

ADVANCING MULTILINGUAL LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING FOR EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE LEGAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA: A POLICY IMPERATIVE*

Abstract

Nigeria's vast linguistic diversity presents both an opportunity and a challenge for its legal and governance systems. Despite being home to over 500 indigenous languages, English remains the language of legislative drafting and legal communication, creating a significant barrier to public understanding, participation, and compliance. This paper examines the prospects, challenges, and policy imperatives of adopting multilingual legislative drafting as a mechanism for enhancing effective and inclusive legal service delivery in Nigeria. It argues that the continued reliance on monolingual drafting not only limits access to justice but also undermines democratic legitimacy and civic engagement. Drawing on comparative insights from multilingual jurisdictions such as Canada, South Africa, India, and Switzerland, the paper highlights the potential of multilingualism to improve legal accessibility, promote cultural inclusion, and strengthen institutional accountability. It further identifies critical challenges including constitutional and institutional constraints, linguistic complexity, financial implications, and the scarcity of trained multilingual drafters. The study employs a legal and comparative analytical approach, anchored in the theories of legal pluralism, comparative law, and access to justice. The paper recommends, constitutional amendment, institutional capacity-building, and the use of technology to manage translation and harmonization.

Keywords: Legislations, Compliance, Language, Accessibility, Multilingual

1. Introduction

Nigeria is a country with immense linguistic diversity with over 500 indigenous languages, presenting both an opportunity and a challenge for accessing legislations and compliance.¹ Despite this diversity, English remains the primary language of lawmaking, legislative drafting, and judicial interpretation.² This monolingual approach to legislative drafting limit comprehension among large segments of the population, reduce legal literacy, impede public participation, and therefore weaken legal service delivery and democratic legitimacy.³ Language policy and implementation have received scholarly attention in Nigeria. For example, Owojecho⁴ examines the implementation challenges of the National Language Policy, emphasising the marginalisation of indigenous languages caused by the dominant functional role of English and lack of decisive policy guidelines for language use, language rights, and allocation of roles among languages.⁵ Similarly, Bab a & Isaiah⁶ explore the role of English in the Nigerian legal system, arguing for the translation of legal documents and legislative texts into major indigenous languages to enhance access and understanding. In addition, linguistic analysis within legal drafting reveals that the register and style typically adopted in legislative drafting, dense, technical, legalistic, and often archaic, pose obstacles for comprehension by non-lawyers. In “An Analysis of

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¹ A. I Baba, & A. Isaiah, ‘Language and Law: The Role of English Language in Nigerian Legal System’ *Jalingo Journal of Linguistics and Literary Studies* (2024) (8) (1)

² J. N. Ekpang, & O. Ogolekwu, ‘Socio-legal Discourse Analysis of a Selected Court Proceeding’ *Journal of Language and Literature* (2024) (3) (1).

³ U. Ahmad, ‘English–Hausa Translation of Legal Terminology: Challenges and Prospects’ *Journal of Translation and Language Studies* (2024) (2) (1) 88–103.

⁴ F. Abah Owojecho, ‘Implementation Challenges of National Language Policy in Nigeria: The Roles of the Indigenous Languages’ *International Journal of Language & Literary Studies* (2024) (2) (1).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Baba & Isaiah (n1).

Linguistic Choices in Legal Drafting”, Goma Mbanugo & Ezeifeke⁷ contend that the specialised nature of legal language and its unique register make laws less accessible to laypersons. The drive toward plain English drafting has also been explored⁸ it was argued that legislative drafters in Nigeria need to adopt clearer, simpler phrasing without altering the legislative intent. From the constitutional and rights perspective, language rights show how Nigeria’s legal framework addresses or fails to enforce language rights and equal opportunities for speakers of indigenous languages.⁹ These works collectively demonstrate that while the idea of multilingualism in policy is not novel in Nigeria, its integration into legislative drafting, legal documentation, and law practice remains minimal and under-theorised. Accordingly, this research aims to interrogate the extant legislative drafting practices while highlight its inadequacy. The objective is to argue for the advancement and adoption of multilingual drafting for improved compliance with legislations and effective legal service delivery.

