

Language Preferences of Selected Uneducated Inhabitants of Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria: Implications for National Integration

Uriel Okunrinmeta

Department of English Studies, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko

Wale Adegbite

Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife

Abstract

The study examines the languages in the repertoire of selected uneducated inhabitants of Akungba-Akoko, identifies their language preferences and highlights the implications of such preferences for national integration. Three hundred (300) Akungba-Akoko inhabitants, with Primary Six, less or no educational qualification at all, were randomly sampled and interviewed by skilled field workers on their language preferences, and their responses were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results show that 13 languages occur in the repertoire of the respondents, but only two of them (Yoruba and English or a combination of both) feature predominantly in various domains of use. Yoruba is preferred mostly in informal communication with close relations and friends at home and at work, and also in a good number of formal/official domains where English ought to have been preferred. The results also show that, although the respondents are largely proficient in their first language, a large proportion of them are not proficient in a second or third language and, thus, express the desire to learn other languages, top among which are indigenous Nigerian languages. The study concludes that the respondents' language preferences are supportive of Nigeria's aspirations for national integration since they satisfy the requirements for its achievement. The study recommends that Nigerians should be encouraged to identify more with indigenous Nigerian languages than foreign languages because of their relevance in promoting and sustaining national integration.

Introduction

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multilingual nation with a population of about 200 million people (UNDESA, 2018), over 250 ethnic groups and over 500 languages (*Ethnologue*, 2020). With Nigeria's vast population, diverse ethnicity and complex linguistic situation, it was envisaged right from independence that the country would have various challenges. One of such challenges is that of national integration: how Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups with different cultures, languages and religions can live together in unity and harmony. Bearing this challenge in mind, the opening statement of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states as follows:

WE THE PEOPLE of the Federal Republic of Nigeria:
HAVING firmly and solemnly resolved:
TO LIVE in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble
Sovereign Nation...

Section 15 of the 1999 Constitution also states thus:

- (1) The motto of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress.
- (2) Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited.
- (3) For the purpose of promoting national integration, it shall be the duty of the state to:
 - (a) provide adequate facilities for and encourage free mobility of people, goods and services throughout the Federation;
 - (b) secure full residence rights for every citizen in all parts of the Federation;
 - (c) encourage inter-marriage among persons from different places of origin, or different religious, ethnic or linguistic association or ties; and
 - (d) promote or encourage the formulation of associations that cut across ethnic, linguistic, religious or sectional barriers.

In pursuance of (3) above, the government has been engaging in various schemes aimed at promoting national integration since 1960 (Adegbite and Okunrinmeta, 2016, pp. 419 – 420). One of such schemes is the language for integration scheme, captured in such national policy documents as the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the National Policy on Education (NPE). Section 55 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (amended 2011) states as follows:

- (i) The business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English, and in Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made therefor.

Also, Section 8g of the National Policy on Education (NPE) (revised 2013) reads thus:

- (ii) ...every child shall be taught in the mother tongue or language of the immediate community for the first four years of basic education. In addition, it is expected that every child learn one Nigerian language.

Although the recommendations in the two documents cited above have their own challenges, particularly in the area of commitment in terms of implementation, they express government's intention to use language as a veritable tool to provide solutions to the challenge of effectively promoting national integration in Nigeria's vast multi-ethnic and multilingual population. As implied in (ii) above, for example, one of the ways through which national integration can be achieved is by ensuring that each Nigerian learns at least one Nigerian language in addition to his or her mother tongue. This also implies that each Nigerian is required to make choices from the numerous languages that exist in the Nigerian linguistic landscape. However, as noted by Adegbite and Okunrinmeta (2016, pp. 434 –

436), the preferences that Nigerians make in this complex linguistic situation are bound to affect the country's quest for national integration either positively or negatively. Thus, it is necessary to examine the language preferences of Nigerians to ascertain if they are capable of enhancing national integration and, if not, prompt them through enlightenment and encouragement to re-direct their preferences towards the promotion of national integration such that Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups can live together in unity and harmony.

