

The influence of the popular art and musical groups in distributing and preventing the Fur language in Sudan from dying out.

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Abstract.

This study attempts to identify the impact of the popular art as well as the various musical groups in preventing the Fur language from dying out. Fur language is a Nilo-Saharan language spoken in Darfur region in the south west of Sudan. Recent studies demonstrate that Fur language is affiliated to the ancient Nubian Language beside it is one of the most widely spoken languages in Sudan. It is ranked third after Arabic and English respectively. Fur is spoken by almost 5000,000 people and was the language of the entire state for hundreds of years (Idris Y. Ahmed (2020)). Thus, Fur is deeply rooted and seen as an ancient language which deserves the title of the mother of languages in Sudan. It has maintained its authenticity as well as its historical background and cultural depth simply because it has been the language of Fur Sultanate for hundreds of years.

In today's world the issue of protecting languages from dying out is vital particularly in multilingual communities where parents speak a language which is not definitely spoken by their children. As an inevitable result of what has been linguistically known as language shift, Fur language is not an exceptional case as long as its speakers, especially young age groups, regularly shift towards Arabic language. It has been recently observed that the phenomenon of language shift is predominantly increasing among the young generations in particular. Today, hundreds of parents including the researcher speak Fur as a native language, but unfortunately their children use Arabic as a lingua franca in their daily communication bases. A vast literature review shows that the most effective method via which we can protect indigenous languages such as Fur from disappearing is through adopting the recorded and printed documentation. Furthermore, it seems as if the digital era has enabled many youths to distribute different materials associated with Fur language via several social media applications. For instance, Artists, youtubers, and vloggers have been

effectively contributing to the process of language spread and protection when sharing their works benefiting from several social media platforms. Therefore, the study also attempts to investigate how those youths have positively contributed to the process of Fur language distribution all over the globe. To undertake this study, the researcher used a qualitative research methodology. The researcher initially interviewed three Fur native subjects for the privacy of the study. All of them were researchers and interested in investigating the cultural heritage of Fur native. To enlarge the data collection tools, the researcher has also relied on variety of sources specially when he lately observed that, Fur native artists, social activists and researchers in the area of cultural heritage have been given the opportunity on Sudan's national television to debate on issues of great concern to their communities particularly throughout Eid al- Fitr and Eid al- Adha the thing which was extremely rare in the past. The researcher has finally collected and analyzed the requested data to display the study results as well as the conclusions and the necessary recommendations. The study resulted into some findings of which the most significant is that popular art as well as the various Fur native musical groups have been contributing to the process of preventing the language from dying out.

Key words

Fur language, popular art, musical groups, preventing, dying out

1. Introduction

The situation where speakers give up their heritage language at will has been dramatized by the economist Abram de Swaan (2001) as “stampeding from their language” for an alternative with a higher “Q-value”. Several studies have shown that countless efforts have been presented to revitalize a considerable number of endangered and not any longer spoken languages. The efforts presented in protecting small languages from dying out also confirms that many of them are likely to be no-longer spoken within the next century as clearly stated by (Nettle & Romaine 2000, p. 40, cited in Hoffmann 2009, p. 6). And unfortunately, in such cases, there is someone who will be the last speaker and feel a great sadness according to (Krauss 1992, p. 6, cited in Hoffmann 2009, p. 6). Among the reasons behind the language death is the process of shifting from a language to another particularly when the new generations of speakers abandoned the use of their ancestral language. Krauss (1992: 6), states that the estimate of the world's languages which are no longer being learned by new generations of speakers is 50%. This estimation led him to conclude that “the number of languages which will become extinct during the coming century is 3,000 of 6,000.”

In case of the Fur language in Sudan, it seems as if parents speak the language fluently while the younger generations could not. And that is why they frequently shift from their native tongue language to Arabic the language of local majority as a result of many unavoidable factors including schooling. Today, the risk of losing the speakers of Fur comes from the fact that the new generations are no longer communicate in it at homes. In a multilingual community similar to the situation of Darfur, the truth is that having many languages being spoken by a great number of people makes it difficult for smaller languages to survive. However, the revival of the so-called small language is not absolutely melancholy. In addition to the above – mentioned factors, numerous publications have addressed the impact of globalization on language endangerment and have covered the subject matter very broadly. As clearly stated by authors such as Nettle & Romaine (2000), Crystal (2000, 2004), Skuttnab-Kangas (2000), Maurais & Morris (2003), and Hagège (2006), the impact of globalization on language death is evident. When speakers of any particular language are not being able to speak their native language, lack of practice can gradually result into loss of competence in the language. However, when the process turns into a phenomenon where all speakers experienced lack of language competence and the language can no longer be learned by their children, the situation can simply be characterized as dying or dead. The positive image in the case of Fur language lies in the vital role that have been played by various popular art groups to connect the Fur native speakers with their ancestral language via folkloric and traditional songs which encouraged many youths to learn the language. Additionally, as the situation of peace and stability deteriorated in Darfur during the last two decades, numerous people flee the country looking for better living conditions as asylum seekers. Many of them have managed to leave the country either as refugees or displaced people. However, the good news is that their newly established communities have been interrelated with their deep - rooted culture and the native ancestral language. That is why many Fur native artists and several musical groups have been regularly participating in conducting and performing musical concerts to those abroad in the neighbouring countries or to the various communities emerged as a result of recent migrations in the UK, USA and Australia using their ancestral language.

