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<td>Uguru Joy O.</td>
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A Common Nigerian Language
(Revised Edition)

Joy O. Uguru
A Common
Nigerian Language
A Prerequisite for National Identity and Development

(Revised Edition)

Joy Otochi Uguru
Humanities Unit
School of General Studies
University of Nigeria,
Nsukka
Dedication

To a United Nigeria
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"Tell Nigerians that I am very well.

Also, in his survey on the use of Nigerian Pidgin in Effurun, Obrorindo (2005:5) reports that a primary school teacher proved the extent of pidgin usage in her school in the following statement:

The students in my class speak more of Pidgin English than their mother tongue and even our official language. So if I really want them to understand more, I speak pidgin to them. With my fellow teachers, we do speak Pidgin English especially if we are talking about our families in the staff room.

Since Nigerian Pidgin plays very important roles in communication in Nigeria, it will be beneficial to make it official (that is, co-official with English) in order to enhance the participation of all citizens in the economic, social and political development of the country. Many countries of the world have been able to solve their language problems by making their pidgin or creole languages official. Some of these languages are used solely or in addition to other official languages with which they share the official status. Patrick (2005) has outlined a number of such countries as can be seen below (Table 1).
Foreword

Language is a powerful tool for the promotion of unity, national identity and the homogeneity of a people. For nationalism to thrive in any nation there must be an enabling environment facilitated through a common medium of communication: language. In this book, *A Common Nigerian Language*, Joy has brought to the front burner, the need and urgency for a homebred and mutually acceptable choice, Nigerian Pidgin. An indigenous language such as Nigerian Pidgin makes learning generally simpler and can promote home-grown technological development. Other countries of the world have successfully used their national languages as instruments of unity, industrial development and for state security. This can also be achieved in Nigeria by Nigerians if our policy makers and language specialists take steps to give Nigerian Pidgin an official status.

The publication of this book is timely and should be seen as a clarion call to the people of Nigeria for a review of the country’s language policy. This effort should not be allowed to end up on the shelves or as mere classroom exercise. Let Nigerians talk about their future, their hopes and aspirations, and this is the starting point: *A Common Nigerian Language*.

Professor O.K. Oyeoku
Dean, Faculty of Arts
University of Nigeria
Nsukka.
Language is the lifeblood of any human society. Being an integral feature of every human, practically everybody - the language specialist and the layman alike - has something to say about language and language use. This accounts for the diversities of views and solutions proffered towards the resolution of language problems in many societies. Only a clear understanding of the nature and functions of language can enable a society to come up with a rational and effective language policy to meet its language needs.

Generally, countries with language problems are the least developed and these fall mainly within the continent of Africa. It is disturbing that since independence, most African nations, including Nigeria, have not been able to solve their language problems. In Nigeria, this inability has been as a result of the country's multilingual nature. In Nigeria, multilingualism has bred some negative consequences which undermine national development. These negative effects include inter-ethnic rivalries, conflicts, disunity and so on. These cannot be eradicated without addressing the need for a commonly spoken language. English has failed in this regard since the language is predominantly for the learned. Every Nigerian citizen (regardless of his or her educational background) has the right to be able to use its national/official language competently in order to participate in the affairs of the society. Unfortunately, this right has been denied some citizens hence they cannot make meaningful contributions to the development of the country.

This book therefore calls for the urgent consideration and pronouncement of Nigerian Pidgin, Nigerian as co-official language with English. This will be effective since Nigerian Pidgin is a national language (spoken and understood nationwide). This step is more feasible than the former which granted the three major Nigerian languages - Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba - equal status with English. This has not
been implemented, hence it is better to introduce a more feasible one. The latter may either serve as an addition or a replacement. It is hoped that as Nigerian Pidgin and English are used as Nigerian official languages, the latter will be gradually jettisoned eventually. In most countries where pidgins have been adopted as official languages, they share that status with some other languages (see chapter one).

Granting Nigerian Pidgin co-official status with English will not hinder the use, study and development of indigenous Nigerian languages. Rather, it will project them since it (Nigerian Pidgin) draws its phonology, syntax and some vocabulary from these languages. Officializing this national language is therefore an easy and effective way of solving the Nigerian language problem.

This revised edition has been written bearing in mind some criticisms, suggestions and new developments in language studies. I thank my husband, Mike, for proofreading this work and also for his recommendations. I also thank my daughter, Chinaza, for her encouragement. I am very grateful to Prof. O. K. Oyeoku who wrote the foreword to this work. Messrs. Hubert Diolu and Chika Anolue, who formatted the work and designed the cover page respectively, are highly appreciated. Finally, I thank Almighty God for his guidance.
Introduction

The multilingual problem in Nigeria, the use of English (a foreign language) as the country’s official language and the resultant conflict over which indigenous language should replace English as the official language stemmed from British colonization of Nigeria. Generally, the language problems in African nations resulted from the continent’s colonization by Europeans. The bringing together of many language groups to form different African countries created communication problems with the accompanying problems like ethnicity, political instability and other factors which all culminated to underdevelopment. After independence in 1960, Nigerian pioneer leaders did not introduce the use of an indigenous official/national language to replace English, as was stipulated by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) founding fathers. In the early 1960s, these founding fathers generally decided that every independent African country should systematically start using an indigenous language as its official language in place of the colonial tongues.

A politically-independent country ought also to be linguistically independent in order to take its place in international affairs. The need for a commonly-spoken and understood language in a highly multilingual setting like Nigeria is a pressing one. Furthermore, the achievement of national development will be elusive without a common language that every citizen can use in his or her interpersonal communication. The replacement of English with an indigenous official language has been hampered by the multilingual nature of the country coupled with the high degree of language chauvinism and loyalty manifested by different language groups. No language group would accept the imposition of another’s language as the country’s official language. Nigerian Pidgin is spoken commonly by most Nigerians regardless of status and educational background.
Moreover, it is neutral; not belonging to any ethnic group and so will be well accepted. Having its own indigenous language will give Nigeria a pride of place in the world as well as serve as a symbol of unity among its citizens. The English language, according to Montgomery (1995) is now being considered to have undergone a creolization process out of Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse and Norman French. This means that it was sometime a pidgin. If given a fair chance, Nigerian Pidgin can evolve into a language that Nigerians can be proud of.
National language and identity

If you met two Frenchmen who could not understand each other unless they spoke English or German, how would you feel? Similarly, if you travelled overseas and you stumbled into a Nigerian from a different language group, what would both of you speak? What do you think would be the feeling of the non-Nigerians there if you spoke English? This picture gives a vivid understanding of the relationship between a country’s language and its image or identity. There is no gainsaying that a country ought to have an indigenous official language particularly when most of its citizens can neither speak nor understand its foreign official language due to either stark illiteracy or half-baked literacy. This is vital for both national and citizens’ identities.

National language/official language

In defining national language and official language in this book, the view of the sociolinguist, Professor Peter L. Patrick of the University of Essex (a guru in the study of pidgins and creoles) is adopted. A national language refers to a language in which “major social institutions or functions are often carried out – such as mass media, primary education, government debate and so on” (Patrick, 2005). An official language is one which is recognized or assigned specific functions in a country’s constitution. In other words, official languages are determined by governments while national languages are determined by their usage by speakers. National languages emanate under natural conditions and, therefore, are indigenous to their speakers while official
NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

languages are mainly introduced to meet the official needs in a country. This view could have been drawn from the fact that national implies (as defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English) being common to a whole nation, that is, being nationwide or widespread. On the other hand, official refers to being recognized by authority; that is, being approved. French, for instance, is the national language of France but the official language of francophone countries like Cameroon and Benin. Similarly, English is the official language of Nigeria and Ghana but the national language of Britain. A national language does not need to be officialized in a mainly monolingual country. Contrarily, in a multilingual setting, it needs to be officialized before it can be used for official matters. Nigerian pidgin is a national language but not yet an official language. It has to a high degree, solved the intercommunication need among Nigeria’s numerous language groups. It is used extensively in inter-ethnic business transactions. It can be defined as the language of the Nigerian youth since they usually speak it to fellow youth from the same language group. It is used in mass media, particularly for advertisement and public awareness campaigns in radio, television and posters. In some parts of the country, it is used for news broadcast. Also, some primary school teachers in some parts of the country have revealed that Nigerian Pidgin is sometimes used as a medium of instruction to facilitate the learning process (Obrorindo, 2005). Furthermore, Nigerian pidgin has served extensively in enabling the entire populace participate in government debate. Some political leaders use Nigerian Pidgin to draw home their points while making public speeches. An ex-president, Olusegun Obasanjo, while addressing the Nigerian public over the television concerning the condition of his health in 2005, said the following:
"Tel Nigerians say ai dee kankpe". – Tell Nigerians that I am very well.

Also, in his survey on the use of Nigerian Pidgin in Effurun, Obrorindo (2005:5) reports that a primary school teacher proved the extent of pidgin usage in her school in the following statement:

The students in my class speak more of Pidgin English than their mother tongue and even our official language. So if I really want them to understand more, I speak pidgin to them. With my fellow teachers, we do speak Pidgin English especially if we are talking about our families in the staff room.

Since Nigerian Pidgin plays very important roles in communication in Nigeria, it will be beneficial to make it official (that is, co-official with English) in order to enhance the participation of all citizens in the economic, social and political development of the country. Many countries of the world have been able to solve their language problems by making their pidgin or creole languages official. Some of these languages are used solely or in addition to other official languages with which they share the official status. Patrick (2005) has outlined a number of such countries as can be seen below (Table 1).
## Table 1: Countries using pidgins/creoles as national/official languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Pidgin/Creole</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Official Language(s)</th>
<th>Ancestors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>Caboverdianu</td>
<td>national, not official</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Portuguese, Wolof, Fula etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>Sango</td>
<td>national, not official</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Ngbandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Kreyòl</td>
<td>official</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French, Kru Languages-Gbe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Matsuyn</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French, Fon-CWE, Barhara, Wolof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>Tok Pisin</td>
<td>official</td>
<td>Hiri Motu</td>
<td>English, Austronesian Languages-Tolai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Tome and Principe</td>
<td>Sochomense</td>
<td>national</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Portuguese, Kwa and Kongo languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>Senelwa</td>
<td>official</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Krio</td>
<td>national</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>Bislama</td>
<td>national and official</td>
<td>English and French</td>
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### National identity

National identity refers to the possession of a sense of belonging to a particular nation. In discussing national identity as used in this book, we have two aspects. One aspect relates to the citizens' allegiance to their country. National identity is distinguishable from ethnic identity as the latter entails allegiance to the group with which one has ancestral links. Crystal (1987) asserts that although religious
practices, long-standing institutions, and traditional customs are important in determining national identity. Language is the most widely encountered symbol of any nation. The Guinness Book of Knowledge (1997) confirms this. It shows that Serbian and Croatian, which are in fact the same language, have been deemed to be two different languages as a result of their speakers' quest for national identity. Croatian is the national language of Croatia while Serbian is the national language of Yugoslavia. However, Croatian is written in Latin script while Serbian is written in Cyrillic. A common indigenous official language, therefore, is pertinent to the inculcation of national identity. Crystal holds the view that national and state loyalties rarely coincide and that when different languages are formally associated with these concepts, there is bound to be a conflict. According to him, linguistic conflicts are often bitter and violent. Some countries which have had linguistic conflicts are Canada, India, Spain, Sudan, Turkey and Cameroon.

The second aspect of national identity has to do with the identity of a nation; that is, its rating and what things it can be identified with. It is important to define the characteristics of a nation in order to fully understand this. According to Encyclopaedia Americana, a nation is a polity under one government, with its people sharing a common history, culture and language. Nigeria has one political government and its history can be traced to the colonial era when diverse ethnic groups were brought together as one polity, in 1914, by the Governor General, Lord Lugard. Since different ethnic groups have differing cultures, Nigerians do not have a common culture. The different cultures, however, share some mild similarities: Language, which is an aspect of culture, is one of the divisive factors in Nigeria because different ethnic groups have different languages. In addition, the official language of Nigeria is English, the language of ex-colonial masters. Most Nigerians
Lack of competence in this language. Lack of a common indigenous language in Nigeria, therefore, brings her nationhood into question.

Linguistic differences are major causes of inter-ethnic conflicts and rivalries since an ethnic group is identified by her language and so represents a language group. An ethnic group can therefore be referred to as a language group. The official language of a nation is important because it is through this language that a nation and its citizens are identified by other countries' nationals. When a country uses a foreign language for its domestic affairs, then it is doubtful if it has really attained nationhood. On the other hand, the use of an indigenous official language ensures strong national identity among a country's ethnic groups and boosts its international image. However, such a language should not be imposed forcefully. The wisdom and rationality applied when making language policies go a long way towards ensuring how easily they can be implemented. Language policies should be feasible for easy implementation.

An indigenous official language (like Nigerian Pidgin) that can be used by all citizens will enable language groups to transfer their loyalty from their ethnic languages to the official language. This will go a long way in curbing ethnicity in Nigeria, where ethnic rivalry is the order of the day. A nation with a common language has a greater chance of achieving national unity which makes for national development. Although multilingual nations abound, there is a need for every nation to have a common language that everyone can speak and understand. The Encyclopaedia Americana shows that since African nations have many tribal languages being spoken in them, the likelihood of having unity in such countries is slim. National unity is facilitated when a nation has a common language that its citizenry can speak since this creates a sense of belonging among the people. Thus inter-ethnic conflicts and rivalries will cease.
ushering in patriotism and development. A common language gives a sense of identity to the citizens. In other words, the language unites the citizens. Language aids in the expression of individual or personal identity. National identity has its bearing from individual identity. Thus as the common language gives the individual a sense of belonging, he or she expresses this sense of belonging through the way he or she relates with fellow citizens, through patriotism and general participation in nation-building. As the individual does these, national identity comes into play. An individual’s sense of belonging is expressed through language. Hughes (2002) points out that research has shown that there are three elements underlying a strong sense of personal identity:

- a sense that one belongs
- a sense of being worthwhile
- a sense of being able to contribute

A commonly spoken national language enhances these three elements. Imposing any dominant language on other language groups as an official language does not solve national language problems as can be seen from the Indian and Sudanese examples. In these countries, Hindi and Arabic were respectively, enforced as official languages to the chagrin of other language groups. Conflicts and a bloody war erupted from such enforcement. When a language group cannot accept or speak the official language, they tend to develop language loyalty towards their ethnic tongue in a bid to preserve and express their identity. Ethnic language loyalty breeds conflicts and division which accumulate to underdevelopment.