The study was inspired by the 12th Public Lecture of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, delivered on Wednesday, 12th February, 2014 by Professor N.O. Adedipe, the pioneer Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. The lecture, entitled "Postgraduate Studies Reform for Capacity Building, Institutional Strengthening and Quality Assurance in the Nigerian University System", proposed, as a reform recommendation, that "coursework should be made more vigorous, to include a United Nations operating foreign language (French, Arabic, Spanish) to enhance global competitiveness" (p. 13). As a response to this reform recommendation, a distinguished professor in the audience suggested that, if postgraduate research in Nigerian universities should be made relevant to the Nigerian society, the list of languages should be expanded to include indigenous Nigerian languages, and that each postgraduate student should be required to explain the relevance of his/her research thesis in an indigenous language. The distinguished lecturer, however, misunderstood this suggestion to mean writing theses in indigenous languages and, therefore, rejected it. Surprisingly, another high-ranking professor, who happens to be a renowned sociologist and linguist, supported the lecturer by saying that "although all languages are equal, some are more equal than others." This implies that such foreign languages as English, French, Arabic and Spanish recommended for postgraduate research in Nigeria are more important than the indigenous Nigerian languages and should, therefore, be given preference.

The foregoing is suggestive of the exocentric language attitude of the people in the elite class who, perhaps because of their high level of exposure, are often inclined to foreign languages and would, therefore, support the promotion of such languages over and above indigenous Nigerian languages (Oyesakin 1992, Adegbite 2003, 2010). Owing to the social power of the elite class, this pro-foreign-language attitude has gained so much grounds that there appears to be a smooth, effective implementation of the foreign language components in relevant national policy documents, while those components relating to the indigenous languages suffer gross non-implementation owing, particularly, to lack of conviction and commitment. Thus, it is not surprising that, while the section in the *National Policy on Education* (NPE 2004, Para 10b) which requires students to learn French as "a second official language in Nigeria" (after English) was vigorously pushed for implementation, even when children had not yet mastered their mother tongues, the provisions made for the indigenous languages were left unimplemented, or poorly implemented, even when opinion leaders in the nation expressed openly their support for multilingual policies in which indigenous languages play major roles.

This lopsidedness in the implementation of language provisions in national policy documents has been traced above to the exocentric attitude of the elite class which results in the accordance of undue preference to foreign languages at the expense of indigenous languages. But, is it the elite class alone that is guilty of this pro-foreign-language attitude? Does the lower class also serve as an accomplice or is it merely a victim of hegemonic dominance by the elite? It was in an attempt to provide answers to these questions that Wale Adegbite and Uriel Okunrinmeta undertook a TETFund-sponsored research, entitled “Language Policy and National Integration: A Case Study of Identities and Attitudes of Selected Inhabitants and Workers in Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria”, in 2016. The first part of the research focused on the language attitudes of 300 workers randomly sampled from Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. Part of the findings of the research reported in Adegbite and Okunrinmeta (2016) was that, although 29 languages existed in the repertoire of the respondents, they were generally bilingual in Yoruba and English. It was also reported that, although the respondents were contented with being bilingual in Yoruba and English alone, some expressed the desire to learn a third language; but the majority of such respondents preferred learning a foreign language (French) to a Nigerian language (Hausa or Igbo). It was, therefore, concluded that the preference for learning French (a foreign language) as a third language, which also reflects the pro-foreign-language attitude of the elite class, is detrimental to Nigeria’s quest for national integration, the achievement of which requires that each Nigerian learns at least one Nigerian language in addition to the mother tongue.

Since the above represents the attitudes and preferences of the educated class, it is necessary to also ascertain the preferences of the low (uneducated) class and compare them to those of the educated (middle and working) class so as to have a clearer picture of the language attitudes and preferences of Nigerians generally and the implications these may have on national integration. This is necessary because, although a lot of studies have concentrated on the elite group, especially the middle class, the lower (uneducated) class has, for one reason or the other, been neglected (Babajide, 2001). Yet the voice of the masses too must be heard and measured against the language policies in Nigeria.

