

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FRENCH LANGUAGE POLICY IN A MULTILINGUAL
AFRICAN SOCIETY:
NIGERIA AS A CASE STUDY

BY

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Abstract

Language is a pushed factor for national and international cooperation and development. The French language has been adopted as Nigeria's second official language and compulsory subjects in schools from basic 4-9. This paper examines how practicable the implementation of this policy has been in the light of the multilingual environment in which it operates. The paper explores the evolution and objectives of the French language in Nigeria and explains the Rationale for the French language policy in Nigeria. It highlights the efforts and support initiatives of the government to actualize the policy. It further identifies some challenges facing the implementation process and proposes some solutions. In conclusion, it stresses the point that in order for French to take root in Nigeria, and for the policy to be well established, the study of French must take into account the implantation of the structures of the students' first language, their socio-cultural environment, and the realities of their daily lives. It must resolve critical issues of language integration, linguistic complementarities, language interference and government political will in assigning roles and functions to French and other languages on the curriculum

**Keywords: French Language Education, Language Policy, Multilingualism,
Policy Implementation**



Introduction

The Nigerian language policy has favoured the French language by upgrading its status from that of a foreign language to a second language. The implication of this second language status is that it has become a compulsory language in the school system from basic 4-9 and optional at the senior secondary level with prospects of becoming compulsory at the tertiary levels if the policy works out at the secondary level. By being compulsory, it forms part of the education process of the Nigerian child.

This privileged position of the French language has exposed it to serious controversies of whether the policy is practicable or not in the light of the current, emergent, socio-cultural and linguistic issues surrounding the National language policy. Hence the dilemma of the policy being a myth or a reality.

Evolution of French Language in Nigeria

The French language came to Nigeria before the 19th century through the transmissions and borrowed words in commerce, religion and cultural contacts with the European merchants and colonial masters. French was introduced into the Nigerian curriculum in 1956, (Asobele (1999). French and German languages featured in the curriculum of the first educational establishments founded in Nigeria in the 19th century and was taught in major elite schools such as Wesley High School and King's College Lagos, (Omolewa, 1971), Government College Ibadan and many other establishments that could recruit foreign teachers in French (Okoli, 1999).

In the 1960's, Nigerian universities like the University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria Nsukka, University of Lagos, the University of Ife and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, all created departments of modern languages and commenced the teaching of the French language in their universities.

The rationale and justification for introducing the French language into the Nigerian school system were rooted in the Yaoundé International Conference of 1961 when the commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa (CTCA) convened a conference for the education ministers in the sub-region to deliberate on unifying the ancient colonies of France and Britain. At the end of the deliberations, it was resolved that all African ministries of education South of Sahara should adopt French and English as mandatory subjects in the school systems of Anglophone and Francophone countries respectively to serve as second official languages in these colonies as a way of facilitating communication and thus enhancing social, economic, political and technological activities of African countries and other countries of the world (Adetoye, 2003). This move was followed up during the meeting of experts in Addis Ababa in November 1963 and culminated in the official approval of the bilingual education policy for all Africa by the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa in 1963 (David, 1975). The essence was for French and English to serve as means for communication and understanding between the peoples of these two linguistic blocks in Africa. It was, however, after independence (in the

1960's) that the impact of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action on Education in Africa led to Nigeria's adoption of French as an approved African Policy (Okwedishu, 2000). After the take-off of the African Bilingual Policy, the Federal Government of Nigeria displayed its involvement and commitment in the formulation and approval of the French/ English Bilingual Policy in Nigeria by its awareness and appreciation of the role of the French language as a unifying force in the inter-regional scene among African states, thus; "for the smooth interaction with our neighbours, it is desirable for every Nigerian to speak French. Accordingly, French shall be the second official language in Nigeria and it shall be compulsory in schools, from basic 4-9, (FRN, 1998).

During this period in the 70s, French as a subject knew its moment of glory as it flourished in Nigeria. Students and teachers of French enjoyed scholarships and travelled to French-speaking West African Countries and France for more knowledge of French. Motivation and morale in the study of the language were high and more people studied the language.

