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ABSTRACT

Language policy and language usage trends in Nigerian education are examined, particularly as they concern the role of Anglo-Nigerian Pidgin (ANP), an inter-ethnic lingua franca. Language policy and practice for official and native languages both before and since Nigerian independence are chronicled. Results of a survey of 240 individuals in six urban centers in southern Nigeria are then reported. The survey gathered information on the respondents' personal characteristics (age, sex, religion, tribe), language(s), contact with ANP, and attitudes toward the promotion of ANP in certain domains and possible adoption as an official language. Findings are detailed here for geographic/tribal regions. It is concluded that about 80 percent of respondents regard ANP as a language, about half think it is a "normal" language, and most see it as a variety of English. About one-fourth approve of its being taught as a subject; one-third would not mind its use as a medium of instruction, and about one-third would like it adopted as an official language. ANP was the most popular third language among respondents, with school the primary locus of contact with it. (MSE)

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10 Anglo-Nigerian Pidgin in Nigerian Education: A Survey of Policy, Practice and Attitudes

CHARLES C. MANN

*Africans and Asians alike viewed an English academic
education as the means to social and economic advantage
and, for some, eventual political power. Anything less
was regarded as second rate. (Whitehead, 1982: 58)*

Introduction

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Traditionally, the literature on definitions and descriptions of pidgins and creoles¹ is replete with derogatory epithets, e.g. 'corrupt', 'bastardised', 'marginal' (forms of their so-called superstrate languages). However, and as also suggested in Mann (1988: 93), Hall (1955: 30) points out that 'there is no such thing as "corruption" in linguistic history, only change'. He reports (1955: 13) that an Australian critic called Neo-Melanesian - the pidgin of Papua New Guinea - 'every-man, no-man language', and that in July, 1953, the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations in that region 'condemned the use of Pidgin in the Territory of New Guinea, and demanded that Pidgin be immediately "abolished"'. Today, it is the language of Parliament in Papua New Guinea.

In spite of increased awareness, since Hall's work, of the origins, processes of formation, nature and relevance of these languages to linguistic theory, pidgins and creoles continue to be socially perceived as lesser languages, and the 'poorer cousins', even if Decamp (1971: 16) rightly remarks that 'In fact,

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we can never know how many of the "normal" languages of the world originated via this pidgin-creole process'. The low social prestige they suffer, consequently, is so regular as to suggest that it is a salient feature of their definition.

Anglo-Nigerian Pidgin (ANP) is an endogenous, Atlantic pidgin, believed to have evolved from language contacts between the natives of the coastal areas of present-day Nigeria and, firstly, Portuguese sailors (fifteenth century) – giving rise to 'Negro-Portuguese' (Brosnahan, 1963: 23); then, British traders, missionaries and colonisers (eighteenth century), undergoing, thereby, a process of re- and adlexification (towards English). Variouslly called 'Nigerian Pidgin English', 'Nigerian Pidgin', 'Broken English', or simply 'Broken', ANP is, today, a regular feature of urban language communication in Nigeria, even if it is regarded, generally, as having its stronghold in the multilingual Delta region (Warri, Sapele and Effurum). While it is, by all indications, going through a process of creolization, i.e. structural complication, elaboration and extension in use, it is regarded by some (Elugbe & Omamor, 1991) as having 'nativised' in the Delta.

Today, ANP's sociocommunicational utility, as an interethnic *lingua franca*, is in expansion. In fact, as suggested by Mann (1993), it has undergone a process of language (function) naturalisation (or 'readjustment') with the university youth, in that it is now used between students sharing a common mother tongue, as a language in its own right, and it is no longer necessarily viewed as an 'auxiliary'. According to Marchese and Schnukal (1980: 1), 'Though often ignored and only partially documented, Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) may be spoken by more people than any other language in Nigeria'. A similar view – though qualified with specific reference to urban centres and interethnic communication – can be found in Mann (1993). ANP is, at present, liberally used in the media for newscasting, drama sketches, discussion and record request programmes, and, more popularly, advertising. Furthermore, radio and TV drama presentations and advertisements in ANP are, more often than not, the most popular, in terms of public appeal. While there have been attempts to graphise it (Saro-Wiwa, 1985; Fatunde, 1986) for literary purposes, there is, as yet, no standard orthography.

The formal language situation in Nigeria, today, is that English is the official language (of instruction, government and banking); while Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo – languages of the three (demographically) dominant tribes – enjoy official recognition for legislative matters, and in education, as subjects of instruction at secondary and tertiary levels. By the same policy, languages of minority tribes (e.g. Efik, Ijaw, Urhobo) can be used as media and subjects of instruction at the primary level, in their role as mother tongue(s) (MT),

or languages of the immediate community (LIC). Nowhere, today, however, is ANP officially recognised as liable to play a role in the Nigerian educational establishment.

This paper surveys the main states and trends of educational policy and practice in Nigeria – both pre- and post-independence – with specific reference to language education, and in relation to ANP. It also presents and evaluates questionnaire-based data, from six urban centres in southern Nigeria, on attitudes of the principal actors in the educational establishment towards ANP, in an attempt to better appreciate where this language stands currently in this crucial domain of Nigeria's national life, and in the context of new, world developments. An attempt is made to interpret the attitudes expressed in the survey from a sociopsychological perspective.

Language Policy and Practice in Nigerian Education

The pre-Independence era

Although the 1st Educational Ordinance for West Africa (1882) decreed the sole use of English in teaching, subsequent official pronouncements and actions on language education in the colonies² prescribed the use of the natives' mother tongue(s) in the early stages of primary education. The missionaries were the first to take an interest in indigenous languages 'to teach basic literacy so that pupils could read the Bible and memorise the catechism. This often resulted in pioneering instruction in vernacular languages and translating the Word of God into these same languages' (Watson, 1982: 13). Likewise, the other two funding agencies of colonial education had their vested interests in language education: trading companies and government required numerate and literate natives to function as administrative and court clerks, etc. The attraction of the colonial school is summarised by Watson (1982: 26) thus: 'many of the students who attended saw the European language and the examination qualifications as a route to employment in government service or in business and commerce'.

In practice, there were inadequacies in teaching staff, teacher-training and the provision of relevant textbooks: educationists decided locally on texts used, curricula and syllabi, with state control being exerted only through grants-in-aid, payment-by-results and inspection. Awoniyi (1976: 37) describes the colonial government's attitude towards mother tongue education, in spite of its seemingly commendable official stance, as "benevolent tolerance" without any systematic planning'. If it is any consolation, we are informed (Watson, 1976: 9-10) that primary education was introduced in England only in the 1870s; universal secondary education came well after World War II:

and 'if a policy of *laissez-faire* was pursued in most British colonies in the nineteenth century this reflected the prevailing pattern in England'.

The post-Independence era

The colonial legacy in language education was carried over, initially, with little or no tinkering after Independence. Excepting the Northern Region, the mother tongue (or language of immediate community) was used for instruction for the first three years of primary education, while English was studied as a subject – these roles being reversed for the three remaining years. English is the language of instruction at secondary level, with the possibility of studying the "major" languages as electives (French, and possibly Arabic, were compulsory for the first three years, after which they became electives). English, while being the language of instruction in the newly-established universities, is also compulsory in the first year as a remedial subject, given the unsatisfactory standards attained by some students on admission.

In 1967, the division of the Federation into 12 states led to some local liberties being taken with policy through language education experimentation: the Western state's six-year (mother tongue) primary school project (Afolayan, 1976); and the Rivers Readers' Project on the formalisation of mother tongues in Rivers state, and provision of primers, thereof (Williamson, 1976).

In 1977, the National Education Policy made it mandatory, for the first three years of secondary education, that pupils study one major Nigerian language, in addition to their own (after which these became electives). This meant that language studies constituted as much as a third of the curriculum, which comprised 12 subjects. At tertiary level, the inclusion of Nigerian languages as subjects of degree study in departments of linguistics is a reflection of a growing interest in indigenous languages. These languages are, generally, also used for newscasting, drama sketches, discussion programmes and advertising in radio and TV.

