

## **1.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

Language is the universal fabric that holds every individual of a community together. An instrument, used by man for communication within his environment, without which there would be no meaningful relationship between the human world. Language can also be referred to as the medium through which ideas, thoughts, and other forms of human communication are expressed or carried out.

In the mental compartment where all possible, meaningful and acceptable words are formed, there are certain rules that must be followed or certain conditions met before any word can be viewed as acceptable in any language. The branch of linguistics that studies the compatibility of such combinations and proposes the rules for their formation is called MORPHOLOGY. The basic concept of this branch is the morpheme, the smallest meaningful unit in grammar which may constitute a word or part of a word.

Every language has its own set of morphological rules which are strictly adhered to by members of its community. Such members, (Native speakers) share a great deal of unconscious knowledge about their language which helps in the acquisition of their first language with little or no formal instructions. In connection to morphology, the Migili language has been duly investigated with a view to finding/revealing the aspects of its morphological set up. The Migili people are a tribal group found in Agyaragu local government, Lafia, Nasarawa State. The first chapter of this research centers on areas such as the historical background of the Migili people, their socio-cultural profile, occupation, religion, festival, mode of dressing, marriage, genetic classification. Several other aspects will be reviewed in the latter chapters of the project work.

## **1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MIGILI**

In an interview with the town chief (ZHE Migili) who is the traditional ruler and an autocrat, two major facts were revealed. One of them is the fact that the name of the language popularly known as Mijili is incorrect rather it is formally known as Migili. The second fact duly noted by him is that the Migili people are not part of the Hausa tribe as they have been mistakenly identified by many.

The Migili tribe has a long history which dates back to the old Kwararafa Kingdom in Taraba State. The Kwararafa kingdom comprised of different ethnic groups such as Eggon, Algo, Idoma, and the Gomai. Each tribe took turns in occupying leadership positions of the kingdom and a heir was selected from the royal home of each ethnic group. But things changed when it was time for Akuka, a Migili descendant who was next in line to ascend the throne. Akuka was plotted against hence he could not become the next leader. This sparked up a lot of negative reactions from the Migili people as well as some other tribes who viewed such an action as unjust, a way through which they were deprived because of their small population. Together with all members of the tribe, Akuka moved down to a place called Ukari where they settled down for a while and later moved to Agyaragu in Lafia, Nasarawa State where they reside presently.

Today, the Migili people are known as settlers in Obi, Agyaragu local government, Lafia,

Nasarawa State, Nigeria. They can still be found in other places such as Minna, Abuja, Kubadha in Kaduna, Zuba e.t.c. The major population of about 18,000 people constitute about 96% of Obi Agyaragu local government area.

## **1.2 SOCIO – CULTURAL PROFILE**

The Migili language is rich in both its social and cultural aspects. Some of these aspects are their festival, religion, marriage, occupation e.t.c

### **1.2.1 OCCUPATION**

The Migili people are predominantly farmers. This occupation ranges from young to old, male and female. They produce a lot of crops but their major cash product is yam. Yams are produced for transportation to different parts of the country and they also engage in inter – village sales with their neighbours who do not produce the types of crops that they do. Migili people also grow crop such as melon, beans, guinea corn, rice and millet.

### **1.2.2 FESTIVAL**

There are two major festival celebrated by the Migili. These festivals are very important aspects of their culture as they expose their heritage and ancestral endowments. First is the farming season in which every farmer within the village premises is involved. During this farming season, they move from one indigenes farm to another in large groups cultivating, clearing and planting different types of crops for one another. After this has been done, a date is set to celebrate the harvest of these crops and this leads to the second festival which is the Odu festival.

The Odu festival is celebrated village – wide in Migili. This is a period of harvesting of crops, celebration of the harvest, exchange of pleasantries and entertainment in the village square. During the festival, the Odu masquerade which represents their ancestral values is dressed in a colourful attire with which it displays great dancing steps to the amusement and applause of the villagers.

Another festival that is celebrated in the village is the demise of an elderly indigene. This is done with a type of dance called Abeni.

### **1.2.3 RELIGION**

Before the arrival of the missionary, the Migili people were ardent traditionalists. They worshipped their ancestors some of which are Odu and Aleku. They had separate seasons at which sacrifices were made and worshipped them with dancing and entertainment. But things gradually began to change after the missionaries arrived thus most of them were converted to Christians, though a small population remain strictly traditional worshippers while some are Muslims.

