



# Nation-building in Nigeria: Roles of the English Language within the Context of Globalization

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## Abstract

*This study examines the roles of English in Nigeria in terms of nation-building in the era of globalization. From historical and contemporary perspectives, the pride of place that English has in Nigeria is not incidental. Given its position on the world stage, the language is highly recognized in the country. It links the country with other nations of the world in the quest for knowledge, innovations and cross-domain development. In this regard, communication is the fundamental pillar of the sustainable growth and development of Third World countries including Nigeria. Fostering nation-building in a multilingual, multi-ethnic and multicultural region like Nigeria inevitably involves deploying language policy frameworks that put into consideration, how English can co-exist peacefully and productively with Nigeria's ethnography; in spite of the positive roles that language plays in a heterogeneous nation, it has divisive potentials that should be properly managed for the good of any nation. The parameters for the co-existence of English with Nigerian languages remain intriguing due to ethnic resentments. This paper hinges on two theoretical frameworks: Orisawayi's Development Theory and Morgan's Speech Community Theory. While the former highlights feature of development that any country is expected to aspire for, and acquire, the latter emphasizes not only the significance of shared system of communication in a speech community, but also the instrumentality of a global language to a forward-looking speech community. The paper concludes that English fosters nation-building in Nigeria because as a global language, it guarantees national cohesion, enhances social mobilization, its vocabulary stock is wide and the language is a medium of instruction in schools.*

**Keywords:** Nigeria, English, nation-building, globalization, Orisawayi's Theory of Development, Morgan's Speech Community Theory.

## 1. Introduction

The development potential of English in post-independence Nigeria is worthy of scholarly attention, particularly in this era of globalization when different countries believe that sustainable growth in nation-hood, is non-negotiable. The choice of English as National Language or Official Language in different African countries is informed by the recognition of the global status of the language. It also implies that such nations understand the crucial roles that the human natural heritage, "language", plays in any nation. Obiegbu Ifeyinwa (2014: 87) submits that language is "a creation of man's social needs. Like all other living creatures, we depend on the air, water and earth around us, and in the same way, society depends upon language for its very existence. For effective national development, language plays a central role, particularly in terms of such agents of development as literacy and communication. This is clearly understandable because it is through language that man has to plan ... Apart from the planning, man uses language to instruct and evaluate his programmes." There are indices to conclude that countries are already engaged in one form of development initiative or the other. However, this paper examines English-based linguistic approach to development in Nigeria. In the era of globalization, the desire for information, knowledge and economic progress remains major drivers of nations' desire to leverage on the global status of English. When a country is safe, self-dependent, economically successful and technologically well-established, it can be concluded that development is being achieved therein. Language, being a basic means of communication among humans, is equipped with the potential to foster the development of any nation. In exploring the global status of English for the overall growth and development of Nigeria,

there are challenges that confront the prospects. This study contends that such challenges can be managed properly and objectively for the good of Nigeria.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

In multilingual Nigeria where English constitutionally operates as an Official Language, the dominance of the language over indigenous languages in the country implies that Nigerian languages are being threatened towards being irrelevant in nation-building. However, the crucial roles English plays in Nigeria in the context of globalization, are too significant to ignore. In this regard, pertinent questions include:

- I. Should English be dislodged from its constitutional roles?
- II. If a language policy framework for the co-existence of English with Nigerian languages is a better option than dislodging English, what are the justifications for saying so, within the contexts of globalization and nation-building?