One should add that the 1979 Constitution³ gave legal stamp to the role of English as the official language of the Federation, and to Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo ('when adequate arrangements have been made therefor') as languages of the National Assembly; as well as to local language(s) selected by State Assemblies for their business ('as the House may by resolution approve').

In practice, the same *lactunae* in implementation that dogged policy in colonial times, were to be found: inadequate planning for teacher-training needs for mother-tongue education (Bamgbose (1992: 572) reports that of the 48,854 teachers required, only 6,383 were available); lack of textbooks and other study materials; and no feedback, or review systems. In effect, the

urban vs. rural, and élite vs. ordinary school duality of the colonial heritage has been maintained.⁴

Attitudinal Survey

This questionnaire-based survey sampled the attitudes and perceptions of pupils/teachers and students/lecturers in six urban centres in southern Nigeria (Calabar, Port-Harcourt, Warri, Benin, Lagos, and Ibadan) towards ANP. Twenty subjects were sampled (per group) in each centre, divided equally among the subgroups and sexes, i.e. five of each, to give a total of 240 subjects. The sampling rationale was based on prevailing ethnic representativity at state and centre levels. Ibadan, given its relative linguistic homogeneity, with Yoruba being the *lingua franca*, served as an inclusive control centre. Thus, while Ibadan has a different linguistic aspect from the other five, which could be said to belong to the 'Pidgin zone', Ibadan is, nonetheless, a southern Nigerian urban centre and its scores, though examined apart, were taken into consideration for overall evaluation. The four-part questionnaire gathered information on the subjects':

- personal details (age, sex, religion, tribe, etc.);
- verbal repertoire;
- contact details (with ANP); and
- attitudinal dispositions towards ANP's nature, promotion in certain domains, and possible adoption as a future official language (with reasons advanced).

The survey scores indicated in Tables 10.1 and 10.2 (and other main scores) are presented, analysed and discussed below. Figure 10.1 presents the inter-centre analysis of approval for ANP as an official language.

Results and Analyses: Secondary Level

Sample profile

(Numbers presented in the summaries of results are rounded percentages.) The four main tribes represented by the pupils were: Yoruba (30%), Edo (13%), Efik (8%), and Ibibio (8%). Most were 15–19 years old (82%); and trilingual (40%) – ANP ranked as their first third language, and 67% believe they speak it well. The greater number (45%) claimed they first came across ANP when they were 5–9 years old, at school (21%), and through peers (63%).

Table 10.1 ANP (Attitude) scores at secondary and tertiary levels

	Pupils		Secondary (%)		Tertiary (%)		Overall	
	n = 60	Mean	Teachers n = 60	Mean n = 100	Lecturers n = 60	Mean n = 100	Students n = 60	Mean n = 240
<i>ANP as language</i>								
1	70		83.3	82	80	88	88.3	80.3
2	35		53.3	50	46.7	52	56.7	47.9
3	53.3		70	65	63.3	72	81.7	67.1
<i>ANP as school language</i>								
4	25		21.7	27	25	26	25	24.1
5	33.3		33.3	37	33.3	36	33.3	33.3
<i>ANP as official language</i>								
6	30		40	38	35	35	33.3	34.5
<i>Favourable reasons:</i>								
a	25		35	33	28.4	24	28.4	27.1
b	3.3		1.7	2	3.3	3	3.3	2.9
c	1.7		3.3	3	3.3	8	3.3	4.5
<i>Unfavourable reasons:</i>								
d	41.7		43.3	38	18.3	18	18.3	31.7
e	8.3		8.3	8	16.6	19	16.6	12.5
f	1.7		1.7	1	11.7	7	11.7	4.2
g	11.6		3.4	9	11.7	12	11.7	9.6
h	5		—	3	3.3	4	3.3	3.3
i	1.7		3.3	3	3.3	4	3.3	3.3
j	—		—	—	1.7	2	1.7	0.9