The attrition rate was low because the bilateral agreement between Nigerian and the French Government was strong and cordial. This period was followed by a period of a dramatic downswing in French language study, (from the early 1980s to mid-1990s). Due to budgetary constraints in both Nigeria and France, the attrition rate of both students and teachers in the study of the language started recording high measures (Opara, 1998).

As if the situation was not enough, French was given an elective status in the School curriculum. The situation raised a clarion call from concerned Nigerians and bodies clamouring for a reconsideration of the status of French in the National Policy on Education, such that more people could be encouraged to learn French, (Akudolu, 1995). Similarly, the Association for the promotion of Quality Education in Nigeria (APQEN) at its 10th Annual Conference in 1988 demanded, among other things, a re-examination of the National policy on Education as well as the Curriculum in languages with special provision for a foreign language among other disciplines, to realign it to meet the expectations of the 21st century.

Fortunately, the turn of events during the tenure of Office of late General Sani Abacha, as the Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria warranted a closer bilateral relationship with mostly the AU and ECOWAS member states. The Anti-democratic posture of the military regime then made Nigeria unpopular in several sectors of the International Community. Nigeria's precarious situation, in almost all the predominantly French-speaking nations, became more visible. It became inevitable to renew diplomatic ties with French-speaking Governments. The then Head of state, General Sani Abacha declared the "need for Nigerians to be literate in French within the shortest time possible " as well as initiated the need to set in motion the machinery to realize this objective. A ministerial task-force was set up to study the implications

of this development and to work out the short and long-term measures for the implementation of a new policy on the French language in Nigeria.

The Ministerial taskforce worked out a three-phased implementation schedule for the realization of the policy as follows:

STAGE	DURATION	REGULATIONS
First	Sept. 1998 to Oct. 2000	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. French to be made compulsory from primary 4 to 6 2. French to be taken at common entrance examinations 3. A pass in French to be a criterion for acquiring the JSS certificate
Second	Sept. 2000 to Oct. 2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. French to be made a compulsory subject from JSS 1 to JSS 3 2. A pass in French to be a criterion for promotion from JSS 3 to SS1 3. A credit in French to be a criterion for recruitment/ admission into the University
Third	Sept. 2004 to Oct. 2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A basic knowledge of French required for recruitment into jobs 2. A basic knowledge of French required for promotion of civil servants

Source: IORTIE (Personal communication 1998 quoted in Okwudishu (2000))

Based on the recommendations of this task-force, in its report in May 1998, the Nigerian Government promised to set the necessary machinery in motion to realize the new policy on the French language. This stance of the Federal Government was still carried on by General Sani Abacha's successor, General Abdulsalam Abubakar. So, French was signed into law in 1998 as the 2nd official language in Nigeria and the policy was enacted in the National Policy on Education in 1998, (NPE, 1998, P.9)

The bilateral agreements in signing the policy into law, between the Nigerian Federal and State Governments and the French Governments have certain obligations and expectations for the governments concerned. The French government, for example, was expected to supply the necessary equipment, literate technical advice, instructional materials, foreign experts, teachers, bursaries and scholarships. The Nigerian governments (Federal and state) were expected to provide the infrastructure, support staff and local teachers of French, (UBE Implementation Blueprint 2000).

With this political backing, one would expect that the Federal Government would exercise a strong political will that would ginger great enthusiasm and love for the French language among Nigerians. The Nigerian school children who learn French can hardly speak it. The enthusiasm, the motivation and the interest are not there. The society is not attuned to encouraging the learning of the French language. Even in the school system, many teachers do not seem aware of

the current status of French. The multilingual environment does not encourage the need for French as a second official language and thereby constitutes an inconducive environment for the growth of the language and the implementation of the policy. This situation has negatively affected Nigerians in social, economic political, diplomatic, educational and cultural dimensions.