## 3. The Ethnography of Nigeria

Nigeria is a very large country in West Africa. As expected therefore, it is multilingual, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. Ifeyinwa Obiegbu (ibid: 84) reports that “Nigeria has a natural division, through the rivers Niger and Benue, into three major areas. These divisions correspond with the three major language groups in the country namely the Hausa in the North, the Igbo in the East and the Yoruba in the West. Despite these three major languages, Nigeria has many other indigenous languages ... In a multilingual Nigeria context, the issue of national language has been very sensitive and controversial ...” Dada (2010: 418) cites Brain who describes Nigeria’s ethnography further by stating that “the recent 2005 Ethnologic Data listed 521 languages for Nigeria. Of these, 510 are living languages, 2 are second languages without mother tongue speakers, and 9 are extinct. Research submits that Nigerian languages are grouped as major languages, state languages and local languages based on their status as dominant languages, their territorial spread and the population that speak them.” In addition, Ayodabo (2013: 19) gives linguistic, geographical and economic insights on Nigeria:

- It is a multilingual country, having about 395 languages (not dialects) already identified;
- Bilingualism involving English has been institutionalized as a factor of nationalism in the country;
- In spite of over a century of the introduction of Western education, majority of Nigerians are illiterates, particularly in English which is the language of supralocal country-wide communication.

The literature of sociolinguistics is replete with fascinating perspectives on Nigeria’s present ethnography. For example, Akaegbobi, Oby et al. (2001: 32) submit that “Nigeria is a linguistically rich nation. Recent mapping of number of individual languages in Nigeria shows that the country is home to about five hundred and twenty (520) languages. This makes Nigeria one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world. Indeed, if the record that places the number of languages in the world at 6000 is correct, it means that Nigeria contributes nearly ten per cent (10%) to the global pool of language resources. Out of this number, about five hundred and ten (510) are regarded as living languages that is, languages with current speakers and which are still transmitted to children. Two in this language pool are without native speakers as they rely in their being used as second languages for their survival while (9) are said to be extinct without any known living speaker.” For more tips on Nigeria’s ethnography and its implications on language-related phenomena, see Bamgbose (1972) and Dada (ibid).

## 4. Nation-building and Globalization Conceptualized

### 4.1 Nation-building

Nation-building concerns cross-domain progress of a nation. Anderson (1996) defines “nation” as “a clearly defined territory which (i) is recognized internationally as a state (ii) is presided over by a government able to make and enforce independent decisions concerning domestic policy and law and foreign policy and (iii) is permanently occupied by a specific population.” Kamwendo (2010: 325) cites Stalin who posits that “a nation is formed only as a result of lengthy and systematic intercourse as a result of people living together generation after generation.” Nation-building is essentially about national development. In this sense, “to build a nation” simply means “to develop it”. The three dimension evolved by Topado and Smith (2011) in the description of development, are worthy of scholarly attention: economic dimension (satisfaction of basic needs); psychological dimension (positive view of “self” as obtainable in any person); and social dimension (freedom that individuals have or enjoy as their right). According to Obasi (1987), national development is “the progressive transformation of the economic, social and political structures of a society from relatively less complex, less efficient and less desirable forms to relatively more complex, more efficient and more desirable forms.”

### 4.2 Globalization

Steger (2019: 7-8) defines globalization as “the interconnections of global economic, political, cultural and environmental processes that continually transform present conditions.” Nataliya Todorova and Anna Todorova (2018: 333) posit that “the term globalization has no precise definition, but numerous meanings and interpretations in different

areas such as cultural studies, economics, environment or politics. While some students consider globalization as a social process that makes the currently existing borders irrelevant, others stress the world-unifying, homogenizing power of this process. This term generalized, globalization, (which obviously comes from the word 'globe') is the 'big idea' of 20<sup>th</sup> century, which contains the process of international integration arising from the exchange of worldwide views, products, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture and life." The definitions above bring to the fore, the features that are typical of the phenomenon referred to as globalization. Such features are domain-reflective, and reveal globalization as experiential continuum. Chen (2012) highlights five crucial features of globalization:

- i) Globalization is a dialectically dynamic process, which is caused by the pushing and pulling off between the two forces of cultural identity and cultural diversity, or between local and global;
- ii) Globalization is universally persuasive as it penetrates into every aspect of human society and influences the way it lives, thinks, and behaves;
- iii) Globalization is holistically interconnected as it builds a huge matrix in which all components are interconnected with networks;
- iv) Globalization represents a culturally hybridized state, which allows cultural transmission via new media to take place at a very rapid rate by permeating and dissolving human boundaries.

