

Naija: The Cinderella for Nigerian and West African National Language, Unity and Identity

Omowumi Olabode Steven Ekundayo¹

¹Department of English and Literature, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

Article Info

Keywords:

Naija
Nigerian Pidgin and Creole
Cinderella
linguistic relativity
national language

ABSTRACT

The perennial questions about the national language and the Nigerian Pidgin (Naija) status remain unresolved in Nigeria. Hence, this paper focuses on the national language question for Nigeria against the theoretical background of the national language, national identity, and linguistic relativism. The paper sets out to reevaluate the common arguments often articulated against adopting Naija as the national language and advance the reasons why it should be adopted as the national language. The paper adopted the qualitative approach to research. Primary data were generated from the interview, observation, and spontaneous speech recording, while secondary data were taken from library materials and the Internet. Educated and illiterate Nigerians constituted the study population, and mixed and purposive sampling methods were used to select informants. It is established in this paper that it is the de facto national language and the most undermined and neglected among the five major languages in Nigeria. The paper concludes that language, a critical factor of production, has been undermined. Adopting Naija as a national language will foster national unity and cohesion, accelerate scientific advancement, facilitate democratization and enhance teaching and learning in the long run.

This is an open-access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Omowumi Olabode Steven Ekundayo
Department of English and Literature, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria
Email: ekuns20@yahoo.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is an amalgam of many ethnolinguistic nations, cultures, and religions, which Lord Lugard yoked together in 1914. The three largest ethnolinguistic groups are the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, but there are many other big and small ethnic groups, such as the Fulani, Ijaw, Edo, Igala, Tiv, Idoma, etc. Apart from the so-called big three and other local languages, there is Naija, the Nigerian Pidgin (NigP). The number of languages and dialects spoken in Nigeria is not precisely known. Guesstimates put them at between 200 and 530 languages and dialects [1], [2]. Unfortunately, Nigerian Pidgin is regularly relegated to the background in Nigerian languages, sometimes not mentioned at all [3]–[6].

Pidgin is not mentioned in this popular online source, and many other contexts in which local languages are listed. What criteria justify the inclusion of Fulfulde, Kanuri, and Ibibio and the exclusion of Pidgin in the list of Nigerian languages? This background of bias against Nigerian Pidgin and emphasis on Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo has regularly thrown up questions about the national language, which have not been resolved.

Against this backdrop, this paper reevaluates the perennial questions about the national language and examines their historical and scholarly perspectives intending to achieve the following objectives:

- a. debunk popular arguments against the adoption of Pidgin as the national language
- b. show that the use of indigenous African languages and NaijaPidgin will better express national identity;
- c. prove that NigP is indeed an indigenous Nigerian language having Nigerians as native speakers;
- d. Show that most Nigerians love and prefer Pidgin as the official national language and that Pidgin can very well function as the national language

The paper emphasizes the imperative of a national language in national development, social cohesion, and national identity. It reaffirms that the use of native national languages is a sine qua non for national development and socio-economic, political, scientific, and technological breakthroughs. Subsequent sections of the paper present the methodology, literature review and theoretical orientation, argument, conclusion, and recommendation.

2. METHOD

The paper is extracted from the report of a national survey of Nigerians' use of and attitude to Pidgin. It is predominantly qualitative and, to some extent, quantitative in outlook. The researcher conducted a national survey of Nigerian Pidgin's ubiquity and nationwide acceptance from 2007 to 2013 during his doctoral research on a similar topic on the English language in Nigeria. The study was augmented in 2015 and 2016.

Educated and illiterate Nigerians constituted the population of the study. Mixed sampling methods were used to sample informants across Nigeria. First, cluster sampling was used to divide Nigeria into five zones. The researcher modified the well-established six geopolitical zones into five zones: North, West, South, East, and Central Nigeria. The purposive sampling method was then used to select three cities from each of the five zones. The criterion for the purposive selection of cities was a population with a cosmopolitan nature of the cities. Accordingly, the most thickly populated or strategically located cities in each region were selected, and fewer than three thousand informants were reached in each zone through quota sampling.