### **1.2.4 MARRIAGE**

Marriage as an entity was approached from the early stages of childhood amongst the Migili people. Before the Missionary arrived, intercultural marriage was forbidden amongst them with serious consequences or punishment allotted the violation of such law. Marriage between indigenes was formally approached, by the father of the suitor, who informs the mother of the admired girl of his intention. Once an agreement has been reached, the first payment is made to confirm the betrothal of the female child who continues to live with

her parents until the due age has been reached. The male child(suitor) then pays his first installment of her dowry and engages in farming activities for his in-laws once every year. But today the order of things have changed and marriage within and outside the tribe is now by choice hence enhancing inter-cultural relationship.

### **1.2.5 MODE OF DRESSING**

The Migili dressing mode displays their cultural heritage, though their dressing is quite similar to that of the Hausa. Women wear short vests that expose their belly and long skirts that cover their legs, then they adorn their hands, forehead, lips and ankles with beads and bracelets. An interesting feature about their dressing is the plaiting of hair by both male and female indigenes. Though a bit of civilization has been introduced into their culture, hence influencing their dressing, a typical Migili indigene would still appear in colourful beads and bracelets.

### **1.3 GENETIC CLASSIFICATION**

This is the arrangement of languages into their different categories according to their relationship with other members of their category.

#### **NIGER KORDOFANIAN**

NIGER CONGO KORDOFANIAN

Mande Atlantic Congo

Atlantic Ijoid Volta Congo

Kru Kwa North Volta Congo Benue Congo

Akpe Platoid Defoid Edoid Nupoid Idomoid ukumoid Igboid Crossriver Bantoid

Tarokoid

Beremic Southern Adunic Alomic Ninzic West East North

Yeskwa Ayongie Koro Hyame Jiju Tyap Irigwe

Adapted from Roger Blench (2006)

Koro Zuba Koro Ija Jijilic Koro-Makamei **KORO MIGILI** koroLafiya

### **1.4 SCOPE OF STUDY**

As earlier mentioned, the purpose of the research project is to closely and carefully examine the Migili language and hence, expose its morphological aspects. Investigation would be carried out on the various morphological processes attested by the language. Various steps, theories and methods would be used and considered in the analysis and exemplification of the morphemes and their processes. Also, an accurate compilation of the alphabet in the language has been carried out in order to justify the compilation of the data and its analysis thereof.

### **1.5 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

This long essay has been divided into five different chapters, each containing certain aspect of the research work. Below is a highlight of the chapters and their contents; (i) Chapter one deals with general introduction into the background of the study, the historical background and socio-cultural profile;

(ii) Chapter two deals with literature review on the chosen aspect of the research work;

(iii) Chapter three deals with the presentation and analysis of data on the chosen work;

- (iv) Chapter four centers on the processes involved in the branch of study;
- (v) Chapter five deals with summary of the work done, observation, conclusion and recommendation of references.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In the execution of this research, both the informant and introspective methods/approach have been adopted for data collection. Two native speakers have been approached, hence providing the researcher with complete and accurate data from the Migili language. Also, a library/internet research has been adopted, serving as a guide on some primary aspects of the research such as, the geographical location of the language and its speakers, its genetic classification, its population size e.t.c.

Below is a brief information about the two informants whose help was sought;

### **Informant 1**

- (i) **Name:** Ayuba Osibi Haruna
- (ii) **Age:** 40 years old
- (c) **Occupation:** Personal assistant to the chairman, local government
- (iv) **Aspect:** Data collection (400 wordlist)

### **Informant 2**

- (a) **Name:** Dr Ayuba Agwadu Audu (JP)
- (b) **Age:** 62 years
- (c) **Position:** Village chief
- (d) **Aspect:** Historical Background and socio-cultural profile.

The Ibadan four hundred (400) wordlist served as the basis for data analysis. In it comprises a list of words in English language for which equivalent meaning has been substituted in Migili language. A frame technique has also been used in order to find out the use of words in into sentence context. A series of sentences have also been translated from English language Migili.

## **ASPECTS OF MIGILI MORPHOLOGY**

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