2. An Overview of the Need for Multilingual Legislative Drafting

Multilingual legislative drafting refers to the practice of preparing legislative texts in more than one language. This can involve co-drafting in multiple languages (parallel versions), translation of a master text into one or more local/indigenous languages, or using several official/national languages in different versions of the law, each of which may have legal force or serve simply as explanatory aids.¹⁰ Such drafting aims to enhance accessibility, legitimacy, and participation in law- making by ensuring that a significant segment of the population can read and understand laws in languages they easily understand. Multilingual legislative drafting is a part of broader fields such as language policy, translation studies, legislative drafting theory, and legal pluralism.¹¹ Adopting multilingual legislative drafting in Nigeria holds considerable promise in advancing legal service delivery, democracy, and equity.¹² It improves accessibility and comprehension of legislation. The adoption and domination of English language in Nigerian law excludes many citizens from full understanding of legal texts, reducing legal literacy and hindering participation.¹³ By making laws available in indigenous Nigerian languages (for example, major ones like Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba) alongside English, more citizens would likely better understand their rights, obligations, and the content of statutes that affect them. This fosters not just compliance but trust in legal institutions as language barriers reinforce inequalities and disenfranchisement.¹⁴ Therefore, multilingual drafting enhances legal fairness and inclusivity. Also, multilingual legislative drafting could strengthen democratic participation and legitimacy of law-making.¹⁵ When communities see their languages included, it signals respect for cultural identity and linguistic rights. Also, clearer and more comprehensible texts allow public input and better scrutiny of proposed laws. Furthermore, as Nigeria’s policy documents such as Translating Policy into Legislation

⁷ C. Goma Mbanugo, & C. Ezeifeke, ‘An Analysis of Linguistic Choices in Legal Drafting’ *Awka Journal of English Language and Literary Studies* (2023) (10) (1) 290 – 307.

⁸ Adamu Idris Tanimu, & Barakat Adebisi Raji, ‘Contemporary Legislative Drafting: Plain English Principles’ *International Journal of Comparative Law and Legal Philosophy* (2023)

⁹ Ejike Francis Okaphor & Orji Dereck-M. Akachukwu ‘Appraising Language Rights under Nigeria Legislation’ *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence* (2014). (5). See also F. Niyi Akinnaso, ‘Toward the Development of a Multilingual Language Policy in Nigeria’ *Applied Linguistics* (1991) (12) (1) 29-61.

¹⁰ Valerie Dullion, ‘When was Co – Drafting ‘Invented’? On History and Concepts in Legal Translation Studies’ *Studies in Translation Theory and Practice* (2022) (2).

¹¹ Waldemar Nazarov, ‘Ambiguity in co-drafting and multilingual legal translation A frame-semantic analysis of the first Swiss COVID-19’ regulation trans-kom (2024) (17) (1) 73–8.

¹² Theophilus Sunday Ogor, ‘Language as a Tool of Engendering or Endangering the Justice System in Nigeria’ *Journal of Language and Linguistics* (2025) (9) (1) 48.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ I. Aluya, & F. O. Olukemi, ‘The Interplay of Language and Law: Exploring Power Dynamics within the Legal Systems in Nigeria’ *International Journal of Language & Law* (2024) (13) 24–33.

¹⁵ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, section 55 which provides that the National Assembly shall conduct its proceedings in English, as the official language, and in Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba when adequate arrangements for interpretation are made.

in Nigeria¹⁶ show, there is already some awareness among lawmakers that legal texts should be more intelligible and rooted in public policy rather than remote language.

Furthermore, the use of technology and improved language resources presents an enabling environment for multilingual legislative drafting. The recent survey¹⁷ reveals both the deficits and the growing efforts in creating computational and annotated linguistic resources for Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. These resources can help with translation, standardisation, check for consistency, and reduce costs/time needed for producing parallel texts. Also, leveraging translation tools, glossaries, and standardised terminology may make implementation more feasible than in the past when these technological resources were non-existent.