2. Statement of the study problem

The biggest potential for the continuity of Fur as a living language seems to be the shift of its young age groups of speakers towards Arabic. Today, we can say that there is a lack of intergenerational linguistic communication among the Fur native communities as parents and children speak differently at homes. This discrepancy reduces the continuity of Fur as a leading language among the new generations who prefer Arabic as a language of communication to achieve multiple purposes such as expanding access to

career opportunities, shopping, schooling, and when communicating with their peers. With the growing role of Arabic as a lingua franca, the process of shifting from Fur to Arabic may turn into a phenomenon. And when those young age groups experienced lack of their ancestral language competence and the language can no longer be spoken among them, this situation may simply be characterized as language endangerment or death. Therefore, there is every reason to believe that the large communication gap between the Fur native parents and their children is rapidly decreasing the number of speakers and one day we may lose the language unless serious actions and measures are made. Language policies in Sudan may also impact the process since the status of several minority languages is still unclear, particularly when it comes to teaching these languages in schools. So, we appeal to the language policy makers in Sudan to make courageous decisions that contribute to official teaching of these languages in schools. And yes, more research in this area affirms that lack of investment in teaching indigenous languages in schools encourages loss of identity. Additionally, together with teaching and learning these languages as school subjects, the researcher believes that other interested parties such as musical bands as well as the popular art groups can effectively participate in preventing the multiple national languages in Sudan from dying out.

3. Study Questions

1. What is the effect of the popular art in spreading the Fur language?
2. What is the impact of the numerical Fur native musical groups in motivating the language usage among the young generations internally and externally?
3. To what extent do digital tools enhance speaking Fur language among its interested learners?

4. Literature Review

This section covers a vast literature review to determine why a language dies, besides investigating some suggested measurements that mostly prevent languages from dying out. To highlight the role of the various Fur native musical groups in preserving the national languages and the cultural heritage, the chapter also briefly illustrates the immense effect of these groups on the newly established Fur communities in their countries of destination and internally as well.

1.4 Factors behind the death of languages

The literature review shows various factors that stand behind the death of any language, most of them are as follows: First, a language dies when its speakers do not pass it to the next generation or when they do not speak it within their community. Additionally, a language may slide into irrelevance when speakers lose access to advantageous circumstances through which they can earn a livelihood (Nettle & Romaine 2000, p. 5). Furthermore, (Singh & Jones 2005, p. 84) state that languages die out when speakers have some doubts that it forms an important component of their uniqueness. Moreover, when languages have no written and recorded documents or they are no longer in use today, we can simply classify them as extinct (Crystal 2000, p. 2). Likewise, a language can be a dilapidated version of itself when it is not passed from parent to children. In some cases, a language may reach the final destination of its long journey or simply die out when it has just one remaining speaker, whereas a language for which there are no present speakers is deemed to be extinct or dead (Crystal 2000, p. 20-21). This situation is also referred to as language endangerment or endangered language.

The definition of “endangered language” as shown by enormous studies wereintended to a language that is at risk of losing all of its speakers. According to some dire estimates, there are more than four thousand languages that may disappear by the end of the twenty-first century (Krauss 1992, p.7), and people are likely to use languages such as Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, and English (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Linguists believe that there are almost 7,000 languages spoken around the world, and eighty percent of the world’s population speaks one of 83 languages (Harrison 2007:14). However, it seems as if nearly 50% of the world’s languages are endangered languages as statistically stated by (Harrison 2007: 14) who claims that almost 3,000 languages are spoken by 20.4% of the people, and some 3,586 languages are spoken by only 0.2% of the world’s population. Based on such statistical summary, it can be said that in the case of Fur language in Sudan, the risk of losing its speakers comes from the fact that the new generations are no longer use it at homes, on the contrary, the majority found themselves shifting to Arabic. Krauss (1992: 6) states that the estimate of the world’s languages which are no longer being learned by new generations of speakers is 50%. This estimation led him to conclude that “the number of languages which, at the rate things are going, will become extinct during the coming century is 3,000 of 6,000.” Consequently, linguists have an extremely important role to deal with the situation of the current decline of many of the world’s languages (Hale et al. 1992). However, without clear measurements and vivid intervention to protect these languages from dying out, it seems as if linguists are going to lose the

