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**PROBLEMS OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN WEST AFRICA  
(ILLUSTRATED BY CAMEROON AND NIGERIA)**

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**Abstract**

A distinctive feature of Africa is its high degree of linguistic and cultural diversity. In a multilingual and digloss society, numerous minority languages are at risk of disappearing, which leads to the impoverishment of the world cultural heritage. In this regard, there is a need for a comprehensive study of the specifics of the language situation in order to identify existing problems, identify their causes and identify solutions. Cameroon and Nigeria were chosen to study existing sociolinguistic problems because they share a common colonial past, as well as similar sociolinguistic conditions. The authors give an analysis of the various factors of extralinguistic nature, posing a threat to local languages. Linguistic signs of language dying are described. The problem of division of language collectives as a result of artificial planting of borders in the colonial period, which leads to language dialectization, is also revealed. The study reveals the dependence of the vitality of a language on the existence of a writing system and grammar. The dependence of the level of functional load and viability of the language on its prestige in society has also been shown. The important role of the national language policy in creating the conditions necessary to increase the vitality of the endangered languages by increasing their functional load has been discussed.

Keywords: multilingualism, language policy, minority languages, indigenous languages, language death, Cameroon, Nigeria, West Africa

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[Connel, 1998].

[Batibo, 2005, 2008;

., 2014; Dressler, 2017]

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/> (accessed 11.10.2019).



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[Adegbija, 2001],

1970

PROPELCA (Programme de Recherche Operationelle pour l'Enseignement des Langues au Cameroun),

( [Romaine, 2002; Rosendal, 2008].

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#### For citation

. . 2020. ( -  
 ). . 39 (1): 83-89. DOI:  
 Blazhevich Yu.S. 2020. Problems of indigenous languages in West Africa (illustrated by Cameroon and Nigeria). *Issues in Journalism, Education, Linguistics*. 39 (1): 83-89. (in Russian). DOI: