

## Module 2

### Language mapping

**Why language matters**



**TRANSLATORS**  
**WITHOUT BORDERS**





## Learning objectives

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- Understand the importance of language and format for communicating effectively
- Understand terminology challenges and how to manage them
- Know about the language map and how it can provide area specific language data

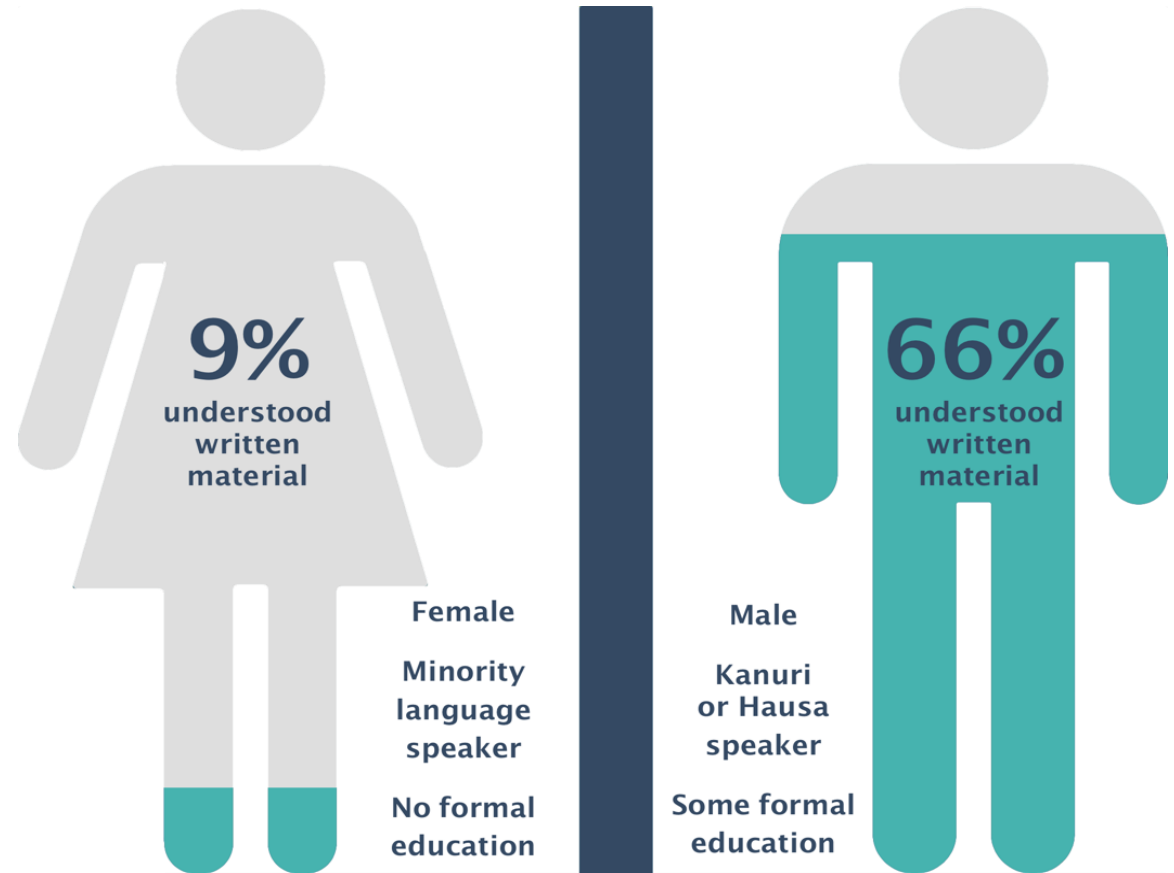




## Can you read me?

- Information in the wrong language and format will not be understood
- Comprehension of simple text in Hausa or Kanuri

Source: Translators without Borders/Oxfam/Girl Effect 2017





# Not everyone understands Hausa

**ASSUMPTION:**  
Everyone understands Hausa, the language humanitarian organizations in NE Nigeria mostly use to communicate with affected people



**FACT 1:**  
2019 MSNA data shows Hausa is the primary language for a minority of people surveyed, and a large proportion don't understand it well



