

**Journal of African Languages and Literary Studies
(JoALLS)**

ISSN 2633-2108 (Print) ISSN 2633-2116 (Online)

Indexed by IBSS, COPERNICUS, EBSCO and Sabinet

Volume 4, Number 3, August 2023

Pp 73-90

**Mobilising Nigerian Pidgin English as a Second
language for Communication and Instruction in Primary
Schools in Ajegunle, Lagos**

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31920/2633-2116/2023/v4n2a4>

Akpan Udoh James

Post-Doctoral Fellow,

Department of Criminology and Forensic Study,

School of Applied Human Sciences,

College of Humanities,

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard Campus,

Durban, KZN, South Africa

Email: udohja2000@yahoo.com

Akinmolayan Emmanuel Seun

Programme Manager,

School of Education,

Management College of Southern Africa

(MANCOSA),

Durban, KZN, South Africa.

&

Mkhize Sazelo Michael

Senior Lecturer,

Department of Criminology and Forensic Study,

School of Applied Human Sciences,

College of Humanities,

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard Campus,

Durban, KZN, South Africa

Abstract

The language question in former British colonies has been a topical issue in Africa. Independent African states still use English as one of the official languages long after the colonisers relinquished political power. The development of the Nigerian Pidgin English can be seen as a resistance to embrace the coloniser's English. Nigeria being a colony of Britain and also inherited English language has evolved a second language called Pidgin English which has now pushed the official English language to becoming a third language while the indigenous language comes second in many cases. However, she has not been able to harness the potential of the Pidgin English. This paper therefore seeks to explore the mobilization of Pidgin English spoken by every ethnic group in Nigeria as a language of communication and also an instructional language for learners in primary school in Ajegunle, a multicultural, low income and populous township in central Lagos, the commercial hub of Nigeria. The paper will adopt a the sociocultural theory as a framework and desktop data collection approach by reviewing relevant literatures from Google Scholar, text books and media sources, review it with the effective communication model and educational learning theory and concluded that Pidgin English can be effective in the production of knowledge in Ajegunle community.

Introduction

One of the impacts that colonialism bequeathed on their colonies is the imposition of their language as the language of communication, instruction and power. Long after colonialism has ended, many of the colonies including Nigeria are still using these languages as an official or one of the official languages in their respective country. Colonialism according to an online article written by Erin Blakemore on National Geographic¹ is the control by one power over a dependent area or people. It occurs when one nation subjugates another, conquering its population and exploiting it, often while forcing its own language and cultural values upon the colonised people. In ancient history, colonialism was practiced by empires such as Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Ancient Egypt, and Phoenicia. These civilizations all extended their

¹ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/colonialism#:~:text=Colonialism%20is%20defined%20as%20%E2%80%9Ccontrol,cultural%20values%20upon%20its%20people.> – 21st February 2023

borders into surrounding and non-contiguous areas from about 1550 B.C. onward, and established colonies that drew on the physical and population resources of the people they conquered in order to increase their own power.

Modern colonialism began during what is also known as the Age of Discovery. Beginning in the 15th century, Portugal began looking for new trade routes and searching for civilizations outside of Europe. In 1415, Portuguese explorers conquered Ceuta, a coastal town in North Africa, kicking off an empire that would last until 1999. The British Empire began in its formative years in the sixteenth century and flourished and grew dramatically, lasting until the twentieth century. Many of the British colonial strategy was through economic ventures. Their first foray into colonialism was through the East India Company which began establishing trading posts in India in 1600, and the first permanent British settlement in Africa was made at James Island in the Gambia River in 1661.

The British then made in-road into what is now called Nigeria, and their influence in the region began with the prohibition of slave trade to British subjects in 1807. Britain annexed Lagos (now the commercial capital of Nigeria) in 1861 and established the Oil River Protectorate in 1884. Nigeria became a full and established colony of The British Empire at the Berlin conference which divided Africa by European powers according to an article titled History of the British Takeover of Nigeria by Ohio State University in 2020². The amalgamation of northern and southern protectorate into Nigeria, two different colonies was completed in 1914.