The aim of the study is to investigate the language preferences of selected uneducated inhabitants of Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to identify the languages that exist in the repertoire of selected uneducated inhabitants of Akungba-Akoko; examine the language preferences of the selected inhabitants; and highlight the implications of such preferences for national integration.

Methodology

The study is a survey of the language preferences of selected uneducated inhabitants of Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. Three hundred (300) subjects, with primary education or no formal education at all, were sampled from the inhabitants of the town through the purposive-random sampling method. The sampling took into consideration age and gender factors, aiming as close as possible at equal representation. The choice of the sampled respondents was informed by our interest in investigating the language preferences

of the uneducated class and comparing them with those of the educated respondents reported in Adegbite and Okunrinmeta (2016) so as to highlight their implications for national integration. The purposive-random sampling method was, therefore, adopted so as to focus exclusively on the uneducated inhabitants of the town whose language preferences formed the basis for our investigation in this study.

The research employed two research instruments, which were administered on the subjects through the assistance of skilled field workers: (i) interview questions on the subjects' language preferences were tape-recorded and (ii) observations were made on language use during the encounter. The interview questions contained two sections for personal data and questions designed for the sake of illiterate respondents. The tape-recorded responses were later transcribed and analysed quantitatively in terms of percentage scores for observed frequency, and qualitatively with insights from Giles and Johnson's (1987) ethno-linguistic identity theory.

Theoretical Framework

This study is situated within the ethno-linguistic identity theory (ELIT) formulated by Giles and Johnson (1987) and extended by other scholars (Giles and Coupland 1991, Oakes 2001, Nwagbo 2014). Giles and Johnson hold that as people grow up, they also learn to group themselves and other people into social categories which usually use language as a marker of ethnic distinction. As observed by Appel and Muysken (1987), language serves as a means of segregating one group from others as the choice of one language instead of another puts the user in one group as against the other (Nwagbo, 2014, p. 3). The people who share the same system of symbols and meanings often see themselves as belonging to the same group (the in-group) and, thus, share an "us" feeling (Korth, 2005), while they consider others as belonging to the out-group. Thus, identifying with a group entails using the language of the group, and this may be conditioned by one's perception of the role of the language and the functions it performs in relation to the language of the other group (Sadanand, 1993, p. 124). However, one may choose to identify with another group by using the group's language, especially when one, among other factors, considers such a language as prestigious and, thus, aspires to be associated with the high status, honour and prestige its users enjoy in society. Thus, as observed by Romaine (2003, p. 517), through the selection of one language over another, speakers display "acts of identity", choosing the groups with whom they wish to identify. Language choice is, therefore, tied to the projection of image or identity. This explains why Matsunaga et al (2010) observe that the ethno-linguistic identity theory provides explanations for the conceptual link between an individual's language use and cultural adaptation, and identity.

In Nigeria's complex linguistic situation with its over 250 ethnic groups and 500 languages, Nigerians are expected to make several linguistic choices which enable them to be identified with one group or the other within the Nigerian setting. Broadly speaking, there may be some Nigerians who identify with the indigenous Nigerian languages and, thus, strive as much as possible to use them to project their in-group identity. There may also be some, especially in the elite class, who identify with the foreign languages (English, French, Arabic, Chinese etc.)

and, therefore, support their promotion over and above the indigenous Nigerian languages. Besides, there may be some instances where some Nigerians in either of the groups may, for one reason or the other, swap their group membership by adopting the language of their new group. The ethno-linguistic identity theory is, therefore, relevant here because it provides the necessary guidelines for categorising Nigerians into groups on the basis of their language preferences and, thus, provides the framework for explaining such preferences and discussing their implications for Nigeria's national integration drive.

