

NIGERIAN PIDGIN: THE IDENTITY OF A NIGERIAN AWAY FROM HOME

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Abstract

In a rapidly globalizing world, language plays a vital role in shaping identity, especially within diasporic communities. This study explores how Nigerian-Canadian speakers engage with Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and how their linguistic behaviors reflect broader socio-cultural and educational trends. Despite being Nigeria's most widely spoken language, NP has historically been marginalized and perceived as a 'broken' form of English (Agheyisi, 1971; Akande & Salami, 2010). While previous research has examined NP's role in education (Akande, 2010) and its potential as a national language (Mann, 2009), its function in shaping diasporic identity remains underexplored. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study analyzes multilingual practices among 30 Nigerian-Canadians in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) across three age groups (younger: 18–29; middle-aged: 30–49; older: 50+). Findings reveal generational and educational differences in attitudes toward NP. Younger speakers prioritize English for socioeconomic mobility and integration into Canadian society, while middle-aged and older speakers use NP more frequently as a cultural marker. Contrary to expectations based on covert prestige (Trudgill, 1972), female speakers expressed more positive attitudes toward NP than men. Matched-guise results indicate that a female speaker was rated more favorably in English, whereas the male guise received higher ratings in NP, reflecting gendered linguistic perceptions (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Education also influenced attitudes, with postgraduates showing stronger support for NP as an identity marker compared to undergraduates. Additionally, longer residence in Canada correlated with a preference for English over NP, suggesting a linguistic shift over time (Fishman, 1991). These findings highlight NP's complex role in identity construction, solidarity, and integration among Nigerian-Canadians in the GTA. While NP fosters transnational ties, its perception remains context-dependent, shaped by

stereotypes and sociolinguistic hierarchies, and this reflects hierarchies about pidgins and creoles more generally (DeGraff 2003, 2005). Overall, this study contributes to broader discussions on language, migration, and diasporic identity, emphasizing the evolving status of NP within and beyond Nigeria. Future research should further examine NP's role in pan-West African identity and intergenerational language transmission in diasporic contexts.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A: "Omo, you don land?"

B: "I don show, my guy! Canada cold no be small!"

(A: Hey, have you arrived?)

B: Yes, I just got here! Canada is really cold!)

(common exchanges in NP among Nigerians in Canada)

1.1. Background and Rationale

In an increasingly globalized world, the dynamics of language use and identity dynamics are continually evolving. For Nigerian-Canadian communities, this evolution is particularly pronounced as individuals navigate the intersections of their Nigerian heritage and Canadian identity. The linguistic landscape of these communities is marked by a rich tapestry of languages, including English, Nigerian Pidgin (NP), and various indigenous Nigerian languages. This dissertation examines how Nigerian-Canadian speakers engage with these languages and how their linguistic behaviors reflect broader socio-cultural and educational trends.

Nigerian Pidgin (NP) represents a unique linguistic phenomenon, serving as a lingua franca across diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria (Samarin, 1987). NP is the most widely spoken language in Nigeria. Despite its widespread use, NP has often been marginalized in formal and educational settings, perceived by some as a 'broken' or inferior form of English (Agheyisi, 1971, Igboanusi 2008, Akande & Salami, 2010). This perception contrasts with its role as a vital tool

for cultural expression and social cohesion within Nigerian communities. Previous research investigating attitudes towards the use of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a language of education (Akande, 2010) or as a national language (Mann, 2009) has primarily reported negative evaluations, with positive assessments being rare. Studies have focused on the attitudes of educated Nigerians within Nigeria (Igboanusi, 2008; Mann, 2009; Akande & Salami, 2010), noting that these individuals, who possess a command of both English (learned in school) and their native languages such as Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo, are in a better position to influence and participate in policy-making due to their multilingual repertoire.

However, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding the attitudes of Nigerians in the diaspora, particularly concerning how NP is tied to Nigerian identity and "Nigerianness" outside of Nigeria. Previous studies have also addressed language policy and standardization issues, including proposals for NP to be developed and used as a national language (Awonusi, 1990; Deuber, 2005; Egbokhare, 2003; Elugbe, 1995; Elugbe & Omamor, 1991; Faraclas, 1996; Gani-Ikilama, 1990; Mann, 1998, 2000; Ndolo, 1989; Oladejo, 1991; Wolf & Igboanusi, 2006). Despite these discussions, the relationship between NP and "Nigerianness" and its role in shaping Nigerian identity has not been directly addressed in the literature.

This current study aims to fill this gap by focusing on the identity of Nigerians in Canada, particularly in Ontario, as it relates to their use of and interactions with other Nigerians in NP. Ontario, a province located in east-central Canada, provides a significant context for this exploration. This study is crucial because it seeks to understand how Nigerian identity is maintained and expressed through NP in the diaspora, specifically in Canada. By examining Nigerians' attitudes towards NP in Canada, this research contributes to our understanding of the

role of NP in constructing and negotiating Nigerian identity outside Nigeria. Figure 1 provides a detailed map of Canada, illustrating the geographical context of this study. This research represents a critical step towards understanding the sociolinguistic dynamics of Nigerian identity in the diaspora and the significance of NP in this process. As a Nigerian who speaks NP and resides in Toronto, I am part of the speech community being studied, which allows me to directly engage with the target group for my research. Understanding the attitudes of Nigerian-Canadian speakers towards NP and its role in their lives provides valuable insights into the complexities of language identity and adaptation in a diasporic context. As of 2016, there were over 51,000 Nigerians residing in Canada, with more than half of this population living in Ontario (2016 Census). According to the 2021 Census, over 40,000 Nigerians immigrated to Canada between 2016 and 2021, making Nigeria rank fifth in the number of immigrants to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022). For this study, I recruited Nigerians living in Ontario, specifically in the Greater Toronto Area. Using a qualitative method involving individual interviews, this study aims to explore how language is used among Nigerians in the diaspora and to examine the use, usefulness, and impact of NP as a unifying language among Nigerians abroad. This research may also illuminate the importance of empowering NP in Nigeria. By investigating the significance of NP in the diaspora, this study could contribute to fostering positive attitudes towards NP within Nigeria.



Figure 1: Location of province Ontario in Canada (TUBS, 2011)

1.2. Research Problems and Questions

This study aims to investigate the linguistic behaviours and attitudes of Nigerians in the GTA, focusing on their use of Nigerian Pidgin and other languages. The central research problem addresses how these speakers balance their Nigerian linguistic heritage with their Canadian environment and how their perceptions of NP influence their language choices and preferences.

The key research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do Nigerian-Canadian speakers use Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in their daily lives, and what are their attitudes towards its use?

2. What are the linguistic behaviors and language preferences of younger and older, and male and female Nigerian-Canadian speakers, and how do these reflect their cultural identity? Are there differences in behaviour according to age and gender?
3. How do Nigerian-Canadian speakers perceive the role of NP in educational contexts, and what are their views on the development of NP textual materials?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are:

1. To analyze the linguistic behaviors of Nigerian-Canadian speakers, including their use of NP and other languages.
2. To explore the attitudes of Nigerian-Canadian speakers towards NP, focusing on its role in cultural identity and its impact on educational outcomes.
3. To compare the perspectives of younger and older Nigerian-Canadian speakers regarding NP and its status in their communities.
4. To assess the implications of these attitudes and behaviours for language education and cultural preservation in the Nigerian-Canadian context.

The findings of the study show that both younger, middle-aged, and older Nigerian-Canadian speakers exhibit high levels of multilingualism, utilizing English, NP, and indigenous Nigerian languages. This multilingualism reflects a strong connection to Nigerian heritage while also adapting to the Canadian context. Younger speakers prioritize standard English and often display ambivalence towards NP. In contrast, middle-aged and older speakers use NP more

frequently as a cultural marker, albeit with varying degrees of support for its development and formalization. The study highlights persistent stereotypes surrounding NP, often referred to as "broken English," "bastardized English," or "watered-down English." These attitudes align with broader sociolinguistic trends where creoles and pidgins are perceived as inferior to their lexifier languages (DeGraff, 2003). Participants expressed concerns about NP's potential impact on educational standards and formal English proficiency, reflecting stigmas common in discussions about creoles and pidgins globally. At the same time, some participants recognized NP's role in bridging linguistic gaps and aiding individuals with limited command of Standard English, supporting DeGraff's (2005) assertion about the educational and socioeconomic barriers faced by creole-speaking communities. Older participants often acknowledged NP's cultural significance, using it to maintain ties across diverse Nigerian ethnicities while also expressing concerns about its impact on formal education.

This study offers valuable insights into how language shapes identity, cultural ties, and adaptation in diasporic contexts, using the Nigerian-Canadian community as a case study. By examining linguistic behaviors and attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and other languages, it bridges gaps in sociolinguistics and language-identity research, particularly in underexplored creole and diaspora settings. It demonstrates the nuanced use of NP and indigenous languages as markers of identity and tools for cultural cohesion, emphasizing individual rather than collective choices in language identity. The study also highlights the role of multilingualism in maintaining cultural heritage while navigating new sociolinguistic environments. It addresses concerns about the role of NP in education, offering a foundation for balanced approaches that promote linguistic diversity without undermining academic success. Finally, it highlights the potential of NP to foster a pan-West African identity, with implications for intercultural communication and

community cohesion. It enriches our understanding of the interplay between language, identity, and education, providing a model for exploring linguistic behaviors in multicultural and diasporic settings. It underscores the importance of recognizing the legitimacy and cultural value of creoles and pidgins within the broader sociolinguistic landscape.

1.4. Structure of the Dissertation

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents the literature review. This chapter reviews relevant literature on language attitudes towards creoles, language and identity, Nigerian Pidgin, and multilingualism in diasporic contexts.

In Chapter 3, I present the pilot study methodology. This chapter presents an overview and analysis of the pilot study conducted as a precursor to the current dissertation study.

In Chapter 4, I present the dissertation's methodology. This chapter outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analytical procedures used in the study. It also highlights the research constraints of the study.

In Chapter 5, I present the core findings of this study, including sociodemographic data, language preferences and proficiency levels, and an in-depth discussion of the matched-guise experiment. This chapter also explores the linguistic behaviors and attitudes of Nigerian-Canadian speakers, interpreting the findings in light of the existing literature while addressing the research questions and hypotheses.

Chapter 6 focuses on the qualitative data, presenting insights and themes derived from the participant interviews.

In Chapter 7, I present a quantitative analyses interview responses provide and other potential factors that may have influenced the results.

In Chapter 8, I provide an overall conclusion, summarizing the key findings, discussing their broader implications. This chapter also offers recommendations for future research in the field.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Context

For a better understanding of the basis of this study, it is pertinent to explore the demography of Nigeria (2.2) and its linguistic situation (Section 2.3). Following the demography of Nigeria, I provide background on Nigerian Pidgin, abbreviated as NP (2.4). In sections (2.5) and (2.6), I provide an overview of studies on language ideology and language attitudes, followed by a section on the history of attitudes towards pidgins and creoles (2.7), to gain context on attitudes in related languages and attitudes towards NP in particular (2.8). Finally, section (2.9) provides an overview of language use and identity formation in the diaspora.

2.2. The Demography of Nigeria

Nigeria is bordered by Niger to the north, Cameroon and Chad to the east, the Gulf of Guinea to the south, and Benin to the west. As of 2021, the country's population was estimated at over 213 million (World Bank, 2021). Nigeria is a highly multilingual nation, home to over 250 ethnic groups and more than 500 languages¹, showcasing its rich cultural diversity (Reed & Mberu, 2014; Blench, 2012). This linguistic and cultural diversity makes Nigeria a prime example of a multilingual, pluralistic, and heterogeneous African state with a history of British colonization. Within this diversity, language functions as a core element of individual and collective identity (Ogunmodimu, 2015, p. 154).

Moreover, Nigeria's vast geography further underscores its linguistic diversity, as different regions have dominant languages. For example, approximately 29% of the population resides in Hausa-speaking regions in the north, 21% live in Yoruba-speaking areas in the west,

¹ While I do not conflate language with ethnicity in the Nigerian context, it is important to note that language is frequently perceived as emblematic of ethnic identity. However, this relationship is not absolute, and exceptions do exist.

and 18% inhabit Igbo-speaking areas in the southeast (Danladi, 2013, p. 5). In addition to these major groups, other significant ethnic communities include the Efik, Ibibio, Anaang, Ijò, Urhobo-Isoko, Edo, Itsekiri, Kanuri, Chibok, Bali, and Nupe, among others.



Figure 2: Map of Nigeria in Africa. (TUBS, 2011).

Nigeria is administratively divided into 36 states, each further subdivided into local government areas. Figure 3 below illustrates the locations of these states, along with the Federal Capital Territory—Abuja (WorldAtlas. (n.d.)). Reflecting its linguistic complexity, each state has five or more languages spoken. However, accurately determining the exact number of languages spoken in Nigeria remains a challenge due to its extreme linguistic diversity (Omachonu, 2015). As a result, English and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) have become essential as languages of wider communication, facilitating interaction among people from different ethnic

backgrounds (Omachonu, 2015). English, introduced during British colonial rule, now serves as Nigeria's official language.



Figure 3: Map of Nigeria (WorldAtlas. (n.d.))

The historical roots of English in Nigeria predate formal colonization. In the late sixteenth century, British missionaries and traders arrived in coastal regions such as Lagos and Calabar (Omamor, 1991; Elugbe, 1995; Egbokhare, 2001; Esizimotor, 2002b; Adegbiya, 2003). These traders were involved in the transatlantic slave trade, purchasing enslaved people from various Nigerian ethnic groups, particularly from the coastal and southeastern regions, including the Igbo, Yoruba, and Efik, while missionaries sought to spread Christianity (United States

Library of Congress, 1991). Following the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, some formerly enslaved Nigerians returned home, bringing English as an acquired language. These returnees often served as interpreters and scribes for missionaries, further contributing to the spread of English (Ogunmodimu, 2015). For instance, Ajayi Crowther, a notable figure of this era, translated the Bible into Yoruba, symbolizing the early role of English in proselytization and administration. This development aligned with British colonial interests, as English was used to establish economic and missionary influence across West Africa (Huber, 1999; Connell & Akinbiyi, 2019). Although formal colonization began in 1884, the use of English in Nigeria had already become entrenched through these early missionary and commercial activities (Ogunmodimu, 2015, p. 155). Subsequently, under British colonial rule, English became the language of administration and education, playing a central role in governance. Over time, it evolved into Nigeria's official language, remaining indispensable in education, media, religion (especially Pentecostal Christianity), politics, governance, and law (Lawal, 2004; Ogunmodimu, 2015, p. 156).

In contrast, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) functions as an informal, colloquial language with no official status. Widely used in casual conversations among family, friends, and in informal settings both within and outside Nigeria, NP bridges linguistic gaps among diverse ethnic groups. While English serves as the official language for nation-building and daily administration, NP fosters inclusivity and reflects the everyday realities of Nigerians (Adegbija, 1994; Warhol, 2012; Awobuluyi, 2013; Ogunmodimu, 2015).

2.3. Nigerian Pidgin (NP).

Nigerian Pidgin (NP), sometimes referred to by Nigerians as 'Naija', 'broken English' or 'bad English,' was previously estimated to be spoken by more than thirty million Nigerians (Holm, 1989). It is part of a linguistic continuum with West African Pidgin English, which extends from Sierra Leone to Gabon in Central Africa, with the exception of Liberia (Barbag-Stoll, 1983). In a more recent study, Faraclas (2021) estimates the number of NP speakers in Nigeria at approximately 110 million, making it not only the most widely spoken language in Nigeria but also one of the most widely spoken languages globally. This significant increase may reflect the rapid growth of NP. Agheyisi (1988) explains that historically, NP primarily served as a trade language in markets and other informal commercial settings, as well as a medium of interaction with uneducated employees and domestic servants. More recently, NP has evolved to serve as a lingua franca in entertainment, newscasting, and public enlightenment, despite its lack of official status (Agheyisi, 1988, p. 229).

There have also been different accounts of NP's origin in the literature, most of them tracing its origin to intercultural interactions between Europeans and Africans between the 16th century and the 19th century. According to Egbokhare (2001), the first contact by Europeans was made by the Portuguese around 1469. It is assumed that some type of trade jargon developed between the Portuguese and their Nigerian trading partners because the Portuguese could not have communicated with their Nigerian hosts in *Sabir*, the supposedly pervasive language of the trade world (mostly the Mediterranean) in the age of discovery (Elugbe & Omamor, 1991, p. 4). However, since what is spoken today as NP is not Nigerian Pidgin Portuguese, Elugbe and Omamor (1991) suggest that pidginized Portuguese ceased to exist when the Portuguese were forced to terminate their interest in Nigeria. It is important to point out that the presence of the Portuguese traders in Nigeria explains the presence of Portuguese words in NP, although meagre

(Elugbe & Omamor, 1991, p. 4). The Dutch began in about 1593 trading with merchants in the coastal areas but were soon replaced by the English, who dominated trading in that area onward (Igboanusi, 2001, p. 106). On the west coast of Africa, enslaved Africans, food supplies, ivory, and gold were traded (Mufwene, 2001, p. 7). As earlier mentioned, some have traced the origin of NP to the missionaries and freed slaves from Sierra Leone who had been exposed to English from their masters (Igboanusi 2001). With all the theories put forth to explain the origin of NP, Faraclas (1996) comments: "Whether Nigerian Pidgin developed from market-place contacts between European traders and the various ethnic groups along the coast, or from the influence of missionaries from Sierra Leone, is impossible to determine given the present state of our knowledge" (p. 3). This still holds today.

Due to Nigeria's large population and linguistic diversity, Faraclas (2002) posits that Nigeria developed a highly mercantile society with major urban centers centuries before European merchants arrived in the 15th century. Language contact and contact languages existed long before European contact, driven by the high degree of multilingualism and practices of trade, travel, and intermarriage. Consequently, pidginized versions of Nigerian languages may have been widespread in many areas before the arrival of European traders, though there is no solid evidence for this. Following the arrival of Europeans, some European words, particularly English and Portuguese-derived items (such as *sabi* from the Portuguese "saber," meaning 'know'), would have been substituted for Nigerian words to facilitate communication (Faraclas, 2002). A pidgin language arose in West Africa from the contact between Europeans and Africans and their desire to communicate. This pidgin was generally known as West African Pidgin English, with varieties such as Nigerian Pidgin and Ghanaian Pidgin spoken in specific West African countries and named for the countries in which they are spoken (Yakpo, 2016).

The main debate on the origin of pidgins in West Africa centers around two theories: the monogenesis theory and the polygenesis theory. These perspectives offer different views on whether West African pidgins, such as Krio and NP, evolved from a single ancestral language or if various local varieties developed independently. Proponents of the monogenesis theory, which suggests a common ancestral language, argue that there is a strong historical and linguistic connection among different West African pidgin varieties. According to this view, the diverse features present in these pidgins can be attributed to subsequent contact with different African and European languages while maintaining common core elements (Sebba, 1997).

Conversely, the polygenesis theory holds that various local varieties of pidgin in West Africa developed independently of each other. Advocates of this theory argue that different regions in West Africa had distinct contact and trade networks, leading to the evolution of separate and distinct pidgin languages. They highlight the variations and unique characteristics observed in different West African pidgin varieties, suggesting different local origins (Kouwenberg, 2003). The debate over the monogenesis and polygenesis theories focuses on the extent to which West African pidgins share a common linguistic origin or if they independently emerged in different regions. It is also crucial for examining the extent to which Nigerian Pidgin (NP) has been shaped by indigenous Nigerian languages. More research is needed to determine the true origins of West African pidgins, considering historical, social, and linguistic factors specific to each region.

According to Faraclas (2012), Nigerian Pidgin can be considered one link in a chain of English-lexifier pidgins and creoles spoken along the coast of West Africa and in African Diaspora communities throughout the Atlantic Basin. Among these related varieties,

Cameroonian Pidgin is closer in form to Nigerian Pidgin than Sierra Leonian Krio and Jamaican Patwa (Faraclas, 2012). One piece of evidence supporting the monogenesis theory is the similarity between Cameroonian Pidgin and Nigerian Pidgin, compared to other English-based varieties that emerged from contact between English and speakers of West African languages, like Sierra Leonian Krio and Jamaican Patwa. The close resemblance between Cameroonian Pidgin and Nigerian Pidgin suggests a shared linguistic origin or significant historical and linguistic connections between these two varieties (Peter & Wolf, 2007). This similarity can be observed in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and phonetics. For example, both Cameroonian Pidgin and Nigerian Pidgin draw heavily from English, have similar syntax and grammatical structures, and show similar phonetic patterns and pronunciation rules (Peter & Wolf, 2007). These linguistic resemblances between the two pidgin varieties provide evidence of a potential common ancestry or close historical connections. One distinctive feature that may differentiate NP from other English creoles would be its incorporation of loanwords from indigenous Nigerian languages such as Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. Although these pidgins and creoles share a significant number of semantic, grammatical, and phonological features, this study focuses primarily on Nigerian Pidgin as it relates to Nigerian identity in the diaspora. Additionally, the study explores the potential formation of a West African identity through the use of Nigerian Pidgin.

"Following the British colonial period and Nigeria's independence in 1960, the issue of a national language was addressed in the 1977 National Policy on Education. While the framework included aspirational statements aimed at promoting multilingualism (Afolayan & Bamgbose, 1980, p. 220), it is worthy of note that there was no fully implemented 'deliberate plan' for language development at the time. The document emphasized the importance of children

learning one of the three major Nigerian languages—Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa—in addition to their native languages. However, its practical impact on language implementation has been limited. The 1979 constitution of Nigeria, established on October 1st, 1979, during the administration of President Shehu Shagari, outlined the functional status of different languages in the country. English was established as the *lingua franca*, and Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa as the national languages. According to Adegbija (1994), national languages are needed in modern Africa to foster unity and to express national pride and independence. The national languages, Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, are also the languages of the three main recognized ethnic groups in Nigeria and may be used in national functions such as the civil service, law, commerce, education, and other official domains (Ayeomoni, 2012). Other ethnic languages are only officially recognized within their ethnic groups and are used for formal functions in particular states, like Ibibio and Efik, spoken in the south-south part of the country (see the linguistic map of Nigeria in Figure 4).

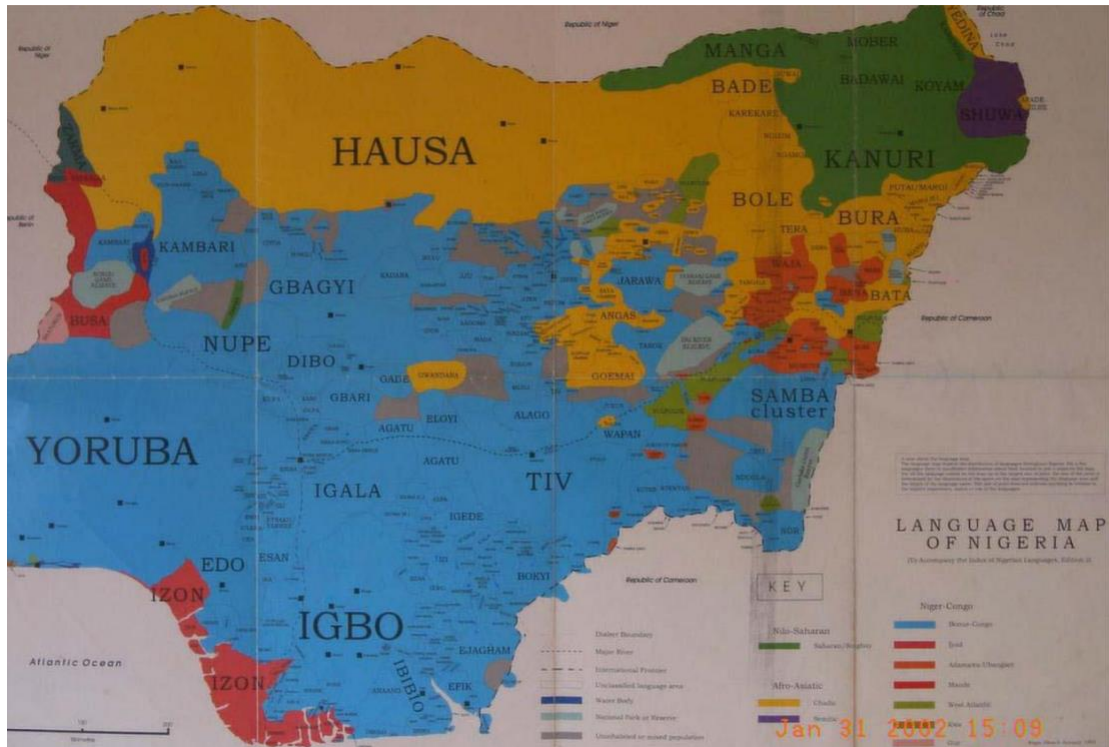


Figure 4: Language Map of Nigeria (Crozier & Blench, 1992)

Unlike Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and English, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) has no official recognition or role in education, no overt prestige, few public advocates, no standardized orthography or grammar, and limited written literature. NP is not mentioned at all in the constitution, and national policy on education, which can be viewed as the language policy of Nigeria (Faraclas, 2012, p. 418). While English functions as the official code and as a medium of instruction in school, NP is used in informal settings for intra- and inter-ethnic communication. It is used as a means of communication between speakers who share different native Nigerian languages and among family and friends. English enjoys high and overt prestige, while NP has low prestige (Akande, 2010).

NP is becoming more important in Nigeria, and it has become the native language and main vernacular for some speakers in some parts of the country (Igboanusi, 2008). NP has also

been described as an English-lexified basilectal creole variety spoken across every ethnic and social boundary in Nigeria (Bickerton, 1975). In a creole continuum, the basilect is the variety furthest from the standard lexifier language (Singler, 1991), in this case, English. Bickerton (1975) suggested that the emergence of such a creole continuum in Nigeria happened as far back as 1960, after its independence, fueled by social mobility, which he believes drives the development of a continuum. He proposed that as people with multilingual backgrounds moved from one part of the country to another, there was an opportunity for the uneducated to learn English. However, Agheyisi (1984) refutes this claim by positing that the relationship between NP and English in Nigeria cannot be described as a continuum in the sense of Caribbean varieties discussed in the literature. This is because “the NP variety, which has been designated as interlanguage PE [Pidgin English], does not constitute a ‘mesolect’ in a possible continuum that might be said to have the Pidgin-proper variety as the ‘basilect’ and Nigerian Standard English as the ‘acrolect’” (Agheyisi, 1984, p. 230). A key distinction lies in the linguistic environment: in Jamaica and other Caribbean creole-speaking societies, African languages are no longer spoken, leaving the continuum confined to English and Patois. In contrast, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) coexists not only with English but also with numerous Indigenous languages.

Older studies such as Todd (1974) also put it that a creole continuum can be found in every part of the world where an English-based creole coexists with English, in addition to Bickerton’s assertion of a continuum in Nigeria. Deuber (2005) addresses this generalization and points out the lack of detailed empirical evidence to support these assumptions. She investigates empirically the possible existence of a continuum in Nigeria by looking at NP spoken by educated Nigerians in Lagos, the southwestern part of Nigeria. Analyzing the use of copula constructions, tense-aspect marking, and verbal negation in NP, she interprets her data as

evidence against the existence of a linguistic continuum. She found NP and English to be two separate varieties with no evidence for intermediate varieties between the two. I therefore assert that NP and its lexifier language, English, are separate varieties and that NP is an English-lexifier creole that is used both as L2 and L1 (APiCS—The Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures, Michaelis et al. 2013). Siegel (1997) also firmly rejects the notion of a continuum in Melanesia. Much like the situation in Nigeria, Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea coexists with English as well as hundreds of Indigenous languages, with a well-defined boundary between Tok Pisin and English.

Over the years, NP has come to dominate urban spaces in Nigeria, particularly in southern Nigeria, and has been accepted on a widespread level to the extent that it is the first language of many Nigerians, especially in Edo State, Warri, Port Harcourt, and Sapele (Elugbe & Omamor, 1991). The widespread use of NP has led some applied linguists to propose its adoption as the national language of Nigeria. One reason for this proposal is to use a Nigerian language as the official language in an attempt to maintain an African identity (Agbali, 2005; Ogunmodimu, 2015). Choosing a single indigenous official language out of 500 possible languages is not an easy choice to make, which may be why Nigeria still maintains English as its official language after independence (Ogunmodimu, 2015). Under such circumstances, NP, as a language that originated within Nigeria, can be seen as indigenous and may be promoted as a national language in the nation. Another advantage of NP is that its lexicon embodies a composite of diverse Nigerian linguistic heritages (Agbali, 2005). NP is undoubtedly the most widely spoken, readily learned, practically useful, and fastest-growing language in Nigeria today (Faraclas, 2012, p. 418).

In summary, as highlighted in Faraclas (2012), NP has been spoken as a mother tongue for several generations by millions in Warri, Sapele, and other Delta towns and is one of the first languages learned by the overwhelming majority of the exploding urban population of southern Nigeria, the majority of the similarly burgeoning urban population elsewhere in the country, a majority of the rural population of the southeast, a minority of the rural population elsewhere and, and used by millions in the diaspora (p. 417). NP is therefore a language that is spoken by Nigerians from all social backgrounds, both the educated and non- educated, young and old, and most importantly, for the interest of this study, Nigerians in the diaspora. Akande (2010) notes that “there is a sense in which NP could be regarded as a marker of identity and solidarity” (p. 38). It is therefore important to consider the role of NP in identity formation for Nigerians outside of Nigeria as such a study has not yet been done in the diaspora.

2.4. Language Ideology

This study considers language attitudes through the lens of *language ideology*. Language ideologies are ideas, whether clearly stated or implied, that shape how we think about the relationship between language and people in our social environment (Woolard 1998, p. 3). Language ideology has been defined as "self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in the social experiences of members as they contribute to the expression of the group" (Heath, 1989, p. 53), and as "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Irvine, 1989, p. 255, as cited in Schieffelin et al., 1998). We often hear someone allege that a language reflects something about its speakers' character, and if a national language, then national character (Gal & Irvine, 2019, p. 3). These positions suggest that a nation is often seen as distinct

from others in terms of both character and linguistic usage. For example, Gal and Irvine discuss how Americans tend to find French accents charming, based on the perception that French people are sophisticated and intelligent. Conversely, they note that many French speakers find American accents in French unattractive, associating them with perceptions of Americans as boorish or uninformed (Gal & Irvine, 2019, p. 3). These are common examples of language ideology.

Winford's chapter in *Black Linguistics* (2003) offers a crucial perspective on the intersection of language ideology, attitudes, and the lived experiences of Black speakers. Winford emphasizes the role of linguistic ideologies in shaping perceptions of creole and vernacular varieties, arguing that these ideologies often stem from colonial histories and racialized hierarchies that delegitimize non-standard forms. This framework is particularly relevant to my study, as it underscores how attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and other non-standard varieties reflect broader sociopolitical dynamics and historical marginalization. Winford's discussion complements my examination of Nigerian-Canadian speakers' linguistic attitudes by highlighting how ideologies surrounding "standard" and "non-standard" varieties are often informed by racial and cultural identities. Additionally, his work aligns with perspectives from other scholars in *Black Linguistics*, such as John Baugh, who explore the stigmatization of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and its implications for speakers' identity and social mobility. Together, these contributions offer valuable insights into the ways linguistic hierarchies perpetuate exclusion while simultaneously serving as tools for cultural resistance and solidarity. In light of Winford's analysis, this study incorporates a nuanced exploration of how Nigerian-Canadian speakers navigate these ideological tensions, particularly as they relate to their language preferences, perceptions of NP, and broader identity constructions. By situating

these findings within the theoretical framework provided by *Black Linguistics*, this dissertation aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of language ideologies in shaping diasporic linguistic identities.

The studies by Silverstein (1985), Woolard (1998), Vigouroux (2017), Pennycook (2017), and Walsh (2016) also collectively explore the intricate relationship between linguistic ideologies, language attitudes, and social structures. Silverstein delves into ideological analysis, investigating how doctrines of linguistic correctness and incorrectness are rationalized and linked to valued cultural qualities. Additionally, he explains the moral indignation over nonstandard forms in relation to ideological associations of the standard with cultural values like clarity or truthfulness. Woolard (1998) extends the discussion by emphasizing the competition among ideologies within societies and historical periods, illustrating how this struggle shapes states' distinctive approaches to language regulation. The case studies of Britain and France exemplify this, with Britain historically adopting a laissez-faire approach tied to the supremacy and global prestige of the English language, while France embraces a more prescriptive linguistic purism. Vigouroux (2017) contributes to the understanding of linguistic stereotypes and racism in France. She scrutinizes the discursive trajectory of non-standard grammatical structures, like "*y'a bon*," revealing how they have become enregistered emblems indexing sub-Saharan Africans as allegedly incompetent in French. Vigouroux argues that uncovering these complexities requires examining historical aspects and sociopolitical orders that sustain long-lasting linguistic representations of the 'African Other.' She contends that the *y'a bon* slogan is deeply embedded in France's linguistic ideology, reflecting colonial and postcolonial power relations.

These studies collectively shed light on the intricate interplay between linguistic ideologies, language attitudes, and sociopolitical structures. They emphasize the historical and

ideological dimensions that contribute to the formation and perpetuation of linguistic stereotypes and attitudes, offering a nuanced understanding of language in the context of power and cultural representation. The ideology concept allows one to relate the microculture of communicative action to political economic considerations of power and social inequality, to confront macrosocial constraints on language behavior, and to connect discourse with lived experiences (Briggs, 1993, p. 207, as cited in Woolard 1998, p. 27). Ideologies of language are not about language alone; rather, they envision and enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology.

About identity, Woolard expresses the view that linguistic borrowing might appear to indicate speakers' high regard for the donor language. However, Hill (1993a, 1995) argues that when we analyze how English borrows from Afro-American sources and humorously distorts Spanish, it unveils these actions as strategies of racist distancing. This approach simplifies the diverse Latino experience into a subordinate and commodified identity. In this situation, using language is viewed as a tactic that sidelines and reduces the richness and diversity of the Latino experience. It treats this experience as a commodity, neglecting its full complexity. In subsequent works, Hill referred to this as "Mock Spanish" (Hill, 1998; 2008). Another case of negative appropriation of identity through language in the diaspora is the appropriation of creole speech, music, and dress by white adolescents in South London, who see only "style" (again, commodified), in tension with black adolescent views of these codes as part of their distinctive identity (Hewitt, 1986). This negative appropriation could also be found in Toronto as it is not a phenomenon restricted to London. Similar to the appropriation of creole speech, music, and dress by white adolescents in South London, as discussed by Hewitt (1986), Toronto also sees racialized and stereotyped representations of Black identity through language. In examining the

linguistic behaviors of younger male speakers, it's essential to consider Derek Denis's work on language and race in Toronto. Denis (2021) highlights how linguistic practices among Black men, especially those of Somali and Caribbean descent, are often stereotyped. These linguistic features, such as Toronto slang, carry racialized associations with criminality, low socioeconomic status, and deviance, reflecting broader societal biases. Denis focused on the use of *bucktee*, a term rooted in Somali-Canadian speech, which has come to symbolize toughness, defiance, and social capital. This reflects Trudgill's (1972) concept of covert prestige, but it must be understood in the context of race, power, and place. As Bucholtz (1999) and Reyes (2005) suggest, the appeal of such language extends beyond Black men, with non-Black individuals adopting these linguistic markers of masculinity and toughness. However, this raises concerns of cultural appropriation, as non-Black speakers benefit from the prestige of these linguistic markers without experiencing the structural inequalities tied to them (Eble 2004). This intersection of language, identity, and race in Toronto underscores how language functions as both a cultural tool and a site of social stratification and racial profiling. By drawing on Denis's work, we can better understand how linguistic practices among younger male speakers are influenced by societal stereotypes and racialized perceptions, particularly in multicultural urban spaces such as Toronto.

Appropriation is not only present or found in the diaspora. Gaudio (2011) looked at how Nigerian popular singers combine elements of West African musical styles with hip/hop and/or reggae, and their lyrics consisting of NP, various Nigerian languages, African American English and occasionally Jamaican Creole. Like NP, Jamaican Creole and AAVE have been stigmatized as 'broken English'. The author argues that the artists engage a Black Atlantic cultural tradition within this imagined transnational space. In other words, they are contributing to the formation

of a pan-Nigerian public with cultural linkages to Black diasporic communities in the U.S., Jamaica, and the United Kingdom (p. 242). This brings the following questions to mind: to what extent is NP uniquely Nigerian enough to serve as a marker of national identity in the diaspora? Could it also serve to symbolize a pan-West-African identity in the diaspora? These questions are important to explore in this study because of the similarities of West African pidgins (Holm, 1989).

2.5. Language attitudes

Speakers and listeners may have attitudes and reactions towards languages, and these attitudes can be defined as a disposition to react favorably or unfavorably to a class of objects (in this case, languages) (Sarnoff, 1970, p. 279). Attitudes may not always be positive or negative but may subsume both positivity and negativity (Haddock & Maio, 2004b, p. 1). Some techniques used to access speakers' attitudes in the literature include both quantitative methods, such as the use of surveys and questionnaires (which can be qualitative as well), and qualitative methods such as semi structured interviews, map-labelling tasks, matched-guise (which can be used quantitatively as well), and verbal guise techniques. These techniques are used to access speakers' attitudes towards language, both their own and others'. These techniques can also be categorized into direct or indirect methods. The direct method is overt and involves using explicit and direct questions written in the form of a questionnaire designed for a large group of people. These questions can also be in the form of interviews in which the researcher asks the respondents individually (Garrett, 2010, p. 39; McKenzie, 2010, p. 37). The direct method targets participants' cognitive, behavioral, and affective levels, as they are expected to express their attitudes overtly. Indirect methods apply complementary and less direct techniques such as

the matched-guise technique, which seeks to analyze the attitudes of participants without informing them that attitudes toward language are being investigated.

Lambert, Hodgson, and Fillenbaum (1960) invented the *matched-guise* methodology to indirectly measure attitudes towards languages. It was developed in the 1950s in Canada as a method of identifying attitudes towards languages. They proposed:

...listener's attitude toward members of a particular group should generalize to the language they use. From this viewpoint, evaluational reactions to a spoken language should be similar to those prompted by interaction with individuals who are perceived as members of the group that uses it. But because the use of language is one aspect of behaviour common to a variety of individuals, hearing the language is likely going to arouse mainly generalized or stereotyped characteristics of the group. (Lambert et al. 1960, p. 44).

The studies by Lambert et al. (1960), Haugen (1966), and Schuppert et al. (2015) collectively explore language attitudes through the matched-guise technique, shedding light on cultural stereotypes and perceptions of linguistic varieties. Lambert et al. conducted a pioneering study using matched guise, where English-speaking and French-speaking Canadian students evaluated speakers in both languages. English-speaking students favored English speakers, while French-speaking students surprisingly rated English guises more favorably than French guises. This was interpreted in the context of a cultural stereotype wherein English-speaking individuals were perceived as more competent and prestigious, influencing the positive perception of the English language among French-Canadian participants. The matched guise technique, as introduced by Lambert et al. (1960), has since been a valuable tool for assessing attitudes indirectly, tapping into participants' private emotional and conceptual reactions. In the present study, the technique

is employed to assess attitudes toward NP in the GTA. This approach enables researchers to explore nuanced reactions without explicit opinions.

Haugen's (1966) survey on mutual intelligibility in Scandinavia revealed interesting language attitudes. Danish participants found Swedish more beautiful than their own language, while Swedish participants did not reciprocate this sentiment. Schuppert et al. (2015) also conducted a contemporary study mirroring Lambert et al.'s (1960) approach, using a matched-guise experiment with Danish and Swedish children. Results indicated that, even after more than 50 years, attitudes towards Swedish remained positive among Danes. This highlights the enduring impact of language attitudes and stereotypes over time.

These studies collectively illustrate the persistent influence of cultural stereotypes on language attitudes, emphasizing the lasting impact of such perceptions across different linguistic contexts and over several decades. The matched guise technique remains a powerful tool for uncovering implicit reactions, providing valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of language attitudes. It would be interesting to see if the 'broken English' and 'bad English' stereotypes of NP (Agheysi, 1989) will be carried forward to the present among speakers of NP in this diaspora study.

John Baugh's research on linguistic profiling examined reactions to three guises of his own voice, using features from Black English, Chicano English, and Standard/normative English while reading the same script. Baugh discovered that listeners responded unfavourably when he used his "black voice" (Baugh, 1999). This finding reflects his personal experiences as an African-American professional trying to secure accommodation. During phone calls to prospective landlords, he used his "professional voice," which he described as sounding "white."

Although no landlord ever asked about his race, he was denied access to housing upon arrival for scheduled appointments. Baugh explained that his fluency in Standard English allowed him to escape “linguistic profiling” over the phone because he sounded white (Baugh, 2005, p. 158).

Similarly, Henderson (2001) recounts an incident in Philadelphia where she was directed to the most expensive apartment in a complex and told it was the only one available. The next day, using Standard American English over the phone, she found that several less expensive apartments were immediately available, and she was invited to see them (Henderson, 2001, p. 2-3). These experiences illustrate the positive attitudes toward Standard American English and how language attitudes are intertwined with racial attitudes. In essence, attitudes about language often serve as a proxy for attitudes about the speakers themselves.

Further on attitudinal studies, Adegbija's (1994) publication, "Language Attitudes in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Sociolinguistic Overview," offers a comprehensive analysis of language attitudes in the region, highlighting the complex interplay of sociolinguistic, historical, and political factors. The study categorizes attitudes into stigma, tolerance, and prestige, noting that indigenous languages often face stigmatization due to colonial influences. Adegbija emphasizes the roles of education, employment opportunities, and media in shaping language preferences, with English and French enjoying high prestige in many countries.

Ihemere (2006) focuses on language attitudes in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, using the matched guise method to assess perceptions of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and Ikwerre. His study, which investigates the language shift in Port Harcourt, reveals that participants favored NP over their native Ikwerre. Using a language proficiency and preference questionnaire along with the matched-guise technique, Ihemere found that members of the community rated speakers of NP

highly with regard to modernity, level of education attained, and general sophistication than they did for Ikwerre speakers. This underscores the importance of regional context in shaping language attitudes. Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2009) advocate for an interactional approach to studying language attitudes, emphasizing the value of qualitative methods like conversational interviews over quantitative approaches. They argue that such methods provide richer insights, aligning with the approach of the current study, which employs individual conversational interviews in addition to a matched-guise test to explore participants' attitudes toward English and NP.

These studies collectively illustrate the multifaceted nature of language attitudes in Africa. Adegbiya (1994) provides a broad overview of the influences shaping these attitudes, while Ihemere (2006) offers a specific case study of language preference and shift in Nigeria. Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2009) highlight the methodological considerations in studying language attitudes, advocating for qualitative approaches to gain deeper insights. Together, they underscore the significance of historical, sociopolitical, and regional contexts in understanding language attitudes.

In sociolinguistic research, interviews can be utilized in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Quantitative approaches often focus on language change in progress, examining how the phonological and morpho-syntactic systems accommodate variability and change. In contrast, qualitative approaches consider the speaker's position, investigating the meanings and social appropriateness of different linguistic variants or discourse types (Horvath, 2017, p. 9). For my study, I will ask participants about their usage of English, Nigerian Pidgin (NP), and other languages in their repertoire. According to Horvath (2017), an ethnologically based

qualitative approach is more suitable when the research question revolves around language use and identity. This approach can vary, with some researchers being deeply embedded in the community or even members of the community, thus already having identified the subgroups of interest (p. 13). In qualitative research, speakers can be conceptualized as groups or types of speakers sharing a social identity that distinguishes them from others. Their membership in these groups is reflected in their speech and the significance of language use and features within the community. Qualitative studies often use extracts from recorded interviews or conversations as evidence for linguistic claims (Horvath, 2017, p. 13). For this study, I have employed individual qualitative conversational interviews, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis.

2.6. History of Attitudes towards Pidgins and Creoles

Pidgins and creoles are often treated as interrelated in the literature. A creole is typically defined as a pidgin that has developed native speakers and is spoken as a first language, while pidgins are learned as auxiliary languages to facilitate communication between speakers of different L1s that have no other language in common (Mufwene, 2001; Holm, 2000). Nigerian Pidgin (NP) has undergone nativization in certain regions of Nigeria, thus it can be described as a creole (Igboanusi, 2008). Therefore, it is crucial to examine the historical attitudes towards pidgins and creoles broadly before focusing specifically on attitudes towards NP.

In examining the perspectives on creole languages, scholars like DeGraff (2001a, b, 2003a, b) and Mufwene (2000) critically address the historical assumptions rooted in (neo)colonial history, which have categorized creoles as exceptional or abnormal languages.

DeGraff (2003) contends that the view of creoles as abnormal is intricately linked to imperialist constructions of political, cultural, and racial hegemony. This stance, embedded in scholarly narratives, has perpetuated the notion of creole exceptionalism, wherein creole languages are considered structurally or genealogically inferior to European languages. McWhorter (1998) contributes to this discourse by arguing that creoles constitute a synchronically definable typological class, uniquely characterized by traits such as minimal inflectional affixation, limited use of tone for lexical contrast or syntactic encoding, and semantically regular derivational affixation. He terms a language exhibiting these traits as fitting the "creole prototype," emphasizing the simplicity of creole languages. Seuren (1998) further supports the notion of creole simplicity, emphasizing that creole grammars lack sophisticated features found in languages with rich cultural histories and well-established literate societies. These ideas trace back to eighteenth-century scholars like Girod-Chantrons (1980), who described colonial precursor languages as weak, dull, and insipid, contributing to the linguistic marginalization of creoles (DeGraff, 2003).

Historically, these views are evident in Bloomfield's (1933) assertion that speakers of less dominant languages may resort to 'baby talk' when communicating with more dominant language speakers. This paternalistic perspective reflects the condescending attitude towards creole languages and their speakers. These studies collectively reveal the entrenched biases against creole languages, showing the historical roots of Creole exceptionalism. To combat these beliefs, DeGraff (2003) presents a case study of Haitian Creole (HC) to show that creoles are not degenerate versions of their European ancestors (in this case, French). He claims that certain properties of HC grammar show an increase in complexity in relation to French, to the extent

that these structural properties of HC have no counterpart in French. He gives the following examples:

the morphophonologically conditioned allomorphy, with at least four allomorphs in each case, for the prenominal indefinite determiner and the postnominal definite determiner; some of this allomorphy exhibits ‘anti-markedness effects’ (Klein, 2001); predicate-clefting strategies with either a resumptive pro-form or a predicate copy in situ (also discussed in DeGraff, 2001b, p. 284).

Due to the widespread acceptance of creole exceptionalism and the view of creoles as handicapped, DeGraff (2005) believes that there is an obstruction of scientific and social progress in and about creole communities, and the roles that creoles should play in the education and socioeconomic development of monolingual creolophones are undermined. The history of creole exceptionalism can therefore be interpreted as one discursive link in the colonial dialectic chain connecting the problem of slavery in the New World to European scientific racism (DeGraff, 2005). Although nineteenth-century race theories have been rejected by twentieth- and twenty-first-century linguists, some of the empirically and theoretically problematic aspects of nineteenth-century creole-related writings continue to be found in modern linguistics (DeGraff, 2003, p. 397, 2005). In order to overcome this, DeGraff proposes “postcolonial creolistics” as an effort at breaking the exceptionalist dialectic chain in creole studies (also see DeGraff 2003, p. 402-4, 2005). From the discussion above, as expressly conveyed by DeGraff, scholarly views about pidgins and creoles may affect the use of the languages in society. It is therefore important to see what scholarly views are held about NP regarding language attitudes (see 2.6. below).

DeGraff also argues that there exists a significant connection between scholarly views and the formulation of language policies, as well as the shaping of language attitudes within creole-speaking societies. Scholarly perspectives, influenced by historical biases and linguistic hierarchies, often impact the development of language policies that may either support or marginalize Creole languages. These policies, in turn, influence societal attitudes towards creole languages. Moreover, DeGraff suggests that non-scholarly views, such as those held by the general public or policymakers, also play a crucial role in shaping language policies and attitudes. These perspectives may align with or challenge scholarly viewpoints, contributing to the overall linguistic landscape.

There is often a perception that creoles are misunderstood and undervalued by outsiders and even their speakers. The language may be unfairly judged as "broken" or "inferior" compared to more widely spoken languages. For example, a non-scholarly view of NP can be seen in the responses of participants from my pilot study (Affia, 2023) summarized in Chapter 3 below. A 37-year-old male L2 participant also speaks about the origin of his view about NP in the pilot study.

"Unfortunately, when we were growing up NPE was not encouraged because it was seen as a language for commoners or a motor-garage language, so it was seen as something for people who could not speak proper English and then it immediately delineates you to a certain social class, and because we didn't want to identify with that social class, NP was not encouraged, it was highly frowned upon in classrooms, while going to school, so it was forbidden in school, it was forbidden at home

However, over the years, it has evolved to see that if you want to communicate with your maid, your driver, your gate-guard, you go to market and other places, it is better to speak NP." (Affia, 2023, p. 76-77)

These attitudes of speakers themselves, influenced by both scholarly and non-scholarly perspectives, can influence language use and the social status of creole languages within their communities (DeGraff, 2018, DeGraff, Frager, & Miller, 2022). In essence, DeGraff highlights the interconnectedness of scholarly, non-scholarly, and speaker perspectives, emphasizing their collective impact on language policies and attitudes in creole-speaking societies which in turn will be assessed in this current study.

2.7. Attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP).

In this study, a language attitude is defined as "any affective, cognitive, or behavioral index of evaluative reactions toward different language varieties or their speakers" (Ryan, Giles & Sebastian, 1982, p. 7). Language attitudes or behaviors toward a language reflect the social meanings relative to the social norms within a given speech community. Examining language attitudes provides insights into how language serves as a symbol of identity and group membership, as well as the social significance of a given linguistic code (Adegbija, 1994; Ihemere, 2006). There is a paucity of studies focused specifically on attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP), underscoring the importance of this research. Some Nigerians perceive NP as a degraded form of English, often associating it with individuals lacking formal education (Akande, 2010). This perception may be influenced by the prestige associated with English and

scholarly views on creoles, such as those posited by Bloomfield (1933) and Girod-Chantrons (1980). NP, similar to other creoles and pidgins with European language lexifiers, has been described pejoratively as "bastardized English" or as an inferior language in scholarly discourse (Mann, 1996). Such views can be traced back to colonialism and prejudices against speakers of pidgins and creoles. However, linguistic scholarship recognizes NP as a distinct language separate from English. For instance, Agheysi (1984) argues that there are educated speakers of NP who incorporate English elements (through code-mixing or switching), yet NP remains a separate language. Elugbe and Omamor (1991) support this distinction by highlighting that the sentence structure and phonological system of NP are sufficiently different from those of English.

Several studies have examined attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP), particularly among university students in urban centers in Nigeria. Igboanusi (2008) investigated university students' attitudes towards recognizing and empowering NP within the educational system. Despite some linguistic scholars advocating for NP to be designated as an official or national language, Igboanusi found that most participants, primarily university students, opposed the inclusion of NP in school curricula. This highlights a discrepancy between scholarly recommendations and public attitudes. Akande and Salami (2010) further explored this issue by analyzing attitudes toward NP among students at two Nigerian universities. They considered the influence of urban characteristics on students' use of and attitudes toward NP. While students at the University of Benin exhibited more positive attitudes, the general sentiment across both institutions was against adopting NP as a medium of instruction. This reflects a broader trend of marginalization of NP in educational contexts.

Mann (2009) investigated attitudes toward NP in urban southern Nigeria, with a focus on age as a variable. The study revealed that the middle age group (40-49 years) had the most favorable attitudes toward NP as a subject, medium of instruction, and potential official language. Conversely, the younger age group (15-19 years), who are considered primary users of NP, displayed less favorable attitudes, likely influenced by the immediate benefits of promoting English in education and the increasing dominance of English as a world language. The results of these studies align with findings from my pilot study (presented in Chapter 3), which examined the attitudes of the middle-aged Nigerian diaspora in Canada toward NP. It will be interesting to observe the patterns of attitudes across different age groups within the context of this diaspora study. Collectively, these studies emphasize the complex attitudes surrounding NP, influenced by factors such as education, urban environment, and age. While scholarly proposals advocate for the recognition of NP, public sentiment, particularly among university students, seems resistant to its formal adoption in educational settings. This underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of language attitudes to inform language policies and initiatives.

Despite prevailing negative attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP), the language continues to play a significant role among ethnic groups in Nigeria that do not share a common language. In this context, NP serves as a unifying medium of communication, reflecting a broader sense of national identity (Akande & Salami, 2010). It encapsulates and expresses “Nigerianness,” symbolizing a shared cultural identity across the nation. Scholars like Agbali (2005) have even suggested that NP has the potential to transcend its current unofficial status and evolve into a recognized national language. Given that the present study examines NP as a marker of identity for Nigerians in the diaspora, it is crucial to explore the existing literature on

the sociolinguistics of diaspora communities. This will provide a broader understanding of how NP functions as a tool for identity construction and connection in transnational contexts.

2.8. Language use and identity formation in the diaspora

This study focuses on Nigerians living in the diaspora, necessitating an exploration of language attitudes and identity formation among other diasporic communities. The term "diaspora" is complex and contested, often intertwined with notions of migration, cultural dislocation, and transnational ties. Migration, which frequently underpins diaspora formation, is described as "a separation from the mother culture" that often leads to "conflict between the new and old culture" (Sengun, 2001, p. 68). However, not all migrants constitute a diaspora. As Brubaker (2005) argues, diasporic communities are distinguished by their active homeland orientation and boundary maintenance, which foster solidarity and sustain transnational identities. This differentiation raises critical issues. Not all immigrant communities are diasporic. The notions of heritage languages and cultural identity intersect differently in diasporic and non-diasporic contexts.

Brubaker's (2005) conceptual framework identifies two essential characteristics of diasporas: homeland orientation and boundary maintenance. Diaspora communities actively preserve cultural boundaries, creating a shared identity linked to a real or imagined homeland. This notion of boundary maintenance, whether through language, social practices, or cultural traditions, distinguishes diasporas from other immigrant groups that may orient more fully toward integration into the host society. For instance, Hoffman and Walker's (2010) study of Chinese and Italian-Canadian communities in Toronto suggests that not all immigrant groups

align with a diasporic model even when of the same generation. While first-generation members demonstrate stronger ethnic ties and evidence of substrate transfer, subsequent generations often integrate linguistically and culturally into broader Canadian society, as seen in their adoption of local linguistic features like the Canadian Vowel Shift. This finding contrasts with more typical diaspora models, where heritage language use and cultural practices persist across generations.

Diasporic communities can also display significant internal variation, challenging the notion of a unified identity. Hundt's (2018) study on Fiji Indians in New Zealand exemplifies this complexity. Despite sharing a common origin, Fiji Indians demonstrate diverse linguistic practices, shaped by stratification within Hindi and English use and generational differences. This diversity highlights how diasporic identity is not monolithic but rather constructed through individual and collective negotiations of language and cultural affiliation. Similarly, Sharma's (2021) longitudinal study of British Asians reveals shifts in language attitudes over time, reflecting the interplay between social mobility and changing ideologies. The selective adoption of educated Indian English features by younger generations illustrates how diasporic language practices can challenge traditional hierarchies and create new forms of prestige.

Vigouroux and Mufwene (2021) further problematize diaspora as an analytical category, advocating for a processual view that considers the construction of a homeland, the local environment, and their interplay. This dynamic perspective underscores the role of language ideologies and practices in shaping diasporic communities, moving beyond static definitions. For Nigerians in Canada, such an approach enables an understanding of how language use, attitudes, and identity are negotiated within a multicultural and multilingual context like Toronto, where transnational ties and local integration coexist.

In the Canadian context, studies of ethnolects and heritage languages, such as Hoffman and Walker (2010), provide valuable insights into how immigrant and diasporic groups navigate identity through language. For Nigerians in the GTA, these dynamics raise questions about how language use fosters cultural continuity and transnational connections while navigating the pressures of integration and generational change. The intersection of heritage languages, identity, and diasporic belonging offers a productive area of research for exploring how Nigerians articulate their identity and maintain connections to their homeland in a linguistically diverse context.

This study, therefore, contributes to the broader field of sociolinguistics by examining how language attitudes and practices among Nigerians in Canada align with or diverge from existing models of diaspora. It also interrogates the boundaries of what constitutes a diaspora, situating Nigerians within a continuum that includes both heritage language maintenance and broader processes of linguistic and cultural adaptation.

2.9. Nigerians in the GTA as part of a diaspora

As discussed earlier, in sociolinguistics, the term "diaspora" generally refers to communities of people who have migrated from their homeland and maintain cultural, linguistic, or social ties to that homeland. Nigerians in the GTA meet this definition for several reasons, which align with scholarly frameworks for understanding diaspora.

Nigerians in the GTA represent a community dispersed from Nigeria, a homeland with which they maintain a shared sense of identity. Safran (1991) highlights that diaspora groups typically involve communities dispersed to multiple locations but united by a shared connection to their

origin. Nigerians in the GTA embody this dispersal through migration motivated by economic, educational, political, or family reunification factors. Diaspora communities also maintain ties to their homeland, often through cultural practices, language, and remittances. Vertovec (1999) describes diasporic groups as those engaging in transnational activities that keep them connected to their country of origin. In the GTA, Nigerians maintain these connections through Nigerian cultural events, religious practices, and use of indigenous languages and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) (Affia, 2023).