The researcher used both primary and secondary data. The primary data were elicited from the interview, observation, and spontaneous speech recording, while the secondary data were taken from library materials and the Internet. The researcher traveled to all Nigeria zones and used research assistants. Data were gathered through observation, recording of people's interactions, and interviews. The researcher keenly observed the

attitudes of the Nigerian masses and the elite to Pidgin and how, why, and where Nigerians used it. A structured interview was used to elicit information about the popularity rating of Nigerian Pidgin and people's willingness to accept Pidgin as the national language. The questions were put in standard Nigerian English and Pidgin and then read to educated and illiterate informants. Information volunteered was recorded or written and tallied in jotters on the interview spots.

The data were collated and analyzed over nine years, from 2007 to 2016. Consequently, they were qualitatively described and annotated with arguments for or against them. Tables and schemas were also used to graphically present data and variables. Ordinal data were put in frequency tables and charts and annotated accordingly for easy reading and comprehension.

3. ARGUMENT AND DISCUSSION

Naija is a linguistic Cinderella and the most qualified to be declared national lingua franca, given its numerous strengths, popularity and ubiquity, uniqueness, attitudes of Nigerians to it, and its prospect for education, democratization, and national cohesion.

3.1. Naija, the National Language Cinderella

The Cinderella tale is prevalent in folklore, with different versions from culture to culture. In the Italian language, it is called *Cenerentola*, *Cendrillon* in French, and *Aschenputtel* in the German language. The story of a slave girl who later met and married a King originated in Egypt in Africa in the 7th century B.C. The leitmotif and character abound in the world's folktales, such as 'the lucky slave girl,' 'the fortunate princess,' 'the lucky orphan,' etc., whose name varies from one setting to another. The story's subject matter is unfair oppression and unexpected deliverance and reward. Cinderella's two sisters maltreat her all the time, making her do all the disgusting domestic chores and despise her despite them.

Nevertheless, one day, Cinderella meets Prince Charming and marries him, which changes her destiny. 'Cinderella' has now become a symbol for something or somebody whose qualities were ignored, who surprisingly gains recognition, success, and power after a period of neglect, obscurity, and disdain. Naija language is a linguistic Cinderella of many strengths.

3.2. The Strengths of Naija Languej

The strengths of Naija are better shown when the language is matched with the criteria for selecting a national language. Bamgbose [7] gives six criteria: *nationism*, *nationalism*, *vertical integration*, *acceptability*, *population*, and *language development*. By 'nationism,' it meant a language of wider communication (LWC) like English which is not indigenous to Nigeria but can foster national unity and cohesion. Nationalism and patriotism are at the core of adopting a national language. A national language should be home-grown and proudly native, not foreign. Such a language should be widely accepted (acceptability), spoken by a sizeable proportion of the people (population), capable of achieving national cohesion (vertical integration), and should be well-developed and

standardized (language development). Bamgbose then used these criteria to score the languages being proposed for a national language, as shown in the table below (modifications are in square brackets, and the horizontal lines are not in the original table:

Table 1. Rating of Language Types [8]

Language]	Nationism	Nationalism	V. Int	Acceptability	Popu	Lang Dev.
1. LWC [English]	+	-	-	±	-	+
2. Arabic	-	+	+	±	+	+
3. Indigenous language						
a. Major [Hausa, Yor. Igbo]	-	+	+	±	+	+
b. Minority [e.g., Edo, Igala]	-	-	-	-	-	-
c. Artificial [Guosa]	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Pidgin	-	+	+	-	-	-