As any other societal phenomenon, globalization is not accepted by everybody. Those who criticize the fall-outs of globalization argue that it puts Third World nations at disadvantage; it makes such Third World nations abandon native values and struggle to catch up with the inevitable trends and necessities that globalization puts on them. Kayode Omole (2016) cited in Ayodabo et al. (2016: 435) provides more insights on globalization:

Globalization refers to the universal adoption of social institutions. It is a process by which social institutions or policies become adopted on a world-wide scale ... 'the age of globalization refers to that period of time when certain institutions or policies which may have been peculiar to or characterized certain geopolitical regions of the world or people become extended to or diplomatically imposed on other parts of the world.' One of the institutions mostly affected by globalization is culture, characterized by the neglect of indigenous languages by African youths and elite. There are many factors responsible for this. Among them are the official status of English and French in many African countries, the founding of many international schools or educational institutions that promote or emphasize the learning of these international languages, massive onslaught of foreign movies and magazine and the elitist aspirations of parents who tend to make English or French the first language of their authentic African children. Given all these social circumstances, Africa's indigenous languages are being gradually disowned by their speakers.

## 5. The Global Status of English

The global status of English is indexed by the various international inputs of the language in world affairs. Such inputs account for why English is often labeled "a global language". Rohmah Zuliati's (2005: 107) reports extensively on this label and the use of the term "international language" to make reference to English:

About fifty years ago the notion of English as a true global language was merely a theoretical prediction which is still diffuse and vague. However, realities have created it as a real world language at the present time. People in every part of the world feel its urgent role in their life: for academic purposes, for business goals, and for other purposes. English is spoken by people throughout the world as their first language, second language and foreign language. Indeed, English is now a world language. English as a world language is not merely an international language. The notion of international language can be understood as a language which is used in any international communication which involves people from two or more countries. Japanese is an international language, but it is not a global language...

It is often believed that the position of a language on the global stage is tied to the military, political and technological achievements of its native speakers. According to Crystal (2003), "given that the USA has come to be dominant element in so many of the domains ..., the future status of English must be bound up to some extent with the future of that country. So much of the power which has fuelled the growth of the English language during the twentieth century has stemmed from America. ... the country contains nearly four times as many mother-tongue speakers of English as any other nation. It has been more involved in international developments in twentieth-century technology than any other nation. It is in control of the new industry (that is, electronic) revolution. And it exercises a greater influence on the way English is developing worldwide than any other regional variety – often, of course, to the discomfiture of people in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa who regularly express worries in their national presses about the onslaught of 'Americanisms'." Viewing the global status of English from other perspectives, Umar Fauzan (2022: 39-40) submits that "as a global language, English language has some statuses. Firstly, it is the first language for the native speakers and used as a national language. Secondly, it is the second language for the non-native speakers and used as an official language ... Thirdly, it is a foreign language for the speakers other than the two groups above. For the sake of international communication, it is used as a lingua franca. As an international language, English language functions as the official language by the United Nations (UN) and is used for international communication. In the academic field,