Nigeria, according to Translators without Borders (TWB), a global community of over 100,000 language volunteers offering language services to humanitarian and development organizations worldwide³ is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, with over 500 languages spoken. The official language is English, but it is spoken less frequently in rural areas and amongst people with lower education levels. Since the amalgamation necessitated the need for interaction among the newly joined people, communicating in a unified language with each other became inevitable. Since the masses could not really

² <https://u.osu.edu/introhumanitiesonline/2020/02/04/history-of-the-british-takeover-of-nigeria/> - 21st February 2023

³ <https://translatorswithoutborders.org/language-data-nigeria#:~:text=Nigeria%20is%20one%20of%20the,with%20over%20500%20languages%20spoken.> - 21st February 2023

speak the British English that was the official language, a new form of communication language had to be formed.

In a way, the formation of this new language of communication took a strong footing after the independence of Nigeria, and it could be argued to be some sort of de-colonialism especially from the burden of speaking the British English. The concept of decolonization itself is about cultural, psychological, and economic freedom for Indigenous people with the goal of achieving Indigenous sovereignty which are the right and ability of Indigenous people to practice self-determination over their land, political and economic systems and culture. Language is at the centre of people's culture and is the principal method of human communication, consisting of words used in a structured and conventional way and conveyed by speech, writing, or gesture.

Language is a structured system of communication that consists of grammar and vocabulary. It is the primary means by which humans convey meaning, both in spoken and written forms, and may also be conveyed through sign language. Makoni and Pennycook (2007) argues that we need to understand the interrelationships among meta-discursive regimes, language inventions, colonial history, language effects, alternative ways of understanding language and strategies of dis-invention and reconstitution of languages to appreciate language better, and not just in its formation.

Therefore, human and language are two inseparable synergies. They work hand-in-hand, as there is no human existence without a specific form of language communication. Within human society, there are various and many forms of languages, and some of these languages are categorized into major or minor, dialect, home language, additional languages, formal, jargons, register, slang or informal. Some of these languages have gained so much international popularity and have been adopted as national as well as international languages to most countries of the world.

Evolution and extinction of languages

According to Nowak and Krakauer (1999), the emergence of language was a defining moment in the evolution of modern humans. It was an innovation that changed radically the character of human society. They also assumed in their work that early in the evolution of language, errors in signaling and perception would be common. They therefore modeled the probability of misunderstanding a signal and show that this limits the

number of objects that can be described by a protolanguage. This error limit they believe is not overcome by employing more sounds but by combining a small set of more easily distinguishable sounds into words (Nowak and Krakauer, 1999)

The evolution of languages or history of language includes the evolution, divergence and development of languages throughout time, as reconstructed based on glottochronology, comparative linguistics, written records and other historical linguistics techniques.

However, according to International Language Service, (2019), some languages have gone into extinction. In an online article published by H.L. Noss in June 2021⁴, 11 languages have in recent times gone into extinction. A language goes into extinction when it has no more speakers because of political, economic, or cultural reasons, such as the effects of colonization or parents refusing to teach their off-springs the language but rather focus on the dominant language made official by the government or because majority of the people speak it.

The languages that have gone into extinction recently according to the article are Aka-Cari spoken by the dwellers of Andaman Islands in the northeastern Indian Ocean; Tehuelche language which is native to Argentina. The Wichita language which was native to the indigenous Americans, The Klallam language from North America; Livonian language from Latvia. Yurok language from the Native Americans and Pazeh people are native to Taiwan. Others are Cochin Indo language formed from creole-Portuguese in Portugal. The Bo language from Andaman Islands, the Eyak language from Alaska, United States of America, Sámi language spoken in the Kola Peninsula of Russia.

However, amongst many other languages that survived and is still extant, there are those that are often used as lingual-franca or national languages (Nordquist, 2020) and one of such language is Pidgin which is widely spoken in Nigeria and some West African countries.

Pidgin language

Pidgin is not just one of the languages that is in extant but it is gaining more popularity amongst the people of West Africa. Though, not an official language, Pidgin remains the language more spoken than English language in the streets of most Western African countries (Agbo & Plag,

⁴ <https://historycolored.com/articles/7389/11-recently-extinct-languages/> - Accessed 19th February 2023.

2020). This brings to the fore the need to examine the concept of Pidgin language as an essential tool of communication.