Analysis and Findings

The data collected for the study are analysed and presented as follows:

Respondents' Characteristics

The characteristics of the respondents, as indicated in the data, are as follows:

Ethnicity: Yoruba = 297 (99%), Ebira = 2 (0.67%) and Igala = 1 (0.33%);

Gender: Male = 143 (47.67%) and Female = 157 (52.33%);

Age: 18-25 = 57 (19%), 26-35 = 55 (18.33%), 36-45 = 53 (17.67%), 46-60 = 66 (22%) and 60 and above = 69 (23%);

Marital Status: Single = 55 (18.39%) and Married = 244 (81.61%);

Qualification: Primary Education = 214 (71.57%) and No Education = 85 (28.43%); and

Occupation: Farmers = 56 (18.67%), Artisans = 134 (44.67%), Traders = 103 (34.33%) and Apprentices = 7 (2.33%).

The information presented above shows the characteristics of the respondents in terms of ethnicity, gender, age, marital status, educational qualification and occupation. These characteristics were put into consideration in the sampling of the respondents with a view to aiming as close as possible at equal representation.

Languages in the Repertoire of the Respondents

A total of 13 languages were identified by the respondents as the languages they speak or wish to speak. These are listed as follows:

Yoruba, English, Pidgin, Ebira, Hausa, Igala, Igbo, Urhobo, Ijaw, Idoma, Edo, Efik and Arabic.

This number is small when compared to the number of languages in the repertoire of the educated respondents reported in Adegbite and Okunrinmeta (2016) who speak 29 languages. This limited language repertoire may be as a result of the low educational background of the uneducated respondents involved and, thus, their limited level of exposure to other languages and cultures.

The data show that the vast majority of the respondents (98.67%) speak Yoruba as their first language, while the remaining 1.33% speaks other indigenous languages (Ebira and

Igala) as first language. This suggests that they are more proficient in Yoruba than in any other language that exists in their repertoire. This is understandable, especially because Yoruba is the predominant language in the study area (Akungba-Akoko: a Yoruba speech community in Ondo State, which is a Yoruba-speaking State).

While 34.33% of the respondents confirmed that they are also proficient in a second language, the remaining 65.67% confirmed that they do not speak a second language; thus, they chose “none” as their preferred option for the second order of proficiency. Similarly, only 5.33% of the respondents confirmed that they are proficient in a third language, while the remaining 94.67% chose “none” as their preferred option for the third order of proficiency to confirm that they do not speak a third language. This suggests that the respondents are predominantly monolingual as they speak Yoruba (their first language) alone; just a few of them (far less than half of the total sample size) are bilingual and, thus, proficient in varying degrees in Yoruba and English or Yoruba and other indigenous languages.

The data also indicate that, although the majority of the respondents are proficient in Yoruba alone, the prospects of them becoming bilingual are high as the majority (86%) of them (including a substantial portion of those who are proficient in Yoruba alone) confirmed that they wish to learn other languages, especially for communication with friends and neighbours and for business purposes, among others. Topping the list of the languages the respondents wish to learn are indigenous languages (including Yoruba, for those who do not speak it as a first language) (45%) and English (39.67%). It is interesting to note that only 1% of the respondents showed interest in learning a foreign language.

Language Choice in Informal and Institutional Communication

Table 1 shows the respondents’ language choices in informal communication.

Table 1: Language choice in informal communication (in %)

Language s	with spouse	with children	with older relations	with younger relations	with neighbours and friends	with friends at work
Yoruba	79.33	63.33	93.33	87.67	85.00	64.00
English	0.00	4.67	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.00
English and Yoruba	0.00	4.67	0.00	0.67	2.00	3.67
Other indigenous langs.	0.67	0.67	2.00	1.00	0.33	0.00
Pidgin	0.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Yoruba and Pidgin	0.00	3.67	0.33	0.00	1.67	15.67
Yoruba and Hausa	0.33	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Yoruba and other indigenous langs.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	6.67
None	16.67	20.00	4.33	10.00	8.00	10.00

The table shows that, when communicating with spouse, children, older relations, younger relations, neighbours and friends as well as friends at work, the majority of the respondents (79.33%, 63.33%, 93.33%, 87.67%, 85% and 64% respectively) prefer speaking Yoruba to English, Pidgin and other indigenous languages, among others. The major reason for the choice of Yoruba, as confirmed by the majority of the respondents, is that it is the language that they understand. Besides, the study area is a Yoruba community and, thus, almost all the respondents (except 3) are Yoruba indigenes who speak the Yoruba language.