English language can be used as a medium of instruction and a means of developing science and technology ... English has become a very important language especially when communicating with people from different countries.” The global status of English is also a dividend of its historical feat. Its native speakers colonized different regions of the world and established colonial structures which linger in such regions till date. In this regard, English is imperial. Akin Odebunmi (2017: 21) reports that “in his theory of linguistic imperialism, Phillipson (1992) (re-) groups global English speakers into core English speaking countries, comprising Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; and “periphery English-speaking countries”, where English serves as a second language (for example, Nigeria, Ghana, India and Singapore) or an international language (for example, China, Indonesia and Japan). The groups relate unequally with respect to structural and systemic power in that the Western Anglophone group wields political and socio-economic power against the former colonial communities found in the peripheries. This hegemony is further sustained by “English linguistic imperialism”, defined as “the dominance of English” ... asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.” The debate on the right label for English in terms of whether it should be referred to as a “global language” or as an “international language” is in recognition of its great position across continents. Commenting on the debate, Phillipson (2008: 4) cited in Poggensee Anna (2016) reports that “‘global English’ is an appropriate term because English is widely accepted in the global linguistic market and ... English is becoming the defiant language of international communication in an increasing number of countries worldwide. On the other hand, Ammon (2010: 11) uses the terms ‘international language’ or ‘world language’ to describe the English language because of its function as a language of international communication. He believes that ‘the more international the language or the higher its international standing, the more justified its claim to the status of a world language.’”

## 6. Theoretical Frameworks

This study is anchored by two theoretical frameworks. They are presented below:

### 6.1 Orisawayi's Theory of Development

Orisawayi's (2005: 13-14) Theory of Development is a suitable theoretical framework for this study because it reveals acceptable indices of development and what nations should achieve in using any lingua franca for sustainable growth and national development:

1. Intellectual and mental expansion for the individual person in society;
2. a stable polity with a strong sense of commitment to nationalism/nationhood among the people;
3. economic development, progress and equitable distribution of national wealth;
4. socio-political integration of the constituent units that make up the nation;
5. scientific and technological progress and its application to the improvement of the quality of life of the people;
6. efficient and functional educational output at all levels;
7. widely recognized, accepted and practiced democratic structures and systems;
8. highly enlightened citizenry with 80%-90% achieved level of functional literacy among the people and highly sharpened awareness of individual and collective fundamental rights, with freedom of speech and association;
9. stable employment for all citizens in private and public sectors of the economy;
10. a highly recognized and respectable network of understanding and positive relations among the constituent units and with other nations of the world;
11. a highly developed network of communication and transport system; and
12. a high sense of motivation among the citizenry towards the achievement of all the parameters of development indices ...

### 6.2 Morgan's Theory of Speech Community

Morgan's Theory of Speech Community views communication as a pillar of national development. In this sense, the processing of meaning conveyed through a unifying global language in cross-domain communication/interaction is a product of shared knowledge of members of a given speech community. Babatunde and Aremu (2017: 99-100) comment on Morgan's Theory of Speech Community:

Morgan's (2003) view is that a speech community does not simply focus on groups that speak the same language but rather that the concept takes as facts the notion that language represents, embodies, constraints and constitutes meaningful participation in society and culture. Morgan sees the study of the speech community as being central to the understanding of human language and meaning-making because it is the product of prolonged interaction among those who operate within shared beliefs and value system regarding their own culture, society and history as well as their communication with others. In his view, these interactions constitute the fundamental nature of human contact and the importance of language, discourse and verbal styles in the representation and negotiation of the relationships that ensue. Morgan goes further to submit that the concept of speech community (which a global language indexes) does not simply focus on groups that speak the same language but that it connotes that the common language represents, embodies, constructs and constitutes



meaningful participation in a society and culture. Similarly, to Morgan, a homogenous community presupposes the existence of a mutually intelligible, symbolic and ideological communicative system among members.

Within the context of this study, Morgan's Theory of Speech Community places a country's quest for national development above ethnic nationality and sentiments.