Many dictionaries have defined Pidgin as a language coined from a combination of two or more languages. Generally defined, Pidgin is commonly used amongst people who do not speak same language. It is “...a set of linguistic practices or a special language by two or more people who speak different languages, usually for the purpose of particular kind of instruction” (Khan & Akter, 2021: 164-165), or often created for the purpose of trade and business transactions (Mireku-Gyimah, 2018) or for lingua franca in many bilingual or multilingual contexts (Akinlotan, 2022). With this knowledge, many other scholars, writers and linguists have explicated the concept of Pidgin, especially within sociolinguistic contexts. Nordquist, (2020) further defines Pidgin as a language that is coined from the combination of two or more languages used for lingua franca. Thus, within the context of this study, Pidgin is a Modified-English language that evolves as a mixture of the European English language and West African languages (Agbo & Plag, 2020).

In a nutshell, Mireku-Gyimah, (2018) refers to Pidgin English as a language coalesced of English language and local languages of a certain community. Agbo, & Plag, (2020), whilst arguing that Pidgin is the language extracted from the mixture of English and dialectical variations of a community, they also submitted that morphemic and syntactic features make it the property that distinguishes it from one Pidgin spoken community to the other. For instance, in many features, West African Pidgin “Englishes” (such as spoken in Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Liberia and Krio of Sierra Leone) have close similar variations, semantics and intonations, but are slightly different in their grammar, syntax and morpheme. Hence, there is the same definition of Pidgin but different variation from one country to the other. Other instances of variant Pidgin are the Ghana Pidgin (Mireku-Gyimah, 2018), Chinese Pidgin (Liu, 2022), Nigerian Pidgin (Agbo, & Plag, 2020). The latter is examined within this study.

Evolution of Pidgin English in Nigeria and the recognition of Pidgin English by BBC

Outside Africa, one of the first forms of Pidgin is traced to Canton in China, in 1807, where indigenes coined their own forms of English lexicon, syntax and neologism from the English language. The purpose was to unify a people with many indigenous languages when transacting

trades and businesses (Khan & Akter, 2021). In African context, Pidgin language started during the Slave Trade era, somewhere between 1400-1800. Around 1880, it has spread across Western countries as the language of transaction. It reached a full linguistic standard of communication for business and daily transaction around 1884 (Kuega, 2017).

In Nigeria, Pidgin also began quite earlier, initially as a Portuguese-based Pidgin, traced to 1469 when the Portuguese traded in the Nigeria coast. However, other European colonizers, such as the French, Dutch and finally the British, found Nigeria land fertile in resources, trades, and businesses. The predominance of the British colonization in the 17th century and the amalgamation of the Norther and Southern Nigeria Protectorates into one nation, Nigeria, in 1914 (Eric, 2016) further fostered a common language (lingual-franca) for trades and businesses amidst the multi-ethnic, culture and language context as the case till today (Emike, Magaji, & Baidu, 2019). As much as the British reinforced English as the language of education, formality, and civilization, it does not maintain this status quo in the street, trade, and transactions of the common Nigerians (Ibrahim, 2016).

Over the years, Pidgin has moved away from the language of the uneducated and local traders to retaining the recognition as one of the widely spoken languages and competing headlock with the three major and national languages in Nigeria, Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa, and indeed the official language of Nigeria which is English (British origin). Though, it has not been officially declared as an official language and language of education, the reality in Nigeria is that Pidgin has grown to be language of wider communication. For instance, Pidgin is widely spoken daily on most Nigerian media platforms and broadcast houses, such as Naija FM, WAZOBIA FM and the popular BBC as a channel that also reports in Pidgin, known as BBC Pidgin. Almost all news and media channels have one programme or the other in Pidgin (Bakare, 2022). To be a successful musician, bloggers, and social media entertainer in Nigeria, and West Africa at large, one must converse in Pidgin. (Ibrahim, 2016). All Nigeria musicians, from classical to contemporary have used Pidgin or few words in it.

Movies and music have transformed the image of Pidgin in the international space. Afrobeat is African, and originated from Ghana in the 1920's, but reached fames of attention both locally and internationally when the Nigerian musician, Fela Anikulapo Kuti debut it globally as he spiced it up with local and cultural dance, melodic vocals,

and dress (The Music Origins, 2020). According to the Stears Business Survey (2022), it is of no doubt that Nigerian Music Industry is World-class, “*the second best-performing entertainment and media consumer-market of the world*” (Adebiyi, 2022: p. 1). The film industry in Nigeria known as Nollywood, a name coined from the Hollywood (the film industry of The United States of America based in Hollywood, California), also obtained global attention as a mechanism that unveils African culture, lifestyles, and history. However, both Nollywood and Nigeria Afrobeat use Pidgin as their language device in reaching both African continent and beyond. This to a large extent has shown evidence that Pidgin is no longer a local or West African lingua franca or language-identity, but it has become the language currency in reaching global acknowledgement and international recognition (Haynes, 2021).

