Module 1
Language Awareness

Why language matters

TRANSLATORS
WITHOUT BORDERS

Learning objectives

- Understand why language is an important factor of vulnerability
- Know how to take language into account when you communicate with communities

Marginalized language speakers

One emergency, one main language of response

And often many ‘marginalized’ languages

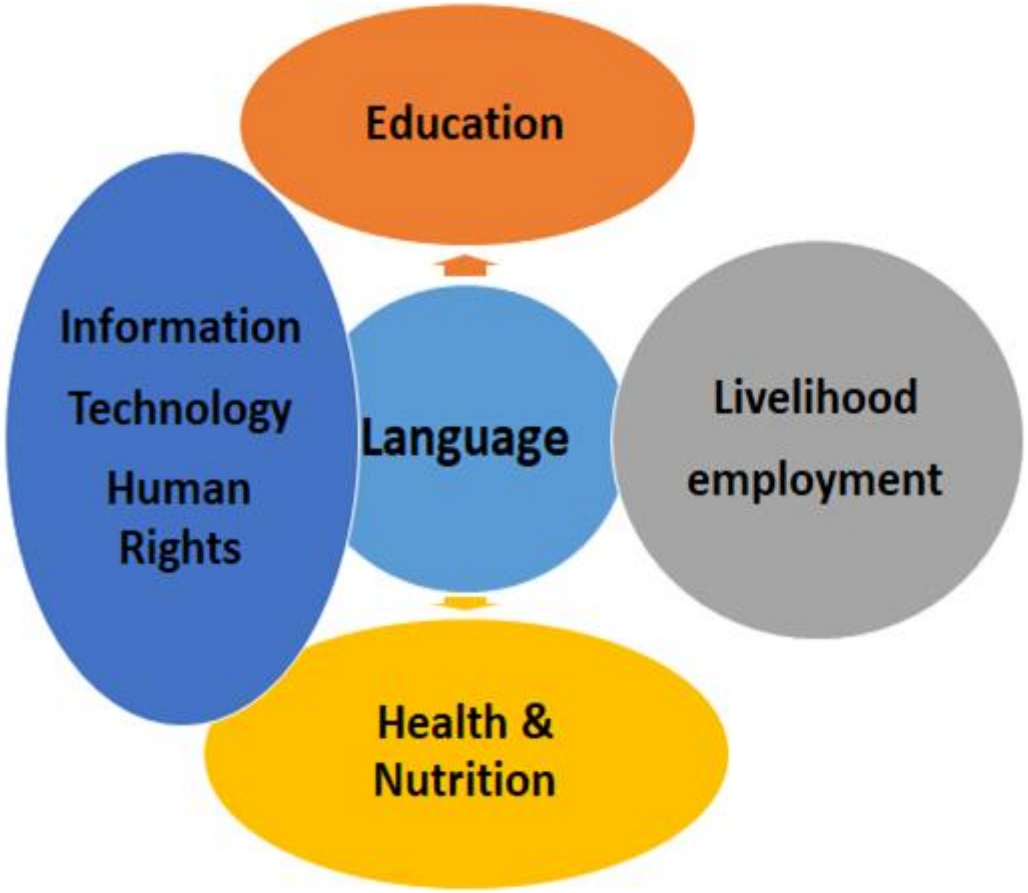
Spoken by minority & majority groups, often marginalized