Table 1 shows how Bamgbose scored in each of the languages. The plus (+) signs mean that the language satisfies the criterion, and the minus (--) means it does not satisfy the above criterion. Arabic and indigenous languages score the highest points of five out of six, with 50/50 under acceptability, meaning that many people accept and reject the adoption of any of the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo languages. Minority languages score zero in all the criteria but one (nationalism), while artificial language scores no points. Pidgin, at the bottom, scores two points only on nationalism and vertical integration. Thirty years after this assessment, Nigeria's sociolinguistic environment has changed so much that Bamgbose's ratings no longer reflect the current reality. Even in the early 1990s, it is surprising that he scored Naija minus on the population criterion. Does that mean that in 1991 Naija had no sizeable population of speakers in Nigeria? Bamgbose's assessment here is questionable because, twenty years before Bamgbose's work, Mafeni [9], Agheyisi [10], and other scholars had shown that Naija had the highest population of speakers in Nigeria. Bamgbose also gave Naija minus under language development, which is arguable. A plus-minus (±) sign would have been more exact here because Naija already had a developed spoken form and a developing written form in 1991. Many scholarly works had been done on Naija before 1991, some of which have been cited here. Four other criteria of geopolitical neutrality, linguistic closeness to other local languages, the teeming population of native speakers, and intranational spread are added to the six criteria mentioned above. The ten criteria are then matched with the four major Nigerian languages competing for the office of the national language.

Geopolitical neutrality here means that the language does not unduly favor an ethnic region, group, and culture, as the Yoruba favors the Yoruba people, Fulfude the Fulani people, etc. While all the major and minor indigenous languages fail on this point,

Naija can be scored between 80% and 100% because it is the only Nigerian language that is ubiquitous and popular nationwide, which every Nigerian can claim as his or hers.

Linguistic affinity is used here to denote the similarity of a language to other surrounding languages. Interestingly, Naija can be awarded 100% here, for it is the only Nigerian language that sounds like English on the surface of vocabulary but has the grammar of its surrounding Nigerian languages. Nigerians speak it precisely in the way they speak their mother tongues in prosody. Its vocabulary is a mixture of English, Portuguese, French, Spanish, local languages, and purely Naija words.

Naija also satisfies the criteria of nationism and nationalism. It is nationally well spread, made in Nigeria by Nigerians for Nigerians, though some linguists and people belabor the point that Naija has no native speakers as Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, an arguable point. The questions here are (i) was Naija imported like English, French, and Arabic to Nigeria? The answer is No. (ii) Where did Naija originate, in England or Nigeria? It originated in Nigeria. (iii) Which people speak Naija with native competence? Nigerians speak it. Is the source of a language not its native land of origin? Naija originated in Nigeria and is popular, unique, and ubiquitous.

3.3. The Popularity, Uniqueness, and Ubiquity of Naija

The fourth parameter for selecting a national language is its potential for national cohesion. Again, Naija leads on this point. Naija is used everywhere in Nigeria. Regarding national spread, Naija comes before Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. It has the highest speakers, well over one hundred million Nigerians. It is the indigenous African language with the highest number of speakers and the Pidgin/Creole with the highest number of speakers in the world [11]; the language one hears loudest at all major markets in Nigeria: Onitsha Market in Anambra State, Alaba, Tejuosho, Mile 2, Mile 12, and Oshodi Markets in Lagos, Wyatt Market in Calabar, New Benin, Oba and Satana Markets in Benin City, Central Market in Kaduna, Kano, Jos, Ilorin, etc. Even among siblings who speak the same mother tongue, Naija is sometimes used for interaction at home because the grammars of local languages and Pidgin are similar. Outside Nigeria, Naija is the lingua franca of Nigerians in Diasporas; for wherever Nigerians who speak different languages gather in a foreign land, they use Naija for interaction, and this bestows on them a Nigerianness that none of English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and other local languages can. Further, speaking Naija helps to cut off foreigners who probably understand English.

The Nigerian language has an international power not found in other Nigerian languages, often proposed as national languages. It is the international language of Africa. Pidgins speak most of the languages of Africa [9], [11]–[14]. Pidgin varieties of the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, and Cameroon share mutual intelligibility. In addition to this widespread advantage, Pidgin links Africa to Europe linguistically and historically. There are wide other varieties of English-based Pidgins as well as other European-language-based Pidgins all over the world. West African Pidgin varieties emerged from contact with European and African languages. Therefore, Pidgin is a mixed-race child; for it gathers its vocabulary from English and African languages and emerges a distinct ‘Afro-Proto-Germanic language,’ or ‘Afro-Anglo’ language, which is indigenous

African creation from the contact of African and Proto-Germanic languages. Now, Afro-Anglo Pidgins flourish in Africa. The terms Afro-Anglo and Afro-Proto-Germanic are coined here to denote Pidgins based on a mixture of European languages: French, English, Dutch, and African [15].