## 7. Building the Nigerian Nation within the Context of Globalization: The Roles of English

In this section of the paper, the roles of English in building Nigeria within the context of globalization, is examined from different perspectives:

### 7.1 National Cohesion and Identity

In multilingual Nigeria, ethnic sentiments towards mother tongues threaten nation-hood. The major and minor ethnic groups struggle to avert domination. In worse case scenarios, national security is threatened. Without peace, nation-building is impossible. English, being a neutral language, plays a unifying role (national cohesion). As a language of nationism in Nigeria, English fosters cohesion in different spheres of nation-hood, including private and public organizations which count on organizational cohesion for efficiency and productivity. Lee Thomas (1996: 131) submits that "clearly, the nation running, or administrative aspects require strong communication among members of the government as well as in governmental interactions with the members of the nation. At first glance, it appears reasonable to require all interactions to be in a common language to facilitate the smooth operation of the administration of a nation." Fishman (1968b: 6) submits that "in the absence of a common, nationwide, ethnic and cultural identity nations proceed to plan and create such an identity through national symbols that can lead to common mobilization and involvement above, beyond ..." In being able to promote national cohesion, English is a credible national language in Nigeria. Fasold (1984: 77) posits that a national language is:

- (a) The emblem of national oneness and identity;
- (b) Widely used for some everyday purposes;
- (c) Widely and fluently spoken within the country;
- (d) The major candidate for such a role, since there is no equally qualified alternative language within the country;
- (e) Acceptable as a symbol of authenticity; and
- (f) Having a link with the glorious past.

The role of English in fostering national cohesion in the Nigerian nation is captured by Rohmah Zuliati (ibid: 124) who reports that "English is the language of politics in Nigeria. It makes communication easier for our leaders. In our national assembly politicians from different ethnic groups interact in English. With the English language our President, state governors, etc. make speeches on the Independence Day, budget announcements to different ethnic groups in Nigeria at once. Our national symbols; the Coat of Arms, the National Anthem, the Nigerian Pledge, the Nigerian Flag and the currency are represented in English. The usage of one of the indigenous languages to represent them will breed conflicts because other ethnic groups whose languages are not used will feel marginalized and cheated. The peaceful role of the English language in the realm of politics is very significant." Those who contend for a language-based solution to national problems argue that human communication (as in the use of English for interaction across domains of society) produces cohesion in society, and cohesion promotes nationism which is essentially "the smooth running of a nation.

### 7.2 Mobilization Potential

Through English-based communication, Nigerians are spurred to act together (solidarity) to solve societal problems. This is simply about the pragmatic use of speech acts in English. Wardhaugh R. and Janet M. Fuller (2015: 9) assert that "solidarity refers to the motivations which cause individuals to act together and to fulfill a common bond which influences their social actions. Thus, the concept of solidarity is intertwined with both identity formation and group formation." The use of English for crisis management in different parts of the world including Nigeria, is worthy of note. Studies on the pragmatics of using English shows that speech acts, registers and face-threatening acts (FSA) are language-driven phenomena. Indeed, no nation can thrive without atmosphere of peace and harmony.

### 7.3 Scope of the English Lexicon

David Crystal's (ibid: 146) submission accentuates the broadness of the English lexicon:

Most adaptation in new English relates to vocabulary, in the form of new words (borrowings – from several hundred language sources, in such areas as Nigeria), word-formations, word-meanings, collocations and idiomatic phrases. There are many cultural domains likely to motivate new words, as speakers find themselves adapting the language to meet fresh communicative needs. A country's biogeographical uniqueness will generate potentially large numbers of words for animals, fish, birds, insects, plants, trees, rocks, rivers and so on – as well as the issues to do with land management and interpretation which is an especially important feature of the lifestyle of many indigenous peoples. There will be words for foodstuffs, drinks, medicines, drugs, and the practices associated with eating ... The country's mythology and religion, and practices in astronomy and

astrology, will bring forth new names for personalities, beliefs and rituals. The country's oral and perhaps written literature will give rise to distinctive names in sagas, poems, oratory and folktales. There will be a body of local laws and customs, with their own terminology. The culture will have its own technology with its own terms – such as for vehicles, house – buildings, weapons, clothing, ornaments and musical instruments. The whole world of leisure and the arts will have a linguistic dimension – names of dances, musical styles, games, sports – as will distinctiveness in body appearance (such as hair styles, tattoos, decoration). Virtually any aspect of social structure can generate complex naming systems – local government, family relationships, clubs and societies, and so on ... So, when a community adopts a new language, and starts to use it in relation to all areas of life, there is inevitably going to be a great deal of lexical creation.