It is the responsibility of the Nigerian Government to enforce the policy and the teachers' role as implementers of the curriculum by helping Nigerians to develop communicative competence in the French language. Teachers now have the responsibility of making French to assume its proper status as a second official language; a necessity for people to learn in order to communicate. This also specifies the need for an integrative curriculum and its adaptation to the realization of this objective.

According to Nigeria's language policy, adopting French as the country's second official language and a compulsory subject from Basic 4-9 (Primary 4 to JSS3) and an optional subject in the Upper Basic as well as a general subject in some higher institutions of learning, is to make the learners acquire communicative competence so as to be able to communicate with Nigeria's Francophone neighbours and other French speakers through the knowledge of this language of business, diplomacy, science and technology (NPE, 1998, 2002). This is in view of the role of the French language for sub-regional unity and development (Quedraogo, 2000). In addition, Nigerian Government has the responsibility to train and re-train teachers of French and to equip the schools in order to facilitate an effective instructional strategy.

Nigerian Language Policy Provisions for Implementation

According to the National Policy on Education, Government appreciates the importance of French language as a means of promoting social interaction, national cohesion and preserving cultures. Hence, for the smooth interaction with our neighbours, it is desirable for every average Nigerian to speak French, French shall be the 2nd official language in Nigeria and it shall be compulsory in schools'' (NPE).

The content of the policy has been broken up into three stages for the purpose of facilitating its implementation.

The strategies for the realization of the stages of the policy include:

- i. Designating pilot schools (both primary and secondary) in certain states e.g. the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Kebbi, Jigawa, Oyo, Lagos, Imo and Abia. These schools are to serve as model demonstration schools in the study of French at primary and secondary levels.
- ii. Designating some colleges of education and some universities as special centres equipped for mass training of teachers of French.
- iii. Conducting a recruitment tour of the country to identify and employ qualified teachers of French

- iv. Attachment of sections of national institutions to the Centre for French Teaching and Documentation (CFTD) in Jos and the French Language Village in Badagry charged with the responsibility of pre and in-service formation of teachers in French.
- v. Recruitment of French Teachers from the West African countries and posting them to the pilot schools
- vi. Establishment of French language Centre in Abuja and an Inspector of French appointed with the responsibility of coordinating and evaluating French language activities in the three pilot schools in the Federal Capital Territory.

From the foregoing, one can see that a good measure of effort has been made by the Federal Government towards making French assume its new role as the second official language in Nigeria. However, the proper implementation of the policy has been the bone of contention.

Objectives of the Study of the French Language in Nigeria

The French language was introduced into Nigeria:

- i. to promote national and international business;
- ii. to foster national and International development; and
- iii. to preserve the local languages and cultures.

Learning French in the Nigerian context is for communication and understanding with our neighbours across cultural and linguistic diversities. This is because there is much to lose when one goes beyond one's country of origin and cannot understand one's neighbours. Hence, the statement in the Nigerian bilingual language policy: "for a good relationship with our neighbours, it is desirable for all Nigerians to speak French. French shall be the second official language and it shall be compulsory in schools." (NPE, 1998).

The dual goal of the Nigerian French language policy is to enhance the learner's communicative effectiveness and efficiency by making his communicative competence wholesome and meaningful in order to promote intercultural/ inter-linguistic unity and consciousness, sub-regional cooperation and understanding between Anglophone and Francophone countries. Such cooperation would be facilitated if the learner understands the common cultural values shared by the diverse people of Africa in general and West Africa in particular. Broadening people's cultural horizon and bringing people together is the benchmark for language co-existence, language diversity and multilingualism.

The objectives of French language studies in Nigeria have steadily evolved over the years. Generally, the goals of foreign language learning are closely linked to the motivation for learning the language (Okwudishu, 2002). Broughton, *et al* (1988) identified two types of motivation for foreign language learning as instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation is when a language is learned for operational purposes, such as:

- 1. reading books in the new language;

2. communicating with other speakers of that language;
3. furthering a career and getting a job; and
4. translating from one language to another.

People who learn a language for these reasons are mainly the tourists, the salesmen, the scientists and the students.

