

Complete List of Nigerian Dialects by Population, Region, and Mother Language

Total Population: 229.5 million (2024) **Total Languages/Dialects:** 520+ varieties

MAJOR LANGUAGE GROUPS WITH DIALECTS

1. HAUSA LANGUAGE GROUP

Mother Language: Hausa (Afroasiatic family) **Total Speakers:** 48+ million native speakers | 63+ million including L2 speakers **Primary Region:** Northern Nigeria

Standard Varieties:

Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Notes
Kano Hausa (Kananci)	~8 million	Kano, Jigawa	Standard literary form
Daura Hausa	~3 million	Katsina, Jigawa	Classical standard

Regional Dialects:

Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Sokoto Hausa	~6 million	Sokoto, Kebbi	Hausa
Katsina Hausa	~5 million	Katsina	Hausa
Zamfara Hausa	~3 million	Zamfara	Hausa
Zaria Hausa	~4 million	Kaduna, Niger	Hausa
Bauchi Hausa	~3 million	Bauchi, Gombe	Hausa
Plateau Hausa	~2 million	Plateau, Nasarawa	Hausa
Kaduna Hausa	~4 million	Kaduna	Hausa

2. YORUBA LANGUAGE GROUP

Mother Language: Yoruba (Niger-Congo family) **Total Speakers:** 39.5 million | 47+ million including L2 speakers **Primary Region:** Southwest Nigeria

Major Dialect Clusters:

Dialect/Sub-dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Standard Yoruba (Oyo-Ibadan)	~12 million	Oyo, Ogun	Yoruba
Lagos Yoruba	~8 million	Lagos	Yoruba
Egba	~3 million	Ogun	Yoruba
Ijebu	~2.5 million	Ogun	Yoruba
Ekiti	~3 million	Ekiti	Yoruba
Ondo	~2 million	Ondo	Yoruba
Osun	~2.5 million	Osun	Yoruba
Kwara Yoruba (Okun)	~1.5 million	Kwara, Kogi	Yoruba
Ibadan	~4 million	Oyo	Yoruba
Ogbomoso	~1 million	Oyo	Yoruba
Ife-Ijesha	~2 million	Osun	Yoruba
Remo	~800,000	Ogun	Yoruba

3. IGBO LANGUAGE GROUP

Mother Language: Igbo (Niger-Congo family) **Total Speakers:** 27 million | 31+ million including L2 speakers **Primary Region:** Southeast Nigeria

Major Dialect Groups:

Dialect/Sub-dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Central Igbo (Owerri)	~8 million	Imo, Abia	Igbo
Onitsha Igbo	~4 million	Anambra	Igbo
Nsukka Igbo	~3 million	Enugu	Igbo
Anioma (Western Igbo)	~3.5 million	Delta	Igbo
Ngwa	~2.5 million	Abia	Igbo
Ohuhu	~1.5 million	Abia	Igbo
Awka	~2 million	Anambra	Igbo
Enugu	~2 million	Enugu	Igbo
Afikpo	~1 million	Ebonyi	Igbo
Orlu	~1.5 million	Imo	Igbo
Okigwe	~1 million	Imo	Igbo
Ikwerre	~800,000	Rivers	Igbo

4. FULFULDE/FULANI LANGUAGE GROUP

Mother Language: Fulfulde (Niger-Congo Atlantic family) **Total Speakers:** 22 million **Primary Region:** Northern and Middle Belt Nigeria

Regional Varieties:

Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Sokoto Fulfulde	~6 million	Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara	Fulfulde
Adamawa Fulfulde	~5 million	Adamawa, Taraba	Fulfulde
Gombe Fulfulde	~3 million	Gombe, Bauchi	Fulfulde
Bororo Fulfulde	~2 million	Plateau, Nasarawa	Fulfulde
Kano Fulfulde	~2.5 million	Kano, Jigawa	Fulfulde
Mbororo	~1.5 million	Various (nomadic)	Fulfulde
Niger Fulfulde	~2 million	Niger, Kwara	Fulfulde

5. KANURI LANGUAGE GROUP

Mother Language: Kanuri (Nilo-Saharan family) **Total Speakers:** 7.6 million **Primary Region:** Northeast Nigeria

Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Central Kanuri	~4 million	Borno	Kanuri
Manga Kanuri	~2 million	Yobe, Borno	Kanuri
Tumari	~1 million	Borno (northeast)	Kanuri
Bilma	~600,000	Borno (Chad border)	Kanuri