Nigerians in the GTA also exhibit a strong sense of shared identity and solidarity, both among themselves and with the broader Nigerian diaspora globally. Cohen (1997) identifies "a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time" as a defining feature of diaspora communities, reflected in the communal activities, cultural organizations, and Nigerian-oriented spaces in the GTA. Like other diasporas, Nigerians in the GTA also navigate dual identities, balancing their Nigerian heritage with Canadian sociocultural norms (Affia, 2023). Brubaker (2005) emphasizes that diaspora involves a dual orientation toward the homeland and the host society, a characteristic evident in the multilingual practices of Nigerian-Canadians in the GTA as they adapt to Canadian contexts while preserving Nigerian linguistic and cultural traditions. Language also plays a central role in identifying and preserving diaspora communities. Fishman (1991) notes that language is a critical aspect of cultural identity and group cohesion in diaspora settings. The continued use of Nigerian Pidgin, Yoruba, Igbo, and other Nigerian languages among Nigerians in the GTA underscores their diasporic identity. Nigerians in the GTA may embody the sociolinguistic meaning of diaspora through their transnational connections with Nigeria, sociocultural practices that preserve Nigerian heritage, and linguistic behaviors, including multilingualism and the use of Nigerian Pidgin. Their navigation of identity between

the Nigerian homeland and the Canadian sociocultural environment may fit well within established sociolinguistic frameworks of diaspora. However, this will be further assessed in the study findings.

In the following chapter, I present the pilot study conducted as a foundational component of the current research. This pilot study, informed by previous literature on identity construction through language, language ideologies, and attitudes towards creoles, underpins the methodology adopted for the present investigation. The hypotheses of the current research, particularly Hypotheses 1 and 2, were preliminarily tested in the pilot study. The subsequent chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the results and observations from the pilot study, which serve to refine and contextualize the methodology and research questions of the current study.

Chapter 3: Pilot Study

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview and analysis of the pilot study conducted as a precursor to this current comprehensive research. The pilot study laid the foundational groundwork, helping shape the hypotheses and methodologies employed in this subsequent larger-scale research presented in this dissertation.

3.2. Hypotheses

This section presents the hypotheses developed during the pilot study, along with their justifications. The pilot study explored gender as a primary social factor influencing language use among Nigerians in the Canadian diaspora. Two key hypotheses were tested and subsequently adopted for the current research.

3.2.1. Hypothesis 1:

Nigerian Pidgin (NP) was hypothesized to function as a language of identity for Nigerians in the diaspora, particularly in informal contexts. NP was considered likely to bridge linguistic gaps between English and Nigeria's indigenous languages, serving as a lingua franca when speakers did not share the same native language. It was posited that Nigerians in Canada would gravitate towards NP as a marker of cultural identity and familiarity in interactions with other Nigerians, viewing it as emblematic of their Nigerian heritage and a medium for fostering a transnational community. This aligns with observations in Nigeria, where NP often fulfills an informal, unifying role across social strata.

3.2.2. Hypothesis 2:

The study hypothesized gender-based differences in language preference, with female

speakers showing a greater tendency to prefer Standard/Nigerian English over NP in informal settings. Men were expected to favor NP, perceiving it as possessing covert prestige and aligning with masculine identity norms. Drawing on sociolinguistic literature (e.g., Labov 1966, Trudgill 1972), it was anticipated that women, traditionally associated with overt prestige norms, would prioritize English due to its high status in Nigeria and its utility in professional and formal contexts. Conversely, men were hypothesized to view NP as a social language more suitable for informal interactions within the diaspora.

3.3. Methodology and results of pilot study

The pilot study employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to explore participants' attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and its role in identity. This combination allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of language use and perception among participants.

3.3.1. Methodology

The qualitative component consisted of focus groups and conversational interviews, conducted and recorded via Zoom. These methods provided an opportunity to delve deeply into participants' views and observe how beliefs emerged in both group dynamics and individual contexts. Focus groups allowed for interaction among participants, fostering a richer exploration of shared and contrasting attitudes (Yitzhaki, 2010). The interviews, on the other hand, provided a more private setting to ensure participants' opinions were not influenced by group dynamics.

The quantitative component involved a language preference and proficiency questionnaire. This survey asked participants to indicate their preferred language for informal interactions with other Nigerians (between NP and English) and assess their proficiency in speaking NP.

Sociodemographic data such as age, gender, region or state in Nigeria, and language background were also collected. The questionnaire items were adapted from Ihemere's (2006) work and are detailed in Appendix B.

3.3.2 Participants and Recruitment

Ten participants, evenly split between males and females, participated in the pilot study. They were recruited using the snowball sampling method (Hoffman, 2014) and were aged between 30 and 45 years. All participants were highly educated (graduate level), a deliberate choice to include individuals proficient in English, NP, and their native languages. This demographic was deemed capable of providing insights into language use and attitudes, as well as influencing policy discussions in Nigeria (Igboanusi, 2008). Participants were divided into two focus groups—one male and one female—comprising six participants in total (three males and three females). The remaining four participants engaged in individual conversational interviews. This structure allowed for a comparison of attitudes expressed in group versus individual settings, reducing the potential for groupthink and revealing more personal perspectives.

3.3.3. Data Collection

The focus groups and interviews covered a range of topics, including participants' feelings toward NP, its role in their identity as Nigerians in the diaspora, and issues such as standardizing NP and elevating its status as a national or official language. These themes were

informed by prior studies, such as Mann (2009) and Akande and Salami (2010). A sample of the discussion questions can be found in Appendix D. The combination of focus groups, interviews, and the questionnaire enabled an exploration of participants' individual integration within the Nigerian diaspora and their interaction with NP. This triangulated approach provided both depth and breadth to the analysis of language attitudes.

3.3.4. Results

As hypothesized, the findings revealed that the majority of participants (8 out of 10) regarded NP as a key marker of Nigerian identity in Canada. This was demonstrated through a specific interview question: "If you wanted to be identified by other Nigerians or Africans as Nigerian, which language would you speak?" While eight participants chose NP, two opted for their native language. Several participants elaborated on the significance of NP in shaping identity:

"Pidgin is our heritage, the stigma from NP has eroded a great lot, it is our new identity... we see that those of us who were forbidden from speaking NP because it was a motor garage English, are now trying to struggle to speak it to show that we belong." – **Samuel**, male, 37 years, moderate NP speaker.

"I try to teach [my children] as much as I can, that's part of the foundation of who they are, that's their identity." – **IT**, male, 43 years, fluent NP speaker.

"I would like them [my children] to learn and speak [NP] because I want them to feel as Nigerian as possible." – **Olive**, female, 31 years, moderate NP speaker.

3.3.4.1. Gendered Perspectives

The results indicated notable gender differences in attitudes toward NP. Male participants exhibited greater knowledge of NP's history and importance, aligning with their more positive attitudes toward the language. This may suggest the presence of covert prestige (Trudgill, 1972). For example, all male participants expressed a desire for their children to speak NP, whereas three out of five female participants did not. A higher preference for Standard English was also observed among women, with 4 out of 5 female participants favoring it over NP. This trend is consistent with sociolinguistic studies suggesting that women often align with linguistic forms associated with prestige and formality (Trudgill, 1972).

3.3.4.2. Proficiency and Attitudes

Participants with higher NP fluency and frequent use of the language expressed overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward NP. They consistently described it using positive adjectives and highlighted its cultural significance:

"Whoever thought of it [NP] in the first place did something brilliant... I try to indoctrinate my Canadian friends to NP. Pidgin is just awesome; it's a good way for us to communicate at different levels back home." – **IT**, male, 44 years, fluent NP speaker.

"For me, NP is not ugly; it is attractive." – **Uby**, male, 45 years, proficient NP speaker.

"I love speaking Pidgin with my friends; there's this connection, this joy that we are Nigerians, and it's an easy language to speak." – **Nsy**, female, 39 years, fluent NP speaker.

Conversely, participants with moderate NP proficiency expressed more neutral or critical views, often associating NP with stereotypes such as "broken English" or "motor-garage language."

3.4. Implications for the Current Study

These findings have informed the methodological design of the current dissertation research. The decision to include gender as a social variable stems from the observed differences in male and female attitudes. Additionally, the inclusion of younger and older participants aims to provide a broader generational perspective. To further explore attitudes, a matched-guise test was added to the current study, supplementing interviews and questionnaires. Language proficiency and preference factors were also retained, given their clear correlation with positive attitudes toward NP in the pilot study.

3.5. Conclusion

The pilot study highlights NP's role as a marker of Nigerian identity among educated middle-aged Nigerians in Canada. These findings offer valuable insights for further research on language attitudes and identity within the Nigerian diaspora. The next chapter details the methodology used to gather data for the current study, while subsequent chapters analyze and discuss the findings in relation to existing literature.

Chapter 4: Dissertation Methodology

4.1. Introduction

In the area of sociolinguistic research, considerable attention has been devoted to investigating language attitudes through various methodological approaches. Traditional methodologies, including surveys such as questionnaires and informal interviews, have been extensively employed. One effective method involves the quantitative or indirect approach, notably, the matched-guise test as expounded in Section 4.8, often complemented by a direct or qualitative approach such as informal conversational interviews. This combined methodological framework facilitates a nuanced exploration of both subconscious and conscious perceptions, ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes individuals harbor toward languages.

In this research, I employed a dual-method approach comprising informal interviews (direct approach) and the matched-guise test (indirect approach). Through these methods, I aim to investigate Nigerians' perspectives and attitudes towards NP, and how language serves as a conduit for expressing their Nigerian identity within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) diaspora context.

4.2. Methodology

This section outlines the comprehensive methodology employed in the dissertation, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore Nigerians' perceptions of NP in the GTA diaspora context. The combination of direct and indirect methods offers a robust

framework for analyzing language attitudes and identity formation among Nigerian immigrants in Canada.

4.2.1. Methodological Approach

The methodology combines qualitative and quantitative methods to comprehensively explore Nigerians' perceptions of NP in the GTA. The quantitative data collection involved the distribution of structured questionnaires via online surveys hosted on Qualtrics (links provided in 4.3). These questionnaires captured participants' sociodemographic information—such as age, gender, regional origins in Nigeria, and ethnic orientation—and assessed their language proficiency and preference in informal interactions with other Nigerians in Canada. The structured format ensured systematic data collection to identify correlations between demographic variables and language attitudes. The matched-guise test is another quantitative method utilized in this study. Participants listened to recordings of speakers using NP and Standard Nigerian English, among other languages, and evaluated them using a semantic differential scale. This approach provided direct insights into participants' subconscious perceptions and evaluations of NP in relation to other languages, shedding light on attitudes toward NP's linguistic qualities and social connotations (Schuppert et al., 2015).

The qualitative data collection centred on in-depth, semi-structured individual interviews conducted via Zoom. These interviews enabled participants to express nuanced views and personal experiences regarding their use of NP in Canada, offering rich contextual understanding. The interview questions explored participants' self-identification as Nigerian-Canadians, their social interactions in Canada, language choice in different contexts, and perceptions of NP's role in identity construction. The qualitative approach facilitated a deeper

exploration of participants' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences related to NP, allowing for emergent themes to be identified and analyzed (Yitzhaki, 2010; Horvath, 2017).

4.3. General study design

In this study, I examined several key social factors—age, gender, and ethnicity—that influenced attitudes towards NP. The pilot study particularly revealed the influence of gender and ethnicity on these attitudes, revealing gender-based differences and regional impacts on participants' perspectives. Furthermore, the factor age was chosen because it had also been identified as a significant factor in sociolinguistic analyses of language and identity (Sharma, 2017; Hundt, 2018; Hoffman & Walker, 2010), especially considering NP's association as a language predominantly used by younger individuals. Therefore, examining participants' attitudes by age was deemed essential.

Additionally, language proficiency and preference were considered as potential determinants of attitudes toward NP among speakers. The methodology employed in this research integrated both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitatively, participants completed questionnaires on Qualtrics, which captured sociodemographic information such as age, gender, state of origin in Nigeria, ethnic orientation (adapted from Hoffman & Walker, 2010), language proficiency, and language preference in informal interactions with other Nigerians.¹ These surveys facilitated the collection and comparison of participant information with reported and observed language use.

¹ The Sociodemographic questionnaire can be found here: https://yorkliberalarts.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9z92lnkiHxm6ugK), the Language preference and proficiency questionnaires can be found here: https://yorkliberalarts.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ebrCdAuVcCLI6F0).

Furthermore, the study utilized ²matched-guise test to explore participants' attitudes towards NP, where participants rated voices in different languages. Qualitatively, the research adopted a speaker-oriented interview approach, probing the underlying meanings behind language choices and the appropriateness of discourse types across social contexts (Horvath, 2017). Building on the pilot study, the individual interviews were conducted to delve into participants' beliefs about NP, observing how these beliefs manifested in interactions. This qualitative approach facilitated a deeper exploration of participants' perspectives and ensured a focused exploration of specific thematic areas (Yitzhaki, 2010).

4.4. Hypotheses

Here, I present the hypotheses that form the basis of this study, along with the anticipated patterns expected to emerge from the data.

4.4.1. Hypothesis 1

Participants in this study may opt to use NP as their language of choice when seeking to assert their Nigerian identity in informal diasporic settings. Previous research has underscored NP's role as a language of Nigerian identity (Agbali, 2005).

4.4.2. Hypothesis 2

Female speakers in informal interactions with other Nigerians in Canada may favor Standard/Nigerian English over NP. Conversely, male speakers may prefer NP over

² The matched guise test can be found here: https://yorkliberalarts.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a5KGtWLmXtaFfro).

Standard/Nigerian English in similar contexts. This phenomenon can be attributed to sociolinguistic factors such as covert and overt prestige and standardization (Trudgill, 1972).

4.4.3. Hypothesis 3

The middle and older age groups may express more positive attitudes towards NP, especially towards the idea of enhancing and standardizing NP, while the younger age group will be neutral.

Older and middle-aged Nigerians often recognize language as a crucial aspect of their heritage and identity, as highlighted in Mann (2009). In contrast, younger speakers in the diaspora may often gravitate towards linguistic varieties prevalent in Canada or the Greater Toronto Area, influenced by non-Nigerian norms. Sociolinguistic research suggests that younger speakers typically adhere to current trends and social norms without strong emotional ties to their native languages. Consequently, older and middle-aged individuals who appreciate NP's cultural significance in the diaspora are more likely to support efforts aimed at its enhancement and standardization, whereas younger speakers may display indifference.

The attitudes of older speakers may also be shaped by the standard language ideology, an aspect that will be discussed if pertinent to this study. Furthermore, participants' duration of residence in Canada will be considered as it may potentially inform their linguistic practices.

4.4.4. Hypothesis 4

More women than men may overreport their use of Standard English when answering the question about their language preference and use of the varieties of interest in the study, whether or not this is the case in actuality.

Labov's (1966) seminal sociolinguistic variationist study highlighted a recurring trend: male participants tended to under-report their use of the standard or prestigious language form, whereas female participants tended to over-report theirs. This trend may be found in the Nigerian diaspora researched in this study, as was seen from findings in the pilot study, where women were more likely than men to embrace Standard English, while men showed a stronger preference for Nigerian Pidgin (NP). Recognizing the potential limitations of self-reported language use, I invested time in engaging participants in conversations conducted in both Standard English and NP to directly assess their language proficiency. This direct assessment was subsequently compared with their responses to the language proficiency questionnaire (see Appendix B). Instances of discrepancy between reported and observed language proficiency may reveal expressions of covert or overt prestige. Over-reported fluency or use of NP may indicate a positive attitude towards the language and active identity construction, whereas under-reporting may suggest negative attitudes towards NP and a sense of detachment from the language. Additionally, I will explore alternative explanations derived from the gathered data.

Furthermore, participants were invited to identify segments they perceived as NP and those they identified as Standard English from the recordings presented in the matched-guise test. This methodological approach aimed to deepen understanding of participants' perceptions and interpretations of language use within the study context.

4.4.5. Hypothesis 5

The participants may be familiar with the similarities between certain creoles and NP in their dealings with other West Africans and Afro-Caribbeans.

As previously discussed, Nigerian Pidgin can be situated within a continuum of English-lexifier pidgins and creoles prevalent along the West African coast and within African diaspora communities across the Atlantic Basin. Among these cognate varieties, Cameroonian Pidgin exhibits closer linguistic affinity with Nigerian Pidgin compared to other examples such as Sierra Leonian Krio and Jamaican Patwa (Peter & Wolf, 2007). However, Nigerians residing in diasporic settings may exhibit a reduced inclination to employ Nigerian Pidgin when communicating with other West Africans due to potential mutual intelligibility issues among these pidgins. Consequently, Nigerian Pidgin may or may not consistently signify a broad West African identity in diasporic contexts but rather may distinctly connote Nigerianness.

4.5. Participants.

Thirty qualitative individual conversational interviews were conducted with a total of thirty participants to explore their perceptions and usage of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in the diaspora, aiming to elucidate identity formation and expressed attitudes towards NP. The participants, all immigrants in Ontario who had been residing there for one to ten years or more, were categorized into six groups based on age and gender. These six groups comprised three age categories: the older age group (50 years and above), the middle-age group (30-49 years), and the youth group (18-29 years), each divided into male and female subgroups. The younger age group included Nigerian university students and graduates from universities in Nigeria or Canada, currently employed in Ontario. Education level was not a determining factor initially, as all participants had exposure to both English and NP. Additionally, all participants had either completed higher education or were currently enrolled in a university program.

Potential participants were screened for language proficiency during recruitment, engaging in conversations in both English and NP. The middle-age groups consisted of professionals and workers who immigrated to Ontario for career opportunities or other reasons, while the older group included individuals who had relocated to Ontario and were either employed or retired, including senior citizens. Crucially, all participants were proficient in English and NP, allowing them the choice to interact with other Nigerians or West Africans in either language.

The participants were recruited using the snowball or friend-of-a-friend method (Hoffman, 2014) and were provided with demographic questionnaires, language proficiency/preference surveys, and a matched guise questionnaire prior to the interviews. This approach aimed to familiarize them with the topics of discussion and mitigate potential biases that could arise during interactions with the researcher. These tools were employed for comparative analysis to ascertain whether the sentiments expressed during interviews aligned with those indicated in the questionnaires.

4.6. The questionnaires.

Three questionnaires were administered to the study participants, all of which were designed as Qualtrics surveys to facilitate the systematic recording of their responses before the interview sessions. The first questionnaire, referred to as the sociodemographic and ethnic orientation

survey, collected participants' demographic details. An excerpt of the survey is presented in Figure 5, while the full questionnaire is included in Appendix A for reference.

The image shows a portion of a survey form with a light gray background. It contains five sections, each with a title and a corresponding input area:

- Nationality**: A single-line text input field.
- State of Origin**: A single-line text input field.
- What is your Age-range**: Three radio button options stacked vertically:
 - ☐ 18-29 years
 - ☐ 30-49 years
 - ☐ 50 years and above
- Gender**: Three radio button options stacked vertically, with a text input field for the 'Other' option:
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
 -
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
- Languages Spoken**: A single-line text input field.

How many years have you lived in Canada

☐ 1-3 years

☐ 4-6 years

☐ 7-10 years

☐ More than 10 years

How long did you live in Nigeria?

☐ 15-20 years

☐ 21-30 years

☐ 31-40 years

☐ 41-50 years

☐ More than 50 years

Figure 5: A snippet of some part of the sociodemographic questionnaire

The second questionnaire administered was the language proficiency and preference survey, designed to gather data on participants' self-reported usage and preference between English and Nigerian Pidgin (NP), as illustrated in Figure 6 (depicting select questions from the survey). These responses were cross-referenced during informal interviews to verify actual language usage patterns.

If you had to describe how well you speak Nigerian Pidgin, which would you say?

☐ Fluent

☐ Very well

☐ Moderately well

☐ Hardly at all

Which language do you use in conversations with other Nigerians who speak a different native language from yours in Canada?

((N/B: **Nigerian English** here refers to the English spoken in Nigeria that contains words from the native languages of Nigeria (e.g. *shey*, *abi* etc.)).

☐ Canadian/Standard English

☐ Nigerian English

☐ Nigerian Pidgin

☐ Other (please specify)

What language do you use in conversations with Nigerians from **your ethnic group** in Canada?

☐ Native Nigerian language (please specify)

☐ Canadian/Standard English

☐ Nigerian English

☐ Nigerian Pidgin

☐ More than one of the above (please specify all)

Figure 6: A snippet of some parts of the language proficiency and preference questionnaire.

The third questionnaire administered was the matched-guise survey, incorporating a semantic differential scale as seen in Figure 7 below. Participants were tasked with evaluating English and NP guises based on attributes such as beauty, normalcy, intelligence, modernity, and others, using a scale ranging from 1 to 5. The complete questions of the questionnaires can be found in Appendix C.

1. What language is used in the recording?

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the individual in the recording in terms of the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Beautiful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Normal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Smart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Modern	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kind	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rich	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Educated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rude	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Figure 7: A snippet of the matched-guise questionnaire.

4.7. The interviews.

The informal qualitative individual interviews were conducted via Zoom, focusing on discussions regarding language preferences, choices, and the reasons behind these choices. Individual interviews were conducted to allow participants to express their views freely without the influence of others' opinions, as might occur in a group setting. Also, during the pilot study, coordinating participants' schedules proved challenging, necessitating both focus group and individual interviews. Conducting individual interviews provided flexibility to accommodate each participant's availability. Importantly, in the pilot, similar gender-based differences in attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP) were observed in both focus group discussions and individual interviews, thereby necessitating the choice of individual interviews.

Interviews for the current study also explored participants' perceptions, sentiments, and concerns regarding NP and its implications for their Nigerian identity. Discussions included the potential standardization of NP and its elevation to an educational, national, or official language status in Nigeria, topics previously addressed in related research. Questions posed in the interview, presented below, aimed to solicit thoughtful insights and attitudes towards NP and English while illuminating participants' language practices in the context of their diasporic identity in the GTA.

- Do you think of yourself as Nigerian, Canadian, or Nigerian-Canadian? Why or why not?
- Are most of your friends in Canada, Nigerians? Why or why not?
- Are people in your neighbourhood Nigerians? What about people you work with?

- Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?
- What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak them?
- Can you think of any scenario where any of these languages were used here in Canada and it was inappropriate? What about NP?
- What is your favorite Nigerian language in Canada, and why is it your favorite language?
- How will you rate your NP speaking ability on a scale of 1 to 10?
- If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?
- What is your take on English being taught and used as a medium of instruction in school and not NP?
- What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales? (Follow-up question: would you buy it for your kids?).

The interviews also served as a means of observation to assess participants' language usage with another Nigerian (the researcher), conducted in both English and NP based on the participants' preferences, as the researcher is a native speaker of NP. At the onset of each interview, participants were invited to communicate in the language they found most comfortable. The interviewer initially engaged in NP and then switched to English while posing questions. Participants' sustained language choice throughout the dialogue after the initial 15 to 20 minutes most likely indicated their preferred language for the interview, and all the participants mostly used English.

4.8. The matched-guise test

For the matched guise experiment, the researcher prepared recordings featuring individuals speaking in both Standard English and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) on a general topic, which was 'the importance of family' (see Appendix E). To mitigate gender bias, recordings were made using both male and female voices for both English and NP. Additionally, recordings of the same content spoken in the three major Nigerian languages—Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo—by native speakers of each were included. These recordings were played sequentially, interspersing the English and NP guises among the other language guises. The purpose of including other language guises was to distract participants from recognizing that the English and NP guises were performed by the same speakers. All seven recordings used in the matched-guise test were presented in their entirety. The total duration of the recordings was 6 minutes and 45 seconds, with each individual recording lasting approximately 1 minute, varying slightly above or below that time. Participants were instructed to evaluate the English and NP guises only using a 5-point semantic differential scale, rating attributes such as normalcy, beauty, intelligence, modernity, kindness, education level, rudeness and perceived wealth (adapted from Schuppert et al., 2015). The participants' responses to these matched-guise questions were analyzed to gauge their immediate reactions and attitudes toward NP, capturing spontaneous impressions rather than deliberate considerations.

Baugh (2005) argues that our language, whether spoken or written, reveals significant aspects of our identity as we engage in linguistic activities in our daily lives. Perceptions of intelligence or lack thereof are often closely intertwined with perceptions of language, including specific dialects and accents within a given language (p. 155). The matched-guise testing was

conducted before the interviews and served as a comparative tool to assess each participant's stance during the interview discussions. According to Lambert et al. (1960, p. 44), exposure to a language tends to evoke generalized or stereotypical characteristics associated with the speaker's group. Additionally, the testing aimed to ascertain participants' ability to distinguish between English and NP. Therefore, before rating the samples on a semantic differential scale, participants were asked to identify the language heard in the matched-guise questionnaire.

4.9. Step-by-step process of the data collection

The process began with the participants receiving an email from the researcher containing a consent form for their involvement in the study. Upon reviewing and signing the forms to indicate their agreement to participate, they were scheduled for a one and a half-hour Zoom meeting with the researcher. During this session, participants first completed both the sociodemographic and the language proficiency and preference questionnaires. Subsequently, the researcher initiated the recording of the meeting, followed by the administration of the matched-guise test, where participants evaluated English and NP guises using the matched-guise questionnaire. Following the test, an informal interview ensued. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were provided with a debriefing statement explaining the partial deception involved in the matched guise test, where they were not informed that the same speakers performed both the NP and English guises. Finally, participants were presented with a post-debriefing consent form, granting permission for the researcher to use their data after being informed of the partial deception.

So far, I have outlined the objectives of my research, grounded in theoretical frameworks of language attitudes towards pidgins and creoles, which encompass concepts such as creole exceptionalism, language ideology, and language and identity. I have provided a historical overview of Nigerian Pidgin (NP), its usage in its country of origin, and a summary of the preliminary study that forms the basis of this dissertation. Furthermore, I have presented five hypotheses and the methodologies employed to test them. Using a combination of quantitative methods (questionnaires), qualitative methods (conversational interviews), and the matched guise test, I have explored expressed attitudes towards NP in the diaspora, assessed how Nigerians in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) utilize language, and examined the role of NP in constructing a Nigerian identity in the diaspora, as detailed in the following chapter.

4.10. Research Constraints

I chose to use an online survey and Zoom interviews due to their numerous advantages, including the ability to reach a broad spectrum of respondents, the efficiency and speed of data collection, cost-effectiveness, and the convenience it provides for participants. A drawback of collecting data through an online survey is that the researcher is unable to be present while respondents are completing the survey, making it difficult to answer questions or clarify instructions in real-time. I was able to mitigate this as I allowed the participants to fill out their surveys during the Zoom call before the interviews section of the research, which allowed them to ask questions and seek clarifications as they filled out their surveys.

The relatively small number of participants limits the ability to generalize the findings across the broader Nigerian-Canadian community. The sample size of 30 participants was

determined based on several considerations. First, the in-depth nature of the interviews required significant time and effort from both the participants and the researcher. These interviews were designed to be comprehensive, providing rich qualitative data, but the time-intensive nature of the process meant that expanding the sample size further would have exceeded the practical limits of this research project. Second, recruiting participants and securing their commitment to the time demands of the study was challenging, particularly in a diaspora context where potential participants often have varied and busy schedules. Despite these constraints, the sample size of 30 participants was sufficient to uncover meaningful patterns and insights in language use and attitudes while remaining feasible for thorough qualitative analysis within the timeframe and resources available for this dissertation.

Additionally, the sample size was insufficient for conducting robust statistical analyses, which could have provided more quantitative insights into language preferences and identity markers. To address this research constraint, I conducted a sample size calculation related to the second matched-guise test research question ‘which language do you use in conversations with other Nigerians who speak a different native language from yours in Canada?’, specifically focusing on the "kind" variable in the dataset. Using the `pwr.test` function from the `pwr` package in R, I calculated the required sample size to achieve a statistical power of 0.8 and a significance level of 0.05—standard benchmarks in statistical analysis—for a two-sample t-test. This test is appropriate for comparing the means between the three age groups. The results indicated that a minimum sample size of 497 participants would be necessary, which far exceeds the sample size available in this study. I have been careful to consider the distribution of data and refrain from making any claims of significance in the analysis and discussion unless supported by appropriate statistical tests, such as t-tests for differences between groups. With further refinement of the

methods outlined above, there will be opportunities to gather larger datasets from each region of Canada, enabling more robust statistical analysis.

The next chapter provides the data from the matched guise test, questionnaires, and interviews with a discussion of the findings.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive presentation and analysis of the collected data, covering the matched-guise test and the questionnaire results. This chapter begins with an exploration of participant selection criteria and exclusions, crucial for understanding the demographic makeup and representativeness of the study sample. Following this, the chapter proceeds with an in-depth examination of the findings derived from the sociodemographic questionnaire. This section provides insights into the diverse ethnic backgrounds and regional origins of the participants, offering a foundational understanding of their cultural contexts and migration experiences. Subsequently, attention shifts to the language proficiency and preference questionnaire, which elucidates participants' self-reported fluency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP), Nigerian English, and Canadian/Standard English. This exploration is pivotal for discerning patterns in language use and preferences among Nigerian immigrants in Canada.

The core of this chapter centers on the outcomes of the matched guise test, which systematically evaluates perceptions of language varieties through controlled audio stimuli. This analysis uncovers nuanced perceptions and biases associated with NP, Nigerian English, and Standard English, offering valuable insights into linguistic attitudes and stereotypes. I present the ratings using charts that display individual group scores alongside tables that summarize the averages for age and gender distributions. This approach is applied to the Matched Guise Test ratings. The rationale for this methodological choice is based on the observation that while individual ratings reflected personal linguistic experiences and attitudes, broader patterns emerged within demographic groups. By organizing participants into groups—younger males,

younger females, middle-aged males, middle-aged females, older males, and older females—this study aims to highlight collective linguistic behaviors while still acknowledging individual variation. This approach enables a more structured analysis of how attitudes toward NP align with sociolinguistic trends within each demographic category. Additionally, grouping participants allows for clearer correlations between their matched-guise ratings and the qualitative insights from their interviews, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping their language ideologies.

5.2. Sociodemographic Information of Participants

The study's participant pool was drawn from a diverse range of demographic and ethnic backgrounds across Nigeria, encompassing individuals who spoke Yoruba, Igbo, Ibibio, Hausa, Esan, and Ijo. These groups are geographically dispersed throughout Nigeria, making the participants somewhat potentially reflective of the broader Nigerian populace. Specifically, the sample included 12 participants from the western region of Nigeria, originating from Ogun, Osun, Kwara, and Lagos States. Two participants were from the northern region, representing Kano and Adamawa States. The southern region was represented by eight participants from Edo, Delta, and Akwa Ibom States, while another eight participants hailed from the eastern region, specifically Anambra, Imo, and Ebonyi States. Notably, representation from Northern Nigeria was comparatively lower, with only two participants. Figure 8 below illustrates a map

highlighting these various states and their locations within Nigeria and further breaking down zones into geopolitical zones found in Nigeria.

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>State of Origin</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Years in Canada</i>
1	Mr Felix	Male	55	Kwara	Yoruba	12 years
2	Mr Yekeen	Male	56	Ondo	Yoruba	5 years
3	Mr Chidozie	Male	51	Imo	Igbo	5 years
4	Mr Godfrey	Male	54	Edo	Edo	3 years
5	Mr Bola	Male	56	Osun	Yoruba	27 years
6	Mrs Amaka	Female	54	Enugu	Igbo	5 years
7	Mrs Aishatu	Female	57	Kano	Hausa	13 years
8	Mrs Bose	Female	52	Ondo	Yoruba	24 years
9	Mrs Cordelia	Female	53	Delta	Ijò	11 years
10	Mrs Suzzy	Female	56	Ogun	Yoruba	22 years
11	Abasiakan	Male	38	Akwa-Ibom	Ibibio	9 years
12	Debo	Male	38	Ondo	Yoruba	5 years
13	Gregory	Male	38	Delta	Ijò	2 years
14	Nnamdi	Male	36	Anambra	Igbo	4 years
15	Babatunde	Male	34	Lagos	Yoruba	5 years
16	Inimfon	Female	31	Akwa-Ibom	Ibibio	4 years
17	Ima-Obong	Female	37	Akwa-Ibom	Ibibio	12 years
18	Ifeoma	Female	32	Anambra	Igbo	2 years
19	Onyinye	Female	34	Ebonyi	Igbo	3 years
20	Jane	Female	32	Anambra	Igbo	3 years
21	Eli	Male	19	Edo	Edo	2 years
22	Kash	Male	19	Anambra	Igbo	2 years
23	Thom	Male	26	Ogun	Yoruba	8 years
24	Rotimi	Male	28	Lagos	Yoruba	20 years
25	Ethan	Male	24	Akwa-Ibom	Ibibio	5 years
26	Temidayo	Female	23	Ogun	Yoruba	1 year
27	Ifeoluwa	Female	19	Ogun	Yoruba	2 years
28	Faith	Female	25	Ogun	Yoruba	5 years
29	Jacintha	Female	22	Adamawa	Hausa	4 years
30	Oluwagbemisola	Female	27	Lagos	Yoruba	5 years

Table 1: Participants' demographic information.

Table 1 above provides more detailed sociodemographic information on participants, including their gender, age category, state of origin, ethnicity, and the number of years they spent in Canada.

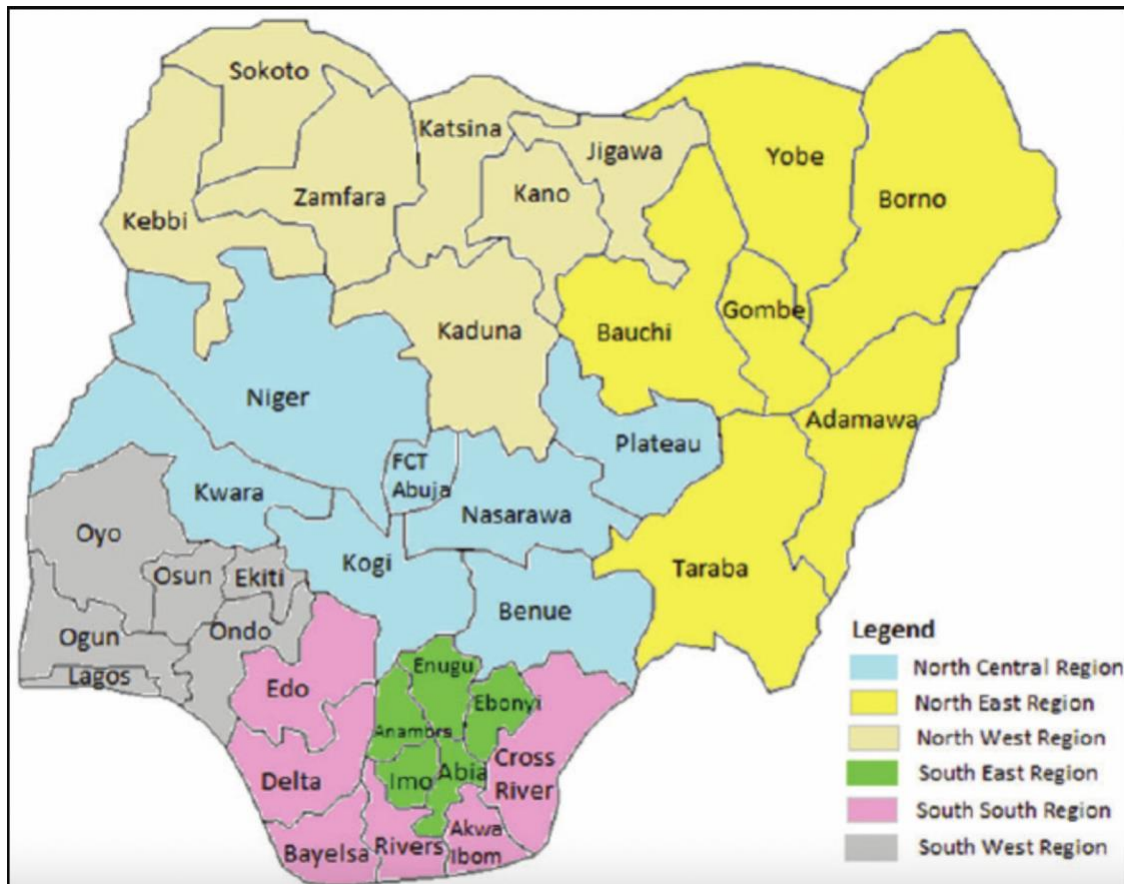


Figure 8: States of Nigeria indicating geopolitical zones. (Gayawan, Arogundade & Adebayo 2014)

Before reporting the specific number of years they have lived in Canada, the participants were asked to report the duration of their stay in Canada, to be grouped into the following ranges: 1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-10 years, and more than 10 years. Eight participants indicated that

they had been in Canada for more than 10 years, two participants reported a duration of 7 to 10 years, 11 participants indicated a stay of 4 to 6 years, and nine participants reported being in Canada for 1 to 3 years. Figure 9 below provides a visual representation of the distribution of participants according to the length of their stay in Canada. This data will be revisited to explore whether the duration of their residency in Canada, along with their ethnicity, influences their use of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) or their language preferences.

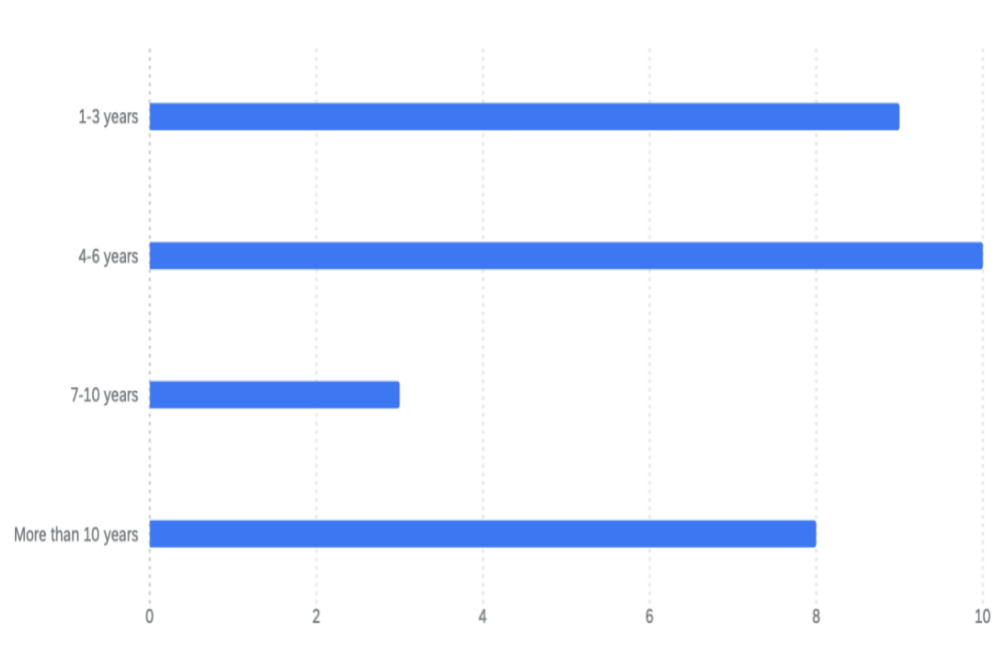


Figure 9: How many years have you lived in Canada?

The majority of participants resided in Nigeria for a period ranging from 15 to 30 years before relocating to Canada. Specifically, ³most of the younger speakers had spent 15 to 20 years in Nigeria, while the middle-aged speakers had lived in Nigeria for 21 to 30 years, and the older

³ Only one younger male participant (YM4) lived in Nigeria for less than 15-20 years. He, however, chose the lowest range provided in the survey (15-20 years).

speakers for 41 to 50 years. Figure 10 provides further information regarding the duration of participants' stay in Nigeria prior to their relocation to Canada.

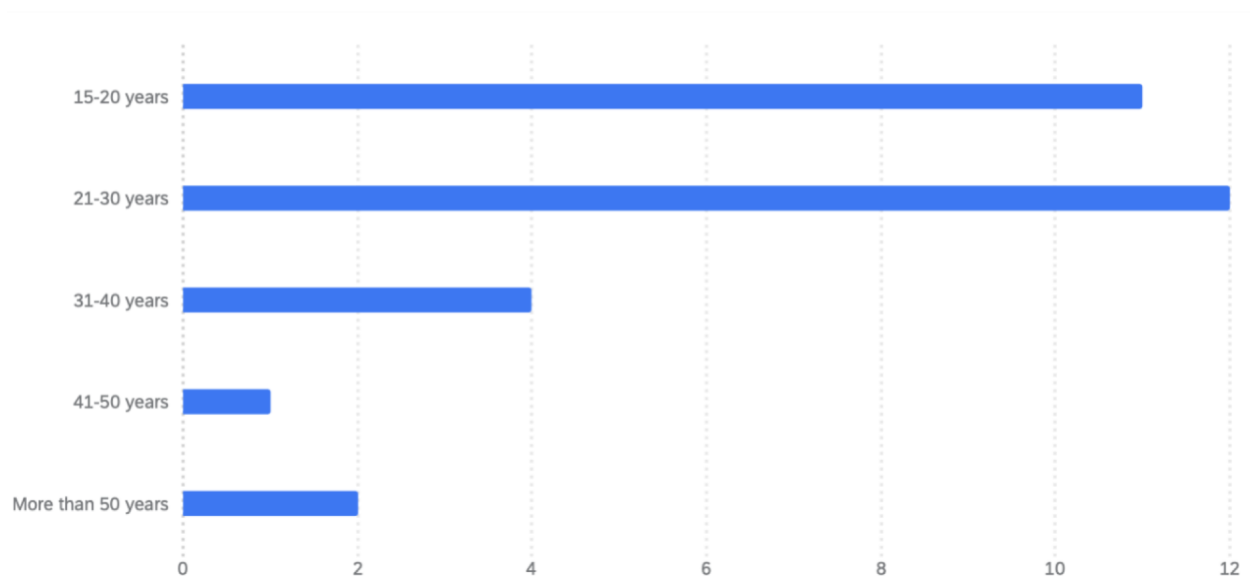


Figure 10: How long did you live in Nigeria (age when coming to Canada)?

5.2.1. Discussion and observation on the sociodemographic questionnaire findings

The socio-demographic information of participants in the study reveals a diverse representation of Nigerian ethnic groups and regions, including Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Ibibio, and Edo ethnic groups from various states across Nigeria. Participants' durations of stay in Canada vary, with significant numbers residing for 4-6 years or more than 10 years. This diversity in background and duration of residence provides valuable context for understanding their language preferences and proficiency, shedding light on how factors like acculturation and previous experiences in Nigeria influence their linguistic behaviours and cultural identities within the Canadian context.

The sociodemographic profile of participants in the study also provides valuable insights into their backgrounds, which may be crucial for understanding their language preferences, proficiency, and perceptions of voices speaking Standard English and Nigerian Pidgin (NP). As we see here, participants reported staying in Canada for 1-3 years (30%), 4-6 years (33%), 7-10 years (10%), and more than 10 years (27%). This distribution allows for analysis of how length of residence correlates with language preferences and proficiency. Before migrating to Canada, participants lived in Nigeria for varying durations, ranging from 15 to 50 years. This aspect provides context regarding their upbringing, primary language exposure, and cultural affiliations (Figure 10).

The detailed sociodemographic profile of participants underscores the diversity and complexity of linguistic practices within the Nigerian diaspora in Canada. This information should enrich the interpretation of language preferences, proficiency levels, and perceptions of voices speaking Standard English and Nigerian Pidgin in subsequent sections of the dissertation.

5.1. Language Preference and Proficiency

In the language proficiency and preference questionnaire, participants were presented with seven questions designed to assess their language use, preferences, and performance. The first question asked for their name, while the remaining questions focused on their language use and preferences. These questions were structured as follows:

1. If you had to describe how well you speak Nigerian Pidgin, which would you say?

The study participants self-reported their perceived proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) fluency. Specifically, 37% of the participants indicated they were fluent, 23% reported they spoke NP very well, 27% assessed their ability as moderately well, and 13% indicated they spoke NP hardly at all. These responses are further elaborated upon in the interview discussion, which will be presented in Chapter 6 below. A visual representation of these figures, generated through Qualtrics, is provided in Figure 11.

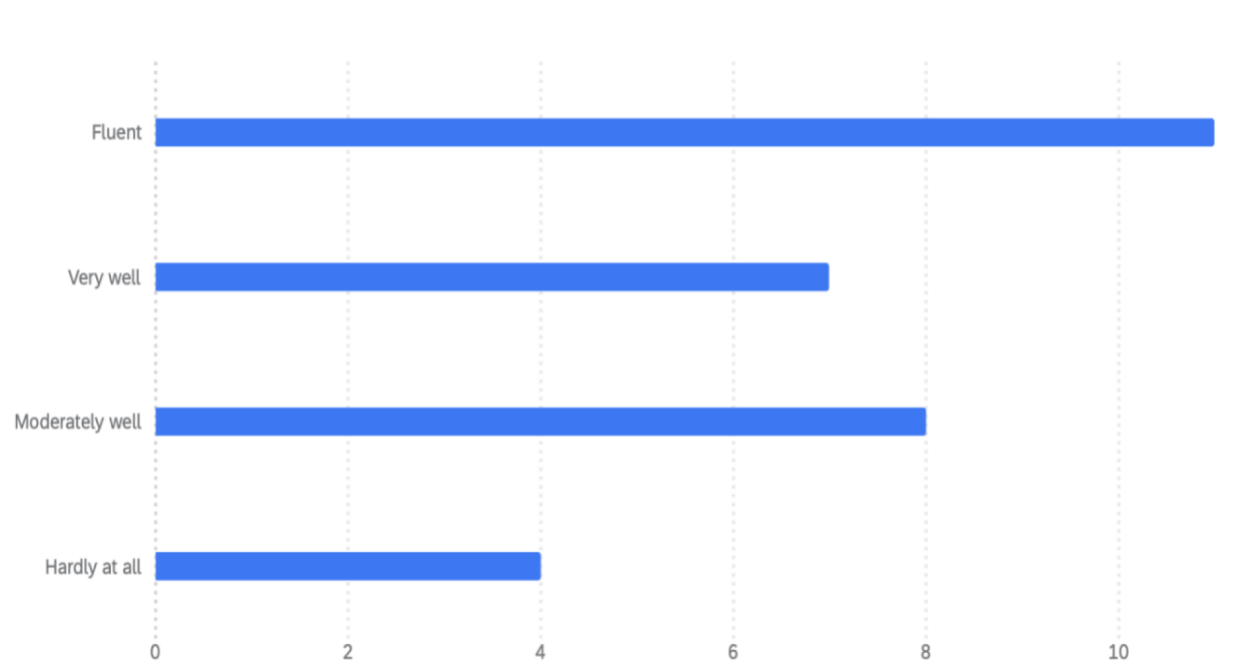


Figure 11: How well do you speak NP?

Through the systematic documentation of individual responses and the subsequent analysis of the data in Excel, Figure 12 clearly illustrates that participants in the middle-aged and older cohorts demonstrated the highest fluency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP). In contrast, several participants in the younger group showed limited proficiency, with some speaking NP only moderately well or not at all. There was no strong correlation with area of origin and fluency revealed in the Excel analysis.

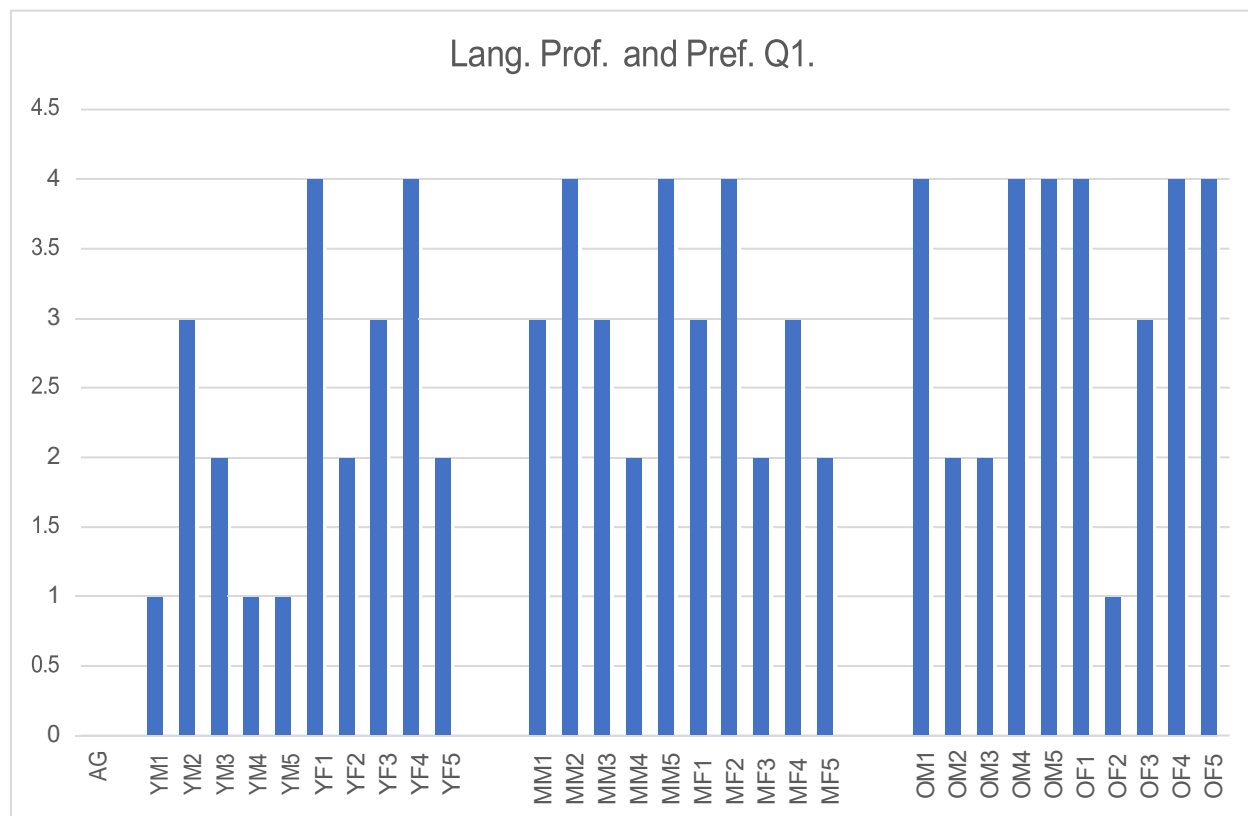


Figure 12: How well do you speak NP? 4 = Fluent, 3 = Very Well, 2 = Moderately Well, 1 = Hardly at All.

2. Which language do you use in conversations with other Nigerians who speak a different native language from yours in Canada? ((N/B: Nigerian English here refers to the English spoken in Nigeria that contains words from a native language of Nigeria (e.g., shey, abi, etc.)).

30% of the participants reported using Canadian/Standard English, while 43% indicated a preference for Nigerian English, and 20% of the participants identified Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as their likely choice of language. The distribution of these responses is depicted in Figure 13 below.

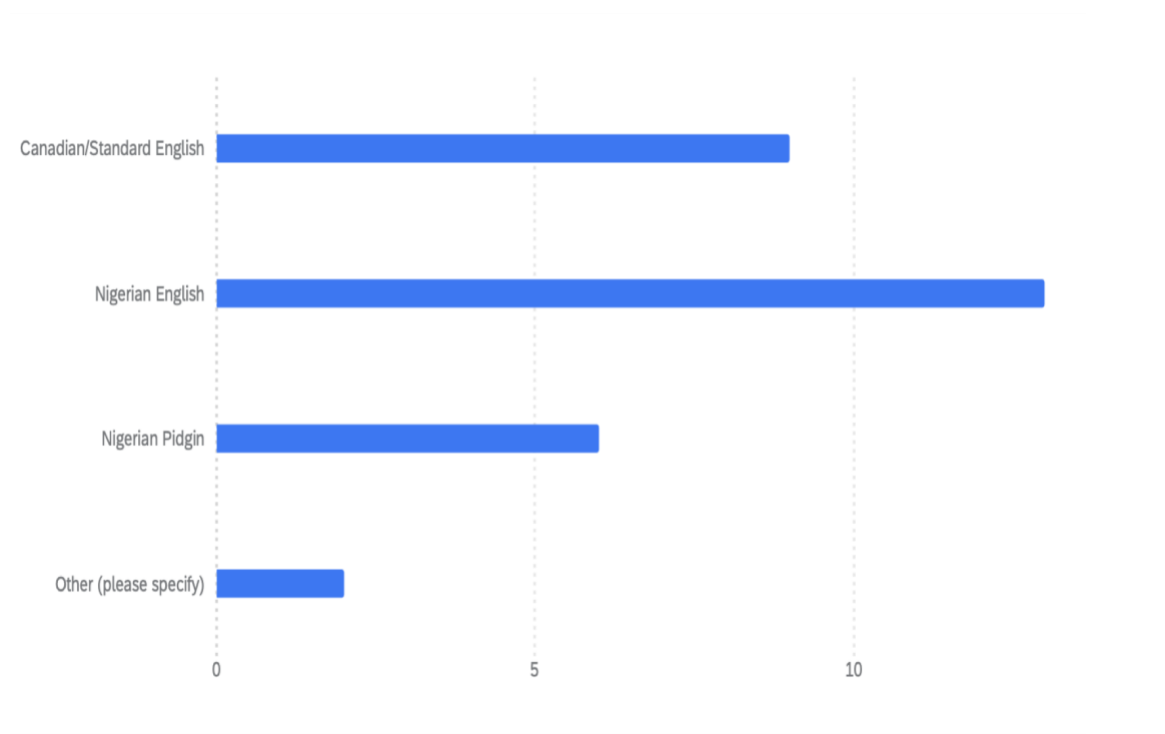


Figure 13: Which language do you use in conversations with other Nigerians who speak a different native language from yours in Canada?

Although the majority of participants preferred Nigerian English, followed by Canadian and Standard English, none of the younger group participants reported using Nigerian Pidgin (NP) when communicating with Nigerians from different ethnic groups. The two individuals who selected ‘other’ indicated that they used more than one of the three language options provided for this question in the survey. The distribution of these responses is clearly illustrated in Figure 14 below.

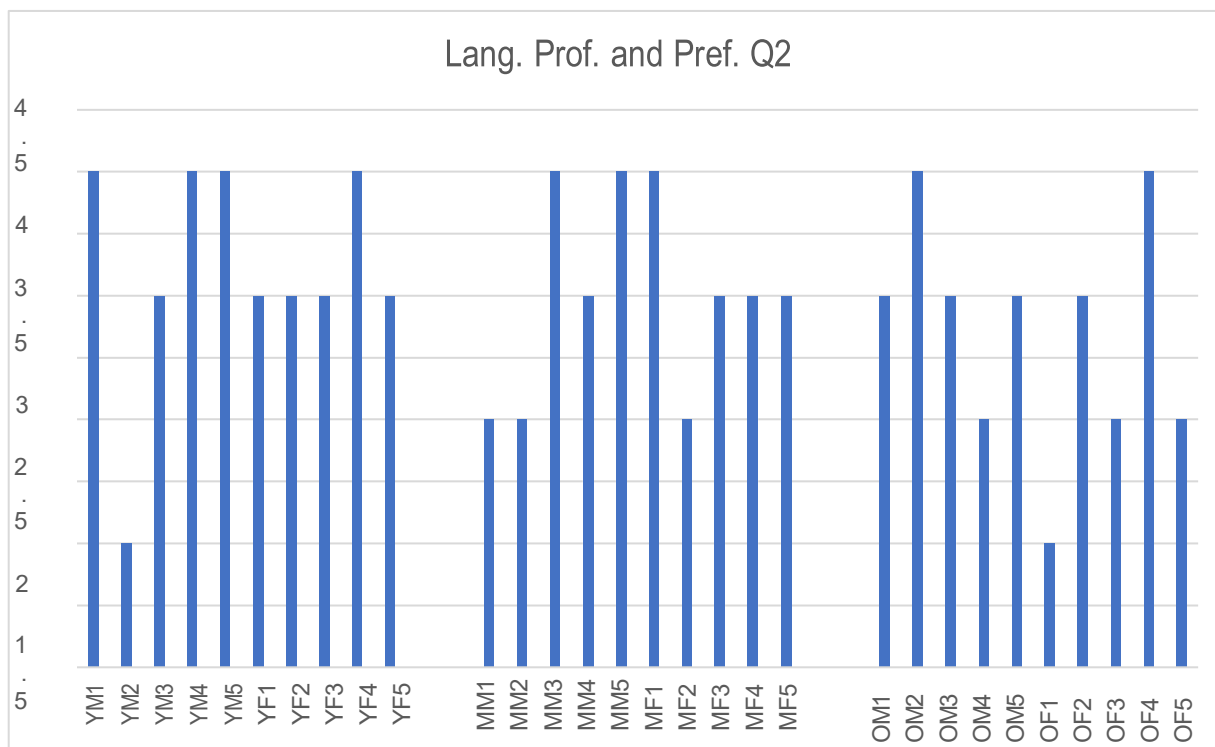


Figure 14: Which language do you use in conversations with other Nigerians who speak a different native language from yours in Canada? 4= Canadian/Standard English, 3= Nigerian English, 2= Nigerian Pidgin, 1= Other.

3. What language do you use in conversations with Nigerians from your ethnic group in Canada?

Ten participants selected their native Nigerian language, such as Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Esan, Iẗon, as their language of choice. Seven participants opted for Nigerian English, four chose Canadian/Standard English, and two selected Nigerian Pidgin (NP). Additionally, seven participants indicated that they use more than one of the specified options, with a preference primarily for their native Nigerian language. The distribution of these responses is presented in Figure 15 below.