* Mean-Ib = Mean excluding Ibadan, i.e. mean of Pidgin zone, or the average for the five centres: Calabar, Port-Harcourt, Warri, Benin and Lagos only

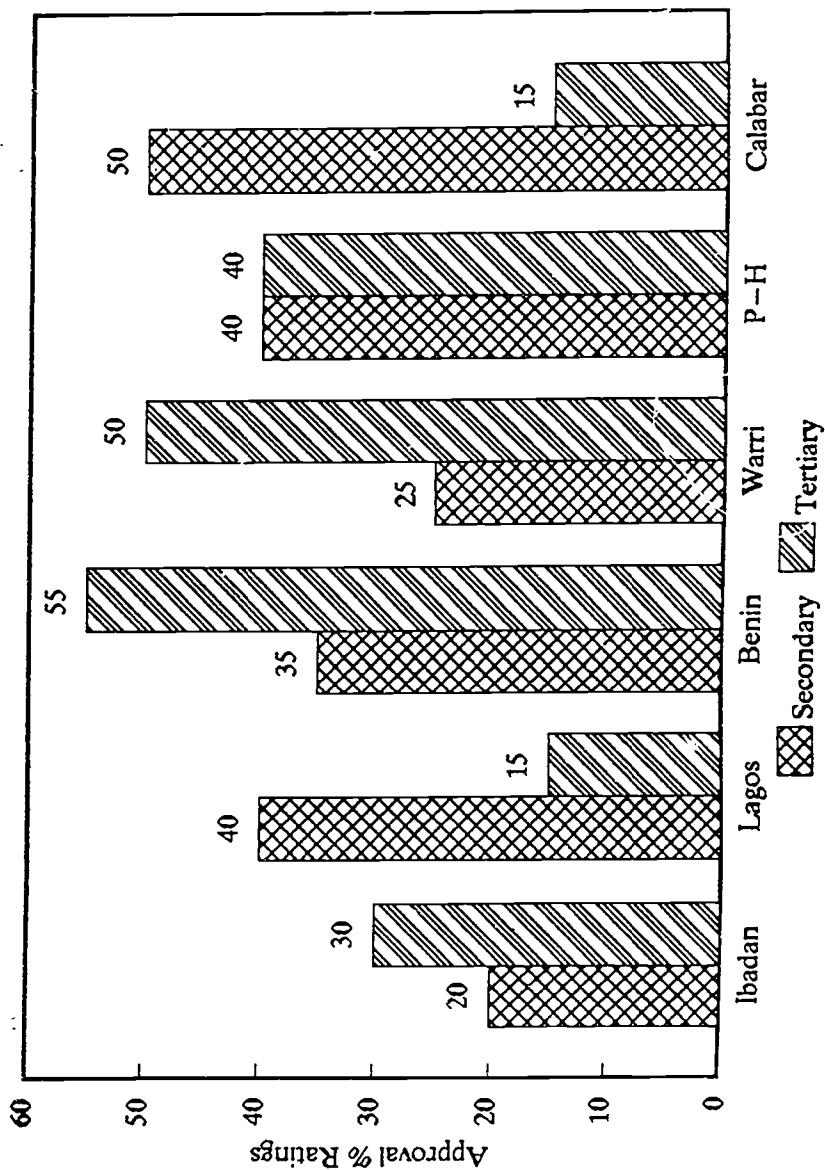


Figure 10.1 ANP (as official language) approval rating per centre

The (main) ethnic composition of the teachers was: Yoruba (25%), Ibo (20%), Edo (15%), and Efik (8%). 48% were in the age range 30–39 years, while 40% were between 20–29 years. The greater number (47%) were trilingual, with ANP, again, being ranked as the most popular third language and 70% claimed they speak it well. 30% indicated they came across ANP, for the first time, between the ages of 1–4 years; and 27% between 10–14 years. The school is, again, indicated as the most popular place of contact (30%), and peers (65%) as the primary agents.