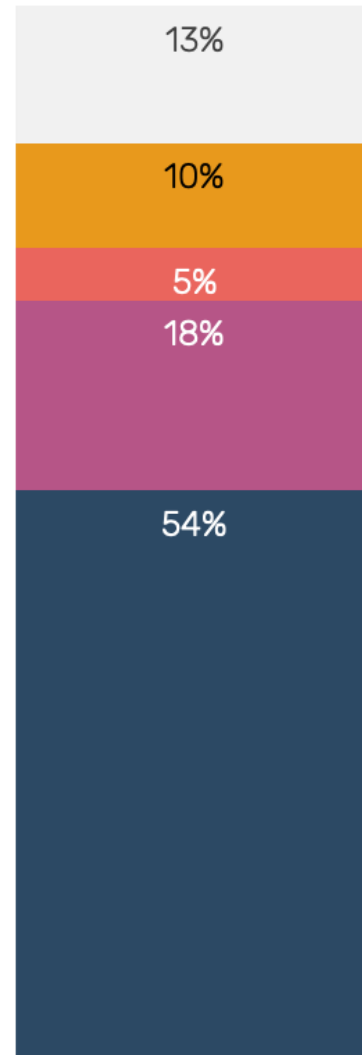
**FACT 2:**  
TWB's comprehension assessments found that communicating exclusively in Hausa means many women and older people are unable to access information or make their voices heard



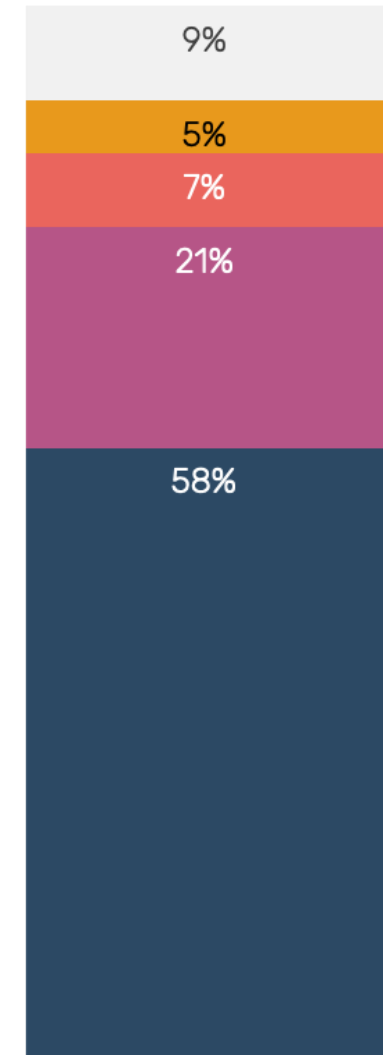
**Both language  
and format  
matter**

## Preferred language to receive information in

■ Hausa ■ Kanuri ■ Fulfulde ■ English ■ Other



Written information



Spoken information



# Primary languages vary by area

## ADAMAWA STATE

- Only 39% of households in Adamawa State report Hausa as their primary language
- 57% prefer to receive spoken information
- 52% prefer to receive written information in Hausa.
- Most households (92%) claim to speak Hausa “fluently” or “very well.”
- However, only 66% state they can read Hausa “fluently” or “very well.”



# Primary languages vary by area

## BORNO STATE

- Kanuri is the most spoken primary language (48%) in Borno State, where most internally displaced people live
- Only 51% say they read Hausa “fluently” or “very well.” Dikwa, Ngala, and Magumeri are among the LGAs with lower rates of Hausa speaking and reading ability.



# Primary languages vary by area

## YOBE STATE

- 75% of households prefer to receive spoken information in Hausa language
- 73% prefer written
- Kanuri and Fulfulde were next in order of preference for both spoken and written information. However, rates of Hausa speaking and reading ability were lower in Tarmua, Yunusari, and Gujba LGAs.



# **Five ways to take language into account in humanitarian funding and programming in northeast Nigeria**

1. Community based engagement and accountability on area-specific language data.
2. Use this data from the language map to identify the language skills needed in community engagement, accountability, data collection, and other program roles.
3. Test comprehension of information materials and key terminologies by primary language, gender, and age.



# **Five ways to take language into account in humanitarian funding and programming in northeast Nigeria**

4. Promote a common approach to intralingual and multilingual communication and community engagement
5. Measure program outcomes by language to ensure marginalized language speakers are not left behind



# Examples from Nigeria and Rohingya Response



**Bangladesh - “violent women”** Gender = ‘women,’ and gender-based violence became ‘violent women.’



**Nigeria – “ocean” - SEA’** in Hausa = *teku* meaning ‘ocean’ or a body of water.



**Nigeria – “centres for mad” - ‘mental health centre = centre for mad people**



# Why Words & Terminologies may differ.

Even in the same language, words and terms may differ according to the following language dynamics:

