus, negative attitudes among younger speakers may accelerate the displacement of Ganagana by Hausa and English, while positive attitudes may strengthen its vitality and intergenerational transmission.

Minority languages are generally more vulnerable to endangerment than majority languages because they often possess fewer political, institutional, educational, and socioeconomic advantages. Within Nigeria's minority-language category, languages whose functions are restricted to their immediate communities are particularly vulnerable compared with languages that perform broader state or regional functions. Grenoble and Whaley (1998) identify rapid social transformation as a major factor contributing to the vulnerability of minority languages. Their position suggests that languages that fail to respond to changing social conditions may eventually be abandoned.

Globalization, modernization, urbanization, and technological development have intensified contact between politically and economically powerful societies and less powerful communities, frequently placing minority languages under pressure. In attempting to participate in modern education, commerce, administration, and technology, speakers may gradually abandon aspects of their traditional ways of life, including their indigenous languages. Batibo (2005) and Brenzinger and Dimmendaal (1992) further argue that where speakers of majority languages dominate the political structures of a country, language policies are likely to favour their languages. Childs (2003) observes that such languages may consequently become languages of education, government, commerce, the media, and wider communication, thereby acquiring greater prestige and economic value.

Extending these foundational positions, UNESCO (2022a) emphasizes that many Indigenous and minority languages remain marginalized because they are excluded from educational systems, public institutions, research, and broader socioeconomic participation. In Nigeria, language politics and policy have similarly produced different levels of recognition for majority languages, languages of state importance, and languages of localized importance such as Ganagana. English and the three major Nigerian languages consequently enjoy greater institutional support, compelling children from minority-language communities to use them in schools, offices, and public functions. Even where language policies are fairly formulated, they are frequently poorly implemented. For example, Nigeria's language policy on education stipulates that the language of the immediate community should serve as the medium of instruction during the early stages of education; in practice, however, English and dominant regional languages are often used instead.

UNESCO (2022b) emphasizes that formal education can contribute significantly to the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages when those languages, together with their cultures, histories, and knowledge systems, are integrated into teaching and learning. Underriner et al. (2021) likewise demonstrate that immersion programmes, community-based instruction, culturally grounded learning, and language-nest models can strengthen minority-language acquisition and maintenance.

Language documentation also constitutes an essential component of vitality. UNESCO (2003) maintains that a strong language should possess adequately documented, transcribed, translated, and annotated audiovisual recordings of natural speech. Building on this position, Shah and Brenzinger (2021) argue that documentation should involve the development of community-owned orthographies, dictionaries, grammar books, literacy materials, and other resources that reflect speakers' needs and preferences. In addition, Li et al. (2022) demonstrate that social-media platforms and other digital technologies can expand the visibility and functional domains of minority languages. Ganagana's limited presence in educational institutions, documentation initiatives, radio, television, the internet, and social media therefore represents both an indication of vulnerability and a missed opportunity for language revitalization.

Empirical studies have examined different dimensions of language endangerment and minority-language vitality. Hashi (2004) asserts that the world's languages are becoming endangered at an unprecedented rate and consequently investigated the development of a model corpus through which endangered or vulnerable languages could benefit from advances in corpus linguistics.

Within Nigeria, Ovorughe (2014) examined governance and language loss among young people by reviewing governmental language policies before and after independence and evaluating patterns of language use and attitudes within Nigerian communities. The study identified the non-implementation of language-education policies, the inadequate promotion of vernacular languages in schools, parents' preference for English in the home, and the extensive use of Nigerian Pidgin in music and advertising as factors that increase the vulnerability of minority languages. Sarvi (2016) similarly investigated the

degree of endangerment of the Eggon language in Nasarawa State and concluded that the language was severely endangered because of native speakers' negative attitudes and the decline of intergenerational transmission. These findings support the positions of Onyenwe (2019) and Dołowy-Rybińska and Hornsby (2021) that speakers' attitudes, prestige perceptions, and language ideologies substantially shape language vitality.