Language identity

Language identity can be seen as the demands made on a language in a particular society or country. This demand
depends on the rating of the language as standard or non-
standard, ‘superior’ or ‘inferior’, national, or regional,
of official or non-official and some other classifications that are 
associated with language. In Nigeria, the English language 
has the identity of an official language. Hence it has a high 
status, being closely associated with literacy and intelligence 
because it is the language of government and education.
Ability to speak it, therefore, places one on a high echelon.
The indigenous Nigerian languages are regional/ethnic 
languages. Though the three major Nigerian languages – 
Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba have been granted co-official status 
with English, they are not used as such. On the other hand, 
Nigerian Pidgin is a national language as can be adduced 
from its usage in communication in different parts of the 
nation.

Language identity can also refer to the language by 
which an individual or a group of individuals can be 
identified. In this case, the speakers of the language are in 
focus. If a country has a commonly spoken and accepted 
official/national language, its citizens are usually identifiable 
by that language. Contrarily, in cases where there are 
problems relating to the choice of a country’s official 
language, its citizens are identified by their ethnic or regional 
languages. This identification is generally involuntary, as the 
people tend to give loyalty to their ethnic languages.

Language expresses personal identity, that is, who we are and 
where we belong. A case, therefore, where an individual is 
more identified by an ethnic language than a national 
language will make room for ethnicity and unpatriotic 
tendencies, which are clogs in the wheel of development. 
Nigeria is one of the countries where language problem has 
led to ethnic conflicts and underdevelopment. While it may 
be granted that there have been some intra-language group 
conflicts in Nigeria, as is seen in the Ife/Modakeke and 
Aguleri/Umuleri cases, it is clear that the majority of
conflicts that have occurred in Nigeria have been between different language groups. Such conflicts include the Nigeria-Biafra three-year civil war, the Tiv/Jukun conflict in Benue and Taraba States, Urhobo/Isokki hostility, and the incessant clashes between the Ibibios and the Igbo along Abia State and Akwa Ibom State boundaries. These conflicts were brought about by linguistic differences. In the case of the Nigeria-Biafra civil crisis, it has been shown that prior to the civil war, following the killing of some Igbo people residing in the north, the Igbo people in the north were urged to go back to their home state (East Central State). As narrated by eyewitnesses, the following injunction was given:

“anyone in the North that speaks ‘bia’ should leave the North and go home”.

Bia is the Igbo word for ‘come’. It can be observed here that a linguistic factor was used to determine who was a foe to the northerners. The negative impact of the subsequent war is too obvious to be recounted. The thesis that must be made clear here is that just as linguistic differences led to national disintegration, so will linguistic cohesion usher in national consolidation. This can be achieved by entrenching a common official language that all language groups can accept and speak – Nigerian Pidgin.

Language identity and national identity
Khubchandani (1983) opines that in European countries, language identity is very much a part of the identity of a nationality or nation. Little wonder then, European nations have been able to attain far greater national development than the developing countries, particularly, those in Africa. In Africa, particularly Nigeria, the pertinent relationship between language identity and national identity has been undermined, resulting in conflicts and underdevelopment.
Nigerians tend to view language identity as belonging to one compartment and national identity as belonging to another. When they think of language identity, they think of the ethnic groups and their indigenous languages. National identity, to Nigerians, simply implies citizenship to a nation. They seem not to link English, the official language with national (Nigerian) identity since it is obvious that it is a foreign language and most Nigerians are not able to speak it competently. A commonly spoken indigenous language, Nigerian Pidgin, which can be christened Nigerr, will help create the awareness of a language identity/national identity relationship among Nigerians. This means that those who cannot use English competently will no longer feel threatened.

In America, language identity is also related to national identity. This is seen from the fact that the use of Black English was banned after the abolition of slave trade. Black English was associated with slavery and it was thought that its use would retard the freed slaves’ integration into the American system as they could still be seen as slaves. The Dutch also link language identity with national identity. Hall (1966) reports that they disallowed the Indonesians from speaking Dutch, their language. They colonized Indonesia, but probably, did not want mixed identities and so permitted them to speak only the pidgin that developed as a result of the interaction with them. The Dutch could have only reacted in this way because of the close association of language identity with national identity among Europeans.

There is a sense of national pride in a country possessing a common national language with which it can uniquely be identified. As citizens of such a nation become associated with this common language, national unity, harmony and development ensue. The identity or status of a language is determined by its use in interactions. Khubchandani states that changes in the content or functions
of a language can be actualized only by social acceptance rather than decree. However, it must be pointed out that in addition to the social acceptance of a language, certain governmental actions in the form of laws are important to make its use official. For instance, Seselwa, a French creole spoken in Seychelles, has been granted official status with English and French and has been used for primary education since 1982. Also, it is used in newspapers and radio. The government of a nation, therefore, has a role to play in the allocation of identity to a language. The use of Nigerian Pidgin, Nigerian, as an official language can only be guaranteed by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The onus falls on the Nigerian government to grant Nigerian Pidgin co-official status with English since the latter is a foreign language and most Nigerians cannot speak it. Doing this will give Nigerian Pidgin a recognized national identity (a language with which the nation can be identified) and also create a sense of national identity (allegiance to the nation) among Nigerians. A common official language will create national identity unlike the ethnic languages which create ethnic identity.

Language, ethnicity and nationalism

Language is a conspicuous aspect of any community. The life and cultural patterns of a community are tied closely to its language. Language, an aspect of culture, influences other aspects of culture. Also, it influences the thought patterns of speakers. Any similarity between the languages of people tends to bind such speakers together as these similarities usually suggest common origins. Ayorinde (2000) points out that in Cuba, there are some sects (traditional groups) bearing the names of some traditional groups in Efik- and Ibibio-speaking areas of Akwa Ibom and Cross Rivers States of Nigeria. She shows that some place names in these areas are found in Cuba. These include Obutong. These have sparked
off some researches funded by an international body. There are now speculations that slaves deported from Calabar port could have found themselves in Cuba and continued their culture, retaining those words and names. These discoveries brought up some nostalgic feelings not only among the language groups in question but also among historians and linguists. This shows how effectively a language can be used to establish human relationships. Hence nationalism can easily be inculcated in the citizens of a nation that has an official language that all can speak and understand.

Furthermore, language is a tool for digging into the historic past. As cited above, traditions of origin have been discovered by means of language. Even when ability to speak the language has ceased, the emotional attachment remains, binding the people to their past. The indigenous people of some parts of Nigeria, stretching from Onitsha in Anambra State, some parts of Delta and even Oguta in Imo State, claim to have migrated from old Benin Kingdom. Traces of Bini language in the form of personal names, names of festivals and other language forms exist, which seem to establish their claims. Such tracing of origins enables the communities involved to pay allegiance towards the same cause — preservation of their origin. This can be applied to the Nigerian case. Nigerian Pidgin, *Nigeri*, is a tool for tracing the origin of Nigeria as a country from the pre-colonial times when the Westerners came as slave traders to the time when they came as colonial masters. This will ensure allegiance to national cause, since Nigerians will come to understand, through Nigerian pidgin (the language that grew out of colonialism), that Nigeria has come to stay as a nation. This is nationalism.

However, a language can function as a barrier between people of the same geographical location. When a society has languages that are not mutually-intelligible, such languages become natural barriers among the various
Each language group will naturally pay allegiance to its ethnic group. This condition can only be remedied through the introduction of a commonly spoken language. If, unfortunately, the official language cannot be spoken by all, the condition of linguistic chaos persists. In such a case, greater attention is paid to linguistic boundaries than to geographical boundaries. A situation of this kind breeds inter-ethnic rivalry and conflict and keeps degenerating if no language that can divert the people’s attention from their ethnic groups to the nation is introduced.

Different parts of Cameroon are identified with a particular ‘national’ language. Western Cameroon is identified with English while Eastern Cameroon is identified with French. These two are both official languages of Cameroon. Unfortunately, citizens of the country, even when bilingual, would always speak the one that is spoken by their ethnic group. According to Konings and Nyamnjoh (2003) Biya, the president of Cameroon, though bilingual insists on speaking French to fellow politicians from English-speaking areas. Also, bilingual officials would prefer to speak in French (with interpreters relaying their information to the audience) just to maintain their Francophone identity. The authors regret that Anglophone culture is seemingly assimilated by the Francophone in the name of ‘national integration’. These authors show that Chumbow (1980:29) describes French as the language of oppression. There have been several threats of secession based on the Anglophone-Francophone divide. These problems would have been solved by introducing a common official language in the country.

Language and unity

Even in a society rife with language problems, language can be used to achieve unity. It has been shown in the preceding section that in any society with language problems, linguistic boundaries tend to be more prominent than geographical
boundaries. This is so because language differences are usually emphasized more than their relationships. In addition to using a commonly-spoken language to achieve national unity and development, it is also important to embark on a linguistic awareness campaign to enlighten Nigerians on the linguistic relationships existing among indigenous languages of Nigeria. Most languages of Nigeria belong to the same language family, the Niger-Congo language family. Thus these languages share similar features. The features of these indigenous languages, together with some of English make up Nigerian Pidgin. This knowledge will go a long way towards ensuring oneness, unity and spirit of fellow feeling among Nigerians. These pave the way for national development.

The more the mutual intelligibility test is applied to languages, the more language conflict a society is bound to have. The fact that a Yoruba man, for instance, may not understand or speak Igbo should not make him or her see an Igbo man as a total stranger. The Yoruba should rather focus on the fact that Igbo and Yoruba belong to the same language family. The mutual intelligibility test, when applied to dialects of the same language, reveal that, at times, the speakers of one dialect may not understand those of another. The dialectal variations of the Igbo sentence below explain this.

**English:** Nigeria is our country.

**Standard Igbo:** Najiri bu obodo anyi.

**Ojokoro Umuahia:** Najiri bu ofe nke anyi.

**Ogbala Umuahia:** Najiri bu ebe anyi.

**Afikpo:** Najiri bu iho nke anyi

**Ezza:** Najiri bu ile anyi.

**Ika:** Najiri wu ala ezi.

**Ikwere:** Najiri bu eli awa.

**Ngwa:** Najiri mbu obe ke anyi.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Nigeria is our country.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard Igbo</strong></td>
<td>Najiri bu obodo anyi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ojokoro Umuahia</strong></td>
<td>Najiri bu ofe nke anyi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ogbala Umuahia</strong></td>
<td>Najiri bu ebe anyi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afikpo</strong></td>
<td>Najiri bu iho nke anyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ezza</strong></td>
<td>Najiri bu ile anyi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ika</strong></td>
<td>Najiri wu ala ezi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ikwere</strong></td>
<td>Najiri bu eli awa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ngwa</strong></td>
<td>Najiri mbu obe ke anyi.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Onicha. Naijiria bu be anyị.

The renditions of the sentence above into other Igbo dialects not shown in the examples above are bound to show variations.

Uguru (2001) reveals that pronunciation variation exists within Igbo dialects. Since Igbo is spoken in seven states of Nigeria, she considers the pronunciation of the Igbo word for ‘thing’ as spoken by the various dialect groups in these seven states.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abia</td>
<td>ihe/h#e/hWe/h he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anambra</td>
<td>Iffehhe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebonyi</td>
<td>ihe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Iffehhe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enugu</td>
<td>ihe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers</td>
<td>ih#e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imo</td>
<td>ihe/hhe/h#e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In these examples, the linguistic variable (h), varies among the states. A linguistic variable is a linguistic item that varies in form but does not bring about change in meaning. The variation is shown below.

h: [ʰ] [f] [h] [h#] [h]

Uguru (2001) shows that linguistic variables can account for intra-ethnic conflict since people who use the same variant tend to identify with one another, probably, scorning speakers of other variants. Inter- or intra-linguistic variation should not generate animosity among language groups.
That some Igbo dialects cannot be understood by speakers of other dialects does not call for discrimination. One woman’s first visit to Nsukka required her asking for directions and the only person she saw in the vicinity was a labourer cutting grass. She asked for directions in standard Igbo and the man said something she could not decode. Probably, it must have been Nsukka dialect. Do you then see that an official language that all (regardless of educational background) can speak is important for both inter-language and intra-language group communication? The relevance of this short story is to show that there can be non-intelligibility within a language group. Thus non-intelligibility across language groups should not be made a dividing factor.

Furthermore, for language to foster unity, the policy of grassroots bilingualism (requiring individuals to speak one indigenous language in addition to their ethnic languages) introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria should be implemented. Speakers of one indigenous Nigerian language should endeavour to learn one or two other indigenous languages. This will make for unity among Nigerians and help in the preservation of our indigenous languages. In addition to the common official language, the preservation of the indigenous languages is important to avoid their death and the consequent loss of the indigenous culture, science and technology which these languages embody. Generally, language can be a factor of unity rather than division.
Driven by the indispensable role of language in national unity and development, some of the immediate post-independent African leaders opted for the continued use of the language of the ex-colonial masters. Notable among these was Milton Obote, a former president of Uganda. This was contrary to the decision of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) founding fathers that each independent African country should discontinue the use of foreign official language and change to an indigenous language. Their decision was based on the fact that liberation from linguistic imperialism would make for total independence. Language aids in individual, group and national development. The process of development involves growth, which can be referred to as an output. To have an output, there must be some input. What are the inputs needed for development? Here, what is being considered is the holistic view of development and it is pertinent to point out that individual development precedes national development. During a child’s first language acquisition, basic cultural items and patterns of the society are internalised. These are the bases on which development is founded. Education is a major tool in individual development since development involves moving from the known to the unknown. Education, whether formal or informal, involves some form of language. At school, the child is taught through language, to read and write some form of language. Also, all the disciplines the child studies require the speaking, reading and writing of language. As he or she engages in these, the necessary information is obtained and this is what enhances the scholar’s development and at a time, spills over to impact on his or her community or nation.
New discoveries are made through language (in form of thought and reasoning) and communicated to the world through spoken or written language.