Attitudinal Dispositions

- (1) ANP appears to have enjoyed more favour, regularly, from teachers than pupils, in relation to perceptions of its (language) nature and status (Questions 1–3). The scores of both subgroups converge a lot more on issues of its possible (formal) applications and promotion (Questions 4–6): 25% of pupils would like to see it taught as a subject, and 22% of teachers. 33% of all subjects combined would not be against it being used to teach; curiously, 40% of teachers would like it adopted as official language, compared to 30% of pupils.
- (2) ANP's accessibility, as a language, is the strongest point in its favour, as far as the pupils are concerned, followed by its use as a mediating language between the different ethnic tongues. The three most remarkable (negative) scores for ANP with the pupils are, respectively: their view that it impedes educational progress in English (this is also the most important factor at 42%), that it is not a world language, and that it is not standardised. A lot more teachers appreciate its ease of acquisition (35%), and find the consideration of its apparent politico-ethnic neutrality more important (3%), as a factor in its favour, than its function in interethnic communication. The number of teachers who believe it would hinder education in English is close to that of the pupils (43%), but, again, the teachers found its lack of standardisation a more worrying problem than the fact that it is not an internationally recognised language.
- (3) In the Pidgin zone (i.e. Calabar, Port-Harcourt, Warri, Benin, and Lagos), a very high percentage of the subjects (82%) regard ANP as a language, half of them believe it is a 'normal' language, and most feel it is a variety of English (65%). 27% would like it taught as a subject; while 37% think it should be used as a medium of instruction. Almost 40% favour its adoption as an official language. The main rankings of reasons advanced follow the pattern of the teachers' scores.

- (4) Predictably, all the final means for the group are reduced under the influence of the low scores from the control centre Ibadan (Ibadan-only figures are not presented in Table 10.1), where only 5% favour it being taught; 15%, the possibility of using it to teach; and a mere 20%, its adoption as official language. Only three (unfavourable) reasons are offered here in the control centre: [d] (65%); [e] (10%); and [f] (5%). Overall, the scores from all centres at the secondary level show that 23% of those sampled support teaching ANP in schools; 33% would not mind it being used to teach; and slightly over this same number would like to see it adopted as official language.

Tertiary Level

Sample profile

The three main constituent ethnic groups in the students sample are: Yoruba (33%), Edo (17%), and Urhobo (8%). Most of them (87%) were in the age range 20–29 years, are trilingual (43%), use ANP as their dominant third language, and 73% claim to speak it well. The greater number (45%) indicate having come across ANP for the first time in the age range 5–9 years, and 33% in the age range 1–4 years. Most claim to have had contact with ANP for the first time in the domains 'at home' (43%), (the school coming second best here with 18%), and the agents of contact were family (43%) and peers (43%).

The main (ethnic) composition of the lecturers sampled is as follows: Yoruba (23%), Ibo (17%), Edo (13%), and Urhobo (12%). Most were 30–39 years old (58%), and quadrilingual (43%). ANP ranked as their dominant third language, with 67% claiming to speak it well. 27% had their first contact with ANP between the ages of 10–14 years, and 25% between the ages of 1–4 years. This initial contact took place, for the greater number (33%) at school, and through peers (65%).

Attitudinal Dispositions

- (1) The trend of scores for Questions 1–3 seems to be reversed for the third-level group, i.e. students appear to have responded consistently more positively than lecturers; all their scores, except for teachers on Question 6, are more than (or equal to) those of the other subgroups. The fact that ANP is easy to learn, and accessible to the majority of Nigerians is, in their view, its most positive feature. The students also have the most evenly spread scores for factors mitigating against its adoption as an official

language. Interestingly, the fact it is not (nationally) understood by all, is as important an inhibiting factor as its lack of an international communicational status. Incidentally, their score for the likelihood that ANP would hinder educational progress in English is the lowest (18%).