In the areas of use and function, Naija is taking over all the domains of our personal and collective life. It is the language that secondary and higher institutions students use in hostels, military and paramilitary personnel, and their families in the barracks, the language of popular culture, particularly Nigerian stand-up comedy and hip-hop, and Naija gives them their uniqueness and compelling Nigerianness. In the advertisement, broadcasting, television drama, and Nigeria home video, Naija is suffocating English. Even in official communication, Naija has assumed pride in place.

At critical points in the classroom and formal discourses, scholars use Naija to achieve clarity, simplicity, and Nigerianness. Politicians in the 2015 and 2019 general elections used Naija for their electioneering in different parts of Nigeria. Twenty-five years ago, Elugbe [16] stated that Naija was yet to enter the domains of religious evangelism in Christianity and Islam. Today, Naija has entered those domains. In the Niger Delta, the *Jesus of Nazareth* film has been translated into Naija, and both Christian and Islamic clerics now use Naija to evangelize. The Jehovah Witness organization has translated many Bible verses into English. In sports, too, Naija is jostling menacingly with English. Football commentaries are now run in Naija. One cannot think of any area of life that Naija has not penetrated.

3.4. Attitudes of Nigerians to Naija

Nigerians are proud of Naija, and a majority of them interviewed proposed Naija as the national language. Tables 3 to 10 below show the statistics of responses from 15,000 Nigerians from 2010 to 2019 on the suitability of Naija as the national language.

Question 1 : *Which of these languages is widely spoken everywhere in Nigeria?*

Naija : *Wich languej pipul dey speak welwel for evriwie for Naijiria?*

A. Pidgin B. English C. Hausa D. Yoruba E. Igbo

Table 2. The most widely used language in Nigeria

S/N	Figure over 15,000	Percentage
A: Pidgin	12,300	82%
B: English	2,000	13.3%
C: Hausa	280	1.86%
D: Yoruba	238	1.8%
E: Igbo	182	1.2%
F: Others	77	0.5%

Table 2 shows that Nigerians agreed that Naija is the most popular language in Nigeria, which is apparent even from a cursory or careful observation as one moves around Nigeria. Questions two (2) and Tables (3) to (9) show the responses from informants on the

question of the desired national language for Nigeria. The responses/figures are arranged according to the five significant zones of Nigeria studied.

Question 2 : *Which of these languages will you propose as our national language?*

Pidgin : *Wich languej you want govment to jeneral languej for everibodi?*

A. Hausa B. Yoruba C. Igbo D. Nigerian Pidgin E. Name any other

Table 3. Response from Northern Nigeria: Bauchi, Kano and Kaduna

S/N	Figure over 3,000	Percentage
A: Hausa	1,300	43.3%
B: Yoruba	250	8.3%
C: Igbo	204	6.8%
D: Pidgin	1,080	36%
E: Others	166	5.5%

Table 3 shows that Hausa is in the lead with 43%, followed by Pidgin with 36%. The preference for Hausa in the north is a result of its popularity as the native language of the Hausa who populate the area and the lingua franca of other non-Hausa Nigerians in northern Nigeria.

Table 4: Response from Western Nigeria: Lagos, Ibadan, and Ore

S/N	Figure over 3,000	Percentage
A: Hausa	200	6.6%
B: Yoruba	1,029	34.3%
C: Igbo	299	9.9%
D: Pidgin	1,472	49%
E: Others	100	3%

In table 4, Naija has the edge over Yoruba because of its popularity in Ibadan and Lagos, the two largest conurbations in Nigeria.

Table 5. Response from Eastern Nigeria: Onitsha, Owerri, and Aba

S/N	Figure over 3,000	Percentage
A: Hausa	185	6%
B: Yoruba	220	8%
C: Igbo	1,030	36%
D: Pidgin	1,300	45%
E: Others	265	5%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that Igbo ranks second after Pidgin, with 36% in Eastern Nigeria, which includes Onitsha, Owerri, and Aba. Table 6 below shows the response from Central Nigeria.