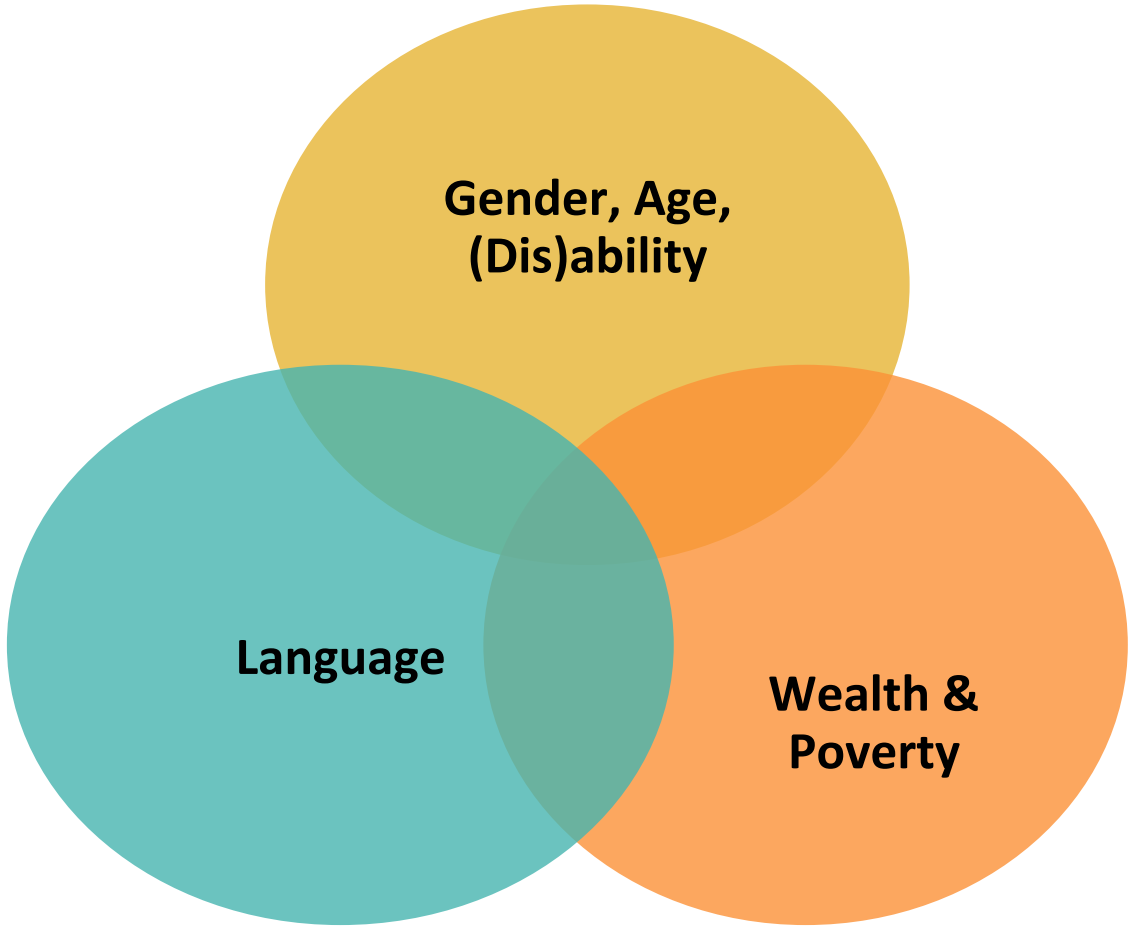
Language exclusion

Linguistic diversity is sometimes hidden or suppressed:

- To portray a ‘unified’ country
- To ‘manage’ ethnic tension

Layers of disadvantage





Humanitarian concern

Marginalized language speakers

Among the most important people to reach and communicate with in an emergency

And among the hardest

What makes it harder?