Pidgin: West African Jargon, Discourse and Language Identity at home and in the diaspora

Pidgin has become, not just the language of the community and transaction but presently, it is taking the role of a Creole in some parts of Nigeria especially in the Southern and Middle Belt of Nigeria, while Northern Nigeria though steeped in their Hausa-Fulani language, are increasingly taking to Pidgin English Language. To this end, most Nigerians, many of them born outside their ancestral land have arguably inherited Pidgin English as Creole. Creole was originally, any person of European (mostly French or Spanish) or African descent born in the West Indies or parts of French or Spanish America (and thus naturalized in those regions rather than in the parents' home country).

According to Khan and Akter (2021), Creole is a form of Pidgin that has been adsorbed as a native language of a set of people. On the contrary, it is called a Pidgin language when it is used as a second or third language (L2/L3). Either Creole or Pidgin, their functionality is to converse within the context of inter-ethnicity and multilingualism as a lingua franca, just like every other Lingua Franca, such as English, French, etc. In essence, a Creole and Pidgin are the same language, however, it is a Creole if a set of people use it as their native language, mother tongue or first language (MT/L1) while it is a Pidgin if it is used as L2/L3 (Akinlotan, 2022; Khan & Akter, 2021). In this regard, within Nigeria context, many people use Pidgin language as their L2/L3, while a few uses it as Creole (MT/L1). Most children obtain Creole in cases where parents are from different indigenous languages, hence, adopted

Pidgin as their home lingua franca. Some other children acquired Creole as a language because it is either the only language or most popular language used in their home environment. In Nigeria, the use of Creole is prevalent in the Niger Delta, and some other parts of Nigeria. It is estimated that over 5 million people use Creole in Nigeria, while over 75 million people use Pidgin language in their daily activities in Nigeria and diaspora (Emike, Magaji, & Baidu, 2019).

Pidgin, also known as ‘Naija’, was initially labelled the language of inferiority, but which has been celebrated as the second largest lingual franca in Nigeria, after English, and the third in West Africa after French language, in the Francophone countries (Haynes, 2021). Pidgin has become the language of every social and economic status, unlike the Standard English language (British) that remains in the status quo of the prestige, privileged, power and literacy. Moreover, even though Pidgin remains unrecognised as an official and national language, its widespread within all the towns and across the border of Nigeria is alarming. It has moved away from mere lingual franca of 75 million people in Nigeria to a linguistic mechanism that harmonises the multi-ethnic, cultural, and dialectal nature of Nigeria (Bakare, 2022).

The Standard English carries the identity of elitism, but Pidgin is recognized as the street language discourse. Besides, it has formed the identity of an ordinary Nigerian, locally and in diaspora, regardless of their level of elitism, literacy, or illiteracy. Thus, Pidgin is no longer a language but a banner of identity of every Nigerian, hence, the popular saying, ‘I be omo Naija’ or ‘I be Naija pickin’ which in English means, ‘I am a proud Nigerian’. In the diaspora, the first form of an average Nigerian’s identity is not in the culture, dress, or appearance but in their ability to codeswitch to Pidgin language, when amongst other Nigerians (Bakare, 2022: 4). Therefore, Pidgin, beyond being a lingual franca, has gained the height of a unifying language, intercultural and ethnic comity, a jargon, cultural identifier, or language discourse that now represents an identity of Nigerians.

Marginalization of Pidgin English in Nigeria

According to Honkanen (2021), Pidgin English has played a prominent role in the identity in authenticating different Nigerian identities on this diasporic web. Olatunji (2001) also points to Pidgin English as a language of identity for Nigerian Music, while Inyabri and Mensah (2021) says it is the identity and hallmark of Nigerian stand-up comedy. In their paper

titled *Use and attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin English among Nigerian university students*, Akande and Salami (2010) argues that Pidgin English has not received its social position because of lack of political authentication. They concluded that a language that is spoken by millions of people within a country would be expected to be standardized. They said that Pidgin English is neither completely codified nor standardized, and that it is an act of marginalisation that it has been subjected to, and that it has not only been socially marginalised but it has received little or no political support from any government in Nigeria.