very important thing they study. Krauss (1992: 10) writes: “Obviously we must do some serious rethinking of our priorities, lest linguistics go down in history as the only science that presided obliviously over the disappearance of 90% of the very field to which it is dedicated.” Studies also show that whenever possible, linguists have to assist communities and preserve languages besides documenting them. Accordingly, Hale (1992: 41) believes that, “while it is good and commendable to record and document fading traditions, and in some cases, this is absolutely necessary to avert total loss of cultural wealth, the greater goal must be that of safeguarding diversity in the world of people.” These interpretations have been rejected as some think that we have to treat each situation differently. For instance, according to Ladefoged (1992) when addressing a certain community in terms of opinions, customs, and needs, always there is a need to consider each situation carefully and sensitively, simply because “we should not assume that we know what is best for them” (Ladefoged 1992: 810). In many cases, people want to be part of the modern world and have made the conscious decision to give up traditional lifestyles, including language, in order to pursue that modernity.

In contrast, there are scenarios where a certain language is no longer spoken even by one single speaker and as a result it can't be used for limited purposes also, only a few expressions or words are used. Such languages are classified under a list of languages that are not being totally dead or alive. To put it another way, we can say that these languages are also known as sleeping languages which are likely to rise from slumber simply because their written documents are available and there is a likelihood of restoration of their previous standing. A good example of this classification is the case of Miami language which had been facing a decline in the last 30 years but is undergoing a revival at present time as investigated by (Leonard 2008, p. 2). Miami language is an Algonquin language which is used widely in Oklahoma.

4.2 Culture and language attitudes in Sudan

Lately, the spread of Fur native musical groups became a phenomenon as many of these groups constantly participate in various events such as students' graduation ceremonies, circumcision events and wedding festivals either internally or externally. Today, there are almost 39 artists enrolled under the umbrella of Fur native musical professions association based in Khartoum and their influence is extremely effective locally and regionally. The impact of these bands at the community level is great simply because many Fur speakers prefer the participation of the indigenous orchestras on their various occasions instead of the modern Arabic medium orchestras. Moreover, these musical groups have an immense effect on the newly established Fur native communities in their countries of destination as they

are regularly invited to participate in several events organized by these communities. There is evidence that during such ceremonies and events speakers of other languages are also participating simply because they are motivated by such a great music. Concerning language attitudes in the Sudanese context, the literature review shows that ethnic migrants in Khartoum are undergoing a significant shift to Arabic despite the fact that they hold positive attitudes toward their own languages (Miller and Abu Manga 1992; Mugaddam 2005). Language shift takes place when there is a language contact or when a certain language meets another. In the case of Fur language, the contact is caused by the reality of the existence of Arabic as a lingua franca in the entire region of Darfur. In a real comparison, at present, the new generations are less competent in Fur native compared to adults simply because young age groups are much effected by the process of shifting. For instance, the researcher aged 46 and can speak the Fur native language professionally but his children cannot even uttered a single word in that language and that is why we communicate with them in Arabic. Thus, it makes sense to say that parents across Darfur region are either bilingual or multilingual, however, their children become monolingual when they start shifting. Consequently, (Fasold 1987; Fishman 1972) state that holding positive attitudes toward a language, then, do not certainly result into maintenance efforts. However, negative attitudes on the other hand, seem to have played an important role in the endangerment of many African languages. It seems that such negative attitudes carried by the young age groups among other factors such as the need of the minorities to adapt the language of the majority for conducting businesses, getting better education and schooling as well as the vital requirements of some cultural integration will test the upcoming future of the Fur language. For instance, the process of language shift from Fur into Arabic is expected to continue since the young age groups of Fur are willing and able to gain success and integrate via shifting to Arabic as Fur language won't make their dreams come true. In some cases, language policies may force minorities to use a certain language according to the decision makers' will. It happened that during the intermediate stage, the author was among the students who were banished to use their vernaculars within the boarding school arena simply because Arabic was the only language allowed. However, it was unclear whether the banishment decisions were taken by the school administration or by the local authorities of ministry of education. As affirmed by (Adegbija 1984) the introduction of some European languages such as English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese were connected with the demoralizing conditions of master and servant, superior and inferior social interaction. The thing which classifies the European languages as languages of power and high prestige versus the languages of slaves and poverty represented in African languages. As a result, many Africans were unwillingly neglected their own languages and start learning