As indicated in the data, 42% of the respondents prefer Yoruba to be spoken in primary school to English (30.33%) or English and Yoruba (25.67%), among others. At the secondary school level, 39.67% of the respondents showed preference for English and Yoruba as against 36% (for English alone) and 19.33% (for Yoruba alone). However, in tertiary institutions, it is English that is preferred to be spoken. This was confirmed by 63.33% of the respondents as against 16.67% and 11.33% for English and Yoruba, and Yoruba respectively.

Similarly, the language preferred to be used as medium of instruction in primary school is Yoruba (39.67%), while English and Yoruba (33%) and English (25.33%) are less preferred. The preferred medium of instruction in secondary school and tertiary institution, however, is English (39.33% and 71.67% respectively), although the use of both Yoruba and English as medium of instruction in secondary school is also preferred by 38.33% of the respondents. The major reason for these choices is to facilitate better understanding and easy communication in the school setting.

Language Choice for National Communication

In table 2, the respondents' language choices for national communication are indicated.

Table 2: Language choice for national communication (in %)

Languages	Local Govt.	State House of Assembly	National Assembly	Inter-ethnic communication
English	6.67	38.00	73.67	24.00

English and Yoruba	11.67	21.33	4.00	4.67
Yoruba	80.67	37.67	8.33	0.00
Three major indigenous languages	0.00	0.00	10.67	0.00
Pidgin	0.00	0.33	0.67	0.33
Indigenous language	0.00	0.00	0.00	70.33
None	1.00	2.67	2.67	0.67

The table shows that, for deliberations at the Local Government level, Yoruba is preferred by the majority of the respondents to either English and Yoruba or English. This was confirmed by 80.67%, 11.67% and 6.67% of the respondents to indicate their preference for Yoruba, English and Yoruba, and English respectively. The major reason for the choice of Yoruba is that it is the language the people at the grassroots level understand and, thus, the deliberations that affect their lives must be done in the (Yoruba) language which they understand.

For deliberations in the State House of Assembly, English is preferred by 38% of the respondents on account of its official status in the country and, thus, the need for the lawmakers to use it for their deliberations. However, 37.67% of the respondents prefer the use of Yoruba owing to the need to promote the language in the State. The close percentile figures indicating the respondents' preferences for English and Yoruba in this communicative domain suggest that there is the need for both languages to complement each other in order to facilitate effective communication.

Expectedly, English is the language preferred for deliberations in the National Assembly owing to the linguistic diversity that characterises its membership. Thus, to facilitate easy communication and understanding, 73.67% of the respondents prefer English to the three major indigenous languages (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo), which 10.67% of the respondents prefer and, thus, be used through translation.

Interestingly, 70.33% of the respondents favoured the use of an indigenous language for inter-ethnic communication in Nigeria. The choice of an indigenous language over English, which was preferred by only 24% of the respondents, is predicated on its relevance as a means of identity and cultural promotion in the country.

While rating the importance of indigenous languages, the majority of the respondents (90%) confirmed that their indigenous language is very important. Owing to the importance attached to the indigenous language, the respondents observed that they participate in language promotion activities in various ways, including encouraging people to speak it and correcting them whenever they make an error, among others.