With specific reference to Ganagana, Bakare (2025) investigated the documentation of indigenous proverbs using ethnography of communication and sociolinguistic approaches. Data were collected through interviews, focus-group discussions, and participant observation. The findings revealed that the use of Gana-Gana proverbs was declining among younger generations because of language shift, globalization, and urbanization. The study therefore recommended the urgent documentation of the proverbs and their integration into the educational curriculum to safeguard this linguistic and cultural heritage. This recommendation corresponds with UNESCO's (2003) emphasis on documentation and UNESCO's (2022b) position on the inclusion of Indigenous languages and knowledge systems in education. Adung (2025) examined the effects of bilingualism on language acquisition among Gana-Gana children in the Abaji Area Council of the FCT. Using a mixed-method survey design involving questionnaires, interviews, and focus-group discussions, the study found that although bilingualism enhanced cognitive flexibility, it posed a significant risk to the use and transmission of Ganagana from parents to children. Adung therefore recommended the integration of Ganagana into the school curriculum and the promotion of its use within the home.

Finally, Moses (2025) investigated the impact of social media on the vitality and sustainability of Ganagana. Anchored in Vygotsky's social interaction theory and employing a descriptive survey design involving quantitative and qualitative data, the study found that Ganagana was conspicuously absent from the mass media. It consequently recommended the development of digital tools, including dictionaries and spell-checkers for smartphones, to enhance the language's vitality. This finding aligns with Li et al. (2022), who demonstrate that active participation in digital and social-media domains can increase the visibility, functionality, and public relevance of minority languages.

Collectively, the foundational and contemporary literature demonstrates that language endangerment is produced by the interaction of several interconnected factors rather than by a single cause. These factors include declining intergenerational transmission, negative community attitudes, unequal language prestige, globalization, urbanization, educational exclusion, ineffective language policies, inadequate documentation, limited literacy resources, weak community participation, and restricted access to new media and digital domains. The literature further indicates that reversing language decline requires more than increasing the numerical population of speakers; it also requires restoring the language's functions in the home, school, community, cultural life, public institutions, and emerging communication technologies.

Although Hashi (2004), Ovorughe (2014), and Sarvi (2016) provide insights into language endangerment within broader international and Nigerian contexts, and Bakare (2025), Adung (2025), and Moses (2025) examine specific aspects of Ganagana documentation, bilingualism, intergenerational transmission, and social-media use, these studies address the vulnerability of Ganagana from relatively individual dimensions. Limited empirical attention has been directed towards a comprehensive assessment of the interconnected factors responsible for the language's endangerment vulnerability in the Kwali and Abaji Area Councils of the FCT. The present study addresses this gap by examining the factors responsible for Ganagana's endangerment vulnerability, the consequences of its declining vitality, and the contextually appropriate strategies through which the process may be reversed.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is hinged on the sociolinguistic theory of language and vitality, with particular emphasis on UNESCO (2003) framework for assessing language endangerment. The framework provides the conceptual guide in understanding the endangerment vulnerability status of Ganagana language. UNESCO developed the model in 2003, identifying the following nine factors for evaluating language vitality.

Factor 1 -Intergenerational language transmission

Factor 2-Absolute number of speakers

Factor 3-Proportion of speakers within the population

Factor 4-Trends in existing language domains  
Factor 5-Responds to new domains and media  
Factor 6-Material for language education and literacy  
Factor 7-Governmental and institutional attitudes and policies  
Factor 8-Community members' attitude towards their own language  
Factor 9-Amount and quality of documentation