the European ones in desperate search of social and economic upgrading despite the fact that many countries have raised the issue of national nationhood in multilingualism after independence. To make this dream come true, they needed to promote the national languages as one of the most effective strategies. Thus, as an attempt to deal with this vital subject, some governments adopted indigenous languages as national or official languages descending from their roles as media of wider communication. However, the impact of the newly adopted policies was ineffective and added nothing positive as far as minority languages retention is concerned. The rare positive cases where the regional African languages replaced the European ones is the case of Swahili in Tanzania and Hausa in Northern Nigeria respectively. The study conducted by (Mugaddam 2005) revealed that among the minorities involved in language shift to Arabic in Khartoum were Nuba groups as well as Northern and Darfurian ones with existence of considerable shift variation from one group to another. The highest rate of shift showed by the study was registered by Gulfan, followed by Massalit, Zaghawa, Miri, Dongolese, Nobiin, Daju, and Fur, respectively. On the other hand, the study also displayed the highest rate of ethnic mother-tongue retention among Viri, Dinka, Shilluk, Madi and Beja and it appears that the four language groups which took the lead in ethnic language maintenance belong to the same geographical area, Southern Sudan simply because these groups represent the biggest population in Khartoum. Furthermore, when comparing the level of shift between adults and children across the entire community, the study illustrates that mother-tongue shift reveals a consistent decrease of mother tongue maintenance among adults with a significant increase among children. A good example provided by the study is the case of shift among children in Daju, Dongolese, Gulfan, Zaghawa, Fur, Massalit, Nobiin, and Miri. The vast literature review also shows that language shift can happen when a group of people are colonized and the colonizers become the majority while those being colonized become the minority. A good example to illustrate this point is the case of the Republic of Haiti the very small state with few populations. However, in Darfur, Fur speakers are demographically majority although they are deployed in a multilingual region where many vernaculars are spoken. Obviously, Arabic plays a very powerful role across the region in business, politics and still dominant in terms of culture, satellite, media and education. Consequently, minorities shift to use a language according to its function and when speakers adopt a new language they contribute to its spreading. Languages teachers as well as studies in the domain of applied linguistics have been addressing the need to integrate cultural knowledge into second and foreign language teaching (e.g., Lafayette, 1988; Moorjani & Field, 1988; Patrikis, 1988; Robinson, 1985; etc.). Additionally, numerous sociolinguists, communication theorists and anthropologists have investigated the connection between the

way the language is used and the cultural values which dictate this use (e.g., Hall, 1978; Hymes, 1962; Loveday, 1982; Scollon&Scollon, 1981; etc.).The connection between Fur language and its deeply rooted culture is inseparable. Many artists and popular art groups have taken up the banner of such connections. For example, musicians such as EboKrdum who made their way to Europe havebeen participating effectively in distributing the Fur native language and many more vernaculars via his targeted music. Several concerts have been organized across Europe for the honour of the newly established communities of Fur nation migrants. For instance, recently Fur communities worldwide have organized various musical concerts in celebration of the international day of Fur native language including the ones organized in Lyon, France and Manchester, UK respectively where several artists and musicians gathered to sing for peaceful coexistence and non- violence in Darfur. Television series with high image quality concerned with Fur indigenous drama have also been produced and uploaded on specific youtube channels.Moreover, it is also found that cultural competency is vital for productive communication since capability in linguistic knowledge does not guarantee successful use of the language(e.g., Alptekin, 1993; Beamer, 1992).Therefore, we have a firm belief that the popular arts groups associated with the indigenous culture of Fur nations have motivated many youths to develop better communication in their native language. This is true when we consider the huge number of young generations officially being enrolled at various languagecentres to learn the languagefor the purpose of effective communication with others.However, according to Tucker and Lambert (1973), the ability to communicate fully in a second language depends on the degree of non-ethnocentrism of the learner. Consequently, they think that successful learner must develop "an awareness of and sensitivity toward the values and traditions of the people whose language is being studied" (p.246). Lado (1957) investigatesthe contrast betweenlanguages and cultures for the purpose of identifying and describing problems that second-language learners will encounter. The study showed that individuals transfer and distribute forms and meanings from their native language and culture to the foreign ones. As a result, people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds regularly miscommunicate, however, their miscommunication is minimized by maximizing conformity. One good example to illustrate this point is the fact that non-natives must be able to communicate in the language in a manner that native speakers will accept as their own for instance if you want to know English, (Lado,1957). It seems that the non-native speaker's cultural background has been excluded by such a view point. And although suppressing one's own cultural identity may not appear to be so traumatic, but the nonnative speaker may feel compromised simply because the values of the English language clash with the values of one's own native language.