Spiritual development is highly dependent on not only the spoken language but also on the meditative form of language, which is, thought. Language helps in the development of intelligence and thought patterns which enable the individual to express his or her creative potentials thus contributing to national development. Physical development, which could be thought to be too practical to have anything to do with an abstract phenomenon like language, also depends on language since instructions on physical exercise are given in some form of language. Physical and moral development are important in national development. In African societies, these are traditionally achieved through folk tales, fables, oral history and other spoken forms of language. Thus the study and development of indigenous African languages are important to ensure the documentation of these media of development to avoid their loss. Moreover, these indigenous languages harbour our indigenous science and technology which can be studied and used in enhancing national development. A country with a common official language will be able to harness these linguistic resources better as all her citizens will be able to express (through this common language) their ideas, which are necessary for national development. Generally, language is indispensable in development. The relationship between language and development can be represented with the schema in Figure 1 below.
Language as man's sole property

Language is man's sole property. Animals have never and can never make use of language. The barking of a dog to show anger, the cackling of a hen when it wants to lay an egg and the crowing of a cock to signify the dawn of a new day cannot be classified as language. Language is solely the property of human beings. Though animals have their various methods of communication, these methods cannot be said to be language. Crystal (1991) gives a succinct definition of language which portrays that only human communication is language. According to him, language is "the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self-expression". In the creation story, the scriptures show that it was Adam, the first man, who gave names to the animals created by God - "whosoever name he gave them, they bore" (Genesis 2:19). The animals could not name themselves. Language is one of the features that distinguish man from animals since man's vocal system was designed for speech and that of animals was not. In addition, language goes with reasoning and man is the only being that is endowed with rationality. The *Encyclopedia Americana* shows that the only universal test we have today of human intellectual capacity is the fact that all children in the world learn to speak their first languages at
the same age. This is contrary to the difficulty encountered in getting animals (apes) learn and use human language. Animal communication is genetic and programmed.

Several attempts have been made to teach the ape (one of the most intelligent creatures in the animal kingdom) to use language but only an infinitesimal success has been achieved. Crystal (1991) reports a number of these experiments. Joni, a chimpanzee, grew up in a home where the keeper never taught him language but hoped he could acquire it as any human child would. He never did, but could only produce sounds made by chimpanzees. Also Gua (a chimpanzee) and Donald (a human child) were of the same age and grew up in the same home. At the right age, Donald was able to babble words but Gua could only bark and screech as any young chimpanzee would. Hayes conducted another experiment of this sort. He took Viki, a chimpanzee, a few days after its birth and taught it language. At six years of age, Viki could only say mama, papa, cup and up, with difficulty. She used these words at inappropriate situations, which portrayed that she did not know the meanings. The most successful experiment of this sort, so far, is that done with Sarah (another chimpanzee) using the American Sign Language. This will not be discussed in detail since this work centres on the spoken language. Findings from the aforementioned experiments show that chimpanzees do not have the appropriate voice box for speech.

Malmkjaer (1991) shows that animal communication can perform the following functions:
- give information about food- availability and direction of food, lack of it and so on
- give alarm or warning
- used for recognition and greeting
Similarly, Hockett (1960) as shown in Malmkjær (1991) has listed the following features of human language with which human and animal communication can be distinguished:

**Vocal-auditory channel:** Human language is realized through this channel.

**Broadcast transmission and directional reception**

**Rapid fading:** Human Language fades in the air. It does not hover.

**Interchangeability:** Adult language users can transmit and receive language interchangeably.

**Complete feedback:** Speaker hears all he (himself or herself) says.

**Specialization:** Language is specialized to convey information. The loudness or lowness of voice does not reduce or increase information.

**Semantics:** Language is meaningful. It talks about the elements and features of the world.

**Arbitrariness:** There is no relationship between a sound or linguistic sign and the element it represents except in a special type of language like onomatopoeia.

**Discreteness:** Language is not arranged in a continuum. Any message can be conveyed at any time.

**Displacement:** Language is used to talk about things that are remote in time and space from the speaker or hearer.
For instance, future and past events can be made reference to.

**Openness**: New messages can be generated and old ones can be reformed.

**Tradition**: Language is learnt; not inherited (genetic).

**Duality of patterning**: Small units of language combine to form larger groups which produce meaning.

**Prevarication**: Language can be displaced.

**Reflexiveness**: Language can serve as its own metalinguage. This means that communication can be held about language with the use of language.

**Learnability**: A speaker of one language can learn another.

Using thirteen of these design features, Crystal (1987) has put the distinction between human and animal systems of communication in a matrix (Table 2) for clearer understanding.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Visual-auditory</th>
<th>Olfactory</th>
<th>Biased communication and</th>
<th>Semantic</th>
<th>Arbitrariness</th>
<th>Discreteness</th>
<th>Displacement</th>
<th>Productivity</th>
<th>Tradition</th>
<th>Duality of patterning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Rapid fading</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, repeated</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Intercutability</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Temporal feedback</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Semanticity</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>In part</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No (in general)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Arbitrariness</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Semantic</td>
<td>Yes, yes</td>
<td>yes*</td>
<td>Yes, yes</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Discreteness</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>Yes, always;</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Probably not</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Duality of patterning</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Crystal (1987)

* features without any information

? features yet to be authenticated.
All human languages, in addition to possessing all the design features, also have the same degree of lexical and grammatical complexity and require the same intellectual capacity to be learnt. All languages serve the same purpose of communication and none is superior to the other. Thus no language should be relegated. Man’s ability to use language has greatly enhanced his development on earth since it is only through language (spoken, written or sign) that he is able to relay the outcome of his rationalisation. This ability is a great potential for development and progress. Relegating any language will hamper the harnessing of its values, stunt man’s development and accrue to societal backwardness.
Multilingualism and national development

Multilingualism refers to the existence of many languages in a society, that is, language pluralism. This phenomenon is more prevalent in Asian and African countries because of the merging of many ethnic groups (with different languages) to form individual countries. This was done by the ex-colonialists. However, language pluralism also exists in Europe and other continents of the world. Multilingualism, therefore, is universal and findings have shown that there is no monolingual nation. According to Hudson (1980) there are about four or five thousand languages in the world but only one hundred and forty nations. Obviously then, most countries have a large number of languages. The fact however, is that the degree of multilingualism in Asian and African countries is higher than that of the developed world. The Guinness Book of Knowledge (1997) shows that Africa has about 1,300 languages, the highest number among all the continents of the world. Khubchandani (1983) shows that India has about two hundred ‘classified’ languages. Similarly, the Encyclopaedia Americana reveals that the linguistic diversity of New Guinea is probably greater than that of any area of comparable size in the world. It has seven hundred languages. Therefore, examples of nations that are highly multilingual abound.

The so-called monolingual countries also have the problem of diverse language varieties, which most of the time, may not be mutually intelligible. Although it is obvious that the language problems of multilingual nations are more complex than those of monolingual ones, it will suffice to say...
that neither of the two categories of nations) is devoid of one language problem or the other. While in multilingual nations, there may be the problem of choosing an official language, monolingual societies have to grapple with selecting and standardizing one of the varieties of a language. Crystal (1987) shows that Somalia, a monolingual country, has had a lot of language conflict over selection and standardization. Since there are bound to be diversified languages and language varieties, language groups ought to make way for others' languages.

Language loyalty and conflict

Ideally, in societies where there are plural languages, and consequently, a broad spectrum of speech behaviour, language groups are expected to accommodate one another. Experience has however, shown that mutual accommodation among language groups has proved to be a problem in many of such nations. This problem is as a result of language identity, language loyalty, language maintenance and language chauvinism. Language identity has to do with the identification of a group of people on the basis of the language or languages they speak. It can also refer to the status given to a language in a society. Thus a language may have the status of an official language, a national language, regional language, ethnic language and so on. Khubchandani (1983) states that before Indian independence “grass roots multilingualism” (a situation where people spoke and used languages of other language groups) thrived, with each language being used to meet the required needs. After independence, the struggle over which language should be the national language, in addition to the new goal of language development, led to language conflict as different language groups struggled to maintain their languages and protect them from possible death. This development was and is still prevalent in many African nations, including Nigeria.
Brosnahan (1963) shows that in many newly developing and highly nationalistic countries at the time (shortly after independence) language loyalty was low. This was before the events that ushered in language chauvinism and suspenance. Although no advocacy is being made for the relegation of indigenous languages in favour of foreign ones, care should be taken to avoid letting language loyalty spark off language and inter-group conflict. Such a development would result in political conflict which hinders national development and integration.

Hohenthal and McCorkle (1995) posit that group loyalty can occur with or without language maintenance. They cite an example with the Quauquiuques of Venezuela who preserved their property relations but gave up their language and religion. Kuhn (1934) also shows that many Auslandsdeutsche maintained their identity as Germans in the midst of Polish and Ukrainian majorities, long after giving up their German mother tongue. It could therefore be inferred that language loyalty may not be a strong factor in disunity in African politics. This calls for further research to draw a valid conclusion. It will suffice to say that since the 1970's and 1980's, language loyalty, language maintenance and language chauvinism in Africa have increased by the day. The speakers of the European languages, who gave up their languages, could have done so following the emergence or choice of a national or an official language. Thus for them, national loyalty should supersede ethnic loyalty. Fishman (1971) holds the view that in Europe (particularly Eastern Europe) nationalism preceded nationism. Consequently, European language groups were able to make way for a common national language in preference to theirs. According to Fishman (1971), in Africa, nationism preceded nationalism. During the colonial and post-colonial years, the emphasis of the newly-created countries was the maintenance of nationhood and every facilitator, including the use of
foreign official language was put into play. With language awareness, sparked off by the founding fathers of the Organisation of African Unity and the regionalization of African countries by the use of linguistic parameters (Anglophone and Francophone) came the emotional attachment to nationalities rather than to nations. Some re-orientation is needed to enable these nationalities to pursue the goal of a common indigenous official language to ensure national identity and development. Although there is need to replace foreign official languages with African indigenous ones, this replacement should be carried out with caution. Thus for a start, the indigenous ones should be granted co-official status with the foreign ones. This is the situation in many nations that were colonized at one time or the other. There should not be unhealthy rivalries among language groups as such situations breed inter-ethnic conflict and hinder development. African language problems could have been averted if African pioneer leaders had made language policies to introduce African indigenous languages as official languages. Contrary to the stipulation of the founding fathers of the Organisation of African Unity (O.A.U.), most African post-independence leaders continued the use of foreign tongues to 'maintain national unity'. With wisdom and understanding however, these foreign languages can still be replaced with, or used alongside African indigenous languages.

In Cameroon, two foreign languages - English and French - were retained. This has continued to pose a problem to national integration. Faced with the choices of either being part of Cameroon or Nigeria, Southern Cameroonians opted to be part of Cameroon. This choice was made out of fear of domination of their economy by the Igbo and Ibibio who had migrated to Southern Cameroon (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2003). However, they have continued to grapple with the problem of language conflict ever since. Having had English
colonial masters when they were part of Nigeria, their official language is in the minority while French, the official language of the north is in the majority. Thus the Southerners have continued to be marginalized on the basis of linguistic divide.

Mukong (1990: 93 - 103) shows that in 1981, a Cameroon Anglophone lawyer, Fon Gorji Dinka, demanded the immediate promulgation of an independent Anglophone state which he called the Republic of Ambozia. If difference in foreign official languages can be a hindrance to national integration in a country, differences in indigenous languages, if not adequately handled, will pose greater problems. To reduce the negative effects of multilingualism, a country should have a commonly spoken language.

Merits and demerits of multilingualism

There are some benefits that can be derived from multilingualism if a properly-planned and goal-oriented language policy is adopted. First, the diversity of languages implies cultural diversity and this cannot be devoid of a broad spectrum of human behaviour. Multilingualism, therefore, provides an environment for developing insight into human behaviour. Thus multilingual societies are good research fields for psychologists and sociologists. Also, the diversity of languages in a country makes for multi-technological development as every language is spoken by an ethnic group which has its indigenous science and technology. A multilingual society therefore has a great array of indigenous technologies which can be harnessed for national development.

Conversely, however, in most multilingual societies, language sentiments usually exist and lead to discord and rivalry among language groups. Also, language chauvinism, which refers to the total rejection and relegation of other languages and insistence that only one's own is the best, can
result from multilingualism. Another language problem that can develop in multilingual societies is language loyalty. Though this may be in the interest of individual ethnic languages, it is unhealthy for national development. Language loyalty is a case where individual language groups try to protect their languages from being dominated by others. The usual problem that crops up in such societies is the difficulty of having a common national language. As each language group clings to its language, it becomes difficult for the different language groups to come together and choose a common language for national affairs like administration, law and politics. Language sentiments make way for language conflicts which culminate in the use of a foreign language as the country’s official language. This is the situation in Nigeria.

Language problems encountered by multilingual societies differ from one place to the other and can be traced to the process through which multilingualism originated in the societies concerned. Language problems are more rife in countries where diverse language groups became collated as one country due to colonization. Contrarily, if multilingualism resulted because of annexation, migration or sharing of common boundaries, the language problems are likely to be relatively less. A good example is the United States of America which was originally inhabited by the American Indians. The English were the first to migrate to America and were welcomed and accommodated by the American Indians. Following a clash of worldviews as it relates to harnessing the abundant forest resources in the area, the immigrants fought and conquered the natives and with time, the language of the Indians went into extinction and was replaced by English language. Subsequent immigrants like the French, the Spaniards, the black African slaves and other races also gave up their various languages and used American English. It is only in Canada that the French
maintained their language. In the United States of America, every nationality speaks the national language, English. Nevertheless in such societies as the United States where monolingualism exists, the language problem could be that of standardization that is, which variety of the language should become the standard language. Language shift and language death are also consequences of multilingualism. Language shift is the gradual or sudden move from one language to another. Language shift gives way to language death, which is the complete loss of a language. The Amerindian language cited above, for instance, has gone into extinction and many more are following suit. Hence in spite of the importance of common national languages, the regional or ethnic languages should not be allowed to die, since languages are as valuable as mineral resources. They ought to be studied, developed and tapped. Ways of ensuring this are discussed in chapter four.
The language situation in Nigeria

Nigeria is made up of many language groups. Of all these linguistic groups, numbering between four and five hundred, three language groups stand out. These are the Igbo, the Yorubas and the Hausas. They appear to be more prominent than the others because they have numerical advantage over them. Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa are termed 'major' Nigerian languages. Each of these three language groups would want its language to succeed English as the official language of Nigeria. The 'minor' language groups also, are not willing to see any other language but theirs succeed English. Specifically Sofunke (1990) has projected Igala, spoken in Kogi State to be the best alternative to English as the official Nigerian language. This linguistic rivalry springs from the need to replace English with an indigenous Nigerian language. Nigeria is one of the African countries that did not change over to the use of an indigenous official language after independence. Only Tanzania, Kenya and a few South African countries switched from their colonial languages to indigenous ones after independence. Thus in Nigeria and most other African countries the use of the 'white man’s' languages has continued and these languages have acquired much prestige to the detriment and relegation of the indigenous languages.