Pidgin, popularly known as “Naija” language is nothing but a Nigeria flag and anthem. Such a language of about 75 million people and as a Creole for about 5 million people should no longer undergo discrimination or referred to as vernacular in schools. It is a prejudice if 80 million people’s language used as both a Creole (MT/L1) and as a /L2/L3 is called uncivilized, unofficial, and vernacular. Despite being very popular amongst Nigerian youths and university students, yet, still being regarded as unfit and less standard for academic purposes is predacious. This questions why such lucrative language is not escalated to a more vocabulary, lexical and writing standard that can be used in scaffolding knowledge in school especially primary school to enhance comprehension and intelligibility of complex subjects and modules. As such, noting the role of Pidgin in harmonizing the nation’s multiculturalism/ethnicity/lingualism, and one that is in fact a Creole to about 5 million people as their home language.

This study aims to expound on the need for Pidgin language to be used as both an official language of the country and language of instruction in primary school or as a school subject. It is hypothetically recommended that admitting Pidgin as one of the national languages (such as the case of Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa) will lift the image, identity, sense of belonging of the 5 million people whose language has been discriminated.

Lev Vygotsky theory as the theoretical framework for this study

Lev Vygotsky, a seminal Russian psychologist argues that social development theory affirms that a child's cognitive development and learning ability can be guided and mediated by their social interactions. His theory (also called Vygotsky's sociocultural theory) states that learning is a crucially social process as opposed to an independent journey of discovery. The theory believes that students’ learning and

knowledge internalisation is better attained when they are embedded in the language, social and cultural discourse of their homes. The major concern of this theory are: (1) there is a relationship between thought and language; that is, language influences our thoughts, vice versa. Hence, there is no learning without language and that language plays a huge role in intellectual growth; (2) the wealth of language one has and uses influences how one perceives and interpret the environment (3) according to this theory a good teacher is defined by their role in identifying students' language capital to provoke learning development (4) supports can be provided with a child's zone of proximity if the teacher allows social, cultural and language properties from the immediate environment as scaffolds in obtaining new knowledge (Vygotsky, 1987). Language is the basis of Vygotsky's ideas on social interaction. The development of speech occurs in three stages: external, egocentric, and inner speech. External or social speech occurs from birth until the age of three.

Vygotsky maintained that the social world is not only the interactions between peers and their teacher but also consisted of outside influences within the community. Prior knowledge, such as learned behaviors at home, impact learning in the classroom environment. As such, Vygotsky outlined three main concepts related to cognitive development: (i) culture is significant in learning, (ii) language is the root of culture, and (iii) individuals learn and develop within their role in the community. Culture can be defined as the morals, values, and beliefs of its community members, which are held in place with systems and establishments.

Ajegunle, a mini and melting pot of Nigeria as a location and case study for this paper

The study is set in Ajegunle which is located in Ajeromi Ifelodun Local Government Area of Lagos state Nigeria. The paper also use the location as an exploratory case study and it is a desktop stop that focuses on the use of secondary data gathered from the internet and search engine. The authors searched their materials from various websites and search engine like Google scholar. A total of 38 materials were retrieved and analysed and 15 of them being from various websites.

The site is a major informal settlement, often and popularly described as 'jungle city' "AJ City" or simply "AJ". It has a multi-ethnic population of 550,000. It is the most populated slum and it means "A place where

riches dwells”⁵ in Yoruba Language. It is often seen as the slum or ghetto of Lagos State. Ajegunle has a population density of 750 the highest of all slums in Lagos state. The slum area of Ajegunle constitutes 12.8% of the total area of all 42 blighted areas as at 1995. According to Stoveland Consult, WTP Study of 1997, majority of the multi-ethnic population of Ajegunle are of school age and highly, economically productive. Ajegunle is made up of five resident communities, and consist of people from all parts of the country with the dominant groups being the Ijaw, Ilaje, Hausa, Ibo, Urhobo and Yoruba ethnicity. It is a mini and the melting pot of Nigeria where every ethnic group is represented. Their main occupation is trading in the formal and informal sectors. According to Olajide (2010), the average household in Ajegunle spends about N6000 on food, N2000 of transport, N600 on housing and N885 on energy/fuel for cooking and lighting. In the past, Ajegunle was the boundary between the Western Region and the Lagos Colony.