5. Material and methods

The data collection process is undertaken via a quantitative method where the researcher initially interviewed three Fur native subjects for the privacy of the study. All the study subjects were researchers and interested in investigating the cultural heritage of Fur native. Among them is a university professor and a social activist while the second study subject was Fur native language teacher and a founder of a widespread language learning centre based in Khartoum state. The centre's increasing visibility is a common knowledge simply because most of the teachers working there armed with a cumulative experience in teaching the Fur native and have been effectively contributing to its formal teaching. As a result, many students have taken an apprenticeship on their hands and successfully accomplished learning the ancestral native language. While the third subject was an English language teacher and a founder of association of Fur native speakers, a non – governmental organization with a collective understanding in the field of volunteering and social work. Additionally, the researcher has relied on variety of sources, accordingly, he recorded and analyzed a debatable TV show with respect of the study questions. On (2 – 3) August 2020, the third and the fourth days of the blessed Eid al- Adha, Sudan national Television hosted a group of activists, researchers, and academicians to discuss the overall impact of culture on social peace in Darfur region. The author attempted to make the best usage of their view points towards maintaining the role of the Fur native cultural heritage and language for intergenerational contacts as related to the current study. The audience included a university professor and an author of one of the most important books written in the Fur native language. Furthermore, among those were Fur native social activists, and researchers in the area of cultural heritage who have debated the impact of Fur culture and national language on peace and social coexistence in detail. Moreover, the participation of the two legendary artists (Mokhtar Toor Baare & Siddig Turmo) also represented an important contribution to the show within the framework of the diversity policy of attention recently espoused by Sudan's national television. What makes the study subjects being interviewed special is the fact that for almost a decade they have been involving in different activities associated with Fur communities' development particularly issues linked with those scattered around the slum areas of Khartoum state. The aim of the interview was to determine the exact impact of the various Fur native musical groups and the popular art bands in spreading the language among the youths who are greatly involved in the process of language shift.

The following are the interview questions distributed to the study subjects:

1. What is the effect of the popular art in spreading the Fur language?
2. What is the impact of the numerical Fur native musical groups in motivating the language usage among the young generations internally and externally?
3. To what extent do digital tools enhance speaking Fur language among its interested learners?

6. Summary and findings

As clearly stated above the first study subject being officially interviewed was an English language teacher, and a social activist. He is also a founder of association of Fur native speakers, (a non – governmental organization) actively involved in social issues and the development of Fur communities particularly the issue of preventing the native language and the indigenous cultural heritage from disappearing. In his reflection on the first study question, the participant believes that popular arts have started early in a limited geographical area and with a very little influence. However, amid the war outbreak in Darfur in 2003 which resulted into a vast displaced people around the capital city of Khartoum and several other big cities across the country numerous Fur native musical bands start to enlarge their works. It seems as if there was an urgent need for the intervention of popular arts groups, artists and those who are very interested in protecting their indigenous cultural heritages from disappearing. Thus, their participation has significantly expanded as they took part in different occasions such as circumcision celebrations, weddings, multi students' graduation events, and many more ceremonies that requested special concerts organizations. Generally speaking, Fur native parents prefer the participation of such bands in their social gatherings rather than individual singers. They prefer the popular bands because of the diversity of songs associated with their concerts as well as the varied rhythm of music that enables audiences including speakers of other languages to get involved and fully interact. Furthermore, speakers of other languages may also get attracted by the fundamental requirements of the folkloric aspects represented in the traditional musical instruments, the slinky style of the bands' members, the way they use accessories, and their hair styles. Similarly, such bands have also been established beyond the border to meet the needs of the refugees and the newly Fur native established communities around the world. What is interesting is that speakers of other languages internally and externally attend these events descending from the realism of music itself which is sometimes interpreted as the language of nations do. Regarding the second study question, the first study subject thinks that the influence of the several musical groups on facilitating Fur language learning is evident today simply because the reiteration of the traditional songs motivates many people to learn the language so as to be able to comprehend the words meanings.

Essentially, highly motivated generations get enrolled at instructed schooling system around Khartoum state to learn the language officially particularly in areas where Fur communities are intensively populated, for instance, in Mayo and Haj Yousef districts respectively. The impact of the traditional songs and their echo creates intense desire for learning the language, thus, many youths have been enrolled at the Fur native language schools where they successfully learned the language in a short period of time. There are appreciated evidences that the most talented ones have even wrote poetry in Fur native language and simply developed into song writers and composers. To name some, the famous singer Mokhtar Toor Baare whose concerts are regularly attended by a large public presence that no politician or a man of state can achieve is a good model.