In Nigeria, the English language has acquired so much prestige that excellence and fluency in it is associated with academic brilliance. It is also a prerequisite for admission into higher institutions. Furthermore, in the primary and secondary schools, more periods are allocated to the study of English. Unfortunately many Nigerians,
THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN NIGERIA

particularly the rural dwellers and those of the lower class, are not able to communicate in English. It is unlikely that such people can be carried along in the affairs of the government. Therefore, in the early 1980s indigenous language awareness was created in the country. This followed a language conference held in Ghana in 1969 where a call was made for indigenous African languages to be given paramount attention. Though the indigenous language awareness has aided the study and development of these hitherto relegated languages, it sparked off unhealthy rivalries among Nigerian language groups, culminating into inter-ethnic rivalries and conflicts. In the face of this linguistic chaos, the use of English as the official language has thrived and the end to it is not in sight. Several factors have contributed to the continued use of English as the official language:

First, there appears to be a wrong understanding among most Nigerians of what language is all about. They fail to understand that no language is superior to the other. Most Nigerians, particularly those in the elite class, are not enthusiastic about replacing English with an indigenous language. Such people tend to associate academic brilliance with competence or fluency in English. For them, errors in spoken or written English are viewed as grave, humiliating and embarrassing. In contrast, such errors committed in any indigenous Nigerian language are dismissed with a wave of the hand. In fact, errors committed while speaking the indigenous languages are seen as indications that the speaker is a city dweller, 'imported' (one who returned from any of the developed countries) or so much educated that he or she has begun to lose grip of the indigenous language. The more a Nigerian uses "big", jaw-breaking and unfamiliar English words, the more elated he or she feels and the higher the esteem to which the audience holds him or her, regardless of whether they understand the words or not. Most Nigerians
have not understood that the goal of language is communication (passing of information from speaker to hearer) and so, would speak English to illiterate and semi-illiterate citizens when they could have spoken the indigenous language. This situation has placed a high prestige on English and the resultant effect is the unwillingness of those eloquent in it to welcome a change to an indigenous official language. Hence many Nigerian families use English at home.

Another factor akin to the one above is the undue priority and attention given to English language in Nigerian institutions of learning. More hours are allocated to its teaching and a poor performance in English denotes a poor performance in the examination in question. For instance, a minimum of a credit pass in English is a prerequisite for entry into higher institutions. Only in very few courses can an ordinary pass in English be accepted as an entry qualification and it is rarely possible for someone who failed English language to be allowed to study any course at all. Thus in many primary and post-primary schools, the use of any language other than English, among students, is forbidden.

Also, the fact that the terms used in modern scientific and technological development are not available in Nigerian indigenous languages has paved the way for the continual use of English in the country. Since the indigenous languages may not be effective for educational purposes (especially in the fields related to science and technology), the use of English for education becomes the next available option. The existence of mutually non-intelligible languages is an additional factor facilitating the use of English. Ironically, English is not even understood by all Nigerians; but since the elite class, who run the affairs of the government are able to speak and understand it, it has continued to be used as the official language of the country.
In the wake of language awareness in Africa, Nigeria, along with other African countries, had the need to introduce the use of an indigenous official language. This engendered rivalry and contention over which language should become the official language. Since no language group would concede to giving up its language, English language which appears to be the only language that is neutral and which cannot spark off inter-ethnic rivalry and conflict, has continued to be used. Consequently, no attention is given to the fact that some Nigerians are not competent in English. Nevertheless, the fact still remains that Nigeria does not have a common official language that the generality of its citizens can speak competently. Thus a yawning gap exists. As long as Nigeria lacks an official language that all can speak, language chauvinism, rivalry and conflict will continue to exist. Apart from religion, language is a major dividing line among ethnic groups in Nigeria. There is a need to know that there are certain similarities between Nigerian languages. Knowledge of these similarities will make for harmonious co-existence among language groups and can only be achieved by having a holistic view about these languages.

Language families in Nigeria
Identifying the language families to which indigenous Nigerian languages belong would help to eliminate language conflict. Greenberg (1963) has classified the languages of the world, including those of Africa, into families. Most languages of Nigeria belong to the Niger–Congo family. (Table 3)
Table 3: Classification of the language groups of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geo-political zone</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South-west zone</td>
<td>Niger-Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-east zone</td>
<td>Niger-Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-south zone</td>
<td>Niger-Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-central zone</td>
<td>Mainly Niger-Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-western zone</td>
<td>Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saharan and Niger-Congo</td>
<td>Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-eastern zone</td>
<td>Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the South-west zone, Igbo language is spoken. Yoruba is spoken in the South-west, while the South-South zone houses most of Nigerian 'minority' languages like Urhobo, Itsekiri, Edo, Efik, and Ibibio. In the North-Central zone, there is also an array of many minority languages like Tiv, Nupe, Jukun, Idoma, and Igala. What is interesting about the languages of the afore-mentioned zones is that they are of one family, Niger-Congo, irrespective of their mutual non-intelligibility. The North-East and North-West zones mainly house three language families – Nilo-Saharan, Afro-Asiatic and Niger-Congo. Fulani, which is spoken in the North-Central zone, the North-East and the North-West zones, is of the Niger-Congo family while Hausa and Kanuri are Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan respectively. Fulani is also spoken in the North-East and North-West zones. It is therefore evident that most indigenous languages of Nigeria
have a lot in common. This knowledge should enhance unity and brotherliness among Nigerians.

There are pronunciation similarities between diverse Nigerian and non-Nigerian languages. The examples below show the recurrence of the sound segment, [m] in the words for water.

**Water**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abuan</td>
<td>amfun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biakpan</td>
<td>manj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>ameq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efik</td>
<td>moq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>mmiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishan</td>
<td>ameq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nembe</td>
<td>mindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urhobo</td>
<td>ameq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diola (Senegal)</td>
<td>muel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherbros (Sierra Leone)</td>
<td>men</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These similarities show relationship among the languages. These ethnic groups may have been speaking a single language; variation could have come due to migration to different geographical locations. Nigerians, therefore, ought to see themselves as one. Uguru (2001) has shown that language can be a strong facilitator of globalization. Since globalization is a process of uniting the entire world as one entity, it is pertinent to understand that the countries of the world are related linguistically. In most languages of the world, the first personal pronoun has the sound segment, [m]. This is seen below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abuan</td>
<td>aari; timi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biakpan</td>
<td>yim (mine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diola (Senegal)</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>mta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Futunan (Polynesian lang)</td>
<td>mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etrik</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>moi; me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>mich; mir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwari</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idoma</td>
<td>ami (1); m (me)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishan</td>
<td>me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>menyen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan (Polynesian lang)</td>
<td>mau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherbros (Sierra Leone)</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>m (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urhobo</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>mi; emi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The examples above show that the entire humanity sprang from a point. Thus there should be no room for discrimination, ethnicity and racism. Elugbe (1990) sums it up in the following words:

"One language begets dialects in space, and then time makes them so divergent that they become separate languages." In the same vein, Armstrong (1964) points that the difference between Yoruba and Igbo languages took place between a period of four and six thousand years.
Language usage and language policies: examples from other nations.

In this chapter, emphasis is laid on how African countries have tried to solve their language problems. Gregersen (1977) holds that the gaining of independence by African countries gave way to problems of language policy and planning. Coupled with independence, the spread of western education created language awareness and, consequently, language problems caused by the linguistically diversified nature of African countries. Before independence, the languages of the colonial masters were in use in these various countries and there were no language problems since none of the indigenous African languages competed with the foreign languages. Also, they were not competing with one another. With the dawn of independence, and following the decision by the founding fathers of the Organization of African Unity to ensure the replacement of the colonial masters' languages with indigenous African languages, the problem of which language to choose, out of the multiple languages in the African countries, arose. Western education exposed to Africans, their (Africans') worth and value as human persons, as well as the worth and value of their culture, hence the desperate move to jettison whatever subsumed the African under another race. Prominent among such subsuming factors was, and still is, the use of the colonial languages as African countries' official languages. The multiplicity of languages on the continent, however, has put hitches to these desperate efforts to introduce indigenous African languages as official languages in such countries. Gregersen (1977) points out that Africa has over one thousand languages and only about forty
of these languages are spoken by more than a million people. (Table 4).

Table 4: African languages with more than a million speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Where spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amharic</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>North West Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efi k</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewe</td>
<td>Benin, Togo, Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulani</td>
<td>Western Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galla</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onda</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>Nigeria, Niger, Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanuri</td>
<td>Nigeria, Niger, Chad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kikuyu</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimbundu</td>
<td>Angola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kongo</td>
<td>DR Congo, Angola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingala</td>
<td>DR Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luba</td>
<td>DR Congo, Zambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luo</td>
<td>Kenya, Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makua</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malagasy</td>
<td>Madagascar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malinke-Bambara-Dyula</td>
<td>Western Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mossi</td>
<td>Burkina-Faso, Ghana, Togo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyanja</td>
<td>Malawi, Mozambique,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zimbabwe, Zambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda-Rundi</td>
<td>Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sango</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senufo</td>
<td>Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mali, Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stona</td>
<td>Mozambique, Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songhai</td>
<td>Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sotho</td>
<td>Basutoland, South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swahili</td>
<td>Tanzania, Kenya, DR Congo, Uganda, Zambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiv</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twi-Fante</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbundu</td>
<td>Angola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolof</td>
<td>Senegal, Gambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Nigeria, Benin, Togo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zande</td>
<td>DR Congo, Central African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gregersen (1977) with modifications

In the face of the language problems in Africa, some countries, in the 1960s, strove to introduce indigenous official languages. Some of the attempts were met with failure. For instance, Togo put up a language policy making Ewe and Hausa official languages thus granting them equal status with French, the official language. This policy failed probably because it was not done properly. However, some African countries successfully established indigenous language policies which ushered in the use of indigenous official languages. Below is a list of some African countries that were forerunners in introducing indigenous official languages, that is, those which were first to stop the use of colonial languages as reported by Gregersen (1977) (table 5).
### Table 5: African countries that pioneered the introduction of indigenous official languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Official Language</th>
<th>Year of Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Swahili</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Rundi</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>Sango</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A look at African countries and their official languages will help identify other African countries that use indigenous official languages as well as those that do not. (Table 6).

### Table 6: African countries and their official languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Official Language</th>
<th>(Indigenous/Foreign)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Arabic, French</td>
<td>Indigenous, foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>English, Tswana</td>
<td>Foreign; indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>French, Rundi</td>
<td>Foreign; indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>English, French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo (Brazzaville)</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo DR</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>Arabic, French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Language(s)</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>Tigrinya, Arabic</td>
<td>Indigenous, Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Amharic</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Swahili, English</td>
<td>Indigenous, Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>Sesotho, English</td>
<td>Indigenous, Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>Malagasy, French</td>
<td>Indigenous; foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Arabic, French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>English, Nyanja(Chewa)</td>
<td>Foreign; indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda, French</td>
<td>Indigenous; foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Tome and Principe</td>
<td>Portuguese/Portuguese Creole</td>
<td>Foreign; indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Somali, Arabic</td>
<td>Indigenous; foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Afrikaans, English</td>
<td>Indigenous; Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Sahara/Western Sahara</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Language(s)</td>
<td>Official Language Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>Swazi, English</td>
<td>Indigenous, Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Swahili, English</td>
<td>Indigenous, Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from table 6 that no West African country uses indigenous official language. Only East and South African countries have been able to introduce indigenous official languages in place of, or alongside the foreign official languages. It is also observable that Uganda has stuck to the use of English despite the fact that its two neighbouring countries, Tanzania and Kenya, use Swahili as the official language. Crystal (1987) asserts that eighteen million and five hundred thousand (18,500,000) and seventeen million (17,000,000) people speak English in Tanzania and Kenya respectively. This did not prevent them from using Swahili as their official language. The non-usage of Swahili as Uganda’s official language may have stemmed from a wrong language policy. Randolf (1982) reports that the post-independence leaders of Uganda were unwilling to introduce indigenous official language because they felt that English, the colonial language, would help maintain unity in that multilingual nation. Hence, despite the fact that Swahili is also spoken by many people in Uganda, it has not been granted official status.

Ladefoged, Glick and Criper (1968) conducted a survey whereby two thousand people across Uganda were interviewed in Swahili, English and Luganda (table 7).
Table 7: Percentage of Ugandans able to hold a conversation in Swahili, Luganda and English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Swahili</th>
<th>Luganda</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ladefoged et al (1968)

The result of the survey shows that out of those interviewed, the people that could hold discussions in English language were least in number. This raises the question as to why the English language is still Uganda’s official language. This could be adduced to wrong language policy. On the other hand, a better language policy, introduced by Nyerere, has emancipated Tanzania, which has about one hundred and eight languages, from linguistic imperialism. The same case applies to Kenya. It will be worthwhile to trace the origin of this language, Swahili, which has been used to fill such a yawning gap. Polomé (1980), shows that the word, “Swahili”, was derived from the Arabic plural form of coast, ‘sawahil’. The language developed as a result of the coastal trade between the Arabs and the local population. The most plausible view on the origin of Swahili, among many others, is that of Krumm (1932) as reported in Polomé (1980). He puts his view on the development of the language in the following form: “Arab soldiers adopted Bantu language of Coastal population and introduced a number of loanwords relevant to their commercial activity into it.”

After a review of previous studies on the origin of Swahili, Heine (1970) concludes that the language originated
around the Tana River. Thus it originated on the coast of the Indian ocean near the Tana River and spread to the South as a result of the trade. Hence it both originated and spread as a result of trade between the Arabs and the natives. After independence, it was adopted as official language by the countries now using it as such. The reasons for this adoption were to ensure national identity and liberation from linguistic imperialism. Swahili spread from Somalia to Mozambique and up to the Comoro Islands. However not all the countries (where it is spoken) adopted it as an official language. The similarity between the origin and spread of Swahili and those of Nigerian Pidgin will be discussed later.