A travel website called Town to Villages⁶ states that the area called Boundary in Ajegunle marked the boundary point between the Western Region and the Lagos Colony, and its cultural heritage cannot be disassociated from families who have survived many generations like the Ojora family and the Oluwa family as the original owners of the land. However, they also have some other group of families who are regarded as the owner of Ajegunle. These families are the Adeyemo family, the Fakunle family, the Bakare family and the Thomas family. Ajegunle being the most populous informal settlement in Lagos, demand for infrastructural facilities continues to be on the increase despite the present situation of dwindling economy and inadequate infrastructural facilities or perhaps unavailability. A study done by Olajide (2010) on Urban Poverty and Environmental Conditions in Informal Settlements of Ajegunle, Lagos Nigeria analyzed the interplay between poverty, environmental conditions of informal settlements and attainment of livable and healthy cities. Socioeconomic characteristics and environmental conditions of Ajegunle informal settlement in Lagos were examined and was established that the residents are mostly poor, lack basic infrastructural facilities and live in precarious situation. It was also observed that majority of them do not have adequate source of income which they could probably use to liberate themselves from bondage of poverty. Without equivocal, poverty, lack of adequate infrastructure

⁵ <https://thenationonlineng.net/ajegunle-the-good-the-bad-the-ugly/> - 21st February 2023

⁶ <https://www.towntovillages.com/ajegunle-in-apapa-lagos-state/> - 21st February, 2023

facilities and decent housing are some of the major factors contributing to the poor environmental condition in informal settlements.

These factors have also affected the development of schools in Ajegunle especially primary school which is the cradle and foundation of education. Since parents are unable to send their children to elite schools where British English language is taught, therefore the children have to cope with the schools they have with its attendant dilapidated structures and poor teaching staff. Therefore, teaching the primary school pupils in English language is a challenge as the teaching staff themselves can hardly speak being residents of Ajegunle itself. Pidgin English the language of communication and commerce in Ajegunle and all social activities including music is in Pidgin English too. This study therefore argues that Pidgin English should be mobilized to instruct the primary school student in some subject so that they can have basic comprehension as many of them are lost when taught in English language by teachers who can hardly speak English language themselves.

Discussing Pidgin English and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory

Though recently, the Federal Government of Nigeria has approved a new National Language Policy which makes the mother tongue the language of instruction at the primary level; that is, the first six years of education⁷. The policy states that it would be taught along with English language in the first three years of secondary education. This policy is more of an attempt to preserve the indigenous language from going into extinction, and not necessarily for the student comprehension.

As previously stated, Pidgin is a Creole to 5 million Nigerians and about 75 million Nigerian use it as their second language, making it the third largest language in Africa after English and French (Emike, Magaji, & Baidu, 2019). An average Nigerian can communicate in Pidgin. On the basis of the argument in this paper, most learners use Pidgin in their daily activities and homes in Ajegunle (Akinlotan, 2022; Khan and Akter, 2021). Knowing that language deficit will impair learning and cognition, this paper interrogates why Pidgin is not inculcated as a language tool in the learning process of primary school students in Ajegunle.

With the postulations of the Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, this paper aims to establish the importance of adopting Pidgin in school

⁷ <https://theeagleonline.com.ng/new-language-policy-not-a-cakewalk-by-tony-iyare/> - Accessed 21st February 2023

curriculum in Ajegunle, as a subject or as language of instruction, through which the students can find a link between the new knowledge and feasible context especially within the framework which states that individuals learn and develop within their role in the community and that support can be provided with a child's zone of proximity if the teacher allows social, cultural and language properties from the immediate environment as scaffolds in obtaining new knowledge (Vygotsky, 1997). This paper argues that since Pidgin language being a language that the child grew up with will serve as an excellent purveyor of teaching in an Ajegunle primary school.

The sociocultural theory argues that the language capital a child brings to school is pivotal to the child's learning development, to this end, most children in Ajegunle given their parent's socioeconomic status and the limitation of their environment being Ajegunle (Olajide, 2010) has adapted to Pidgin English which has become more like a Creole to them (Emike, Magaji, & Baidu, 2019) as they use it for interaction by peers as well as language of instruction by their parents. It is become a language of capital for them and thus a language that is intelligible to them.