- (2) In spite of the significant differences in scores for the first three questions, the lecturers' ratings on Questions 4–6 converge with those of the students, and are very similar to those of the subgroups in the secondary. Noticeably, they record the lowest score (20%) for the statement that ANP is efficient and easy to learn (6a), but the highest, in appreciating its politico-ethnic importance (10% on 6c). The lecturers' scores regarding reasons against the adoption of ANP as an official language (6d–j) are also more evenly spread: their appreciation of the need to standardise ANP is the highest (17%) – almost equalled by the students – and is double that expressed by pupils and teachers, as individual subgroups. They also emphasise most the drawback that ANP is not indigenous (7%).
- (3) In the Pidgin zone (i.e. excluding the Ibadan scores) the third-level students recorded higher scores than the second-level pupils regarding ANP's language status (Questions 1–3), but converge with the latter regarding its position in schools and official status (Questions 4–6). ANP's lack of standardisation is its most significant drawback (19%) for third-level students in the Pidgin zone, whereas its claimed contribution to exam failure is the most important factor for second-level pupils.
- (4) In contrast to the second-level scores, the margin between the third-level scores from Ibadan and the Pidgin zone (comparing the means excluding and including Ibadan) is much closer regarding ANP's status as a language (Questions 1–3), both groups appearing to converge on questions regarding its position in schools and its official status (Questions 4–6). Politico-ethnic considerations rate second for lecturers and students, in terms of favourable reasons for choosing ANP as official language. With regard to reasons against the adoption of ANP as an official language 6[d–j], their mean for [d] is half that of pupils/teachers; but for [e], double the score for the second-level respondents. As was the case with the latter, 25% would be happy that ANP is taught as a subject, 33% would approve its use as a medium of instruction, and an almost similar proportion would favour its adoption as an official language.

Synthesis and Discussion

Overall scores indicate that a healthy 80% regard ANP as a language, about half think it is a 'normal' language and most (67%) perceive it to be a

variety of English. Regarding more formal concerns, 24% approve of it being taught as a subject; 33% would not mind it being used as a medium of instruction; and over 34% would like it adopted as official language. Interestingly, more respondents were apprehensive of the idea of teaching ANP as a subject than of using it as a medium of instruction, or an official language (mean deviations: Questions 4-5 = 9.1; Questions 5-6 = 1.3). The best approval ratings, overall, come from Benin, followed closely by Port-Harcourt (see Figure 10.1).

Evidently, ANP is the most popular third language among the respondents. The school is, overall, the *primary locus* of contact with ANP, and peers are its *primary agents*. ANP is, therefore, an active language of the school playground. Considerations of the influence of independent variables reveal correlations between approval ratings, gender, and ethnic origin. Approval ratings of male respondents are double, overall, those of female respondents; Yoruba respondents tend to have a lowering effect on ANP's approval ratings, and only 10% of Yorubas sampled approve its use as a subject of instruction.

A recategorisation of reasons advanced for ratings in Questions 1-6, under broader headings (see Table 10.2), shows more clearly that while broadly speaking, educational reasons are the most important for respondents from the second-level, communicational ones are the priority for third-level respondents.

Table 10.2 Reasons for ANP approval ratings: categorisation into macro-domains

	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>
1. Communicational		
(a) Sociocommunicational/functional-integrative (6a)	30.0	24.2
(b) Interethnic communication:		
'ANP aids interethnic communication' (6b)	2.5	3.3
'ANP is not understood by everyone' (6f)	1.7	6.7
(c) World communication: 'ANP is not a world language' (6g)	7.5	11.7
Total:	41.7	45.9
2. Educational/socioeconomic		
(a) Instructional: 'retards learning, leads to exam failure' (6d)	42.5	20.8
(b) Standardisation: 'ANP is not standardised' (6e)	8.3	16.7
Total:	50.8	37.5
3. Ethnic identity/authenticity		
(a) Authenticity: 'ANP is not indigenous' (6h)	2.5	4.2
(b) 'ANP is a "no man's language"' (6j)	0.0	1.7
Total:	2.5	5.9
4. Politico-ethnic: 'ANP is ethnically neutral' (6c)	2.5	6.6
5. Sociomoral: 'ANP does not sound sweet' (6i)	2.5	4.1