Language policy in India

India is a highly multilingual nation. It has been stated earlier that the country has about two hundred 'classified' languages. Out of these, fourteen indigenous languages, along with English, are used as official languages in various parts of the country. However, the Federal Government of India declared Hindi the official language, with English acting as the associate official language pending when Hindi will gain acceptance in non-Hindi-speaking regions. The imposition of Hindi has sparked off conflicts. This kind of language policy could breed language chauvinism and rivalry that may lead to inter-ethnic conflicts, chaos, insecurity and violence in a country. The multiplicity of official languages (one foreign language and fourteen indigenous ones) sprang from the Indian constitution which allows states to choose any language in their regions as the official language. Minority linguistic groups are allowed to receive education in their mother tongues. This has resulted in wide variations in media, content, duration and nomenclature of stages of education. According to Khubchandani (1983) about eighty languages are used as media of instruction at various levels of education, particularly in classes one and two. He posits that
Indian students, on completing their secondary education, are required to have acquired a good grasp of three languages— their mother tongues, Hindi and English. This is because no single language can presently cater for the needs of an average literate Indian. Furthermore, in many universities (in faculties of arts and business) regional languages are used as media of instruction at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In the faculties of law, science and technology, English is the major medium of instruction.

Goel and Saini (1972) carried out a critical appraisal on the role of mother tongue in education. Their findings reveal that because mother tongues (particularly the minority languages) differ in their various stages of development, education through them tends to result in "uneven levels of achievement" thereby creating unequal opportunities for higher education and employment for those educated through them. Khubchandani (1983) also reports that many language experts have conceded that the mother tongue cannot be the only language of education. Hence in such a multi-ethnic and multilingual society, active bilingualism is important and appears to be an effective means of doing away with the contact language, English. This policy of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in India, led to language chauvinism, de-emphasising English, which used to receive high priority attention. Khubchandani (1983) shows that the future of English as an effective contact language in India will depend on the extent to which it can serve as an efficient tool for intra-group and inter-group contact in that multilingual country. Nigeria has some lessons to learn from the Indian language policy.

Using mother tongues as media of instruction creates greater national disunity and leads to uneven achievement of educational goals.

English should be de-emphasized as Nigerian official language since it has not been an effective means of
communication for both intra-and inter-group relationships.

Imposing any indigenous Nigerian language on Nigerians, as the official language, will engender trouble as imposition of Hindi in India did. Also, Gregersen (1977) avers that the Sudanese language policy imposing Arabic as the country's official language, in spite of the fact that those in the south cannot speak it, resulted in bloodshed and long-term civil war. Also, in Egypt, there was a time when anyone who spoke Koptic instead of Arabic in public had his tongue cut off. The idea of expecting a person to switch from his mother tongue to another's does not only amount to oppression and injustice but also could result in the death of the abandoned language. Gregersen (1977) reports that several African languages have died (that is, gone into extinction). These include Koptic, Guanche, Lenge, Old Mfengu, Khoisan languages like Kani-Ka-!ke and 7kat, a language spoken in the former British Cameroons. Thus as Nigerians yearn for an alternative official language with which they can identify themselves as citizens of a nation, Nigerian languages must also be allowed to grow and develop. This can be summed up in the words of Hague (1971).

The rich diversity of human languages and dialects is part of the human condition. To iron them out so that all languages would either be uniformly logical or identical in reference is not only a labour of Sisyphus, but a monstrous goal unworthy of a humanist.
accommodating’ language policies end on paper, being hardly implemented. Unfortunately, African leaders have continued to camouflage this fact. In Cameroon, where the failure of the bilingualism policy has led to threats of secession by the marginalized Anglophones, Konings and Nyamnjoh (2003) show that the president painted a different picture as is seen in the following excerpt:

In an attempt to convince his national and international opponents that Cameroon’s policy of bilingualism had been successful, Biya claimed in 1999 that secessionist tendencies were being manifested only by a tiny Anglophone minority...

Thus the dividing effect of language diversities continue to plague African nations. Therefore, a policy which makes for a commonly spoken official language is the best solution to the language problems in African nations.
In Quest of a common Nigerian language

"For without a common language, it is hard to avoid the misfortune of Babel tower."

-A Korean graduate student

Assuming you are an Igbo man and ran into a Hausa man in a European city and a white man prods on both of you to speak some Nigerian to him, which language would you speak? English or some other indigenous language? If you spoke English, would you term it Nigerian? On the other hand, if you spoke an indigenous Nigerian language, would you term it official? Would both of you be able to speak and understand it? The problem of multiplicity of languages has made various attempts at introducing an indigenous official language, futile. There is no doubt that a commonly spoken Nigerian language will make for national identity as well as enable different linguistic groups to accommodate one another. Hence such a language will usher in national unity. According to Emenanjo (2005) studies and language census carried out in London schools between 1978 and 1991 reveal that there are one hundred and seventy two different languages spoken by children in London. Obviously, this portrays that Britain is a multilingual setting. However, the extent of negative effects of multilingualism is reduced by the presence of a commonly used national language – English. National identity is one of the benefits that emanate from a common national language. Gregersen (1977) reveals
that before the 1966 coup in Nigeria, Northern Nigeria adopted Hausa and English as official languages, having equal status. However, there were differences in opinion concerning this option hence it was dropped. The Federal government of Nigeria however has continued to make language policies to ease the country’s language problem. So far, such policies have not yielded much fruit.

Presently, Nigeria does not have any explicit language policy. Rather, its language policy is contained in the National Policy on Education and also in its constitution. A comprehensive Nigerian national language policy has not yet been established. This could be a factor in the non-implementation of the existing language policy. The National language policy, as contained in the National Policy on Education (1981), states that the mother tongue or language of the immediate community should be the medium of instruction at the pre-primary school. Secondly, the medium of instruction at the primary level should initially be the mother tongue or language of the immediate community and at a later stage, English. Thirdly, it is mandatory for pupils at the secondary school level, to study two indigenous Nigerian languages, that is, the language of the immediate environment and any of the three major Nigerian languages, Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba. The aim of the national language policy is to promote bilingualism among Nigerians. In spite of the benefits of bilingualism in any nation, the flaw of this language policy is evident. It provides a fertile ground for the continued use of English which makes the realization of national identity far-fetched. Also, the necessary steps to achieve the goals of the policy were not taken. The National language Centre published some manuals containing the orthographies of some Nigerian languages. These are meant to help implement the language policy. Bamgboshe (1982) in the preface to the first manual writes:
The National Language Centre has decided to organize the collation of orthographies and sponsor this manual comprising both general and specialized information on the orthographies of each of the following languages. The spate of publications in these and other Nigerian languages and the decision of the Federal Government that the education of each Nigerian child should be started in the language of his immediate community have made it necessary to devote greater attention to Nigerian languages. This manual will be the first in a series of manuals designed to provide information on the orthographies of Nigerian languages. It is hoped that the series will be found useful by a broad spectrum of people, including teachers, writers and publishers.

This first manual edited by Bamgboshe was published in 1982 and contains the orthographies of Efik, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. In 1983, the second manual, edited by Williamson, was published. It contains the orthographies of Edo, Fulfulde, Igbo and Yoruba. In 1985, the third manual containing the orthographies of Idoma, Nupe, Berom, Ibibio and Kalabari was published. This work was edited by Ayo Banjo. In 1986, the fourth manual, edited by Robert Armstrong was published and it contains the orthographies of Ebira, Igala, Isoko, Kaje, Gbagye and Bwtye. These manuals have not achieved the aim for which they were written since English is still used for pre-primary and primary pupils rather than the indigenous Nigerian languages.

Part of the language policy is also contained in the 1979 constitution. Section 51 of this constitution states that: "the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in
English and in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made."

Similarly, section 91 of the same constitution states thus:

The business of the House of Assembly shall be conducted in English but the House may, in addition to English, conduct the business in one or more languages spoken in the state as the House may by resolution approve.

The essence of the language policies contained in sections 51 and 91 of the 1979 constitution is to promote the three major Nigerian languages, and possibly grant each of them a co-official status with English language. This kind of policy has a lot of demerits as already discussed. It is similar to the Indian language policy which resulted in difference in content and effect (impact) of education. Such a policy would create more problems than solve the existing ones hindering national identity, unity and development. Apart from the fact that Nigerian language policies have their demerits, findings have shown that these policies have not been implemented. Uguru (1998) reports that the indigenous language policy, as contained in the National policy on Education, has been not implemented in Enugu State. Okafor (1989) also states that it was not implemented in the old Anambra State. Judging from these two states, one may conclude that the language policy may not have been implemented in other states of Nigeria.

There are strong indications that the language policy, as contained in the country’s constitution, suffered a similar fate of non-implementation, as evidenced by the continuous use of English in the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly. The non-implementation of these policies seems to suggest that there may be no end to the Nigerian language problem. This therefore calls for practical and goal-oriented
language policies as the only viable means of solving language problems in Nigeria. Such language policies as WAZOBA, minority language and those encouraging the continued use of English are very unlikely to meet Nigerian language needs.

The need to have an indigenous official language is summarized below in the words of Sofunke (1990).

However, the issue of the need for a national language goes beyond merely facilitating communication. It is an issue that is closely linked with national identity at a politico-cultural level. More fundamental however, is the ideological imperative of Nigeria as the largest concentration of black people in the world. The leadership role that accidents of history and geography have placed on Nigeria dictates that she become the master of her colonial and neo-colonial history. This imperative requires that Nigeria in the words of Simpson (1978:1) 'breaks clean with the language(s) imposed by erstwhile slave masters and today's neo-colonialists'. Simpson's observations represent one of the most eloquent attempts to show why an indigenous national language is required in Nigeria.

Due to the importance of indigenous official language, the Federal government has made relentless efforts to establish one in Nigeria. Also, individuals have proffered various suggestions towards solving the Nigerian language problem.
Sofunke (1990) discussed the WAZOBIA option. This option rates the three major Nigerian languages as equal. These three major Nigerian languages, Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba are also rated higher than all other Nigerian languages. This rating is based on the fact that the three languages have greater number of speakers. Hence the imaginary language, WAZOBIA was framed and some scholars like Simpson (1978) and Olagoke (1982) have favoured the selection of Nigerian indigenous language from the WAZOBIA languages. Sofunke criticizes this and instead suggests that a minority (non-Wazobia) language, Igala, be adopted as Nigerian official language. According to Sofunke, adopting a major Nigerian language would create dissention among the major ethnic groups, thereby, creating more language problems. On the other hand, the adoption of Igala would not generate ethnic feud. However, one wonders how this can be authenticated and assured, given the fact that every language group in Nigeria has developed language loyalty due to language awareness. It is unlikely that any language group would accept the adoption of some other language as the official language. Sofunke's argument appears to suggest that the Nigerian language problem was created by the major language groups - Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. In order to solve the Nigerian language problem, it is pertinent to trace its history, find out the need to solve it and discover some rational rather than emotional options with which the problem can be tackled. It is only when these factors come into play that a suitable and worthwhile language policy can be evolved. These factors are considered below.

The reiteration of the origin of Nigerian language problem may not be necessary here as it has already been established in preceding chapters. Suffice it to say that the Nigerian language problem started after independence when different language groups became aware of the importance of
their language to their cultural identity and existence. Before independence, English language served as the educational and administrative language. It also aided in inter-ethnic communication. One could pose the question: "Is the English language not performing this function now?" Certainly, it is. Nevertheless, the awareness of the worth and value of man's language to him has made Nigerians uneasy at the continued use of English as the country's official language. The Nigerian language problem can be summarized as follows:

- English, the official language, is a colonial stigma and not all Nigerians are competent in it.
- The major language problem lies in choosing one out of about four hundred languages to replace English as the official language.
- There is difficulty in choosing a Nigerian language that can be spoken and understood by all Nigerians.
- There does not seem to be any indigenous Nigerian language that can meet Nigerian educational, scientific and technological needs.

These issues have been emphasized at various levels by previous policies.

Why is it pertinent to solve Nigerian language problem? It cannot be over-emphasized that an indigenous official language would entrench strong national identity. So long as the language problem lingers in Nigeria, so long would the issue of national identity and unity linger. A common indigenous language is also very vital in projecting the country's image internationally. Linguistic independence is as equally important as political independence. Furthermore, a common indigenous language will enhance unity and
tolerance among Nigerian ethnics. This is because
Nigerians' language loyalty is likely to broaden,
accommodating both the ethnic and national languages.
Simpson (1978) also suggests the following as the reasons
why an indigenous official language is needed in Nigeria:
national consciousness and pride, cultural dynamism,
psychological equilibrium, pedagogical efficacy and mass
communication.

Based on the afore-mentioned factors, that is, the
Nigerian problem and the pressing need to solve it, a
language policy can now be formulated to meet the need.
Ladefoged et al (1968) are of the opinion that in making
language policies, emotional issues like religion and ethnicity
should not come into play. Only rational issues should be
considered and these include:

'...The language to be adopted should enhance
unity and eliminate divisions. This issue must be given
much consideration by language policy makers in
Nigeria. For instance, can the adoption of Hausa, Igbo
or Yoruba as the official language enhance unity?
Some have suggested the adoption of a minority
language; can that be a unifying factor? Given the
degree of language loyalty among Nigerian language
groups, there does not seem to be any 'major' or
'minor' Nigerian language that can be adopted without
some dust being raised by non-speakers. The next
question to address along this line is whether the
English language has been a unifying factor among
Nigerians. Can its continued use unite Nigerians the
more? This is most unlikely as only the well-educated
can use it competently. There is therefore no other
option than to strive to evolve a language policy that
will make way for the adoption of an indigenous
language that will enhance unity. No other language in
Nigeria can do this except Nigerian Pidgin. Nigerian
Pidgin is a beautiful blend of the indigenous Nigerian languages and English.

The language to be adopted should have a clearer definition of national identity. It should be able to serve as a means of establishing national identity whereby ethnic identity will be subsumed under national identity. When such a language is adopted, it should be given a name to indicate the national status of the language. For instance, Nigerian Pidgin, when adopted can be given the name, Nigeri. This can be seen from the languages of the African countries below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Rundi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Somali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>Swazi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>Sesotho</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The language adopted as official language should enhance access to the knowledge of science and technology. This means that the possibility of the new official language being used as a medium of instruction in the sciences is pertinent. Khubchandani (1983) reports that in India, where most of the indigenous languages are being used as media of instruction at tertiary institutions, English has remained the language used in teaching the sciences and the technological courses. In Nigeria, Nigerian Pidgin, when adopted as the official language, can serve as a medium of teaching science and technology. This is deduced from the fact that it has a structural blend of indigenous Nigerian languages and English language. Therefore, English scientific and technical terms can easily be pidginized. Hall (1966) reveals that in Australia, after the Second
World War, Pidgin English was used in the preparation of technical manuals for subjects like medicine, store-keeping and in printing of newspapers. Gani-Ikilama (1990) suggests that Nigerian Pidgin can be used as the medium of instruction in the primary school. This goal appears too low as nothing will have been achieved if our aim is only the primary school. Nigeria can really attain greater heights with pidgin. Nigerian Pidgin will be able to play these roles which will make for peaceful co-existence. Its use as a co-official language should therefore be upheld.