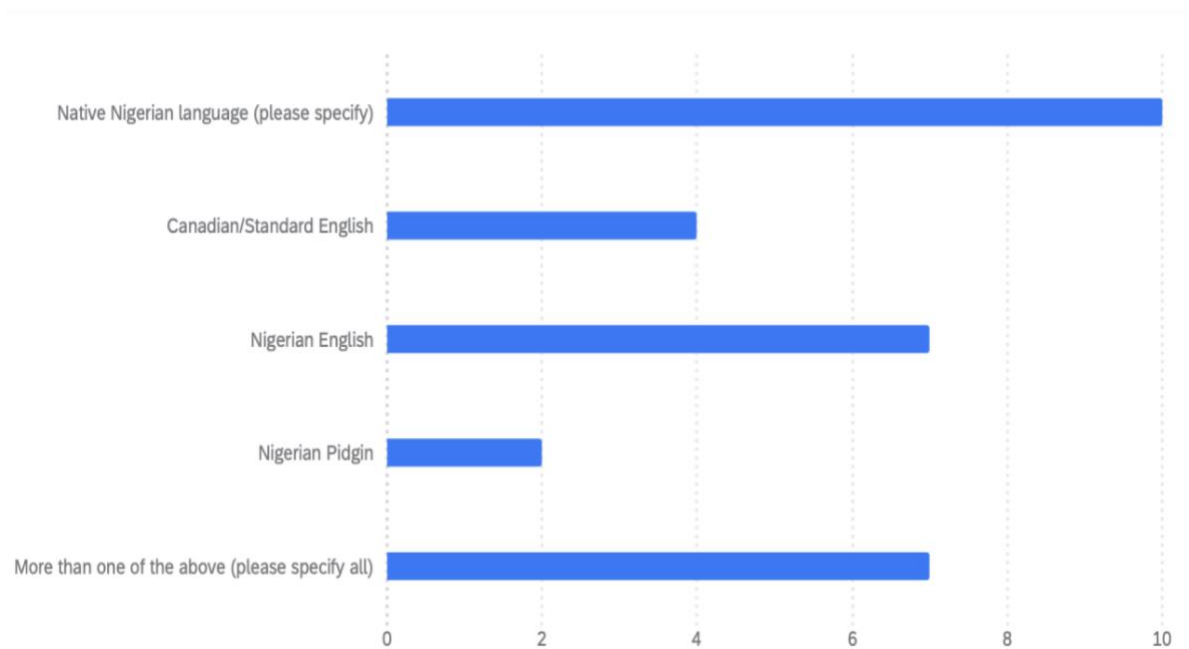


Figure 15: What language do you use in conversations with Nigerians from your ethnic group in Canada?

The findings from the language preference questionnaire reveal distinct patterns among the different age groups. The older group displayed a pronounced preference for their native languages, while the middle-aged group favoured Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin (NP), with some participants indicating a combination of both. In contrast, the younger group demonstrated a stronger preference for English. This distribution is illustrated in Figure 16 below. Participants' language preferences varied, with some selecting a single option from the four available choices, while others opted for multiple languages. Among the middle-aged group, MM3 (Debo) selected both English and Yoruba, MM4 (Babatunde) chose Yoruba and Nigerian English, MF1 (Onyinye) indicated all the specified languages along with Igbo, and MF4 (Ima-Obong) chose Ibibio, Nigerian English, and Nigerian Pidgin. In the older cohort, only OF1 (Mrs. Suzzy) selected both Nigerian Pidgin and Nigerian English. Within the younger group, YF1 (Temi) chose Nigerian English and Yoruba, while YF3 (Ifeoluwa) selected Yoruba and Nigerian

English. Figure 16 below presents a detailed tally of all the language preferences expressed by the participants by age and gender.

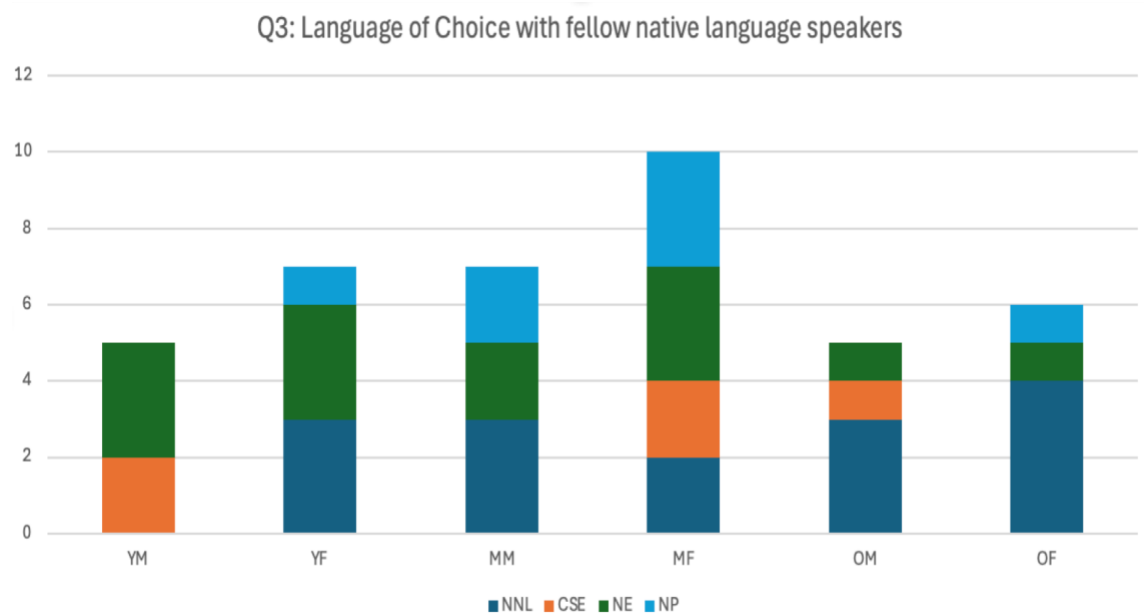


Figure 16: What language do you use in conversations with Nigerians from your ethnic group in Canada? NNL = Native Nigerian Languages, CSE = Canadian/Standard English, NE = Nigerian English, NP = Nigerian Pidgin.

I also examined whether participants' ethnicity influenced their language preferences when speaking to other Nigerians in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) who shared their native language. As seen in Figure 17 below, the findings revealed distinct patterns tied to ethnicity. Among Yoruba speakers, eight participants chose both Yoruba and Nigerian English (NE), four selected Nigerian Pidgin (NP), and one opted for Canadian English. Igbo speakers showed a balanced preference, with three selecting Canadian English, three choosing Igbo, and two opting for NE and NP. Edo participants exhibited diverse choices: the older female chose her native language, the older male and one younger male selected NE, and the middle-aged male chose

NP. For the Ibibio speakers, the middle-aged male chose his native language, one middle-aged female selected her native language, English, and NP, while the other opted for NE; a younger male also chose NE. Among Hausa participants, the older female chose her native language, while the younger female selected NE. Overall, NE was the most commonly chosen language across ethnic groups, particularly among younger and middle-aged participants, while older participants tended to prefer their native languages. NP was less frequently chosen and often used in combination with other languages. Canadian English was rarely selected, indicating its limited role in these interactions. These findings highlight how ethnicity, alongside generational factors, shapes participants' linguistic choices, reflecting a nuanced interaction between cultural identity and practical communication preferences.

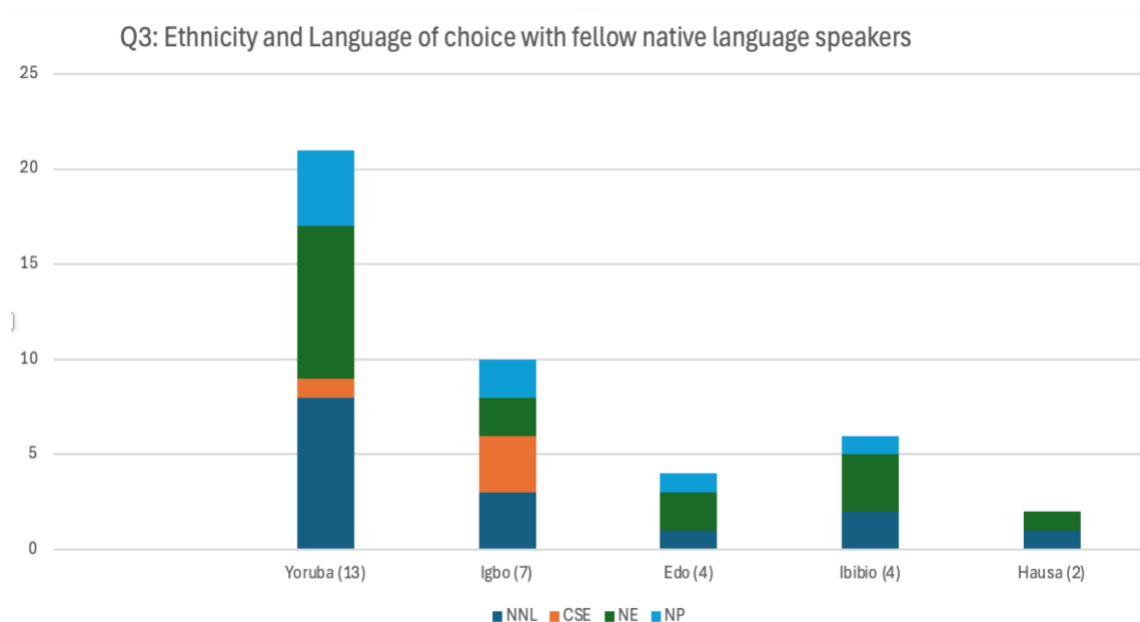


Figure 17: What language do you use in conversations with Nigerians from your ethnic group in Canada? NNL = Native Nigerian Languages, CSE = Canadian/Standard English, NE = Nigerian English, NP = Nigerian Pidgin.

4. How often do you use Canadian/Standard English in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada?

For this question, the majority of participants selected either ‘sometimes’ (indicating 30-60% of the time) or ‘most of the time’ (indicating about 60-90% of the time). Only four participants reported using it ‘all the time,’ while one participant indicated they ‘rarely’ used it. The distribution of responses, as generated in Qualtrics, is depicted in Figure 18 below.

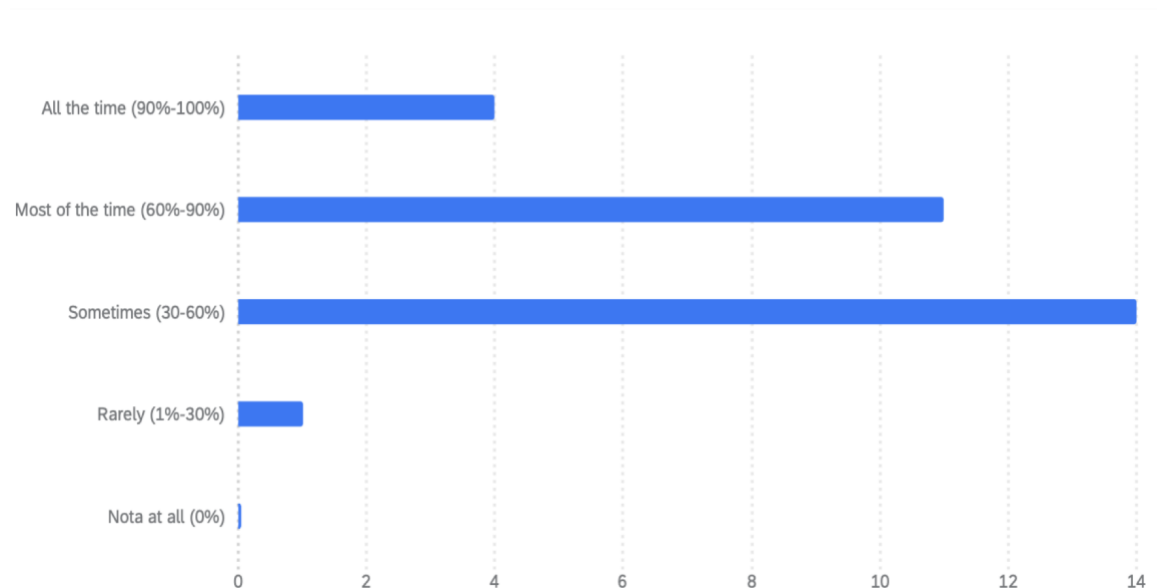


Figure 18: How often do you use Canadian/Standard English in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada?

Although the younger group reported using Canadian or Standard English more frequently than the middle-aged and older groups, the difference in usage when communicating with Nigerians from other ethnic groups appears not to be significant. This is more clearly illustrated in Figure 19 below.

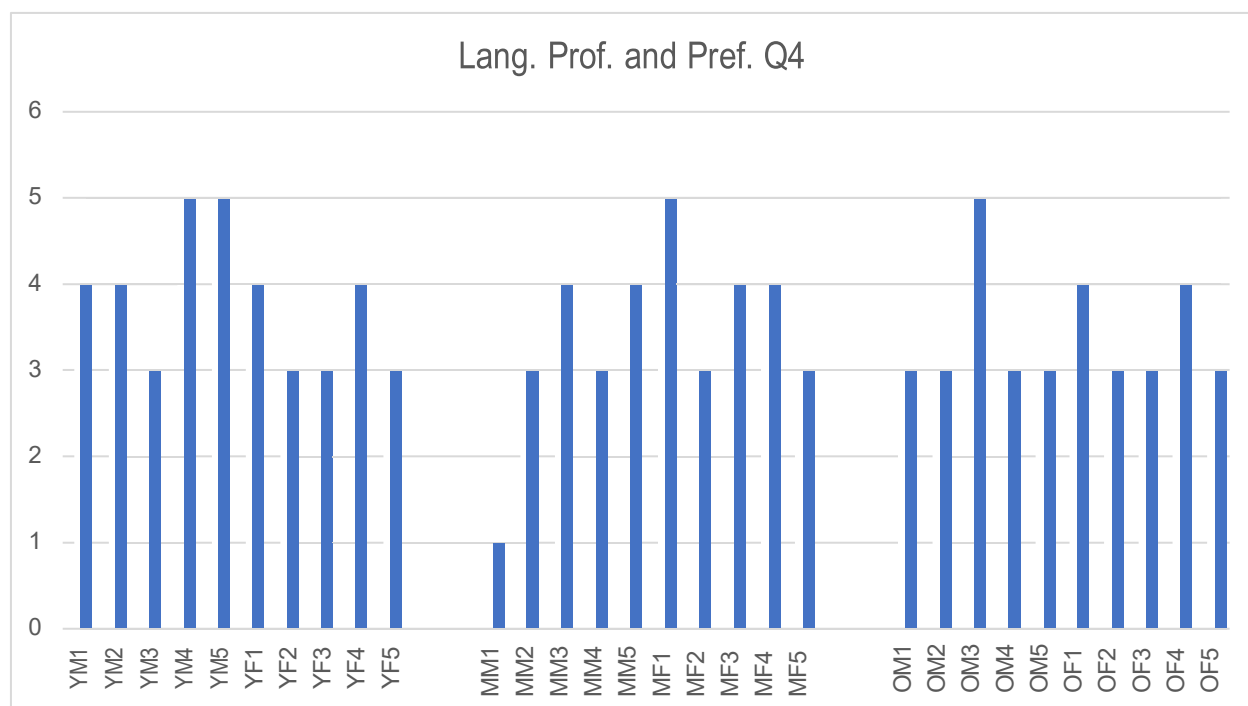


Figure 19: How often do you use Canadian/Standard English in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada? 5= All the time, 4= Most of the time, 3= Sometimes, 2= Rarely, 1=Not at all.

5. How often do you use Nigerian English in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada?

Most participants reported using Nigerian English when interacting with Nigerians from other ethnic groups in Canada. Specifically, 50% of participants indicated that they use Nigerian English ‘most of the time,’ 23% reported using it ‘sometimes,’ 17% stated they use it ‘all the time,’ and 7% indicated they ‘rarely’ use it. The distribution of these responses, as generated in Qualtrics, is illustrated in Figure 20 below.

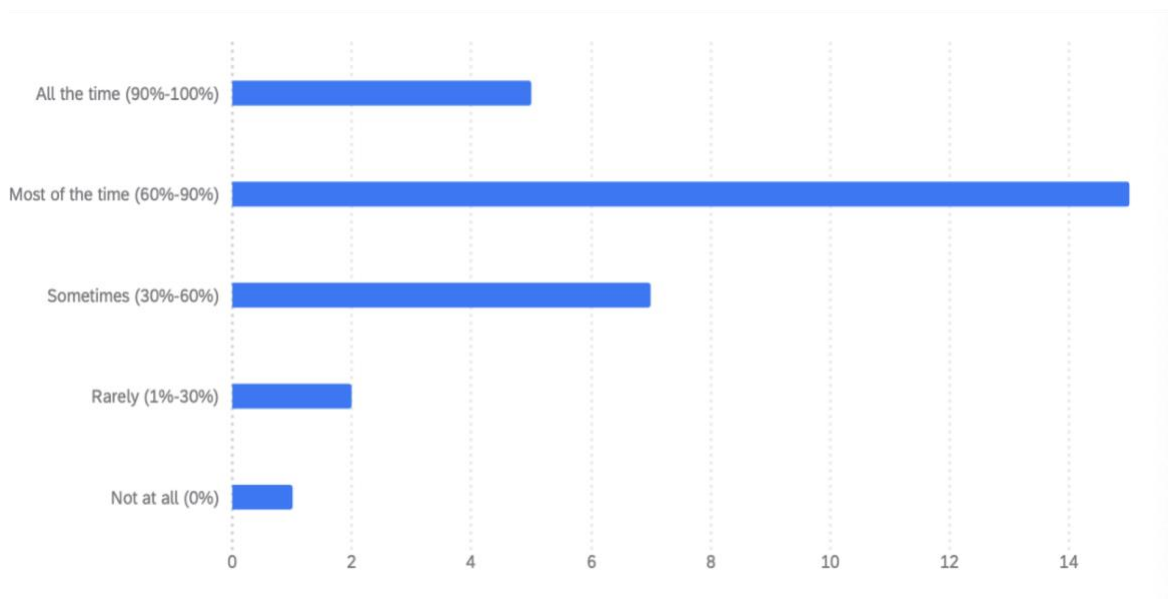


Figure 20: How often do you use Nigerian English in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada?

The middle-aged speakers appear to use Nigerian English more frequently than the other groups, although the difference is marginal as seen in Figure 21 below.

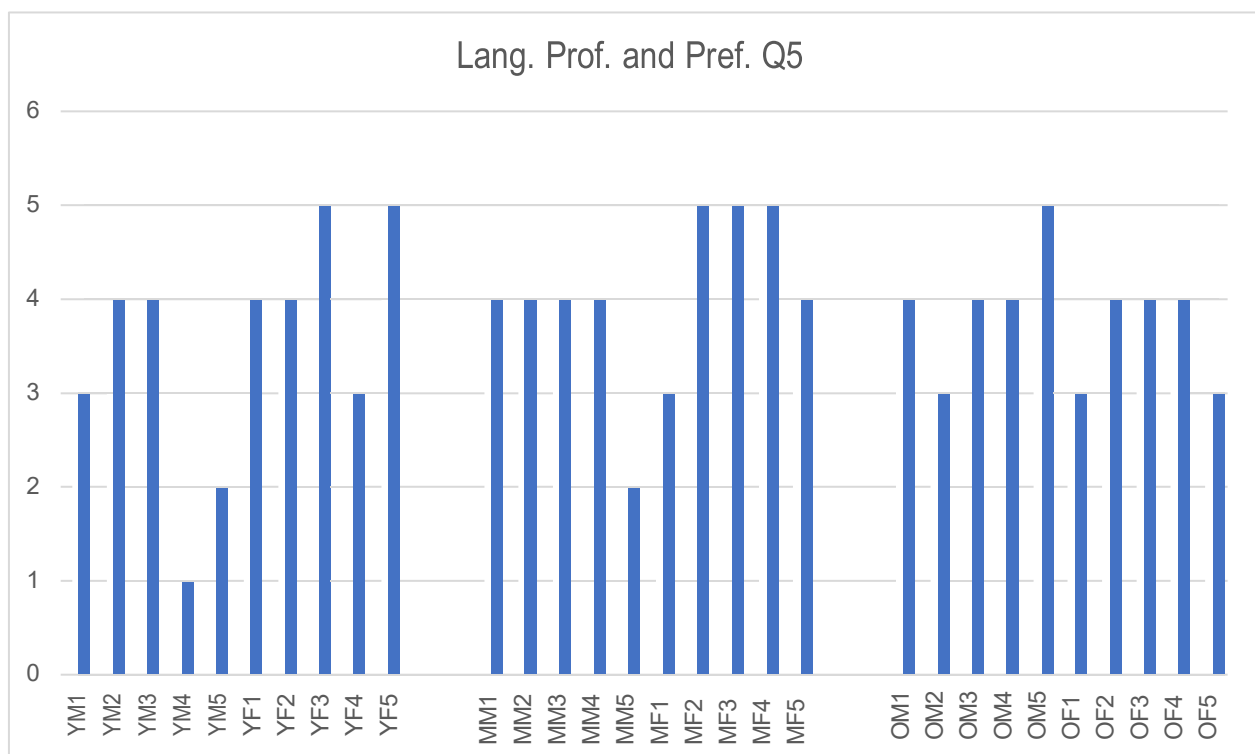


Figure 21: How often do you use Nigerian English in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada? 5= All the time, 4= Most of the time, 3= Sometimes, 2= Rarely, 1= Not at all.

6. How often do you use Nigerian Pidgin in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada?

For this question, participants generally reported infrequent use of Nigerian Pidgin. The majority indicated that they use NP ‘rarely’ in this context (37%), while 33% reported using it ‘sometimes,’ and 13% indicated they use it ‘most of the time.’ Additionally, 10% of participants stated that they use NP ‘all the time,’ and 2% chose the ‘not at all’ option. The summarized version is seen in Figure 22 below.

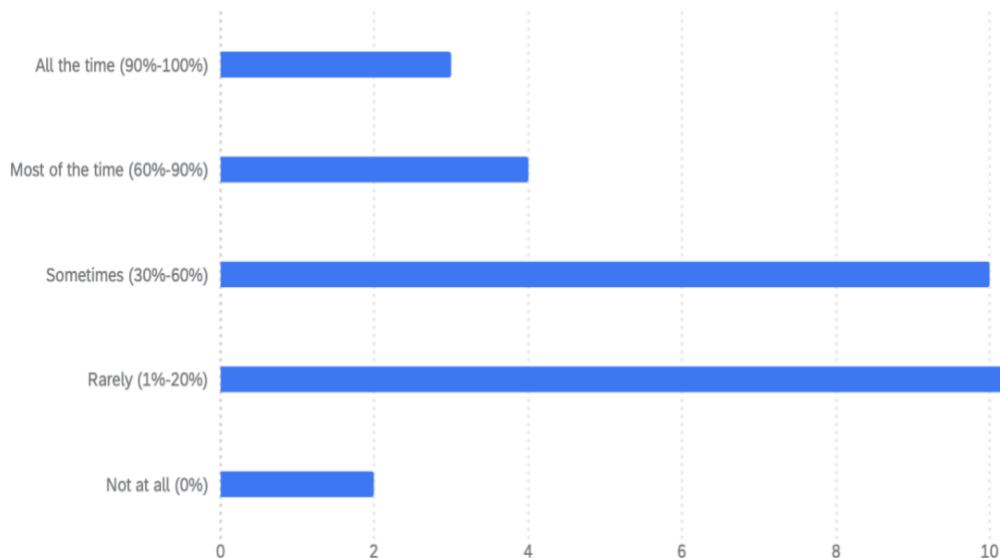


Figure 22: How often do you use Nigerian Pidgin in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada?

As illustrated in Figure 23 below, the middle-aged and older participants demonstrated a greater preference for Nigerian Pidgin compared to the younger group, as hypothesized in the study.

Specifically, 7 out of 10 middle-aged participants reported using NP ‘sometimes,’ ‘most of the time,’ or ‘all the time’ when interacting with Nigerians from other ethnic groups in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Similarly, 6 out of 10 older participants indicated the same levels of usage. In contrast, more than half of the younger participants reported either not using Nigerian Pidgin at all or using it rarely.

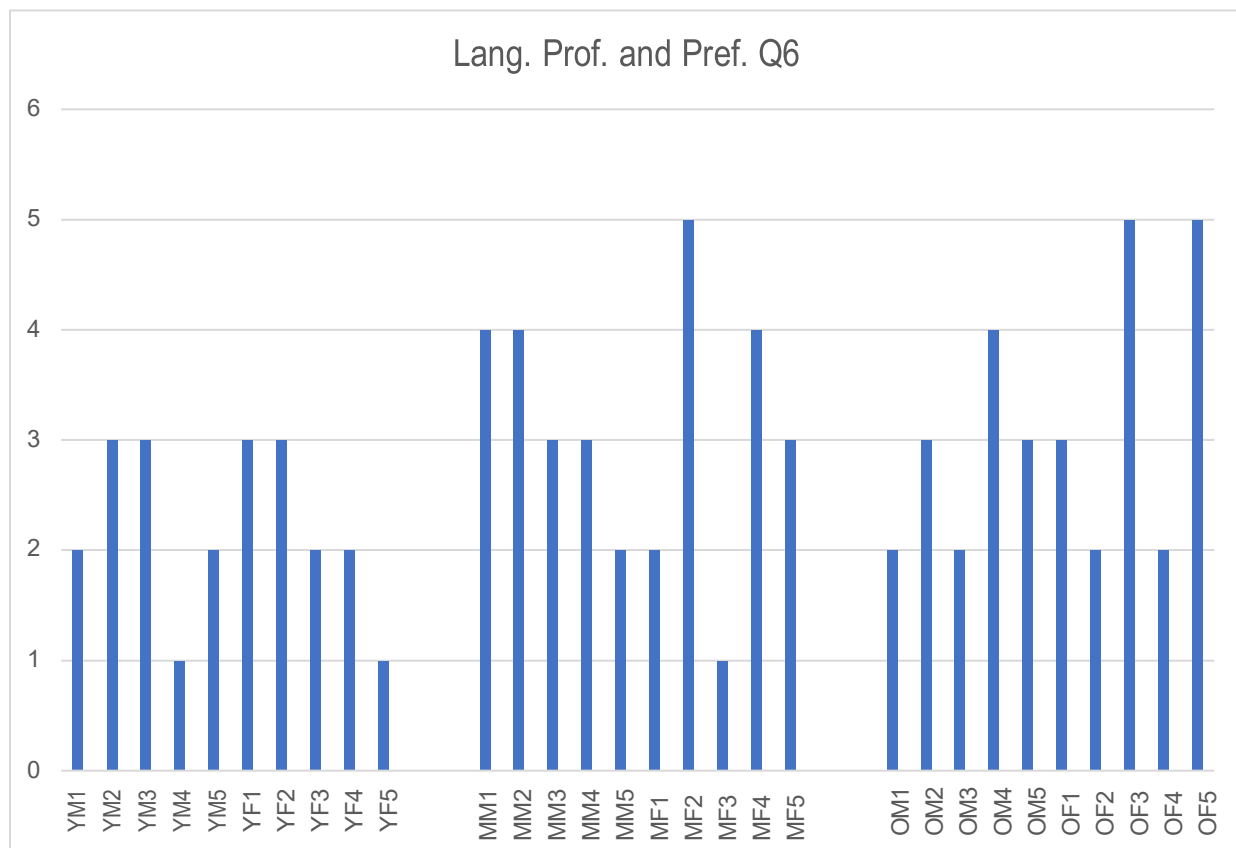


Figure 23: How often do you use Nigerian Pidgin in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada? 5= All the time, 4= Most of the time, 3= Sometimes, 2= Rarely, 1= Not at all.

Discussion/Observation on language proficiency and language preference result

Although there is little to no difference found in gender for the language preference and proficiency survey, the social factor of ‘age’ seemed to reveal some patterns. Older speakers favor Nigerian Pidgin and native Nigerian languages, placing less emphasis on Canadian/Standard English. Middle-aged speakers exhibit a balanced use of Nigerian Pidgin and Nigerian English, with moderate use of Canadian/Standard English and native languages. Younger speakers prefer Canadian/Standard English, use Nigerian English more frequently than Nigerian Pidgin, and exhibit less frequent use of native Nigerian languages. These patterns reflect how language preference and usage vary significantly across age groups, likely influenced by factors such as cultural identity, integration into Canadian society, and generational shifts in language attitudes. These insights may also be crucial for interpreting the perceptual ratings of voices speaking Standard English and Nigerian Pidgin in subsequent parts of the study.

Ethnicity further emerged as a factor influencing language choice when speaking with other Nigerians who share the same native language in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Participants often preferred their native languages within their ethnic groups, underscoring the importance of language in cultural identity maintenance and community bonding. For example, Yoruba speakers tended to favor both Yoruba and Nigerian English, while Igbo speakers exhibited a balanced preference for Igbo and Canadian English. Edo speakers demonstrated diverse choices, including native language, Nigerian English, and Nigerian Pidgin, depending on age and context. Ibibio and Hausa participants also exhibited varied patterns, often blending native languages with Nigerian English. These findings highlight how ethnicity intersects with age to shape linguistic preferences, reflecting cultural preservation and practical communication needs within the Nigerian diaspora.

The preference for using native Nigerian languages within ethnic groups highlights their pivotal role in preserving cultural heritage and fostering community bonds. Despite the prominence of Canadian/Standard English and Nigerian English in intergroup interactions, native languages remain essential for maintaining cultural traditions. Furthermore, the frequent use of Canadian/Standard English and Nigerian English underscores their roles as critical tools for communication and integration within diverse Nigerian communities in Canada, facilitating social cohesion and enabling individuals to navigate both intra- and intergroup interactions effectively in this diaspora.

The limited use of Nigerian Pidgin in intergroup settings (Figure 23) may also reflect its perceived informality and situational use among Nigerian diaspora communities. Research on language attitudes and perceptions suggests that non-standard varieties like NP may carry stigmatized or colloquial connotations, influencing its role in formal communication settings (Labov, 1972; Milroy, 2001). This perception may also influence how voices speaking Nigerian Pidgin are perceived in terms of attributes like intelligence, modernity, and education, as shown in the rating exercises (matched-guise test, 5.4). Understanding participants' language preferences and proficiency helps contextualize their judgments of voices based on attributes like intelligence, kindness, and education. Research on language attitudes suggests that perceptions of linguistic variation can influence social judgments and stereotypes (Preston, 1989; Garrett, 2010). These perceptions can shape social interactions and affect individuals' self-esteem and identity within multicultural contexts (Labov, 2006). This contextualized understanding contributes to broader discussions on language variation, identity, and social perception within diaspora communities, offering insights into how language choices reflect and shape cultural experiences and social interactions.

5.2. Matched-Guise Test

After completing the sociodemographic and language proficiency and preference questionnaires, participants engaged in a voice evaluation task. This task involved rating the voices of both male and female speakers who spoke in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and Standard English. The ratings were conducted using a 5-point semantic differential scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," across various attributes, including normalcy, beauty, intelligence, modernity, kindness, educational level, manners, and perceived wealth. Before the evaluation, participants were asked to record their names and identify the language they heard at each interval before proceeding to rate the voices. The voices were strategically compiled into a single recording, with pauses inserted at specific intervals to allow participants to rate the voices relevant to this study, specifically, the English and NP guises.

The sequence began with a female voice speaking in Igbo, followed by the first male voice speaking in English. After rating the male English voice, participants then heard and rated the female English voice. To ensure that participants did not recognize that the same individuals were performing both the English and NP guises, the task included additional voices: a Yoruba male guise and a Hausa female guise were presented before the participants rated the male and female NP guises. This order of presentation, commonly employed in matched-guise tests, was designed to minimize the likelihood of participants favoring one voice tone over another based on recognition. Consequently, the sequence of voices was as follows: Igbo, English male, English female, Yoruba, Hausa, and finally, the male and female NP guises. The matched-guise test was restricted to evaluations of the English and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) guises. This decision was made to optimize time efficiency and to focus on NP and English, the primary languages of

interest in this study. The content of the recordings remained consistent across all guises. The English version of the message is provided below, with other language versions included in the appendix.

Title: The Importance of family (adopted from: TOPPR- 500 words essay on importance of family for students and children)

In today's world, when everything is losing its meaning, we need to realize the importance of family more than ever. While the world is becoming more modern and advanced, the meaning of family and what it stands for remains the same.

A family is made strong through a number of factors. The most important one is, of course, love. You instantly think of unconditional love when you think of family. It is the first source of love you receive in your life. It teaches you the meaning of love, which you carry on forever in your heart. Families boost our confidence and make us feel loved. They are the pillars of our strength who never fall instead keep us strong, so we become better people. We learn the values of love, respect, faith, hope, caring, cultures, ethics, traditions, and everything else that concerns us through our families.

The following are the general results found for each English and NP guise.

5.2.1. Participants' rating of Standard English vs. NP male guises.

The summary of the rating for the male guise is seen below in Figures 24 and 25.

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the individual (male) in the recording in terms of the following: 30 ⓘ > ...

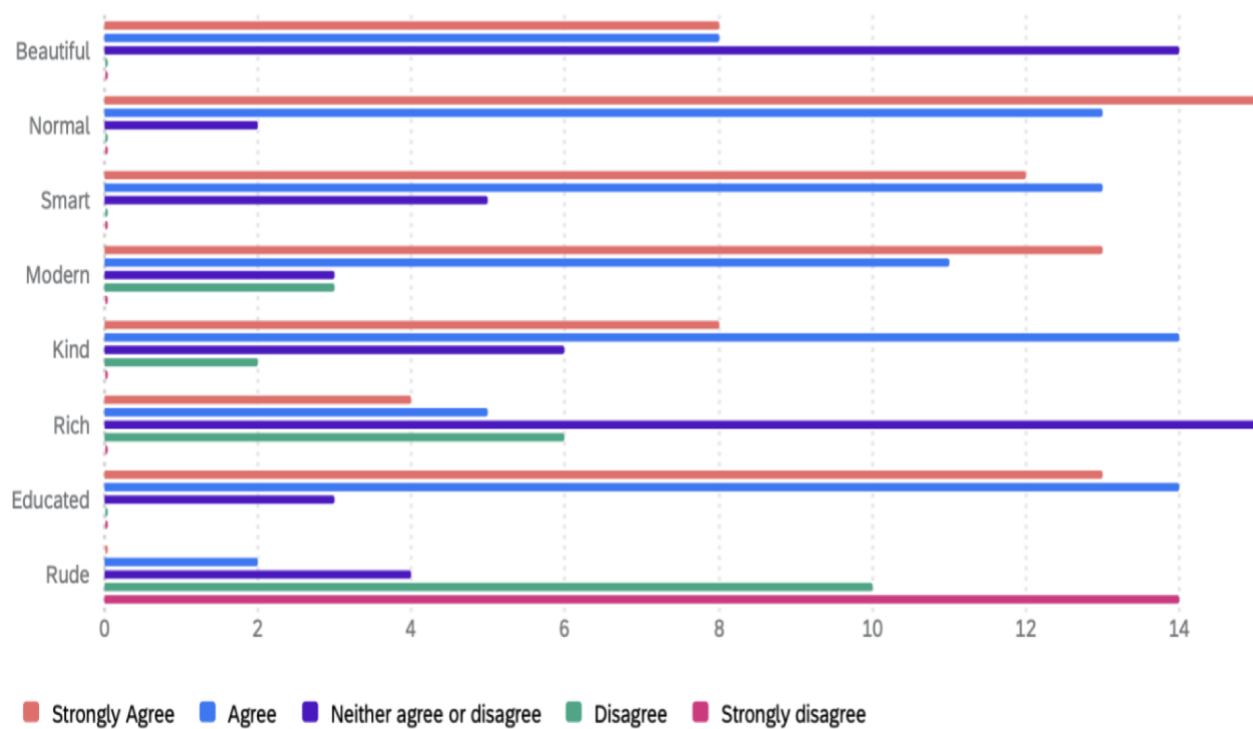


Figure 24: Overall participants rating of the Standard English male guise

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the individual (male) in the recording in terms of the following: 30 ⓘ >

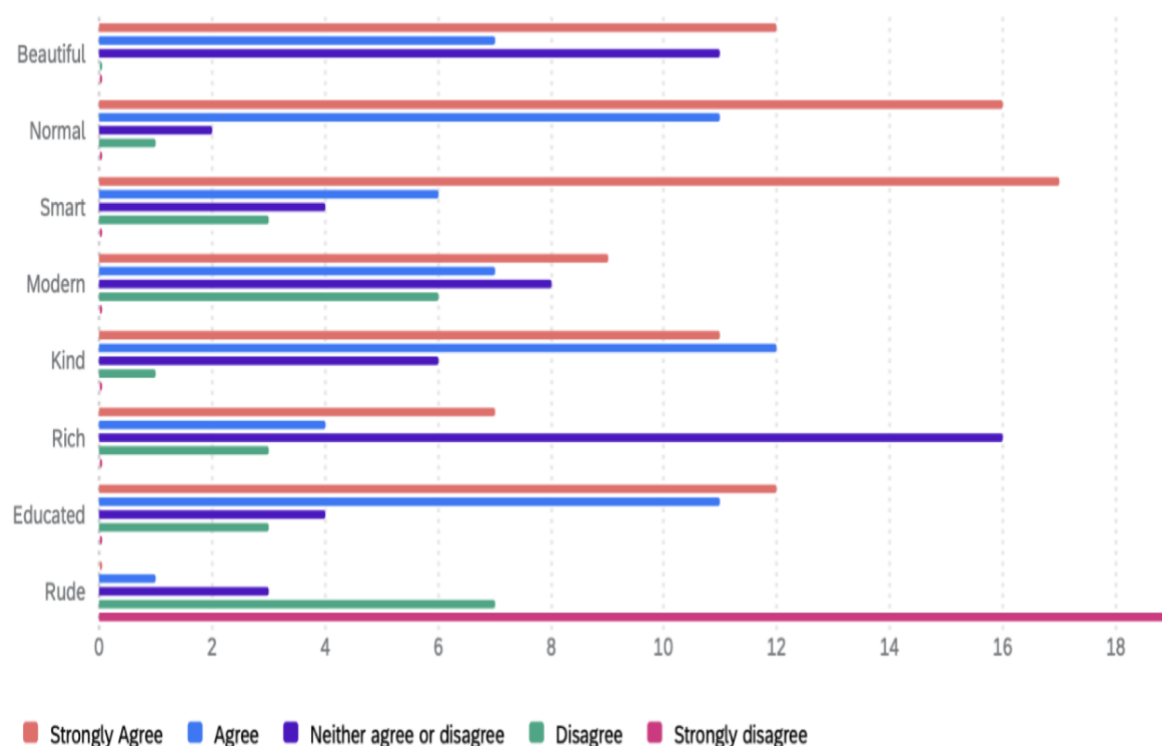


Figure 25: Overall participants' rating of the male NP guise.

Beautiful:

For the Standard English male guise, 8 participants strongly agreed, 8 agreed, and 14 were neutral regarding the beauty of the voice. This suggests that the language and voice were not perceived as unpleasant. Notably, all younger male speakers neither agreed nor disagreed on this point. Among the middle-aged group, more men than women were neutral. This points to a gender difference in the perception of beauty, with a higher proportion of male speakers

expressing uncertainty. In contrast, both older speakers and female participants rated the Standard English guise as more beautiful on average. As Figure 26 below shows,

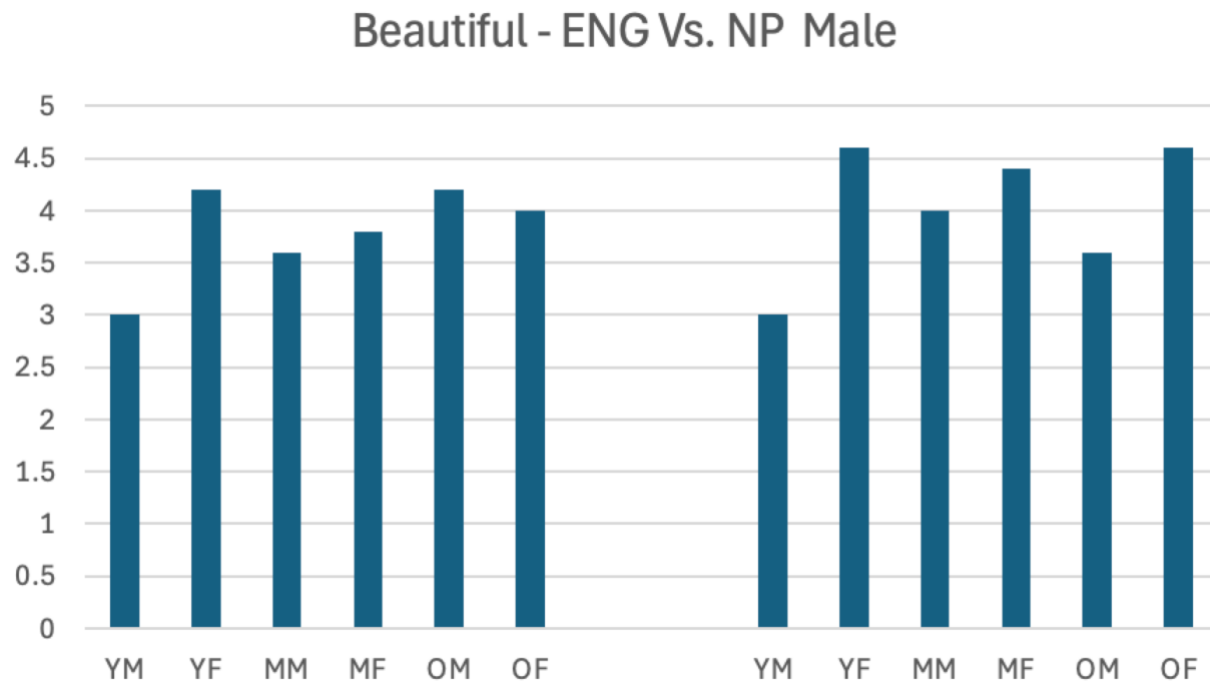


Figure 26: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP male guises for ‘beautiful’ by age and gender. 5= Strongly agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neither agree nor disagree, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly disagree.

When evaluating the Nigerian Pidgin male guise for beauty, the majority of participants rated it positively, even more than the English guise, with 19 agreeing that the voice was beautiful. This positive response for the NP guise could challenge prior expectations that Pidgin would be perceived negatively. A sociolinguistic explanation might suggest that beauty is a socially constructed perception influenced by societal attitudes toward language and speaker identity (Labov, 1972; Holmes, 2008). While Standard English is associated with social prestige (Baugh, 2000), NP’s beauty could be rooted in its authentic, cultural resonance, which might contribute to positive evaluations, especially among those familiar with Nigerian contexts.

Normal: The Standard English male guise was largely rated as normal, with 28 participants agreeing or strongly agreeing and only 2 remaining neutral. This indicates a greater appreciation of the ‘normalcy’ of Standard English, especially among women and older participants as seen in Figure 27, which might align with social expectations that view Standard English as the "norm" for educated individuals (Milroy & Gordon, 2003).

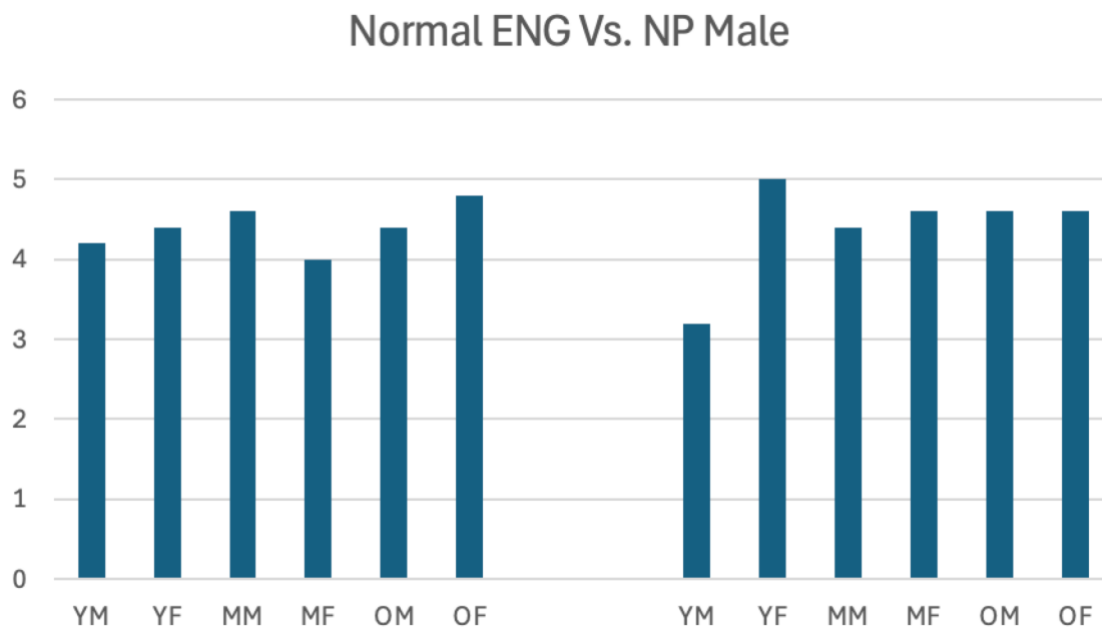


Figure 27: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP male guises for ‘normal’ by age and gender. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

For the NP male guise, the majority of participants also viewed the language as normal. However, a disagreement from one younger male participant (YM1 Eli) illustrates a potential ideological divide, as younger speakers might view NP differently from older or female speakers. Sociolinguists have discussed the concept of "linguistic insecurity" (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003), where speakers may distance themselves from a language variety they

perceive as non-standard. Eli's response may reflect such a perception, positioning NP as less "normal" than Standard English, in line with its sociolinguistic stigmatization in some contexts.

Smart: When evaluating the "smartness" attribute, both the Standard English and NP male guises were rated highly. For Standard English, 25 participants agreed or strongly agreed with the speaker's smartness, with older male and female speakers and younger females consistently rating it positively. This aligns with a sociolinguistic principle where Standard English is often associated with education, professionalism, and higher social status (Baugh, 2000). However, the NP guise as seen in Figure 28 below, showed some disagreements (3 participants in the younger group), suggesting that perceptions of "smartness" are not uniformly attributed to all language varieties. This could also be because of their limited fluency in NP, as seen in their rating of their language proficiency.

This discrepancy may be interpreted through the lens of linguistic prestige and the ideological distinction between Standard English and vernacular varieties like NP, which are often not associated with "formal" education (Holmes, 2008).

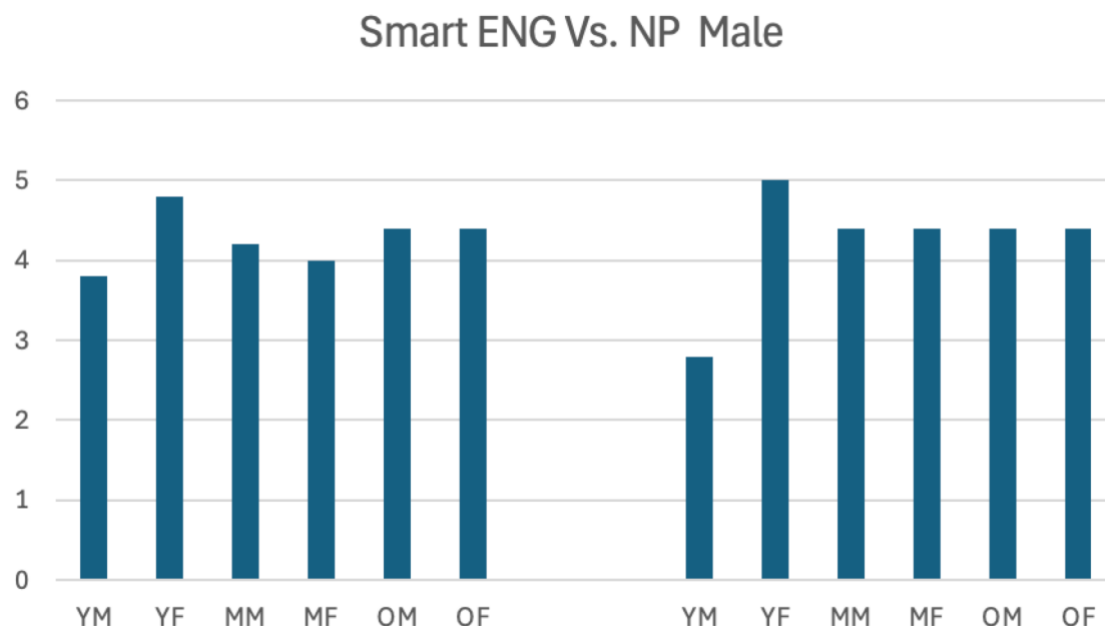


Figure 28: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP male guises for ‘smart’ by age and gender. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Modern: The Standard English male guise was somewhat rated as modern, indicating a possible consensus on its contemporary appeal (see Figure 29 below). This contrasts with the NP guise, where half of the participants did not perceive the voice as modern. The lower ratings for NP might be explained by the association of modernity with global, standardized language forms like English. As sociolinguistic studies have shown, language varieties often gain or lose prestige depending on their perceived modernity, with globalized languages like English often being framed as more modern and cosmopolitan (Crystal, 2003).

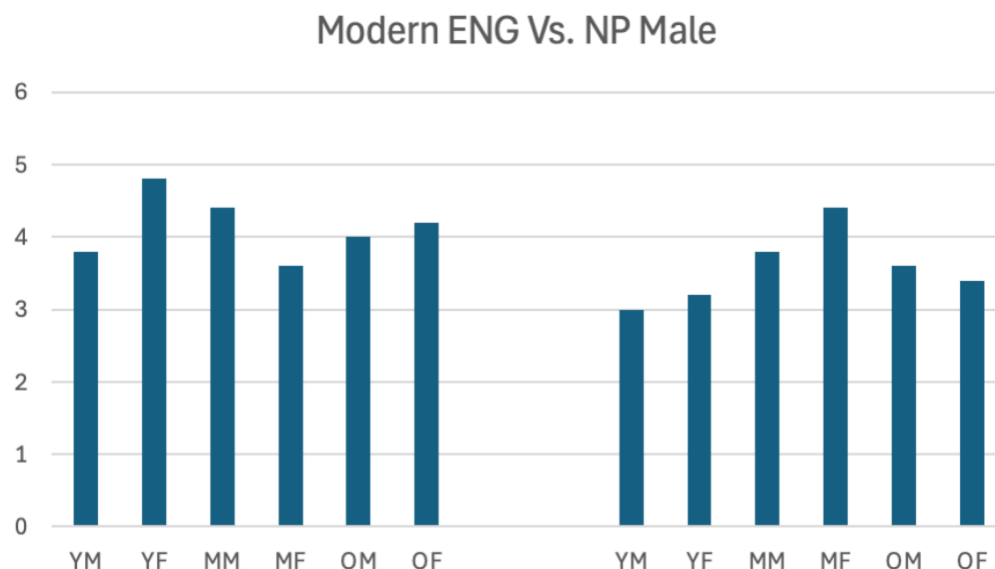


Figure 29: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP male guises for ‘modern’ by age and gender. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Kind: Regarding kindness, most participants perceived the Standard English male guise as kind, although a few remained neutral. Interestingly, two male speakers disagreed with this attribute, which could indicate that certain tones or mannerisms associated with the Standard English guise may not resonate with all listeners in terms of warmth. This reflects the sociolinguistic notion that perceived speaker characteristics, such as kindness, are shaped by both language and social context (Gumperz, 1982). For NP, the majority still viewed the speaker as kind, though 6 participants remained neutral. Interestingly, the male was rated higher in kindness when speaking NP than English, as seen in Figure 30 below. This again highlights how language varieties can convey different social meanings, with NP perhaps being perceived as more approachable or inclusive due to its widespread use in informal, familiar settings.

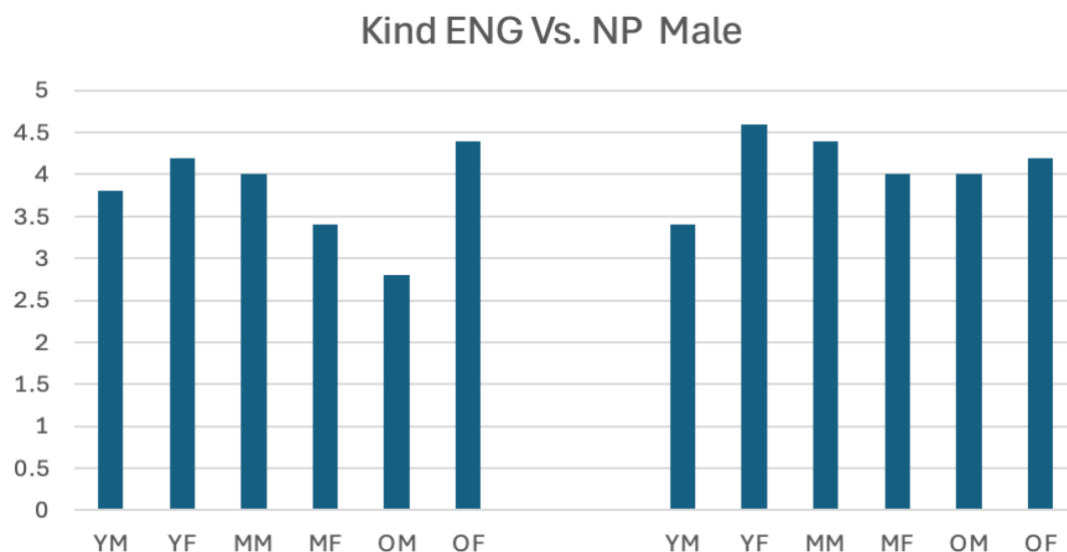


Figure 30: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP male guise for 'kind' by age and gender. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Rich: The Standard English male guise was perceived as less indicative of wealth, with 15 participants neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the notion of the speaker's wealth. The use of Nigerian-accented English could explain this, as accents tied to Nigerian English or Pidgin may not carry the same connotations of wealth as British or North American accents (Coupland, 2007). In contrast, for the NP guise, although similar neutral ratings were given, indicating that participants had difficulty associating wealth with either language variety; the male speaker was judged richer when he spoke NP than English, as seen in Figure 31 below. This highlights the complex relationship between accent, social status, and wealth perceptions (Lippi-Green, 2012).

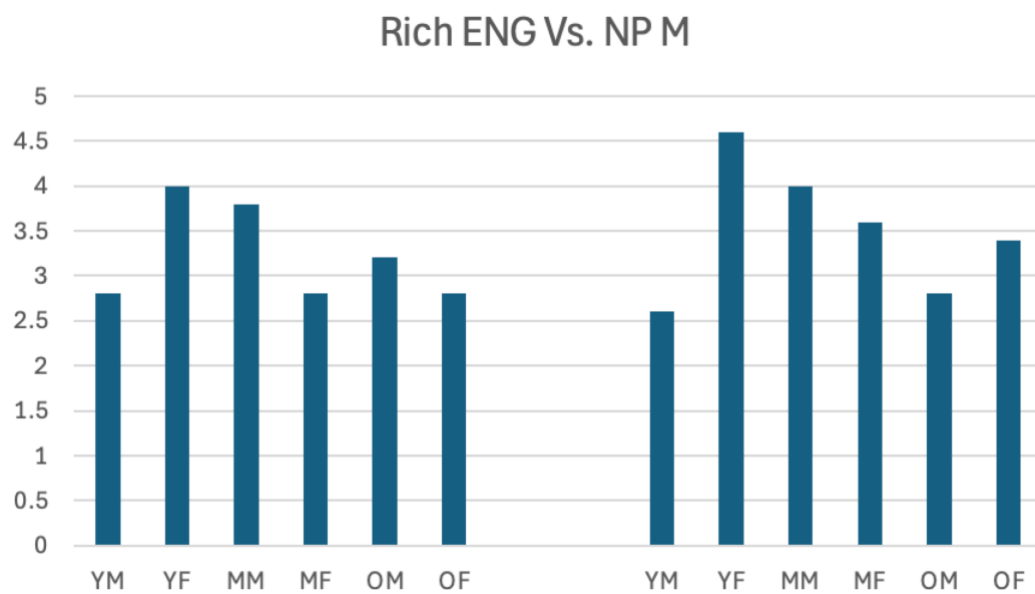


Figure 31: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP male guise for 'rich' by age and gender. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Educated: For both the male Standard English and NP guises, participants generally agreed that the speaker was educated, with ratings closely aligned for both varieties except for the younger male speakers who were neutral for this attribute when rating the NP guise. This may be due to their low fluency and use of NP, or the widespread view that education in Nigeria, at least in formal settings, is closely linked with proficiency in Standard English (Holmes, 2008). This suggests that while NP may not always be perceived as "formal," it is still valued in terms of communicative competence in Nigerian contexts. The distribution of these responses by age and gender is illustrated in Figure 32 below.

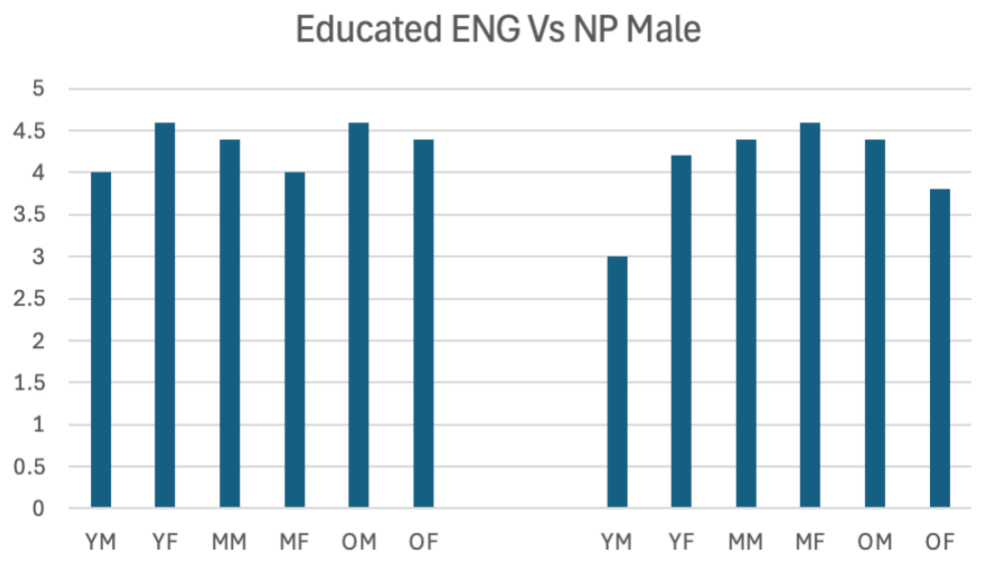


Figure 32: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP male guise for ‘educated’ by age and gender. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Rude: Perceptions of rudeness were minimal for the Standard English male guise, with the majority disagreeing with this assessment. However, two older male participants perceived the speaker as rude. This small anomaly may reflect individual biases or the way particular speech patterns are interpreted by different demographic groups. Similarly, the NP male guise also received low ratings for rudeness, aligning with the general positive reception of NP as an informal, social language that fosters inclusivity rather than hierarchy. See Figure 33 below.