Image 1: a public concert by the famous artist, composer, poet and song writer Mr. Mokhtar Toor Baare

Additionally, many more others have been attempting to get an opportunity within the long queues of students trying to be enrolled at such schools with limited school places. Apparently, the role of the social media and some smart phones applications in developing the Fur native language is undeniable today. The early revival to make the best usage of numerous social media such as Facebook, skype, whatsapp and the YouTube in distributing the language was evident as found by the first study subject. General speaking, the digital youths have managed to use their smart phones effectively to get access to especial online language learning groups instead of the daily hardship and suffering they may encounter to attend official schools scattered around the remote areas in the

capital city of Khartoum. The existence of Fur native alphabets keyboard has also facilitated the mission of many interested youths who are willing and able to download different materials and develop a good handwriting of their inherent language. Furthermore, the role of many Fur native schools and teachers in distributing the language is also evident today. Thus, our solute to those is simply what they deserve following the great efforts they have been presenting to develop and keep up its terminologies as well as protecting some words from dying out and bringing them back again. The second study subject is an iconic Fur native teacher and a founder of a centre that has been playing a vital role in teaching and supporting hundreds of students. It is a famous institute which has been providing the instructed methodology of language teaching and learning. What is so special about the centre is its location in Mayo district the most populated area with Fur community in Khartoum state and that is why huge number of students regularly receive education there. Successfully many students have graduated from the school with a communicative competence in Fur native. Therefore, the study subject believes that in ancient time popular and comedy are known and approved as the main effective methods in spreading and learning languages. So, Fur native popular art is deeply serving the spread of the language among different ethnic groups not only in the western region but also in the entire provinces of Sudan because the pronunciation of its vocabulary as well as its syntax are easy to be learned by non-native as they can simply comprehend the required meanings. So, several ethnic groups are interested in learning Fur native language. In his responding to the second study question, the participant thinks that music is one of the most important and useful elements that motivates learning the language. This view is based on the fact that both music and art are associated with luxuriousness and simply represent a fundamental part of humans' life. Hence, the Fur native numerical artistic groups have effectively motivated the young generations to learn the language either at home or abroad. They have undeniably contributed to its expansion of usage whether they use the modern musical instruments or the traditional ones. Regarding the third study question, the contributor confirms that digital equipment enhances the learning of Fur native language in number of ways: first, it facilitates the recording and the documentation of words and their equivalent meanings that can easily be learned by others. Second, digital devices simplify lessons recorded for those who missed face to face instructed classes. In other words, these devices enable Fur native language teachers to implement e-learning system and make the dream of distance learning comes true for many learners particularly the new generations born in cosmopolitan cities and have been involving in

language shift. The third study subject being interviewed was a university professor and a social activist who has a keen interest in investigating issues of national languages and cultural heritages. Therefore, he believes that musicians and popular arts groups have effectively contributed in distributing the Fur native language in general, but unfortunately the language associated with their music is not the standard one. In other words, these bands are much concerned with the musical rhythm rather than language simply what counts for their fans is the entertainment achieved by the folkloric dances, haircutting methods, and the accessories of bands members but not the performer's language. On the other hand, the existence of such groups has widely introduced the Fur nation and their heritage among other ethnic groups particularly in a multi-ethnic society of Khartoum state where different ethnic group bands compete each other and regularly participate in national musical concerts and several other occasions. However, the study subject observes that these musical groups have negatively impacted the old – school style of the folk songs and dance via introducing a new dance style that seems to meet the wishes of today's youth. Thus, the role of such musical groups in announcing the strangers with Fur deeply rooted native culture and heritage is undeniable but, their impact in teaching the language is very limited. No one can deny the importance of the numerous social media applications in today's world, however, their impact in distributing the Fur language won't be accomplished unless we adapt the language as a main communication means on the websites. Among the most widespread native bands are "Daky Baila & Fura Baila" based in Haj Yousif district, Khartoum state, although their music and folklore are attractive but the participant thinks that their fans are mostly entertained by the performance and rhythms rather than the language even the pronunciation of the lyrics associated with the music is unclear to the majority of audiences. Moreover, the heritage old – school style is at risk as many indigenous customs and traditions have disappeared with only some sort of them which still exist. Therefore, at first instance, speakers of other languages, fully recognize any Fur native group, although the performance of many bands is not along with a typical traditional group we have known. However, it is extremely important to touch this issue because children at home do not aware of language even when parents try to communicate with them in their native tongue they don't respond. One good example in dealing with language protection today is the establishment of several schools concerning with official teaching of many national languages including Fur native language to the new generation of speakers. To enlarge the data collection tools, the researcher has also relied on various primary sources especially when he has observed