Integrative motivation, on the other hand, implies learning a language for reasons such as:

1. identifying much more closely with a speech community which uses that language;
2. feeling at home in it; and
3. understanding the attitudes and the worldviews of the community.

People who learn for integrative reasons are mainly immigrants and second language speakers of the language.

For decades, French has been taught as a foreign language in Nigeria. Hence, it is learnt for instrumental reasons. But in line with the new policy, French is to be taught as a second Official language and Nigerians are expected to adjust their motivation to include both instrumental and integrative. The teaching and learning of French language will yield a lot of benefits for both individuals who may wish to learn French and for the nation in general. However, there is the need for the new policy to reflect the integrative purpose of language learning which has now characterized the language needs of the beneficiaries of the French language education.

The rationale for the French Language Policy:

The challenges in the world today call for the capacity to communicate in more than one language. Being able to communicate in at least two of the major international languages has strategic advantage and relevance in such areas as commerce and industry, economy, culture, politics, science and technology, telecommunications, diplomacy and management. The French language is one of the commonly accepted international languages for international communication, regional, inter-regional and inter-cultural integration. In addition, the monolingualism of English as the only official and international language in Nigeria is detrimental to our democratic process (Opara, 2001). Nigeria needs a second/foreign language to be able to acquire exteriorization principles and values that are required for effective sub-regional integration. Besides, the current trend towards international co-operation, peaceful co-existence and technology transfer, necessitates that a person is able to communicate in a language that is understood by his/her neighbour. Given the geographical location of Nigeria, surrounded by French-speaking countries, the ability of Nigerians to communicate effectively in French will promote and strengthen the socio-economic and political interaction with our neighbours and indeed other French-speaking countries in general. This will usher in processes that will initiate wealth creation and improved standard of living leading to human capital and sustainable development. This has implications for curriculum development and reform, hence,

the inclusion of French as a core subject from the middle basic level consequent upon the need for integration in the West African sub-region.

French Language Policy Provisions for Implementation

Since the promulgation of the French language policy in Nigeria, a number of instruments, laws, initiatives and projects have been adopted and launched by the Federal and State governments.

These include:

1. Enshrining the policy in the National Policy on Education (NPE 1998, 2000, 2004, 2008) and making it form part of the curriculum, thereby positioning it for individual and national survival.

With this provision, the French language is no longer in danger of becoming extinct in Nigeria. A language which is not part of the school curriculum is in danger of becoming extinct. On the other hand, once a language assumes a position in the curriculum, a whole rescue operation is set in motion for its survival and revival (Poth 2000)

2. The development of a schedule for implementation of the policy.

The schedule is broken into stages as earlier stated in the table.

Stage 1 (September 1998 to October 2000)

For this stage, French is to be made compulsory from primary 4 to 6. It must be taken at common entrance examinations before entry into JSS1. The rationale for this early start of French language study in the Primary school is based on the psychological and philosophical bases of language study (Tracey, 2000). This regulation considers the psycho-linguistic basis for early language learning.

Stage 2 (September 2001 to October 2001)

At this stage, French is to be made a compulsory core subject from JSS1 to JSS3. A pass in French is to be a criterion for promotion from JSS3 to SS1. A credit pass in French is to be a requirement for admission into a university as is the case with English.

This stage is rooted in the conviction that French should be part of the basic education process of the average school child as the UBE aims at universalizing access to basic education.

Stage 3 (From September 2004 to October 2008)

For this stage, a basic knowledge of French will be required for recruitment of personnel into the professions as well as for promotion in the civil service. This regulation is based on the principle of education for manipulative skills needed for laying the foundation for lifelong learning.

The strategies for the realization of the first stage of the policy include:

- a. Designating pilot schools (both primary and secondary) in certain states e.g. the Federal capital territory (FCT), Kebbi, Jigawa, Oyo, Lagos, Imo and Abia. These schools are to serve as model demonstration schools in the study of French at primary and secondary levels.