Discussion

With reference to the languages that the respondents speak or wish to learn, 13 languages are identified, and all of these languages (except English and Arabic) are indigenous languages. Considering the fact that study area (Akungba-Akoko) is a Yoruba-speaking community in Ondo State, it is not surprising that 98.67% of the respondents speak Yoruba as their first language, while the remaining 1.33% speaks other indigenous languages (Ebira and Igala) as first language. However, only 34.33% and 5.33% of the respondents are proficient in a second and third language respectively. This suggests that the respondents are predominantly monolingual since just a few of them (far less than half of the total sample size) are bilingual and, thus, proficient in varying degrees in Yoruba and English or Yoruba and other indigenous languages. 86% of the respondents are, however, not contented with their monolingual or bilingual status and, thus, wish to learn other languages, top among which are the indigenous languages. Interestingly, only 1% of the respondents showed interest in learning a foreign language (Arabic), especially for religious purposes.

The respondents' language choices show that particular languages are preferred for particular functions in particular situations. For informal communication with spouse, children, older relations, younger relations, neighbours and friends as well as friends at work, Yoruba is preferred to English, Pidgin and other indigenous languages, among others. This is not unexpected as almost all the respondents (except 3) are Yoruba indigenes who speak the Yoruba language. These preferences are also similar to the ones made by the educated respondents used in Adegbite and Okunrinmeta (2016), except that they preferred English when communicating with friends at work. This is understandable because two different work environments are involved: the formal university environment (where the educated university workers work alongside other workers with diverse language backgrounds) and the informal work environment (where uneducated farmers, artisans, traders and apprentices, who are predominantly Yoruba speakers, work). Thus, it is expected that English is preferred when communicating with friends in the formal university environment, while Yoruba is preferred in such an informal Yoruba speakers-dominated environment where the uneducated respondents work.

For communication in official and formal institutions, both English and Yoruba receive varying degrees of preference in various domains of use. Yoruba is preferred to be spoken and used as a medium of instruction in primary school. The reason for this preference is to facilitate better understanding and easy communication and, thus, improve pupils' academic performance. This position finds support in the evidence provided by studies on the Ife Six-Year Primary Project (ISYPP), including Afolayan (1976) and Fafunwa, Macauley and Sokoya (1989), which showed that when learners are taught in a medium whose concepts reflect their culture and are, therefore, familiar to them, they stand a better chance of performing well both linguistically and academically (Okunrinmeta, 2017, pp. 48 – 49). Also, Section 8g of the National Policy on Education (NPE) (revised 2013) states

that "... every child shall be taught in the mother tongue or language of the immediate community for the first four years of basic education." However, the respondents, instead of restricting the use of Yoruba as a medium of instruction to the first four years of education, prefer its use throughout the 6-year primary education as proposed in the Ife Six-Year Primary Project (ISYPP). At the secondary school level, however, both English and Yoruba are preferred to be spoken; but English is preferred as the medium of instruction, although the use of both English and Yoruba is also preferred by a considerable number of the respondents. However, in tertiary institution, English enjoys a very high preference to be spoken and used as a medium of instruction.

The respondents' language choices for national communication show that, for deliberations at the Local Government level, Yoruba is preferred because it is the language the people at the grassroots level understand and, thus, the deliberations that affect their lives should be done in the (Yoruba) language which they understand. For deliberations in the State House of Assembly, English is preferred owing to its official status in the country and, thus, the need for the lawmakers to use it for their deliberations. However, a considerable number of the respondents (37.67% against the 38% recorded for English) prefer the use of Yoruba owing to the need to promote the language in the State. These highly competitive percentage points recorded for English and Yoruba suggest that there is the need for both languages to complement each other in order to facilitate effective communication in the State House of Assembly. For deliberations in the National Assembly, English is highly preferred owing to the linguistic diversity that characterises its membership. Interestingly, the respondents prefer an indigenous language to English for inter-ethnic communication in Nigeria owing to its relevance as a means of identity and cultural promotion in the country: a function, the respondents feel, English cannot perform in Nigeria's socio-cultural setting.