that Fur native artists, social activists and researchers in the area of cultural heritage have been given the opportunity on Sudan's national television. Through occasions such as Eid al- Fitr and Eid al- Adha they can show their recent works and meet their audiences a thing which was extremely rare in the past. For example, On (2 – 3) August 2020, the third and fourth days of the blessed Eid al- Adha, Sudan national Television hosted a group of social activists and heritage researchers who managed to debate the influence of national languages and the cultural heritages on the promotion of peacebuilding among the various ethnic groups in Darfur. Fur native language was present during the programme period accompanied with the most two gifted and talented Fur native artists (Mokhtar Toor Baare & Siddig Turmo). Truly speaking, they are so popular musicians with multidisciplinary mixture of knowledge and skills that they need no introduction among the Fur communities. The former is also a composer and poet beside his meaningful music. His name was mentioned as a successful model of student who officially studied and graduated from one of the Fur native language centres with competence qualified him to become a super star who wrote and performed great songs. When asked about the current efforts in collecting the Fur heritage and its documentation process, Toor Baare believes that the efforts are inadequate and there is a need for investing more money to support those in charge of protecting the cultural heritage from dying out. Additionally, he thinks that most of the successful work in this regard are the result of individual efforts, therefore, music itself has witnessed a significant development particularly the musical instrument. For example, in the past the Fur music includes only drum as a single instrument, but recently many instruments had acceded its orchestra including piano, saxophone and bass. Concerning his fans, the artist states that they are not all from Fur communities, many speakers of other languages regularly attend his concerts to enjoy his music although few of them are familiar with the Fur language and can understand some words but they are mainly motivated by the music. He also states that in his songs he regularly calls for love and forgiveness hoping to contribute in the comprehensive social peace in Darfur. Thus, we can say that Fur language is actually learned by speakers of other languages via such an influential artist and his purposeful music. On the fourth day of the blessed Eid al- Adha another creative artist was hosted accompanied by several social activists. It was an innovative night where the artist (Siddig Turmo) has saluted his fans in Fur native and contributed to the TV show via performing several notable songs that harnesses the peace and stability opportunities in the diversified region of Darfur. Moreover, through the very cool TV show the episode guests broadly debated the importance of

culture and heritage in constructing unity within the diversity. Illustrating how we can make the best usage of diversity in terms of climate, people, cultures, and languages, many questions have been raised throughout the show, and according to the first guest, to maintain peace and stability, tolerance is a key issue in a community characterized with diversity. He also claims that heritage motivates leaning the national languages. The author of the published book titled: *Al -Fur language: heritage assets and grammar*, Idris Y. Ahmed was a plenary speaker on the proposed TV show during Eid al- Adha (2020). Descending from recent studies on Fur language, his excellency stated that Fur is affiliated to the ancient Nubian Language and was the state language for hundreds of years when Darfur was an independent state. It is one of the most widely spoken languages in Sudan. It ranks third after Arabic and English respectively and spoken by almost 5,000,000 people across the country. He believes that national languages in general should be protected and receive priority attention, and so, ought to be constituted as national wealth. Many national languages spoken in Darfur are connected to each other. This connection is considered as constructive when positively exploit towards reweaving the social peace. Accordingly, he thinks that languages can create population and development linkages in Darfur region within the downsizing of the native administrations' role in the latter period. For example, the role of languages in the USA a country unified by the movements of different communities, cultures and languages and united by the rule of law. As far as we know, the federal government did not impose any identity, but adopted the federal system which he also believes that it will be effective if we agree on it because our diversity as Sudanese is similar to the one, he has seen in the USA. The diversity of rhythms in Fur native music has contributed in distributing the culture, therefore, artists have a vital role to play in identifying their indigenous cultures to others. This point is also confirmed by another guest on the show illustrating that understanding heritage encourages others to learn the language and comprehend the meanings of words. Additionally, the third TV show guest states that it is extremely important to make the best usage of diversity in Darfur. And there is a need for making the best guidance of the diversity and cultures since this mixture will turn the country as a shining light to the world. The diversity of cultures and languages can also reflect the Sudanese unity to the entire world. The speakers also affirmed that tolerance culture is still dominant in the region. For instance, regardless the catastrophic situation since the outbreak of the civil war in Darfur in (2003), failed to silence the guns sounds, but the peaceful coexistence has been one of the pillars of the strong communities' ties. Thus, it seems as if people are able to forget the bitterness and hold

down on the wound so that the region does not come apart. They simply realized that when the region comes apart, Sudan would not tolerate anymore. Of strange things mentioned by one of the speakers on the show is that Sudanese living abroad have strong correlation with one another simply because they represent their country. Therefore, this beautiful image can be transferred back home. In addressing the identity subject, the plenary speakers agreed that via arts every ethnic group can display its cultural heritage and this is not achieved only by using the language they understand. So, the role of the national TV is vital in granting speakers of all the national languages the opportunity to display their cultural heritage since these languages are understood by both literate and non-literate people who will find themselves afforded the spirit of belonging. When someone hears a song in mother tongue, it gives the sense of belonging and getting back to his/her roots. Similarly, those living abroad feel homesick when watching such episodes in their native languages. These specific programmes will also refresh their memory recall and enable them to understand the importance of getting back to their roots and cultivate these concepts for future generations. Likewise, hearing some great songs blend with the blood of human beings and contributed in returning those working abroad to the embrace of the motherland. Arts and singing have a strong connection with the real situation of humans, for example, people of Darfur enjoy songs that call for peace and non-violence because they have experienced painful wars. Singing itself is a double-edged sword that can be used either positively or negatively. For instance, in Darfur, a female poet locally known as (Hakama) can be the spark of a relentless war or a peace dove through performing a poem. Denying some minorities the opportunity of displaying the cultural heritage via their native languages also raises the issue of cultural marginalization. Consequently, the new policies adopted by the national television can put an end to such kinds of marginalization and thus diversity will appear instead of focusing on a particular region. Regarding how we can make the best usage of the recent revolution of the various social media applications, the speakers think that these applications contribute to the distribution of the cultural heritage and can easily carry messages to hundreds of audiences in few seconds unlike the traditional media (radio & television). Thus, this is a call for young people to put their talents on various social media applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube rather than just rely on the traditional ones. For instance, a video can be viewed by 60,000 audiences or more within an hour, a thing which is unattainable via traditional media. Finally, the speakers confirmed that music and arts can effectively be utilized for sending clear messages regardless of the singers' language.