It appears that Nigerian Pidgin is the only language capable of solving our language problem and ushering in national unity and identity. It can be understood by all — even those who are illiterate. This is not to say that the study and development of the indigenous languages should be abandoned since they are necessary for the development of indigenous science and technology. Crystal (1987) shows that in 1985, the United States Department of Education published a list of one hundred and sixty-nine languages which the United States Government considered to be critical because the knowledge of them would promote important scientific research or the security interests of a national or economic kind. These critical languages cut across languages of the world and include Nigerian languages like Efik, Fulani, Hausa, Igbo, Kanuri, Tiv and Yoruba. These may be the Nigerian languages available in the United States Department of Education at the time of the publication. Other Nigerian languages are equally 'critical'. If the United States government can consider Nigerian languages to be important for scientific, security and economic research, then Nigerians should esteem their languages higher for such purposes.
Nigerian Pidgin in usage

"Why you try change me? I no want to speak like damn haole".

A Hawaiian pidgin speaker

The origin of pidgin

Hall (1966) shows that the term, pidgin may have an English origin, being a derivation from an indigenous word meaning 'people'. The word pidgin is a corruption of the word piditam, which refers to local Indians. Thus, it means "a native who is willing to trade" and Pidgin English means "the English used by, and in contact with Pidians. Pidians here refers to people. This etymology, reports Hall (1966) nullifies the generally held view that pidgin means business and was created by Chinese Pidgin English speakers during their trade with the English. Rather, Hall (1966) suggests that the English traders who had contact with the Indians at the mouth of Oyapock River in South America got back with the term and spread it among sailors who then carried it to China. Hall avers that though later the term came to be used to denote business in China, that was not the original meaning. According to him, this was a secondary development of the term. The first Pidgin English recorded was in North America and was used by American Indians. The sentence below recorded in 1641 validates this.
Pidgins usually originate between traders who speak unintelligible languages. Also, in most language contact situations, pidgins denote the superior-inferior or employer-subordinate relationships. This can be seen in the case of Melanesian Pidgin in New Guinea and Nigerian Pidgin spoken in the coastal areas which resulted from the slave trade between the whites and blacks. Also, in the colonial period, the colonialists had black stewards, cooks, court clerks, messengers and other menial labourers who could not speak the English language. Thus pidgin developed as a means of communication between them and their employers.

According to Fishman (1971), Melanesian Pidgin originated as a means of trade between New Guineans and the whites. It was used in the plantations as a language of communication between the employers and their employees. Fishman reports Grimshaw (1971) as suggesting that the interaction between servants and masters who have different mother tongues results in pidgins. According to Grimshaw (1971) pidgins and creoles can also develop in multilingual situations involving contact between languages that are very different, linguistically, from one another, as is the case in Delta, Rivers, and other coastal states of Nigeria.

Hall (1966) records that the earliest pidgin recorded was the one used in the Middle Ages by the European crusaders and traders in the eastern end of the Mediterranean. It was referred to as the Lingua Franca. This is the origin of lingua franca, a term used to refer to any language used as a means of communication among people of different languages. There are various forms of pidgin scattered all over the universe and their structure depends on the people or languages in contact. There are Pidgin English, Pidgin French, Pidgin German, Pidgin Portuguese, Pidgin Bantu, Pidgin Greek, Pidgin Latin and so on. Swahili is an example
of Pidgin Bantu. Melanesian Pidgin, according to Hall, originated as a result of the contact between Malay traders and the aboriginal tribes of Melanesia along the coasts of New Guinea.

According to Hall, the "unholy association" of pidgin with slavery began with the Portuguese. They were great slave traders and since slaves who could speak Pidgin Portuguese or Pidgin Spanish attracted higher prices, they (the Portuguese traders) spread Pidgin Portuguese far and wide.

Origin and use of Nigerian Pidgin

According to Uguru (2000) Nigerian Pidgin may have developed during the interaction between African slave dealers and the European slave traders (before the colonization of Africa). This will be discussed in detail in chapter eight. Some have argued that Nigerian Pidgin be termed Nigerian Pidgin English since they argue that it is a variety of English. We argue against this for two reasons:

Firstly, it is not a variety of English but a "hybrid" language with its own identity; the indigenous languages are also its ancestors and this should not be ignored. Gani-Ikilama (2005:2) confirms this by quoting Tonkin (1971:149) as having shown that the sound system of a pidgin can vary according to the first language of the speaker. Also, the more a pidgin is spoken, the more its phonology is "Africanized". It however is not influenced by only a single African language. Secondly, pidgins from other nations do not have their base languages attached to them thus we simply have Australian Pidgin, Melanesian Pidgin and so on.

Nigerian Pidgin is used extensively in communication in Nigeria. It is used in the in business transactions and in the media - radio and television particularly but minimally in the print media where it is mainly used in cartoons. In former years, some comic magazines like Ikebe were written in
Nigerian Pidgin. However, in recent years (2004 to date) the Nigerian Tribune newspaper has a column, *Buzline*, in which Nigerian pidgin features extensively. The Nigerian government has relied much on Nigerian Pidgin in enlightening the public on educational, health, social, political and other vital issues in the country. Its usage draws from the fact that it is a commonly understood language. Every Nigerian, regardless of ethnic group or educational status, understands pidgin to a large extent. Hence, the government relies on its usage to reach everybody. Ifode (2005: 201) pointing out the extent of its usage, writes:

> Not only do we find it at the highest echelons of the literate class, albeit in the informal use; we also find it in much use in advertising, theatre, political gatherings and other audience-oriented gatherings.

Ifode’s statement above typifies the functions of a national language as stated in chapter one. Thus Nigerian Pidgin is, doubtless, Nigerian national language. Some excerpts of the various ways pidgin is used by government, industries and individuals to relay important information to the general Nigerian public is shown below. The spelling of the words here is as seen in some of the written advertisement. However, some of the advertisements drawn from the radio and television have some words which bear English spelling since the phonetic spelling suggested in this book has neither been generally accepted nor introduced. This is done to facilitate reading. Each excerpt is followed by an English translation.
I. A poster advertisement by the Federal Government of Nigeria (Courtesy of World Health Organization) to encourage people to immunize their children (Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) Surveillance)

**Kick polio comot for Nigeria a beg o.**

Any pikin wey never pass 15 years wey una see say him hand and leg dey weak jus like dat, make una quick quick go report for the health centre wey dey near una place or for the officer Local Government. To find FCCP na the key to drive polio comot for Nigeria.

**Translation**

Please eradicate polio from Nigeria

If you see any child below 15 years whose limbs suddenly becomes flaccid, quickly report to the health centre near you or to the Local Government officer. Detection of FCCP is the key to driving polio out of Nigeria.
11. Poster advertisement against spread of HIV/AIDS infection

Produced by OANA/Aba in collaboration with Family Health International/Nigeria and Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the IMPACT Co-operative Agreement Number HRN-A-00-97-00017-00.

Translation

A. Motor Park

There are men

There are women

You cannot tell who has it.
B. Hotel De Boll
   Many people have AIDS but you cannot
tell who has it.

C. Law enforcement agents are very efficient
   But you cannot tell which of them has it.

D. People suffering from AIDS are all over the
   Place but you cannot identify them because
   It does not show on the face.

E. Laboratory
   It is all over the place but you cannot tell
   who has it except they are advised to go for tests.

Fig. 3

Issued by Enugu State AIDS Coordinating Agency
(ENSACA) Courtesy of DFID Nigeria.
Translation

A. I stick only to my partner.
B. My partner is okay.

One can observe that English and Nigerian Pidgin are used in the above poster. Hence both languages are already recognised by Nigerians as common languages. The next step therefore is officializing the Nigerian Pidgin to widen its usage.

III. Radio jingle against improper handling of naira.

Courtesy of the Central Bank of Nigeria

Officer: Park! Park!
Driver: Officer
Officer: ai say park; wey your particulars?
Driver: Ab! Ogo Officer, eh... my particulars no dey here o.
Officer: In dat case you go follow me go police station be dat
Driver: Habba officer come make we settle dis matter now a beg. Oya take for dis weekend
Officer: What? Offence no. 1, no particulars. Offence no. 2, attempt to bribe an officer of the Law, Offence no. 3, abuse of we naira. Eh?
Driver: Officer
Officer: See, see as you squeeze we naira. You no know say to abuse the naira na Punishable offence wey carry N50,000 fine or up to 6 months jail term or even two of dem join?
Driver: Ah officer I feel sorry o. A beg...
Abuse of Naira na punishable offence now o...
Naira na wey own o
Person wey no yet hear, make i hear.
Translation
Officer: Park! Park!
Driver: Officer
Officer: I say you should park.
Driver: Officer, eh... my particulars are not here.
Officer: In that case, you will come with me to the station.
Driver: Ah! Officer, please let us settle this matter. O.k, take this for the weekend.
Officer: What? First offence – no particulars; second offence – attempt to bribe an officer of the law; third offence – abuse of our naira. Eh?
Driver: Officer
Officer: Just imagine how you are creasing our naira. Don’t you know that abuse of the naira is a punishable offence which carries a fine of ₦50,000 or as much as 6 months in jail or both?
Driver: Ah! Officer I am really sorry. I plead for mercy.
Abuse of naira is now a punishable offence...
The naira is our own. Let all be informed.
This message is from the Central Bank of Nigeria.

IV. Commercial advertisements

1. Tomtom (sweet)

Ah ah na wa o. Dis harmattan don come again, dry air don fu eeriwia. Bet sha,
no worry at all, tomtom wey be your good friend still dey. Tomtom go clear your throat and I go make your body cool.

Translation
Ah! Terrible! This harmattan has started again. The air is very dry now. Anyway, don't worry at all, tomtom, your good friend is still available. Tomtom will clear your throat and cool your body.

2. Rainbownet telephone line

Di awuf wey pass awuf wey rainbownet dey dash dis season for di beta beta people wey dey use rainbownet phone. Make you recharge your phone from December 1 go reach January 31 2008. Jus buy ₦3,000 evry month and you go enia straight inside di draw wey you go fit wii ogbonye new... tua enja car. Dat one no di att prize o. You fit win okada moto sakata, 10 generators and 5 microwave. I neva finish o. Di plenty plenty awuf go kari waka go meet 15 different people wey go win DVD players... No tanda make dis one pass you. Make you begin now dey load credit wey go reach ₦3,000...

Translation
Rainbownet has a lot of bonanza this season for lots of customers who use rainbownet phone. Recharge your phone...
between 1st of December and 31st of January 2008. Just buy ₦3,000 recharge card every month and you are qualified to enter the draw where you could win a beautiful brand new car. That is just the star prize. You could win a motor cycle, ten generators and five microwaves. That’s not all. Lots of consolation prizes to be given to fifteen people include DVD players...Don’t miss it! Start now to load up to ₦3,000.

3. Mr. Chef iodized salt

Junior: Mummy, mummy, ai don return o. ai de hungry.
Mummy: Junior my son, you don come? Ova bring your report make ai see.
Ai hope say you pas dis time. Eh? Again?
Se naa come first from back? Upon all di monti way ai dey waste make you sabi book Eh?
Neighbor: Mama junior, how many times ai go tell you say for pikin to push forward, and for body to dry keep you must give pikin food wey get minerals and vitamins.
Mummy: But ai de giv am beta food.
Neighbor: Agree. But were ai de talk be say important minerals and salts for pikin brain to develop and for family to tranga, na inside Mr. Chef iodized salt i bokwa...make i help pikin fight diseases.
Mummy: you mean say Mr. Chef iodized salt go help my pikin know book?
Neighbor: Yes.
Mummy: Make ai run go chatter aw...
Translation
Junior: Mummy! Mummy, I am home; I’m hungry.
Mummy: Junior my son are you home? Now, bring your
result let me see. I hope you passed this time.
Eh? Again? So you took the last position? In
spite of all the money I have been spending on
your education? Eh?
Neighbour: Mama Junior, how many times will I tell
you that for a child to make progress and have
good health you must give him food
containing minerals and vitamins?
Mummy: But I give him good food.
Neighbour: Yes, but what I mean is that Mr. Chef
iodized salt is rich in all the important
minerals and salts for the development of a
child’s brain and the health of the family...
It help to fight disease.
Mummy: You mean Mr. Chef iodized salt will make
my child do well at school?
Neighbour: Yes.
Mummy: Let me hurry and buy a lot of it...

4. Saclux Paint (Jingle)
Dis penti na supra kwoiti o!
Try am for your house o sharp sharp I go ansa.
No mata di weda saclux penti na champion.
Saclux na for all o! saclux na di champion.
Penti dey penti dey, plenti plenty penti dey o
but if no bi saclux call am I no go ansa.

(Message)
Yes o! for di penti ai dey penti house ev’ri
ye by ye dat ni wai di oga superior penti
- saclux dey adiwa ev’ri penti wery get
This paint really has super quality. Try it on your house and you will see the result. In any weather, saclux is the best. Saclux is really for all, saclux is the best. There are many brands of paint but any that is not saclux doesn’t give good results.

Really, some painters paint the same house yearly. That is why the superior paint—saclux—advises painters to paint once and for all by using it. Saclux comes in emulsion and oil... Saclux’s quality cannot be compared to any other... that is why every other brand is trying to be like saclux but cannot.
Prospects for Nigerian Pidgin

There are very high prospects for Nigerian Pidgin. Presently, as seen in the previous chapter, it is used extensively in advertisements in the radio and television, in jingles political and health awareness campaigns, business and other vital activities of Nigerian economy. In the coastal areas, some primary school teachers reveal that they use it sometimes to enhance the pupils' comprehension (Oborindó, 2005). However, a number of challenges must be overcome before Nigerian Pidgin can used to attain greater heights in the nation. The most prominent challenge is the negative attitude of some Nigerians towards the use of pidgin. Ironically, even those who will easily use this pidgin to bridge communication gaps are guilty of this.