Across facets of society, across disciplines and internationally, the functionality of the English language is informed by its wide vocabulary. Ushuple Lucy M. and Iskandar I. (2019: 63) submits assert that “as a language of wider communication (LWC), English is used for phatic communion, ceremonial purpose, an instrument of keeping records, information dissemination, self-expression and embodiment of thought among the various linguistic groups in Nigeria. The common linguistic basis that constitutes a requisite for the existence of any nation is provided by English. So with English as the common tongue to all the ethnic groups, the collective sentiment of belonging together despite the individual or ethnic differences is forged. Related to the discussion is the fact that Nigerian Nationalism or collective identity is stamped on national institutions through the medium of English.”

#### 7.4 Language of Instruction

A language of instruction in schools is a very vital language in nation-building. Many languages do not have what it takes to be assigned such a crucial role in any nation. In the era of globalization, a language of instruction is the basis for innovations, science and technology without which there cannot be sustainable growth and development in a country. English studies in Nigeria's primary, secondary and tertiary institutions are promoted to ensure that Standard Nigerian English is good enough (internationally intelligible) for international diplomacy. However, in English as a Second Language (ESL) context, mother tongue interference militates against the efforts of the educational system to promote the teaching and learning of discrete skills in English for effective work-place performance. Adeniran cited in Ayodabo (2013: 82) highlights three aspects of communicative competence in language learning:

- **Minimal Competence**  
Speakers are characterized by a single speech habit in a single social sphere without any shifting of repertoire or code (restricted).
- **Average Competence**  
Speakers have a command of a set of speech habits which is neither large nor small; they use this in a limited range of different social spheres, and shift their verbal repertoire accordingly (flexible).
- **Maximum Competence**  
Speakers have versatile speech habits in many social spheres, and shift their verbal repertoire with ease (versatile).”

The relevance of English in the educational pursuits of young and middle-age people in different regions of the world, establishes the fact that its lexicon is expanded to cope with career needs of individuals. In this era of globalization, this fact is widely acknowledged. The internet reveals the the numerous ways that the wide scope of the English lexicon facilitates online studies. The language is widely being learned as Foreign Language or as Second Language in different countries, in recognition of the fact that its well-developed orthography and broad vocabulary is helpful in contemporary research and innovations. English studies in the form of IELTS, TOEFL, PTE, GRE, etc. show that the language is indeed useful and popular in career pursuits. In the era of globalization, more scholarships are being awarded to teeming youths who further studies in countries where English is the medium of instruction. David Crystal (ibid: 112) reports that “since the 1960s, English has become the normal medium of instruction in higher education for many countries – and is increasingly used in several where the language has no official status ...The English language teaching (ELT) business has become one of the major growth industries around the world in the past half-century. However, its relevance to the growth of English as a world language goes back much further.” Indeed, people who engage in international business and commerce have also been taking interest in English language.”

#### 8. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examines how the position of English on the global stage enables it to play crucial roles in building the Nigerian nation at critical period: the era of globalization. Globalization is not only a new trend of the contemporary world; it is also an emerging one which continually brings to the fore, new practices and phenomena as the world remains a global village. Globalization presents Nigeria with numerous intriguing happenings and situations that reflect new “wave” of knowledge and its resultant better living conditions for Nigerians. English is well endowed due to its internal and external characteristics. Attitudes towards English can be immensely useful in using the language to foster