Among these factors, UNESCO emphasized intergenerational transmission as the most important, based on the fact that a language is considered 'safe', when children continue to learn and use it fluently in natural settings like the home and within their community. In other words, a language becomes vulnerable for endangerment when the transmission chain is broken and the children learn and use less of the language. Other causative factors behind endangerment vulnerability of minority languages are; presence of adjacent dominant language, absence of education in non-native languages, as well inter-ethnic mixing in settlements. The long time effect is not only a reduction in language proficiency, but also a weakening of cultural identity and memory. In other words, schooling in adjacent dominant languages like English and Hausa undermine these conditions amongst minority languages, particularly those in marginalised and multi-lingual regions like the Ganagana in language. UNESCO also stresses that the cultural environment must support language use across domains like homes, schools, religious lives, etc. According to Spolsky (2004), the process of language shift, where speakers of a minority language like Ganagana gradually adopt more dominant languages like Hausa and English over time is often driven by socio-political pressures and is accelerated in contexts of:

- Education in non native languages
- Prestige imbalance between languages
- Inter-ethnic mixing in rural dwellings and urban cities.

By aligning empirical findings within this theoretical model, the study provides an in-depth understanding of the endangerment vulnerability of minority languages in FCT, with particular reference to Ganagana language.

### Methodology

A qualitative survey design approach was adopted to examine the endangerment vulnerability of Ganagana language. The study was carried out across 10 Ganagana speaking villages in Kwali and Abaji Area Councils, comprising of 5 villages from each Area Council.

The study population consisted of village leaders, grandparents, youngparents, youths from ages 20 and above. A random sampling technique was first employed, involving ten adult males and 10 adult females from both Area Councils. The final sample included:

- 6 focus group discussions (FGD's) that is, 3 from each Area Council, with each group comprising of 4-5 members.
- 10 in-depth interviews, comprising of 5 from each of the Area Councils
- Participant observation.

Three instruments were used to collect the data for the study:

1. **Focus Group Discussion Guide** - designed to gather data on trends in existing language domains, including intergenerational language transmission in the home.
2. **In-depth Interview Guide** - used to elicit information on the amount and quality of documentation in the language.
3. **Participant observation** – used to observe the volume of usage of the language within the communities.

The instruments were validated through pilot testing in some of the non sampled Ganagana speaking villages in the two Area Councils. Minor adjustments were made on the instruments to make them clearer and contextually more relevant. The qualitative data from the interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed, coded and subjected to thematic analysis. At the end, the combined data was interpreted using UNESCO's (2003) framework. The outcomes were instrumental to the understanding of the endangerment vulnerability status of Ganagana language.

### Ethical Consideration

The study was done with strict adherence to full ethical consideration for the safety, dignity and privacy of all participants. Again, the consent of all participants were obtained orally or in writing and participation was entirely voluntary. Lastly, there was no recording of any identifying personal data to ensure respondents confidentiality and data protection.

### Findings

The findings of the research reveal some factors responsible for the endangerment vulnerability of Ganagana language. Through a combination of data collected from interviews, focus group discussions and observations, the following interrelated themes emerged:

#### (i) **Presence of Hausa and English as Adjacent Dominant Languages.**

All the participants from both Area Councils affirmed that; **“Hausa and English languages dominate the use of Ganagana in the two Area Councils”**.

According to the participants from both Kwali and Abaji, the presence of English and Hausa languages dominate Ganagana in all domains. They are the languages of commerce in all the markets in both Area Councils and are also used and taught in all the schools within the Area Councils, in addition to their wider usage within the communities, there by contributing significantly to the reduction in the volume and domains of Ganagana usage, which leaves it with no option than to become vulnerable to endangerment.

#### (ii) **Decline in Intergenerational Transmission of Ganagana**

Two young parents from Kwali asserted that: **“The volume of use of our language at home now with our children is far below what it used to be when we were growing up”**

The effect of Hausa language dominance over Ganagana consciously or unconsciously extended into many Ganagana homes, where parents now use more of Hausa than Ganagana with their children, consequently leading to a decline in the intergenerational transmission of the language from parents to children. In addition to Hausa dominance, there is also English language dominance. In the case of English, it is used as a medium of instruction in schools within Gana-Gana communities and is also taught in these schools as a subject. To this end, Gana-Gana children and youths that are of school age use it in school and also at home to do their home works and among their peers in the communities. This compounds the reduction in the volume of use of Ganagana and the decline in its intergenerational transmission, amounting to a clear repression of UNESCO’s factor 1 — **intergenerational language transmission**, which only places the language on the road map of endangerment vulnerability.

