

# English language in nigeria



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Many definitions have been given to language by language scholars. ALO (1995) cites some of these definitions, which we reproduce below: “

Language is the primary and most highly elaborated form of human symbolic activity...made up of symbols made by sounds produced by the vocal apparatus.... ” (A. A Hill) “ Language is any set of system of linguistic

symbols as used in a more or less uniform fashion by a number of people who are thus enabled to communicate intelligibly with one another”

( Random House, Dictionary of the English Language) Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication” (Wardhaugh).

“ Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols which permit all people in a given culture, or other people who have learned the system of that culture to communicate or interact”. (Finocchiaro). From the few definitions of language cited above, it should be clear to you that language is a human’s means of communication. Most of the definitions that have been given to language relate it to the process of human communication.

Although language is not the only means of human communication, it is the most important and organized’ means of human communication. But let us also note that language performs some other functions apart from communication. As you proceed in your B. A. Education (English) programme, you will become familiar with the numerous functions of language. But meanwhile, let us go back to the definitions of language cited earlier on. Study the definitions again and identify any features that are common to them.

Having identified the common features, use them to define language in your own way. Domains and Status Of Language It should be clear to you now that language is needed in all areas of human life. When we talk about the domains of language, roughly we mean the fields or areas of activities of language use. The fields or areas of activities of language use as well as the intensity of use partly determine the status accorded the language. Therefore, the status accorded a language is not inherently linguistic.