3. Conceptual Clarification and Theoretical Framework

Monolingualism

The word ‘monolingual’ literally refers to the ability to use one language well.¹⁸ Monolingualism simply refers to the ability of an individual or a country to speak a language well. Monolingualism simply refers to an who does not have access to more than one linguistic code as a means of social communication.¹⁹ Defining the term presents a working problem of whether a standard dialect and a regional dialect of the same language could be said to be one language? Accordingly, to avoid that problem, the term is used in this research to connote countries that have officially adopted a particular language as its official language for the conduct of all official business particularly legislative drafting, administrative operations as well as legal proceedings etc.

Bilingual

The term literally refers to a person fluent in two languages.²⁰ The term Bilingualism refers to the psychological state of an individual who has access to more than one linguistic code as a means of social communication.²¹ Bilingualism also presents a problem of definition as it has been defined the ability of having or using two languages with the fluency of a native speaker. Being bilingual necessarily means the ability to speak two languages sufficiently well with the proficiency of a native speaker.²² However, the term has also been used to denote any person who possess a minimum competency in only one of the four language skills of listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing in a language other than his mother tongue.²³ In this research, however, the term is used to refer to countries that have adopted two languages as their official language to be used in legal proceedings, administrations as well as legislative drafting and conduct of legislative proceedings.

Multilingual

Multilingualism is a complex phenomenon that can be studied from different perspectives in disciplines such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, and education.²⁴ The term has been defined as the ability of an

¹⁶ S. Danwanka, S. Yahaya, & M. Ibrahim, ‘Translating Policy into Legislation in Nigeria’ *Journal of Commercial and Property Law* (2023)

¹⁷ Sanuel Ifeanyi Ojukwu, Ikechukwu Ekene Onyenwe & Ebele G. Onyedinmaa, ‘Development of a Multilingual Translation System for Nigeria Language’ *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews* (2025) (6) (7) 2798.

¹⁸ Cambridge Online Dictionary, accessed from <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/monolingual>> on the 24 October 2025 at 2:00am.

¹⁹ Elizabeth M. Ellis, ‘Defining and Investigating Monolingualism’ *Sociolinguistic Studies* (2008) (2) (3) 312.

²⁰ Britannica Online Dictionary Accessed from <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/bilingualism>> on 24 October 2025 at 2:21am.

²¹ Josiane F. Hamers and Michel H. A. Blanc, *Bilinguality and Bilingualism* (Cambridge University Press 2nd edition 2000) 6.

²² Ibid

²³ Parviz Maftoon & Masoume Shakibafar, ‘Who is a Bilingual’ *Journal of English Studies* (2011) (1) (2) 80.

²⁴ Jasone Cenoz, ‘Defining Multilingualism’ *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* (2013) (33) 4 -5.

individual to communicate in more than one language be it actively or passively.²⁵ It has also been defined as the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives.²⁶ In this research, the term refers to countries that have officially adopted more than 2 languages as languages to be used in administrative operations, judicial proceedings and legislative drafting.

Co-Drafting

The term ‘co-drafting’ refers to a range of methods of multilingual legislative drafting that are used, in various forms, by different institutions. Co – drafting when used in its broader sense refers to both bi – lingual and multilingual drafting. When used in a narrower sense, the term refers to a specific method of bilingual drafting which had developed in Canada whereby a legislative text is to be written by two drafters, one for each language, in close and continuous collaboration.²⁷ It is of interest to legal translation studies particularly because of its relative complexity and uniqueness compared to conventional conceptions of translation. However, the ambition to officially produce multilingual legislation had been present, at least temporarily, in several European states as early as the end of the eighteenth century.²⁸

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the natural law theory a otherwise referred to as divine law or eternal law. the natural law theory is a legal theory that upholds the rule of nature. The theory posits that all civilisations have intrinsic moral and logical values which law must respect, uphold, and promote. According to the naturalist theory of law, justice and ethics were inextricable elements of the law and that law in its normative character must be seen to be striving for the attainment and fulfilment of the values of morality, justice, and ethics etc. Scholars such as Aristotle, Plato, Cicero are considered natural law scholars of the classical period, while Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke are considered some of the leading scholars of modern natural law school of thought. The Naturalists advanced the postulations of the idea that all people, whatever their ethnicity, culture, or religion, can know the difference between good and evil, right and wrong. The naturalist school of law is understood as a principle of moral conduct whose core principles always apply, even though the theory has developed overtime in response to intellectual discourse and changes in politics, society and economics etc.²⁹

The choice of the natural law theory is informed by its promotion of the ethical, moral and just considerations as integral values of law. The practical relevance of the chosen theoretical framework for the analysis of the research problem involves the recognition of the unethical, immoral and the unjustness of a monolingual drafting practice on a significant part of Nigeria’s population who are unfairly excluded from having access to legislations and meaningful civic participation.

4. Comparative Perspectives on Multilingual Legislative Drafting

Canada

Canada officially recognises English and French as its official languages at the federal level with both languages having equal legal status in the services offered and operations of all federal institutions in Canada. The two languages are the officially adopted languages of work in all federal institutions, and

²⁵ Tesso Berisso Genemo ‘Multilingualism and Language Choice in Domains’ in eds Xiaoming Jiang *Multilingualism – Interdisciplinary Topics* (2021) accessed from <<https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/79781#>> on 24 October 2025 at 2:52am.

²⁶ Ivana Katsarova, ‘Multilingualism; The Language of the European Union’ *European Parliamentary Research Service* (2022).

²⁷ Dullion (n10).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Douglas C Youvan, ‘Natural Law Theory: A Philosophical and Theological Divide between Believers in Objective Moral Order and Skeptics’ (2024) accessed from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384604777_Natural_Law_Theory_A_Philosophical_and_Theological_Divide_Between_Believers_in_Objective_Moral_Order_and_Skeptics> on 23 October 2025 at 4:21am.

employees of all federal institutions have the right to use either official language.³⁰ In Canada, 75% of the population identified English as their first language and 23% identified with French.³¹ French is mostly spoken in Quebec while English throughout the rest of Canada.³² Canada requires legislations to treat both languages on equal footing within the federal administration. However, relationship between the official languages and their speakers are characterized by substantial inequality at different levels, including the use of languages in meetings, and the level of proficiency of civil servants in the second languages. Furthermore, the Canadian Government is obligated to advance the equality of status and use of English and French through supporting and assisting the development of both languages.³³ All federal institutions are required to communicate with members of the public in both official languages using such media of communication as chosen by members of the public.³⁴ More importantly, all Acts of Parliament including statutory instruments are required to be enacted, printed and published in the two official languages.³⁵ The drafting of the legislations are done side by side in both English and French languages in a single document.³⁶ Also, journals and other records of Parliament are to be made, printed and published in both official languages.³⁷ This requirement extends to regulations and statutory instruments including Rules of procedure of federal courts. Also, international treaties and any other document issued by a federal institution must exist in both official languages.³⁸

South Africa

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 presently recognise 12 official languages which represents the native languages of more than 99% of the country's population.³⁹ The national government and provincial governments may use any particular official languages for the purposes of administrative action taking into account the needs and preferences of the population across the country or in the province concerned. The constitution made provision for all official languages to enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equally.⁴⁰ The Constitution also established the Pan South African Language Board to promote and create conditions for the development and use of all official languages among other things. Furthermore, the Use of Official Languages Act No. 12 of 2012 made detailed provisions on the use of language.⁴¹ The Act mandated every national department, national public entity and national public enterprises to adopt a language policy regarding its use of official languages. The policy must equally describe how the adopting entity intends to effectively communicate with members of the public whose mother language is not among the 3 chosen official languages or is South African Sign Language.⁴² For instance, the South African Police Service Language Policy adopted a functional multilingualism where plain english is the main working language to be used in all official documents along with all the 12 official languages.⁴³

³⁰ Official Language Act of 1985, Clause 34.