because the native audiences may enjoy the music and the language they understand while speakers of other languages simply enjoy the music as the saying goes music is the language of people. Therefore, music and arts can unify nations regardless the miscommunication between the singer and the listener. In Sudan the role of culture in social peace building is also vital and should be emphasized at this critical time in the country's history. This requirement is extremely important because we have experienced the marathon negotiations since the independence in 1956 between the successive governments' and the various opposition groups but the comprehensive peace has not been realized. To sum up this section, we can say that the widespread of fur native musical groups is associated with the recent crisis of Darfur which resulted into a mass internal migration towards Khartoum state in particular. The well-known musical groups (DakyBaila&FuraBaila) have been effectively participating in different events including the national ones. The names of the two main groups suggest unity of nations with symbol of coming closer to protect our people, land, and culture. Most of their songs have the essence and core of peace, unity resistance, and the refusal of giving up. What distinguish their music is the multiple rhythms that attract different sort of individuals, children, young and elderly people. The diversity of their music requires different sorts of tones that is why group work is essential during their performance where a chorus of men and women sing together in a harmonic manner. They sing for peace, unity, patriotism and while singing, they praise who deserves praising and loath who deserves loathing. For instance, their great participation during the sit – in strike of the general command of the armed forces amid the nation's turmoil in 2019 was highly appreciated. The excessive participation came as a response to the hatred invitations and the systematic demonization against the people of Darfur that has been conducted by the mass media of the former regime. The appearance of these groups was preceded by the innovations of some individual veteran singers such as the two deceased fur native songs icons, AbdellaQuka and Maryam Ammo who have put their finger printson the stage of fur culture and heritage through some immortal songs.

The honourable appearance of the Fur native university professors, authors, intellectuals, social activists, and researchers in the area of cultural heritage on Sudan's national television screen during Eid – Adha accompanied with the two artists was seen as a major event and heavily covered on social media. Among the comments appeared in various social media can positively read as hopes for new Sudan where everyone has the opportunity to display his culture on the national TV. Thus, it seems as if the national media corporation has changed its past removals policy under the new

era of the peaceful revolution that resulted into changing of the country's regime. One of the commenters states that "for 40 years I have never enjoyed mother tongue music live on the national TV screen but I am thankful to those who gave me the chance to enjoy these moments the reign of the cultural appropriation is now over". Furthermore, through the dissemination of various materials that call for the value of land, youtubers such as OmadKorom have also contributed to the distribution of Fur native songs, drama, and the cultural heritage. Indeed, taking advantage of the youtubers as well as the vloggers skills in computer sciences have enriched the Fur culture. So, whatever they have been posting through adapting the best usage of the modern social media platforms, is associated with the history and civilization of the region and have great influence on diaspora Fur native youths across the world.

7. Recommendations

1. There is a vital need to financially assist the various folk troupes along with the musical groups internally and externally.
2. Ministry of Culture and Information must support the relentless efforts of these folk groups in preserving the heritage as well as spreading vernacular languages in one way or another.
3. Parents at homes are highly requested to communicate with their children in their native languages to reduce the level of language shift.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that there are near consensus by the study subjects around the vital role of public art and the numerous musical groups in distributing the Fur native language at both national and international levels. Therefore, the researcher strongly believes that folk groups as well as the numerous Fur native musical bands have been indirectly playing a crucial role in spreading and preventing the language from dying out within the growing of the greatest threat represented in the phenomenon of language shift. The study summary and findings reveal that shifting from Fur native to Arabic is common especially among the young generations, however, the wide spread of different popular art groups has contributed to their passion for learning the language at the widespread schools in Khartoum state and other cosmopolitan cities at various regions of the Sudan. Based on the graduates' numbers, we can say that many students have successfully learned the native Fur language in order to facilitate their daily communication with others and also to

integrate with the rich cultural heritage and traditional songs that has been transmitted by these folk groups from generation to generation.

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