Imposing a second language on a child in school which is somewhat different from his first language, Pidgin English being the language spoken in the environment and the basis for the child's sociocultural development (Vygotsky, 1997) can make learning a deficit to the child or more challenging unlike when classroom discourse is foregrounded in the child's home language of social interaction and discourse. In other words, using Pidgin English in class rooms in Ajegunle will promote inclusivity.

It is also a misnomer not to have a place for a language of 5 million people (as Creole) and 75 million people (as Pidgin) as a language of instruction especially in deprived areas like Ajegunle with poor learning aids, classrooms and teachers with poor oral English language especially when the child is already adept in Pidgin and can comprehend it. It is depriving them of their identity and rendering them second-class citizens. This is believed to impact on their sense of being and reception in school system, which will affect learning.

Pidgin English therefore should receive its due recognition in schools in deprived and multi-cultural areas like Ajegunle especially when the government at all levels now use it as a language of dissemination of government information about their programmes through different channels especially the radio and television. The local electronic media

houses including a trans-national broadcast media house like the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) either on television⁸ which started five years ago, and online newspaper⁹. In fact, some words from the Nigerian Pidgin English have been recognized by the Oxford English Dictionary¹⁰

Conclusion

This paper therefore concludes that the government either at the legislature or the Ministry of Education at various levels to take a second look at the comprehension level of primary schools students in areas where Pidgin language has become their first language (Creole) with a view to reviewing their policy to encourage tutoring with the Pidgin language. It is now more pertinent since Pidgin has now become international as it is being used by BBC for the news and current affairs programme, and it the fact that it has crept into Standard English dictionary. Pidgin English used as a Creole in the everyday communication and commerce in the lives of the resident of Ajegunle should be encouraged as a knowledge production hub that may become their pathway to leaving the poverty bracket.

To this end, policy makers can convene a workshop that will include academics and expert from the various ministry of education and the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) to discuss this possibility, perhaps, it could be developed and even be inculcated into school curriculum using primary schools in Ajegunle as a case study. Further research on the methodology and applicability of Pidgin language as a langue of instruction in Ajegunle or other places should be encourage as part of Nigeria's sociocultural development.

References

1. Adebisi, A. (2022). Nigerian music industry is the second best-performing Entertainment and Media Consumer market globally. Retrieved from:
2. <https://www.pulse.ng/entertainment/music/stears-declares-nigerian-music-industry-the-second-best-performing>

⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXqG_GbWkXE – Accessed on the 21st of February 2023

⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin> - Accessed on the 21st February 2023

¹⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51448295> - Accessed on the 21st of February 2023

3. globally/fgctdgq#:~:text=Nigerian%20music%20industry%20is%20the,and%20Media%20Consumer%20market%20globally (accessed: 12/01/2023).
4. Agbo, O. F., and Plag, I. (2020). The Relationship of Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin in Nigeria: Evidence from Copula Constructions in Ice-Nigeria. *Journal of Language Contact*. 13 (2020): 351-388.
5. Akande, A.T. and Salami, L.O., 2010. Use and attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin English among Nigerian university students. In *Marginal Dialects: Scotland, Ireland and Beyond*. Aberdeen: Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Ireland (pp. 1-79).
6. Akinlotan, M. (2022). Noun phrases and complexity in Nigerian Pidgin English. *Moderna sprak*. 116(1): 245-265.
7. Ayafor, M. and Green, M. (2017). *Cameroon Pidgin English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
8. Bakare, T. (2022). Shey Nigerian Pidgin fit be official language? Retrieved from: <https://guardian.ng/life/shey-nigerian-pidgin-fit-be-official-language/> (accessed: 12/01/2023).
9. Emike, A. J., Magaji, J. M. and Baidu, J. (2019). Nigerian Pidgin English in Nation-Building. *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 4(11): 720-725.
10. Eric, p. (2016). The Amalgamation of Nigeria: Revisiting 1914 and the Centenary Celebrations. *Canadian Social Science*. 12(12): 66-68.
11. Haynes, J. (2021). Nationalism from Below: State Failures, Nollywood, and Nigerian Pidgin”, *Global Storytelling. Journal of Digital and Moving Images* 1(1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.3998/g.657>.
12. Honkanen, M., 2021. Nigerian Pidgin in authenticating immigrant identities. *Current Trends in Nigerian Pidgin English*, p.147.
13. <https://historycolored.com/articles/7389/11-recently-extinct-languages/> - Accessed 19th February 2021
14. <https://thenationonlineng.net/ajegunle-the-good-the-bad-the-ugly/> - 21st February 2023
15. <https://translatorswithoutborders.org/language-data-nigeria#:~:text=Nigeria%20is%20one%20of%20the,with%20over%20500%20languages%20spoken.> – 21st February 2023
16. <https://u.osu.edu/introhumanitiesonline/2020/02/04/history-of-the-british-takeover-of-nigeria/> - 21st February 2023
17. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/colonialism#:~:text=Colonialism%20is%20defined%20as%20%E2%80%9Ccontr>