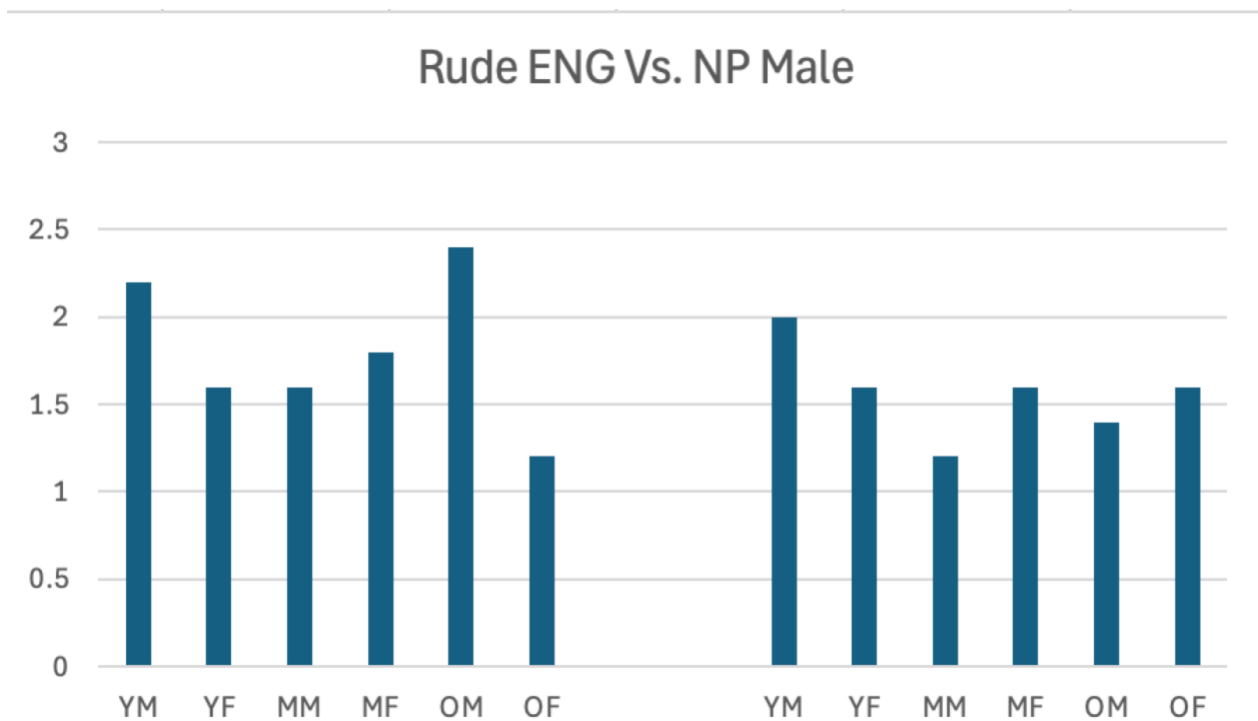


Figure 33: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP male guise for ‘rude’ by age and gender. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Although the ratings for the male English guise show some variance by age, with older speakers generally providing slightly higher ratings (see table 2 below), the gender-based averages reveal a notable trend: women tended to rate the male English guise more favorably across almost all attributes compared to men. It may be because deep or resonant male voices are often associated with higher status and competence (Puts et al., 2007), which might explain why women rate male guises more favorably in attributes like intelligence or authority.

The comparison between Standard English and NP male guises reveals significant gender-based and age-based differences in perceptions, highlighting the social roles that language plays in identity construction (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Standard English is often associated with higher education and formal status, while Nigerian Pidgin is perceived

more as an informal, social language. These findings are consistent with the notion of "linguistic marketplace" (Bourdieu, 1991), where certain languages or varieties are valued more highly than others depending on the social context. The gendered perceptions also speak to the ways in which social expectations influence language attitudes, with women more likely to rate Standard English positively in attributes like "smart" and "educated" (Puts et al., 2007), but this was not really the case for the male guises as seen in Tables 2 and 3 below.

<i>Beautiful</i>	Younger	3.6	Middle-aged	3.7	Older	4.1
	Male	3.6	Female	4		
<i>Normal</i>	Younger	4.3	Middle-aged	4.3	Older	4.6
	Male	4.4	Female	4.3		
<i>Smart</i>	Younger	4.3	Middle-aged	4.1	Older	4.3
	Male	4.1	Female	4.3		
<i>Modern</i>	Younger	4.3	Middle-aged	4	Older	4.1
	Male	4	Female	4.2		
<i>Kind</i>	Younger	4.3	Middle-aged	3.7	Older	4
	Male	3.8	Female	4		
<i>Rich</i>	Younger	3.4	Middle-aged	3.3	Older	3
	Male	3.2	Female	3.2		
<i>Educated</i>	Younger	4.3	Middle-aged	4.2	Older	4.5
	Male	4.3	Female	4.3		
<i>Rude</i>	Younger	1.9	Middle-aged	1.7	Older	1.8
	Male	2	Female	1.5		

Table 2: Average distribution of participants' ratings of all attributed for English male guise

<i>Beautiful</i>	Younger	3.8	Middle-aged	4.2	Older	4.1
	Male	3.5	Female	4.5		
<i>Normal</i>	Younger	4.1	Middle-aged	4.5	Older	4.6
	Male	4	Female	4.7		
<i>Smart</i>	Younger	3.9	Middle-aged	4.4	Older	4.4
	Male	3.8	Female	4.6		
<i>Modern</i>	Younger	3.1	Middle-aged	4.1	Older	3.5
	Male	3.4	Female	3.6		
<i>Kind</i>	Younger	4	Middle-aged	4.2	Older	4.1
	Male	3.9	Female	4.2		
<i>Rich</i>	Younger	3.6	Middle-aged	3.8	Older	3.1
	Male	3.1	Female	3.8		
<i>Educated</i>	Younger	3.6	Middle-aged	4.5	Older	4.1
	Male	3.9	Female	4.2		
<i>Rude</i>	Younger	1.8	Middle-aged	1.4	Older	1.5
	Male	1.5	Female	1.6		

Table 3: Average distribution of participants' ratings for all attributes for NP male guise

Next, I examine the responses for the Standard English and NP female guises.

5.2.2. Participants' ratings of the female English Vs. NP guise

All 30 participants of the study rated these guises, and Figures 34 and 35 below show the overall rating for these guises.

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the individual (female) in the recording in terms of the following: 30 ⓘ >

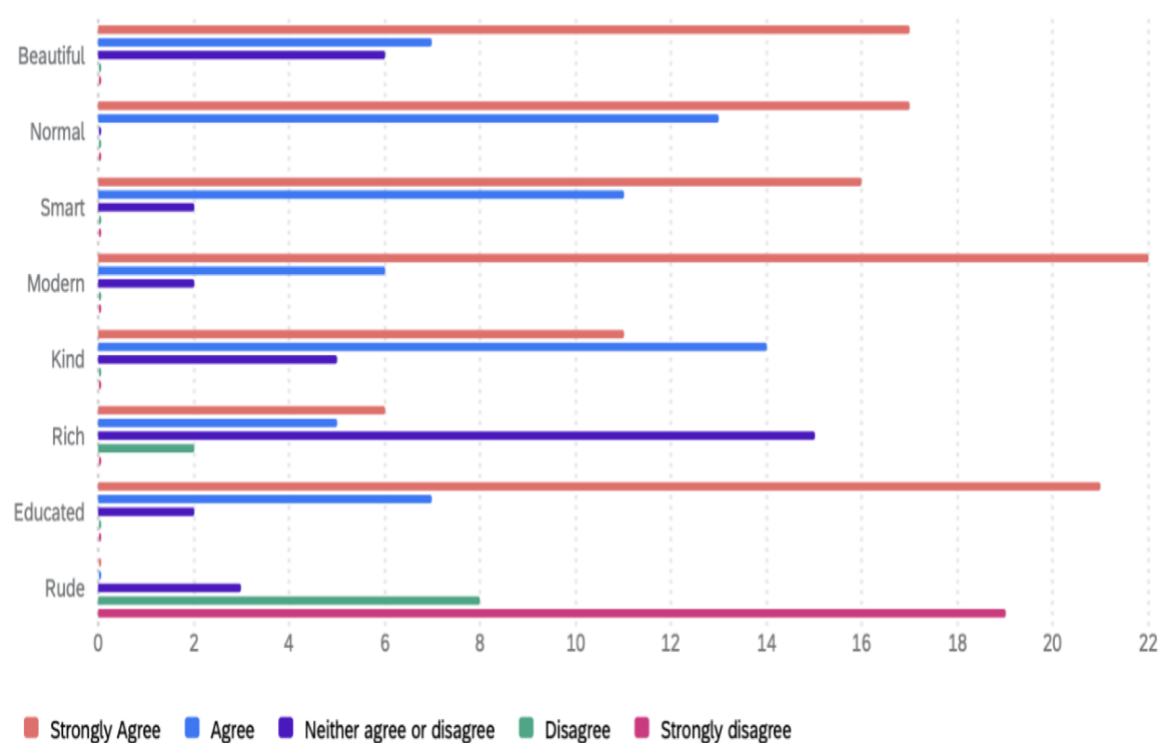


Figure 34: General participants' rating of the Standard English female guise.

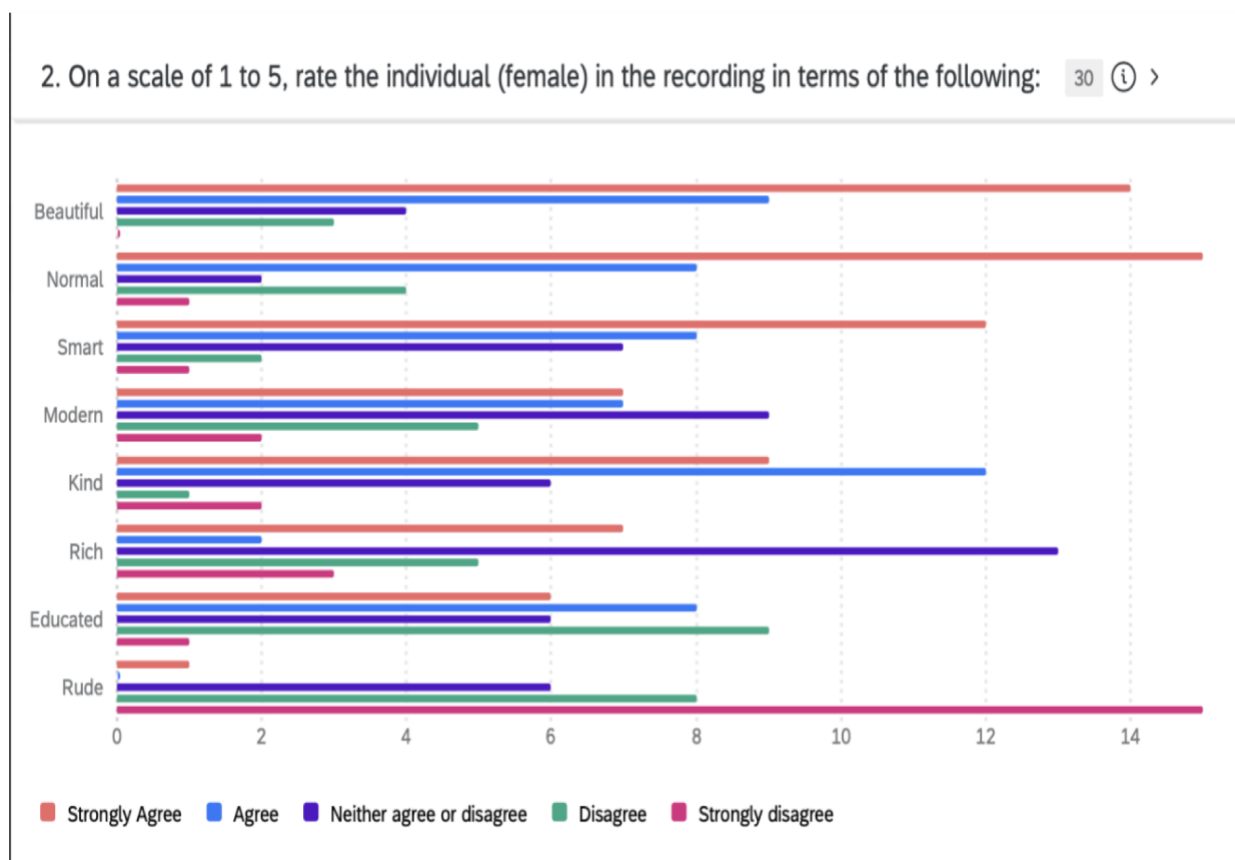


Figure 35: Participants' ratings of the female NP guise

Beautiful: A comparative analysis of the female English and female Nigerian Pidgin (NP) guises reveals notable differences in how beauty is perceived. Regarding beauty, the female English guise was rated more favorably, with most participants considering it as beautiful, although six remained neutral. This positive reception is likely attributed to the slight Canadian accent of the female English guise, which may align with more universally accepted "prestige" accents. In contrast, while the female NP guise was also predominantly rated as beautiful, four participants were neutral, and three disagreed, suggesting a more divided reception (see Figure 36). This variance could reflect NP's association with informality and its lower prestige compared to a standard accent of English, which may have influenced how beauty was perceived.

Compared to the male guise, the female guise was generally judged more favorably in terms of beauty (see Table 4 below). This preference might be attributed to the female guise adopting a slightly Canadian accent whereas the male guise retained a more distinctly Nigerian accent. When the female guise performed the matched-guise passage, stressed syllables were emphasized, while unstressed syllables were shortened, creating a rhythm that made key words like "importance," "love," and "family" stand out. In contrast, the male guise gave each syllable nearly equal weight, resulting in a more rhythmic and deliberate pace. Phonetic differences were also observed in the pronunciation of specific words. For instance, the female guise pronounced “world” with a rhotic quality, as [wɜːld]; “love” with a centralized /ʌ/ vowel, as [lʌv]; and “modern” with a mid-central schwa sound, as [ˈmɒdə̃n]. On the other hand, the male guise pronounced “world” as [wɔːld], with the /r/ sound absent; “love” as [lɒv], with less centralization; and “modern” with the schwa replaced by a more pronounced vowel, as [ˈmɒden].

Despite this, both guises were rated positively in terms of beauty, but the *female English guise* received a more consistent high rating across the board. For example, women gave the female English voice an average rating of 4.7 (Table 4), compared to 4 (Table 2) for the male English guise. In contrast, the *female NP guise* saw more divided reactions, with some participants remaining neutral or disagreeing with the label of "beautiful."

In conclusion, while both guises were predominantly viewed as beautiful, the female English guise was more universally appreciated for its prestigious qualities, accent, and phonetic structure. The female NP guise, however, faced more ambivalence, reflecting broader sociolinguistic trends where standard languages, like English, are often valued over non-standard varieties such as Nigerian Pidgin, despite the cultural significance both languages may carry in different contexts. This comparison highlights the complex ways in which language, accent, and

beauty are interlinked in social perception, with linguistic prestige playing a significant role in how beauty is assessed.

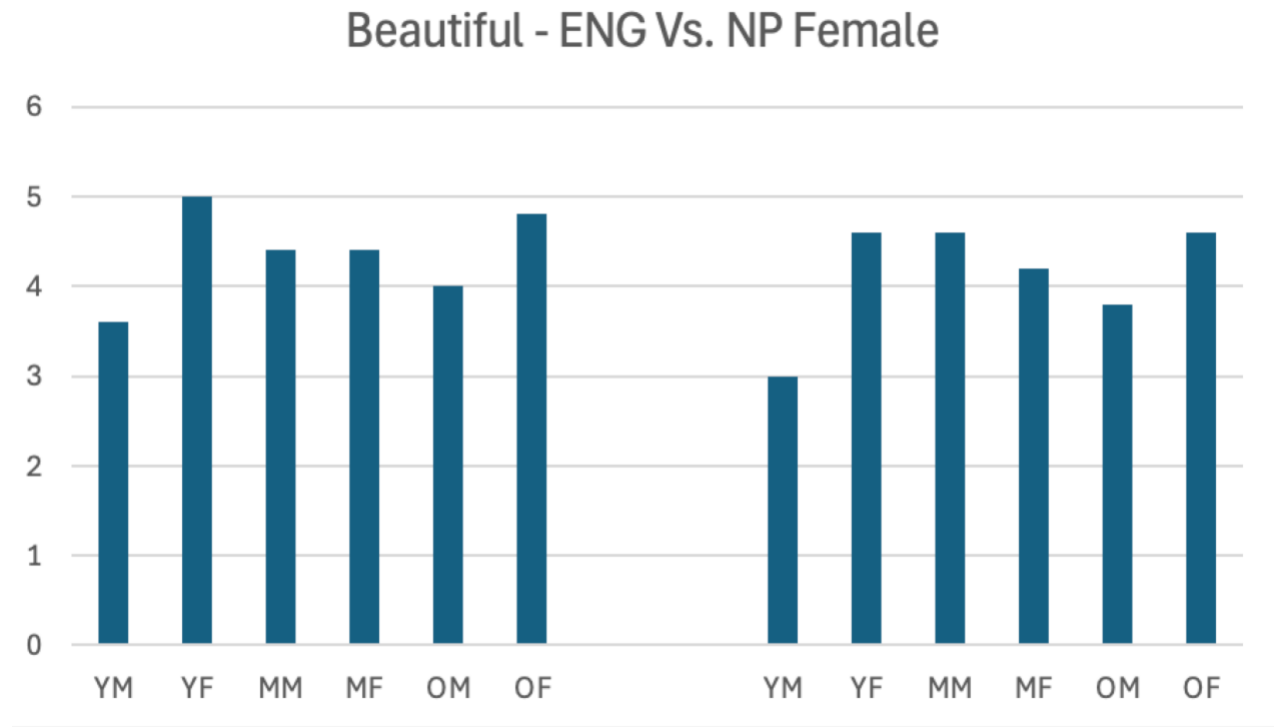


Figure 36: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP female guise for ‘beautiful’ by age and gender 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Normal: All participants unanimously agreed that the Standard English female guise sounded normal, with no neutral or dissenting opinions, highlighting its perceived universality and prestige. This consensus underscores the societal valuation of Standard English as a marker of education and social status, consistent with findings by Milroy and Milroy (1999) on the symbolic power of standard language ideology. In contrast, the Nigerian Pidgin (NP) female guise elicited more divided responses. While the majority of participants rated it as normal, five

disagreed, and two remained neutral. This represents the lowest rating for normalcy among all guises assessed, reflecting the stigmatization that often accompanies non-standard or vernacular varieties, especially among women (Trudgill, 2000).

Interestingly, gender and age differences were evident in the evaluations of NP. Female participants rated the NP guise higher for normalcy than their male counterparts (see Figure 37), possibly due to gendered patterns of linguistic accommodation and solidarity noted by Holmes (2008). Furthermore, middle-aged and older participants provided higher normalcy ratings for NP than younger speakers, especially younger males, which may indicate generational differences in attitudes toward vernacular varieties, as suggested by studies on language change and perception (Labov, 2001). It also aligns with hypothesis 3 that middle-aged and older speakers may express more positive attitudes towards NP while the younger speakers will be neutral. Overall, these findings align with sociolinguistic research that highlights how perceptions of normalcy in speech are shaped by the intersection of language, gender, and social attitudes. Standard English is often viewed as a symbol of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), whereas vernacular varieties like NP are associated with cultural identity but may carry lower prestige in formal or professional settings.

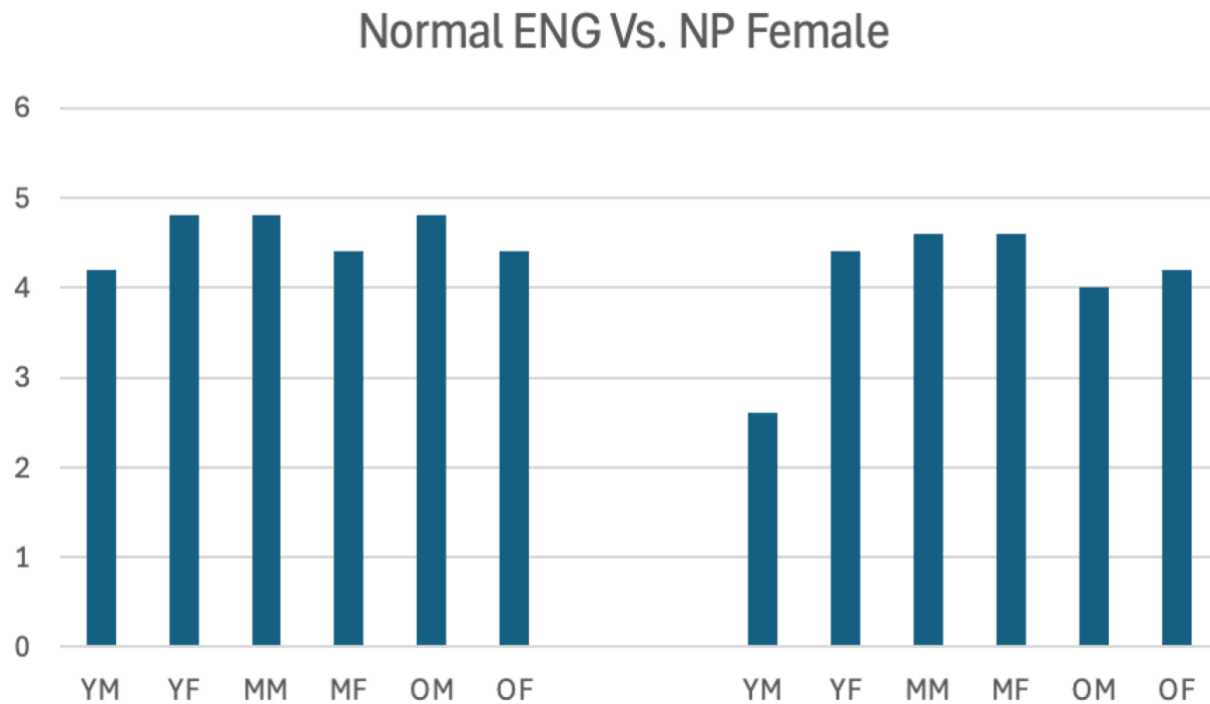


Figure 37: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP female guise for ‘normal’ by age and gender. 5= strongly agree, 4 A= agree 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

Modern: The perception of modernity in different linguistic guises reveals a complex interplay between language, accent, and social identity. In comparing the female English guise with the male English guise, the study found divergent views on modernity that are influenced by both linguistic and social factors.

In the case of the female English guise, a significant majority of participants (28 out of 30) strongly agreed or agreed that her voice sounded modern. This positive perception might be attributed to the combination of an English accent with Canadian influences, which gave the voice a contemporary feel while still retaining a subtle Nigerian undertone. The presence of these two linguistic influences may create an image of modernity that blends global and local

identities, aligning with the idea of globalization and hybridity in sociolinguistics (Pennycook, 2007; Canagarajah, 2006). The use of English with such a hybrid accent can reflect a modern, cosmopolitan image, a phenomenon often observed in multilingual communities where speakers navigate between different linguistic registers to create an identity that is fluid and adaptable (Bourdieu, 1991).

However, the English male guise received more mixed responses when assessed for modernity, with three participants disagreeing and three remaining neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement that his voice sounded modern. This could suggest that the male English guise did not evoke the same level of contemporary appeal as the female English guise. One possible explanation for this is that, in many sociolinguistic contexts, the male voice, even with a prestigious English accent, may be less flexible in embodying modernity compared to a female voice, which is often more readily associated with cultural change and contemporary trends (Eckert, 2000; Holmes, 2001). Additionally, English is often perceived as the dominant global language of modernity, and when spoken by men, it may not signal as much linguistic innovation as when it is mixed with local varieties, such as Nigerian Pidgin.

When the female NP guise was assessed for modernity, more than half of the participants disagreed with the idea that she sounded modern. This stark contrast in responses when compared to the female English guise, indicates that perceptions of modernity are not uniformly applied to different languages. Nigerian Pidgin, despite its widespread use in contemporary Nigeria, may still carry a stigma as a less prestigious, "informal" language, which can affect its association with modernity. Sociolinguistic studies have shown that non-standard varieties like Pidgin are often viewed as "unrefined" in comparison to standard varieties (Siegel, 2008), which may explain why some participants found the female NP guise less modern. Additionally, *global*

English is often associated with modernity, global success, and social mobility (Kachru, 1992), whereas Pidgin may still be linked to more localized, less globalized identities. The contrasting views of modernity between the female English and female NP guises reflect broader sociolinguistic patterns where the prestige and perceived modernity of a language are deeply connected to its social status. The English guise benefits from its association with global dominance and cosmopolitanism, which aligns with ideals of modernity. In contrast, Nigerian Pidgin, despite its rich cultural and communicative role, struggles to be perceived as modern due to its historical associations with informality and lower prestige.

Therefore, while the female English guise was rated modern by a large number of participants, the female NP version was less favorably rated on this criterion, as seen in Figure 38 below. The perceptions of modernity are influenced by factors such as the prestige of the language variety, its global or local associations, and the gender of the speaker. These findings align with sociolinguistic research that highlights how language, gender, and social status intersect in the construction of modern identities (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003).

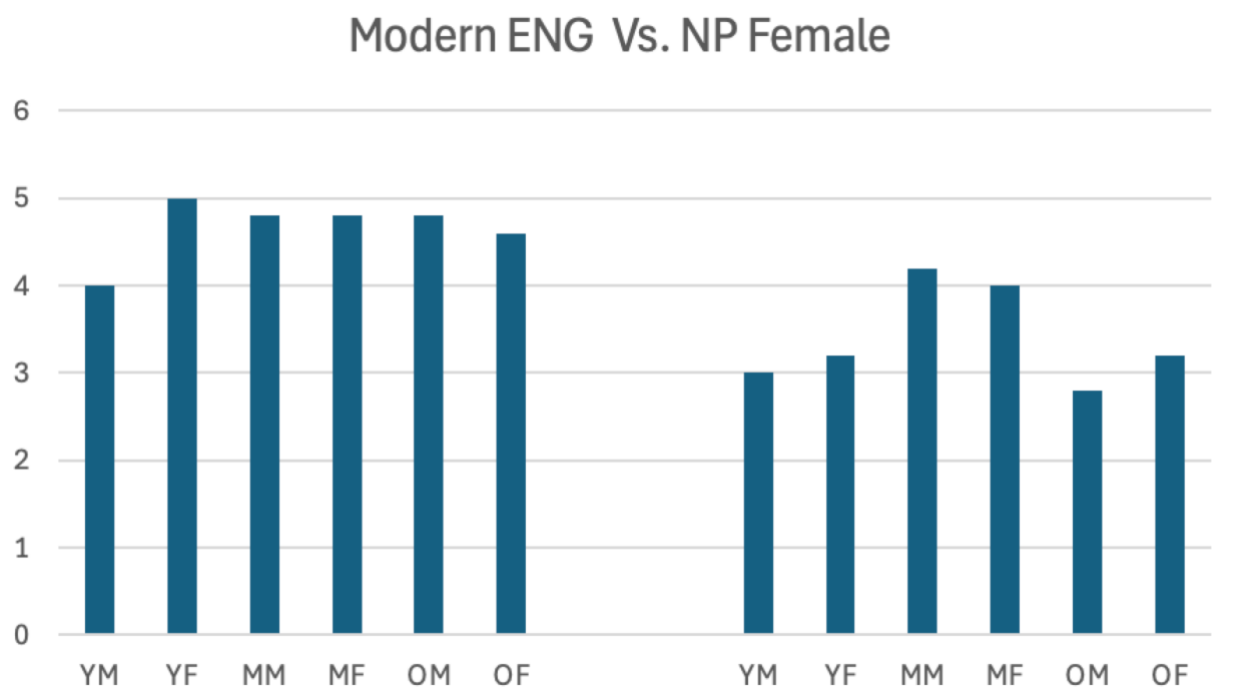


Figure 38: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP female guise for 'modern' by age and gender. 5= strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Smart: The perception of *smartness* in the different linguistic guises, particularly when comparing the English female guise with the Nigerian Pidgin (NP) female guise, reveals distinct societal attitudes towards language and its association with intelligence. For the English female guise, the majority of participants agreed that the speaker sounded "smart," with the highest average rating of 4.8 (by the middle-aged participants) for the attribute of *smartness*, as indicated in Figure 39 and Table 4. This finding aligns with the social perception of English as a prestigious language linked to higher education and socioeconomic status (Bourdieu, 1991). English, as the global lingua franca, often carries connotations of modernity, professionalism, and academic achievement (Kachru, 1992). The female English voice, in this context, benefits

from these associations, reinforcing the stereotype that speaking English signifies intelligence and competence. This study reflects similar trends in sociolinguistic research that examine how language proficiency and accents can influence perceptions of a speaker's intelligence and social class (Labov, 1972; Lippi-Green, 2012).

In contrast, the *English male guise* received more mixed evaluations for smartness, with five participants expressing neutrality on the matter. The highest average rating for this guise was 4.3, slightly lower than that for the female English voice. This difference in perception between male and female guises could be attributed to societal expectations and stereotypes around gender. In many cultures, women are often expected to exhibit qualities that align with intellect and competence, such as clear articulation and linguistic precision (Cameron, 2005). Men, on the other hand, may be evaluated less critically when it comes to the same qualities, especially in professional or academic contexts. Gendered perceptions of language use have been well-documented in sociolinguistics, with women's speech often being more scrutinized for precision and clarity (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003).

When it comes to the female NP guise, the situation changes considerably. Over 35% of participants were either neutral or disagreed with the assessment that the speaker sounded "smart," as illustrated in Figure 39. When comparing the female English and NP guises, the English guise consistently received higher average ratings for *smartness* compared to the NP guise. This stark contrast between English and NP, highly evident in the younger-male speakers rating, is reflective of the stigma that often surrounds non-standard languages like Nigerian Pidgin. NP, despite its widespread use and cultural significance in Nigeria, is frequently associated with informality, lower social class, and lack of formal education (Siegel, 2008). In sociolinguistic terms, non-standard varieties of a language, such as NP, are often perceived as

"imperfect" or "lesser" forms of speech compared to standard varieties like English. This perception may contribute to the lower ratings of *smartness* for the *NP female guise*, as speakers of NP are often stereotyped as less educated or articulate, regardless of their actual intellectual capabilities (Schreier, 2014).

These findings also align with the broader sociolinguistic concept of *linguistic insecurity*, where speakers of non-standard varieties may face bias and discrimination based on the language they use. Speakers of Nigerian Pidgin, for instance, may be stigmatized as less capable or educated, despite the language's role as a marker of identity and solidarity. Sociolinguists have explored how the language a person speaks can deeply influence their social standing, with non-standard language speakers often being judged harshly in formal or professional settings (Labov, 2001). The differing perceptions of *smartness* between the English female guise and the NP female guise highlight the role of language in shaping social evaluations of intelligence. The higher ratings for the English female guise reflect the prestige of English, particularly in the context of gender, while the lower ratings for the NP female guise demonstrate the social stigma attached to Nigerian Pidgin. These perceptions underscore the sociolinguistic concept that language, far from being a neutral vehicle for communication, is a powerful tool for constructing social identities and reinforcing societal hierarchies (Goffman, 1963; Holmes, 2001).

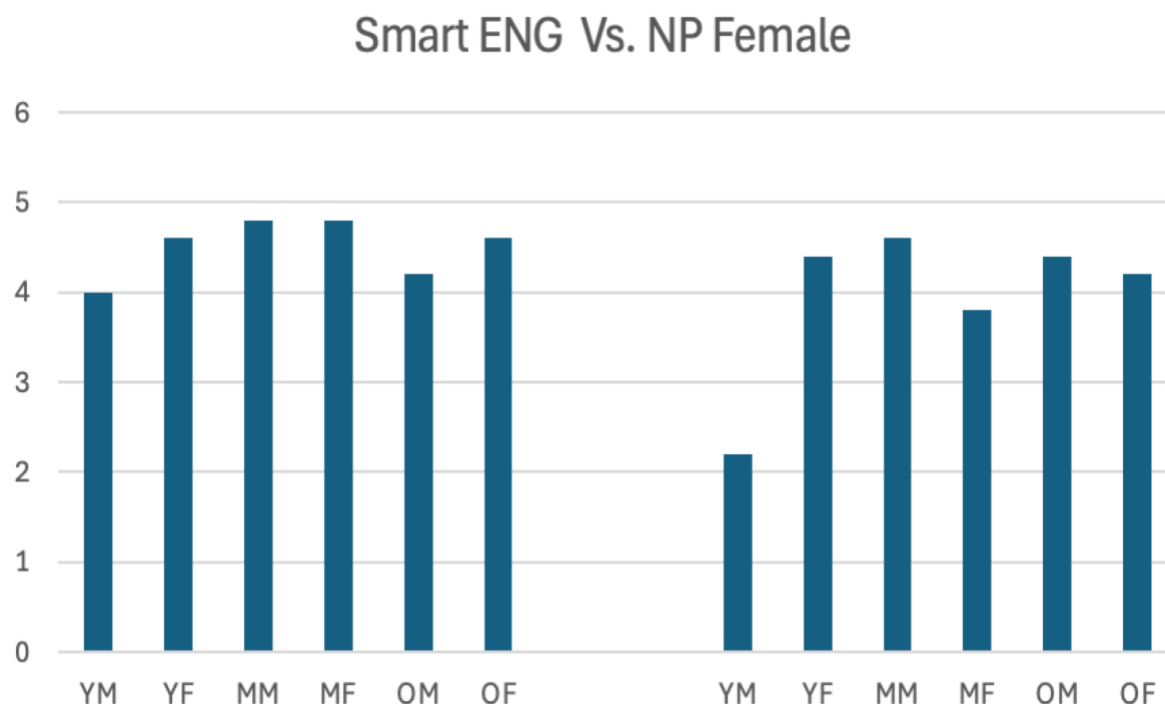


Figure 39: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP female guise for ‘smart’ by age and gender. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Kind: The perception of *kindness* associated with the female voice in English and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) guises reveal interesting sociolinguistic dynamics about language and its emotional resonance. For the female English guise, the majority of participants agreed that the voice conveyed a sense of kindness, with only five individuals maintaining a neutral stance, as shown in Figure 40. This finding underscores the association of Standard English with positive interpersonal traits, such as warmth, politeness, and approachability, in multicultural and multilingual contexts (Crystal, 2003).

The female voice may evoke kindness due to cultural associations of English as a "global" and "inclusive" language, particularly when spoken by women, who are often stereotyped as nurturing and empathetic (Holmes, 2001). Studies on linguistic stereotyping suggest that listeners often project positive personality traits onto speakers

of high-prestige languages, especially when these languages are used fluently and confidently (Giles & Coupland, 1991).

However, for the female NP guise, while most participants still perceived the speaker as kind, six participants remained neutral on this attribute, as illustrated in Figure 40. This result reflects a slightly less favorable perception of kindness when NP is spoken compared to English. Interestingly, the consistent perception of *kindness* across both guises, albeit with varying intensity, suggests that tone and delivery also play a role in listeners' evaluations. The female NP guise, while less associated with prestige, may benefit from its reputation as a language of solidarity and inclusivity. NP is often used to create rapport and reduce social barriers, making it a language that fosters emotional connection in certain contexts (Faraclas, 1996). Thus, the speaker's perceived kindness in NP may stem from the language's social role as a tool for informal and relatable communication.

These findings also align with sociolinguistic studies on the role of gender and language in shaping perceptions. Research indicates that female speakers, regardless of language variety, are more likely to be associated with positive interpersonal traits such as kindness, warmth, and empathy (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). However, these associations can vary depending on the language spoken, with standard varieties like English often reinforcing stereotypes of professionalism and civility, while non-standard varieties like NP emphasize relatability and solidarity (Mesthrie, 2009).

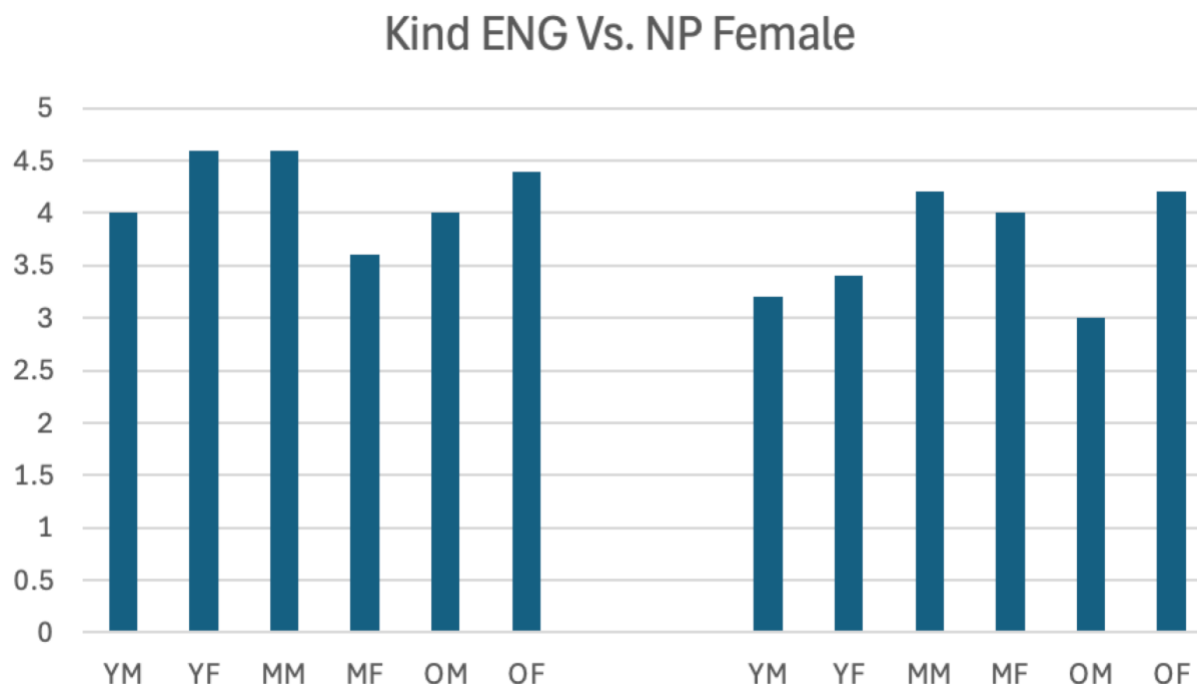


Figure 40: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP female guise for 'kind' by age and gender. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Rich: The evaluation of wealth for the female guises revealed distinct differences between the English and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) versions, highlighting the sociolinguistic impact of language prestige on socio-economic perceptions.

For the female English guise, most participants maintained a neutral stance regarding wealth, as illustrated in Figure 41 below. However, only 2 participants explicitly deemed this guise as "unwealthy," compared to the 6 participants who attributed the same label to the male English guise. This slight gendered bias may stem from societal associations of women's linguistic performance with refinement and access to resources, particularly when English is spoken with North American influences. The female English guise received an average rating of

3.7 for the "rich" attribute, slightly higher than the 3.4 average assigned to the male English guise, as shown in Table 4 below.

In contrast, participants were predominantly neutral in their perceptions of the female NP guise's wealth. However, 8 participants explicitly disagreed with the notion that the speaker sounded wealthy. This represents a higher number of disagreements compared to all other guises, reflecting the lower socio-economic associations often attributed to NP as a non-standard variety. While NP serves as a culturally significant lingua franca in Nigeria, it is frequently linked to informality and lower economic mobility, which likely influenced participants' perceptions. These findings underscore the influence of language prestige on socio-economic evaluations. English, particularly when associated with global prestige and professional contexts, is often linked to wealth and affluence. Conversely, NP's cultural and community-centered associations do not carry the same socio-economic connotations, which impacts how speakers are perceived in terms of wealth.

The results also reveal the interplay of gender and language in shaping perceptions of socio-economic status. The female English guise was rated slightly higher than the male guise, reflecting societal biases that associate women's linguistic performance with social capital and refinement. Meanwhile, the higher level of explicit disagreement for the female NP guise indicates that women speaking non-standard varieties might face greater scrutiny and negative stereotypes regarding their socio-economic standing. These patterns align with sociolinguistic studies that link prestige languages like English with wealth and status, while non-standard varieties like NP are tied to informal, communal settings (Bourdieu, 1991; Faraclas, 1996). The findings further emphasize how gendered norms intersect with language attitudes to shape perceptions of wealth in multilingual contexts.

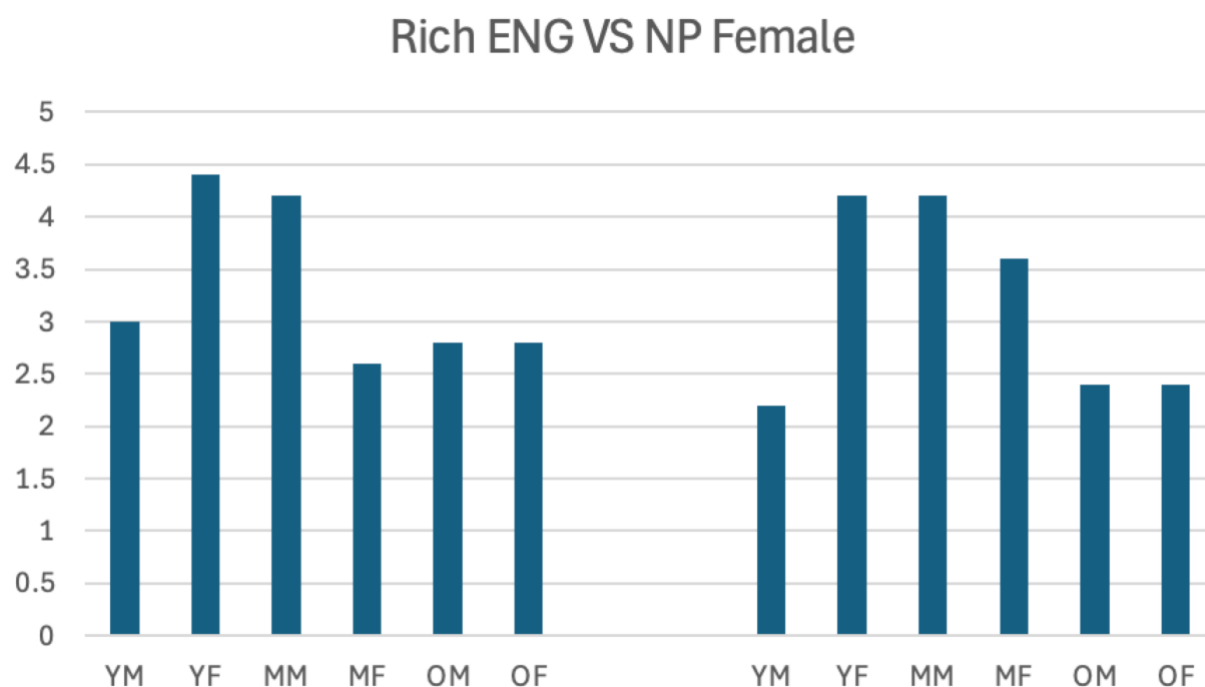


Figure 41: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP female guise for ‘rich’ by age and gender. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Educated: Participants’ evaluations of the attribute of education revealed a clear distinction between the English and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) female guises. For the female English guise, the majority of participants (21) strongly agreed that the speaker sounded educated, with 7 agreeing and only 2 remaining neutral, as illustrated in Figure 42 below. This guise achieved the highest average rating for the "educated" attribute, at 4.8, compared to the male English guise, which received an average of 4.5, as shown in Table 4 below. Participants' stronger agreement for the female guise may be attributed to her performance with a North American-influenced English accent, which likely enhanced perceptions of formal education and intellectual sophistication.

Gender norms may also have played a role, as women speaking prestigious varieties are often judged more favorably in terms of education (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013).

In contrast, the female NP guise received significantly lower ratings for education. Ten participants explicitly perceived the speaker as uneducated, while 6 remained neutral. Only 6 participants strongly agreed that the speaker sounded educated, as shown in Figure 42 below. The lowest average rating for this NP guise was 2.9, markedly lower than the 4.4 average for the English guise, as seen in Tables 4 and 5 below. This pronounced disparity highlights how NP is often stigmatized and associated with lower educational attainment, reflecting longstanding attitudes toward non-standard varieties in multilingual contexts (Faraclas, 1996; Omoniyi, 2006).

These findings emphasize the sociolinguistic biases that influence perceptions of education. Standard English, especially when spoken with accents linked to western education, is widely regarded as a marker of formal schooling and intellectual ability. In contrast, NP, despite its role as a unifying lingua franca, is often linked to informal, oral communication and perceived as incompatible with high educational achievement. The gendered aspect of these evaluations is also notable. While the female English guise outperformed the male English guise in terms of education ratings, the female NP guise faced harsher scrutiny, with more participants explicitly labeling her as uneducated. This pattern again aligns with sociolinguistic studies that suggest women are judged more critically when speaking non-standard varieties, as such forms conflict with societal expectations of women's linguistic refinement (Labov, 2001; Milroy, 1980). These results also reflect how language attitudes intersect with gender norms and social hierarchies, shaping perceptions of education in multilingual contexts. Further exploration of the interview discussions may provide additional insight into the cultural and linguistic factors that underpin these evaluations.

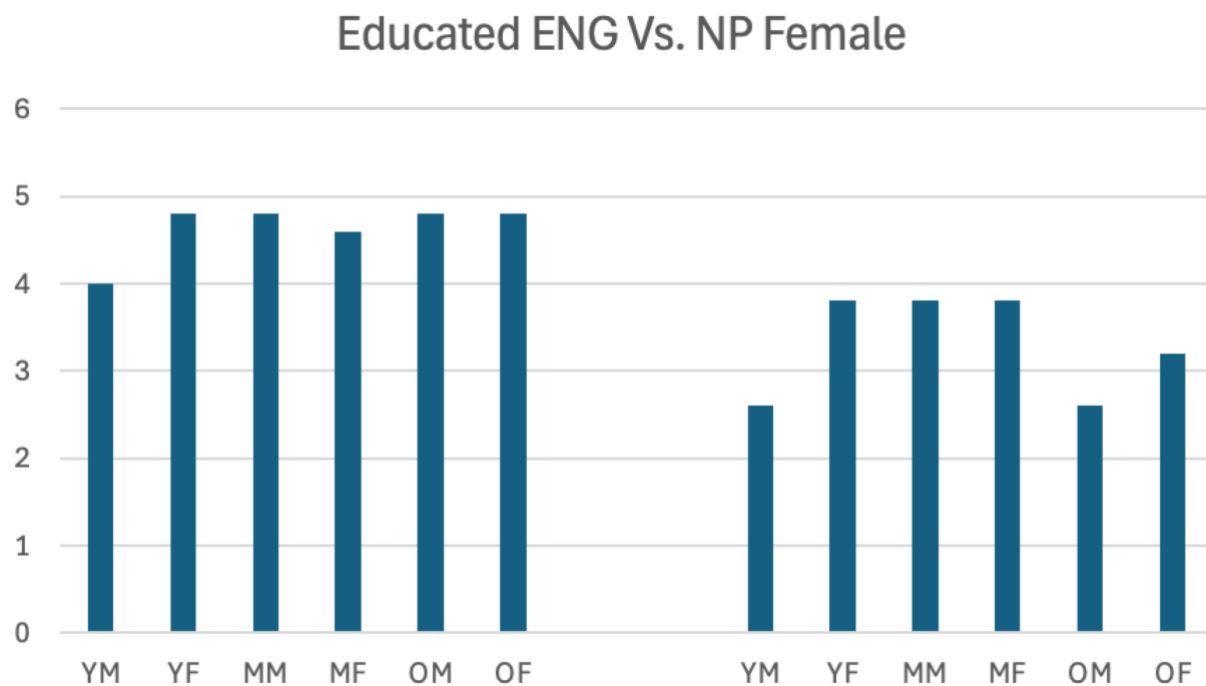


Figure 42: Rating of the Standard English vs. NP female guise for ‘educated’ by age and gender 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Rude: The findings here reveal distinct perceptions of rudeness for the two linguistic guises. The female English guise was overwhelmingly not perceived as rude, with 19 participants strongly disagreeing and 8 disagreeing, while only 3 expressed neutralities. Similarly, no participants found the female Nigerian Pidgin (NP) guise rude, though 6 participants were neutral, as provided in mean averages in Figure 43 below. These results suggest that both guises are generally viewed as polite or non-offensive, with NP eliciting slightly more neutrality, potentially reflecting its informal and culturally contextual nature, which may be interpreted as less inherently evaluative

compared to Standard English.

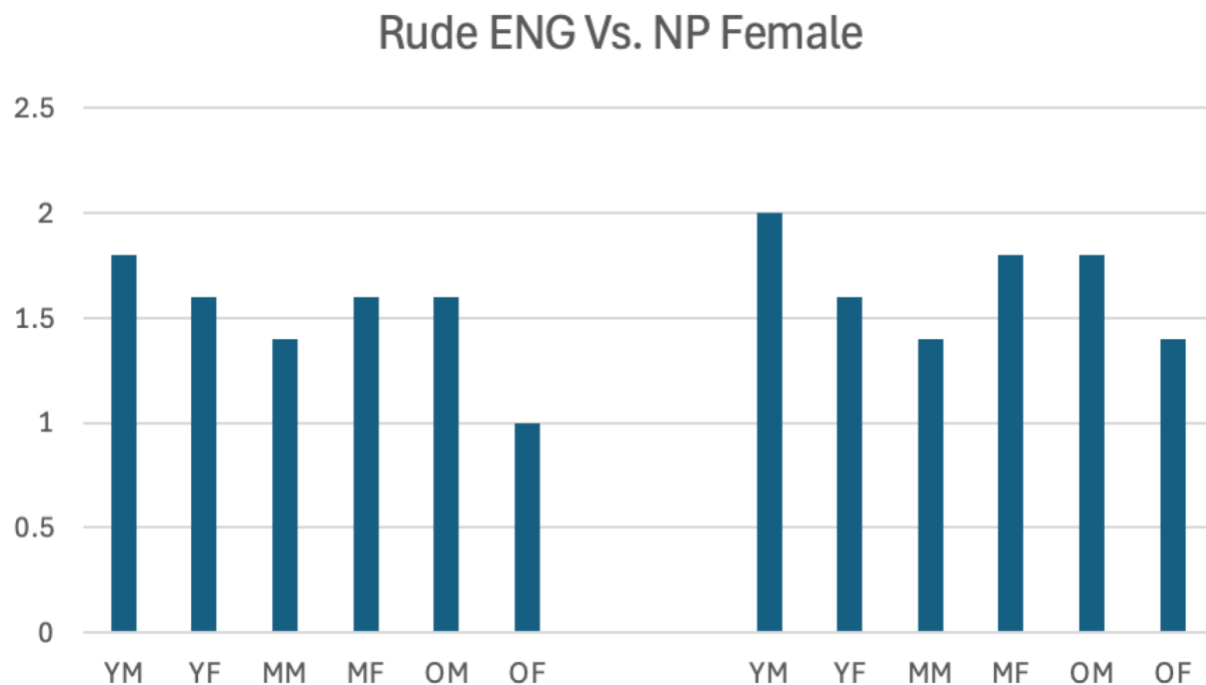


Figure 43: Rating of the Standard English and NP female guise for 'rude' by age and gender. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

<i>Beautiful</i>	Younger	4.3	Middle-aged	4.4	Older	4.4
	Male	4	Female	4.7		
<i>Normal</i>	Younger	4.5	Middle-aged	4.6	Older	4.6
	Male	4.6	Female	4.5		
<i>Smart</i>	Younger	4.3	Middle-aged	4.8	Older	4.4
	Male	4.3	Female	4.6		
<i>Modern</i>	Younger	4.5	Middle-aged	4.8	Older	4.4
	Male	4.5	Female	4.6		
<i>Kind</i>	Younger	4.3	Middle-aged	4.1	Older	4.2

<i>Rich</i>	Male	4.2	Female	4.2		
	Younger	3.7	Middle-aged	3.4	Older	2.8
<i>Educated</i>	Male	3	Female	3		
	Younger	4.4	Middle-aged	4.4	Older	4.8
<i>Rude</i>	Male	4.5	Female	4.7		
	Younger	1.7	Middle-aged	1.5	Older	1.3
	Male	1.6	Female	0.8		

Table 4: Average distribution of participants' ratings for all attributes for English female guise

<i>Beautiful</i>	Younger	3.8	Middle-aged	4.4	Older	4.2
<i>Normal</i>	Male	3.8	Female	4.4		
	Younger	3.5	Middle-aged	4.6	Older	4.1
<i>Smart</i>	Male	3.7	Female	4.4		
	Younger	3.3	Middle-aged	4.2	Older	4.3
<i>Modern</i>	Male	3.7	Female	4.1		
	Younger	3.1	Middle-aged	4.1	Older	3
<i>Kind</i>	Male	3.3	Female	3.4		
	Younger	3.8	Middle-aged	4.1	Older	3.6
<i>Rich</i>	Male	3.4	Female	4.2		
	Younger	3.2	Middle-aged	3.9	Older	2.4
<i>Educated</i>	Male	2.9	Female	3.4		
	Younger	3.2	Middle-aged	3.8	Older	2.9
<i>Rude</i>	Male	3	Female	3.6		
	Younger	1.8	Middle-aged	1.6	Older	1.6
	Male	1.7	Female	1.6		

Table 5: Average distribution of participants' ratings of all attributes for NP female guise

5.2.3. Matched-Guise Study Analysis: Linguistic Attitudes Towards NP and English Guises

This matched-guise study offers insight into how language varieties—specifically Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and English—are perceived based on gender and various social attributes. The findings reveal a nuanced interplay between language prestige, speaker identity, and societal expectations, highlighting both positive and negative evaluations of the two guises. By comparing the ratings of male and female speakers of NP and English, this analysis draws upon established sociolinguistic theories to explain why some language forms receive higher ratings and how these evaluations are gendered.

5.2.4. General Findings: Perception of Language Varieties

Beauty

The female guise was consistently rated higher for beauty when speaking English compared to NP, with female participants showing a significant preference for the English accent. This is consistent with broader sociolinguistic findings where languages associated with higher prestige—such as English—are often linked to more favorable aesthetic perceptions (Labov, 1972). Interestingly, the female participants rated the male guise higher when speaking NP than when speaking English. This could reflect perceived or transferred covert prestige in the male guise, where NP is perceived as more authentic or grounded in cultural identity (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 91).

Normalcy

While both the male and female guises were rated similarly in terms of normalcy when speaking English, the female NP guise was judged as less "normal" than the female English guise. This finding echoes sociolinguistic research showing that non-standard language varieties, such as NP, are often perceived as less socially acceptable or "deviant" compared to standardized varieties (Bourdieu, 1991; Garrett, 2010). The younger male group rated both NP guises as less normal than their older counterparts, aligning with the hypothesis that younger individuals may hold more negative attitudes toward non-standard varieties (Loureiro-Rodriguez et al., 2013).

Smartness

The male NP guise was rated as intelligent by most participants, though some dissented, suggesting that NP speakers may not be as easily associated with intelligence as English speakers. In contrast, the female NP guise received notably lower ratings for intelligence, particularly among younger participants. This discrepancy between the male and female NP guises can be understood through the lens of gendered expectations in language use. Studies have shown that women are often held to higher linguistic standards, especially when they speak non-standard varieties, which are typically seen as less prestigious (Milroy, 1987; Loureiro-Rodriguez et al., 2013). This could explain why the female NP guise was rated less favorably for intelligence compared to the male NP guise.

Modernity

The female NP guise was rated significantly lower for modernity than the English guise. This aligns with the perception of NP as a less prestigious form of speech, which contrasts with

the image of English as modern and cosmopolitan. While the male NP guise was rated somewhat lower for modernity, the difference was not as stark. This reflects the sociolinguistic principle that non-standard varieties like NP are often linked to traditional or local identity markers, while English carries connotations of modernity and global influence (Labov, 1972; Garrett, 2010).

Kindness

In terms of kindness, the NP male guise was rated more favorably than the English guise, possibly due to the association of NP with informal, community-based interactions. Conversely, the female NP guise was rated less kindly compared to the English guise. This gendered difference suggests that while NP may be seen as a "friendly" and "grounded" form of speech in male speakers, female speakers using NP are subject to different expectations. These findings again echo sociolinguistic research on how women's speech is evaluated more critically than men's, particularly when using non-standard language varieties (Loureiro-Rodriguez et al., 2013).