Table 6. Response from Middle Belt (Central Nigeria): Abuja, Ilorin, Makurdi

S/N	Figure over 3,000	Percentage
A: Hausa	282	9%
B: Yoruba	300	10%
C: Igbo	250	8%
D: Pidgin	2,068	69%
E: Others	100	3%

Informants in Central Nigeria voted for Pidgin (69%), and Yoruba trailed behind with 10%, as in table 6.

Table 7. Southern Nigeria: Benin, Warri, and Port Harcourt

S/N	Figure over 3,000	Percentage
A: Hausa	40	1.3%
B: Yoruba	62	2%
C: Igbo	65	2.1%
D: Pidgin	2,793	93.1%
E: Others	20	0.6%

The highest votes for Naija were recorded in the South, as shown in Table 7. Informants voted massively in its favor (93.1%) and expressed a strong passion and dream for it as a national language. Table 8 below shows the total sum scores from the different zones.

Table 8. Aggregates for the Four Major Nigerian Languages

S/N	Figure over 15,000	Total	Percentage
A: Hausa	1,300+200+185+282+40	2,007	13%
B: Yoruba	250+1029+220+300+62	1,861	12.4%
C: Igbo	204+299+1030+250+65	1,848	12.%
D: Pidgin	1080+1472+1300+2068+27 93	8,713	58%
E: Others	166+100+135+150+20	641	4%

Against this backdrop, and based on observed national spread, use, and function, Naija was the number one native language in Nigeria before Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. It is, therefore, necessary to revise Bamgbose's [8] table to reflect current sociolinguistic trends in Nigeria, which is done in table 10 below. Instead of the plus and minus signs in Bamgbose [8], each conceptual variable is operationalized and scored over ten (10) marks to get the total score and percentage for each language. There are ten criteria (10 x10=100%) for each language considered and scored on the following operationalized criteria:

1. **Int. Sprd:** *International Spread and Acceptance*. If the language is international, spoken on all the continents, it can be scored 10. Only English meets this criterion, closely followed by Arabic and Naija varieties used in other continents.

2. **Nat--Sprd:** *National Spread and Acceptance*. If the language is used nationwide and well accepted, it can be scored ten marks. Only English and Naija satisfy this criterion in Nigeria. A language restricted mainly to a region of the country scores two marks. For example, Yoruba has native speakers mainly in Western Nigeria (2 marks), Central Nigeria (2 marks), and outside Nigeria (2 marks). Total is then six marks under **Nat.sprd**.
3. **SOLs:** *Similarity to Other Languages Used in Nigeria*. If the language is similar to many others, it can be given 10. Only Naija satisfies this point. At nearly all levels of language organization, Naija sounds like its neighboring languages.
4. **N--sm: Nationalism**. Does the language instill nationalism in Nigerians? Does it give Nigerians a sense of clear socio-cultural and linguistic national identity? If yes, then the language can score 10. Again, Naija leads here.
5. **Nat--Int:** *National Integration*. How well does the language foster national integration, socio-cultural cohesion, and nationhood? Again, Naija and English stand out here.
6. **Ind. S:** *Indigenous Status*. Is the language indigenous to Nigeria? Is it home-grown or foreign? If it is foreign, then it may not be given any mark. Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Naija, and other local languages lead on this parameter because they are home-grown in Nigeria.
7. **Popu:** *Population*. Does the language have a large population of speakers all over the country? Does it have native speakers? Pidgin, Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo score high on this criterion. Naija has the highest number of speakers of all the languages used in Nigeria.
8. **Lang. Dev:** *Language Development*. How well-developed is the language? Is it standardized, particularly its written medium? A standardized written medium is five marks, and a vibrant spoken medium is five marks. Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, etc. score high on this point, but Pidgin's vibrant spoken medium is not matched with a vibrant standardized written medium, but it certainly has some emerging orthographic features.
9. **N.S:** *Neutral status and Geopolitical and Ethno-Linguistic Neutrality*. Does it unduly favor a particular ethnic group to control, manipulate and dominate others sociolinguistically, culturally, and otherwise? Can all Nigerians lay claim to it as their language? English, Pidgin, and artificial languages are leading in this criterion
10. **AUF:** *Areas of Use and Function*. How widely used is the language? Is it used in all the spheres of our national and private life all over the country? Again, Naija and English stand out here. The scores are presented in table ten (10) below:

Table 9. Rating of Potential National Languages for 2016

Language	Int.Sprd.	N-sm	SOLs.	N-Sprd.	N--Int.	Ind.S	Pop.	L.Dev.	N.S	AUF	Total / %
1. LWC: English	10	0	0	07	06	0	0	4	0	07	58
2. Arabic	06	0	0	06	02	0	06	10	05	06	41
3. Indigenous languages:											
a. Hausa	06	07	04	05	04	10	07	10	0	08	55
b. Yoruba	05	07	04	05	04	10	07	10	0	08	50
c. Igbo	04	07	03	03	04	10	05	10	0	08	48
d. Minority [e.g Edo, Igala]	0	0	0	01	0	02	02	10	0	06	29
e. Artificial Language [Guosa]	0	07	0	0	0	10	0	02	10	01	20
f. Naija	07	08	10	08	08	08	10	06	10	10	79

Table 9 presents the current trends. Standard English satisfies nationalism and language development, but it has issues with other criteria. Naija comes first with 79%, and English trails behind with 58%. Hausa and Yoruba have 55% and 50%, respectively, while Igbo has 48%. These figures are presented in the bar graph below to make the chain of margins and percentages vivid.

Despite its ubiquitous presence, widespread use, and function, Naija is not listed as the number one language in Nigeria. The Nigerian Government, the Nigerian intelligentsia and elite, Nigerian linguists, and language scholars who should be committed to its development are disengaged with and nonchalant about it. Nigerian linguists should have long taken up the challenge of standardizing the language and providing comprehensive grammar textbooks and dictionaries. Fortunately, even though elitist Nigerians may not appreciate its value, more realistic, foreigners acknowledge Naija as the number one language in West Africa. BBC now broadcasts news in Naija Pidgin. A French President spoke Naija during his visit to Nigeria on Jul. 04, 2018. He received a rousing ovation that one expresses joy when a total stranger speaks one's language: 'Mai neym na Imanuel Macron. Na me bi di President of France and I de kampe in Lagos today' (sic: ought to be 'I de kampe for Lagos today).

Furthermore, visiting Prince Charles of Wales followed the path beaten by Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday, Nov. 07, 2018. He switched from his Queen's English to Naija: 'Hau you dey?... God don bota mai bred' (How are you doing? God has buttered my bread). With commitment, industry, and standardization, Naija can be upgraded for teaching and democratization.

3.5. Naija and Education in Native Tongues

Using the mother tongue/first language is a sine qua non for effective teaching and learning. Hence, UNESCO recommends education in the mother tongue. Fafunwa [17] repeatedly lamented the practice of educating Nigerian children in foreign languages, particularly in childhood and early teenage (1-12 years), and he fought to correct it throughout his active intellectual life. In the famous and very successful Ife Project in mother tongue education, Fafunwa and his research group demonstrated that education in the mother tongue is most beneficial to children's intellectual development. Bamgbose [18] later echoes this concern as well: 'There is a dominance of imported European languages in various domains as a result of 'colonial language policies. In the educational system, the non-use of African languages as the media of teaching and learning causes high failure, repeat, and dropout rates in the school system in many African countries (p.8). A decade later, Asiyanbola [19] also observes that Nigerians have neglected their mother tongues in favor of foreign languages, endangering our languages and cultures and hampering accelerated development.