(iii) **Governmental Negative Attitude** The governmental failure or inability to implement its language policy on education, which states that the language of the immediate community should serve as the medium of instruction at the primary and junior secondary school levels of education in the schools within the community is also contributory to the vulnerability of most minority languages in FCT, where for instance, Hausa and English are not only used as media of instruction but also taught as subjects in the primary and junior secondary schools within Ganagana communities. This shows a clear repression of UNESCO’s **factor 7 – governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies**.

#### (iv) **Lack of Response to New Domains and Media**

All the participants admitted that: **“Ganagana is not being used in the new domains and media like, Radio, Internet, WhatsApp, Television, etc”**

This admission by the participants was not difficult to believe as the researcher resides in Abuja and has neither heard of any programme on radio nor seen any on television, featuring Ganagana language. If this obvious absence of Ganagana in both new domains and media is aligned with the UNESCO (2003), framework, it shows a repression of its factor 5 - **response to new domains and media**, a high vulnerability condition for language endangerment.

#### (v) **Absence of Community Based Language Maintenance Initiatives**

Fishman (1991), and Krauss (1992), believe strongly that the advocacy of language renewal or maintenance as it were, should first of all be the responsibility of the local speech community. This is not the case with Ganagana language speech communities in the two Area Councils, as there is no single evidence of any community effort towards the maintenance of the vitality of Ganagana. The implication of the absence of any form of community based initiative to promote and protect the language is that the language will highly become vulnerable to endangerment and even death.

**(vi) Absence of Quality Documentation:**

Although some indigenes of Ganagana have written pockets of books and pamphlets on Ganagana history, culture and migrational stories, there are virtually no grammar and other linguistic books on the language. However, recently the Linguistic Department of the University of Abuja decided to initiate a pilot linguistic investigation and documentation of the language, using some of her final year students in their final year projects as shown below:

1. **A Socio-linguistic Study of Ganagana Personal Names and their Meanings by Ademuwagun Ayomide Comfort. 21/202LIN/272**
2. **The Effect of Bilingualism on Language Acquisition among Ganagana Community Children by Adung Stephen Ulimunye – 21/202lin/274**
3. **Documentation of Ganagana Indigenous Proverbs by Bake Nafisat Omotara – 21/LIN/276**
4. **The Impact of Social Media on the Vitality and Sustainability of Ganagana Language by Daniel Damilare Moses – 21/202LIN/270**
5. **The Role of Reduplication in Ganagana Word-Formation by Favour Obioma Obianujunwa – 21/202LIN/271**
6. **Sociolinguistics Analysis of Selected Folk Tales in Gangana Language by Tolutope Daniella Olaifa – 21/202LIN/269**

Interestingly, the researcher supervised the six projects listed above. Although the researcher acknowledges the leading role by the Department towards the investigation and documentation of Ganagana, he believes that much still needs to be done in this area to be able to satisfy UNESCO's factor 9 – **Amount and quality of documentation.**

**(vii) Lack of Consciousness of the Dangers of Language Loss:**

All the participants asserted: **"We do not know what language endangerment is, talk less of its effects on our culture and over all existence as a people"**

Again, through participant observation, the researcher found out that none of the participants was aware of the dangers of losing their language. They neither knew that their culture was intertwined with the language, nor did they know that their group identity would be lost, the moment their language dies. This lack of awareness on the dangers of language loss is probably responsible for why the language appears unprotected and therefore vulnerable to endangerment

**Discussion**

The findings of the study adduce substantial evidence in support of the fact that Ganagana language is highly vulnerable to endangerment. The findings are in line with socio-linguistic postulations on language endangerment and vitality, although the study believes that the vulnerability of Ganagana language is not irreversible.