Wealth

The male NP guise was rated as wealthier than the male English guise, which is an interesting finding considering the broader societal view of NP as a non-standard, "lower-class" language. This suggests that some participants may associate NP with a particular form of cultural capital, or authenticity, that transcends the traditional markers of wealth. The female NP guise, however, did not exhibit such a pronounced disparity, with ratings for wealth remaining relatively neutral. This could be indicative of a stereotype that links wealth more closely with language proficiency in English for female speakers, as English is often viewed as a symbol of upward social mobility (Bourdieu, 1991).

Education

Although not tested statistically, a significant finding in this study was the lower rating of the female NP guise for education, which may reflect the stereotype that women using non-standard varieties, like NP, are perceived as less educated. The male NP guise did not face the same level of negative evaluation. The perception of education in non-standard varieties, particularly for female speakers, has been discussed in sociolinguistic literature, with studies showing that non-standard language use is often linked to lower educational attainment, particularly when spoken by women (Garrett, 2010; Milroy, 1987). This reflects how language use can intersect with gendered expectations of educational success.

Rudeness

Both the male and female NP guises were generally not perceived as rude, though the female NP guise received slightly higher ratings for rudeness than the male NP guise. The female speaker was rated more rude when speaking NP than when speaking English, and interestingly, the reverse was the case for the male speaker. This difference, however, was not significant. Sociolinguistic studies often find that non-standard varieties, while not inherently linked to rudeness, can be viewed as less "polite" or "formal" compared to standardized varieties (Bourdieu, 1991). This can reflect societal attitudes towards the social function of language, where formal or standardized languages are often associated with higher levels of politeness.

5.2.5. Comparison of NP and English Guises

Overall Ratings

A subtle yet noteworthy trend emerged in the rating of the guises by age and gender. While the English guises generally received higher ratings for positive attributes compared to the NP guises, the younger group, in particular, rated the NP guises lower than both the middle-aged and older groups. This finding aligns with the hypothesis that middle-aged and older individuals might exhibit more positive attitudes towards NP. Across the study, NP guises generally received lower ratings than their English counterparts, particularly for the female speaker, reflecting the prestige of English as the dominant global language. This pattern is consistent with the sociolinguistic concept of linguistic capital, where English is seen as a symbol of higher social status, education, and economic power (Bourdieu, 1991). The NP guises, by contrast, were often perceived as less "normal," "smart," and "educated," consistent with the social stigma associated with non-standard varieties (Labov, 1972). However, the NP male guise did receive more favorable ratings than the female NP guise in several categories, suggesting that male speakers of NP might benefit from a form of covert prestige (Bourdieu, 1991).

Gendered Evaluations

The study also reveals important gendered differences in language evaluations. Women, regardless of whether they were evaluating the male or female guise, tended to rate the guises more favorably than men, with this difference being slightly more pronounced in their evaluations of the NP male guises. This is particularly interesting, given the hypothesis that men might embrace NP as a form of covert prestige. This pattern is consistent with findings from other matched-guise studies, where women often rate speakers more positively across various attributes, especially for traits like beauty, kindness, and intelligence (Loureiro-Rodriguez et al., 2013). A Galician and Spanish study by Loureiro-Rodriguez, Boggess, and Goldsmith (2013) investigated language attitudes among high school students in Galicia, focusing on perceptions

of speakers using Spanish, standard Galician, and non-standard Galician through a matched-guise test. This study highlighted the shifting status of Galician varieties, noting that non-standard Galician was no longer as strongly associated with a lack of sophistication, particularly among male speakers. However, certain stigmas persisted, especially in how participants evaluated female speakers. Women were judged more harshly than men when speaking Spanish with a Galician accent, reflecting societal expectations for women to align with linguistic prestige. Interestingly, despite this stricter evaluation, women were rated higher for personal appeal and perceived capability, though they were considered less socially correct (p. 146), that is, the perception that women speaking Spanish with a Galician accent deviated from socially expected linguistic norms. These findings underscore the gendered dynamics of linguistic evaluation and the influence of societal norms on language attitudes.

This current study reveals both similarities and differences with the Galician study. In both contexts, women were rated more favorably overall for traits such as kindness and personal appeal, reflecting gendered expectations that align with traditional stereotypes valuing women for social attributes (Loureiro-Rodriguez et al., 2013). Furthermore, female speakers in both studies seem to face stricter linguistic evaluations, as seen in the negative perception of women's Galician-accented Spanish and the lower ratings for intelligence and normalcy associated with the female NP guise. Moreover, female speakers of NP were often judged more harshly than their male counterparts, particularly for attributes such as intelligence and education. This gendered discrepancy aligns with sociolinguistic studies that examine how women are more likely to be penalized for using non-standard language varieties, as these varieties are often linked to lower social status and prestige (Milroy, 1987). These results may highlight the societal tendency to hold women to higher linguistic standards, particularly concerning language varieties

deemed less prestigious (Milroy, 1987; Bourdieu, 1991). These findings underscore the complex interplay between language prestige, social identity, and gendered expectations in shaping linguistic evaluations across different sociolinguistic contexts. The comparison reveals a clear disparity in how NP and English guises are perceived across various attributes. These differences underscore the impact of sociolinguistic factors such as language prestige, social identity, and societal attitudes on linguistic evaluations.

Social Prestige and the Linguistic Marketplace

The ratings for both NP and English guises can be understood through the concept of the "linguistic marketplace" (Bourdieu, 1991), which argues that language varieties are valued differently based on their social and economic capital. English, as the prestigious and global language, holds more value in formal and educational contexts, which is reflected in the higher ratings it received across attributes like intelligence, education, and modernity. Conversely, NP, as a non-standard form, is often devalued in similar contexts, despite its strong cultural significance and utility in informal communication.

In conclusion, this matched-guise study provides valuable insights into how language varieties like NP and English are perceived in terms of beauty, intelligence, kindness, wealth, and other attributes. While both male and female English guises were largely rated positively, the female English guise consistently received higher ratings for attributes such as beauty, education, and modernity. This reflects the societal prestige of English as a global language. In contrast, NP guises, especially the female guise, were generally viewed more skeptically, particularly for traits like education and intelligence, highlighting the negative stigma attached to non-standard varieties. The gendered differences in how NP is perceived—especially for female speakers—

illustrate the intersection of language, gender, and social expectations in shaping attitudes towards language use.

These findings contribute to our understanding of how language varieties function in the linguistic marketplace, reinforcing the idea that language attitudes are not only shaped by the social prestige of the language but also by the gendered dynamics of how language use is evaluated in different sociocultural contexts.

Chapter 6: The Interview

6.1. The interview responses

The final component of this study involved conducting informal interviews. After completing the matched-guise test, each participant engaged in a 30-minute to 1-hour interview with the researcher, during which they discussed their language use and perspectives within the diaspora. In this chapter, I analyze participants' responses, categorizing them by age group and gender, as these social factors are hypothesized to influence their perspectives on Nigerian Pidgin (NP), as outlined in Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4. The interview sessions were guided by interview questions as found in Appendix D. The interview questions were designed to explore participants' linguistic behaviors, identity perceptions, and attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in Canada. They examine social connections, language use in different contexts, language attitudes towards NP, and linguistic adaptation, providing insight into how participants navigate their Nigerian identity abroad. Questions on NP's appropriateness, fluency levels, and interethnic communication further assess its role as a unifying or distinguishing feature. Additionally, questions about children's use of NP help determine whether participants' attitudes shift when considering intergenerational transmission—whether they embrace NP as part of their heritage or view it as a lesser language. Questions on Nigeria's national language and the role of English in education provide perspectives on language policy and NP's broader sociopolitical status. These questions were informed by the pilot study, where similar discussions revealed valuable insights into language identity and usage in the diaspora.

The following sections present the responses obtained from the interviews. The questions are interspersed throughout the participants' responses. These questions primarily served to provide clarifications, ensuring that the participants fully understood the inquiries being posed.

6.2. Younger Participants

The younger speakers were primarily university students aged between 18 and 24 years, with the exception of YM3 Thom, who was 27 and employed professionally, and YM4 Rotimi, who was 28 and enrolled in Business School at the time of the interview. All ten participants in this group provided insights into their linguistic experiences and preferences in the diaspora, including their perspectives on Nigerian Pidgin (NP). Their viewpoints are detailed in the following sections, beginning with the younger male speakers.

6.2.1. Younger Male Speakers

6.2.1.1. YM1 Eli (18 years)

Eli identified as Nigerian and expressed little interest in staying in Canada after completing his studies. His social circle and neighbors consisted of a diverse mix of Canadians, Nigerians, and immigrants from various countries and ethnic backgrounds.

(1) Do you think of yourself as Nigerian, Canadian, or NigerianCanadian?

“Nigerian. I don’t plan to stay here. I am going to the States in a few years, after 4 5 years, I’m out of here”

When asked if he consciously tried to sound Canadian, he said

“what do you mean by sound Canadian? Like white people? I just speak clear English and everyone understands me”

Eli did not express an interest in adopting a Canadian accent or identifying as Canadian. When asked about the languages he speaks in Canada apart from English, he made an interesting remark regarding his use of Nigerian Pidgin (NP). He said:

Only when I am joking around a close Nigerian friend of mine, and that’s when I like you-know say some Nigerian stuff, apart from that...(inaudible). (What kind of Nigerian stuff, Pidgin?) “broken Pidgin “like trying to speak Pidgin, so Broken Pidgin.”

This choice of words is particularly notable. Eli mentioned that he primarily uses Nigerian Pidgin (NP) for making jokes, implying that this is the only context in which he employs the language. This may suggest an underlying negative attitude towards NP. Furthermore, he emphatically denied his proficiency in speaking the language.

(2) You said you speak broken Pidgin. How will you rate your NP?

‘I don’t speak broken Pidgin. When I decide to speak it, it’s broken so, I don’t speak broken Pidgin. (interviewer: but you said it before na?) It is not like.. most of the time when I talk when I was talking to them, it’s English I speak most of the time only in the time when it is a joke that comes out of nowhere..

If you want to rate yourself, you will say 1, 2/10?

“I’ll say 3. No, I will say 4, 4,4 4. No, I will say 3, I’m sorry. Or 3.5. yeah.”

As seen in his response of question (2) above, Eli was reluctant to provide a clear rating for his proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP). When asked about his language preferences in various situations, he consistently chose English and also claimed that he does not speak any native Nigerian languages. This response may indicate an implicit attitude towards NP. This attitude was further emphasized when he was asked if he would like his children to speak NP, to which he responded:

‘Fuck no, because it is broken English’

In response to the final question, Eli went as far as to describe the development of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) into textual materials as "rubbish." His responses deviate from the third hypothesis, which predicted that the younger speakers would be neutral in their attitudes towards NP while the middle and older age groups would express more positive attitudes towards NP, particularly towards its enhancement and standardization. However, this participant demonstrated not neutrality but distinctly negative attitudes towards NP. When comparing his interview responses with his matched-guise ratings and language proficiency preferences, his views on Nigerian Pidgin (NP) remained consistent. He consistently rated the NP guises lower in positive attributes such as intelligence, education, and modernity. I now explore how the other participants in this group responded to their interview questions.

6.2.1.2. YM2 Ethan (24 years)

Ethan identified himself as Nigerian, explaining that he is still considered an immigrant under Canadian law. However, he also stated that he would identify as ‘Nigerian-Canadian,’ emphasizing that he is first Nigerian before being Canadian. Ethan's strong sense of patriotism towards Nigeria is noteworthy, as it contrasts with expectations for someone in the younger age group. He explained that most of his friends are Nigerians, stating that, according to him:

‘it is easier to get along with your own people.’

When asked whether he consciously tries to sound Canadian, Ethan responded with a firm ‘no.’ He explained that he prefers to speak clearly rather than intentionally adopt a Canadian accent, mirroring the sentiment expressed by Eli. His response was:

.....if there’s one thing I was, I was good at English in school, I did, I took some classes, and you know all those kinds of things. So, ideally, especially with Africans, if you look at how, like let’s say um like Ugandans or like Kenyans even speak, it is English when they speak English it is English but you can hear there’s an accent. As long as you are clear and audible, anyone should be able to understand you. So, now, agreeable sometimes, you might have to sound a bit more Canadian to maybe get what you want or for easy communication in some places. Yes, I definitely do that sometimes. It makes things a lot easier you-know². Sometimes when people hear a different accent or you-know sound quite differently, it can lead to a different result depending on what you are looking for. But, ideally, as long as you sound audible, you-know pronouncing words clearly, anyone should understand.

² When occurring as a discourse marker, “you-know” is hyphenated.

It appears that both speakers may attribute a form of covert prestige to speaking clearly with a Nigerian accent. I will compare their responses to those of their female counterparts to determine if there are any notable differences. When asked about the languages he speaks in Canada, Ethan mentioned that he does not speak any native Nigerian languages, but he does speak English and Nigerian Pidgin. His response was as follows:

Yeah, just English, Pidgin with my friends, personally, sometimes I can understand a few phrases of Yoruba and things like that but I am not fluent in it. I would say with some Nigerian languages it might be easier for me to understand sometimes than to speak. So mainly. English and Pidgin. Even when I go to Nigeria I say Nigerian English and Pidgin.

(1) In what situations do you speak them? Do you mean in Canada?

Yes. Okay, let's say I'm with friends you-know, we are just bantering, and then we speak English. Sometimes in public when I'm with friends let's say I want to say something and I don't really want other people to get a clue of what I'm saying I'll speak Pidgin, it's possible I will want to speak Pidgin because that's less easy to code. But um, see the thing with Pidgin, especially with the rise of Afrobeats and music is that everyone is getting a hang of it.

Ethan conveys a sense of group membership and exclusivity when using Nigerian Pidgin (NP) with his friends. In evaluating his proficiency in NP, he emphasized the growing popularity of the language and how it has become easier to learn. Below is the question he was asked, followed by his response.

(2) How will you rate your NP speaking ability on a scale of 1 to 10?

Based on what? (Interviewer: fluency) so I feel like, if I should go to Nigeria now, and I was speaking Pidgin in the street somewhere, someone who has been in Nigeria for a long time speaking Pidgin way longer than I have been you-know can pick out that I'm not your average speaker, right? So, in that sense, I'll say maybe about a 5 or 6. I'm not um, especially with the rise of social media now, it is better because for example you-know you see like skits in Pidgin, people use a lot of Pidgin, we have a lot of Pidgin slangs. So, pidgin is making its way into you-know I feel like initially a lot of youths were not speaking pidgin right, we are now, a lot of us are. like I said because of afrobeat songs, all sorts of things becoming more popular. I'll say maybe best case, I will say it's 7.

Ethan also highlighted Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and, more specifically, Nigerian English as the languages he uses to express his identity as a Nigerian in the diaspora. Below is the question posed to him, along with his response.

(3) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

So in a situation whereby I want them to know that I am a Nigerian, definitely, probably a phrase of Pidgin or the way I talk, I mean when I am talking to Canadians with my Canadian this thing, or even just non-black, I tend to polish my English a bit more so they can understand it but talking to a Nigerian, I will just speak normal Nigerian English you-know less laid back, obviously still respectful you-know. But I just will sound more as if I am a Nigerian. And most

of us when we hear that Nigerian English, we just know okay this is a Nigerian, even before you need to speak Pidgin.

For questions of language preference in different situations, he chose English. We then proceeded to the questions that likely expressed attitudes towards NP.

(4) How would you describe NP to a foreigner? Like explain what it is?

Yeah, probably I'll call it informal kind of what Pidgin is referred to as is Broken English because it sorts of uses English as a base, but then it inserts in like the country or the culture's own slang. A lot of times it comes like just regular sounds or like onomatopoeias even when we say things like 'omo' things like that, it's mainly just sounds and things we add to it. But it's broken English. So a fair understanding of English is needed.

As seen in his response to question (4) above, he characterized Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as "broken English" infused with Nigerian cultural elements. Additionally, he elaborated on the significance of NP when responding to the question regarding whether he would want his children to speak NP.

(5) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that?

(follow-up question).

Yeah. Nigeria, we are losing culture; we almost, especially if we leave Nigeria we have a very strong tendency of forgetting about your culture. This does not just only you-know come with the whole um colonialism and all, but we have adopted

a lot from them especially with English, and it's becoming more and more prevailing. Even, for example, you are around Nigeria, you are around Lagos, everything you see is in English. It's very few times for example, you see a signboard that says completely in Yoruba, completely in Igbo. Even when you go to for example Akwa-Ibom, you will see some but a majority of what you see there are English you-know, even if a lot of us may not have *CELPIC* standard you-know English level, we understand it to a good degree, so Pidgin, yeah, definitely I will want them to speak that (to preserve the culture right?) yeah, I mean even if we cannot be able to speak your language, at least be able to converse in a language that is not just plain English.

He, however, preferred Yoruba as the national or official language for Nigeria, citing it as his mother's native language. He also emphasized the need to shift perceptions of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) to foster its development.

(6) *What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?* (follow up question: would you buy it for your kids?)

I feel like first of all like, how Pidgin is seen needs to be demystified. People need to stop looking at it like a lower language, so to say. Um, for example, regardless of who you know or your mother is, if you should go to the market, and even if you spoke English, very good English, she is not going to speak Queen's English you-know to the person she wants to buy goods from. She's going to speak Pidgin, or probably Yoruba or Igbo. You are not going to get what you want. It's

Pidgin English. The truth is Pidgin is more accepted generally; I feel like there's just stigma based on social class and things like that. I feel like we could try that, you-know, bring out Pidgin materials and textbooks, you know how we have 'A for apple' B for boy' those kinds of things, you can get people to understand basics of Pidgin how it works, construction of sentences, but it sorts of works in a similar fashion as the English language.

Ethan appeared cognizant of the challenges facing Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and recognized the necessity for its further development. While he did not convey personal negative attitudes towards NP, he acknowledged its prevailing negative perceptions and advocated for their change. However, he frequently compared NP to English and seemed more critical of the English language's dominance in Nigeria rather than being strongly supportive of NP. His stance was more one of indifference towards NP, emphasizing dissatisfaction with English rather than passionate advocacy for NP, and this neutrality was seen in his matched-guise ratings of NP where he chose neutral options for NP guises on positive attributes such as education and modernity.

6.2.1.3. YM3 Thom (26 years)

Having resided in Canada for over eight years, Thom expressed a sense of being more Canadian, though he maintains his identity as Nigerian. His social circle largely comprises Canadians, reflecting the predominantly Canadian environment in his workplace and daily life. When asked whether he consciously attempts to sound Canadian, he responded as follows:

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

I wouldn't say I consciously try to sound Canadian. All I do is I just try to slow down when I talk and pronounce my words very, very carefully. If that's what it means to consciously sound Canadian, then sure. But, no, my impression was not to, like, fake a Canadian accent. My thing all I did was just slow down the way I spoke just to make sure that I was as clear as possible. But I still pronounce words the way that I was taught to pronounce words. I don't try to pronounce them in a Canadian way.

He shared a response consistent with the other two male participants, noting that he primarily uses Nigerian English when conversing with other Nigerians. His response further highlights the linguistic choices influenced by social and cultural context.

(2) What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak them?

Yeah. Well, I mean, most of the time is English, regular English. Um, I know the survey asked, What do I speak when I talk to Nigerians? I find that when I'm talking to Nigerians, I usually speak more Nigerian English according to your definition. So not full-on Pidgin, but just enough, like, slangs and words thrown in there that I use clearly, like, a different kind of a, like a Nigerian English. Very few times will I use Pidgin. Um, but, yeah, mostly, yeah. 90 percent of the time, I'm speaking English. If I meet Nigerians, I'll say half of the time, I'm speaking, like, Nigerian English. Yeah. But it's clear. When you meet a Nigerian, I feel like it's this sense

of, um, um, comfort. They kind of just, like, let that barrier.. let the wall down, and then you just start speaking Nigerian English.

He explained that when interacting with fellow Nigerians, he allowed himself to be more relaxed and natural, lowering the linguistic "wall" and using Nigerian English without the extra effort to "sound clear." He also mentioned that using Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in the presence of those unfamiliar with it felt somewhat inappropriate. Yoruba was his preferred Nigerian language, and he rated his NP proficiency at 6. He frequently used English in his daily interactions but sometimes spoke Yoruba at home.

His responses to questions concerning NP were as follows;

(3) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I would describe it as a like a broken kind of English. It's an English that has been combined and meshed with almost all the local languages you can find in Nigeria, and it's interesting because I think Nigeria is such a like, heavily multicultural environment over, like, 200 languages spoken or something like that. English is the formal language, but I think everyone's English comprehension is quite different based on their educational background. So I think Pidgin English is where people kind of meet in the middle. It's like, yeah. I'm trying to learn this English, but I have my local language. So then they put a bit of their local language in it, and then somebody else puts their own local language in it. So Nigerian Pidgin is this, like, weird mesh of English mixed with all the Nigerian local languages and slang. So, it's something that can bridge the gap between

every culture. So, it's like it's very informal very, like, heavily influenced by all the local languages. It's kind of the best way I can describe it.

He also described Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a broken English, blending elements of English with native Nigerian languages. Regarding his children's use of NP, he mentioned that he would neither actively encourage nor discourage them from learning or speaking it. When asked which language he would prefer to be used as the national or official language of Nigeria, he selected NP, emphasizing that it could serve as a means of expressing Nigerian identity.

(4) Between English, NP, your indigenous language(s), and other Nigerian languages, which would you prefer to be the national/official language of Nigeria? Can you give reasons for your choice?

Well, I wouldn't pick any of the indigenous languages. That's for sure. Because, like, there's too many of us, and picking one clearly means, like, one ethnicity is more important than the other..... I feel like the one way to unite the country was through a united language, so English made sense. But now I'm struggling to think if it should still remain English or become Pidgin English. Because if it still remains English, it still feels like we're somehow, like, subjugated to this colonial mindset. But Nigerian Pidgin could be a like, unique, true Nigerian identity, a truly unique thing that came from all the Nigerian ethnicities. So that could be interesting. But in terms of being feasible, I don't know. Like, Nigerian Pidgin, as much as it's interesting, it's also quite different. I don't know if it's as fully

structured as and consistent across Nigeria, so it'd be hard to, like, make it happen. So, I guess okay. So long story short, I think my answer will be English. But if I could, like, wave a magic wand and, like, provide more structure to Nigerian Pidgin, then I'll pick Nigerian Pidgin. But I think Nigerian Pidgin is a bit too hard to make it truly official right now. It's just too, like is the word volatile? It changes so fast.

Thom indicated that he would prefer NP as his choice for the national language “if it had more structure”, as indicated in his response to question (4) above. However, he later expressed that he was content with English as the language of instruction in Nigeria, as it provides Nigerians with a global advantage. Despite this, he believed it would be beneficial to have texts in NP and mentioned that he would purchase them for his children to help them stay connected to their roots.

It was fascinating to observe Ethan and Thom’s reasoning, which leaned more positively than negatively towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP). They also demonstrated a profound understanding of the significance of language in shaping culture and national identity. Interestingly, this level of insight is typically associated with middle-aged or older speakers, not younger ones. However, both Ethan and Thom are slightly older than YM1 Eli, who was only 18 at the time. This age difference may account for their more nuanced views and lack of negative attitudes towards NP. Additionally, a key distinction lies in their time spent in Canada: Eli had only been in Canada for one year, whereas Ethan had been abroad for six years and Thom for eight. This raises an intriguing question about whether a longer duration in Canada strengthens one’s desire to

connect with NP or other native languages. I will explore whether this pattern holds true for the other participants in the study.

6.2.1.4. YM4Rotimi (28 years):

Rotimi, though born in Nigeria, has spent the majority of his life in Canada. He identifies as a Canadian born in Nigeria and is frequently recognized as Canadian by his peers at business school in the United States. While he has some Nigerian friends, the majority of his social circle consists of Canadians or individuals of mixed race who also identify as Canadian. During his upbringing, he had a Nigerian best friend, but his current friendships are predominantly with Canadians.

When asked whether he consciously attempted to adopt a Canadian accent as seen in (1) below, Rotimi, who naturally speaks with a Canadian accent due to his 18 years of residency in the country, responded as follows:

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

So, I think I don't consciously try to sound Canadian. I probably consciously try to sound more Nigerian. Yeah. Like, like, I think at least like when I'm around, I don't know if it's even conscious, but like when I'm around Nigerians, I will typically be like, my voice, my voice will change a little bit. Now, I don't know how natural, like how Nigerian-sounding I am. But like, my voice will typically like change a bit. If you see me in like other settings with like, like at work or like just with other friends, then it's, it's like whatever my tone normally is. But like, for example, I guess the best way to think about it is if I was reading something to

myself in private, my voice wouldn't sound Nigerian, it would sound, it'd sound Canadian. Yeah.

Rotimi exhibited a similar linguistic pattern to the other male participants in his category regarding sounding Canadian.' Despite living in Canada for a significant period and naturally speaking with a Canadian accent, he still made efforts to sound Nigerian when conversing with Nigerians. However, he revealed that he spoke only English and did not use Nigerian Pidgin (NP). He found it inappropriate when people assumed that being Nigerian automatically meant one could understand NP. He also considered the use of NP in professional settings in Canada to be unprofessional.

..."For example, I'm sure if I went to Nigeria, either working in Nigeria or doing something professional in Nigeria, and people were speaking Pidgin, I don't think I would find it as... I don't think I'd be like, oh, that's unprofessional. But I think because it's Canada, and that's not a common thing to hear, I think the fact that it sounds like English makes it seem more unprofessional, to be fair. Yeah, I think that's probably what I'm thinking."

Rotimi further expressed a desire to speak his native language, Yoruba, but did not consider it worth the effort to learn, given that he would not have much opportunity to use it. Consequently, he selected English as his preferred language for use in Canada. However, he chose Yoruba as the language he would use to identify as Nigerian, while predominantly speaking English with everyone in most contexts. When asked how he would describe Nigerian Pidgin (NP) to a foreigner, his response was as follows:

(2) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I would describe it as like a like a I would do like ohh like a like a slang language like you know how, like, like, Gen Z have, like, all these... I would describe it that way. Even though I think it's more formal than that. I would describe it as a slang. Like local way of people talking to each other. So, like it's like a mix of English and like slang. But like I would actually describe it also as something like.....Patois but like in English, sorry the Nigerian equivalent or similar, even though I don't know Patois like that.

Rotimi explicitly expressed the view that he did not want his children to speak Nigerian Pidgin (NP), stating a preference for them to learn Yoruba instead. This stance aligned with his negative ratings of the NP guises, where he disagreed with attributes such as education, intelligence, beauty, and normalcy. He appreciated the role that English played as the language of education in Nigeria, noting how it had significantly aided his academic success upon arriving in Canada. Consequently, he advocated for Nigeria to maintain English as the official language and medium of instruction, without attempting to replace it. Although he had no objections to the development of NP textual materials, he made it clear that he did not want his children engaging with them, as he placed little value on NP. His perspective was articulated as follows:

(3) So would you, if these books (NP textual materials) were produced, buy them for your kids when? If you have kids? Say the truth.

Probably not. Not like I just, I don't, I don't. I don't think I value pidgin as a language the way like others do because I didn't grow up speaking it. I

had no ear for it like. And I think. Like, how do I how do I compare this like? For example, like if you're asking me to rank like a bucket of 10 languages, right? English is in there, Yoruba, Igbo etc, but you add other like tribal languages and then other national languages like French, Spanish, you-know like Mandarin like. I don't. I don't see like a high utility for Pidgin, Nigerian Pidgin on that list for me, and I'm saying this purely from utility because that's how I have to think about languages now. I think that's evolved over time, but I see languages from very much from a utility perspective as opposed to from a like a like a culture or an art perspective as like an artistic expression of something. And so for me, I'm like, if I'm going to learn another language, I want it to be because it's like useful. But I think if I lived in Nigeria, let's say I was trying to build a business in Nigeria, I would 100% pick up Pidgin because I noticed even when I was there that it's like it's the language of familiarity. But if I'm in, if I'm in Canada or the US that I'm working, you-know, God willing to have kids, like, I don't see the utility of like teaching them pidgin there. I think I see the cultural utility of them speaking Yoruba. I don't attach cultural utility to them speaking pidgin.

The interview with this participant was particularly detailed and insightful. While he acknowledged that learning Nigerian Pidgin (NP) could be beneficial in Nigeria, he did not view it as useful in the diaspora, especially in Canada. He even did not think it was worth being viewed as a language but as slang. He also did not perceive NP as a language that serves as an

identity marker for Nigerians in Canada. This perspective may stem from the fact that he has spent the majority of his life in Canada with limited opportunities to use NP in any context. As a result, he appears to align more strongly with Canadian linguistic norms than with NP.

6.2.1.5. YM5 Kass (18 years)

This participant, a first-year student at York University, spent the majority of his life in Nigeria and has lived in Canada for approximately two years. He speaks Igbo, English, and Spanish. His responses during the interview were brief, and he did not elaborate much on his views. He identified as Nigerian, emphasizing his birthplace in Nigeria. His social circle consisted of a mix of Nigerians, Canadians, and other immigrants. He worked with many Nigerians and lived with a Nigerian roommate. When asked about his language use, he mentioned that he did not really make an effort to sound Canadian.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

Yeah, so basically, I lived in the States, right? And like my mom, she always used to make me speak like street. She didn't let me ever speak Pidgin. Like I don't know how to speak Pidgin. No one like, even with my friends. Like I can play around with my friends and I try to speak pidgin, right? Probably when I'm angry, right. But yeah, I want to speak, I speak like fluent English. I don't think I have an accent. Right. I just feel like I speak, I speak English normally.

He stated that he spoke English clearly and did not possess a Canadian accent. Notably, he mentioned that he used Nigerian Pidgin (NP) with his friends, particularly when joking around or

when 'angry', the former being the same sentiment shared by YM1 Eli who used NP when he was 'joking'. He further explained that, while he understood NP completely, he did not speak it frequently, as his mother disapproved of him using the language. This sentiment is fairly common and was evident in the pilot study, where participants frequently shared that they were raised to view NP negatively and were explicitly discouraged from using the language by their parents and guardians. Interestingly, he could not identify any scenarios in which NP might be inappropriate. Although he primarily used English in most situations, he communicated in Spanish with his mother and in Igbo with his father at home. When asked to describe NP to a foreigner, he characterized it as "English with minor differences."

(2) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

It is like English, just with a minor difference. I'll say it's Pidgin English they all know what Pidgin English is. Oh if you don't understand. And they try to like understand what the other person is going to talk with them, right? I'll probably just tell them to look for the keywords in what they're saying because that's how I learned. That's even like, that's how I learned from some people, and that's how you learn a language. Basically, you have to look for the keywords. If...if you already know English. Yeah, because if in all languages, if you notice the keywords in English in other languages are basically the same as supermarket or something like that, it's basically the same.

He also expressed that he would not want his children to speak NP, though he was open to them understanding it, as he himself did not actively speak the language.

(3) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that?

(follow up question).

When I have kids, they can understand it. Me, myself, I don't know how to speak it. So, if my children are speaking, it will be weird. So, I'll just say no, I will not want them to speak. They can understand it. They shouldn't just like speak it because I don't speak it.

He also stated that Nigeria's linguistic situation is balanced as it currently stands, with English serving as the official language and other languages coexisting. He supported the use of English as the medium of instruction due to its global reach. When asked about the production of Nigerian Pidgin in textual materials, Kass responded as follows:

(4) What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales? (follow up question: would you buy it for your kids?)

..... The spoken form of the language is fine, and they do not need to have it in a written form. Aside that, speaking languages yeah, I feel like there are only 2 languages that a person can speak. You can only have two strong languages, and know a little of other languages, hence not being able to read them.

So, in the case where there is literature in Pidgin, will you buy for your kids?

Naah, they won't understand it so there is no need.

6.2.1.6. Summary

The responses from the young male participants exhibited notable similarities. All participants, with the exception of Rotimi, identified as Nigerian. They commonly referred to Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a form of broken English and preferred using Nigerian English in interactions with fellow Nigerians. Their preference for English over NP aligns with research on language prestige and identity, which suggests that younger speakers in multilingual settings often gravitate toward languages associated with higher socioeconomic mobility and global communication (Schiffman, 2012; Omoniyi, 2006). A prevailing theme among this group was their general lack of appreciation for NP, a finding that supports my third hypothesis: middle-aged and older individuals might exhibit more positive attitudes toward NP, particularly regarding its enhancement and standardization, while younger individuals remain neutral or indifferent.

Moreover, younger speakers in the diaspora tend to align more with linguistic varieties prevalent in Canada or the Greater Toronto Area, influenced by non-Nigerian norms. This phenomenon is consistent with studies on language shift and second-generation immigrants, which indicate that linguistic identity among younger diaspora members is often shaped by their host society rather than their heritage language (Li, 1992; Fishman, 2001).

In summary, the attitudes expressed by the younger male speakers reflected negativity, ambivalence, conditional support, and indifference. Eli, Rotimi, and Kass demonstrated clear negative attitudes toward NP, with Eli and Rotimi explicitly rejecting its value and Kass considering it an insignificant variant of English. Similar to findings in sociolinguistic studies on language perception and stigma (Lippi-Green, 2012), their rejection of NP highlights the role of

language ideologies in shaping attitudes toward non-standard varieties. Although all three prefer English and show no interest in NP's development or usage, only Rotimi outright opposes its development while still acknowledging its role in Nigeria. In contrast, Ethan and Thom exhibit more nuanced views. Ethan recognizes NP's cultural significance and rising popularity but remains cautious about its development. Thom sees NP as a useful cultural tool if it were "more structured," yet still prioritizes English for practical advantages. Their ambivalence aligns with studies on diglossia and linguistic stratification, where speakers recognize a variety's social function but hesitate to ascribe it prestige (Ferguson, 1959; Rickford, 2013).

A key distinction among the participants lies in their time spent in Canada. Eli had only been in Canada for one year, whereas Ethan had been abroad for six years and Thom for eight. This raises an intriguing question about whether a longer duration in Canada strengthens one's desire to connect with NP or other native languages. Research on heritage language maintenance suggests that time spent abroad does not necessarily predict stronger heritage language retention, as factors such as family use, peer influence, and societal attitudes play crucial roles (Tse, 2001). However, it is noteworthy that Rotimi, who had spent the longest time in Canada among the participants, expressed negative attitudes toward NP, unlike Ethan and Thom. This discrepancy suggests that the attitudes expressed may lean more toward individualism or other factors not fully considered here, rather than being solely influenced by the duration of time spent in Canada.

Regarding sociolinguistic behavior and language use, I consider their Canadian identity versus their Nigerian identity. Despite living in Canada, younger males generally do not prioritize sounding Canadian but focus on "clear English." This preference aligns with findings that immigrant speakers often adopt a pragmatic approach to language use, favoring clarity and

communicative efficiency over native-like pronunciation (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Kachru, 1992). Their views on NP reflect this same pragmatism: some use NP mainly in informal contexts or with other Nigerians, while others rely almost exclusively on English. Ethan and Thom use NP in informal settings to connect with their Nigerian identity, whereas Eli, Rotimi, and Kass see NP as irrelevant or inappropriate in their current environment.

In terms of their perception of NP's status, the participants commonly described NP as "broken English" or informal slang, reinforcing a widespread perception of NP as lacking prestige or legitimacy. This reflects broader sociolinguistic trends in which non-standard varieties are often marginalized in favor of dominant languages (Milroy, 1999; Deumert, 2005). Conversely, their view of English as globally useful and prestigious underscores the role of linguistic capital in shaping language choices among diaspora speakers (Bourdieu, 1991). The subsequent section will focus on analyzing the interview responses of the younger female participants.

6.2.2. Younger Females Speakers

6.2.2.1. YF1Temi (23 years):

Temi is a graduate student who spent most of her life in Nigeria and has been in Canada for just over a year. She identifies strongly as Nigerian and stated that she would continue to identify as such, even if she were to obtain Canadian citizenship. Her social circle is diverse, comprising Nigerians, Canadians, and other immigrants, though she primarily lives and works among Nigerians. When asked whether she consciously tries to sound Canadian as seen in (1) below, her response was as follows:

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

Yes, yes, yes, I don't know. But yes. It just happens unconsciously sometimes like. Especially when I'm trying to pronounce some words, like before coming here, I just think it was Toronto [to'ronto], although my uncle corrected me. There's Toronto right then I came here and everybody saying Toronto [tə'rɒnoʊ], you-know, the Canadian, you-know, ways of pronouncing words and stuff. So yeah, I'm getting used to that. And I often find myself not often, sometimes find myself, you-know, speaking like a Canadian.

This response presents an intriguing contrast to the expressions of the male participants in the same age group. Temi stated that she unconsciously tries to sound Canadian, whereas the male participants emphasized that they simply aimed to speak "clearly." This distinction may reflect an effort to fit in or the concept of overt prestige, a phenomenon widely reported in sociolinguistics, where women are more likely than men to identify with and adopt prestigious language forms (Trudgill, 1972). Temi further emphasized the prestige of her speech by claiming that her English has a British influence, a variety often regarded as more prestigious. This is evident in her response to the question regarding the languages she speaks in Canada, as seen below:

(2) What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak them?

Nigerian English, Yoruba, Pidgin, and Canadian English. OK, before I even answer this question. I just want to state that someone has actually said that I speak British English. I don't know if it's because, you know, the British people colonized us in Nigeria, right? So one of my classmates is from Iran, and then I was speaking to him one day and he was like oh I sound like I sound like I'm a British person. Like I said, my English is like British English, right? So and that was just like the first time hearing that from you-know someone that is not Nigerian, someone different from, you know? Yeah. So just wanted to point that out.

The fact that Temi highlighted that someone thought she sounded British, a detail that was never mentioned by the male participants, further underscores the tendency for women to embrace prestigious language forms, as is commonly noted in sociolinguistic studies. However, in contrast to this emphasis on prestige, she expressed positive attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP), selecting it as her favorite Nigerian language while in Canada. This suggests a nuanced relationship between prestige and linguistic preference, where positive sentiments towards NP coexist with her inclination towards more prestigious varieties.

(3) What is your favorite Nigerian language in Canada and why is it your favorite language?

I'll say Pidgin English, to be honest. Yes, (why?) Most Nigerians actually understand Pidgin English, right? There's a way we speak pidgin English. It just seems very comforting, friendly and very nice. It makes the

conversation very unique and very interesting. Right. So I'll say Pidgin English. See, that's because you- know I don't need to speak Igbo. You- know, it's a language that is understood by people of different cultures in Nigeria. Right. So that's the reason why I said Pidgin English. So if I'm speaking to someone that understands Igbo, that's from the Igbo culture, other culture, Yoruba culture or whatever the Ibibio and the rest them. Speaking Pidgin English, they would understand, I don't need to stress to start thinking of how to speak Igbo and other languages. But Pidgin is like widely acceptable language also in Nigeria.

She rates her NP-speaking ability as 6 on a scale of 1 to 10.

(4) How will you rate your NP speaking ability on a scale of 1 to 10?

I would say 6. Let me not hype myself too much. (Interviewer: OK, it's not bad. I mean, 6 means you can hold a conversation). (here she speaks NP)- 'I sabi hold conversation well well, but he gets some kind, you know, some kind slangs wey dem dey talk for Pidgin English wey I no sabi. But people wey sabi pidgin English themselves o, them fit speak am very well, me I no sabi. Me I sabi small, but not to a great extent. You see that great extent now if to say I sabi English. Sorry. Pidgin English well, you go get some some kind you-know, slang, wey we use instead of great extent. (*"I can hold conversations very well (in NP), but there are some slangs they speak in NP that I don't know. But people who know NP can speak it very well. I don't know. I speak it a little but not to a great extent. You see 'the great extent', if I knew NP very well, there will be some kind of slang*

that can be used for 'great extent'"). So that's what I mean. (Interviewer: "If you wanted to say great extent, you can say 'well well' (very well), yeah, or 'wella'." You are truly a 6, I was listening to your Pidgin and I was grading it for you. You can really speak Pidgin.)

Temi also selected Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as the language she uses to be identified as a Nigerian in Canada, further reinforcing her positive attitude towards NP. She highlighted her experiences with other West Africans, saying that her Ghanaian friend does not usually understand NP.

(5) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

Pidgin English. This is because English is a you-know widely acceptable language that everyone understands, so by speaking Pidgin to this person you know that oh, I'm Nigerian, cause you-know, Nigerians speak Pidgin English and I heard that Ghanaians have their pidgin. Their own pidgin English. But then it's different from ours. Yeah, I have a friend, a Ghanaian friend that I speak Pidgin English to him, but then he's like 'I don't understand' and I'm like "ah! don't you guys speak Pidgin?" And he is like, "no, our pidgin is quite different from yours. Yours seems very deep."

In her description of Nigerian Pidgin (NP), Temi characterized it as English with slang, emphasizing its informal nature. Despite her positive attitudes towards NP and its role in her Nigerian identity, she expressed reluctance regarding her children speaking the language. Instead, she preferred that they understand NP without necessarily using it themselves. This distinction suggests a nuanced perspective, where NP is valued for its cultural significance, but its transmission to the next generation is viewed with caution, due to concerns about its prestige and utility in broader contexts.

(6) *Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that?* (follow up question).

I would like them to understand it, speak it, not too much. I want them to speak proper English, maybe British or Canadian. Also to understand and speak their native languages, Yoruba and whatever language their dad speaks. I would also want them to understand Pidgin though.

As indicated, Temi demonstrated a clear preference for the prestigious varieties of British and Canadian English over Nigerian Pidgin (NP), a trend consistent with sociolinguistic studies that often find women aligning more with standard or prestigious forms of language (Labov, 1990; Milroy & Milroy, 1999). This pattern aligns with the principle of linguistic security, where women, particularly in multilingual or diglossic societies, are more likely to favor standardized or globally dominant varieties due to their association with socioeconomic mobility and status (Trudgill, 1972; Eckert, 2000).

Temi expressed a preference for English as the official language and the medium of education in Nigeria, reinforcing its global utility and status. This perspective echoes broader

findings in language policy research, where English continues to be viewed as a language of power and opportunity, especially in postcolonial settings (Schiffman, 1996; Ricento, 2000). However, despite her preference for English, she acknowledged the cultural relevance of NP and believed that having textual materials in NP would be enjoyable. This reflects the complex relationship between standard and nonstandard varieties, where individuals may reject a variety for formal or institutional use while still valuing its role in cultural identity and informal domains (Meyerhoff, 2018).

She even mentioned that she would purchase these materials for her children, again reflecting a nuanced balance between valuing both prestige and cultural identity. This dual stance aligns with research on heritage language maintenance, where some speakers selectively engage with non-standard or indigenous varieties in ways that do not threaten their social capital but still preserve cultural ties (Fishman, 2001).

6.2.2.2. YF2 Jacintha (22 years)

Jacintha has resided in Canada for over three years and has developed a Canadian accent during this period. Despite her adaptation to the Canadian environment, she firmly identifies as Nigerian and expressed that this would remain the case even if she were to acquire Canadian citizenship. Her social network is composed predominantly of Canadians, although she interacts with some Nigerians at work and lives in a community with a significant Nigerian presence. Here are her responses to the questions asked:

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

Yeah, I think there's a word for it. Is it something shift, culture shift or something like that? Yeah, when I first came here, I was so icky about my accent like especially because I was doing fundraising and talking to a lot of people. I was basically pushed out into the world here when I came here, so I saw myself having to, especially because of my coworkers. They were white, and they lived here longer. So, I saw myself having to speak differently or change certain tones or speak in the higher pitch so that it doesn't sound you know, too, too serious or intimidating because of how where I come from or the perspective of who we are. So yeah, I definitely do find myself having to conform. Initially, it was not intentional. It was not an intentional thing on my side, but as time went on, you get used to just speaking in that accent when the need required it, unconsciously to you. So and then when I am around Nigerians, my Nigerian accent fully comes out. But in my workplace, in class, oh my Canadian accent is 'on point'. My customer service voice is on point. I used to be so insecure, afraid; I thought people wouldn't understand what I was saying; I thought they would see me as uneducated, and I was scared because you are surrounded by people that were born here and had Western education and all, so I think I had that inferiority complex a little bit.

As noted in response to (1) above, Jacintha expresses confidence in her ability to perform the Canadian accent or Canadian English, which aligns with the patterns often observed among

women in sociolinguistic studies. This reflects the tendency of women to gravitate toward prestigious linguistic forms, and in this context, Canadian English is perceived as the prestigious variety compared to the other language varieties discussed in the study. She even voiced concerns about being perceived as "uneducated" if she were to use Nigerian-accented English. This was again reinforced when she was asked about her favorite language in Canada. She selected Canadian English, noting that it is the language she uses most frequently.

(2) What is your favorite Nigerian language in Canada, and why is it your favorite language?

My favorite language in Canada. I would say I don't know if it's my favourite, I will just say it's something. That I'm just more used to and I know that people know me by which is the Canadian English. So it's very easy to just go into that accent when I'm uncomfortable or when I feel peace, for example. But the language that makes me feel most at home is definitely the Nigerian language. Nigerian English. Nigerian English reminds me like it just puts me back home. But the Canadian English makes me feel like I don't know. It's very weird. It makes you feel safe.

In her response, Jacintha articulates that speaking Canadian English provides her with a sense of "safety," while Nigerian English evokes a sense of home and familiarity. She claims that she derives a significant part of her identity through her use of Canadian English, further emphasizing its importance in her daily life. She rated her proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as 5/10 and mentioned that she uses Nigerian English when she wishes to be identified as Nigerian. Additionally, she noted that she uses NP with other West Africans, such as Ghanaians,

highlighting the shared cultural connection that NP fosters across different West African nationalities.

(3) What languages do you speak with migrants from other West African countries? NP or English? And why?

So for other groups, I still speak my Pidgin English, because I have heard them, especially Ghanaians, speak Pidgin as well, and we understand each other. So with others, I speak more Nigerian English; I tend to lean towards my Nigerian English, at least just to introduce myself as Nigerian, because people often think I am from other countries.

Jacintha also described Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as broken English, but pointed out her intention not to suggest that it is commonly used by those who are less educated. This perception, although not expressed by her, reflects a view of NP as a less prestigious variety compared to more standard forms of English, aligning with attitudes often found in sociolinguistic studies where speakers associate prestige with more formal and standardized language varieties.

(4) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I think I will be describing it the way that people describe like the Caribbean, like the Patois. So, I would say it's our own form of like broken English. Because I don't, I don't want to sound like the pidgin is for people who are not necessarily educated, but it can go beyond classes. I would say like it's a language that Nigerians can fall on to speak in wherever, whichever environment that we find ourselves, no matter the class that

you're in, it's just something; it's a way that we find it to be. Either break sentences short or um just add our own Nigerian flair to it.... I don't know what else to say that it's not it's not Westernized, it's not Westernized, but it's still understandable.

She characterized Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as broken English with a “Nigerian flair” but expressed a desire for her children to learn it. She favored Nigerian English as the official language of Nigeria, arguing that just as Canadian English is spoken with a Canadian accent, Nigerian English could similarly reflect a Nigerian accent and serve well as the country's official language. While she supported the development of NP textual materials and storybooks for children, she noted that purchasing such materials for her own children would not be a priority.

(5) So if we do this tale by moonlight and the extra materials in Nigerian Pidgin English, would it be something you would buy for your kids if you eventually have kids?

I don't think it would be the first thing that I will introduce them to. But after the groundwork of Nigerian English is there, then we can start building up on this one and be like, Oh yes, this one is here. This is who you are. Yeah. Start understanding this one too. UM. Yeah, because especially when you're growing up at that age, I don't want that to just be their primary way of communicating especially. Yeah, but again, I would explain it for my kids. If they have questions here and there, I would explain it to them. Yeah, this is how we say this. This is how we say this.

It's fascinating to kids as well. They would want to, you-know, they're curious.

Jacintha's response highlights her view of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a marker of Nigerian identity, as she expresses a desire to instill this connection in her children. However, she also acknowledges the social benefits of adopting a Canadian accent, noting that it reduces insecurity and facilitates integration into Canadian society. While her matched-guise test ratings reflect a degree of appreciation for NP, her linguistic choices suggest a stronger alignment with Canadian English, which she uses more frequently. This reflects broader sociolinguistic patterns where speakers navigate multiple linguistic marketplaces (Bourdieu, 1991), strategically adopting prestigious varieties—such as Canadian English, to gain social capital, while still valuing NP for cultural identity.

6.2.2.3. YF3 Ife (19 years)

Ife, an international student at York University, identified as Nigerian and planned to maintain this identity unless her status in Canada changed. She maintained strong connections with Nigerian friends and valued these relationships to stay connected to her native language and culture. Ife also worked with both Nigerians and individuals from other nationalities. When asked whether she consciously adjusted her speech to sound Canadian, she indicated that she adapts her language based on her conversational partner. Her response was as follows:

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

Sound Canadian? Honestly, because Canada is a very diverse country, you tend to like change the way you speak to different people so they could

hear you. I feel like there are a lot of situations where, like, I'm around my Nigerian friends and my other friends from other nationalities can't hear me even though I'm speaking English, which is the so-called Nigerian English. Then like when I speak with them, I just have to like go with their accents. We have different accents in Canada we're talking about like the Eastern people, you know, like those different people. I have to change it based on that person, so they can understand me because we have a lot of issues with that, just so they can understand the accent. I find myself in that boat.

(2) When you say because of different people, you change your accent, So if you're speaking with someone who is natively Indian that they have the Punjabi English accent, do you sound Punjab?

Yes, when I'm with my Indian friends, but that doesn't necessarily mean I now sound Punjabi, so it's kind of the way it sounds; even my friends would be laughing like, "what are you doing girl?". Just trying to help them understand me, so I don't know. I just tend to just change my accent, but it will now sound exactly like theirs, just so they understand me. But I think as time went by, I tend to realize that when I am actually with another nationality, I actually still change, like it's not the same all around. When I am with my Asian friends, it literally just changes. This is because I know what you need to understand me as my friend, so I just go with that.

Ife further elaborated that she utilizes Canadian English when interacting with individuals from various nationalities and Nigerian English when conversing with fellow Nigerians. Her response regarding Nigerian Pidgin (NP) was particularly insightful; she noted that NP is rarely spoken within her social circle unless used humorously. Additionally, she mentioned that her male friends have expressed a reluctance to use NP with women as seen in response to (2) below.

(3) Do you speak Pidgin here in Canada?

I rarely speak Pidgin because I don't know people that speak it. It is only on rare occasions that maybe we want to joke, or we see a video. It is not like I know people, and guys say, "I don't like speaking pidgin with girls". My ex-boyfriend was like, "it's just weird to speak" and I don't speak it really well so.

(Interviewer: That is, you rarely speak pidgin because of the company you keep; your group, they don't speak it.) Yes.

When asked about her preferred Nigerian language in Canada, Ife indicated that Canadian English was her favorite. She attributed this preference to a shift in her social circle, which now comprises a blend of speakers of Nigerian English and Canadian English.

(4) What is your favorite Nigerian language in Canada, and why is it your favorite language?

So I have had a drastic friends change. I used to speak Yoruba and Nigerian English a lot but now I get to speak a lot of Canadian English

now. I will say 50-50 now though between Canadian English and Nigerian English.

She rated her proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as 6 on a scale of 1 to 10, and indicated that she would use Nigerian English to assert her Nigerian identity, particularly with those who do not speak Yoruba, but she would not use NP for this purpose. She preferred Nigerian English for interactions with Nigerians and Canadian English when communicating with Caribbeans unfamiliar with Nigerian English. Ife described NP as a form of English used primarily by “laypersons” in Nigeria.

(5) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I would have actually called Nigerian Pidgin like another way of speaking English for Nigerians, but that would have been like the Nigerian English. But now that we've n defined it, I don't know. (Interviewer: It doesn't have to be like a textbook definition. How? What do you feel about NP basically? How do you see it?) Feels like pidgin helps with communication regardless of what you are going through you-know, you have to go to school to have a deep understanding of English. But pidgin is like the layman's English language in Nigeria, which would help everyone be able to communicate. So that's kind of like if we say our main language to communicate, like regardless of you being educated regardless of you like being educated or being uneducated, regardless of all of those things, Pidgin is just like what we can fall back on and just be able to communicate. And it's easy to learn, and it's based on English.

When asked whether she would like her children to speak Nigerian Pidgin (NP), Ife indicated that while she would not mind if they learned it, NP would be the least prioritized language. She noted that they could learn it if they were interested. She believed that developing NP textual materials would be more beneficial in regions where NP is widely spoken in Nigeria. She also mentioned that she might purchase such books for her children after their formal education, viewing them as an additional resource rather than a primary focus. She emphasized that native languages should be given more importance than NP.

(6) Will you buy books like that for your kids?

Yeah, when they are done with their school, yes, that's an extra not a main. Maybe if they are really smart and they need additional languages. But if I am not lying, its not something I will say, oh this is what you will learn. I can tell them 'oh this is the trending language; you guys can learn it'. I mean, I feel like you don't even need to read pidgin to learn pidgin. I just learnt it from the market, and from the streets. My parents don't speak to me at all, I just learnt it on the streets. Nowadays, parents don't even teach indigenous languages; is it pidgin that the children will learn? Parents should emphasize native languages for their children because it goes to speak of their identity as well.

This participant placed the lowest value on NP among all the languages she knows, advocating for the promotion of her native language, Yoruba, over NP, emphasizing its significance in cultural identity. Notably, unlike the males in this age group, all the female participants indicated

a preference for speaking Canadian English. Her description of NP as a form of English used primarily by “laypersons” in Nigeria reflects broader sociolinguistic findings on language stratification, where speakers associate certain varieties with prestige and others with informality (Irvine & Gal, 2000).

6.2.2.4. YF4 Halima (27 years)

Halima identified as Nigerian Canadian due to her education in Montreal and her adherence to the language standards required in Canada. Her direct response for (1) was as follows:

(1) Do you think of yourself as Nigerian, Canadian, or Nigerian-Canadian? Why or why not?

I would say I am Nigerian-Canadian, due to the reason being that, when I was in Montreal, I went to school in Montreal, and in my class I remember I was with the Quebecois and the Canadians, so it taught me how to speak like the standard of Canada. So, that has kind of influenced me in a way that I can say that I'm Nigerian-Canadian. (Interviewer: So basically, it's because of your experience in Canada, you will identify yourself as a Nigerian-Canadian.). Yeah.

Her social circle includes Canadians, Nigerians, and individuals from other nationalities. She noted that she often adjusts her accent depending on her conversation partner. In addition to Canadian English and Yoruba, she also speaks French.

(2) What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak them?

I would first of all state the languages I speak in Canada: I speak Yoruba, I speak English and I speak French. So, in the aspect of the situation. Let's say for instance if I am talking to my mum, I have to speak in my dialect, which is Yoruba. If I'm talking to my friends, it depends on where they are from, if they're Canadian, or if they speak French or English. So, most of my friends are bilingual too, like me. I switch from English to French; I go in between those two languages.

(3) What about others that are not your family and are not bilinguals?

Yeah, I speak Standard English if they're not Nigerians.

(4) If they are non-Nigerians, what language do you speak?

Canadian English.

(5) What about with Nigerians?

With Nigerians, it actually depends though, because normally you know when you meet someone for the first time, like you just want to talk the way you talk. But eventually if you get to start talking and you start familiarizing with each other, then you can, you know it's just you just have that mixture of Nigerians that, oh, this is home, it feels like home.

Then you have to just switch back to the accent, because sometimes most of them don't really understand what you're trying to pass across to them because of your accent. And they're like, "oh, you don't sound Nigerian". So, you want to sound and come down to their level for them to understand what you're saying.

(6) *So, when they tell you that they don't understand what you're saying, is it the way you are sounding? What accent do you think you're using when they tell you that? Is it Canadian accent or Nigerian accent?*

I think I would say Canadian accent because they're like, oh, you've been abroad, you sound like... because for someone to say, you don't sound Nigerian, it means that you're sounding like someone from Canada or from America and that kind of.

As seen above, Halima, just like the others in this group, conveyed that she adopts a Canadian accent, as people often assume she has spent time abroad. When asked about her use of Nigerian Pidgin (NP), she described it as "weird" and mentioned that she seldom speaks it. Her preferred Nigerian language in Canada is Yoruba, which she grew up speaking. She rates her NP speaking ability modestly. To assert her Nigerian identity, she uses Nigerian English, while Canadian English is her choice when interacting with non-Yoruba-speaking friends and individuals from other West African countries. Notably, despite describing NP as "broken English," she acknowledges it as a legitimate language.

(7) *How would you describe NP to a foreigner?*

I think I would say Nigerian Pidgin is derived from English, and it's kind of a broken English because what's so fun about it is that even if you don't speak pidgin English and you speak English, you can understand; you can try to put one or two together to get what the person is saying. Because some people will say "I dey" (I'm okay) "how you dey" (how are you?). So, they are words derived from English. I don't know where they got some of the abbreviations and the way they come about those things. But I know that it is mixed with English words. So, you can try to just guess what the person is saying if you know those English words. And I can say pidgin is a broken English or maybe a code that people used to talk back in those days, maybe that became a language now because Pidgin is now like a language in the country, Nigeria.

Halima further expressed that she would not want her children to speak Nigerian Pidgin (NP) since she barely uses the language and was not taught it at home. She noted that her husband also does not speak NP, except when addressed in the language by his friends. Halima preferred English as both the official language and the medium of education in Nigeria. She disagreed with the idea of developing NP textual materials and storybooks for children, reflecting her lack of support for NP's expansion in educational contexts.

(8) *What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales? (follow-up question: would you buy it for your kids?)*

I would disagree with that because you cannot write a book in pidgin because number one, like I said earlier, I will make reference to the fact that I said that we were being colonized by Britons. There are some people in Nigeria that still don't speak pidgin up to date, and some people have not even heard the word pidgin. That's how difficult it is for some people because we have people from abroad, we have people born in Nigeria that went abroad, and after they didn't get to understand pidgin, and it depends on the kind of environment you stayed in and the kind of school you went to. If you go to some high-ranking kind of school, you would not even hear not to talk of somebody saying it where you are. You wouldn't even hear the word pidgin, but when you go to some certain rural areas, you can hear them speaking pidgin, but that's why I'm like something that people don't know; the language that people don't know worldwide shouldn't be accepted.....