sustainable growth and development in Nigeria. For example, Lee Thomas (ibid: 131) notes that “tolerant language policies unite and promote nationality-building through inclusiveness in nationalism, and restrictive language policies divide.”<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt about the official status of English in Nigeria. Ferguson and Heath (1981: 531) define an Official Language as “a language which is legally prescribed as the language of governmental operations of a given nation.” Nigerians are not ignorant of the instrumentality of the English language in their different careers. The fact that the English language guarantees economic opportunities implies that it can be significantly engaged in nation-building. Nunberg (1990) notes that “people learn a language when it has economic and social advantages to them; people do not learn a language because they are forced to, nor do they cease using a language when mandated to do so.” Although the significance of English in nation-building is widely acknowledged, a major challenge is how to make English co-exist with Nigerian languages in nation-building, given the intractable nature of ethnic resentments. Nataliya Todorova and Anna Todorova (ibid: 341) capture ethnic sentiments in ESL context succinctly:

The singular position of the English language in the modern world gave rise to the following lines of debates based on the positive and negative effects of the language spread, as summarized by Anne Johnson:

- Should the rise of English be understood as a powerful economic tool for development and commerce, or as a dangerous mechanism reinforcing (and creating new) inequalities based on English proficiency?
- Does English serve as a carrier of culture and a tool for cross-cultural communication and awareness, or as a force of cultural imperialism and homogenization?
- Is the pre-eminence of the English language as a lingua franca nothing more than a passing phrase, similar to lingua francas of the past, or does its rise under conditions of fast-paced globalization mean that it is a more permanent, and potentially more dangerous, phenomenon?

Being an alien language to the speakers of minority and majority languages in Nigeria, it is expected that there would be constraints to the instrumentality of English in Nigeria. However, such constraints or challenges can be managed towards nation-building. Apart from negative attitudes, other challenges include: negative divisive potential of indigenous languages in Nigeria; economic hardship (that prevents financial investments on the implementation of language planning proposals); and the rising tendency of non-intelligibility of Standard British English (SBE) and Standard Nigerian English (SNE). Facilitators to the effective use of English in nation-building in Nigeria include: positive attitudes towards the language; good language-related policy framework; supporting the promotion of English through the provision of funds; enhancing the standards of English taught in schools as Educated Variety or Standard Nigerian English; and implementing language proposals that are considered suitable for multilingual Nigeria. The sociolinguistic implication of the multilingual structure of Nigeria is that language planning and policy are necessary for language-driven nation-building. Bilingual competence, particularly among the youth is on the rise. As a choice language in this regard, English is learned and spoken by people across social class and age range. It is therefore a fact that English is thriving not just in terms of number of speakers, but also in terms of the spread. In Nigeria, given the fact that bilingual competence in ESL context is targeted towards mutual intelligibility between SBE and SNE, English studies receive remarkable success in formal education. No reasonable government ignores globalization-induced development.<sup>2</sup> This study concludes that English fosters nation-building in Nigeria because as a global language, it guarantees national cohesion, enhances social mobilization, its vocabulary stock is wide and the language is a medium of instruction in schools.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Adebija (2004: 54) posits that “attitudes towards languages are motivated by several factors including their socio-economic value, their status-raising potentials, their perceived instrumental value, their perceived esteem, their perceived functions or roles in the nation, their numerical strength, the perceived political and economic power of its speakers, their use in the official domains, their educational value, etc. Generally, positive attitudes, covert or overt, are developed towards a language that is perceived to have value in all these different areas ... Conversely, negative attitudes, overt or covert, and develop towards a language in proportion to its lack of function or narrowing of its distribution in registers.”

<sup>2</sup> Akaegbobi, Oby et al. (2001: 5) submits that “development has become the watchword of our time. The importance of this is shown in the fact that almost all disciplines are called upon to demonstrate the specific contribution which they can make to development. The ability to show this is at the core of proving the relevance of the discipline involved. The student of language is not immune to this challenge. From time to time, in formal and informal discussions with his lecturers, schoolmates, and others he may be challenged to show the relevance of his discipline in national development.”

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