- ol,cultural%20values%20upon%20its%20people. – 21st February 2023
18. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXqG_GbWkXE – Accessed on the 21st of February 2023
 19. <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin> - Accessed on the 21st February 2023
 20. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51448295> - Accessed on the 21st of February 2023
 21. <https://www.townstovillages.com/ajegunle-in-apapa-lagos-state/> - 21st February, 2023
 22. <https://theeagleonline.com.ng/new-language-policy-not-a-cakewalk-by-tony-iyare/> - Accessed 21st February 2023
 23. Ibrahim, L. (2016). Nigerian Pidgin English: Multi-Prepositional Functionality of “Fo” Among Nigerian Staff of Ces in Manchester. *American Research Journal of English and Literature*. 2(2016): 1-10.
 24. International Language Service, (2019). Understanding Extinct Languages: When and Why They Die Off. Retrieved on 8/12/2022, from: <https://www.ilstranslations.com/blog/understanding-extinct-languages-when-and-why-they-die-off/>
 25. Inyabri, I. and Mensah, E., 2021. Nigerian Pidgin, identity and national re-invention in Naija stand-up comedy. *Current Trends in Nigerian Pidgin English: A Sociolinguistic Perspective*, pp.115-45.
 26. Khan, J. I. and Akter, S. (2021). Pidgin and Creole: Concept, Origin and Evolution. *British Journal of Arts and Humanities*. 3(6): 164-170.
 27. Kouega, P. (2017). Some Features of the Syntax of Proverbs in Cameroon Pidgin English. *Open Access Library Journal*. 4(12): 1-17.
 28. Liu, Y. (2022). Sinicizing European Languages: Lexicographical and Literary Practices of Pidgin English in Nineteenth-Century China. *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies*. 22 (2): 135-159.
 29. Makoni, S. and Pennycook, A. eds., 2007. *Disinventing and reconstituting languages* (Vol. 62). Multilingual Matters.
 30. Mireku-Gyimah, P. B. (2018). “I dey trust you waa’: Pidgin English as a Current Spoken Communication Tool at University of Mines and Technology”, *Ghana Mining Journal*, 18 (2): 77-86.
 31. Nordquist, R. (2020). *What Is a Pidgin?* Retrieved on 5/12/2022, from: <https://www.thoughtco.com/Pidgin-language-1691626>
 32. Noss, H. L. (2021). *11 Recently Extinct Languages*. Retrieved on 8/12/2022, from: <https://historycolored.com/articles/7389/11-recently-extinct-languages/>

33. Nowak, M.A. and Krakauer, D.C., 1999. The evolution of language. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 96(14), pp.8028-8033.
34. Olajide, O., 2010. *Urban poverty and environmental conditions in informal settlements of Ajegunle, Lagos Nigeria*. na.
35. Olatunji, M.O., 2001. The use of Pidgin English in contemporary Nigerian music: A new approach towards national identity. *Humanities Review Journal*, 1(1), pp.41-46.
36. Owusu, E., Adoma, S. K., and Aboagye, D. O. (2016). *Sociolinguistics of the Varieties of West African Pidgin: Englishes—A Review*. 4(4): pp. 534-550
37. The Music Origins (2020). *Afrobeat: The African Sound Evolves*. Retrieved from: <https://www.musicorigins.org/afrobeat-evolves/> (accessed: 12/01/2023)
38. Vygotsky, L.S., 1987. *The collected works of LS Vygotsky: Problems of the theory and history of psychology* (Vol. 3). Springer Science & Business Media.