Halima expressed strong negative sentiments towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP), describing it as a language predominantly found in rural areas, a characterization that is inaccurate. She also stated that she would not purchase NP books for her children. Notably, these strong attitudes were not as evident in her NP matched-guise ratings, suggesting a bit of discrepancy between her expressed opinions and her evaluative responses. Hence the importance of the interview portion of the study.

(9) If linguists now produce or people that write books if they produce books in pidgin or story books for children, would you buy for your kids when you have children?

Like I said, no I wouldn't. Because I don't speak it, what I don't speak, how can I even teach my children that? Because you must teach your children what they teach them in school, and you also must support them at home on how to read. They can't give them such books at school. I am very sure that their teacher does not even speak Pidgin English. If I bring them that book, how would they understand? Because they're not even being taught in school, and it's not homeschooling I'm doing for them. So, I would disagree with that.

The discrepancy between Halima's stated opinions and her NP matched-guise ratings suggests that explicit language attitudes do not always align with subconscious biases—how individuals intuitively evaluate linguistic varieties. Sociolinguistic research has long highlighted this divergence, particularly in contexts where a language carries social stigma (Labov, 1972; Garrett, 2010). Halima's strong rejection of NP may reflect externally influenced views, such as the common perception of NP as “broken English,” rather than an intrinsic linguistic preference. However, her less extreme evaluations in the matched-guise test suggest an implicit recognition of NP's utility, familiarity, or emotional resonance. This aligns with findings in language attitude studies, where socially constructed ideologies shape explicit opinions, while deeper, subconscious associations reveal a more nuanced linguistic perception (Kristiansen, 2009; Campbell-Kibler, 2010).

Halima's response also mirrors broader patterns observed among female participants in this study. She self-identified as a speaker of Canadian English and placed minimal value on NP, reinforcing the sociolinguistic trend that women, particularly in diaspora contexts, often align with prestigious language varieties over stigmatized ones (Trudgill, 1972). Her preference for Canadian English over NP supports the hypothesis that female speakers in this group are more likely to embrace standard forms of language, distancing themselves from non-standard varieties like NP.

6.2.2.5. YF5 Faith (24 years)

Faith, the final participant in the younger female category, identified strongly as Nigerian, reflecting her deep connection to Nigerian culture and her predominantly Nigerian social circle. Despite living among Canadians and working with them, she maintains her cultural ties through her involvement in a Nigerian church. When asked if she consciously tries to sound Canadian, she affirmed this, consistent with the responses of other participants in this category.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

That's a good question. Yes, honestly, I feel like when I'm talking to someone, like at work, for example like today I went for lunch with my manager, and she was Canadian. Like now I don't even know. Maybe it's a natural thing like just my instinct. I just switched and I made sure that like I switched as well because they only hear me or like I think it's just I don't know what it is, but I feel like it's just this sense of trying to find again a

sense of belonging wherever you find yourself. So, I guess my accent also matters in situations like that, so yeah.

(2) What about with Nigerians?

Oh, I go back to my Nigerian accent. Although I have gotten this a lot that I speak a bit of a polished Nigerian accent.

Similar to the other female participants in this category, Faith intentionally highlighted that she has been complimented on her "polished" Nigerian accent. This observation may align with the tendency of women to strive for and be associated with prestigious linguistic forms. Faith's awareness of and emphasis on this perception may suggest an intentional effort to project a refined and socially desirable image through her speech, reinforcing broader patterns of how language is often tied to identity and societal expectations, particularly for women.

She further explained that while she predominantly used Canadian English in Canada, she also spoke Nigerian Pidgin (NP) to a moderate extent, self-rating her proficiency as 5 out of 10. When asked about her preferred Nigerian language in Canada, she indicated a strong preference for Nigerian English. She expressed a desire to use Nigerian English unapologetically, as it serves as a clear marker of her Nigerian identity, thereby selecting Nigerian English over NP as the language through which she identifies as Nigerian.

(3) What is your favorite Nigerian language in Canada, and why is it your favorite language?

Honestly, I think my goal would be to be able to speak my Nigerian English in Canada. Unapologetically, right? It's like to be able to call myself back in those moments that I try to switch to be like, let me just

... speak the way I speak, because after I hear other cultures like Indians don't try to change like we hear them and we know that an Indian is speaking like.. Yeah, exactly... They also have some letters that I think naturally come from their mouth. It's just there's a way it sounds. I don't think they can change. Maybe we as Nigerians can still change a little bit, but it still inspires me in a way, just to be able to speak because no one looks at them a certain way. But I don't know why we sometimes are afraid to just be ourselves and speak the way that you-know we are made to. I think maybe I don't know if that answers your question, but I think that's what I would say is just maybe just being able to just like, my favorite would be Nigerian English. Me being able to speak it.

It is interesting that she expresses a desire to retain her Nigerian accent, despite intentionally adopting a Canadian accent when communicating with people in Canada. This demonstrates that her linguistic adjustments are deliberate, likely motivated by a need to fit in socially or ensure clarity in communication. When asked to describe Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as seen in (4) below, she referred to it as broken English.

(4) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

It is broken English. I don't know how to explain it. I guess I will have to give an example of how its broken. But I'll say it's broken English.

She also would not want her kids to speak NP.

(5) *Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that?* (follow up question).

I don't think so, to be honest. I feel like I can't. I really can't see. Maybe I can't just see a situation where that would be our conversation, because it's not my primary way of talking right? So I don't even see. No, I don't think I'm gonna. I don't think I'm going to encourage it or push it, yeah.

She preferred English as both the language of education and the official language of Nigeria due to its global significance. Regarding the development of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) textual materials, she advocated for prioritizing English and indigenous languages over NP.

(6) *What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?* (Follow-up question: *would you buy it for your kids?*).

I think I would say that English should be the primary language, the primary way of speaking. I mean even in these books and things like that. But I also really encourage that you know indigenous languages as well, because I think that's also something that has been a discussion. I've heard it before and I think I've even been in conversations like that where we were just talking about how our languages seem to be slowly leaving this generation, at least in our generation. Like, I don't think our children's children will know how to speak Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, or any of these languages. So I really... if there's anything I would want to teach my children, it will be indigenous languages, maybe not pidgin but indigenous

languages. And so I think English should still be the official and should still be the main theme. But also, it would be nice to have them have these books, you know, in Indigenous languages as well, yeah.

She expressed a negative attitude toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) when asked if she would want her children to speak it in (7) below, stating that “there is nothing nice about it.”

(7) If they were to produce them for children, would you buy them for your kids?

I don't know. I feel like the way I think about Nigerian Pidgin. Maybe I don't know if this is a bad thing, but there's nothing nice to it. I don't see how it is functional in the world that we live in today like. I think there's nothing nice about it. There's nothing... there's nothing to it. I don't see it. I don't put it on the same scale as Indigenous languages; I just think it's broken English, like what is there? I don't know. Maybe that's not a good way to take it, but that's just how I think about it now. For now, it's just, no, like, I wouldn't buy it.

6.2.2.6. Summary

Four out of the five female participants in this younger group expressed a reluctance to prioritize or encourage their children to learn Nigerian Pidgin (NP). Instead, they predominantly advocated for a focus on indigenous Nigerian languages over NP. Younger female participants show a clear preference for prestigious forms of English, such as Canadian and British English,

over Nigerian Pidgin. This aligns with sociolinguistic findings that women often gravitate towards higher-prestige language varieties (Labov, 1972; Trudgill, 1972). Studies suggest that women are more likely to adopt standard or prestigious forms of language due to societal expectations and the association of such forms with upward mobility and status (Garrett, 2010). Their preference for Canadian English aligns with their experiences and perceived need for clarity and comfort in their interactions.

They all demonstrated flexibility in their language use, adjusting their accents based on contexts. This adaptability indicates a strategic approach to language, balancing between professional and personal identities. Similar patterns have been observed in other multilingual and diasporic communities, where individuals shift their speech to accommodate different social environments (Campbell-Kibler, 2010). NP is generally viewed as less prestigious compared to standard English varieties, and participants expressed a lower priority for NP in their personal and future plans, reflecting its perceived lower status. However, despite their preference for more prestigious forms, some maintained a connection to NP for informal or cultural contexts, showing its continued relevance in personal and social settings. This duality reflects the findings of Kristiansen (2009), who argued that explicit language attitudes do not always align with implicit evaluations, as linguistic forms associated with social identity may still hold subconscious value even when consciously devalued.

Comparing the responses of younger male and female speakers reveals some interesting patterns. Consistent with sociolinguistic trends, younger female speakers exhibited a greater tendency to adopt prestige forms such as Canadian or British English, Nigerian English, and innovative language use (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). This suggests that they are more likely to embrace linguistic trends that signal belonging to their adopted environment, in this

case, Canada. In contrast, younger male speakers exhibited more variation in their speech but tended to maintain Nigerian-accented English or resist linguistic change, asserting that they spoke ‘clear’ and ‘good’ English without needing to conform. This maintenance of speech patterns may reflect different relationships with linguistic prestige and identity (Labov, 1972).

The younger female speakers exhibited more variation in pronunciation and accent based on the desire to conform to new trends or to signal alignment with specific social groups or identities. In contrast, younger males displayed variation as well but placed greater emphasis on maintaining regional or social group accents, reflecting a different set of social pressures and identity expressions. Trudgill (1972) noted that men often retain nonstandard or vernacular speech forms as a way of signaling toughness or authenticity, whereas women may prioritize prestige forms due to social expectations related to status and perceived correctness.

In summary, while there are notable differences between younger male and female speakers in terms of language use, both groups exhibit significant similarities, particularly in their responsiveness to linguistic trends and their use of language as a tool for identity and social signaling. Sociolinguistic research suggests that both genders are influenced by similar social forces, though their responses and language choices reflect differing social pressures and identity constructions (Eckert, 2000).

6.3. Middle-aged Speakers

The middle-aged participants in this study were predominantly in their early to late 30s and included a mix of professionals residing in Canada. Notably, MF5 Ify was the sole

participant who was a college student, transitioning to a new career from her previous profession in Nigeria. Their length of residence in Canada varied from 1 to 12 years, with several having acquired Canadian citizenship. The following sections detail their perspectives on Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and their language practices within the diaspora.

6.3.1. Middle-Aged Male Speakers

6.3.1.1. MM1 Nnamdi (36 years):

Nnamdi, born and raised in Nigeria, had been residing in Canada for four years at the time of the interview. He identified as both Nigerian and Canadian, reflecting a dual cultural identity. He reported having a diverse social circle comprising friends from various cultural backgrounds and expressed enjoyment in interacting with people from different cultures. When asked if he consciously modifies his speech to sound more Canadian, Nnamdi explained that he adjusts his accent out of necessity for clarity in communication rather than as a deliberate attempt to assimilate linguistically, as seen in his response to (1) below.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

It depends on who I'm talking to. If I am talking to a Nigerian, they can hear me quite well. But sometimes I get... I'm being told my accent is quite strong. So, I have to change a bit to try and sound Canadian, especially when I'm talking to someone that is not Nigerian, so they can hear what I'm saying because if not, they are not going to hear what I'm saying at all. So yes, I do try to change the way in which I pronounce things. So, they can hear me.

However, Nnamdi did not explicitly state that he speaks Canadian English; rather, he mentioned that he adjusts his pronunciation to ensure he is understood. He also expressed that he primarily uses Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) when interacting with other Nigerians.

(2) Alright, so I know that you would speak Canadian English with people who are not Nigerians. What about Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin? In what situations do you speak then?

Mostly only with Nigerians and mostly with Nigerians that are not from my ethnic group. That's why I speak Nigerian English with them, Nigerian English, and Pidgin English with them. It's a mixture dependent on who I'm having a conversation with. Sometimes I'm talking to someone from Rivers State, for example, and I know that he speaks Pidgin English a lot. So that's the way in which I'll converse, in which I'll talk with him. Then people from maybe the Southwest that speak Yoruba, then I speak normal Nigerian English with them or Nigerian Pidgin.

Here, Nnamdi elaborates on how his choice of language when speaking with Nigerians depends on the ethnic background of the person he is conversing with. He selected Nigerian English as his preferred Nigerian language, noting that it is widely understood. When asked why he believes Nigerian English is so popular, he explained that not everyone speaks Nigerian Pidgin (NP), which limits its use in comparison to Nigerian English, as seen below.

(3) I would say Nigerian English is the most popular one.

Why is that though?

Yeah, like, just like I said. It's the one in which everybody is most comfortable. Yeah, not everybody likes to speak Pidgin. I don't know. I probably... I didn't grow up speaking Pidgin a lot, so I don't...I don't particularly speak a lot in Pidgin. You get? Maybe just very few times.

Yeah, but Nigerian English is what I am very much comfortable speaking with anybody at all.

He, however, rated his proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) at 6.5 and expressed a preference for Nigerian English when wanting to be identified as Nigerian. Additionally, he mentioned using both Nigerian English and Canadian English when communicating with Caribbeans. He described NP as a blend of English and slang, characterizing it as a humorous and entertaining language, as seen below.

(4) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I would say it's a bunch of English words and then some words that have been switched to other words. So, it's a mixture of the normal English that you hear and then some other slang, some mixture of English and slangs. That's just the way I will put it. I don't know how else to explain it to them.

How do you view Nigerian Pidgin?

I don't have any view against it. Most funny people in Nigeria speak Pidgin, it is very hilarious and funny. But as a foreigner, you would need to understand the meaning of certain words in order to understand Pidgin.

Nnamdi's description of NP as a humorous language, primarily used in jokes, aligns with the attitudes expressed by other younger speakers, who also noted that NP is often used in light-hearted or humorous contexts with friends. This is found in the literature in Gaudio's (2019) work where he discusses how comedians perform routines largely in NP, incorporating code-switching between Pidgin, English, and occasionally other languages. These performances often satirize ethnic, national, racial, and gender stereotypes, as well as critique government officials and economic elites. By privileging NP—arguably Nigeria's most widely spoken language—comedians contribute to constructing a unified Nigerian national public. It is therefore a factual view to link NP to humor, as it is generally obtained in Nigerian comedy.

Nnamdi further indicated that he would prefer his children to only understand NP rather than actively speak it. This reflects a recurring theme among younger participants, who exhibit ambivalence toward NP and prioritize more standardized language forms for their children's linguistic development.

(5) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that?

(follow-up question).

I would want them to be able to understand it but not speak it very much.

(Interviewer: *Why is that?*) I would prefer them to be fluent in the local

language Igbo, in speaking and understanding, and then the Nigerian English. I would focus on those two.

Although Nnamdi acknowledged that developing textual materials in NP could be a positive step, he firmly stated that he would be unlikely to purchase them for his children. His concern was that exposure to NP in written form might interfere with their proper use of standard English, underscoring his preference for maintaining linguistic standards and prioritizing proficiency in more globally recognized language forms.

(6) *Will you buy for your kids though?* Highly unlikely. *Alright, fine. OK, you want to explain why?*

I don't, I don't know. Like I would have struggled to read something pidgin. You can't if it's not normal English. So, for my own kids, it's not something I would want them to read. They could watch a movie, could watch a Nigerian movie that speaks Nigerian pidgin that I don't mind, you-get. But in terms of books and reading, I feel that it may affect their normal English. I don't know. I may be right or wrong. I feel it may affect the normal use of the normal English, you-get, with grammar and sentence you-get. But for a movie, yes, they can watch, they can watch something.

6.3.1.2. MM2 Greg (38 years)

Greg identified as a Nigerian-Canadian and noted that all of his close friends were Nigerians, many of whom had migrated to Canada before him. His immediate social environment comprised both Nigerian and Canadian neighbors, and his professional interactions involved colleagues from diverse backgrounds, including Indians, Nigerians, and Canadians. When questioned about whether he had made a conscious effort to adopt a Canadian accent, he responded in the negative, offering a rationale for this choice.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

No! Really? Why? Sounding that way means borrowing what does not belong to me. I want to sell my own Nigerian language, our pidgin. Even when talking to Canadians, I just speak my normal English language.

His description of his usual way of speaking English as "normal" suggests that, for him, Canadian-accented English may not align with his perception of what is "normal." This insight provides a glimpse into his language ideology and how he views linguistic norms within his cultural and social context. He promptly conveyed his intention to assert his identity as an authentic Nigerian and emphasized his connection to Nigerian Pidgin. He indicated that he spoke both English and Nigerian Pidgin proficiently with his friends. He identified both English and Nigerian Pidgin as his favorite languages, as seen in his response to (2) below.

(2) What is your favorite Nigerian language in Canada, and why is it your favorite language?

I would say 50-50 because I only speak Pidgin when I'm with my Nigerian friends because that's when they understand... like those are the kind of

people that understand my Pidgin English. But apart from that, interacting with other people on the road, at work, or in church, I speak normal English.

Again, Greg's reference to "normal English" provides a window into their language ideology, particularly in how they position their own variety of English in contrast to others. By describing his way of speaking English as "normal," he implicitly frames it as a standard or default, which may indicate a sense of linguistic authenticity or a connection to his Nigerian roots. This perspective contrasts with Canadian-accented English, which he may not view as "normal" within their personal linguistic framework. This reflects Silverstein's (1979) concept of *metapragmatic awareness*, where speakers consciously or unconsciously assign social meaning to language varieties. Additionally, Irvine and Gal's (2000) theory of *linguistic differentiation* suggests that distinctions like "normal English" and other varieties emerge as a result of social and ideological positioning, reinforcing Greg's perception of his own speech as more legitimate within his identity framework.

This statement may highlight Greg's negotiation of identity and belonging, revealing an alignment with the linguistic norms he deems most representative of himself. Such patterns align with the findings of Bucholtz and Hall (2005), who argue that language choices serve as acts of identity construction, where speakers selectively index aspects of their cultural and social affiliations. Furthermore, this ideology shapes their sociolinguistic behavior, as their preference for "normal English" over other varieties may serve as a marker of cultural identity, even within a multicultural setting like Canada. Research on linguistic pride and diaspora communities (Blommaert, 2010) suggests that diasporic speakers often maintain linguistic features that signal heritage and belonging, even in contexts that promote linguistic assimilation.

This belief underscores broader themes of linguistic pride and the negotiation of prestige in diasporic contexts, where linguistic ideologies are continuously shaped by cultural and social influences. Also, by framing his English as “normal,” Greg may be affirming its legitimacy and rejecting external pressures to conform entirely to Canadian or other non-Nigerian linguistic standards. This highlights a complex negotiation between maintaining cultural authenticity and adapting to new sociolinguistic environments, illustrating how language ideologies inform identity and communication strategies. Such findings echo the work of Milroy (1987), who emphasized that social networks play a critical role in linguistic maintenance, as well as De Fina (2003), who examined how migrants strategically navigate linguistic expectations to construct hybrid identities.

Greg rated his proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin as 10/10, attributing this high level of competence to his background from Warri, Nigeria, where Pidgin has been nativized. He also noted that Pidgin is spoken in his household. When asked to describe Nigerian Pidgin, he characterized it as "our English" and "very rich."

(3) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

Very rich. That is our English. Just like the Americans, Canadians, and British have their own English, Pidgin is our own English as Nigerians. Cos, I feel like the English from the Western world is borrowed English.

He further stated that he would love his children to speak NP as it defines their ‘root’.

(4) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that? (follow up question).

100 percent. (Interviewer: *Why?*) Because that defines their root, where they are coming from.

This suggests that Greg views Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as an important cultural marker that connects his children to their Nigerian heritage. In this context, "root" refers to their cultural origins or ancestral background. By learning and speaking NP, the individual believes that his children will have a deeper understanding of their identity, heritage, and connection to the Nigerian community. This indicates a strong sense of cultural pride and the belief that speaking NP is more than just a language choice; it's a way of preserving and celebrating their cultural legacy. He also acknowledged the global significance of English, recognizing its role in facilitating communication between Nigerians and the broader world. Regarding the development of Nigerian Pidgin textual materials, he supported the idea and indicated that he would purchase such materials for his children, as seen in response to (5) and (6) below.

(5) *What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?*

Very good, very good because it is promoting the culture of Nigerians for the world to see. Our culture, way of life, etc. for the world to see and learn.

(6) *Would you buy those for your kids?*

Absolutely. If they are here in Canada. If they are in Nigeria, there is no need for such text, they will learn Pidgin naturally.

Although Greg's responses aligned with the hypothesis for middle-aged speakers, one contributing factor for his overwhelmingly positive attitude towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP) may be his native proficiency in the language. Research in sociolinguistics suggests that speakers with high linguistic competence in a particular variety tend to hold more favorable attitudes toward it, as language proficiency is closely tied to linguistic loyalty and identity (Edwards, 2009). This aligns with the findings of Giles and Johnson (1987) in their *ethnolinguistic identity theory*, which posits that individuals with strong ethnolinguistic ties to a language are more likely to view it positively and use it as a marker of in-group identity.

Additionally, Greg's positive stance toward NP may reflect the broader sociolinguistic phenomenon of *covert prestige* (Trudgill, 1972), where nonstandard or stigmatized varieties hold strong social value within particular communities despite being marginalized in broader societal contexts. His proficiency in NP likely reinforces his emotional and communicative attachment to it, further influencing his willingness to support its use and development. Moreover, Labov's (1972) research on linguistic variation and social meaning suggests that native speakers of nonstandard varieties often express positive affective ties to their language, particularly when it functions as a means of solidarity and identity reinforcement.

6.3.1.3. MM3 Debo (38 years)

Debo identified as Nigerian when interacting with fellow Nigerians and as Nigerian-Canadian in the company of individuals from other nationalities. While most of his friends were Nigerian, he resides in a predominantly Italian community. He noted that he consciously adjusted his speech to sound Canadian depending on his interlocutors.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

Yes, I do. Depending on who I'm speaking with. If I'm conversing with people who are not Nigerians, and because of the Nigerian accent, we need to communicate in a way that they will hear what I have to say; I have to pronounce the words in a way that they will understand what I'm saying at the first time. I don't like when I'm discussing and they go "Pardon me", just to say they can't understand me... Some words are pronounced differently between Nigerians than how some words are pronounced in Canada, so if I'm speaking with Canadians or people who are not Nigerians, I try to speak in a way that sounds Canadian, but if I'm speaking with a Nigerian, you-know, I don't have to do that.

Debo spoke Yoruba, Nigerian Pidgin (NP), and English. He ranked his preference for Nigerian languages as follows: English (60%), Yoruba (25%), and NP (15%). He rated his proficiency in NP as 7/10. When asked about how he expressed his identity through language, he indicated that he would choose NP to communicate with others if they did not speak Yoruba. He also identified NP as the language that announces his 'Nigerianess' in his response to (2) below.

(2) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

If they are Yorubas, I will speak Yoruba. If they are not Yorubas, I will speak Pidgin. “Bros I hail oh” as a salutation. I will choose pidgin in that context if the person does not understand Yoruba, pidgin is a universal, median language. Like a language of convergence, every tribe will have an idea of what you are saying. I will speak pidgin because it is the easiest way to announce my “Nigerianess”. Even though I know that other African countries have their own version of Pidgin, so I think Pidgin is even an African thing.

Debo was the first participant to describe Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a ‘universal language’. He preferred to use NP with friends who were not Yoruba and also with Africans from other countries.

(3) What languages do you speak with migrants from other West African countries? NP or English? And why?

I know people from Cameroon, Rwanda and they speak Pidgin as well. I have friends from the French-speaking side of Cameroon; we speak pidgin with them. Not the deep Pidgin though, just the really simple ones.

Surprisingly, he described NP as a "watered-down English" used by individuals who lack a strong command of standard English.

(4) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I would say it's a watered-down English or it's just a language of communication for those who do not have a very strong command of

English because we're colonized by the British, we were compelled to speak English. But not everyone can speak the Queen's English. So, for those people who don't speak Queen's English, they still have to communicate in a way. So, I guess that was where you-know, the Nigerian Pidgin came from. I think that also applies to other African countries because we want to have a conversation with someone from another part of the country who does not speak the Queen's English. You have to communicate, so in a way you have to water down... It's not the standard, but an easier means of communication, yes, so I say it's an easier means of communication for those who do not have a very strong command of the Queen's English.

He said he would like his children to speak NP as a way of expanding their minds and for survival purposes in Nigeria and to be able to communicate in the grassroots.

(5) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that? (follow up question).

Yes, because in addition to normal English, they should understand it. Language is a way of expanding the mind.... So, it does mean that you speak more than one language and adaptability matters. If you are going to go to Africa or go to Nigeria at some point. When you're in the market, you want to interact with the people at the grassroots. If you are going to be speaking Queens English you are putting yourself in harms way, so, for survivor purpose, right. So, they should understand it.

Interestingly, he selected NP as his preferred language for national or official use in Nigeria, citing its widespread comprehensibility among Nigerians.

(6) Between English, NP, your indigenous language(s) and other Nigerian languages, which would you prefer to be the national/official language of Nigeria? Can you give reasons for your choice?

Nigerian Pidgin. It carries everyone along and everybody can understand. You know, you realized, you-know, it took some time, you know, when the Bible was translated to English and was translated to other languages at some point you have to translate it to Pidgin because you-know, you can use it to drive home some communication in a way. So, they have to, you-know, some people... that's the only language they understand, except maybe their own indigenous language, for those who cannot speak English. You have to be somewhere. So that 'somewhere' there is the Pidgin English. So, it's a language that is easy to learn. It's easy to pick up.... It's the expression, the body language, the personal communication that you understand. So, it's easy to pick up. It's easy to learn. So, for those who are in-between who cannot speak formal English and who cannot speak their native language, we want to carry them along; they're part of the society too. So, that's why I said Pidgin English is easy to learn. Then maybe, maybe from a writing point, we don't do a lot of writing Pidgin English, you know, but at least understanding and communication, yeah.

He preferred English as the language of education, arguing that it supports the teaching of all subjects, whereas Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is more limited in this regard. This perspective aligns with research emphasizing the role of standard languages in formal education due to their established literacy resources and broader societal acceptance (Bamgbose, 2000). However, he acknowledged that developing NP into storybooks was a viable idea, especially for elementary education, reflecting the sociolinguistic principle that language can serve different functional domains depending on context (Fishman, 2020). His openness to purchasing such books for his children indicates a recognition of NP's potential in literacy development, echoing arguments in language policy studies that support the integration of local languages into early education (Igboanusi, 2008).

(7) So, would you buy books like that for your kids?

Yes, I will. Just because I want them to know that. Oh yes, there's a language called Pidgin English, like, you-know, it's part of our culture, and you-know, it's not going to go into the extinction, so you want them to learn it. My, you-know, my parent's language, for example, I can't speak it. So, I'm sure my great-grandchildren, they will not even be able to speak. Gradually, the language will go into extinction. Yeah. So, if you know the native language, you know it will go into extinction, Pidgin will still be there.

It is interesting to assess Debo's assertion that NP might outlast some indigenous languages. This claim aligns with research highlighting the growing prominence of NP as a lingua franca across

Nigeria, often at the expense of indigenous languages facing decline due to urbanization and shifting linguistic preferences (Blench, 2012; Faraclas, 2012; Deumert, 2010). His insights suggest a nuanced understanding of the significance of language, aligning with the anticipated attitudes of middle-aged speakers towards NP. His perspectives highlight the complexities and dynamics of linguistic preference and preservation, illustrating broader debates in sociolinguistics regarding language shift, maintenance, and the role of nonstandard varieties in multilingual societies (Romaine, 2000).

6.3.1.4. MM4 Babatunde (34 years)

Babatunde identified as Nigerian and noted that his social circle primarily consists of Jamaicans, Ghanaians, and Canadians, with whom he predominantly resides. He indicated that he communicates in English with Canadians, Ghanaians, and some Nigerians, while using Nigerian Pidgin (NP) specifically with Nigerians. When asked whether he consciously tries to adopt a Canadian accent, he responded in the negative.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

No, I do not.

In response to (2) below, he indicated that his favorite Nigerian language was Nigerian English. He cited this preference due to the religion of his friends and the fact that they were predominantly educated.

(2) What is your favorite Nigerian language in Canada, and why is it your favorite language?

Nigerian English. (Interviewer: *Why?*) I think it's just, it's because I would say my friends, even despite being Nigerians, like most of them are Muslims in Nigeria. So, it's not like everyone is from the same tribe. Uh and so you have that diversity. But Nigerian English for me, and also their level of education, they're able to connect with it more, more closely, right?

(3) You said something about level of education and connectivity. Can you shed more light on that, please?

Most of my friends are educated, at least with the first degree at the minimum, and so that means they've gone through some learning in English, right? English language, official language, and so given that context, even while you're in Nigeria back home, you would have interactions with different people. It could be the seller on the road or the trader on the streets, right? You could go to the automobile workshop. You find those people there, right? And when you converse with them, they're all coming from different tribes. Some are Igbo or Yoruba, right? But one thing that unites them would be the Pidgin. But if you're educated and you come outside, you're most likely to have the Nigerian English and interjecting a bit of those you know, those words like “Abi” (right?), for example. And then it just flows naturally. So that's what I mean by level of education comparing, or with the fact that when they come in here, they have some education to be able to speak English without any issues.

Babatunde explained that Nigerian Pidgin (NP) serves as a unifying language among Nigerians but is not commonly used among his educated friends. This perspective reflects a diglossic

language ideology (Ferguson, 1959), where NP is seen as a low-status variety used for informal communication, while Standard English holds prestige in formal and educated circles. His distinction between NP as a unifying language and its exclusion from his educated social group aligns with broader sociolinguistic findings on linguistic stratification (Labov, 1972), where speakers differentiate between varieties based on perceived social and educational value.

When asked to clarify this statement in (4), his response is detailed below:

(4) *Would you say that the fact that your friends are like educated, you know, at least undergraduate level is what prompts you to go with Nigerian English more than the other choices like Nigerian Pidgin?*

Yeah, so Nigerian English is not something I speak often right for me.
What do you speak often, if I may ask?

Like I don't speak Pidgin often, that is what I am trying to say.

(Interviewer: OK, *why is that?*) It's also referred to as broken English.

Right. It's not something that's encouraged to be spoken like right from like primary school or like secondary school. And so naturally you just start speaking English, right? But you know a bit of the pidgin, because if you're by yourself from an outside seller, they're most likely to interact with you with Pidgin and then you can have a conversation. And back home, I may speak it depending on where I am right. And so, because you like to connect with those people. But it's not like going to be like the primary thing all the time.

He went on to select Nigerian English as the language he would most likely use when speaking to friends who do not speak his native language, and he would use Standard English and Nigerian English with Caribbeans. He described Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a form of customized English.

(5) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

Maybe I will call it like the customized English language, so to speak. Customized Yeah, customized English language. And that's because its kind of like, it's organic, right? So, but it's it has some elements of English in it. So that's why it's customized. (Customized for who?) Customized for the Nigerian people and by the Nigerian people.

He also expressed a desire for his children to speak Nigerian Pidgin (NP), believing that it would provide them with a broader range of languages for interacting with people.

(6) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that?
(follow up question).

Yeah, they should. I don't think it's something you should be ashamed of speaking. Right. So, I think, yeah. Because that way you have a wider range when it comes to interacting with people. Just to relate back to your other question, just the immediate one, the previous one you said, I think also it's just sometimes you just call it like the broken English, right? So yeah, so I just have to mention that too.

He also selected Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as his preferred choices for Nigeria's official languages. When asked about the development of NP into textual materials, he suggested that NP should remain an informal language. He further expressed that he might not purchase such materials for his children to prevent any potential impact on their English grammar.

(7) What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?

I think it's tricky to say. And that's because it's not, it's broken English, right? So, it's not something that is original to like indigenous Nigerians so to speak. It's coming from English, right? And that's because some people could not speak precise English. And so, it became broken and all of a sudden it became pidgin. Right. It's interesting. It adds to the flavor, right. But I think as opposed to making the Pidgin more formalized, I think it's just good the way we have it there as more like informal, right? So, we can actually still interact with it.

And the last question is if this were to happen and maybe some people decide to write books, children's books, for instance, in Nigerian Pidgin, do you think it's something you would be interested in or to buy for your kids if you have kids?

I would say it again, it depends, right? We want kids to grow up in order to know the right grammar, right, speak, grammatically correct, right, the semantics, the syntax, everything. So, when you corrupt it at a very young age with pidgin, if they are able to distinguish between the two, good,

right, they can be quite complex because of that element of English and broken English, right? So, I think it's good maybe when the kids have developed to a certain level. So, let's say post junior Secondary School, for example, where it can be introduced because then they can actually tell right from left more correctly.

Although Babatunde was not receptive to introducing his children to NP texts at a younger age, he still selected NP as his preferred choice for an official language of Nigeria. However, he did not consider it essential to formalize NP. His attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) reveal a blend of appreciation and reservation. On one hand, he acknowledges NP's role as a lingua franca (Holm, 1989) that unites Nigerians across ethnic lines, recognizing its practical value in fostering communication across diverse linguistic groups. However, he simultaneously views it as "Broken English" and associates it with imprecision and informality, which aligns with ideologies of linguistic subordination (Lippi-Green, 2012), where nonstandard varieties are often perceived as less refined or deficient.

His conditional acceptance of his children speaking NP—only after attaining a certain educational level—reflects a hierarchical approach to language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986), where Standard English is prioritized as the marker of literacy and upward mobility. Babatunde's reluctance to support the development of written Nigerian Pidgin reflects his view that it should remain an oral and informal language. This position reinforces the diglossic divide between Nigerian Pidgin and Standard English (Ferguson, 1959), where NP is seen as suitable only for informal contexts. His stance also illustrates the broader tension in sociolinguistics between recognizing the cultural value of non-standard varieties and upholding the prestige of standardized languages (Milroy & Milroy, 1999).

6.3.1.5. MM5Aybee (38 years)

Although Aybee was recently naturalized as a Canadian, he continued to identify as Nigerian. He indicated that 70% of his friends were Nigerians, while 30% were from other nationalities. He also worked with individuals from diverse backgrounds. When asked if he consciously tried to adopt a Canadian accent, he responded negatively.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

No, not at all. (*Why is that?*). I still maintain my identity; I speak English the way I was taught to speak it.

In response to (2), he also mentioned that he spoke English 70% of the time, with the remaining 30% of his language use being Ibibio, his native language, while at home with his wife.

Regarding Nigerian Pidgin (NP), he indicated that he was not particularly inclined towards it.

(2) What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak to them?

English, 70%, Ibibio at 30%. I speak Ibibio when I am talking to my wife and other Nigerians from the same Ethnic group, I speak English with Non-Ethnic friends and even with my Ethnic friends too. I hardly speak Nigerian Pidgin, I wasn't really given to Nigerian Pidgin, I think I am not very good at it, I just choose to speak proper English.

The comment about not being very skilled in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) did not necessarily reflect his actual proficiency but rather suggested a lack of personal preference for the language. This discrepancy between self-reported proficiency and actual ability reflects broader sociolinguistic phenomena where speakers downplay their competence in a language due to social stigma or personal language ideologies (Preston, 1996). Despite later rating his NP proficiency highly, his general disinclination toward NP suggests an alignment with overt prestige (Trudgill, 1972), where speakers favor standardized, socially dominant varieties over stigmatized ones.

Furthermore, his discomfort when his wife spoke NP may indicate linguistic insecurity (Labov, 1966), where individuals with access to more prestigious varieties perceive nonstandard forms as inappropriate or undesirable within personal and social interactions. His attitude also aligns with language ideology theory (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994), which suggests that individual linguistic choices are shaped by broader societal attitudes and hierarchies of prestige.

(3) Can you think of any scenario where any of these languages were used here in Canada and it was inappropriate? What about NP?

Ah. You know it's relative for me. Yeah, I don't appreciate my wife speaking Pidgin English. You-know. But another person can speak and I wouldn't mind. I would rather have her speaking Ibibio or plain English with me than Pidgin. But outside of that, I don't really care. Yeah, anybody can speak pidgin with me, but I may likely respond with either English or if that person speaks Ibibio too. And again, you know, sometimes if you don't want everybody to hear or to you-know, to

participate in your conversation, you may not want to use English in that.

In that scenario, you may want to speak Ibibio. You know, so that the next person might not understand what you're saying.

When asked to rate his proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP), he gave himself a 10/10. Despite this high rating, his favorite Nigerian language is his native language Ibibio. He selected NP as the language he would use to identify as Nigerian.

(4) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

Nigerian Pidgin. (*Why?*) Just to let that person know that I am Nigerian by speaking a language that he/she understands.

He described Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as English that incorporates elements of Nigerian languages into its grammar, as seen in his response to (5) below.

(5) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

Mainly English with a touch of a mixture of different dialects. There could be a touch of Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. The funny thing is everyone understands it. From the market woman to the village heads, everyone speaks it.

He expressed openness to his children speaking Nigerian Pidgin (NP), provided they first learned Ibibio. He emphasized the importance of maintaining English as the national language due to its global significance. While he supported the idea of developing textual materials in NP and would

consider purchasing them for his children if they showed interest, he prioritized Ibibio and English in their language education.

(6) What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?

I think it is a good idea; it is a welcomed idea. There are people that want to teach their kids Pidgin English, I might not buy into it, but that does not mean others should not buy into it. So, it is a very good idea.

(7) Would you buy it for your kids?

Oh yes! Why not? If they show interest in it.

Although Aybee did not have a particular affinity for Nigerian Pidgin (NP), he was accepting of the idea that his children could speak the language. He also appreciated the concept of developing NP into textual materials, aligning with the hypothesis that middle-aged speakers may support the expansion of NP. Aybee's relationship with Nigerian Pidgin (NP) may reflect a mix of personal preference and societal influence. While he claims 10/10 proficiency, he avoids speaking it and feels uncomfortable when his wife uses it with him, though he doesn't mind others doing so, which suggests some degree of ambivalence towards NP. This could stem from the stigma often associated with NP as a less prestigious language, contrasting with his preference for English and Ibibio, which he likely views as more aligned with his identity and social aspirations. His selective discomfort suggests he respects NP's role in broader communication but doesn't consider it suitable for personal or intimate settings, highlighting how individual attitudes toward NP can be shaped by cultural, social, and contextual factors.

6.3.1.6. Summary

The middle-aged male participants exhibited varying degrees of appreciation for Nigerian Pidgin (NP), with notable differences in their attitudes towards the language. The degree of appreciation for NP appeared to correlate with the participants' exposure and frequency of use, aligning with sociolinguistic theories on language attitudes and speaker identity (Garrett, 2010). For instance, Greg, who speaks NP natively and uses it within his family, holds a positive view of NP and values it highly, reflecting a strong alignment with covert prestige (Trudgill, 1972), where non-standard varieties are valued for their in-group solidarity. In contrast, Nnamdi, who lacks fluency in NP, is less favorable towards the idea of his children speaking the language

The participants' perspectives on NP also reflect their engagement with Canadian English. Two participants (Debo and Nnamdi) reported consciously adjusting their speech to facilitate understanding among non-Nigerians, although they did not claim to speak Canadian English per se. This adjustment aligns with accommodation theory (Giles & Coupland, 1991), which explains how speakers modify their speech to enhance communicative effectiveness rather than fully assimilate into a new variety. This suggests that their linguistic modifications are pragmatic, rather than indicative of a desire to abandon their Nigerian linguistic identity.

Furthermore, two participants, Nnamdi and Babatunde, expressed reservations about exposing their children to NP texts during their formative years, citing concerns about potential negative impacts on English grammar. This view aligns with Ferguson's (1959) theory of diglossia, in which Nigerian Pidgin is treated as a low-status variety relative to English, resulting in resistance to its standardization and use in official contexts. Their limited or infrequent use of NP, evidenced by their lower self-assessed proficiency ratings, likely reinforces their view of NP as a language unsuitable for

education. This also reflects Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic capital, where languages with higher socioeconomic value (e.g., English) are prioritized in educational settings.

In summary, all five participants are multilingual, using a combination of Nigerian English, NP, and indigenous Nigerian languages, alongside English in their Canadian contexts. There is a notable tendency among these individuals to adjust their language use based on context and audience, supporting studies on language style-shifting (Eckert & Rickford, 2001). Some consciously modify their accents to facilitate understanding and integration in diverse settings, though this adjustment is often more about clarity than a desire to sound Canadian.

Most participants prefer English for educational purposes due to its global reach and utility, aligning with linguistic instrumentalism (Ruiz, 1984). Nigerian English is often favored for its comprehensibility and ability to index Nigerian identity. There is broad agreement among participants that Nigerian Pidgin should remain an informal language, with some explicitly opposing its development or inclusion in educational materials. This reflects a belief that NP should not disrupt standard English learning, supporting earlier studies on the role of pidgins and creoles in education (Siegel, 2005).

The participants' views on whether their children should learn NP vary. While some are open to the idea, seeing NP as a useful addition to their children's linguistic repertoire, others consider it less important and prioritize indigenous languages or standard English, similar to findings among younger speakers in previous research. Participants with strong ties to their Nigerian heritage often emphasize NP's role in maintaining cultural connections, though their support for its formal development varies.

Despite maintaining their Nigerian identity, participants adapt their language use to fit Canadian norms, which influences their attitudes toward NP and its role in their children's education. Overall, the middle-aged male participants show a complex interplay between valuing their linguistic heritage and navigating the practicalities of life in Canada. Their attitudes towards NP are shaped by their cultural connections, perceptions of NP's utility, and their preferences for educational language use.

6.3.2. Middle-Aged Female Speakers:

6.3.2.1. MF1 Onyinye (34 years)

Onyinye initially identified as Nigerian, reflecting her recent relocation to Canada at the time of the interview, having been in the country for only three years. She indicated that with prolonged residence in Canada, she would begin to identify as Nigerian Canadian. Her social circle comprised a blend of Nigerians and individuals from other nationalities, and her professional and residential environments were similarly diverse. When asked about whether she made a conscious effort to adopt a Canadian accent in (1) below, Onyinye responded negatively. However, she described her accent as a blend of Nigerian, British, and American influences, suggesting a hybrid of Nigerian, American, and Canadian linguistic features.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

No. I don't and it's for a few reasons. One, I also do not sound like a typical Nigerian in general, because I've lived away from Nigeria for a

long time and when I was in Nigeria, I went to British schools and spent a lot of time in the UK. I have a bit of a British twang, a British American twang, and maybe because all my life living overseas I have always been told how beautiful my accent is. So, I like my uniqueness. I consider the Nigerian accent very much a chameleon. We instinctively mimic people around us, which is why it was very easy for me to pick up the British accent at a young age. But because as an adult I have been told that my accent is beautiful, I'm not interested in consciously picking up the Canadian one, if that makes sense. Maybe I can see if I was a bit more self-conscious about my accents that I'll mimic the accent around me, but I'm sure it's scripted in because you can't help it, but in general, no I don't.

(2) That's interesting. I've never heard that one before, but can you tell me why? So, what accent do you think you have? Like, what English would you say you speak?

I would say it is a very weird amalgamation of Nigerian English, British English and American English all mixed up together, so it all depends on the word. I pronounce different words differently. Some of my pronunciations are British, other pronunciations are American, and also it depends on who I'm speaking to. Or if I'm speaking to someone who, of course is Nigerian and someone I'm comfortable with, a lot more of my Nigerian slang would come out with comfort levels. Of course I speak Pidgin not fluently, but really, really good. So that comes out.... you

should hear me when I'm speaking with my family. When my family calls, we flow between British, American, Pidgin, our native dialects. You know, so it all depends. So yeah.

In Canada, Onyinye's preferred Nigerian languages were Igbo, English, and Nigerian Pidgin (NP). She rated her proficiency in NP as either 7/10 or 8/10.

(3) How will you rate your NP speaking ability in a scale of 1 to 10?

I think I'll give myself like a certain 7 or 8 that's what I think I'll give myself. Of course people who are more hardcore might, you know, have something else to say about that.

(4) What will people who are more hardcore rate your use or ability?

They'll probably give me a 5-6 because the way I pronounce the words might not be perfect Pidgin if you know what I mean. It might be British Pidgin. Yes, exactly. To be fair, I learned Pidgin as an adult. I was over 17 when I learned to speak Pidgin. Yeah.

As noted, Onyinye referred to her Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as "British Pidgin," which reflects her acclaimed influence by her exposure to British English on her speech patterns. It could mean that this manifests in her NP through the use of British intonation, pronunciation, or vocabulary, creating a unique blend of linguistic features. It might also indicate her personal linguistic identity, where her NP is shaped by her broader experiences and education, particularly since she has been significantly exposed to British contexts. It could also reflect the tendency for women

to align with more prestigious linguistic forms. Onyinye's claim that her Nigerian Pidgin (NP) “comes off British” is intriguing, especially in light of the fact that male participants like Babatunde, who share a similar background of higher education and work experience in Britain, did not describe their speech in similar terms. Her comment might reflect a more nuanced linguistic awareness or an effort to distinguish herself within the study. The male participants, while similarly influenced by British contexts, may prioritize other aspects of their linguistic identity, such as their connection to Nigeria or their proficiency in formal English, over identifying British features in their NP. She further selected NP as the language she would use to assert her Nigerian identity.

(5) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

Pidgin. *(Oh good. So why is that?)* Because if I identify that, that's a Nigerian. It's a way of bringing them home because we, I mean, Nigeria has over 200 languages. I don't know where they're from just by looking at them, I can't tell you they're Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, you-know, all the different variations of Nigeria that there are. Pidgin is the unifying language; Pidgin is the language where no matter where you are in Nigeria you speak, and you can communicate. So that is our, as far as I'm concerned, after standard English, Pidgin English is the national language of Nigeria, so it's a way to ground my “Nigerianess”. You can never hear someone speak Pidgin and not know, OK, that's a Nigerian. You know, so that's how I communicate that I'm Nigerian.

It is notable that Onyinye regarded Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a key component of her Nigerian identity and considered it a national language of Nigeria. She predominantly used English in various contexts, while also incorporating NP in interactions with family and at home. In response to (6) below, Onyinye described NP as a form of English enriched with slang from various Nigerian dialects.

(6) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I will describe it as English plus slangs plus phrases that are gotten from different dialects. I would tell the person that Pidgin is a language spoken at the roadsides. It's like roadside French. It's like creole or Patois. So is, like I said, a combination of English slang and then native dialects mixed together, which is why in West Africa, the Pidgin spoken in Nigeria is different from the pidgin spoken in Ghana, for example, or Cameroon because it's been mixed to it and Cameroon is mixed with a bit of French as well as native dialects and in Ghana is mixed with the again native dialects there, yeah.

Onyinye also expressed a strong desire for her children to speak Nigerian Pidgin (NP), viewing it as a distinct and valuable language in its own right.

Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that?

(follow up question).

Absolutely. I would want them to speak as many languages as possible. I consider Pidgin English as a language on its own.

She even selected NP as her preferred choice for Nigeria's official language, citing its widespread understanding among Nigerians.

(7) Between English, NP, your indigenous language(s) and other Nigerian languages, which would you prefer to be the national/official language of Nigeria? Can you give reasons for your choice?

I would say Pidgin English. Reason for my choice is that it is the most widely understood language that brings everyone together in Nigeria. If I go to the market in Kwara state, and I talk with this British accent, I will definitely get robbed. So, I immediately go, “How far? How much you dey sell your market?” (How are you, how much are you selling your goods?) So yeah.

She, however, valued English as the language of education due to its global advantages. While she supported the development of NP textual materials for preserving the language, she also expressed a willingness to purchase them for her children, aiming to expose them to a variety of languages. Despite her alignment with more prestigious English forms, Onyinye's overall attitude towards NP was favorable, which is also seen in her rating of the NP guises. She recognized NP's role in uniting Nigerians, reflecting the anticipated perspective of middle-aged speakers.

6.3.2.2. Jane (32 years)

Jane shared that she identified as Nigerian until she attained Canadian citizenship, at which point she would consider herself Nigerian-Canadian. Her social circle comprised a blend of Nigerians and Canadians, although she primarily lived with Indian immigrants, Jamaican immigrants, and Canadians, and worked with individuals from diverse nationalities. When questioned about whether she consciously tried to sound Canadian, she admitted to doing so when communicating with Canadians to ensure clarity. She elaborated on her language use across different contexts, as detailed below.

(1) What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak them?

So, at work, obviously I speak Canadian English. At home, because I am married to a Canadian, I speak English with a little bit of Pidgin and Igbo, because I want to teach my husband, and Spanish, just because my husband has taken an interest in Spanish. So, we speak a mix of Canadian English, Nigerian English, Nigerian Pidgin, Spanish, and Igbo. With my Nigerian friends, I mostly speak Pidgin 100% of the time, with my family at home, we speak Igbo and English and with some of my friends as well, I speak Yoruba too.

She expressed a strong sense of pride in her language and nationality. She noted that Nigerian Pidgin (NP) was her preferred Nigerian language, citing its ease of use for communication with other Nigerians as a key reason for her preference.

(2) What is your favorite Nigerian language in Canada, and why is it your favorite language?

I think I prefer to speak the Nigerian Pidgin. The reason is because every Nigerian from all ethnic groups understands Pidgin. That is Nigeria's second language, actually. It is an easier way to have a conversation with other Nigerians from other ethnic groups, so that is the language I speak the most.

Her proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) was evident in her fluent use of the language, which she rated as 10/10. She also claimed to write in NP and demonstrated this by responding to questions in NP, as illustrated below.

(3) How will you rate your NP speaking ability in a scale of 1 to 10? I be OG oh. I dey write for Pidgin sef. (I am an OG. I even write in Pidgin) would say 10.

The term "OG" here denotes someone who excels in a particular area, and she used this term to emphasize her exceptional fluency and proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP). She noted that while Nigerian accents often reveal one's identity as Nigerian, she strategically employs a blend of Nigerian English and NP to signal her Nigerian identity to others.

(4) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

It's funny because our accent just gives us off most of the time. Sometimes it's not even by speaking a language like there's a way you can speak your regular English, but I just feel like with your accents you are you-know from this particular part of the world, but majorly for me to be able to get them to know who I am, like if I'm in a mix of Ghanaians and different other people from other parts of the world, I think I speak Nigerian English more and a mix of pidgin too, just so that they can now know oh, you're really Nigerian, you understand?

She identified Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and Nigerian English as the languages she uses with her friends, with NP being the more predominant choice. She characterized NP as both "broken English" and a representation of "our own culture."

(5) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I always just told them in a very simple term that it's broken English. It's our own culture or the way we recognize ourselves in a way that instead of speaking the actual English, we then break it down. But we're still speaking English, so we're not going far from the English. So, it's just like a broken English where instead of saying some full words in English, we just break it down to give it our own style.

She expressed a strong desire for her children to speak Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and noted that she was already conversing in NP with her toddler daughter. She supported English as the official language and language of education in Nigeria due to its global prevalence. Additionally, in her

response to (6) below, she considered the development of children's storybooks in NP to be a positive initiative and indicated that she would purchase such materials for her children.

(6) *What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?*

Well, I think they should, because right there in Nigeria, we also have like all these children's books and tales written in other languages, like Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa, having to have one in Pidgin is also a very good idea. And the reason behind this is because in Nigeria, like Pidgin, it is more or less like the second official language that we speak and is like our own identity, where if you meet a Nigerian and once you say "how far" the Nigerian already knows that ohh, you're Nigerian. So, there's something that comes with you just identifying yourself without having to even say too much. So people like, for example, if we're trying to now bring the Pidgin English across the world, like for every other part of the world, the North Americans, the Asians, all of them to understand our language, it would be nice if they also have, like a book for it so that people can read and be able to know how to translate it. And from there they can learn.

Would you buy them for your kids?

Of course! I wouldn't even hesitate.

Jane demonstrated a notably positive attitude towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP), which may be attributed to her fluency in the language and her belonging to the middle-aged demographic. This aligns with studies on language attitude formation, which suggest that linguistic proficiency often correlates with positive evaluations of a language (Garrett, 2010; Edwards, 2009). Her

perspective also supports age-based variation in language ideology (Eckert, 1997), where middle-aged speakers may have a more pragmatic appreciation of NP compared to younger and older cohorts. This trend aligns with the hypothesis that this age group would exhibit greater appreciation for NP, a finding consistent with sociolinguistic studies on language shift and generational change (Labov, 2001). Middle-aged speakers often occupy intermediary sociolinguistic positions, balancing linguistic maintenance with adaptation to changing linguistic norms (Fishman, 1991). The following analysis will further explore the responses from the remaining participants within this middle-aged female group, highlighting their varying attitudes towards NP.

6.3.2.3. MF3 Inimfon (31 years)

Inimfon initially identified as Nigerian but began to see herself as Nigerian-Canadian due to her extended stay in Canada, which influenced her thinking to be more aligned with Canadian norms than some Nigerians she knew. Her social circle included individuals from various nationalities, though she lived among many Nigerians. When asked about her efforts to adopt a Canadian accent, she clarified that she did not consciously attempt to sound Canadian, but she did slow down her speech for clarity. In response to (1), she also noted that fully adopting a Canadian accent might be challenging given that she was not born and raised in Canada.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

Ohh not really. I think when I have interviews, I speak a bit slower because I have a stutter, so sometimes it comes and goes. Certainly, if I

meet someone new, like it can just be triggered by stress or whatever, but I think I speak clearly enough. So, I think if anything.... I feel like my accent is more of Nigerian/African. No, just more like Nigerian/African than. I think it would be impossible to sound Canadian because I didn't grow up here. So, the most influence I would have from another culture would just be British, like the British English world. That's it.

Inimfon indicated that she spoke English, Ibibio, and Nigerian Pidgin (NP), though she rated her proficiency in NP as 3/10, suggesting limited fluency. She favored Ibibio as her preferred language due to her upbringing in Akwa-Ibom State, where Ibibio is indigenous. She also noted that she used NP primarily in informal or playful contexts.

(2) What language do you prefer to speak with your friends that are Nigerians who do not share the same indigenous language with you?

I speak Pidgin English when I am just goofing around, but mainly I speak English.

When asked to describe Nigerian Pidgin (NP), Inimfon characterized it as "street slang," reflecting a language ideology that associates NP with informality and non-standard usage (Irvine & Gal, 2000). This perspective aligns with broader stigmatization of contact languages (Sebba, 1997) and highlights the ongoing socioeconomic and educational perceptions of NP as a low-prestige variety (Faraclas, 2004). Inimfon's description also suggests a possible disconnect

between fluency and perceived legitimacy, a common theme in language attitude research (Garrett, 2010).

(3) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I think it's like the...like the street slang. So, it was developed by and amongst the people of Nigeria. Just to use in the streets, and it became very popular. It's like it's just like how the British people will say “innit” and their slangs. So, Pidgin is like a slang that is all over Nigeria, especially because we have like, over 200 languages, don't quote me.

When asked if she would like her children to speak Nigerian Pidgin (NP), Inimfon stated that she did not mind, provided they did not use it in serious contexts, implying that she viewed NP as less suitable for formal situations.

(4) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that? (follow up question).

I really don't care. As long as they speak good English. I mean, they should not use it in serious situations. (*Why should they not use it in serious situations?*) I mean, it will make you look unserious. It just feels weird. I think when you want to communicate something serious, English is most likely the language that should be spoken.

Inimfon preferred English as both the official language and the medium of education, valuing it for its perceived propriety. Nonetheless, she was receptive to the idea of developing textual

materials in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and would consider purchasing such materials for her children once they had mastered English and moved beyond the initial language learning stage. She emphasized the importance of learning standard English first, given its predominant role in their future interactions and professional lives.

(5) What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?

Yeah, I think I will be open as long as they can still understand normal English. I think we can understand that. Yes, I think it should be fine. Well, as long as they still learn like proper, like normal English.

(6) Will you buy it for your Kids?

Yeah, it depends. (it depends on what?) I guess it depends on how well they can read, or if they can read proper English already. Then I have no issues. Yes, I think it would depend on their reading age. If they're still very young, then I'm not buying it immediately. They have to learn proper English first. Yeah, because that is what they will use throughout life. Unless they decide to never leave Nigeria and I don't see myself like staying there.

Inimfon's views on Nigerian Pidgin (NP) might be influenced by her limited fluency in the language and its infrequent use in her daily life, predominantly in informal contexts. Additionally, her attitudes may reflect broader sociolinguistic patterns, where women tend to favor standard forms of language over non-standard or less prestigious varieties. Inimfon's

attitude toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) therefore reflects a pragmatic yet dismissive stance. By describing Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as “weird and unserious,” she reinforces a language ideology that frames NP as informal and lacking the prestige associated with more standardized languages. This perspective positions NP as a socially functional but contextually limited variety, suitable for casual conversations but inappropriate for serious or professional discourse. Her indifference toward whether her children speak NP—so long as they refrain from using it in formal situations—further highlights her perception of NP as a low-status linguistic tool rather than a valuable linguistic resource.

This stance was also reflected in her evaluations during the matched-guise test, where she remained mostly neutral when rating the NP female guise on positive attributes such as modernity, intelligence, beauty, kindness, and education. Her neutrality suggests that while she does not overtly devalue NP speakers, she does not associate NP with the same level of sophistication or prestige as other linguistic varieties. This aligns with her broader ideological positioning, where NP is acknowledged as a communicative resource but not as a language of power, education, or high social standing. Inimfon’s attitude reflects a common tension where NP is valued for its inclusivity and ease of use but simultaneously relegated to informal settings due to perceptions of it lacking sophistication or prestige.

6.3.2.4. Ima-Obong (37 years)

Ima-obong is Aybee’s wife, who expressed the view that he did not appreciate her speaking Nigerian Pidgin (NP) with him, raising questions about whether her attitudes towards NP align with his. She identified as Nigerian Canadian, having grown up in Nigeria before becoming a

naturalized Canadian citizen. Her social circle was primarily comprised of Nigerians, reflecting her active involvement in Nigerian communities, where she found Nigerians to be welcoming. While living among Canadians, she reported making a conscious effort to sound Canadian.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

Funny enough, No. But I do notice that when I am talking to someone that is not Nigerian, I tend to sound more like the Canadian English. It is an unconscious thing. Maybe it is because I know that the person might not understand me if I use the Nigerian accent.