## □ LANGUAGE RELATED DIFFERENCES

- Dialectical
- Regional
- Generational
- International
- Age & Gender



# Why words & terminologies may differ.

## CONTEXT RELATED DIFFERENCES

- Humanitarian or Development: WASH, GBV, PROTECTION, HEALTH & NUTRITION ETC.
- Academic
- Media & Journalism



## The power of words

**Armed  
criminal  
group**

**Freedom fighter**

**Terroris  
t**

**Rebel army**

**Armed  
opposition  
group**

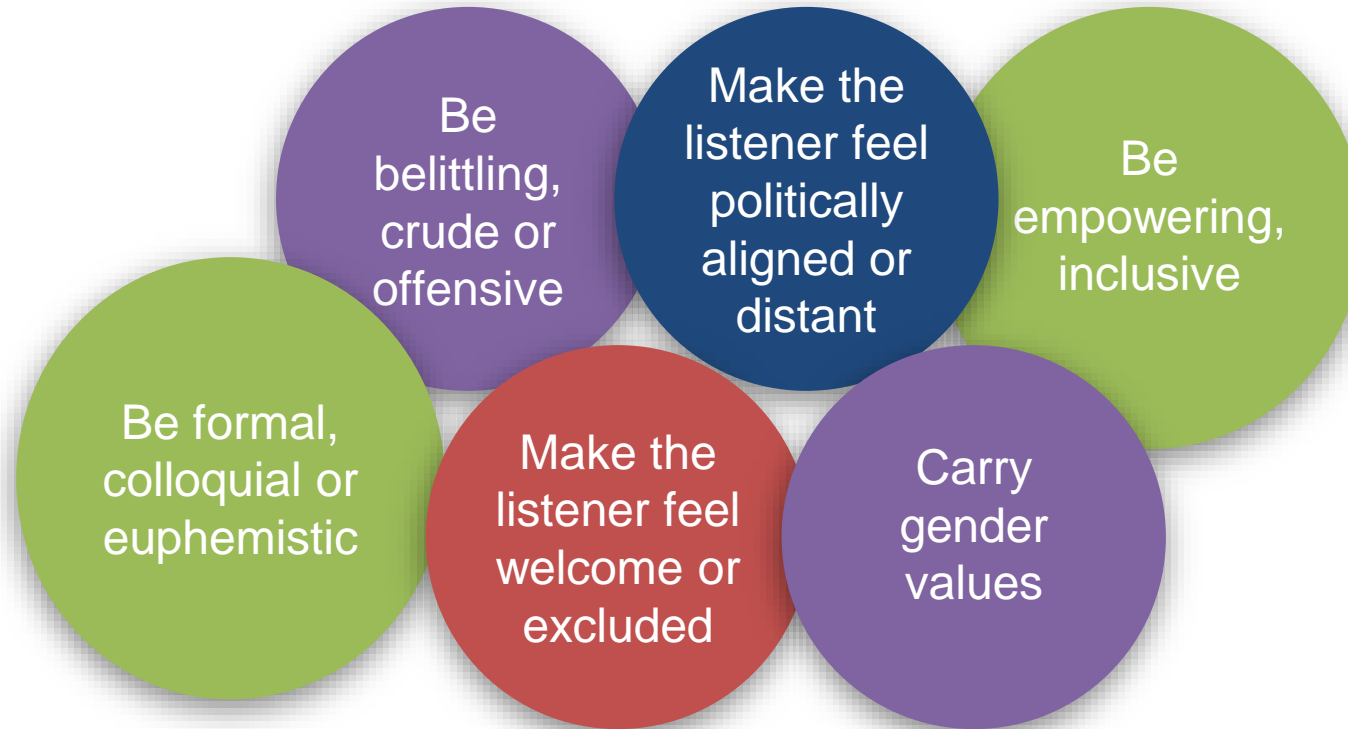


# One word, one meaning?

- Remember that languages evolve.
- Words can carry different meanings in different locations, and new meanings can emerge.
- It is important to understand what a given word means in your local context.