4. CONCLUSION

The work demonstrated that Naija is the number one language in Nigeria, that Naija is a home-grown Nigerian, and that it is the most suitable national language. Accordingly, the work proposes as follows:

- a. The Nigerian Government should set up a National Commission for Language Development (NCLD).
- b. Naija and local languages should be the media of instruction at all levels of education, while English should be taken as a compulsory Foreign Language from year one to the final year in higher institutions.
- c. Naija Languaj should be declared Nigeria's national language now. Delays are dangerous.
- d. Departments of Naija Languaj, Culture, and Literature should be established in Nigerian universities
- e. Government and scholars should encourage genuine efforts geared towards developing Naija, such as the laudable efforts of Oshiorenoya Esizimotor, who runs a center for Naija in Benin City, Naija Languaj Akademi, and our newly established Naija Languaj Studies Association (NaLSA).
- f. The constitution should be reviewed or bills passed to the law in the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly to make explicit provisions for the use and function of Naija.
- g. Southern States like Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Edo, and other multilingual minorities should declare Naija their State and official language for unity and to detribalize Nigerians.
- h. NTA Network News at 9. p.m. should henceforth be broadcast in Naija. Already the BBC has shown a very inspiring example with its News in Pidgin. Charity begins at home before it can extend abroad.

REFERENCES

- [1] D. H. Crozier and R. . Blench, *An index of Nigerian languages*, Second. Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1998.
- [2] M. P. Lewis, G. F.S, and D. . Charles, *Ethnologue: Language of the word*, 18th ed. 2015.
- [3] Y. Montoya, "Grammaticalization in Nigerian Pidgin," *Ikala*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2012.
- [4] E. O. Mensah, "Lexicalization in Nigerian Pidgin," *Concentric Stud. Linguist.*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 209–240, 2011.
- [5] R. A. Tiamiyu and G. A. Olaleye, "Substituting the English Language through the Invigoration of Nigerian Languages: The Hypocrisy behind the Scene.," *IOSR J. Humanit. Soc. Sci.*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 75–80, 2014, doi: 10.9790/0837-19437580.
- [6] N. U. Emeka-Nwobia, "The Place of Indigenous Nigerian Languages in National Development," *Online*, vol. 5, no. 12, pp. 2225–0484, 2015, [Online]. Available: www.iiste.org.
- [7] A. Bamgbose, "Language and the National Question in Nigeria," *African Notes*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 70–80, 1990.
- [8] A. Bamgbose, *Language and the Nation: The language question in subsaharan Africa*. Edinburg: Edinburgh University Press, 1991.
- [9] B. Mafeni, "Nigerian Pidgin," in *The English language in West Africa.*, London: Longman, 1971.
- [10] R. Agheyisi, "West African Pidgin English: Simplification and simplicity," University of Stanford, Ann Abhor, 1971.
- [11] G. . Faraclas, *Nigerian pidgin descriptive grammar*, Routledge. New York, 2005.
- [12] N. Ubanako, "Rethinking language policy in multilingual Cameroon," *Pap. English Linguist.*, vol. 11, pp. 108–122, 2010.
- [13] L. C. Yuka, "On English as a minority official language in Cameroon," *Pap. English Linguist.*, vol. II, pp. 102–113, 2011.
- [14] Michaelis, Susanne Maria & Maurer, Philippe & Haspelmath, Martin & Huber, and Magnus, "The atlas of pidgin and creole language structures," *Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology*, 2013. <https://apics-online.info/> (accessed Dec. 07, 2022).

-
- [15] O. O. . Ekundayo, *Meyk naija awa nashonal languej now*. Benin: Ofuname Waves, 2018.
- [16] B. Elugbe, "Nigerian pidgin: problems and prospects," in *New Englishes: A West African Perspective*, A. Banjo, A. Bamgbose, and A. Thomas, Eds. Ibadan: Mosuro, 1995, pp. 284–299.
- [17] A. B. Fafunwa, J. I. Macauley, and J. A. F. Sokoya, *No Title Education in Mother Tongue: The Ife Primary Education Research Project (1970-1978)*. Ibadan: University Press, 1989.
- [18] A. Bamgbose, "Language and good governance," in *language and good governance and the necessity of history*, S. Ogude, Ed. Ibadan: Nigerian Academy of Letters, 2007.
- [19] A. A. Asiyanbola, "The roles of the mother tongue and second language in the socio-political and economic development of Nigeria," in *language, context and society: A festschrift for Wale Adebite*, A. Ayoola, Kehinde & Odebunmi, Ed. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 2016, pp. 113–128.
-