Pidgins and negative attitudes

In most parts of the world, pidgins and creoles are scoffed at and termed 'inferior' and sub-standard. Etong-Enow (2005) reveals that in the Anglophone region of Cameroon, speaking pidgin English is not allowed in primary schools. Defaulters are made to hang the skull of an animal on their necks during school hours as well as undergo some punishment at close of school. In the secondary schools in the same region, the use of pidgin English is such a great offence that offenders have it recorded in their report cards after they must have undergone some form of punishment. In extreme cases, an offender may face outright dismissal from school. Grimshaw (1971) traces the origin of negative attitude to use of pidgin. According to him, the United Nations, at a time, demanded that pidgin be abolished. The reasons for this demand was
based on the fact that pidgin depicted social subordination of the natives; thus it marked employer/subordinate relationship. Also it was felt that it was not a language but a corruption of English and so could not be used to move its speakers into modern civilization. This could be the origin of the relegation of pidgin as a means of communication. Hall (1955) reacts against the United Nations’ demand, having studied the Melanesian Pidgin and discovered that pidgin facilitated communication between natives and Europeans and also helped to break communication barriers that resulted from multilingualism in New Guinea. He points out that pidgin is an intelligible language which can be used in carrying out thought patterns. It has its own unique grammar (different from that of English) and plays a pertinent role in the social and political mobilization of its speakers. Hall cites the example of Bazar Malay which has been standardized to become an official/national language known as Bahasa Indonesia. This is a clear indication that pidgins can become creolized and further standardized into national languages.

A pidgin is said to have become a creole when it becomes the mother tongue of its speakers. At this stage of development, according to Ervin-Tripp (1971), a pidgin acquires “all the values of group identity with other vernaculars”. Meredith (1964) states that speakers of creoles are language-conscious and are hostile to, and, resistant to change. Ifode (1983:200) claims that it appears that Nigerian Pidgin can only become a mother tongue when the indigenous languages become unavailable since according to her, most pidgin speakers in Nigeria are multilingual, speaking at least two indigenous languages. Ifode’s claim is both obsolete and erroneous because findings have shown that most pidgin speakers (who live predominantly in the coastal areas where Ifode carried out her survey) acquired Nigerian Pidgin before their indigenous languages (Onakpo,
Obrorindo, 2005; Obrorindo, 2005 and Ajubo, 2005). Obrorindo particularly, in the course of his study, interviewed some people who informed him that they acquired Nigerian Pidgin before their indigenous languages. In addition, they speak it more frequently and fluently than their indigenous languages. Hence Nigerian Pidgin, which has been creolized in some regions of the country, can be standardized to become an official language. Nigerian just as Bazar Malay was standardized to become Bahasa Indonesia. This will help to solve the Nigerian language problem. A number of well-known languages have evolved out of pidgins. These include Swahili and Afrikaans. Montgomery (1995) also shows that it is now considered likely that English evolved out of a creolization process involving Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse and Norman French. This explains why there are French words and constructions in English. If an international language like English can be traced to have been a creole, then definitely it must have been a pidgin at some time since there cannot be a creole without a pidgin. Nigerian Pidgin, therefore, if given a fair chance can equally become a highly developed language.

A case for Nigerian Pidgin

The use of Pidgin English still prevails in British colonies, particularly in Africa. To fully understand the nature and origin of Pidgin English in Nigeria, there is need to relay the language attitude of the Western European traders and the account of Hall (1966) is shown below.

Everywhere the West European went he seems to have adopted the same linguistic behaviour towards the natives of the territories he discovered. The European was normally too sure of the superiority of his own culture to design take any interest
in indigenous languages; so the native had to do his best to make himself understood to the newcomer in what he could pick up of the latter's tongue. Naturally, his first attempts at talking Portuguese, Spanish, French or English would be halting. At this point, the European (whether explorer, sea captain, trader or sailor) would assume that the native's incomplete efforts at speaking the European's language were due, not to insufficient practice, but to inherent mental inferiority. So the European would conclude that it was useless to use 'good language' to the native, and would reply to him in a replica of the latter's incomplete speech...

This account of Hall's confirms the report of Uguru (2000) on the effect of slavery on language. According to the author, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade resulted in linguistic inequality in African countries. This is a case where the languages of the European traders were considered to be better than those of the Africans. She puts it aptly in the following words:

The Europeans came to buy black Africans who were being sold by fellow black Africans for some money or European-made goods. It is not imaginable that those blacks selling like-skinned human beings to white-skinned men would feel dignified neither would they present imposing figures. Even if they were as huge as Idi Amin of Uganda and the white was just a midget, they
would still feel relegated. Thus it was only natural for the white man to go on with his language while the ‘seller’ discarded his and tried to speak the ‘buyer’s’. This was the case between the African slave dealers and the Europeans. Thus the white man’s language was regarded as the business language.

Uguru (2000) asserts that Nigerian Pidgin may have developed during the interaction between African slave dealers and the European slave traders. This can be inferred from the fact that pidgin seems to have concentrated on the coastal areas of Nigeria. She shows that Latham (1973) quoted King Eyo VII of Calabar to have said, at the abolition of slave trade in 1841:

“I have too much man now”.

King Eyo meant that since the slaves could neither be sold off nor returned to their homelands, they would have to become his subjects and that resulted in the explosion of the population in his kingdom. Another example of the use of Pidgin English by a Nigerian in slavery period, is that of Oko Jumbo (of Bonny) who, in a discussion with the European traders about King Jaja of Opobo, is quoted to have said:

“e be one of us. We no want to crush him”.

It can therefore be inferred that Nigerian Pidgin developed in the period of slave trade (pre-colonial times) but its use was strengthened in the colonial days and has continued to date.

From the account of Hall (1966) the kind of Pidgin English spoken in Nigeria is the Central Atlantic Pidgin English which developed in the Caribbean and Central
Atlantic (West Africa). He shows that it has now been estimated as substandard English in large towns like Lagos. This is one of the reasons why pidgin is relegated since its speakers are seen as speakers of a non-prestigious language. Despite this relegation, it is still being used, even among young undergraduates, in Nigeria. Ifode (1983) reveals that despite its stigmatization, it seems to be an attractive language for public messages. It is obvious that Nigerian Pidgin has played a tremendous role in solving the communication problem involving different language groups in Nigeria. Succinctly put, Nigerian Pidgin has come to stay and it would be better to make optimal use of it rather than relegate it. Hall reports that when the Germans took over the government of Melanesia, they did all they could to eradicate pidgin but did not succeed. When the German imperialists observed this, they made its use official. Then German administrators and missionaries treated it as a language of its own, analysed its sound system and grammar, and designed an adequate orthography for it. Nigeria can take a cue from this.

Regrettably, most educated Nigerians, particularly of the elite class, disregard Nigerian pidgin though they make use of it when the need arises. Some feel it should be associated with the low class or unlearned. Hence Nigerian Pidgin, a child of circumstance, has not received enough attention in terms of study, analysis and development so as to be used for officially purposes. For some people, it should be left for the agberos ( riff-raffs) while the learned must speak the Queen's English. There is little wonder then, why we have not seen much of pidgin literature. Ironically, however, despite its relegation, the use of Nigerian Pidgin has continued just like the case of the Melanesian Pidgin. It will be worthwhile to halt from our confused scampering around for an indigenous official language and see what we can harness out of this linguistic resource - Nigerian Pidgin. One
thing we ought to come to terms with is the fact that there is no way Nigerians can speak the English language as accurately well as native speakers, particularly when all the features of the language are considered - grammar, phonology, phonetics and so on. What is being grappled with here, is simply Nigerianized English. This is so because not all the phonemes of English and Nigerian languages are alike; thus there is bound to be difficulty in the pronunciation of unfamiliar phonemes. Also, the arrangement of words or sentence construction in English is different from what we have in Nigerian languages. Consequently, wrong constructions of English sentences are bound to feature in Nigerian 'standard' English. Many more reasons why Nigerians cannot speak English as accurately as the native English speakers abound. These include the fact that in Nigeria, it is taught by second language speakers. Pidgin English is easier to speak and understand, having the phonology and syntax of indigenous languages and mainly adopting the vocabulary of English with modifications. Thus it is akin to indigenous languages and since it cuts across all Nigerian language groups, it will fit in perfectly as an indigenous official language. Many countries have adopted pidgin as their official languages. According to Hall, in a bid to enforce caste separations in the East Indies, the Imperialist Dutch refused to allow Indonesians to learn Dutch. They were only allowed to speak Bazar Malay, a pidgin. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise, for this pidgin served as a starting point for developing Indonesian official language, a new national language known as Bahasa Indonesia, which is being used today.

There should be a change of attitude towards the use of Pidgin since it has been shown that it can develop, not only as the language used between a superior and a subordinate but also as a means of communication in a multilingual society. There is need to embrace the rejected
baby-Nigerian Pidgin. It could be the answer to what has been so much sought after - an indigenous official language. It has been shown that Pidgin English has become creolized in some coastal parts of Nigeria like Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States. This means that there are now people whose first language and mother tongue is Nigerian Pidgin. It is a natural process of growth for a pidgin to grow into a creole and finally into a standard language. It has already been pointed out that English language grew from a creolization process. However, one may not need to authenticate whether Nigerian pidgin has creolized or not before calling for its officialization since it is already playing a crucial role in inter-ethnic communication in the country. The Federal Government of Nigeria has a role to play in the possible standardization of Nigerian Pidgin. This can be done through making of language policies to facilitate its use. Also, finance and research grants are needed for its study, analyses and development of orthography and sound system. There are still other necessary aspects to look into by language specialists. Nigeria typifies its national status and identity.

**Varieties of Nigerian Pidgin**

Since Nigerian Pidgin is a hybrid of English and Nigerian indigenous languages, it is only natural that its varieties will be virtually as numerous as the number of Nigerian languages. This is so because speakers of these languages incorporate the features of their languages into pidgin. Gam-ikilama (2005) states that pidgins are prone to have many varieties since their users keep "creating and recreating". This high rate of creation is attributable to ease of usage - pidgins are simple to use. Among the various varieties of Nigerian Pidgin, Delta Pidgin spoken mainly in the Warri - Sapele axis, appears to be most prominent. Some other varieties are also spoken in other southern parts of Nigeria.
I'KOSI'ECTS FOK NIGERIAN PUDGIN

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Varieties of Nigerian Pidgin

Since Nigerian Pidgin is a hybrid of English and Nigerian indigenous languages, it is only natural that its varieties will be virtually as numerous as the number of Nigerian languages. This is so because speakers of these languages incorporate the features of their languages into pidgin. Gani-Ikikama (2005) states that pidgins are prone to have many varieties since their users keep "creating and recreating". This high rate of creation is attributable to ease of usage - pidgins are simple to use. Among the various varieties of Nigerian Pidgin, Delta Pidgin spoken mainly in the Warri - Sapele axis, appears to be most prominent. Some other varieties are also spoken in other southern parts of Nigeria.
Contrary to the erroneous belief that Nigerian Pidgin is not spoken in the north, Gani - Ikilama (2005:3) reveals that it is spoken in the northern Nigeria. However, its usage in the north is not as widespread as that of southern Nigeria. It is however observable that while the southern varieties appear to be largely intelligible to most Nigerian speakers, the northern varieties are not easy to understand. Gani - Ikilama outlines some examples of Nigerian Pidgin as used by Hausa speakers.

Bot in ma sef inevä go to sku. (But even he did not go to school)
Ai don foget yo nem ma sef. (I have even forgotten your name)

Gani - Ikilama shows that ma is a Hausa word meaning even and sef is the pidgin word for too. In the two sentences above, both mean even. Other Hausa words that feature in northern Nigerian Pidgin, as shown by Gani - Ikilama include ne (meaning it is that), kawai (meaning just) and samwn (meaning not at all) as seen in some of her sample sentences below:

Ai de trai ne smo smo. (It is that I am making some effort)
I no fit ne kawai. (He just cannot)
I no fit ne kawai; samwn. (He just can’t at all)

From the foregoing, one may conclude that the vocabulary of northern variety of Nigerian Pidgin was more influenced by Hausa than English.

In studying Warri Pidgin, Marchese and Schmukal (1982) considered the languages spoken in its environment and discovered that they fall into three main groups - Yoruba, (Isekiri); Igbo (Kwale) and Edo (Isoko, Okpe, Urhobo, Uvwie). Hence since Nigerian Pidgin may have
begun from these coastal areas, one may infer that these languages greatly influenced the fundamental structures of the pidgin. On the other hand, considering the fact that varieties of pidgin differ from place to place, one may conclude that these Delta languages mainly influenced the Warri variety of Nigerian Pidgin.

Warri pidgin has a lot of slang and this seems to be what hinders meaning in its usage, particularly among people living outside Warri and its environs. Some of these appear below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English word</th>
<th>Pidgin</th>
<th>Pidgin Slang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eat</td>
<td>chop</td>
<td>wak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>money</td>
<td>pepe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit</td>
<td>bit</td>
<td>nak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fool</td>
<td>fool</td>
<td>mugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>papa</td>
<td>pale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>mama</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>boy</td>
<td>boboh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>girl</td>
<td>chikala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>water</td>
<td>drip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Chop</td>
<td>wakis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shake hands</td>
<td>shake hands</td>
<td>clap hands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Pidgin English is spoken in most Anglophone African countries, the varieties spoken in these countries differ in syntax, vocabulary and phonology. In Cameroon pidgin English for instance, the following words exist (Etong - Enow, 2005):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cameroon Pidgin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>asha</td>
<td>sorry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>massa</td>
<td>husband, other meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndiba</td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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One can observe that the words above were not drawn from English. Etong-Enow points out that their origin is not known since some say they were coined from local languages while others think that the words were drawn from the whites’ mispronunciation of the words of the local languages. However, what is important is the fact that the users understand their meanings and can use them to communicate within their multilingual society regardless of ethnic group and education background. English has not been able to serve this need in most African states, including Nigeria. Furthermore, the strangeness of pidgin words from English signifies that pidgin is indigenous and a language that can be used for national identity.

Standardization of Nigerian Pidgin

There has been this proposition that there are so many varieties of Nigerian Pidgin that it is difficult to select one as Nigeria’s official language. Much as no official language is being presented as a model, it is pertinent to point out that many official languages are not the only varieties of such languages. Rather, only one variety is chosen to be used as the official (standard) dialect, out of a host of varieties. Standard English, for instance, is from the dialects of the Southeast of England (Strang, 1970). There are other varieties of English like Welsh, Irish, and Yorkshire. Consider the following expressions in Yorkshire and Irish English.
Yorkshire

Grandfather Taylor were afraid o' nowt and nobody. 'E were a real 'ero. Tha's got sommar to be proud of belonging to this chapel.

-adapted from Whittaker (1987)

Irish

You're a giving me a ride already.