³¹ Patrick Borbey, and Matthew Mendelsohn, *The Next Level: Normalising a Culture of Inclusive Linguistic Duality in the Federal Public Service Workplace* (Government of Canada Ottawa 2017) 1.

³² Borden, Ladner Gervais, 'Doing Business in Canada: A Practical Guide from 'Eh' to 'Zed'. (2025) accessed from <file:///C:/Users/UMAR%20PADDAH/Downloads/BLG-Doing-Business-in-Canada-Sept-2025-EN.pdf> on 22 October 2025 at 10:06am.

³³ Official Language Act of 1985, Clause 41.

³⁴ Ibid, Clause 30.

³⁵ Ibid, Clause 6.

³⁶ Canadian Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations is annexed for demonstration purposes.

³⁷ Official Languages Act, Clause 5.

³⁸ Ibid, Clause 7(1).

³⁹ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, Section 6 (1)

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Use of Official Languages Act No 12 of 2012 Section 3.

⁴² Ibid, Section 4.

⁴³ Amaka E. Ideh and John O. Onu, 'Multilingualism and the New Language Policy in South Africa: Innovation and Challenges' *Covenant Journal of Language Studies* (2017) (5) (2); Karen Calteaux, 'Language Policy for Training in the SAPS' accessed from <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/23275241/language-policy-for-training-in-the-saps#google_vignette> on the 20 October 2025 at 5:39am.

The South African constitution and its language policies have been commended as promoting the principle of inclusivity glorifying South Africa as a paragon of democracy in Africa.⁴⁴ Yet again, the highlighted constitutional provisions as well as the Act itself have been criticised for failing to yield desired outcomes.⁴⁵ Authors have argued that there is a doubt as to whether the Act and language policies embodies the promotion of multilingualism forcefully enough to be able to counter the continuing trend towards English monolingualism.⁴⁶ They argued that issues surrounding language is basically an issue of power and that majority of Afrikaans negotiation position of weakness.⁴⁷ Despite the constitutional provisions made for empowering the previously underprivileged African languages, English has in fact expanded and dominates most public domains.⁴⁸

India

India is one of the world's most linguistically diverse nations with an estimated 19,500 languages, spoken by over 1.4 billion people in over 1,000 different dialects.⁴⁹ Against this background, effective communication between the people and government in a clear, and easily accessible communication becomes a challenge. Upon attaining independence in 1947, Hindi was declared as the official language with English as a secondary official language for no longer than adopt a language policy regarding its use of official languages. The policy must equally describe how the adopting entity intends to effectively communicate with members of the public whose mother language is not among the 3 chosen official languages or is South African Sign Language.⁴² For instance, the South African Police Service Language Policy adopted a functional multilingualism where plain English is the main working language to be used in all official documents along with all the 12 official languages.⁴³ The South African constitution and its language policies have been commended as promoting the principle of inclusivity glorifying South Africa as a paragon of democracy in Africa.⁴⁴ Yet again, the highlighted constitutional provisions as well as the Act itself have been criticised for failing to yield desired outcomes.⁴⁵ Authors have argued that there is a doubt as to whether the Act and language policies embodies the promotion of multilingualism forcefully enough to be able to counter the continuing trend towards English monolingualism.⁴⁶ They argued that issues surrounding language is basically an issue of power and that majority of Afrikaans negotiation position of weakness.⁴⁷ Despite the constitutional provisions made for empowering the previously underprivileged African languages, English has in fact expanded and dominates most public domains.⁴⁸