The respondents' language choices for education and national communication presented above are quite different from those made by the educated respondents in Adegbite and Okunrinmeta (2016) who preferred English to be spoken and used as a medium of instruction at all educational levels and for deliberations at the Local Government, State House of Assembly and National Assembly as well as for inter-ethnic communication. One of the reasons for the preference of the educated respondents for English is that, owing to their exposure to English and other foreign languages in the course of training as university workers, they have grown to appreciate the privileges associated with the knowledge of English both in Nigeria and globally and, thus, the preference for the language and its promotion over and above the indigenous languages. Besides, the linguistic diversity in Nigeria places English over and above the indigenous languages because of its unifying function as an official language used by the majority of Nigerians, irrespective of their diverse linguistic, cultural and regional backgrounds, among others.

The implications of the study for national integration are examined with reference to the languages the respondents wish to learn as a second or third language in addition to Yoruba and English, and their language choices in various domains of use. As shown in the study,

all the respondents (100%) speak an indigenous language as first language. However, only 34.33% speak a second language in addition to their first language, while 5.33% have a third language that they speak. Thus, the majority of the respondents express the desire to learn other languages because they are not contented with being monolingual or bilingual. The choice of the language to be learnt often has serious implications for national integration because it is not just any language, but the one that is supportive of the fulfilment of Nigeria's aspirations in that regard, that has to be learnt. With reference to the data, the additional languages the respondents wish to learn are in the following order, with indigenous languages topping the list: other indigenous languages (44%), English (39.67%), Yoruba (for those who do not speak Yoruba as their first language) (1%), foreign language (Arabic) (1%) and Pidgin (0.33%). This shows that the respondents' choices of the additional languages to be learnt are in line with the provisions for national integration in Section 8g of the National Policy on Education (NPE) (revised 2013), which stipulate that each child learns at least one Nigerian language in addition to his or her mother tongue and, thus, support Nigeria's aspirations for national integration.

The respondents' choice of an indigenous language as the additional language to be learnt suggests that they are appreciative of the importance of the indigenous Nigerian languages as a means of identity creation and cultural promotion. Thus, as confirmed by the majority of the respondents, they identify with their indigenous language by speaking it and engaging in activities that facilitate its promotion (e.g. encouraging people to speak it and correcting them whenever they make an error, among others). This is, however, not the case with the educated respondents in Adegbite and Okunrinmeta (2016), who, because of their high level of exposure and their quest for global competitiveness and recognition, often identify more with English and other foreign languages. This is evident in their language choices in various domains of use: they give a very high preference to English in all domains of use, except informal communication with close relations at home. This is also reflected in their choice of an additional language to be learnt, where French was preferred as the first choice option, while Hausa and Igbo came a distant second and third option respectively (Adegbite and Okunrinmeta, 2016, p. 430). This pro-foreign-language attitude of the educated respondents, unlike that of the uneducated respondents, is not supportive of Nigeria's aspirations for national integration, the fulfilment of which requires Nigerians to learn at least one Nigerian language in addition to their mother tongue (a Nigerian language). Thus, the language choices of the uneducated respondents are more supportive of Nigeria's quest for national integration than those of the educated respondents reported in Adegbite and Okunrinmeta (2016).

Conclusion

The study argues that, owing to the uneducated respondents' choice of an indigenous language as the additional language to be learnt, their language preferences are more supportive of the country's desire for national integration than those of the educated Nigerians. This is so because, for national integration to be achieved, Nigerians are required to learn at least one Nigerian language beside their mother tongue. While the uneducated

respondents in this study fulfil this requirement in their choice of an indigenous language as an additional language, the educated respondents in Adegbite and Okunrinmeta (2016) failed in this regard as they expressed the desire to learn a foreign language (French) as a third language. There is, therefore, the need for Nigerians to identify more with indigenous Nigerian languages than foreign languages owing to their relevance in the promotion and sustenance of national integration, which is one of the strong pillars on which the unity and continued corporate existence of the country rest.

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