This is the case with most other languages of the world. Standardization of Nigerian Pidgin will take the normal processes in language planning and standardization. Language planning, according to Jemudd and Das Gupta (1969) refers to "organised efforts to find solutions to societal language problems". The onus of language planning falls mainly on the government of a nation. Thus Robinson (1988) defines language planning as "official, government-level activity concerning the selection and promotion of a unified administrative language or languages". He points out that language planning is necessary to solve socio-political needs of a country and to enable every linguistic group of a country have "an equal opportunity to participate in their government and to receive services from their government". Appel and Muysken (1987) point out that the governments of multilingual countries, particularly those in the Third World, should embark on language planning. Robinson is of the view that the first thing to do in language planning is analysing the socio-political analysis of communication patterns in a given society. This is followed by selection which involves choosing an indigenous national language, developing it,
fostering its spread as well as making policy statements concerning the status of other indigenous languages in the country. Such planning and development may include evolving a simplified spelling like those of Esperanto and Volapuk. Individuals can also participate in language planning through creation and continual use of new words. Sociolinguists and other language specialists should be involved in government language planning to guide decision-making. The government does language planning through language agencies or centres whose duty it is to devise orthography and create new words.

Crystal (1991) defines standardization as the natural development of a standard language or an attempt by a community to impose a dialect as the standard. Standardization is therefore part of language planning. The various processes involved in the standardization of a language are selection, codification, elaboration of function and acceptance. In the first stage, a variety of a language is selected out of the range of varieties existent in the language. In the case of Nigerian Pidgin, a variety has to be picked out. In Swahili, the variety spoken in Zanzibar town was chosen to be the standard. The second process of standardization, that is, codification, involves the writing of dictionaries, grammar books and other important materials that would serve as guides to correct usage of the standard language. Until Nigerian Pidgin becomes a written language, there may not be a standard variety. This is so because it is in the process of adopting a uniform written variety that can be used by all, that standardization sets in. According to Hualde and Zuazo (2007) dialectal diversity hindered the standardization of the Basque language such that the standardization moves which began in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries only saw fruition in the second half of the twentieth century. It was after the linguist, Luis Michelena, presented a report to the Basque Academy in 1968 on the bases for a written
standard language that the standardization processes were hastened up. Also, Spencer (1971:4) has shown that while it is easier to talk of a standard written English, it is more difficult to talk of a standard spoken English. In other words, language users are less strict with conforming to standard when speaking than when writing. Although English forms are adopted in writing Nigerian Pidgin, it will be unique and less nebulous to devise another form of spelling. A more simplified method, where the written form is as close as possible to the pronunciation (that is phonetic spelling) as seen in Esperanto will be ideal. This will make it very distinct from English.

**Examples**
1a. English: We want it.
   1b. Nigeri: Wi wont am.
2a. English: We want to eat.
   2b. Nigeri: Wi won it.
3a. English: I want to go.

From the sentences above, we can observe that Nigerian Pidgin has a phonetic spelling and is phonologically different from the English language. Based on sentences 1b, 2b and 3b, a phonological rule can be formulated thus: that (t) of wont is silent or elided except occasionally when it precedes a word beginning with the open vowel, /a/.

The third process of standardization is elaboration of function. Appel and Muysken (1987) also refer to it as modernization. It entails developing the language to the level that it can become useful in all spheres of life - science, technology, health, justice, business, government affairs, education and so on. To achieve this, new words have to be coined. Nigerian Pidgin, being partly based on English, a developed language, may not face much problems in the area.
All that may need to be done will be modifying the spelling of the words and reconstructing expressions fit into the grammar of Nigerian Pidgin, Nigeri. The last process of standardization is that of acceptance. A standard language must be acceptable to the citizens of a country as a national/official language. Examples have already been given of cases where national languages were forcefully imposed and gruesome incidents followed. Measures that can ensure this acceptance include the undertaking of awareness campaigns, by government, to enlighten its citizens and the general public on the advantages of choosing a particular dialect as the standard language or a particular language as the national language as the case may be. Also, in the case of choosing a language as the official language of a country, the language of choice should ideally be a neutral one so as to avoid negative reactions from biased language groups. Nigerian Pidgin meets this criterion since no language group can lay claims to its ownership. Also, the fact that Nigerians speak it freely, particularly the educated youth, is a good indication that its acceptability by Nigerians as an official language will be high. It also shows that it will be a strong unifying factor among Nigerians.

A look at the four processes involved in standardization shows that developed languages also go through some of them. The two processes that developed languages also undergo are codification and elaboration of function. Being dynamic, languages never stop developing. In terms of elaboration of function, new words are coined on continuous bases as new discoveries are made in various aspects of life. For instance, it took time for the English lexicographers to incorporate the word, globalizaton in the lexicon. As it concerns codification, new dictionaries, grammar books and other needful materials are churned out from time to time to ensure the incorporation of the entire vocabulary of the language in its lexicon. Also, some

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Grammatical rules are adjusted as years go by; hence the importance of reviewing grammar books or writing new ones. A lot of funds are expended on language materials regardless of whether the language in question is a developing or a developed one. Similarly, language researches are carried out in both categories of languages. Therefore, no nation should be deferred from choosing an indigenous official language.

**Nigerian Pidgin as Nigeria's official language**

One could argue that there is no need for Nigerian Pidgin to be granted co-official status with English since it is partly based on English and so could be said to be its offshoot. The question could be posed - what is indigenous about Nigerian Pidgin? If anyone can explain why the United States of American citizens, who speak a variety of English, have stuck to American pronunciation and spelling rather than taking to 'Received Pronunciation' or the so-called Queen's English, then anyone can understand the important role Nigerian Pidgin can play as an official language. Nigerian Pidgin was developed by Nigerians upon Nigerian soil, drawing some vocabulary from both English and Nigerian languages but using the phonology and syntax of indigenous Nigerian languages. These are what qualify Nigerian Pidgin as an indigenous language and, if nurtured, it will give Nigerians a sense of belonging within and outside the country.

Nigerian Pidgin is the only language that virtually all Nigerians can speak and understand regardless of educational background, social status, ethnic group and so on. The official language of a country should be a tool for every member of the society to express himself or herself in. The English language lacks this quality. Thus this is a great advantage that Nigerian Pidgin has over English, which can only be used competently by the educated. Nigerian Pidgin,
as an official language, will enable all Nigerians to express themselves freely and so contribute their ideas towards nation-building. A personal experience a woman had confirms this. This incident took place in 1989. The radio was broadcasting the news in Pidgin English and the newscaster said:

"Vegiebul don fuul evriwia nau." (Translation: There are plenty of vegetables everywhere now).

A stark illiterate woman, on hearing this, said something that showed that the news item was exaggerated. Thus this woman, through pidgin, was able to criticize, which was a form of contribution. She was no longer an onlooker but a participant in government. This is a demonstration of what nation building is all about.

Furthermore, Nigerian Pidgin is a simplified language with simplified grammar. Its phonology (pronunciation, intonation and so on), which is African, is simple and indigenous to Nigeria. Crystal (1987) asserts that no natural language is "simple or wholly regular" since all natural languages have complex grammatical rules and also exceptions to those rules. He shows that only pidgin languages are 'natural' languages that can be seen to be simple. This can explain why the illiterate woman could understand the aforementioned statement about vegetables even when it appears that the words were mainly English. It was the need for simplicity that led to the development of artificial or auxiliary languages like Esperanto and Volapük. Hence because its grammar and phonology are simplified and indigenous to Nigeria, less time will be given to the study of Nigerian Pidgin, Niger. This is contrary to the amount of time devoted to the study of the complicated and complex systems of the English language. English language is allocated more periods of study in Nigerian schools. This
places the study of other subjects at a disadvantage. By replacing English with Nigerian Pidgin, more periods can be devoted to the study of other subjects thereby ensuring rapid development. Having a simple language that is virtually spoken by all is therefore a good opportunity for Nigeria to seize in overcoming its language problems. In addition, the phonetic (simplified) spelling recommended in this book will make it easy for second language learning, which will usher in better international relations and foreign investment.

Furthermore, since Nigerian Pidgin was partially derived from the English language, the problem of devising metalanguage for science and technology will not arise. This is because the English forms of the scientific and technological terms can easily be transformed to take the form of the rest of Nigerian Pidgin structure. Thus it can easily be used in formal education.

Nigerian Pidgin and English as co-official languages
There is need to grant Nigerian Pidgin equal official status with English because it is important to accommodate both the learned and the unlearned in the affairs of the society. The use of English as the sole official language shuts off the unlearned thus many of them do not have the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the development of the nation. Even when everybody in Nigeria becomes learned (as is being aimed at) most people would still find it easier to use Nigerian Pidgin. This is because it has the advantage of being simpler since it is closer to our indigenous languages than English. Experience has shown that many people (particularly youngsters) within and outside academic environments, who speak English fluently, often speak Nigerian Pidgin. This is a pure indication that Nigerians feel more at home with Nigerian Pidgin than English.

When both languages are used as official languages, as is being suggested, the use of English will be
systematically discontinued. However, the study of English in schools will continue though it should be seen as a foreign language like French. English is an international language used as a working language in most international gatherings. However, there is no sense of national pride in projecting it as our official language. Other nations have their indigenous languages that they use for day to day activities, with the learning of English being optional. We should take a cue from them. English is a foreign language and should be viewed and treated as such.

Nigerian Pidgin and indigenous Nigerian languages

The syntax, phonology and some vocabulary of Nigerian Pidgin are drawn from indigenous Nigerian languages. These features qualify it as an indigenous language. Hence Nigerians do not have difficulties with its phonology and constructions. However, the number of English words in Nigerian Pidgin sentence is determined by the level of education of the speaker. The relationship between Nigerian Pidgin and the indigenous languages projects the latter to the limelight. It is common to find a sentence in Nigerian containing words from different indigenous languages in addition to English words. An example is seen below:

Oya make una come. – Now, you (plural) come.

Above, we have a Yoruba word, oya, and Igbo word (modified) una, combining with English words to form a complete sentence. Anybody in Nigeria can understand this sentence. This goes a long way to simplify and facilitate the learning of indigenous languages. In speaking and hearing Nigerian Pidgin, people are learning these languages inadvertently. In addition, it aids formal indigenous language learning since learners will have come across some vocabulary of indigenous languages in Nigerian Pidgin.
Nigerian Pidgin is therefore the oil that has lubricated grassroots bilingualism (Nigerian ethnic groups learning one another's languages). Hence the use of Nigerian Pidgin as Nigeria's official language will facilitate rather than hinder the study and development of Nigerian languages.
Conclusion

The need for national identity and unity in Nigeria can be met by the introduction of a common official language. Nigeria is blessed with diverse linguistic resources and it is practically impossible to merge all these languages into one to form an indigenous official language that all language groups will accept. Even if it were possible, the outcome will be a meaningless, non-communicating language. Such a language will not have all the design features possessed by human languages. The main purpose of language is communication. In multilingual societies, this goal communication is usually hindered since the languages are not usually mutually-intelligible; hence inter-language group communication is bound to be hampered. Only a careful language planning which comes up with rational language policies can solve the language problem in such societies. In meeting this need, the government as well as language specialists have the duty of ensuring that the right language is chosen as the national language. The criterion of neutrality is important in making such a choice that is, choosing a language that is not identified with any ethnic group. Doing this will enable all language groups to embrace and accept the chosen language without any bias. Nigerian Pidgin meets this criterion and can solve Nigerian language problem. There is a view that English language, along with the three 'major' Nigerian languages, should be used and that the three indigenous Nigerian languages should be left to compete with one another. According to this view, any of the 'major' indigenous languages that out-competes the others will eventually replace English as the country's official language. This view may be a subtle way of encouraging the continued use of English as the official language. Even if any of the 'major' or 'minor' indigenous languages succeeds in
replacing English, ethnic rivalry and conflict, language chauvinism, language loyalty and so on, which breed unpatriotic tendencies, will ensue. Nigerian Pidgin, which has been suggested to be christened Nigertn, is therefore the ideal language to replace English as Nigeria’s official language. This will be done systematically with English and Nigerian Pidgin having official status at first and then that of English removed gradually. The issue of English language scholars becoming redundant does not arise since the English language will still have a place as a foreign language just like French.

Therefore, let all join hands to establish an official language that Nigerians can be proud of. It has been shown that a good number of languages grew out of Pidgin and most languages passed through the process of creolization before attaining the peak of language development, that is, becoming standard languages. Such languages, as already pointed out in this book, include Bahasa Indonesia, Swahili, Afrikaans and English.

The family relationship existing among most Nigerian languages has been shown to be a point for unity among Nigerians. Nigerians are hereby encouraged to emphasize the relationships between their languages rather than the differences. This will ensure national unity. The Adoption of a common national language that most Nigerians can use competently will also enhance national unity and identity. A language which Nigerians can identify and be identified with both nationally and internationally, will give Nigeria a more enviable position on the globe. In this age of globalization, there is need to break the language barrier among Nigerian ethnic groups before forging ahead to join the rest of the world in the march to globalization. Linguistic barrier hinders national unity which is a prerequisite to national development. In turn, national unity and development make way for better international relations, a sine qua non in the process of globalization.
There is a great need to give attention to the Nigerian language problem. The longer the problem persists, the graver its consequences – ethnicity, violence, bloodshed etc. These consequences are vices which culminate into underdevelopment in any nation. Any nation having problems of this sort, encounters difficulties in attaining the heights reached by developed countries. Some African countries dealt with their language problems immediately after their independence. How long will that of Nigeria linger? Language problems are as grave as any health, economic or political problem and so, should not be ignored.

In Papua New Guinea an English-based pidgin, Tok Pisin, is the official language. Wurm (1994) shows that this pidgin underwent very little creolization. This means that it does not have many first language speakers. According to him, its first language speakers are between 20,000 and 50,000 in number. In other words, most language groups still use their indigenous languages in addition to Tok Pisin. Papua New Guinea has about seven hundred languages and a total area of 306,000 sq miles (792, 500) sq km. Nigeria, which has approximately four hundred languages and a total area of 356,669 sq miles (923, 773 sq km) has a lesser linguistic diversity than Papua New Guinea. Therefore, Nigerian Pidgin can easily be made an official language like Tok Pisin.

The issue of neutrality must have been considered in making the language official. In a multilingual society, only a neutral language can be entrenched as official language without inter-language group conflicts arising. Tanner (1967) also shows that the most important feature possessed by Bahasa, the Indonesian pidgin that has now become an official language, is the fact that it is a neutral language. This means that it is not the language of any known ethnic group hence its choice as the official language cannot generate opposition. Nigerian Pidgin possesses this quality of neutrality. Declaring it as the official language will indeed solve the nation’s language problem.
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