She identified Nigerian English and Canadian English as her preferred languages in Canada. She rated her proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as 7 or 8 out of 10 and mentioned that she used NP occasionally to assert her Nigerian identity.

(2) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

It would probably be me chipping in Pidgin. If you speak English, other nationalities can relate to it but if you put in Pidgin, they will know you are Nigerian.

She also mentioned that she used NP with her friends from other West African countries when joking around.

(3) What languages do you speak with migrants from other West African countries? NP or English? And why?

I have a close friend that is Cameroonian, she also understands Pidgin a bit. I speak Nigerian English, but sometimes I chip in pidgin when we are just trying to be funny and cool.

She predominantly spoke Ibibio with her family and at home, and described NP as broken English.

(4) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I will just say it is broken English in the sense that, it is like adding certain slangs to English words. You break it and add certain intonations to English words.

She was comfortable with her children speaking NP along with other languages.

(5) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that? (follow up question).

If possible, for them to speak all of the languages, I won't mind. Ibibio, Nigerian English, Nigerian Pidgin and Canadian English, just so they can fit in anywhere they are.

She preferred English as the official language of Nigeria but also supported the use of NP as an official language within Nigeria due to the country's diverse ethnic and linguistic landscape. She valued English for its global advantages in education and expressed strong support for developing NP texts. She indicated that she would purchase such materials for herself and her children.

(6) *What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?*

Yeah, that would be great. That would be great... That is also part of making the next generation embrace the language in the country and on this last trip I had, my niece brought back a book from school, and it was a story book that was written in Ibibio language. And I was like, wow, that is, that is great because they are also teaching them in school how to speak to people, how to read Ibibio which is good. So, it's not just you learning only English, but you also have to be conversant with your mother language and preserve it. Because if we keep speaking only English, you might see that in the next two or three generations the mother tongue will be wiped out and that culture... will no longer be there, so it will be great to have books, stories, newspapers, even TV programs, all of that in Pidgin language. It is something that will create a bond among the different ethnic groups and preserve the culture.

(7) *Will you buy these books for your kids?*

Yeah I would buy for my kids, and I would buy for myself as well.

Imaobong demonstrated a positive attitude towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and emphasized the importance of preserving the language for future generations. This was also reflected in her consistent high ratings of NP guises on positive attributes. Her supportive stance towards NP aligns with the expectations and hypotheses of the study for the middle-aged group.

Interestingly, she appeared more open to NP than her husband Aybee, which contrasts with typical sociolinguistic findings that suggest men are often more accepting of non-standard forms than women (Trudgill, 1972).

6.3.2.5. MF5 Ify (32 years)

Although Ify had been in Canada for only a year and was still on her student visa, she identified as Nigerian-Canadian. She maintained friendships with both Nigerians and Canadians, lived with Nigerians, and worked with a diverse group of Canadians. When asked whether she consciously tried to sound Canadian in (1), she confirmed that she did.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

Yeah, uhm, yes when I am with Canadians and other ethnicities because, I feel like that is the only way they can understand me. If I speak the typical Nigerian English, I feel they might not understand me.

As seen in her response above, Ify expressed that she used Canadian English to ensure she was understood, as has been expressed by other participants. She spoke Nigerian English, Igbo, Yoruba, and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) infrequently, reserving NP mainly for interactions with close friends. She rated her proficiency in NP as 7/10.

(2) What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak to them?

I speak English, I speak my native dialect Igbo, sometimes I speak Pidgin. I speak English with my colleagues at work and people that I do not know too well, and when I speak Igbo, I speak to my mom, and my friend that I have known since way back, I speak Pidgin very scarcely. Before I speak pidgin to you, we must have been buddies and close. I also speak Yoruba; I have spoken it to one or two people here before.

Ify's statement highlights how she associates Nigerian Pidgin (NP) with intimacy and familiarity in her social interactions. By stating that she speaks NP "very scarcely" and only with close friends, she frames the language as a marker of trust and personal connection rather than a general means of communication. This suggests that, for Ify, NP carries a symbolic value tied to specific social bonds, and she reserves its use for contexts where she feels comfortable and at ease. Her selective use of NP might also reflect her broader linguistic identity, where she prioritizes other languages for more formal or neutral interactions, using NP to signify closeness rather than as a default mode of communication. This view aligns with the idea of NP being both functional and personal, with its use varying significantly based on relationship dynamics.

Ify identified her favorite languages in Canada as Canadian English and Nigerian English. However, she selected Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as the language she would use to signify her Nigerian identity.

(3) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

I would speak Pidgin. I know other countries speak Pidgin, but Nigerians have theirs. Someone can speak Yoruba and you cannot relate, but when you speak Pidgin, everyone can relate.

Ify mentioned that she used Nigerian Pidgin (NP) when communicating with other West Africans who are not Nigerians.

(4) What languages do you speak with migrants from other West African countries? NP or English? And why?

OK, yes, I met some in school. I have one Ghanaian friend and one Cameroonian friend, and they speak Pidgin. Yes, it's a bit different, but it's Pidgin. I speak pidgin to them when we want to banter, its interesting seeing Ghanaians and Cameroonian friends speaking pidgin.

Ify described Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as "broken English" and expressed her intention to teach her children "Queens English" instead of NP.

(5) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that? (follow up question).

I will teach them Queens English. If they grow up to desire to learn Pidgin, then no problem but I will teach them Queens English.

Ify preferred English as the national or official language for Nigeria due to the country's diverse ethnic groups. She characterized Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a "street language" that self-aware adults can learn but argued that "Queens English" should be taught in Nigerian schools.

(6) What is your take on English being taught and used as a medium of instruction in school and not NP?

I feel it's like a street language. Where you pick up from the streets, right? So. And if you're self-aware enough or if you're grown enough to speak Pidgin English, it is fine because it will help you in some scenarios or communities where you find yourself or even in the market if you go to the market and you're trying to buy tomato from a roadside seller. She doesn't know how to speak good English, so that way the Pidgin English can help, but definitely you should speak great English. They should teach Queen's English in school.

Although Ify rated the NP guises highly in the matched-guise test, she rejected the idea of producing textual materials in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and stated that she would not purchase such materials for her children, insisting that they must learn "Queens English."

(7) What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?

Hmm, it's very interesting. (Anything to give?) I don't know. I don't think I'll buy the idea. I mean, it's beautiful to do that, but I don't think I would take that idea.

Would you buy them for your kids?

No, I won't. My children must speak the Queen's English. They can learn the Pidgin but it won't be that I would teach it to them.

Ify's responses and her insistence on "Queens English" align with sociolinguistic studies that often show women favoring more prestigious language forms. Labov's work on sociolinguistic patterns (1972) demonstrates how language variation correlates with social class and prestige, which can help contextualize Ify's preference for Queen's English as a marker of education and sophistication. Bourdieu's theory of linguistic capital (1991) further explains that language choices reflect social power, with Ify's prioritization of Queen's English illustrating a desire to align with societal standards of success and professionalism. Additionally, Cameron's exploration of gendered language use (2007) suggests that women often gravitate toward more standard or prestigious forms of language, which is evident in Ify's strong preference for Queen's English over Nigerian Pidgin (NP). Fishman (1972) emphasizes the role of language in socialization and identity, supporting Ify's view of NP as a language suited for informal, personal interactions rather than formal or professional settings. Gal's work on language and political economy (1989) also provides insight into Ify's stance, illustrating how language choices can reflect aspirations for social mobility and economic success, with Queen's English seen as the key to achieving such goals. Ify's limited and relationship-specific use of NP suggests she values it as a personal, cultural tool but does not see it as essential for formal education or her children's linguistic development. Overall, her stance reflects broader sociolinguistic patterns in which language choices are shaped by the desire to attain social prestige and align with dominant societal norms.

6.3.2.6. Summary

The middle-aged female participants in this study exhibited diverse attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP), shaped by their language proficiency, cultural identity, and exposure to

different linguistic environments. Onyinye demonstrated a positive attitude toward NP, viewing it as an integral part of her Nigerian identity. Despite her use of prestigious English varieties, she rated her NP proficiency highly and recognized NP as a crucial unifying language for Nigerians. Her support for the development of NP into textual materials and willingness to purchase them for her children reflect an appreciation for NP's role in cultural preservation. This aligns with Bourdieu's (1991) theory of linguistic capital, which emphasizes how language serves as a vehicle for social identity and cultural continuity, as well as Fishman's (1972) work on language as a tool for social cohesion. Jane, similarly, identified strongly as Nigerian but adapted her speech to sound Canadian when interacting with Canadians to ensure clear communication. While she valued NP for its practicality in connecting with other Nigerians, she also emphasized the importance of English for global reach and educational purposes, consistent with sociolinguistic patterns that show a preference for prestigious languages in formal contexts (Cameron, 2007).

Inimfon, on the other hand, displayed a more critical stance toward NP, describing it as "street slang" and preferring English for formal and educational contexts. Her reluctance to support NP's development into educational materials reflects the sociolinguistic tendency for women to favor more standard language varieties, a pattern explored in Labov's (1972) work on linguistic variation and social class. Imaobong, who held a more positive view of NP compared to her husband, Aybee, appreciated its role in identifying with Nigerian culture and supported its development, consistent with the findings of Gal (1989) on the role of language in identity and social cohesion. Finally, Ify's strong preference for British English over NP, combined with her insistence on teaching her children "Queens English," underscores a clear alignment with prestigious language forms. This preference for Standard English, even in the face of NP's

practical use, is consistent with sociolinguistic patterns where women tend to prioritize more standard or prestigious languages, a trend highlighted in Cameron's (2007) analysis of gendered language use. The shared recognition of NP's unifying role among the participants, coupled with the acknowledgment of English as essential for educational and global purposes, demonstrates the complex interplay between language, identity, and societal norms. Most participants valued NP for its cultural significance and utility in informal settings, while simultaneously recognizing the necessity of English for broader social and professional success, aligning with the theories of language ideology and prestige as explored by Bourdieu (1991) and Labov (1972).

The results from the middle-aged group in this study show a clear divergence in attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) compared to the younger age group, with more positive views on NP being expressed by the middle-aged cohort. The findings largely support the third hypothesis, which proposed that the middle-aged group would favor the development of NP more than the younger speakers. This group, consisting of both male and female participants, demonstrates a diverse range of attitudes shaped by language proficiency, cultural identity, and sociolinguistic factors. Participants with higher proficiency in NP, such as Jane, Imaobong, and Greg, expressed positive views about NP, recognizing its value in maintaining Nigerian cultural identity and its utility for communication within Nigerian communities. They supported the development of NP into textual materials, aligning with the view of language as a cultural and identity marker (Fishman, 1997). On the other hand, participants with lower proficiency in NP, such as Inimfon, Ify, and Nnamdi, exhibited critical attitudes toward the language, associating it with informality and preferring English for its global prestige and formal applicability. This reflects a broader sociolinguistic trend where language proficiency correlates with attitudes toward a language's prestige and educational value, as highlighted by Labov (1972) and Cameron (2007).

Furthermore, the preference for English, particularly British English, among female participants like Ify and Inimfon aligns with research on women's tendency to favor prestigious language varieties (Cameron, 2007). This preference for English over NP in formal and educational contexts is consistent with Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic capital, where languages associated with power and prestige, like English, are seen as more beneficial in social and professional settings. In contrast, participants like Babatunde, despite having lower proficiency in NP, expressed support for NP as a potential official language, reflecting the continued importance of NP as a cultural tool, as discussed by Gal (1989). The observed variation in speech adaptation, particularly the conscious efforts by participants like Jane to adjust their speech for clarity when interacting with Canadians, further underscores the sociolinguistic dynamics of navigating multiple linguistic identities in a multicultural context (Fishman, 1997).

In summary, while more middle-aged women than men favored prestigious forms of English, both genders in this group demonstrated nuanced views toward NP. Their opinions were influenced by proficiency, cultural identity, and sociolinguistic contexts, highlighting the complex role of language in identity construction and social prestige.

6.4. Older Speakers

The older participants in this study, ranging in age from 51 to 57 years, represent a group of established professionals from diverse occupational backgrounds. Many of them have resided in Canada for over a decade, navigating the complexities of sustaining their Nigerian linguistic and cultural identities in a Canadian context. Their extensive experience as immigrants provides

valuable insights into their perspectives on Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and other Nigerian languages. The following sections discuss their nuanced responses, reflecting their attitudes towards language use, cultural preservation, and the implications of language choice within the diasporic setting.

6.4.1. Older male speakers

6.4.1.1. OM1 Mr. Otedola

Mr. Otedola identified as Nigerian-Canadian, reflecting his integration into Canadian society while maintaining strong ties to his Nigerian heritage. Most of his friends were Nigerian, though he lived among Canadians and Indians and worked predominantly with Indians, even learning some of their languages. In Canada, he spoke Yoruba, English, and the Owo dialect of Yoruba. As expected for older speakers, Yoruba remained his favorite language. When asked if he consciously tried to sound Canadian in (1), he asserted that there is no singular Canadian accent, emphasizing Canada's multiculturalism. He conveyed that he speaks good English and focuses on clarity rather than adopting a particular accent.

(1) Do you try to sound Canadian like a Canadian accent?

There is no accent in Canada, I'm sorry to say this. Canada is English. If you can speak English because we have different accents in Canada. Like I've said, that tells you it is different from America, where they speak jargons. If you can speak good English in Canada, then you are Canadian. There's no Canadian jargon. Canada is all about speaking good English

communication. When you say the people communicate and let them know what you are trying to pass across to them. Simple.

Mr. Otedola rated his Nigerian Pidgin (NP) speaking ability as 9.5/10, indicating a high level of fluency in the language. He expressed that NP was the language he used to identify as Nigerian because of the linguistic and ethnic diversity of Nigerians.

(2) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

I would like to speak Pidgin. I would like to speak pidgin because I won't want to sometimes discriminate that I am either Yoruba, Igbo or Hausa. So, I prefer speaking Pidgin.

When asked about the language he spoke with friends who did not share the same indigenous language as him, Mr. Otedola mentioned that he spoke "broken English," distinguishing it from Nigerian Pidgin (NP). This distinction highlights his nuanced understanding of language varieties and their social roles within the Nigerian and diaspora communities.

(3) What language do you prefer to speak with your friends that are Nigerians who do not share the same indigenous language with you?

Well. Let me say this. There is a difference between Pidgin and broken English. Pidgin is a language that is being developed from English and our local language, that is pidgin for you. But when you say broken English, it is you are speaking English, but it may not be a British standard of English

the way you speak it, for example, instead of using “was” you can use “is” and the person still understands you. So, in that case, most of my friends are Igbo, I will speak broken English with them, not pidgin. “How you dey now? I hope you go come where I'm going” (*How are you? I hope you will come to where I am going*). That's what I'm saying. In Yoruba now, if you come to Yoruba land, we don't really speak pidgin; we speak more of broken English. That means when “is” and “was” doesn't have much relevance and where grammatical error is not considered. But when you speak English, you watch your grammatical error, because if you are speaking English to somebody who is not from your environment, you should be avoiding the grammatical error for him or her to understand you better. But when you are speaking English to a Nigerian, that is what we call Nigerian English, which is a broken English. Nigerians still have two English the standard one and the broken one. The real pidgin when you speak it, people who ‘no go Sabi, no go Sabi’ (*people that wouldn't know wouldn't know*). But when you speak broken English, people who know some English, will still understand you.

In the interview, Mr. Otedola referred to Nigerian English as "broken English" and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as "Pidgin." He expressed the view that among Yoruba people, NP was seldom spoken, so he communicated with them primarily in Yoruba. He described NP as a form of broken English infused with elements from Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo, indicating his perception of NP as a composite language that reflects Nigeria's linguistic diversity.

(4) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I will tell him Pidgin is a good language that people use in communicating in Nigeria. It is a broken English that they have to come with different Wazobia (it is a term that means 'come' coined by combining the words *wa*, *zo*, and *bia*, all meaning 'come' in the three national languages of Nigeria, Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo, respectively), in addition to that English, because if you want to speak good Pidgin English, it has some kind of element of Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa come together to form the language. So, Pidgin is more of a Nigerian developed language from different cultural backgrounds with English as the bedrock because English was used as the basis, where other languages were added to it to form a Pidgin. So, I will let the foreigner know that look, this language we call Pidgin is all about English that is being mutilated with local dialect in order for us to understand ourselves better.

Mr. Otedola's distinction between "broken English" and "Pidgin" seems to stem from his particular understanding of Nigerian English. While I consider Nigerian English to be a grammatical variety with distinct structural patterns, discourse markers, and focuser items that differentiate it from Canadian English, his perspective suggests a different interpretation. He appears to associate Nigerian English with ungrammatical English spoken by some Nigerians, likely influenced by fluency levels. As a result, he categorizes such speech as "Nigerian English," distinguishing it from NP, which he acknowledges as a structured linguistic system.

Mr. Otedola expressed positive attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) by stating that he desired for his children to speak the language. He expressed he will actively engage with them in NP, demonstrating his acceptance of the language.

(5) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that? (follow up question).

For sure. In fact, the way you are just talking, anytime I call them, I have to be speaking Pidgin with them. I won't speak English again.

Mr. Otedola advocated for Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as the official language of Nigeria, expressing dissatisfaction with English in this role. He argued that many Nigerians fail exams due to their inability to speak English fluently, sharing real-life examples to support his claim. His passion for NP was evident as he switched to speaking NP during this part of the interview, underscoring his belief in its accessibility and significance.

..... I have a brother who is an engineer. He dropped out at form three, but there is no machine you bring in that he cannot fabricate and bring the better one out of it. If he's in China, where they use their language to develop their technology, many Nigerians would have gone far. So, if I have to say this, I will say English should not be used as a yardstick for somebody to gain admission into a university or whatever. It should be purely to me, Pidgin, because Pidgin has to be developed. If I have my way, na pidgin, I go talk because e bi like say na im go be the main be the main thing wey go develop Nigeria. We dey fool ourselves, be say na

English na we go dey use. Because English, many people no even understand am, many people fail am like five times same time because he no fi sabi to talk the real English or to write an well. (If I have my way, Pidgin would be what I will be speaking because it seems like it is the main thing that will develop Nigeria. We fool ourselves for using English because many people do not understand it and many people fail like five times because they cannot speak correct English or write it well). So, one of the greatest challenges wey Nigeria get is that English language weh dem dey talk oh and I don't know why all of them no dey think well. So, for me na pidgin oo. House of Assembly everywhere, na pidgin na im we suppose to talk. (So, one of the greatest challenges of Nigeria is the English language that they cannot speak fluently, and I don't understand why they are not thinking about it well. So, for me, it is Pidgin. House of Assembly, everywhere, it is Pidgin that we should all speak).

Mr. Otedola's strong preference for Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in education and language planning is a noteworthy deviation from the more typical attitudes observed in the study, where most participants favored English for its global utility and prestige. His advocacy for the development of NP textual materials, along with his willingness to purchase such materials for his children, underscores his commitment to the preservation and development of NP as a valid and valuable language. This aligns with research on language ideology, where non-standard languages like NP are often seen as culturally significant but less suitable for formal educational contexts (Gal, 1989; Heller, 2007). Despite his preference for Yoruba, Mr. Otedola's support for NP challenges traditional sociolinguistic expectations, particularly in relation to older speakers,

who are often assumed to prioritize more prestigious languages like English in educational and national language policy contexts. His stance echoes the findings of Labov (1972), who noted that speakers of non-standard varieties may resist dominant language ideologies, advocating for greater recognition of their linguistic identity and cultural heritage. Mr. Otedola's position, therefore, reflects a broader shift in attitudes toward linguistic diversity and the role of local languages in formal settings, challenging the assumption that older speakers of Nigerian descent will prioritize English or other prestigious forms over their indigenous languages.

6.4.1.2. OM2 Mr. Felix

Mr. Felix identified as Nigerian and expressed pride in his Nigerian culture. His social circle included friends from various nationalities, and he worked with both Nigerian and Caribbean clients. He was multilingual, speaking Standard English, Yoruba, and Nigerian Pidgin (NP), with Yoruba as his favorite language. When asked if he consciously tried to sound Canadian, he emphasized that he focused on being clear in his speech while maintaining his Nigerian accent. This reflects a balanced approach to linguistic adaptation, where clarity is prioritized but cultural and linguistic identity remain intact.

(I) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

No. But I consciously make myself to be understood much as with my Nigerian accent. So, I speak slowly when I'm speaking to the people that are outside Nigeria so that I don't lose them in my conversation with them.

So, I still use my accent, but I speak slower so that we can have enough time to process my intonations.

Mr. Felix mentioned that he used English without being overly conscious of his pronunciation when he wanted to identify as Nigerian.

(2) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

I'll speak English. I speak English without the consciousness of the crowd I'm speaking to. Once I find that the crowds are Yoruba, I will just be in my element, but I'll speak English.

Mr. Felix communicated in English with his friends and responded in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) if addressed in NP. He rated his proficiency in NP as 3 or 4 out of 10. He consciously chose to speak English to avoid using NP with individuals who were not Nigerian, highlighting a selective use of NP based on the interlocutor's familiarity with the language.

(3) What language do you prefer to speak with your friends who are Nigerians who do not share the same indigenous language with you?

I will speak standard English to them just because I don't want to be seen speaking a different language that become entrenched in me that when I'm dealing with somebody else that is not Nigerian, I will end up speaking Pidgin to them. I don't want to do that.

In response to (4) below, Mr. Felix described Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a "watered-down localized English," indicating his perception of NP as a less formal or diluted version of English tailored to local contexts.

(4) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I'll describe it as a watered-down localized and abridged English language.

Mr. Felix did not consider Nigerian Pidgin (NP) to be particularly useful and preferred that his children speak Yoruba instead. He supported the use of English as both the language of education and the official language of Nigeria due to its global advantages. Additionally, he opposed the development of NP textual materials, advocating instead for the creation of indigenous language texts to promote cultural advancement rather than investing in what he perceived as a "watered-down English."

(5) What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales? (follow up question: would you buy it for your kids).

I still feel the same, you see...Culture is so powerful..... So, if they want to develop those things, why don't they develop it in the local language of the parent or whichever one the kids choose to study, and not the watered-down standard English? So, you can create those books in Yoruba, in Hausa, Igbo, Ibibio, so if somebody wants to learn it, they can learn it. In these days of modern Nigeria too, that even the child of two Akwa Ibom people don't even speak their language, they only speak English, so that

can become like a second language for them to study right from an outside source. I know children that bears Yoruba names and their two parents are Yoruba, but they can't speak one single Yoruba language. So, they could really supplement that for them in school because for me, when we are growing up, we learn English, but we also learn Yoruba. We learn how to write Yoruba comprehension, we learn how to write Yoruba letter and that was even in the elementary school. So, by the time we got to the secondary school, it becomes a choice course for you when you get to certain level, whether you want to take any of those things, but the foundation is there. But to now even throw the local language away, now you say water down English. Why not let English be something that we learn, and we learn the proper one.....

Mr. Felix's description of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a "watered-down localized English" reveals his perception of NP as a diluted, informal variant of English, shaped by local cultural and linguistic contexts. This view reflects the broader sociolinguistic tendency to consider non-standard languages, such as NP, as inferior or less legitimate compared to more prestigious varieties like Standard English (Cameron, 2007; Bourdieu, 1991). Mr. Felix's reluctance to prioritize NP, alongside his preference for his children to speak Yoruba, is consistent with the traditional view among older speakers that indigenous languages hold more cultural and educational value than NP.. By advocating for Yoruba, Mr. Felix is reflecting a common sociolinguistic attitude that views indigenous languages as crucial for cultural preservation while seeing NP as a less useful, informal tool for communication. His lack of support for the

development of NP textual materials further underscores his belief that NP does not warrant significant attention or resources in comparison to more standardized languages, as seen in similar patterns across older generations (Gal, 1989).

Mr. Felix's attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP) reflect broader language ideologies that privilege standard and indigenous languages over non-standard varieties. While he did not support NP's use in formal domains or for his children's linguistic development, his ratings in the matched-guise test suggest that his personal language ideology does not entirely align with negative stereotypes about NP speakers. Despite describing NP as a "watered-down localized English" and rating his own NP proficiency as low, he evaluated NP guises favorably in traits like intelligence, modernity, and normalcy. This apparent contradiction highlights the influence of language ideology on individual attitudes. Felix's stance aligns with dominant ideologies that associate linguistic prestige with standard languages—such as English and Yoruba—while positioning NP as an informal or lower-status variety. His opposition to NP's development reflects a broader societal view that sees English as the language of upward mobility and Yoruba as a key marker of cultural identity, leaving little room for NP as a valued linguistic resource. However, his positive assessment of NP speakers suggests an awareness that, despite its stigmatization, NP does not inherently reflect negative qualities in its speakers.

Felix's case illustrates how language ideology can shape, but not entirely determine, individual linguistic perceptions. While he internalizes the idea that NP is unsuitable for education and formal use, his implicit evaluations suggest that he recognizes its communicative utility and social legitimacy. This demonstrates how individuals may simultaneously uphold dominant linguistic hierarchies while displaying nuanced, context-dependent attitudes toward stigmatized varieties.

6.4.1.3. OM3Chidozie (51 years)

Chidozie identified as Nigerian-Canadian, given his Canadian citizenship, and primarily interacted with Nigerians while living among Indian immigrants. He predominantly spoke English and preferred Nigerian English due to his interactions with fellow Nigerians. When asked to rate his NP use as in (1) below, he rated his proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as 5/10.

(1) How will you rate your NP speaking ability in a scale of 1 to 10?

The only time I speak Nigerian pidgin is with my wife; if we don't want the kids to hear, we switch to Nigerian Pidgin. On a scale of 1 to 10 I will say 5.

When asked which language he used to assert his Nigerian identity, Chidozie selected Nigerian English, noting that his Igbo accent typically revealed his heritage.

(2) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

OK. It depends on the people around me are not. If I'm with Nigerians, for them to know... I don't even need to speak Pidgin, my accent will tell them this guy is Igbo, right? I don't need to speak, because the Igbo I will speak who would I speak the Igbo to. For example, where we have Yoruba people, they won't hear Igbo, but once I speak my Nigerian English, once a Yoruba speak Nigerian English you will know he is from Yoruba land,

no matter how he tries. I don't need to speak Igbo for them. For example, if it is not Nigerian people gathering together... Nigerian English. For example, when a Ghana person speaks English, you know that this person is from Ghana, they have their Ghanaian English from their accent, which you will be able to know. Two things are involved... the accent will show you where that person is from. If I speak Igbo to a Ghanaian, he is not conversant with the language. I speak my Nigerian English.

He communicated in English with Caribbeans and used Nigerian English with other West Africans. Although his children spoke Canadian English, he conversed with them in Nigerian English. He characterized Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a widely understood national dialect in Nigeria, distinct from English. However, he preferred that his children learn Igbo rather than NP.

(3) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

Is a Nigerian national dialect that we use to communicate to the whole tribes in Nigeria. And also, is a dialect that everyone understands apart from normal English.

(4) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that? (follow up question).

No. I will prefer they should speak my own Igbo.

Chidioze, however, selected Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as his preferred national language for Nigeria due to its unique role in the country. Nonetheless, he advocated for English to remain the language of education, citing its global benefits, especially for migration. He supported the

development of NP textual materials and expressed a willingness to purchase them for his children, emphasizing NP's role as a unifying language for Nigerians, in contrast to English, which he views as borrowed.

(5) What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?

Yes, it should be done,.. A Hausa man will be able to speak to the Hausa man because some of them don't understand English, they don't hear English, so if they know the Pidgin, it makes it easy for them to understand. Even in a local village, where some of our parents didn't go to school, the way you want to speak "Mama e be like you want to?" (*it is like you want to...*) You want to? You want to do this? Some of them will understand than when you are speaking English to them. So if you can do those books, our children unborn when they start reading it they will be able to communicate better

(6) So, would you buy that kind of books for your kids? Here in Canada?

Yes. Of course, yeah if I see it, I will buy it, but one thing is that you're buying and wanting them to have interest to read, you can't force them. If you buy, they say they can't read you can't force them because of the laws here. So yeah, I'd love to.

(Interviewer: *But you said you didn't want them to speak pidgin*). Yeah, I said I wouldn't want them, I said I would love Igbo for them to speak but I

would encourage Nigerians to have one unity language, like we use to say English is not our language; it is a borrowed language from the foreigner.....

Chidioze's attitude toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) reflects a nuanced understanding of language's role in national identity and cohesion. While he expressed a strong preference for his indigenous language, Igbo, he did not dismiss NP, instead recognizing its value as a unifying language for Nigerians. His view that NP serves as a cohesive force within Nigeria mirrors the sociolinguistic concept of *linguistic relativity* (Whorf, 2012), which suggests that language shapes cultural identity and group cohesion. Chidioze's advocacy for NP as a preferred national language highlights the role of local languages in fostering a sense of national unity, especially in multilingual societies like Nigeria (Bamgbose, 2000). However, his support for English as the language of education aligns with the pragmatic view that English, as a global lingua franca, offers greater social mobility and educational opportunities (Canagarajah, 2006). His willingness to purchase NP textual materials for his children further underscores his recognition of NP's cultural value and role in preserving Nigerian identity, despite its status as a non-standard language. Chidioze's perspective reflects an emerging recognition of the potential for NP to function as both a cultural and unifying tool within Nigerian society, while still acknowledging the need for English in formal educational contexts.

6.4.1.4. OM4 Mr. Bola (56 years)

Despite having lived in Canada for over 28 years, Bola identified as Nigerian-Canadian due to his enduring connection to Nigeria, noting that 90% of his friends are Nigerians, which reflects his strong cultural ties and sense of identity. Although he lived with a diverse group, including many Indian immigrants and a few Nigerians, he did not consciously attempt to sound Canadian. Instead, he expressed a deep pride in his Yoruba ethnicity.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

Never tried to, but even somebody was asking me yesterday that how come my accent did not change and I said, 'why would I want my accent to change'? I guess from when we were young you have that sense of identity that you don't want to lose. You want to sound Nigerian. You want to think Nigeria; you want to behave like one even when you are back home. I guess maybe because of the ethnicity that we dealt with when we were back home, it makes us get that strong sense of pride in what we are and we kind of attach to that. I've never tried to. I have those challenges with my kids because many times they don't sound alike and then when it comes to pronouncing things, I pronounce it different from them and then they start educating you. It takes a while to understand each other on some things, but I've never tried to sound Canadian.

Bola shared that he used Yoruba when speaking with Yoruba friends, NP with non-Yoruba friends, and English with people of other nationalities. He mentioned that NP helped him establish boundaries with others and strengthen bonds within the Yoruba community.

(2) What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak them?

Yoruba. Mostly I speak Yoruba with my friends. Non-Yoruba speaking, I speak Pidgin with them, and then other people, I speak English with them.

(3) That's interesting. so, it's only Yoruba that you speak with your friends who are Yoruba.)

Yes, my friends, I will speak with them in Yoruba. Yoruba people who are not my friends, I will speak with them in English or Pidgin. When you start speaking to people in Yoruba, it creates a sense of familiarity that sometimes you don't want with some people, even if they are Yoruba. If you want to put a distance between you and somebody, you start speaking in Pidgin immediately. It kind of puts a barrier between the two of you when it comes to language. Language, I guess people tend to think of language as a bonding point. When you are talking with the same language, they feel you will understand them better or that you will reason the way they reason. And unfortunately, there are times when even though you speak the same languages, you don't want to bond with them, you don't want to share that kind of familiarity that language brings about...

Bola's approach to using Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is noteworthy because it differs from other participants' perspectives. One middle-aged female speaker, Ify, even mentioned that she reserves the use of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) exclusively for interactions with very close friends. While NP was also commonly used for humor or to affirm Nigerian identity, Bola used it to establish boundaries in relationships. In response to (4) below, he chose NP as his primary language for Nigerian identification and rated his NP speaking ability as 5/10.

(4) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

The Pidgin English because the likelihood is there that they will understand me better. I wouldn't want to speak Yoruba until I know the person is Yoruba because it's difficult to identify who is Yoruba and who is not. It's easy to identify who is Nigerian. And even when you identify who is Nigerian, it's easy to bond with people when you are speaking Pidgin, because it's almost universal to all of us. Yoruba, I don't use it with everybody. I will probably just speak Pidgin.

Bola also used Nigerian Pidgin (NP) with other West Africans when they understood it, and spoke Canadian English with Caribbeans. He described NP as 'bastardized English,' reflecting his view of the language as a less formal or less refined variant of English.

(5) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

It's difficult, I will say bastardized English. We have changed a word or two from it and personalized it to our own liking, but it's still English.

However, Bola expressed that while his children might be resistant to speaking Nigerian Pidgin (NP), he would be pleased if they could speak it. Despite his affinity for Yoruba, he preferred English as the official language of Nigeria.

(6) Between English, NP, your indigenous language(s) and other Nigerian languages, which would you prefer to be the national/official language of Nigeria. Can you give reasons for your choice?

So, I know Yoruba is the most spoken language in Nigeria among all the tribes that we have. I don't know whether it will be appropriate to say that as an official language in Nigeria, because it's difficult. It's difficult in many contexts to converse in Yoruba. It's difficult to write in Yoruba, and it could be very confusing to speak Yoruba. I think we've gone far with English. We are safe keeping it as English. The difficulty that we may have around Yoruba is why I know they said a lot of people use it and it's the most commonly spoken among all the tribes, but I'm not sure if it will be appropriate for the national language.

What about Nigerian Pidgin?

It won't work. We won't be able to document anything in Nigerian Pidgin as, we don't even have it written, that's the challenge. If we adopt it as a national language, documenting things might be a nightmare.

Bola believed that English's convenience made it a necessary choice for education in Nigeria. He was skeptical about the feasibility of developing textual materials in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and doubted their effectiveness, choosing not to buy such materials for his children to avoid

confusion. Although his views on NP were not overtly negative, he expressed practical concerns about its development and utility, which set him apart from other participants. Mr. Bola's assertion that Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is unsuitable for documentation due to its lack of an established written standard reflects a dominant language ideology that equates linguistic legitimacy with formalization and codification. This perspective aligns with broader societal attitudes that view NP as an informal, spoken variety rather than a language capable of serving educational or literary functions. His stance reinforces the idea that languages without standardized orthographies or institutional support lack prestige and are unfit for official or academic use. This belief is not unique to NP but is commonly associated with creole languages and vernaculars such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE). As DeGraff (2005) argues, such ideologies stem not from linguistic deficiencies but from sociohistorical hierarchies that marginalize these languages, framing them as "broken" or inferior versions of their lexifiers, as many participants in this study have described NP. In reality, NP, like any other language, possesses the structural complexity and expressive capacity required for formal and institutional use. The challenges of adopting NP as a national language and creating documentation in it are not rooted in the language's intrinsic properties but rather in the historical neglect of its standardization and development as a written medium. This underscores how perceptions of NP as unsuitable for national or formal purposes are socially constructed, shaped by broader ideologies that delegitimize non-standard languages and reinforce existing power dynamics.

However, despite this ideological positioning, Mr. Bola's ratings of NP guises in the matched-guise test suggest a more complex attitude towards the language. He evaluated NP speakers favorably on attributes such as intelligence, modernity, education, and beauty. This indicates that, while he may reject NP's role in formal domains, he does not necessarily perceive

its speakers as lacking sophistication or competence. His positive assessments in the guise test reveal an implicit recognition of NP's social and communicative value, even as his explicit stance aligns with prevailing ideologies that marginalize non-standard varieties. Bola's case illustrates how language ideology can shape overt beliefs about linguistic legitimacy while allowing for more flexible, context-dependent evaluations of speakers. His position underscores the tension between institutionalized language hierarchies and the everyday realities of linguistic practice, where even those who dismiss NP as a formal language may still associate it with positive speaker attributes.

6.4.1.5. OM5 Mr Godfrey (54 years old)

Mr. Godfrey explained that while he identifies as Nigerian, he presents himself as a Canadian citizen of Nigerian descent to Canadians. Most of his friends are Nigerians, and he works and lives predominantly among Black communities. In response to (1) below, he acknowledged making an effort to sound Canadian, especially in academic settings, to ensure he is understood.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

Yes, a lot of times. For instance, the program at York. You want to participate in class and be involved, you-know.

Godfrey also shared that he spoke Esan, English, and Nigerian Pidgin (NP). He used NP to be inclusive for those who had difficulty understanding English, reflecting his commitment to bridging communication gaps within his community.

(2) What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak them?

I speak English, Esan, and Pidgin English. Esan because I have met with Esan people and a way to really test where they are from is to speak to them. Pidgin English when you are in a community of people, some educated, some not educated, you-know, it affords everyone understanding.

Mr. Godfrey chose Nigerian English as his favorite Nigerian language and rated his NP speaking ability as 9/10. He used NP to identify as Nigerian in Canada and noted that he often used NP when communicating with uneducated Nigerians to ensure they did not feel inferior.

(3) What language do you prefer to speak with your friends that are Nigerians who do not share the same indigenous language with you?

It depends on whether the person is educated or not. At that point, you literally try to shoulder, you-know, we speak Nigerian English. But if you feel the person is not on your level, you don't show off. You come to their level of understanding and expectations and speak in a way that the person understands so they don't feel you're intimidating especially for lawyers, in that case, I will speak Pidgin. So, you can ask the person, what language are you comfortable speaking, and you flow with them on that.

The researcher sought clarification from Mr. Godfrey regarding his statement about NP being used with uneducated Nigerians. Mr. Godfrey explained that his use of NP in such contexts was not meant to imply that NP was solely for the uneducated, but rather to create a sense of inclusivity and ease of communication. This participant's response highlights significant language ideologies and the role of English in Nigeria's linguistic marketplace, as conceptualized by Bourdieu (1991). The decision to use Nigerian English or Nigerian Pidgin (NP) appears to be influenced by perceived social and educational hierarchies, where English, particularly Nigerian English, is associated with higher social status and professionalism. By contrast, NP is positioned as a more accessible and egalitarian medium for communication, particularly with individuals perceived to have less formal education. This reflects the symbolic capital attributed to English in Nigeria, where its use can signal status, authority, or expertise, especially in professions like law. However, the deliberate choice to switch to NP to avoid appearing intimidating or condescending reveals a nuanced negotiation of power dynamics and social rapport. This interplay demonstrates how speakers navigate the linguistic marketplace, using language not only to convey meaning but also to manage relationships and align with social expectations.

(4) I want to add in a bonus question. You said that pidgin English is understood by the uneducated; do you think pidgin is for the uneducated?

No, that is not what I meant and intended with that. It is with the intention of achieving communication with the people you are talking to, so that they can understand you properly. It does not have to be only uneducated

people, it can be for even the educated as well as long as what is being spoken is understood.

Mr. Godfrey expressed that he spoke English with Caribbeans and used Nigerian Pidgin (NP) with other West Africans, who understood NP well. At home and during family gatherings, he and his family primarily used English. He viewed NP as a widely understood language in Nigeria and did not oppose his children learning it. Mr. Godfrey was open to either English or NP being Nigeria's official language. He echoed Mr. Otedola's concerns about English as the language of education in Nigeria, expressing that its complexity sometimes impedes the effective transmission of knowledge, particularly in scientific fields, due to some Nigerians' limited understanding of the language.

(5) What is your take on English being taught and used as a medium of instruction in school and not NP?

Ok. For that, I have a different view because the whole essence of passing knowledge is so that the person to whom the knowledge is passed understands what the subject is all about. I believe the reason we are not as knowledgeable in the area of science today is because it is taught in English to people who are not very literate in that language. If it is taught in other languages, local languages, I think that time helps strengthen and deepen the understanding of science in Africa absolutely. Maybe particularly in Nigeria because the people can relate to the subject in their own language and are most likely to know it better than when it is taught in English.

Mr. Godfrey supported the production of texts in Nigerian Pidgin (NP), citing its usefulness and providing examples from Nigeria where NP texts have been beneficial. He expressed a willingness to purchase NP materials for his children, highlighting his positive stance on the development of NP textual resources.

(6) What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?

Yeah, like I was saying earlier, if you transmit information through the local dialects or a language that is widely spoken among the people, the information is taken in better than transmitting in a language that they don't speak well. Because remembering information and absorbing information, for someone that is a non-native English speaker, he takes the information and translates first to his language before translating it to English, so the process is longer.

(7) Does that mean you like the idea of this?

Yeah, once in Nigeria, you-know a church called Christ Embassy; they have a daily devotional to many local languages, including Pidgin, and I remember that that translation actually got the attention of many members, both the educated and the non-educated. I think it helps in translating information to people if that language of communication is well understood by the people.

(8) If those were produced, will you buy them for your kids?

Yes, I will. As I said before, comprehension is very important.

Mr. Godfrey's strong advocacy for Nigerian Pidgin (NP) highlights the increasing recognition of the need for linguistic inclusivity in education. His support for NP's development into textual materials aligns with the sociolinguistic perspective that languages should be accessible and serve the communicative needs of their speakers (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2013). By emphasizing NP's role in bridging communication gaps, Mr. Godfrey underscores the importance of using a language that resonates with the lived experiences of many Nigerians, especially those who face barriers to English proficiency. His dissatisfaction with English as the sole medium of instruction in Nigeria reflects the critical stance on language policies that prioritize English at the expense of local languages, a viewpoint shared by scholars like Bamgbose (2000), who argues for the inclusion of indigenous languages in educational systems to support linguistic diversity and improve access to education. Mr. Godfrey's advocacy for incorporating NP and other native languages into Nigeria's education system mirrors global calls for educational reforms that recognize the value of local languages in promoting equitable learning opportunities (Mohanty, 2017). His perspective reinforces the idea that a more inclusive educational policy, one that integrates NP alongside English, could facilitate better learning outcomes for all Nigerian children, particularly those from marginalized linguistic backgrounds.

6.4.1.6. Summary

The interviews reveal several sociolinguistic patterns among older Nigerian-Canadian men regarding language use, identity, and attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and other

languages. Firstly, two participants in this group (as seen in other groups) reported adjusting their speech to be understood better in a Canadian context. Mr. Felix consciously spoke slowly and clearly without altering his Nigerian accent, while Mr. Godfrey tried to sound Canadian in academic settings.

The older male speakers exhibit a range of attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP), reflecting their professional backgrounds, personal experiences, and cultural affiliations. All participants spoke multiple languages, including English, indigenous Nigerian languages (Yoruba, Esann, Igbo), and Nigerian Pidgin (NP). Most participants in this group expressed acceptance and utility of NP, viewing it as a unifying language in Nigeria. Mr. Godfrey described NP as inclusive, enabling communication across different educational backgrounds. Mr. Chidozie and Mr. Bola highlighted its role as a national language understood across ethnic groups. Mr. Otedola and Mr. Godfrey critiqued the exclusive use of English, arguing that it hinders comprehension and knowledge transmission. They suggested NP and/or indigenous languages could be better mediums of instruction.

While Mr. Otedola and Mr. Godfrey advocate for NP's broader acceptance and development, emphasizing its practical benefits and inclusivity, Mr. Felix and Mr. Bola prefer more prestigious languages, viewing NP with skepticism due to its perceived non-standard status. Chidozie provides a nuanced view, supporting NP's role in unifying Nigerians while prioritizing Nigerian English and English for educational purposes. These perspectives highlight the complexity of linguistic identity among older Nigerian- Canadian men, showcasing how personal experiences and professional contexts shape their views on language use and development. Language was also used strategically to manage social

relationships. Mr. Bola used NP to create boundaries and signal different levels of familiarity, while Mr. Godfrey used NP to ensure inclusivity and avoid appearing intimidating.

The interviews therefore reveal that older men maintain strong ties to their native languages and express varying attitudes towards NP and English. While some favor NP for its inclusivity and national identity, others prefer English for its global utility. Their language preferences reflect their personal identities, social interactions, and views on education and communication.

6.4.2. Older Female Speakers

6.4.2.1. OF1 Mrs. Suzzy (56 years)

Suzzy identified as Nigerian and maintained friendships with individuals from various nationalities while also living and working closely with a significant number of Nigerians. When asked whether she consciously attempted to sound Canadian, she acknowledged that she occasionally did so for the sake of clarity.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

I don't have to, but I want them to understand what I am saying, so maybe sometimes.

Suzzy spoke English, Nigerian Pidgin (NP), Yoruba, and Igbo, with NP being her favorite Nigerian language primarily because most of her friends also spoke it. Interestingly, she began

using NP more frequently after moving to Canada, attributing this shift to the influence of her social circle.

Interviewer: *And you speak it very well? (Yeah). It is interesting you learnt it in Canada and you can speak it that well.*

It is not that I didn't understand pidgin before I came, but I started speaking it here in Canada. I understood it, but I had no reason to speak Pidgin language in Nigeria, when I was there until I came here, and the type of people I associated with spoke a lot of Nigerian Pidgin. So, it just propped me up, so whatever I do, I usually do very well.

Suzzy rated her proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as 10/10, yet she chose Yoruba, her mother tongue, as the language she used to identify as Nigerian while in Canada. She spoke English with other West Africans and at home. Suzzy described NP as Nigeria's "broken language."

(2) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

We know that every race has their own broken language. Even the US; the Americans, they have (AAVE), Jamaicans also have it; they call it Patois.

In response to (3) below, Suzzy also expressed that she would not want her children to speak NP, as she believed it would negatively impact their use of English, just as it had affected hers.

(3) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that?

(follow up question).

No. (Interviewer: *Why won't you want your kids to speak Pidgin English?*) Talking from personal experience, I don't know where I got that from, but I think speaking broken here, everybody around me speaking broken, it's kind of affected... I was speaking English before I came here, you know what I mean, but now I get to come down to talk to some people on regular basis. Somehow things just change, you-know. I don't think I really like that. It's interesting now, but it's true whether you like it or not. When I came to Canada I was really posh; speak good English till I met them. You go dey hear mama, wetin dey sup now (*you will hear "mama, what's going on?"*), those kind things affected me a lot.

When Suzzy expressed that she “gets to come down to talk to people,” she was referring to the Nigerians in Canada who spoke NP with her, insinuating people of lower class or that are not ‘posh’. Suzzy preferred English as the official language and the medium of education in Nigeria, emphasizing that it would facilitate interactions between Nigerians and non-Nigerians. She strongly disapproved of NP textual materials, believing that they degrade English, and she would not purchase them for her children, considering such materials to be suitable only for illiterates.

(4) *What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales? (follow up question: would you buy it for your kids?).*

For what now?. (Why?) Language that destroys your English, I will never support that. (Interviewer: So, ma that means you won't even buy that

kind of book for your children). There is nothing to learn in that language. There's a belief that it's a language for the illiterate when I was growing up. (Interviewer: Do you still have that belief?) You want me to be honest with you? I believe even though along the line we have come down to their level to speak that. But while growing up, my parents, till they died, never spoke broken English. You get what I'm saying so. It's a no-no for me.

Suzzy's attitude towards NP aligns with common perceptions, as NP has often been stigmatized and regarded as a language used predominantly by illiterates. In her rating of the female NP guise, she strongly disagreed that the speaker was or sounded normal, educated, modern, or rich. This shows that, at least, she did not fancy NP. Suzzy's strong disagreement with positive attributes like "normal," "educated," "modern," or "rich" in her rating of the female NP guise during the matched guise test is consistent with her later expressions about Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in the interview. Her ratings reveal an entrenched perception of NP as socially and culturally inferior, aligning with her view that the language is associated with illiteracy, degradation, and a lack of value. Suzzy's statement reflects a deeply ingrained language ideology that views Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as inherently deficient or inferior, aligning with broader attitudes toward creole languages. By describing NP as a language with "nothing to it" and associating it with a lack of sophistication, Suzzy reinforces the belief that creoles are limited, incapable of expressing complex or formal ideas, and detrimental to the prestige of their lexifier languages. However, as DeGraff (2005) and other scholars have demonstrated, such views are not based on linguistic realities but rather on sociohistorical and colonial constructs that marginalize creoles and their speakers. NP, like any language, possesses the grammatical complexity and expressive

versatility necessary for all communicative contexts. The idea that NP "destroys and degrades" English reflects a perception that positions English as the linguistic ideal, further entrenching the marginalization of NP. Suzzy's association of NP with lower-class or less educated individuals highlights how language ideologies are intertwined with broader social hierarchies, where linguistic forms are imbued with symbolic power that reflects and perpetuates social inequalities.

6.4.2.2. OF2 Mrs. Bose (52 years)

Bose identified as Nigerian-Canadian, emphasizing her Nigerian roots despite having lived in Canada for an extended period. While all her friends and colleagues were Nigerians, her neighbors were Italians. She spoke the Ondo dialect of Yoruba with those who shared the language and with her family, as well as Yoruba and English. She did not consciously try to sound Canadian.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

To be honest, I never do that. My Kids are all born here; they sound Canadian but me, I don't have Canadian accent.

Bose's favorite language is Ondo, and she rated her proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as 5/10. She used Yoruba to identify as Nigerian in Canada and relied on English to communicate with those who did not understand her dialect or Yoruba. She described NP as "English spoken in another way." Regarding her children's use of NP, she expressed that they loved the language, and she was fine with it as long as they enjoyed it.

(2) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that? (follow up question).

My kids love Pidgin, especially my first daughter, she loves Pidgin. She learnt it from YouTube. (Interviewer: That is interesting, and they were born here). And again, I have my niece she lives with me, she came to Canada like 4 years ago, so she can speak Pidgin very well. So, when they see her speaking Pidgin with her friends that live in Nigeria, my kids love it. From there, they love Pidgin.

(3) Do you like that they speak it, or you don't like it?

Well, it is ok, because they like it.

Bose expressed a preference for Ondo to be the national or official language of Nigeria. However, she chose English as her preferred language for education in Nigeria, citing its importance for immigration purposes and the global advantages it provides.

(4) What is your take on English being taught and used as a medium of instruction in school and not NP?

It makes sense. Why I said it makes sense was that you can't be speaking our language, Yoruba or Ondo dialect, throughout Nigeria because most of the Nigerian people, they travel abroad, they travel out. So, if we were using only our own dialect, it's not gonna be working because we are coming here to meet foreigners, they are white; they cannot speak our language, they speak English, you have to speak English. Like speaking

English with teaching in English is good. Let me tell you something. You know what? I notice one thing, even my nephew, I think you met him here. His spoken English is very, very good, and he lived all his life in Nigeria, before he came to Canada. But there was last week one guy who came, he came here, and he was talking to him and he asked him, he said... because he saw how he was speaking good English, very, very good English. So, the guy asked him and said “you can speak good English”. I was so proud when he said that. So, I told him, he just came from Nigeria, this was his first country, he hadn't travelled to anywhere and he can speak good English. So Nigerian people can speak good English even more than the people that were born here. We speak good English in Nigeria. I was so happy that day, I said “wow”.

When asked about the development of textual materials in Nigerian Pidgin (NP), Mrs. Bose firmly rejected the idea, stating that she would neither support nor purchase such materials for her children. Her reaction reflects a deep alignment with language ideologies that prioritize English—particularly standard or “good” English—as a marker of success, education, and upward mobility. This perspective suggests that she views English not only as a practical necessity but also as a symbol of intelligence, modernity, and social prestige.

Her excitement over her nephew’s proficiency in English further underscores this ideological stance, indicating an implicit belief that mastery of English equates to personal and professional advancement. This aligns with broader societal attitudes that elevate English above

indigenous languages and NP, reinforcing the idea that linguistic assimilation into global or Western norms carries significant symbolic capital. Her preference for English over NP in formal and prestigious domains reflects a belief system that positions NP as inadequate for serious communication or academic development.

Interestingly, despite her disinterest in NP and its perceived lack of utility, Mrs. Bose consistently rated the NP guises high on most positive attributes in the matched-guise test. This suggests a complex and perhaps subconscious recognition of NP speakers as competent, modern, and intelligent, even as she consciously rejects NP's role in formal education and professional settings. Her evaluations highlight the nuanced ways in which language ideologies operate—shaping explicit attitudes toward language use while allowing for implicit acknowledgment of its social value in specific contexts.

6.4.2.3. OF3 Mrs Amaka (54 years)

Amaka identified herself as a genuine Nigerian and African woman, maintaining friendships with individuals from various nationalities due to her professional environment. She conveyed that she made no effort to adopt a Canadian accent, as she took great pride in her Nigerian heritage.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

No. Because I don't want to. You see, this my naija, no matter what my naija still dey as e be (*you see this my Nigerianness, no matter what, it still remains the same*), I'm so proud of being a Nigerian. Like tonight when

we played our match and lost, I told my brother, ‘listen we make mouth (boast) too much, that is what we have’. We don't have good government; we don't have anything, and what we have is ourselves. We have confidence; we are intelligent; we are smart; that is what we have, and that is who we are; we should flaunt it. So, I don't consciously want to sound anything other than being a Nigerian.

It was interesting to see that when she expressed how firm her identity is as a Nigerian, she expressed it in NP, denoting an association of NP with ‘Nigerianness’. She used Nigerian Pidgin (NP) or Igbo when interacting with Nigerians in Canada. She recounted a noteworthy incident at a Nigerian restaurant where, assuming the server was Nigerian, she addressed them in both Igbo and NP, only to discover that the server was actually Jamaican.

(2) What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak them?

For example, one day I went to a restaurant, and I saw a woman at the restaurant. She looks Igbo, and I spoke to her, and she said ‘no, no, no, I'm not Igbo’. I said ‘ok sorry’. Then I spoke the Pidgin English, the general Pidgin English, and she still said ‘no. no, no, no, I don't understand that either’. Oh, OK. ‘So where are you from?’ And she says she's Jamaican. Oh, ok, ‘you are Jamaican selling the Nigerian food, so who makes it?’ And she said whatever she said, and I said ‘I'm not buying’. I can't buy our food from other people. I asked him, ‘do you know

⁴arigbe’ and he said ‘no’, I said, ‘how did you now make the soup? No, thank you.’ So, I speak it anywhere I see a Nigerian, especially my Igbo language in a restaurant because I want to eat food made by Igbo.....

She selected Igbo as her preferred Nigerian language, using it consistently in her daily life. When asked to rate her proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP), she gave herself a 10/10 but noted that she used Igbo for expressing her Nigerian identity, as it came more naturally to her. She employed NP when communicating with Nigerians who did not speak Igbo. At home and during family events, she spoke Igbo, while describing NP as a lower variety of English for the illiterate.

(3) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I will just say, well, this is a lower version of English language because it is mostly used by people who are not educated.

She mentioned that her children did not speak Nigerian Pidgin (NP), though she wished they could. She preferred English as Nigeria's official language due to the country's linguistic diversity and the challenges associated with writing NP. While she believed that developing NP could be beneficial, she would not purchase NP materials for her children, as she felt they would not be able to understand them.

(4) What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?

⁴ ‘arigbe’ is African basil, a fragrant herb used in soups, to season meats, and for marinades.

Well, it would be a good idea because it will help to educate the uneducated public in Nigeria, but another thing is who can read it. Because speaking Pidgin is very easy, but reading and writing it is not as easy as you think.

(5) Would you buy such a book for your children?

No, because they won't understand.

Mrs. Amaka's perspective on Nigerian Pidgin (NP) highlights a complex intersection of fluency, utility, and deeply ingrained language ideologies. While she is fluent in NP and recognizes its potential utility, she associates it with illiteracy and positions it as a "lower version" of English. This view reflects the pervasive belief that NP, as a creole, lacks the sophistication and capacity for higher functions associated with standard English. Her support for the development of NP textual materials, specifically to aid illiterates, further underscores this perception, framing NP as a tool for basic communication rather than a fully-fledged language capable of serving all domains of life. Additionally, her belief that writing NP would be challenging mirrors widespread assumptions about creoles being inherently unstable or unsystematic, despite linguistic evidence to the contrary. These attitudes demonstrate how social hierarchies influence perceptions of NP, relegating it to informal and lower-status contexts, even among those who acknowledge its practical value in specific situations.

Cordelia identified as a Nigerian Canadian, emphasizing that her Nigerian identity remains integral to her, even as she felt privileged to hold Canadian citizenship. Her social and professional interactions were diverse, involving friendships with people from various nationalities, extensive engagement with Nigerians through her church activities, and living in a predominantly Nigerian community. She worked with a range of nationalities and was a French teacher. Cordelia spoke English, French, Iẓọn, and Nigerian Pidgin (NP).

(1) What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak them? I know you speak Iẓọn, English, Nigerian Pidgin, and French. OK, in what situations do you use these languages?

I teach French, I studied French in a university in Nigeria. (Interviewer: Yeah, that means you're going to be really good). Well, I left off for like 20 years before I came back to pick it up again. So, I lost my fluency, but I am able to get it up again.

(2) What about Iẓọn you speak with the people from your place, right?

Yes, I do. When we want to hide something from my son, me and my husband will speak.

What about Nigerian Pidgin?

Yeah, with your close friends you said. Like when I want to say something in privacy. When I was in England, I had this friend that lived in Nigeria before, so we were working together. Anytime we want to say something nobody should hear, we just switch to Pidgin. They will be looking at our mouth like this. How are you guys saying it. Pidgin is even deeper than the Nigerian English.

Her preferred language was English due to its widespread understanding in Canada. She rated her proficiency in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as 5/10, and she selected NP as the language she uses to express her Nigerian identity while in Canada.

(3) If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?

I would say Pidgin, because we are from diverse ethnic backgrounds, but the Pidgin is understood by more people across ethnic lines

She communicated in English with Nigerians who did not speak her indigenous language, as well as with other West Africans and Caribbeans. She also used English at home and expressed a preference for increased awareness and promotion of native indigenous languages in Nigeria.