**(i) Need for creation of Awareness on the Dangers of Language Loss**

The speech communities of Gana-Gana need to understand that their language is their symbol of group identity and also an embodiment of their whole culture and life style, which will be no more if the language disappears. It is only through this consciousness that the communities will rise to the occasion to protect the language and consequently make it less vulnerable. They should avoid dominance by other languages like Hausa and English and see their language as not being inferior to any other and should uphold it over and above any other language irrespective of its social status and low economic mobility.

**(ii) Intergenerational Transmission of Basa**

A language can only be strong and free from being vulnerable to endangerment, if it is transmitted from one generation to another and also used in many domains. If the transmission chain is broken and it ceases to be used in large volumes in both the home and within the community, the language will continue to be vulnerable to endangerment and may consequently die, if nothing is done to remedy the situation. The Gana-Gana speech community, as a matter of urgency needs to ensure that the transmission chain at home from parents to children is sustained, instead of being broken. It is only through this way that the language's vitality will be beefed up to guarantee its survival. The community leaders should hire PTA teachers to assist in the teaching of their language in the schools within their area.

**(iii) Linguistic Human Right Protection**

According to UN Declaration of 2007, language is a linguistic human right and therefore needs to be guided jealously by every speech community. Therefore, the failure of the government in implementing the language policy on education that stipulates that the language of the immediate community should be used as a medium of instruction at the primary and junior secondary school levels within the speech community is an aberration of the law that Gana-Gana speech communities must fight against, to prevent their language from being vulnerable to any form of endangerment, shift or even death.

**(iv)Need for the Expansion of Ganagana Language Domains**

In this 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and with the current wave of digitalization, apart from intergenerational transmission of language from parents to children, new domains and media like WhatsApp, facebook, internet, radio and television appears topmost among the factors that guarantee language promotion and sustenance. There is therefore need to widen the scope of the domains of use of Ganagana to include these areas. This will not only widen the scope of its use and strengthen its vitality, but will also promote its visibility outside the local domains.

**(v)Need for Community Based Language Maintenance Initiatives**

If Fishman (1991) and Krauss's (1992) assertions that the advocacy for the renewal of an endangered language vitality should first rest on the speech community is anything to go by, it also follows that the responsibility of ensuring that a language is not vulnerable to endangerment, should also be the primary concern of the speech community. The Gana-Gana community should organize regular seminars to promote the language and fashion out ways of increasing the volume of its usage in the homes and within the community. They should focus on organizing cultural activities, dances, wrestling, masquaring, new yam festivals to promote their rich cultural heritage, as well as sponsor language vitality projects like engaging PTA teachers to teach or auxiliarily use the language in the schools within their communities as a way of enhancing its vitality, and consequently reduce its endangerment vulnerability status.

**(vi)Need for Quality Documentation in the Language:** The recent initiative by the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Abuja, to begin investigations and documentations on the language is fantastic. The community should collaborate with the University and possibly other Universities within and around the FCT to sustain the idea and possibly expand the scope of the initiative, by also involving postgraduate research works in the language. In addition, the community should further engage other language experts to develop an orthography for the language and also write grammar and other linguistic books in the language.

**Limitations of the Study**

In the course of the study, the following limitations were inevitable:

**(i)Geographic and Access Constraints:** During the study, access into some of the interior parts of the two communities was quite problematic. This was because some of the roads into such places were bad. In view of this constraint, the data may not holistically represent the entire views of the Ganagana speaking occupants in the two Area Councils.

**(ii)Reliance on Self-Reported Data**

Research data that are based on focus group discussions and interviews are sometimes not without bias. Since the researcher had no alternative, he swallowed the resultant data from the said instruments hook, line and sinker.

**(iii)Limited Scope**

As a result of access issues, the study was limited to communities that were relatively easy to access, neglecting the other communities in the interior parts that were difficult to access.

**(i) Observer's Paradox**

Research where participant observation is used as a major research instrument is sometimes characterized by participation or non-response bias, where outcomes become non representative of opinions of actual research respondents. This is usually because researchers sometimes consciously or unconsciously possess certain threats that influence participants opinions and research outcomes.