- b. Designating some colleges of education and some universities as special centres equipped for mass training of teachers of French.
- c. Conducting a recruitment tour of the country to identify and employ qualified teachers of French.
- d. Acquisition of national institutions for the centre for French, teaching and documentation (CFTD) in JSS and the Nigeria French Village in Badagry charged with the responsibility of pre- and in-service formation of teachers in French.
- e. Recruitment of French teachers from the West African countries and posting them to the pilot schools.
- f. Establishment of French language centre in Abuja and an Inspector of French appointed with the responsibility of coordinating and evaluating French activities in the three pilot schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

From the foregoing, one can see that a good measure of effort has been made towards making French assume its new role as the second official language in Nigeria.

3. The establishment of bilateral agreements in signing the policy into law between Nigerian governments (federal & state) which brought about the establishment of the pilot school system thereby making provision for French language centres such as multilingual resource centres in Lagos & Abuja.
4. The establishment of the Nigeria French Language Village in Badagry (NFLV) and the Center for French Teaching and Documentation (CFTD) in Jos. Though the Nigerian French Language Village (NFLV) was established nine years before the inception of the French language policy, it was established to facilitate the actualization of the decisions of the Yaoundé (1961) and Addis Ababa (1963) conferences on sub-regional unity and cooperation between Anglophone and Francophone countries. The French Language Village (NFLV) has been serving as a framework for the implementations of the French language policy in Nigeria. The Nigeria French Language Village (NFLV) is for the training of students of French.
5. Human resource capacity building in France and French-speaking countries such as:
 - i. Centre de Linguistique Appliquée de Besançon (CLA), France ;
 - ii. Centre Béninois des Langues Etrangères (CEBELAE). Cotonou; and
 - iii. Centre for French Language Teaching and Documentation (CFTD), Jos.
 These centres are for the training of teachers of French.

With the foregoing, one can assume that the stage is well set to accomplish the policy. However, this is an assumption which is a far cry from the expected. The government has invested a lot of efforts and resources in the study of the languages both first and second. These efforts have so far been characterized by *ad hoc* decisions and improvisations which hardly translate to reality (Banjo, 1980a). Implementation, therefore, remains a problem. The English/ Mother Tongue

Bilingual Policy, for example, has never been effectively realized and the general attitude is that of dissatisfaction with the level of proficiency in these languages among Nigerians. This phenomenon, thus, generates scepticism and lack of faith in policies of this nature.

Challenges Facing the Implementation of French Language Policy

The paper is based on the results of some of our researches on the French language and French language policy in Nigeria namely:

1. "The Universal Basic Education (U.B.E) and the new French language policy: implications for classroom instruction". The basic interest question in this research was whether the French language can stand the competition with English, which has a long established privileged status, in its efforts to attain official status. Hence, the question: to what extent are the two variables of goal and process compatible with the realization of the policy?

The objective was to ascertain the level of preparedness of the Nigerian school system to implement the policy. The study also attempted to seek ways of improving the poor conditions on the ground regarding the implementation process of the policy. This was with a view to use French to achieve the ideals of the Pan African bilingual objective of French and English serving as a second official and compulsory languages in Anglophone and Francophone countries in Africa and West Africa.

Taking the form of an out-door in-service workshop for teachers of French in Secondary schools in Lagos, Nigeria and using an illuminative/syndicate/conference interactive and participatory approach, the teachers were led through discussion, question and answer session in a relaxed and non-threatening atmosphere to brainstorm and analyze the interaction of the relevant parameters in the linguistic terrain in which the policy was operating to determine how the policy was working out and to fashion out some solutions if the policy was not been realized.

The end results were the production of an action plan, which expanded into a development plan, for schools with ways of coping with the issues of implementation.

Using a similar procedure, the researches on "The Appraisal of the French Language Pilot Schools Scheme Program in Lagos, Nigeria: "Implications for Effective Communicative Competence "and "Implementing the New Nigerian Bilingual Policy of French as a Second Official Language: Some Issues and Challenges of Multilingualism", among others were conducted.

The end results were the highlighting of some challenges hindering the proper implementation of the policy and the identification of some possible strategies to move the situation forward. Some of these are presented below.