One could posit that this is related to the more prescriptive perspective taken in secondary education, as compared with the greater liberalism promoted in tertiary education. The most telling factor in the subjects' attitudes is the apprehension that ANP would hamper education in English, and lead, eventually, to lower educational standards. In sociopsychological terms, it could be suggested that this is a pragmatic viewpoint, based on the social exchange theory, i.e. decisions we take in society are grounded on our evaluation of the rewards they could generate. There is also a hint of Tajfel's (1974) theory of intergroup distinctiveness, whereby 'people experience satisfaction in the knowledge that they belong to groups which enjoy some superiority over others' (Giles & Smith, 1979: 52).

Conclusion

It is very unlikely that there will be a significant challenge to the role of English as Nigeria's official language in the foreseeable future. The recent enhancement of the capitalist ideology – whose principal agents and actors are Anglophone or 'anglophonising' – following the collapse of socialist systems in the Soviet Union and other east European countries, can only reinforce its status on the world stage. It would equally enjoy some fillip from contemporary tendencies to establish supranations (e.g. the European megastate), which would, necessarily, require a convergent medium of communication. Given that English remains the language of education, and, therefore, the passport to educational qualifications and (upward) socio-economic mobility, these two pulls or forces, the national and the international, will continue to constitute its attraction to Nigerians. Moreover, it is unlikely that those who used it to attain an élite status, will be sympathetic to a change that puts their position in jeopardy.

However, it is my contention, though hypothetical, that English is too typologically distant – linguistically, psycholinguistically and socioculturally – to serve the higher goal of liberation and emancipation from underdevelopment. The aspiration must be to have an official language which is more relevant and accessible to the sociocultural existence, or 'world view', of the people. Misconceptions of their competence in English are widespread among Nigerians. In fact, few Nigerians possess a standard mastery of English, even fewer use it grammatically correctly and only about 10% are literate in it (Bamgbose, 1992). This state of affairs cannot be explained away, in my view, by reference to the ineffectual literacy campaign. The greater majority of Nigerians are denied, through English, an opportunity to take part fully in the national debate, with implications for the growth of indigenous languages and their use in ideation, full self-expression, and sense of self. In fact,

it might very well not be an overstatement to say that English is, today, a language of captivity and deprivation in Nigeria. Curiously, this author is not aware of any nation that attained greatness through an imposed foreign tongue that did not 'nativise'.

The results recorded from the survey on ANP can only be described as promising for a language that is not standardised, suffers from low social prestige, but, most importantly, enjoys no official recognition. Given its omnipresence in urban sociocommunication, it is high time ANP enjoyed more respect and appreciation from all those concerned with language planning and policy in Nigeria. There are, clearly, implications for cost, planning, interethnic tensions, and sociopsychological reorientation, in any discussion of language policy change or modification. However, these must not be dissuasive excuses. Government and academics must reinforce their interest in the study and formalisation of Nigerian languages, and follow, attentively, their evolution in society, so as to better determine what roles they could be made to play. They must be given a chance to fulfil the three types of language 'adequacy' defined by Whinnom (1971: 108): contextual, referential and literary. After all, a language is only as developed as the communicational challenge it gets. The present vitality of ANP in socio-communication is established, and growing still. This, in some respects, already vindicates Hymes' (1971: 3) hope that pidgins and creoles, which have traditionally been called the stepchild of linguistic theory and research concerns, would, one day, prove a Cinderella. Our next obligation is to give Cinderella her shoe!

Notes

1. See Hymes, 1971; Valdman, 1977; Mann, 1988, for discussion.
2. The Phelps-Stokes Commission (1922), the 1st Report (HMSO, 1925) of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, the inauguration of the International Institute of African languages and cultures (1926), and the 1927 Memo of the Conference of Colonial Officers.
3. Chapter 5, Part I, B.51 and Part II, A.91, respectively.
4. See Oladejo (1992) for discussion of vagueness and loop-holes of the 1977 National Policy in Education.

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