Switzerland

Switzerland is a nation with multilingualism being deeply rooted in the historical formation of the Confederation and an integral part of Switzerland's identity.⁴⁹ Out of the 26 cantons that make up Switzerland today, twenty-two have only one official language. Out of these 17 adopted German, 4 adopted French and 1 Italian. Three cantons are bilingual in French and German and one canton is trilingual in Romansh, German and Italian. The Swiss Law on Languages regulate the use and promotion of languages and enhanced the status of Romansh as one of the official languages in 2010. While Swiss language policy is determined at the federal level, actual implementation is a matter for cantonal jurisdiction. The Swiss Federal Constitution enshrines the principle of multilingualism.⁵⁰ In Switzerland, legislations are drafted in the three official languages being German, French and Italian. Unlike Canada, the drafting of the Swiss legislation is not in one single document but involves multiple

⁴⁴ J. L. Pretorius, 'The Use of Official Languages Act: Diversity Affirmed?' *Potchesfroom Electronic Law Journal* (2013) (16) (1) 281.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Pretorius (n 46)

⁴⁷ Ideh and Onu (n 34)

⁴⁸ Brenzibger (n 20).

⁴⁹ Muhammad Issa, Muhammad Kamal & Ansar Ali, 'Multilingualism in Switzerland: An Overview' *Journal of European Studies* (2022) (38) (2) 55 – 63.

⁵⁰ Article 70 the Federal Constitution of Switzerland.

authoritative versions of the legislation in the official languages drafted by drafters working together.⁵¹

Lessons for Nigeria

From the foregoing, Nigeria being a country with a sharp linguistic diversity stands to benefit from some of the insights offered. Essentially, Nigeria requires a comprehensive national language policy. As all 4 countries have, to varying degrees, developed and are implementing their national language policies specifically designed to harness their linguistic diversity for national cohesion and prosperity, Nigeria needs a comprehensive national language policy that identify the indigenous language or languages to be added to English language as the national official language. At present Nigeria's language policy is by no means comprehensive.⁵² The development of a comprehensive national language policy must be followed by the promotion of an education system developed and taught in the adopted official languages. This is to facilitate the standardisation of the varying dialects and wordings to be used in multilingual drafting as well as the emergence of the next generation of employees proficient in the adopted official languages. The significance of governmental funding of multilingual education system as obtained in Switzerland is significant to facilitating tolerance and promoting national cohesion.⁵³ The recognition of minority languages through the guarantee of equal parity or equality of status strengthens national cohesion. As language policy and choice of official languages are essentially determined by political power, the equality of status does not mean the adoption of the estimated 500 languages in Nigeria. These choices must necessarily create an unequal status between the adopted indigenous languages as the Switzerland's experience has demonstrated. Nigeria could also learn an invaluable lesson from South Africa in seeking the medium of multilingualism to empower historically oppressed population. Also, recognising multilingualism could strengthen unity and national cohesion. However, as language policy involves a complex interrelationship with politics and power, empowering minority languages and historically oppressed populations must go beyond the black letters of the law.⁵⁴

5. Challenges

Constitutional Limitations: Unlike the countries of comparison, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (CFRN) merely permits the use of indigenous languages in Nigeria in the conduct of the proceedings of legislative houses.⁵⁵ The CFRN merely recognize only 3 out of estimated 500 indigenous languages. Furthermore, the CFRN relegates indigenous languages as proficiency in the English language is among the requirements for contesting elections.

Lack of standardisation of the Indigenous Languages: Apart from the three dominant Nigerian languages of Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba, it may be a bit difficult to find other languages that have been fully developed and standardised to a point of being a course of study in university.

Lack of adequately trained drafters: Arising from the longstanding practice of educational training and drafting practices, Nigerian drafters are mainly trained and proficient in monolingual drafting. They draft in English language and may face an uphill task if they were to be asked to draft legislations in any other language even if their mother tongue.

Increasing globalisation and the pressures of the multilateral economies: These have led to the emergence of the English language as the global language of choice. Job interviews, school entrance examinations and assessments are assessed in the global lingua franca. In today's world, English is a prerequisite for career advancement and also an indispensable requirement for performing well in the educational system. Proficiency in English language is generally considered a priority in all levels of formal education.