6. IBIBIO-EFIK LANGUAGE GROUP

Mother Language: Ibibio (Niger-Congo Cross River family) **Total Speakers:** 10+ million **Primary Region:** South-South Nigeria

Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Central Ibibio	~6 million	Akwa Ibom	Ibibio
Efik	~2 million	Cross River	Ibibio
Annang	~1.5 million	Akwa Ibom	Ibibio
Eastern Ibibio	~800,000	Cross River	Ibibio

7. IJAW LANGUAGE GROUP

Mother Language: Ijaw/Izon (Niger-Congo Ijoid family) **Total Speakers:** 5+ million **Primary Region:** Niger Delta

Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Central Izon	~1.5 million	Bayelsa	Ijaw
Kalabari	~800,000	Rivers	Ijaw
Nembe	~600,000	Bayelsa	Ijaw
Okrika	~500,000	Rivers	Ijaw
Apoi	~400,000	Ondo	Ijaw
Ibani	~300,000	Rivers	Ijaw

8. TIV LANGUAGE GROUP

Mother Language: Tiv (Niger-Congo Bantoid family) **Total Speakers:** 5 million **Primary Region:** Middle Belt

Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Central Tiv	~3 million	Benue	Tiv
Northern Tiv	~1 million	Benue (Katsina-Ala)	Tiv
Southern Tiv	~800,000	Benue (Konshisha)	Tiv
Eastern Tiv	~200,000	Taraba	Tiv

9. EDO LANGUAGE GROUP

Mother Language: Edo (Niger-Congo Edoid family) **Total Speakers:** 3+ million **Primary Region:** South-South Nigeria

Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Benin Edo	~1.5 million	Edo	Edo
Esan	~800,000	Edo	Edo
Etsako	~400,000	Edo	Edo
Owan	~300,000	Edo	Edo

10. NUPE LANGUAGE GROUP

Mother Language: Nupe (Niger-Congo Nupoid family) **Total Speakers:** 2.5 million **Primary Region:** Middle Belt

Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Central Nupe (Bida)	~1.2 million	Niger	Nupe
Northern Nupe	~600,000	Niger (Kontagora)	Nupe
Southern Nupe	~400,000	Niger (Pategi)	Nupe
Eastern Nupe	~300,000	Kwara	Nupe

REGIONAL MINOR LANGUAGES (100+ languages with dialects)

MIDDLE BELT LANGUAGES

Language/Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Berom	~500,000	Plateau	Berom
Goemai	~300,000	Plateau	Goemai
Jukun	~400,000	Taraba	Jukun
Mumuye	~600,000	Taraba, Adamawa	Mumuye
Idoma	~800,000	Benue	Idoma
Igala	~2 million	Kogi	Igala

ADAMAWA-UBANGI LANGUAGES

Language/Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Kutep	~200,000	Taraba	Kutep
Chamba	~300,000	Taraba	Chamba
Longuda	~150,000	Adamawa, Gombe	Longuda

CROSS RIVER LANGUAGES

Language/Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Ejagham	~150,000	Cross River	Ejagham
Bekwarra	~100,000	Cross River	Bekwarra
Yala	~200,000	Cross River	Yala

NIGER DELTA LANGUAGES

Language/Dialect	Population	States/Regions	Mother Language
Urhobo	~2 million	Delta	Urhobo
Isoko	~800,000	Delta	Isoko
Itsekiri	~500,000	Delta	Itsekiri

SUMMARY BY REGIONS:

NORTHERN NIGERIA (19 States)

- **Dominant Languages:** Hausa, Fulfulde, Kanuri
- **Total Speakers:** ~90 million
- **Major Dialects:** 40+ varieties

MIDDLE BELT (7 States)

- **Dominant Languages:** Tiv, Nupe, Igala, Idoma
- **Total Speakers:** ~15 million
- **Major Dialects:** 150+ varieties

SOUTHWEST (6 States)

- **Dominant Language:** Yoruba
- **Total Speakers:** ~45 million
- **Major Dialects:** 25+ varieties

SOUTHEAST (5 States)

- **Dominant Language:** Igbo
- **Total Speakers:** ~30 million
- **Major Dialects:** 35+ varieties

SOUTH-SOUTH (6 States)

- **Dominant Languages:** Ijaw, Ibibio, Edo, Urhobo
- **Total Speakers:** ~25 million
- **Major Dialects:** 200+ varieties

TOTAL LANGUAGE VARIETIES: 520+ dialects and sub-dialects across Nigeria