Linguistic Ambiguity

There is the problem of ambiguity arising from the enhanced position of French as a second official language in the light of the long-standing position of English as the first official language and the presence of other indigenous languages justifying their positions on the school curriculum. As a second official language, French would be expected to enjoy a comparable status with English. Coping with the complex challenges of being exposed to several languages at the same time, despite the inherent values of multilingualism, is a big drawback on the implementation of the policy.

The question arises, therefore, whether French would retain the comparable status with English as the official languages in Nigeria. This reinforces the ambiguity of the real position of French in the policy

Lack of Language Integration and Linguistic Complementarity

There is the bilingual policy of French and English as second and official languages in Nigeria instigates tension and competition, especially as the policy has not assigned roles and functions to them. The situation becomes more challenging when we consider the more complex phenomenon of multilingualism within which the French/English bilingualism operates.

This situation creates a challenge of language integration. Nigeria needs to define and implement its national language policy. The challenge is even more problematic for French than for English in view of the long-existing presence of English on the School curriculum. There is no doubt, therefore, that while trying to justify its new status, French must have challenges which could tend towards competition with English and other languages. This certainly will be detrimental to the effective implementation of the language policy. A vacuum is, therefore, created which could pose critical issues of harmony and integration. Lack of adequate attention to these issues have obviously questioned the rationale for the policy and has seriously interfered with its implementation

Lack of complementarities between French and other languages creates a barrier to the integration of French within the multilingual and multi-cultural environments in the country. In a country of linguistic disharmony such as Nigeria, linguistic problems of diverse forms and levels obviously arise and can cause problems of lack of integration as each tries to dominate the others. When languages come in contact, they behave with infinite sensitivity to many parameters. There may exist tension and competition among them. This is a big challenge. The issue, according to Akoha (1999) and Opara (2000) should not be that of competition but rather of complementarities. Complementarities can be justified in the bilingual policy and in other similar scenarios such as the concept of globalization, the evolution of a common language for the European Union and the development in information technology.

It is the only complementarity that can expel tension and conflict between languages, as no language can easily give way to another, whether indigenous or foreign. Complementarity should, however, not be taken to mean the equal status of languages within particular linguistic entities. Rather, it should be understood that where languages come together, each should realize its roles and functions. This is where the political will of the government comes in. A government that has fashioned out a laudable language policy such as Nigeria, in its English/ Mother tongue/ French language policies, should have the political will to assign roles and functions to them. Otherwise, there is bound to be linguistic disharmony.

Language Interference

Language interference cannot be overemphasized in language education, especially, in a multilingual society like Nigeria. It exists between languages learnt concurrently and or successively. It is caused by the inhibition resulting from the establishment of some sound systems and elements of the mother tongue and a second language in the learner's sound production organs. The interference can be proactive or retroactive.

There is, therefore, the need to step down this interference phenomenon in order to actualize the implementation of the policy as it poses a serious challenge to the French language to be properly integrated with other languages that had earlier been established in the country before French. Over 350 local languages co-exist along with English and French. Research has shown that one major way to curb interference phenomenon and enhance the position of French in Nigeria is by adopting improved teaching methods based on a detailed comparison between French and other languages in the school. Incidentally, such bilingual/ multilingual comparisons have not been easy due to the diversity of languages in Nigeria. This debars teachers from devising effective methods of teaching the learner.

Other challenges include:

- i. the large class syndrome which does not give room for effective teaching of the language;
- ii. inadequate infrastructure and the insufficient number of classrooms for a large number of students in the Basic Education classes *vis-à-vis* the number of teachers available. This prevents the effective practice of the linguistic skills by the students.
- iii. lack of adequate instructional materials to inculcate the communicative competence in the learners and the unavailability of audiovisual materials needed to bring the realities of the French language into the learning experiences of the students. This situation becomes a challenge for the teachers who need to do a contrastive analysis of the students' mother tongues and that of the French language in order to devise effective methods of teaching the learners;

- iv. lack of well-trained teachers in the French language which does not allow for the use of innovative methods for the effective teaching of the language and culture of the French people;
- v. inadequate funding to promote linguistic excursions and language immersion programmes;
- vi. lack of political will by government to assign roles and functions to the French language and other languages on the curriculum;
- vii. lack of motivation of the teachers and the students which negatively affects their performances; and
- viii. lack of understanding of the curriculum by the teachers which also poses a problem to the effective teaching of the French language.