**Further Research Directions**

Future studies might be undertaken in the underlisted areas as a build up on this study.

1.A holistic study of the vulnerability status' of minority languages in FCT.

- 2.A study on how to reverse the endangerment vulnerability of Ganagana language.
- 3.Possible Gana-Gana speech community efforts at language vitality maintenance
- 4.Comprehensive study of the consequences of Ganagana language loss.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the Ganagana language is highly vulnerable to endangerment. This vulnerability is largely associated with inadequate language protection and promotion by both the Gana-Gana speech community and relevant governmental institutions. The findings reveal considerable weaknesses in relation to several factors in UNESCO's (2003) framework for assessing language vitality and endangerment. These include Factor 1, intergenerational language transmission; Factor 4, trends in existing language domains; Factor 5, response to new domains and media; Factor 7, governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies; Factor 8, community members' attitudes towards their language; and Factor 9, the amount and quality of documentation.

The declining use of Ganagana within homes, schools, public institutions, the media, and emerging digital domains indicates that the language is progressively losing both speakers and functional relevance. The dominance of Hausa and English, weak intergenerational transmission, limited institutional support, inadequate documentation, and the absence of sustained community-based maintenance initiatives further intensify its vulnerability. Nevertheless, the study concludes that the decline of Ganagana is not irreversible. Its vitality can be strengthened through coordinated and sustained interventions involving families, community leaders, educational institutions, linguists, cultural organizations, and government agencies.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

#### **1. Strengthening intergenerational language transmission**

Parents and older members of the Gana-Gana speech community should consistently use Ganagana when communicating with children at home. Family-based transmission should be deliberately encouraged to ensure that younger generations acquire and use the language naturally.

#### **2. Expanding the domains of language use**

Ganagana should be used more frequently in community meetings, cultural activities, religious gatherings, local commerce, traditional ceremonies, and other social domains. Its use should also be extended to radio, television, social media, websites, mobile applications, and other digital platforms.

#### **3. Integrating Ganagana into education**

Relevant educational authorities should implement the national language policy by introducing Ganagana as a medium of instruction or subject of study in schools located within Ganagana-speaking communities. Community leaders may also support the engagement of competent native-speaking teachers and the development of culturally appropriate teaching materials.

#### **4. Promoting positive community attitudes**

Awareness programmes, seminars, cultural festivals, and language campaigns should be organized to educate community members about the consequences of language loss and the importance of Ganagana to their cultural identity, history, indigenous knowledge, and collective memory.

#### **5. Establishing community-based language-maintenance initiatives**

Traditional rulers, youth groups, women's associations, cultural organizations, and other community stakeholders should establish language committees responsible for coordinating literacy programmes, cultural activities, documentation projects, and other revitalization efforts.

#### **6. Defending the linguistic rights of the speech community**

The Gana-Gana community should advocate for the recognition and use of Ganagana in education, local administration, public communication, and cultural affairs. Government institutions should also ensure that policies relating to the languages of immediate communities are effectively implemented.

#### **7. Improving the quality of language documentation:**

Linguists, universities, research institutions, and community members should collaborate to document Ganagana comprehensively. Priority should be given to the development of an accepted orthography, grammar books, dictionaries, literacy materials, audio and audiovisual archives, collections of proverbs and folktales, and other culturally relevant resources.

#### **8. Promoting digital language development**

Digital resources such as Ganagana keyboards, electronic dictionaries, spell-checkers, mobile learning applications, online lessons, and social-media content should be developed to increase the language's visibility and encourage its use among younger speakers.

### **9. Strengthening institutional collaboration**

The Gana-Gana speech community should collaborate with the University of Abuja, other universities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and language-development bodies to support sustained research, documentation, teaching, and revitalization programmes.

### **10. Monitoring language vitality**

Periodic assessments should be conducted using UNESCO's language-vitality framework to determine changes in intergenerational transmission, domains of use, community attitudes, documentation, educational inclusion, and participation in new media. Such assessments would provide evidence for evaluating the effectiveness of language-maintenance interventions.

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