⁵¹ Felix Uhlmann & Stefan Hofler, 'Multilingual Legislative Drafting in Swiss Cantons: Burden or Blessing? A Paper Presented at the Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel Conference 2017, Melbourne.

⁵² Morakinyo Ogunmodinmu, 'Language Policy in Nigeria: Problems, Prospects and Perspectives' *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* (2015) (5) (9) 154 – 160.

⁵³ Miaoyan Wang, 'Switzerland's Multilingual Education Policy and the Implications for China' *Advances in Educational Technology and Psychology* (2023) (7) (2) 55.

⁵⁴ Aaron Mnguni 'Dreams and Realities for South Africa: Use of Official Languages Act, 2012' *Studies in Media and Communication* (2021) (9) (1) 1 – 8.

⁵⁵ CFRN, Sections 55 & 97.

Lack of political will to promote and uplift indigenous languages: The promotion and development of Nigeria's indigenous languages require the standardisation of the languages and the unification of the varying dialects as well as the use of such languages in prose writing to ensure their transmission and continuous usage.

Inadequate translation services: Multilingual legislative drafting necessarily requires sufficiently trained translators that are capable of conveying the true legislative intent in the various languages without loss. This truly requires special training and proficiency without which meanings may be lost or, worst, conflated across the various versions of the same legislation. Multilingual drafting must strive at retaining the formal and linguistic quality of the original legislation in each of the languages while ensuring concordance. Each version is expected to be coherent and of equal authenticity for reliability in legal interpretation and application.

6. Recommendations

The alteration of the CFRN: To constitutionally recognise and declare indigenous languages as official languages beyond merely permission as well as the use of indigenous languages in the drafting of legislations and every other subsidiary instrument.

Investment towards standardisation of the Indigenous Languages: To facilitate the advancement of multilingual legislative drafting, government should invest towards the standardisation of the indigenous languages to be adopted as official languages. The standardisation of the languages will address the linguistic challenges likely to arise in the translation of the original legislative texts.

Training of legislative drafters in multilingual drafting: Drafters require training in practice of multilingual legislative beyond the traditional monolingual drafting they have practiced. This could be achieved through organising training and retraining for the drafters while developing an educational curriculum that ensures multilingual competency to future drafters and employees.

Recognition and promotion of indigenous language: The recognition and promotion of indigenous languages would push back the dominance of English language in Nigeria's educational and economic spaces. This could be attained through the use of learning and teaching in the educational systems in indigenous languages.

Strengthening political will to promote and uplift indigenous languages: The political will to promote and develop Nigeria's indigenous languages includes the adoption of some indigenous languages as official languages, allocation of the required funding towards research and the standardisation of the languages and the unification of the varying dialects as well as the use of such languages in prose writing to ensure their transmission to and continuous usage by generations to come.

Training and capacity development of legal translation services: The training and capacity development of translators would ensure the advancement of multilingual legislative drafting. Adequate legal translation services ensure the conveyance of the true legislative intent in the various languages without loss while retaining the formal and linguistic quality of the original legislation.

7. Conclusion

Advancing multilingual legislative drafting through a comprehensive national language policy has the potential of significantly enhancing legal services as well as improving compliance with legal requirements among Nigeria's linguistically diverse population. Multilingual legal order through legislative drafting has the potential of facilitating administrative operations and legal proceedings, promoting national cohesion as well as the protection of historically oppressed or minority. The relationship between Language and law is profound, with language serving as the primary tool through which laws are created, interpreted, and enforced. Drafting laws in a language that Nigerians speak and understand improves legal awareness, compliance and civic participation. The language of legislation plays a role in ensuring compliance by those who sufficiently understand the language far better than those who do not understand the language. Adopting multilingual legislative drafting in Nigeria offers significant potential to improve legal service delivery, advance democracy, and promote equity. However, adequate planning and measures for the protection of minority languages are required if the true potentials of multilingualism are to be attained