## Words can...





# One solution – sectoral glossaries

## Technical specialists

- Ideally at Sector/Cluster level
- Choose relevant words
- Simple definitions

## Local mother-tongue speakers

- Ensure translated words are:
  - Easily understood
  - Convey the precise meaning
  - Don't offend or stigmatise

## Affected people

- Confirm comprehension
- Ensure inclusiveness

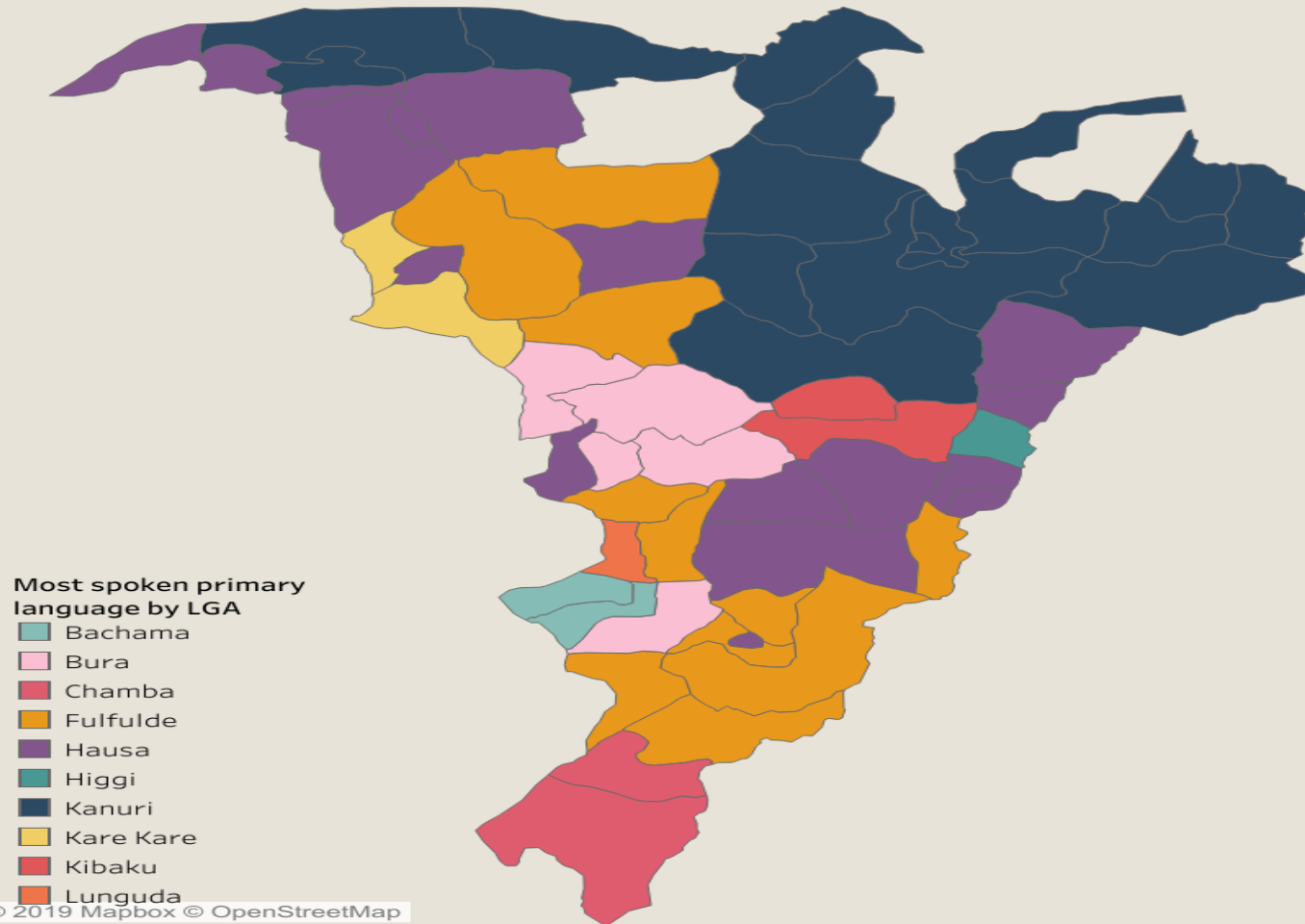
<https://glossaries.translatorswb.org/nigeria/>

**COVID-19 Glossary with Nigerian languages among others**

[:https://glossaries.translatorswb.org/covid19/](https://glossaries.translatorswb.org/covid19/)



# Northeast Nigeria Language Map



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## Primary language (% of households)

Hausa	31%
Kanuri	28%
Fulfulde	11%
Other	7%
Bura	5%
Shuwa Arabic	4%
Marghi	2%
Kare Kare	2%
Bachama	2%
Mandara	1%
Higgi	1%
Kilba	1%
Kibaku	1%
English	1%
Mafa	1%
Glavda	0%
Jukun	0%
Waha	0%
Gamargu	0%
Tiv	0%

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Show data source

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



# **TRANSLATORS WITHOUT BORDERS**

Questions?