One size fits all approach

Speed and capacity

Lack of information about what languages people speak

Lack of information about the languages themselves

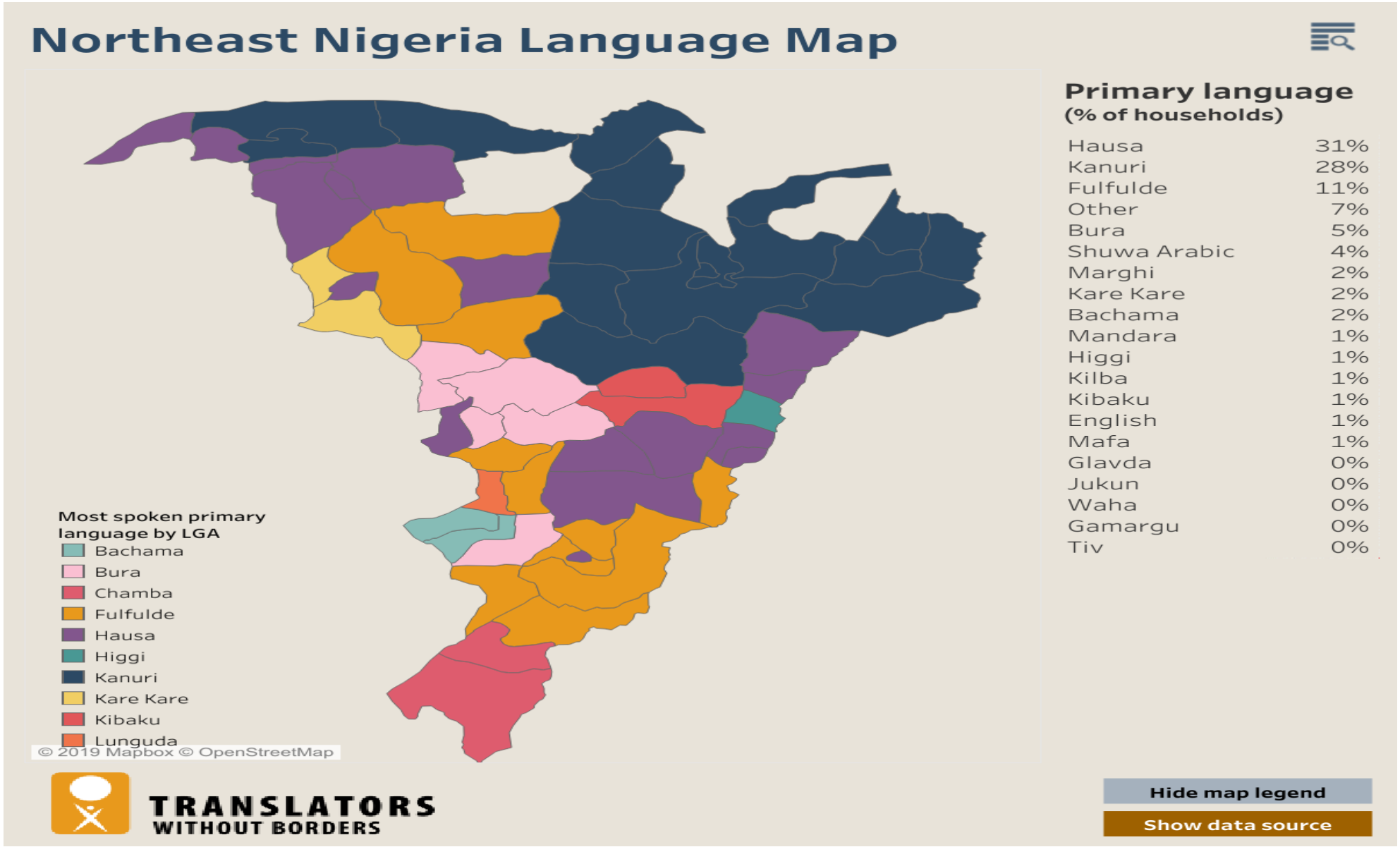
Note

Language

- Be aware of language power dynamics.
- Identify quickly which languages people speak, understand, and read.
- Hire interpreters and translators to ensure affected people can communicate in their preferred language.
- Test comprehension of your communication materials.
- Train and support translators and interpreters.

Words

- Be aware of the exclusionary potential of words.
- Agree on consistent terminology as early and as widely as possible.
- Make sure you work with local mother-tongue speakers to find the most precise and useful translations for the target audience.



https://translatorswithoutborders.org/northeast-nigeria-language-map/

TRANSLATORS
WITHOUT BORDERS
Questions?