The Way Forward

In the light of the above challenges, the following recommendations are proffered.

- To harvest the huge benefits of French as second official language, Nigeria should adopt French language study as a compulsory subject, not only from basics 4-9 but also as a general studies course at the tertiary levels. This may take a while, but the effort would be quite rewarding. This will give the students leverage and make them more competitive in the international labour market.
- To be able to use the French language as a second official language, Nigerian students/youth should acquire the relevant communicative competence to be able to interact with Nigeria's neighbours and others from French-speaking countries. The results of research studies have shown that Nigerians are deficient in this. To overcome this deficiency in Nigerian youths, it is recommended that the acquisition of the French language and possession of a proficiency certificate in communicative French be made a *sine-qua-non* for employment into the Federal Civil Service, especially, those Federal Government agencies that have to deal directly with foreign relations like the Immigration, the Police, the Customs and the Aviation Services.
- As a second official language and compulsory subject in Nigerian schools, its presence on the school timetable must be substantial. A situation where the time allotted for the teaching of French in schools is only once or twice a week is absurd. Therefore, enough time should be allotted to French language teaching in the school timetable to enhance thorough, in-depth and effective teaching and learning that would ensure adequate facilitation of the required communicative competence.
- As a living and a dynamic language which should be communicative in nature, the instructional procedures should adopt experiential techniques that are proactive in nature. Results have shown that teachers in this 21st century are yet to come to terms with this globally accepted the best practice. The instructional and assessment procedures should be informal and flexible to motivate and encourage both teachers and learners.

- As language immersion has shown from research studies to instil linguistic, cultural and civilizational competence, schools should endeavour to send their students for language immersion experience in Francophone milieus at least once in a year. Language immersion experience is an obvious platform for acquiring effective communicative competence.
- The French language should be made compulsory in the training of security operatives to forestall aggression from French-speaking countries. If Nigerian soldiers can speak French language and there are detectives who can also speak French, they will be able to alert the authorities when there are threats of invasion against the country.
- The Federal Government should reactivate its diplomatic relations with the French Government to reintroduce bursaries for teachers and learners of French in French-speaking countries to enhance their communication skills. This will attract more patronage for the French language. This is because research studies have shown a serious lack of incentives for teachers and students of the French language in schools.
- As the French language has become a second official language and compulsory subject in the school system, there should be an integrative curriculum to reflect the new objective and status of the language. Therefore, there should be a periodic review of the curriculum in use in schools to ensure compliance with the integrative curriculum that will correspond with the motivational purpose and language skills of our present day Nigerian youths. Such regular review would enhance the implementation of the language policy of French as a second official language in Nigeria and compulsory subject in schools.
- Assigning functions to each language of compulsory status on the curriculum is desirable. A country can have as many second and compulsory languages as it deems fit but each must be assigned its proper role and function in order to avoid conflict on the linguistic platform.

Conclusion:

This paper has attempted to throw a searchlight on the French language policy in Nigeria. It recounted the evolution of French in the Nigerian linguistic environment, highlighted its objectives and justified the rationale for the policy.

Some efforts and provisions put in place by the Nigerian governments to actualize the policy were highlighted. Some issues hindering the proper implementation of the policy, which include; lack of political will, unconducive linguistic environment, improper establishments and the mother tongue among others. Some recommendations to help in establishing complementarities in an inter-linguistic relationship of French, English and the mother tongue of the students and contrastive studies between French and their indigenous languages were proposed. The point was stressed that in order for the French language to take root and the policy to be well established in Nigeria, the study of French must take into account the implantation of the structures of the

students' first language, their socio-cultural environment and the realities of their daily lives.

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