(4) What languages do you speak at home?

Mostly English. It is sad because our languages are gradually going to extinction. We talk about this a lot. My husband and I grew up in the village, and I attended basic school in the village before going to further education in the city. My husband is like, "you're supposed to speak our language better." But when you ask me certain things, I can't say what it is in our language. But those of you that are linguists really need to, like, do a lot of work by trying to encourage people you know, especially Africans, Nigerians particularly to promote our ethnic dialect. We've seen that over here they don't joke with it. So they do, you know, they appreciate their language. The French will always want you to speak French. You go to France; you don't understand French; you're on your own. You find the

people appreciate their language, but for us, most of us from back home, we feel being modern is like not speaking your language. And most of our kids can't speak our language. Even me speaking here, I am guilty because my son can't speak my language. You know, those are things that we consciously imbibe into our kids growing up.

She described Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as "broken English" that is widely understood across Nigeria and expressed a desire for her children to speak it, considering it a major lingua franca. However, she preferred NP as Nigeria's national and official language to ensure inclusivity and prevent the marginalization of any native language.

(5) Between English, NP, your indigenous language(s) and other Nigerian languages, which would you prefer to be the national/official language of Nigeria. Can you give reasons for your choice?

It will be difficult for a native language to be an official language in Nigeria because everybody has their own dialect, right? Ummm, I will say maybe the Pidgin. Because if you speak any native language, every other language will be left out. We have 3 major tribes being projected out of Nigeria, which is not fair. We have so many other languages in Nigeria, there is not much equity.

Cordelia's perspective reflects a pragmatic stance on language use and education, shaped by global and local considerations. Her support for English as the language of instruction highlights its role as a gateway to global opportunities, emphasizing its utility for Nigerians to

compete and engage effectively in international arenas. At the same time, her endorsement of developing Nigerian Pidgin (NP) into textual materials signals an acknowledgment of NP's inclusivity and its value in reaching populations without advanced academic backgrounds. This dual position illustrates an attempt to balance the symbolic and practical capital of English with the accessibility and unifying potential of NP. However, her prioritization of English over NP underscores a hierarchy of language ideologies that align English with modernity, progress, and success, while positioning NP as a supportive, but secondary, linguistic resource. This reflects broader societal attitudes that value English for its global utility while limiting the scope of NP to local, informal, or remedial contexts. It is noteworthy that Cordelia rated the NP guises consistently high, particularly the male guise, and demonstrated a significant interest in and concern for Nigerian Pidgin (NP), a perspective that somewhat diverges from those expressed by the other three participants (Bose, Suzzy, and Amaka). This difference may be attributed to her background from Edo State in Nigeria, where NP is spoken natively.

6.4.2.5. OF5Mrs. Aisha

Aisha identified as a Nigerian Canadian, appreciating her life in Canada while still considering Nigeria her true home. She exhibited strong patriotic sentiments. Although she did not have many Nigerian friends due to her community's demographics, she encountered numerous Nigerians through her work. She spoke English, Hausa, and Nigerian Pidgin (NP). When asked if she made a conscious effort to sound Canadian as in (1) below, she responded in the negative.

(1) Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?

No, I don't. I am very proud of my culture. Only if.. even with work, I don't try to sound Canadian. I just be myself. English, of course, is our first language in Nigeria. And I know that if I speak to you in English, as a Canadian, as a British, as an American, you would understand what I'm saying. So, I'm not going to sound, you-know and try to sound like Canadian or something like that. No, because I'm. I'm proud of what I can speak with. It is for you to understand clearly, and that's the most important thing, yeah.

Her favorite Nigerian language was Hausa, which she used to express her Nigerian identity. She was proficient in Nigerian Pidgin (NP), having studied in the South of Nigeria, and enjoyed speaking NP with her Southern friends.

(2) What language do you prefer to speak with your friends who are Nigerians who do not share the same indigenous language with you?

Pidgin English. (Interviewer: Why?) It is fun, and many Nigerians are fluent with Pidgin English. People from other countries admire how we speak the Pidgin English. I have my Spanish friends, my friends from other countries that we're working together that are learning how to speak the Pidgin English. So it's a lot of fun....

She communicated in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and English with other West Africans and even taught NP to her Jamaican friends. In response to (3) below, she described NP as a "very romantic and sexy" language that effectively connects West Africans.

(3) How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

I would describe Nigerian pidgin to a foreigner as a very romantic language and very sexy and expressive and relatable to every you-know, like every, most West African countries. I will describe that to someone. It's a language that links us, links the West African coast. You know, especially during, I don't know if it's since during the trans-Atlantic trade or so, I don't know. But I know that most of those West African countries speak that, and they are excited to meet the Ghanaians and Nigerians who want to speak, who are excited to speak; you know the Pidgin English, in which you can see excitement. And it's also something that is expressing our culture, cultural tradition, and also our music, you know, our music and arts, like our vision. Pidgin is like art to us now.

She appeared to have a positive attitude towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and expressed a desire for her children to speak it. However, while they understand NP, they are not able to speak it themselves.

(4) Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that? (follow up question).

I would like them to speak Nigerian Pidgin, but the thing is that my kids don't know how to speak it. They know... they can, they can hear...they understand it, but they cannot speak it. That's the problem. They can't. You-know, they cannot, and the reason why is because they are different from me. Like you know, Carol... Except my younger one. Most of them are introverts. They don't go out. They're just in.

She preferred Hausa as the official language of Nigeria and English as the language of instruction due to its global advantages. Despite her positive views on NP, Aisha did not support the development of NP textual materials, citing concerns about potential confusion and stating that she would not purchase such materials for her children.

(5) What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?

I don't... I don't support that because when you start that at the end of the day, the kids will not.....they're going to get them confused. You-know, it's going to be like, confused personality like that or confused in...you-know, speaking the correct English or that kind of thing. So it's better for them to grow up by themselves and sort out themselves. I don't believe in the Pidgin English being because, first of all, English is not even our language. We are just taking that, and you want to stand the test of time by ensuring that you can speak English, the kids can speak English properly, and the kids are actually trying now. So, when we start writing you-know story books in Pidgin English for them, we will confuse them.

(6) Yeah. OK, so if they have books like that, you would, would you buy for your kids?

I'm not going to buy for my child.

Aisha's perspective on Nigerian Pidgin (NP) reveals a nuanced appreciation of its cultural and social significance, juxtaposed with reservations about its practical application in formal contexts. Her positive view of NP as an art form and a unifying language across West Africa highlights its role as a bridge for cultural exchange and identity, even extending its influence beyond its native speakers, as evidenced by her efforts to teach it to her Spanish friends. Her ratings of the NP guises in the matched guise test also support her positive views towards NP, as she gave the highest positive ratings among her group. However, her reluctance to support the development of NP textual materials underscores a common tension between valuing a language's cultural significance and questioning its utility in more formal or academic domains. Her concerns about potential confusion and her preference for English as the language of education reflect a broader ideological framework that positions English as the language of global opportunity and academic advancement, relegating NP to informal and interpersonal spaces. This duality illustrates the complexity of language ideologies, where the cultural value of a language is acknowledged but its expansion into formalized domains is resisted.

6.4.2.6. Summary

The interviews reveal significant sociolinguistic patterns regarding language use, identity, and attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) among older female participants. A strong sense of Nigerian identity pervades their perspectives, though the expression and maintenance of this

identity vary. Participants strategically navigate their linguistic repertoire to adapt to social and professional contexts in Canada. Cordelia and Aisha exhibit relatively positive attitudes toward NP, viewing it as an inclusive and unifying language among West Africans. Aisha, in particular, describes NP as romantic and highlights its cultural role in connecting diverse groups. However, Suzzy and Amaka view NP more negatively, characterizing it as "broken English" or a "lower version of English" used predominantly by less-educated individuals. These perceptions reflect entrenched language ideologies that position NP as linguistically and socially inferior, resonating with broader patterns observed in the treatment of creoles and vernacular varieties, as noted by DeGraff (2005). Such beliefs underscore the presumption that NP lacks the structural or expressive capacity required for formal or intellectual domains.

While Cordelia supports the development of NP into textual materials for inclusivity, she expresses that English must remain the focus for educational and professional advancement. Aisha, despite her appreciation for NP's cultural value, opposes textual development due to concerns about potential confusion, particularly for children. Suzzy and Bose outright reject the idea of NP textual materials, expressing skepticism about its utility and suitability for formal education. These views reflect broader ideologies that marginalize vernaculars like NP, framing them as inadequate for high-prestige domains.

A consistent theme among participants is the primacy of English as Nigeria's language of instruction and official language. They underscore its global utility, its role in fostering inclusivity across Nigeria's linguistic diversity, and its perceived necessity for immigration success. Both an older male and female participant explicitly mentioned the importance of English for navigating immigration systems and adapting to Canadian society. This connection between English and immigration highlights the language's symbolic and functional value in

contexts of transnational mobility, aligning with Bourdieu's (1991) concept of the linguistic marketplace, where proficiency in globally dominant languages translates to enhanced socio-economic opportunities. However, the prevalence of English among Nigerians extends beyond immigration, given its entrenched role as the country's lingua franca and medium of education. Thus, while immigration amplifies the perceived utility of English, its widespread use by Nigerians is deeply rooted in historical, educational, and social frameworks, regardless of migration contexts.

When comparing older female and male participants, several parallels and distinctions emerge. Like men, the women are multilingual, employing English, NP, and indigenous Nigerian languages in context-dependent ways. However, older men exhibit varying degrees of conscious adjustment to sound Canadian, reflecting an attempt to acquire covert prestige in professional and social settings. Surprisingly, contrary to expectations based on literature, the older women generally do not consciously adjust their speech, emphasizing their Nigerian identity more explicitly through language use and resisting assimilationist pressures. This pattern contrasts with younger groups, where women are often more likely to adopt overtly prestigious linguistic forms.

Both genders acknowledge the utility of NP for informal interactions but express concerns about its potential to undermine English proficiency and educational standards. While older men often frame NP as a tool for fostering familiarity and inclusivity, some women, such as Suzzy and Amaka, associate it with lower educational attainment and diminished social status. These attitudes illuminate the tension between valuing NP's cultural significance and viewing it as incompatible with the demands of formal or global contexts. This reflects broader ideologies

that stratify languages hierarchically, positioning English as a language of opportunity and NP as limited to informal and interpersonal spheres, as argued by DeGraff (2005).

In summary, the older female participants share with their male counterparts a pragmatic appreciation for NP's sociolinguistic functions while favoring English for its global significance. Their views on NP reveal the persistence of ideologies that stratify languages hierarchically, positioning English as a tool for mobility and opportunity, especially in transnational contexts, while relegating NP to informal domains. These findings underscore the complexity of language attitudes, shaped by personal experiences, cultural values, and broader sociopolitical dynamics in diasporic contexts.

Chapter 7: Scoring Attitudes Toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP): A Quantitative Analysis of Interview Responses

To further illuminate participants' attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) for the purpose of investigating other possible factors affecting participants' views, I quantified their responses to key interview questions. This analysis focused on evaluating their perspectives based on answers to the following questions:

1. How would you describe NP to a foreigner?
2. Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that?
3. What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales?
4. Follow-up: Would you buy it for your kids?

These particular questions were selected for quantitative analyses because they consistently elicited the most critical or skeptical attitudes toward NP in the interview as presented in chapter 6 above. The participants' responses were rated using a simple scoring system:

- 1 point for favorable responses that positively depict NP or its potential.
- 0.5 points for neutral responses, reflecting ambivalence or mixed feelings.
- 0 points for negative responses that reject or diminish the value of NP.

The following are examples of responses and scoring:

Question 1: How would you describe NP to a foreigner?

- **Favorable (1 point):**

Very rich. That is our English. Just like the Americans, Canadians, and British have their own English, Pidgin is our own English as Nigerians. Cos, I feel like the English from the Western world is borrowed English. (MM2 Greg)

- **Neutral (0.5 points):**

Maybe I will call it like the customized English language, so to speak.

(Customized?) Yeah, customized English language. And that's because it's kind of like, it's organic, right? But it has some elements of English in it. So that's why it's customized. (Customized for who?) Customized for the Nigerian people and by the Nigerian people. (MM4 Baba)

- **Negative (0 points):**

I will just say, well, this is a lower version of the English language because it is mostly used by people who are not educated. (OF5 Amaka)

Scoring Framework

To ensure consistency, each participant was assigned 1 point for their general discussion of languages and their use, serving as a baseline measure of engagement. Additional points were accrued based on their specific responses to the targeted questions. This scoring approach provides a composite view of participants' attitudes toward NP, reflecting the nuanced ways in which they perceive its value, utility, and status within Nigerian and diasporic contexts. The numerical scores offer a structured method to compare attitudes across participants and identify patterns tied to gender, age, level of education, ethnicity, and duration of stay in Canada. By quantifying responses, this analysis underscores the complex interplay between language

ideologies and individual experiences, highlighting the multifaceted attitudes toward NP within the study population.

7.1. Age, identity and positive attitudes towards NP

This study hypothesized that younger Nigerian-Canadian speakers would be neutral in their attitudes towards NP, while the older and middle-aged participants would prefer and express more positive attitudes towards NP. In that case, the younger group may demonstrate a stronger preference for standard English over Nigerian Pidgin (NP), reflecting a global shift toward prestigious language forms, while older speakers would exhibit more diverse attitudes, shaped by cultural ties and practical engagement with NP. The findings somewhat affirmed these hypotheses. The majority of the younger participants expressed negative attitudes towards NP in the interviews and in their ratings of the NP guises and overwhelmingly favored standard English, aligning with global norms and a desire to integrate into international standards in these aspects of the study. In contrast, more middle-aged speakers expressed positive attitudes towards NP, while the older speakers displayed a broader spectrum of attitudes toward NP, informed by their cultural heritage and the language's role in social interactions.

Quantitative analysis of participants' attitudes across age groups also revealed these notable differences. Middle-aged speakers exhibited the most positive attitudes toward NP, surpassing even older participants. Younger speakers, however, expressed the most negative views toward NP, as illustrated in Figure 44. This generational divide was also reflected in the matched-guise ratings. Younger participants consistently rated NP guises—especially the female

NP guise—lower on attributes like modernity and intelligence when compared to English guises, and the ratings of the other age groups, as shown in Figure 45.

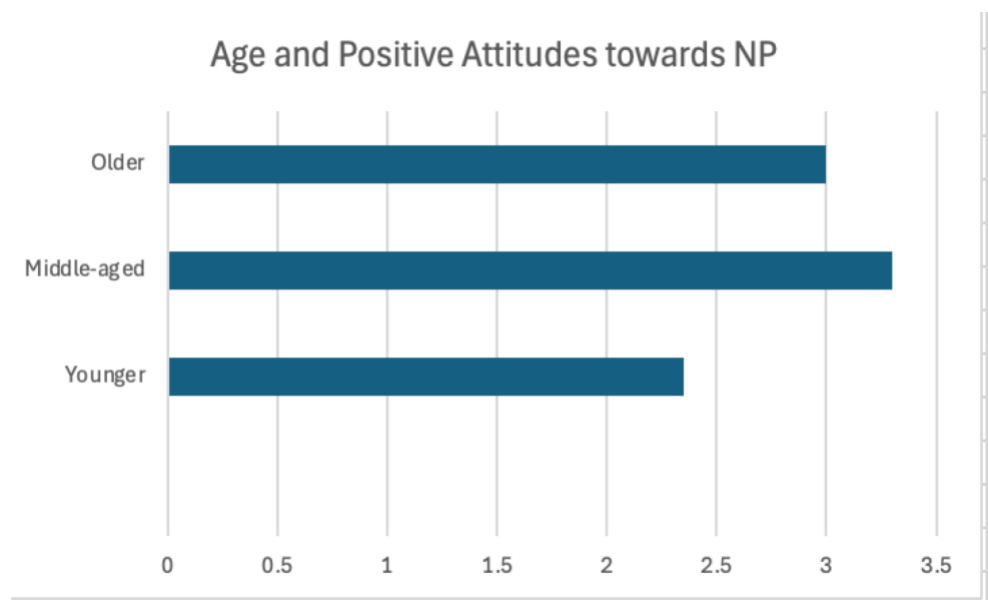


Figure 44: Age and positive attitudes towards NP

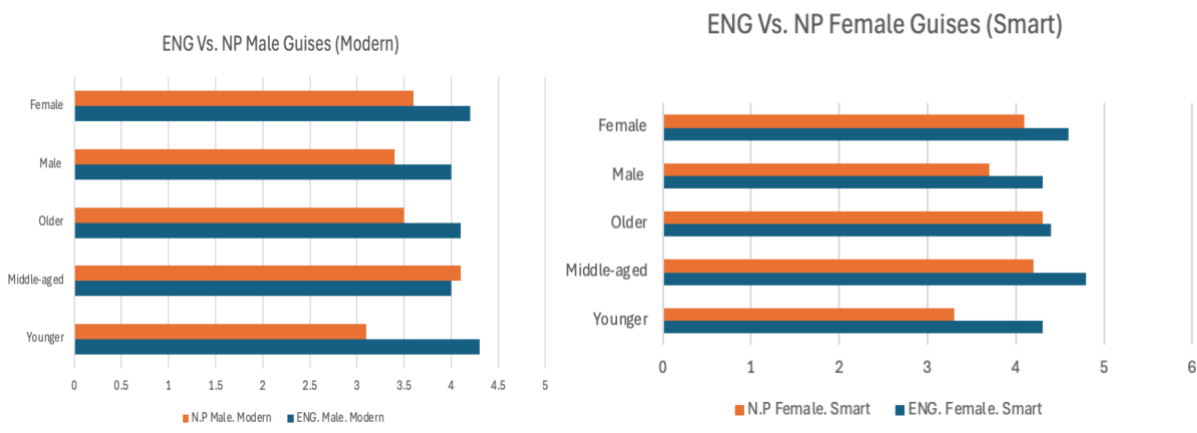


Figure 45: Examples of participants’ ratings for NP guises vs. the English guises.

These generational preferences were further evident in participants' language choices for identity within the diaspora (Figure 46). Among younger participants, 70% selected Nigerian English as their identity language, with none opting for a native language or NP. In contrast, middle-aged speakers demonstrated the opposite trend, with 70% identifying with NP and 30% with Nigerian English. Older participants were more evenly distributed: 40% chose a native language, 50% selected NP, and 10% identified with Nigerian English. These findings support Hypothesis 3, which predicted that middle-aged and older participants would express more positive attitudes toward NP than younger participants. This finding is similar to that of Mann (2009), which examined attitudes toward NP in urban southern Nigeria, focusing on the role of age. The study found that middle-aged individuals (40–49 years) had the most positive attitudes toward NP as a medium of instruction and potential official language. In contrast, younger people (15–19 years), who are primary users of NP, expressed less favorable attitudes. This was likely due to their focus on the advantages of English in education and its growing global dominance. Interestingly, similar patterns emerged in this study of the GTA diaspora, as younger participants displayed a preference for English while middle-aged participants showed more appreciation for NP. The trend highlights the complex interplay between age, identity, and language preferences, illustrating how generational experiences and global influences shape linguistic attitudes in diasporic communities.

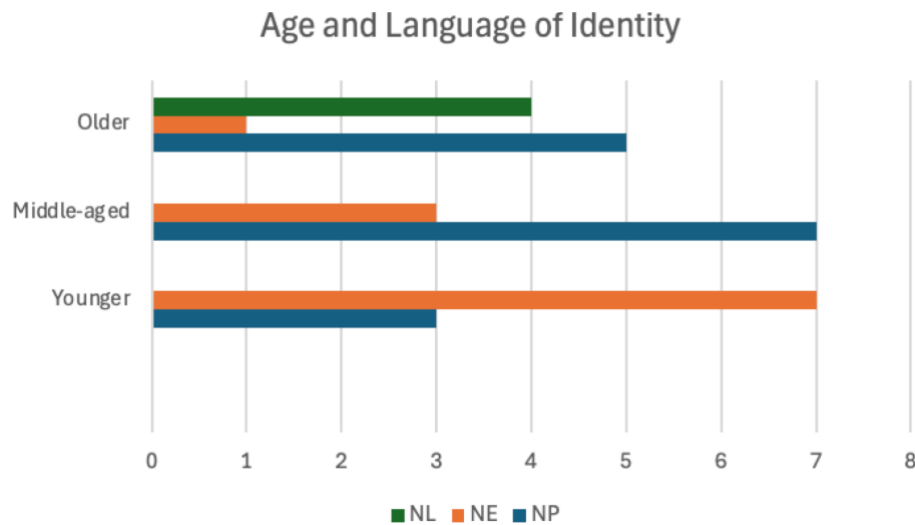


Figure 46: Age and Choice of Language of Identity

7.2. Gender and positive attitudes towards NP

Gender was hypothesized to influence diasporic attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP), with women expected to favor standard and prestigious language varieties more than men, as supported by sociolinguistic findings (Trudgill, 1972). This expectation was grounded in the view of NP as a non-standard form and Canadian English or Nigerian English as a prestigious alternative. Findings from the interview section of the study revealed that a higher proportion of women, particularly among middle-aged and younger participants, reported using Canadian English, often citing a desire to integrate into Canadian society. As seen in chapter 6, some female participants noted being complimented for their British-sounding accent (e.g., YF1 Temi) or receiving positive feedback about their speech (MF1 Onyinye, YF5 Faith). Additionally, several women expressed a preference for their children to speak Queen’s English over NP (e.g., MF5 Ify). This also supports hypothesis 4, which stated that more women than men may

overreport their use of Standard English when answering questions about their language preferences and use, whether or not this is the case in actuality.

However, despite these claims, women demonstrated more positive attitudes toward NP than men, as evidenced by three key observations. First, women rated the NP guise higher in positive attributes during matched-guise tests, as illustrated in Figure 45. Second, overall, women expressed more favorable attitudes toward NP than men, as shown in Figure 47. Third, while an equal number of men and women chose NP as their language of Nigerian identity in Canada, a greater proportion of men opted for Nigerian English as their identity language, while some women opted for native languages, as seen in Figure 48.

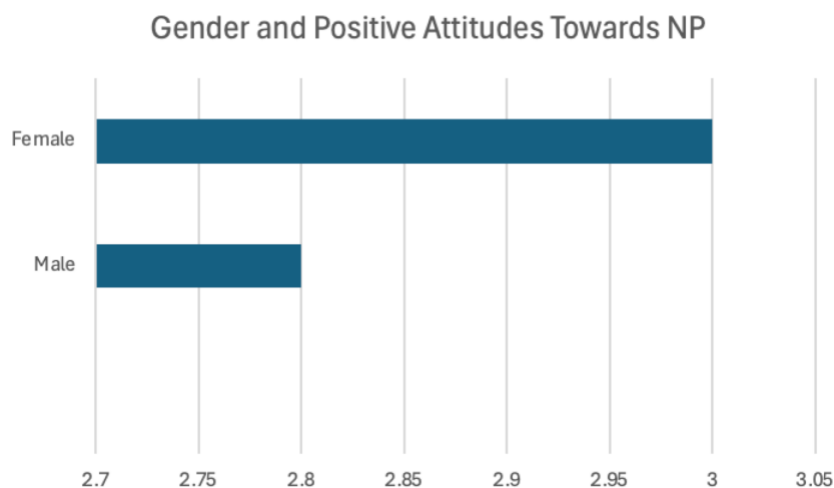


Figure 47: Gender and positive attitudes towards NP

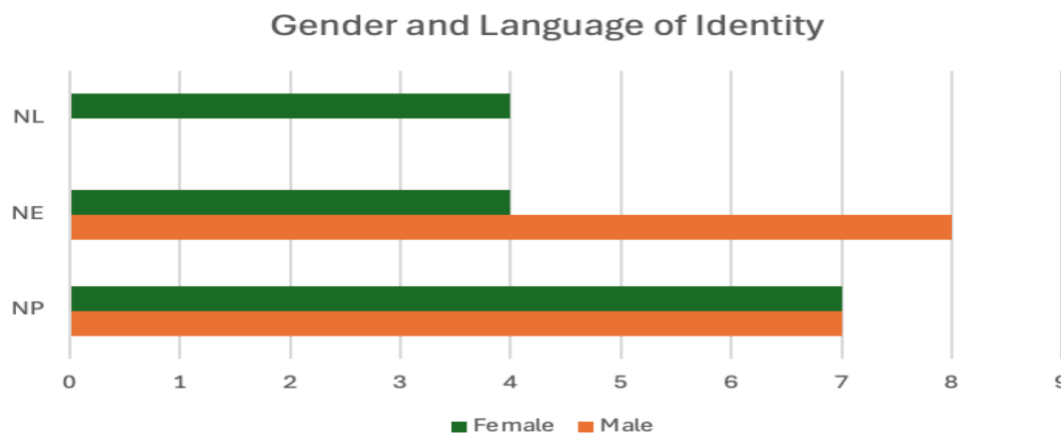


Figure 48: Gender and Choice of Language of Identity.

A related hypothesis proposed that in informal interactions with Nigerians in Canada, women would prefer Standard or Nigerian English, while men would gravitate toward NP. This hypothesis reflects sociolinguistic principles of covert and overt prestige and the role of standardization (Trudgill, 1972). However, while some women aligned with prestigious varieties like Queen’s English and Canadian English—potentially overreporting their use of Standard English in self-assessments—language use in informal contexts displayed notable gendered variation. For example, men such as Nnamdi, Aybee, Ethan, and Felix (MM1, MM5, YM2, OM2) from different age groups favored English in informal settings, while women like Onyinye, Amaka, Jane, and Temi (MF1, OF3, MF2, YF1) expressed a preference for NP.

These findings suggest that while gender influences attitudes and reported behaviors, actual language preferences in informal situations are shaped by individual experiences and personal choices rather than by gender or age alone. This complexity highlights the nuanced interplay of identity, societal expectations, and linguistic agency within diasporic communities.

7.3. Exploring Additional Influences on Participants' Views

Given the shared patterns in attitudes and behaviors across age groups and genders, it became important to consider other factors beyond the initial hypotheses that may shape participants' views on Nigerian Pidgin (NP). These factors could also influence their language attitudes, preferences, and expression of identity through language. This section explores these potential influences and their impact on participants' perspectives regarding NP, which include ethnicity, duration of stay in Canada, and level of education.

7.3.1. Ethnicity, Attitudes and Language of Identity

I initially hypothesized that participants would select Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as the language most representative of their Nigerian identity in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) or Canada. However, language choice to index identity varied significantly depending on age, gender, individual experiences, and perceptions of ethnicity. Ethnic identity therefore emerged as a possible pivotal factor in determining language preferences for many participants. The results showed that older female participants often expressed a preference for indigenous Nigerian languages, such as Yoruba, Igbo, or Hausa, as markers of identity. Four out of five older women in the study selected their native languages, emphasizing the importance of their ethnic heritage in linguistic choices. The fifth older female participant chose NP, which could be viewed as native to her ethnic group (Ijò). Conversely, younger participants demonstrated a stronger inclination toward Nigerian English (NE), reflecting a broader, pan-Nigerian or globalized identity. This dichotomy suggests that participants with a strong connection to their ethnic group are more likely to favor indigenous languages, recognizing them as cultural anchors. On the

other hand, those who align with a pan-Nigerian identity or global diaspora tend to embrace NP or NE as unifying or functional languages.

To further investigate the role of ethnicity in shaping language preferences, participants were categorized into five ethnic groups: Yoruba (13), Igbo (7), Ibibio (4), Edo/Delta (4), and Hausa (2). Language options for expressing Nigerian identity included NP, NE, and native languages (NL), with no participant selecting Canadian English as representative of their Nigerian identity.

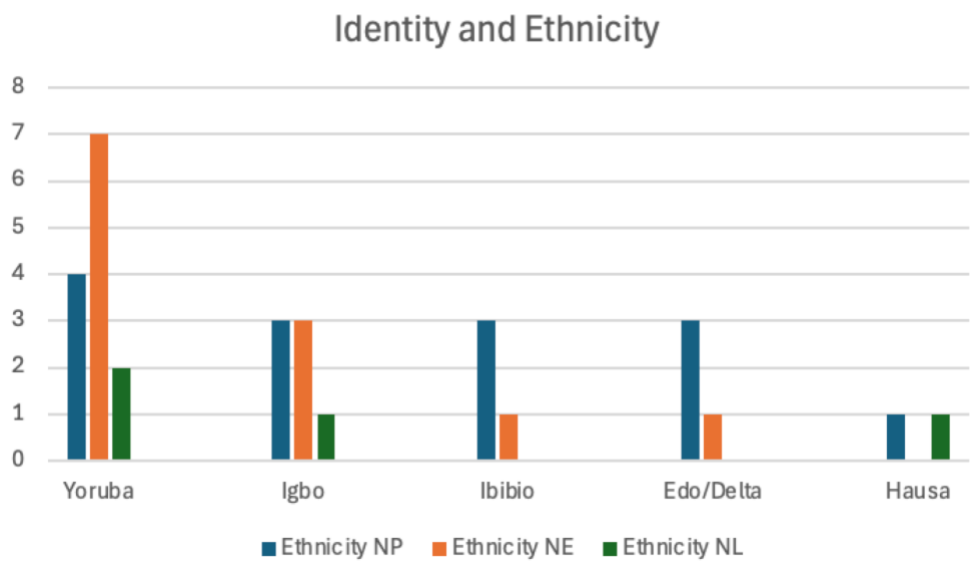


Figure 49: Ethnicity and Choice of Language of Identity

As illustrated in Figure 49 above, distinct trends emerged among the ethnic groups. Yoruba participants primarily chose NE (7 out of 13), with smaller proportions opting for NP (4) or their native language (2). This finding may align with the Nigerian tradition, particularly among the Yoruba, of prioritizing NE for interethnic communication (Adegbija, 2004). In contrast, Ibibio and Edo/Delta participants, who hail from the South-South geopolitical zone

where NP is widely spoken, the predominantly selected NP. This reflects broader regional linguistic norms, as NP functions as a lingua franca in the South-South and other ethnically diverse regions of Nigeria (Faraclas, 1996; Elugbe & Omamor, 1991). Igbo participants exhibited a balanced preference, with equal representation for NP and NE and one individual choosing a native language. The Hausa participants presented an intriguing contrast, with only two female representatives—one older and one younger. Although both expressed positive attitudes toward NP, their language choices diverged: the older participant selected Hausa, consistent with the trend of older females prioritizing native languages, while the younger participant chose NP, illustrating generational variation. This may align with Blommaert’s (2010) observations on how generational differences influence language maintenance and shift within diasporic communities.

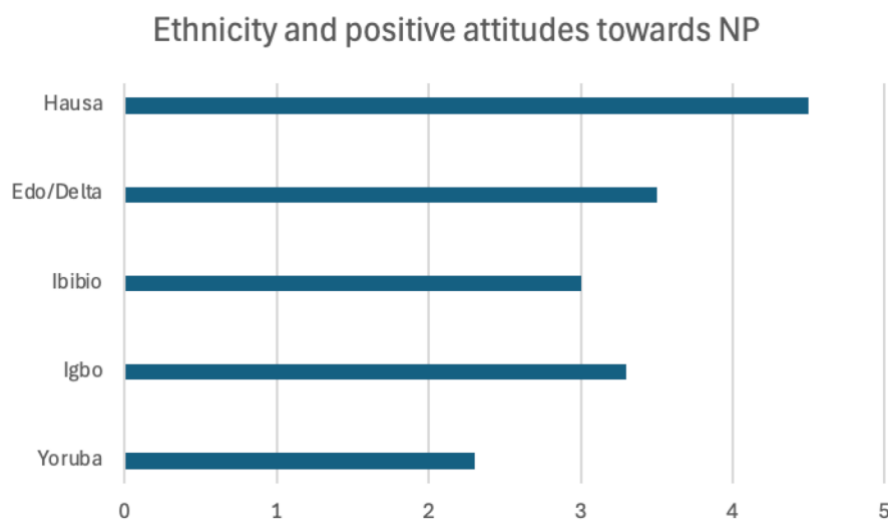


Figure 50: Ethnicity and Positive Attitudes Toward NP.

Quantitative assessments further highlight the role of ethnicity in shaping attitudes toward NP. Figure 50 shows that Edo participants expressed the most positive attitudes toward NP compared to Yoruba, Igbo, and Ibibio participants. This is consistent with linguistic practices

in the South-South geopolitical zone, where Edo/Deltans often speak NP natively (Faraclas, 1996). Nearly all Edo participants demonstrated favorable attitudes toward NP, with YM1 Eli, a younger male, being the only exception due to his strong aversion to the language and as the only younger speaker in this group.

Interestingly, Hausa participants exhibited the highest positivity toward NP. However, with only two individuals representing the group, these findings are insufficient for definitive conclusions. Similarly, Igbo participants expressed relatively positive attitudes, likely due to the predominance of middle-aged participants in this group—an age category that consistently displayed more favorable views of NP throughout the study. The uneven representation of ethnic groups in the study reflects recruitment limitations, as ethnicity was not a primary consideration during participant selection. Additionally, the researcher's proximity to a predominantly Yoruba community contributed to the higher number of Yoruba participants. While the findings cannot be generalized due to these limitations, they suggest potential trends and underscore the importance of including ethnicity in future studies on language attitudes and identity in the diaspora.

These results highlight the intricate interplay of ethnicity, regional linguistic practices, and generational differences in shaping language preferences for Nigerian identity in the diaspora. Previous studies on language and ethnicity in Nigeria, such as those by Bamgbose (1995) and Adegbiya (2004), emphasize how linguistic practices are often deeply rooted in ethnic affiliations. Similarly, sociolinguistic research on diasporic communities, such as De Fina (2003) and Blommaert (2010), underscores the influence of ethnicity and migration on language attitudes and choices. They highlight how ethnicity and migration significantly influence language attitudes and choices. De Fina's study of Mexican immigrant narratives in the United

States illustrates how linguistic practices reflect ethnic solidarity and identity negotiation within multicultural spaces. Similarly, Blommaert examines the sociolinguistic effects of globalization, emphasizing how migrants navigate language ideologies at local and global scales. He argues that linguistic choices often serve as tools for asserting identity, resisting marginalization, or adapting to new social contexts. Both scholars underscore that in migration settings, language becomes a key resource for balancing the maintenance of ethnic identity with the demands of integration into host societies. These findings align with the broader body of research, demonstrating that ethnicity and regional linguistic norms remain critical factors, even within a diasporic context.

7.3.2. Duration of Stay, Identity and Attitudes Towards NP

The length of time one has lived in Canada since migration was also considered a determining factor in attitudes towards NP and language preference for Nigerian identity in the diaspora. To analyze this, participants were divided into four groups based on the duration of their residence in Canada: 1+ years (1–4 years), 5+ years (5–9 years), 10+ years (10–14 years), and 20+ years (20 years and above). This categorization was derived from participants' self-reported information. The distribution included 11 participants in the 1+ group, 9 in the 5+ group, 5 in the 10+ group, and 5 in the 20+ group.

As seen in Figure 51, the findings suggest that native languages (NL) and Nigerian English (NE) are the primary language choices for those who have resided in Canada the longest. Conversely, participants in the 1+ group, who had been in Canada for a shorter duration, were more likely to identify with NP. This trend aligns with studies such as Kerswill (2001), which

demonstrate how longer exposure to a new sociolinguistic environment can foster alignment with dominant linguistic norms or prestigious forms, in this case, NE and NL.

The data further revealed that NP was the most frequently selected identity marker in the 1+ group and the least frequently chosen in the 20+ group. This aligns with findings from Milroy (2002), who highlights how extended migration often results in a shift toward prestigious or globally dominant language varieties. Moreover, the attitudes expressed towards NP mirrored these patterns: the 1+ group exhibited the most positive attitudes, while the 20+ group expressed the least positive. Such a pattern supports Blommaert's (2010) argument that the globalization and localization of languages are influenced by the duration of migration, with newer immigrants retaining a stronger connection to home-country vernaculars like NP.

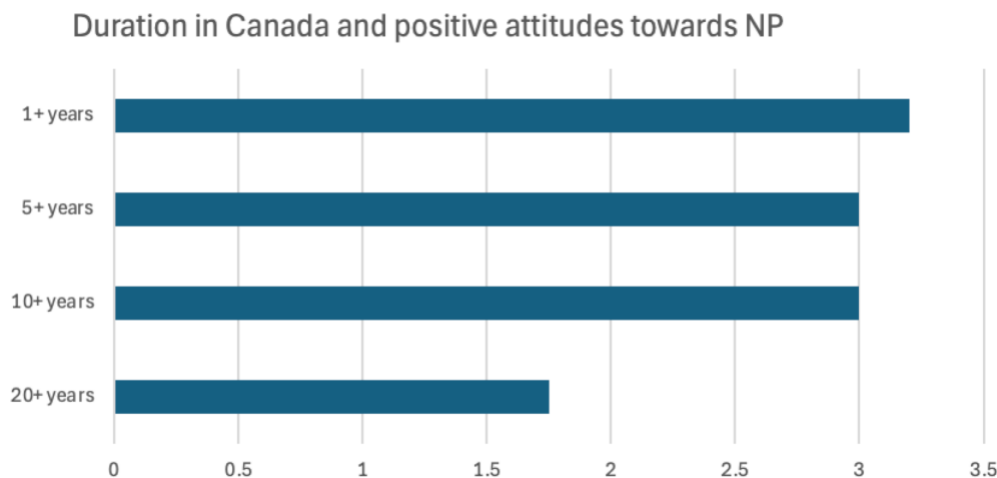


Figure 51: Duration of stay in Canada and positive attitudes towards NP

Notably, only four out of five older female participants across all groups chose their NL as their language of identity. This suggests a unique demographic dynamic, consistent with

Fishman's (2001) framework on reversing language shift, which emphasizes the role of intergenerational transmission in language maintenance. Participants, having spent less time in Canada, may retain NP's familiarity due to its predominance in Nigerian social contexts, as De Fina (2003) notes in her exploration of immigrant discourse. The observed trend—where longer residency correlates with a decline in NP preference and an increase in NE or NL preference—can also be understood through King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry's (2008) research on family language policy. They assert that immigrant families often shift towards languages perceived as more advantageous in their host countries, which could explain the preference for NE and NL in the 20+ group.

Although this study does not have sufficient data to make definitive claims, the patterns suggest that the duration of residence in Canada plays a significant role in shaping linguistic identity and attitudes towards NP. Future research could explore this further with larger and more ethnically diverse participant samples, as the findings here provide useful indications of potential trends.

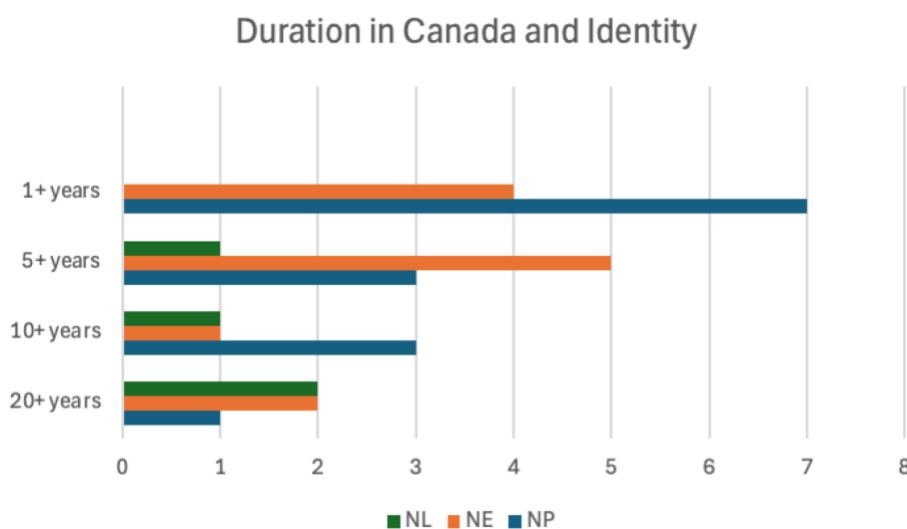


Figure 52: Duration of stay in Canada and choice of language of identity

7.3.3. Attitudes, Identity and Level of Education

Although education was not initially considered a variable in this study due to all participants being either university graduates or currently enrolled in higher education, the diversity of responses necessitated further analysis. Participants were subsequently grouped into three educational categories: undergraduate (n = 4), university graduate (n = 13), and graduate school graduate (n = 13). While examining their attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and their language choices for expressing Nigerian identity in the diaspora, interesting patterns emerged.

As shown in Figure 53, educational attainment appears to correlate positively with attitudes toward NP. Participants with higher levels of education expressed more favorable views of NP. Among graduate school graduates, 77% selected NP as their language of identity, with 23% favoring Nigerian English (NE). University graduates exhibited a more even distribution, with 38% choosing NP, 31% NE, and 31% native languages. In contrast, undergraduates overwhelmingly preferred English (75%), with only 25% selecting NP (Figure 54).

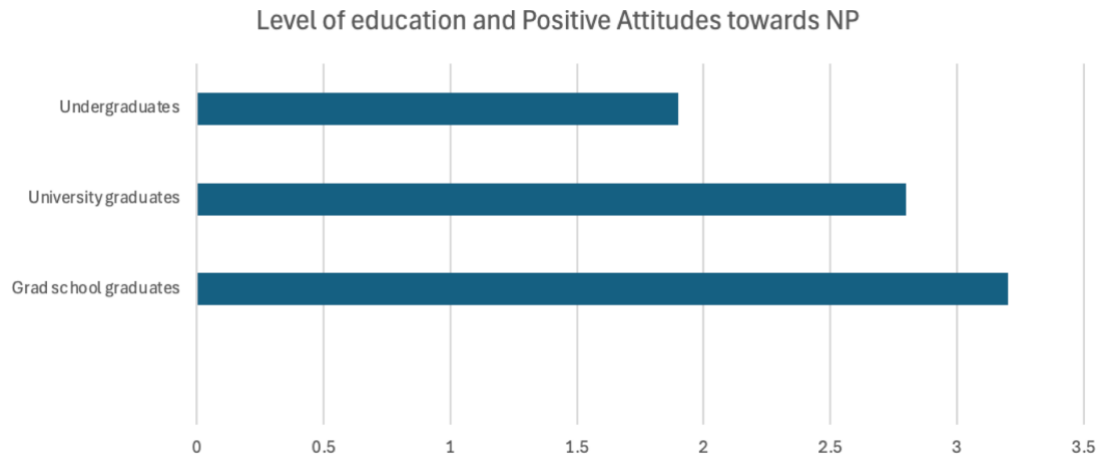


Figure 53: Level of education and positive attitudes toward NP

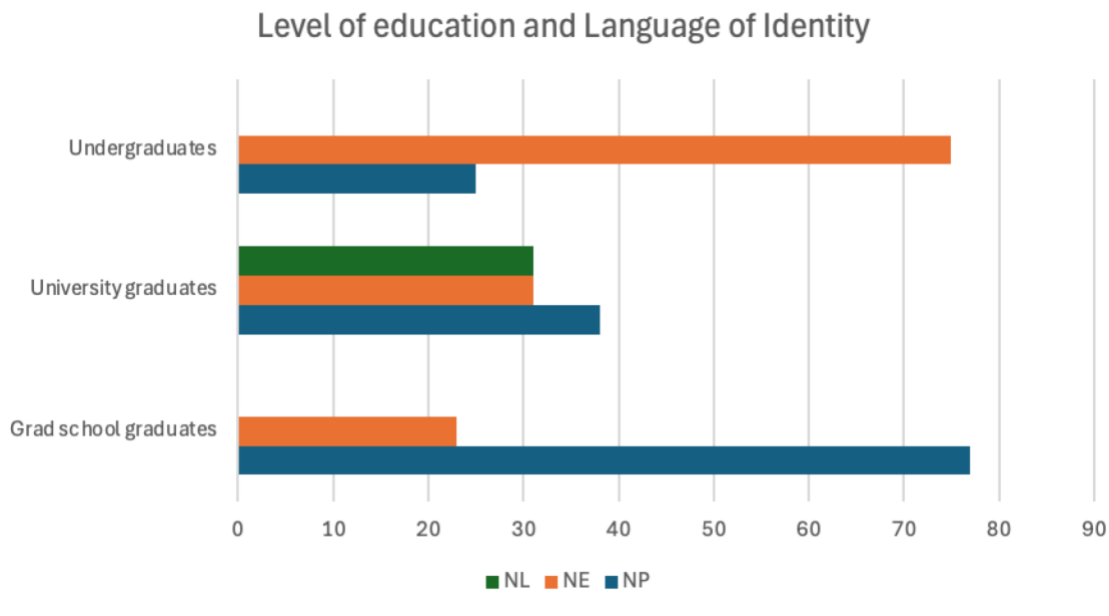


Figure 54: Level of education and choice of language of identity

A possible explanation for the finding that participants with higher educational attainment are more likely to identify with NP could be the exposure to broader sociocultural discussions and a growing appreciation of linguistic diversity. Higher education may encourage individuals to question the dominance of major languages and may lead to a more inclusive view of languages like NP. This is particularly likely in environments that emphasize the value of cultural heritage and local languages. Fishman's (2001) work demonstrates that higher education plays a crucial role in language maintenance and revitalization. Universities offering courses on indigenous and minority languages contribute to increased appreciation and efforts to sustain these languages. Therefore, it is plausible that the graduate school participants may have developed an enhanced awareness of the socio-cultural and historical value of NP through exposure, recognizing its role as a unifying language in Nigeria.

Conversely, undergraduates, who are often at the start of their career trajectories, may perceive English as a tool for upward social mobility and international competitiveness. This supports findings from similar studies (e.g., Ricento, 2005; Crystal, 2003), which highlight the perceived utility of dominant languages like English in achieving socioeconomic goals. University graduates, transitioning from this stage, may begin to engage more deeply with alternative linguistic identities, including NP and native languages, as part of broader social and cultural networks. The limited representation of participants across the three educational levels, particularly among undergraduates, necessitates caution in drawing definitive conclusions. However, these patterns suggest that educational attainment influences linguistic attitudes and identity choices, with higher education potentially broadening perspectives on the value of NP and its role in cultural expression. Future research could expand on this by exploring how

academic exposure to sociolinguistics, cultural studies, or Nigerian history shapes attitudes toward NP.

7.4. Participants and other West African Pidgins/Caribbean Creoles

In addressing the final hypothesis—which proposed that participants may recognize similarities between certain creoles and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in their interactions with other West Africans and Afro-Caribbeans—it is essential to consider the nuanced realities of their linguistic experiences. While most participants acknowledged familiarity with certain Caribbean Creoles, such as Jamaican Patois, and West African Pidgins, including Ghanaian and Cameroonian varieties, only a few reported using NP with other West Africans. Instead, the majority indicated that they primarily used English in these interactions. Furthermore, most participants stated that they did not understand Patois or other Caribbean Creoles, highlighting a gap between linguistic recognition and practical comprehension. Their limited use of NP with other West Africans, alongside their reported difficulty in understanding Patois, underscores the complexity of linguistic convergence and divergence in diasporic settings.

This outcome aligns with prior research emphasizing the role of mutual intelligibility and functional language choices in intercultural communication. Sebba (1997) highlights that linguistic similarity alone does not necessarily translate into practical use, as sociolinguistic factors—such as the dominance of English in diasporic spaces—often take precedence over structural affinities. Similarly, Migge and Léglise (2007) examine the impact of colonial and post-colonial language policies on creole-speaking communities, noting that despite linguistic similarities between creoles and their European lexifiers, sociopolitical factors—particularly the

prestige and dominance of English—frequently dictate language choice and usage. These insights reinforce the findings of this study, which indicate that participants overwhelmingly preferred English in interactions with other West Africans, reflecting its status as a global and functional medium in multicultural settings. Ultimately, these findings illustrate the complex dynamics of language use in diasporic communities, where practical considerations, limited exposure, and linguistic hierarchies shape interactional choices, even in the presence of shared linguistic features among pidgins and creoles.

7.5. The notion of the Nigerian diaspora

For the notion of diaspora, based on the discussions in the interviews, Nigerians in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) exhibit many of the key characteristics associated with diasporic communities in sociolinguistics, but they do not perfectly align with all traditional definitions of diaspora. Many participants expressed strong ties to Nigeria, evident in their language use, cultural pride, and efforts to maintain transnational connections. For instance, individuals like OM1 Mr. Otedola and OM5 Mr. Godfrey actively use Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and indigenous languages to foster identity and solidarity with their Nigerian heritage. There is evidence of cultural boundary maintenance, particularly in how participants preserve their Nigerian identity through specific language choices and attitudes. This aligns with Brubaker's (2005) emphasis on boundary maintenance as a defining feature of diaspora. The multilingual practices of participants reflect the negotiation of identity in a transnational context. The use of NP, indigenous languages, and English illustrates an effort to balance heritage and host community influences, typical of diasporic communities. Participants maintain social and cultural

connections with Nigeria, often viewing their language use as a means of sustaining these ties. This aligns with the notion of diasporas as transnational communities.

However, while some participants exhibit strong ties to their Nigerian heritage, others, particularly younger participants like YM1 Eli and YF5 Halima, express ambivalence or distance from Nigerian languages like NP. This suggests varying levels of solidarity within the community, which challenges the idea of a unified diaspora. The mixed attitudes toward NP (ranging from enthusiasm to indifference or outright rejection) indicate that not all members of the Nigerian community in the GTA share a consistent orientation toward their homeland. The findings suggest that many participants are integrating into Canadian society, particularly younger members who lean toward Canadian English and cultural norms. This integration complicates the characterization of Nigerians in the GTA as a distinct diasporic group maintaining strong boundaries from the host community. The diversity of linguistic attitudes and practices (e.g., generational differences, preferences for NP versus indigenous languages, and varying degrees of support for NP's development) highlights the complexity of the Nigerian community in the GTA. This internal diversity may dilute the cohesive identity often associated with diasporas.

Nigerians in the GTA exhibit many characteristics of a diaspora, particularly in their homeland orientation, multilingual practices, and efforts to maintain cultural identity and transnational ties. However, the varying degrees of solidarity, diverse linguistic attitudes, and the integration of some members into Canadian society suggest that they may not constitute a unified diaspora in the strictest sense. Instead, they represent a dynamic and evolving diasporic-like community, shaped by generational differences, individual attitudes, and the multicultural environment of the GTA. This nuanced understanding aligns with Vigouroux and Mufwene's

(2021) perspective that diaspora should be analyzed as a process rather than a fixed feature, emphasizing the fluid and context-dependent nature of diasporic identity.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1. Summary of Findings

This dissertation has provided a detailed exploration of the language attitudes and rationalizations of Nigerian-Canadian speakers, focusing on both younger and older generations and their interactions with Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and other languages. Through extensive semi-structured interviews, matched-guise tests, and quantitative analyses, key patterns have emerged regarding language use, cultural identity, and perceptions of NP.

8.2. Multilingualism and Cultural Identity

Both younger, middle-aged, and older Nigerian-Canadian speakers exhibit a high degree of multilingualism, utilizing English, Nigerian Pidgin (NP), and indigenous Nigerian languages. This multilingualism underscores their deep connection to Nigerian heritage while simultaneously reflecting their adaptation to the GTA context. Younger speakers tend to prioritize Standard English and demonstrate ambivalence toward NP, whereas middle-aged and older speakers use NP more frequently as a marker of Nigerian identity. However, their support for its development and use in education varies.

The first hypothesis of this study posited that participants would prefer Nigerian Pidgin (NP) when asserting their Nigerian identity in informal diasporic contexts. This aligns with previous research highlighting NP's significance as a marker of Nigerian identity (Agbali, 2005; Affia, 2023). However, the findings reveal a diverse range of language choices for expressing Nigerian identity in Canada. While some participants selected NP as their primary linguistic marker of identity, others preferred Nigerian English or selectively used their native language to signify their Nigerian heritage. Additionally, some participants indicated that their accents alone

were sufficient to signal their Nigerian identity, thereby diminishing the necessity of NP in such contexts (e.g., MM1 Nnamdi and OM3 Chidozie).

Despite their fluency in NP, certain participants opted for their native language as their primary marker of Nigerian identity in the diaspora. For instance, OF3 Amaka, despite her proficiency in NP, chose Igbo as her preferred linguistic identifier of Nigerian identity. These findings suggest that language choice in identity construction is highly individualized rather than collectively determined, necessitating further investigation into the underlying factors contributing to these variations, as explored in this chapter.

8.3. Attitudes Towards Nigerian Pidgin (NP)

The findings of this study not only align with previous research but also reinforce existing scholarship on attitudes toward creoles. The characterizations of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as "bastardized English," "watered-down English," "broken English," and "bad English" (Agheyisi, 1989) persist among Nigerians in the diaspora, as demonstrated in this study. These findings illustrate how creole languages continue to be perceived as structurally or genealogically inferior to European languages, at least by some participants. Across the thirty interviews conducted, numerous negative attitudes toward NP emerged, reflecting broader sociolinguistic perceptions of creoles and pidgins. These attitudes included viewing NP as "broken English," associating it with lower educational standards, and considering it less prestigious than either Standard English or indigenous Nigerian languages. Some participants, such as MF5 Ify and MM1 Nnamdi, expressed concerns that NP might negatively impact formal English proficiency, echoing the stigma often attached to creoles and pidgins.

These findings are consistent with the broader literature on creoles and pidgins, which are frequently perceived as inferior or less legitimate than their lexifier languages (Bloomfield, 1933; Seuren, 1998). Creoles and pidgins are often stigmatized as incomplete or corrupted forms of these languages rather than being recognized as fully developed linguistic systems in their own right. This stigmatization fosters negative attitudes among speakers and communities, ultimately influencing the use and acceptance of these languages in formal and educational contexts. The negative perceptions of NP observed in this study reflect these broader sociolinguistic dynamics, underscoring the ongoing challenges faced by creole and pidgin languages in gaining recognition and prestige.

Despite this prevailing stigma, two participants highlighted the educational challenges faced by Nigerians with limited proficiency in Standard English and suggested that NP could serve as a beneficial linguistic resource for these individuals. This perspective aligns with DeGraff's (2005) argument that creole-speaking communities encounter systemic barriers to scientific and social advancement. DeGraff asserts that the marginalization of creoles in education and socioeconomic development reflects an underlying resistance to recognizing their full potential within broader societal frameworks.

The attitudes toward NP observed in this study reveal a complex interplay between cultural pride and educational concerns. Older speakers generally acknowledge NP's role in maintaining cultural ties and facilitating communication across diverse ethnic groups. However, the prevalent concern that NP might negatively impact English proficiency and educational attainment appears to be reflected in the younger generation's preference for English over NP in both informal and formal settings.

These findings align with existing literature on language and identity, particularly the notion that language use is a critical aspect of cultural identity (Heller, 2007). The multilingual practices observed among Nigerian-Canadian speakers support the theoretical framework that language choices are shaped by both cultural heritage and adaptation to sociolinguistic environments (Gumperz, 1982; Fishman, 1991). Furthermore, concerns about NP's impact on educational outcomes parallel prior research on language and education, which suggests that non-standard languages are often perceived as unsuitable for formal instruction (Labov, 1972; Gee, 1996). This misconception arises from the erroneous assumption that the non-standard language—NP, in this case—is the intended target of learning rather than a potential medium of instruction alongside English. This study contributes to ongoing discussions about the role of NP in Nigerian diaspora communities (Agbali, 2005; Affia, 2023) and its implications for educational practices.

The pilot study provided foundational insights into the linguistic behaviors of Nigerian-Canadian speakers and identified key areas for further investigation, including attitudes toward NP across different age groups. It also underscored the need for a more nuanced exploration of NP's role in both personal and educational contexts. Consequently, the findings from the pilot study were instrumental in shaping the direction of this research and refining the research questions and methodology.

8.4. Implications of Study

This study's findings have significant implications for educational practices within Nigerian-Canadian communities. The concern about NP's impact on English proficiency

highlights the need for balanced language education that supports both cultural heritage and academic success. Educators and policymakers should consider integrating NP in ways that do not undermine the importance of standard English while promoting linguistic diversity. The research also underscores the role of language as a marker of cultural identity and social integration. For Nigerian Canadian communities, maintaining NP and their indigenous languages is crucial for preserving cultural ties while navigating the multicultural Canadian context. NP may somewhat serve to symbolize a pan-West-African identity in the diaspora as some participants maintained they spoke NP with other West Africans who were not Nigerians. Community initiatives and programs that support the use of NP and Indigenous languages can enhance cultural cohesion and identity among Nigerian Canadians.

8.5. Recommendations for Future Research

Building on the findings of this study, future research could delve into the role of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) as a potential symbol of pan-West-African identity within the diaspora. Expanding the participant pool to encompass a broader demographic would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of attitudes toward NP and the factors shaping these perceptions. While some participants reported using NP with non-Nigerian West Africans, this practice was relatively uncommon. Future studies could investigate the sociolinguistic dynamics of these interactions, exploring how NP is utilized, adapted, and understood across various West African communities in the diaspora. Such research could examine whether NP serves as a unifying medium, fostering cross-cultural connections and solidarity among diverse West African diasporic groups. It would also be interesting to conduct similar research in other regions of the

country to determine if comparable patterns emerge, especially in relation to the use of NP among other West Africans and Afro-Caribbeans.

Moreover, there is a need to examine the impact of NP on academic and professional outcomes among Nigerian Canadians. This line of inquiry could explore whether proficiency in NP influences career trajectories, academic performance, or professional networking within the diaspora. For example, researchers could investigate whether bilingual or multilingual Nigerians who use NP in addition to English experience advantages or disadvantages in the Canadian job market and educational settings. Additionally, studies could assess the extent to which NP may be a source of cultural pride or a barrier in professional contexts requiring Standard English.

In the Nigerian context, longitudinal studies could provide insights into how attitudes toward NP evolve over time and across generations, particularly in relation to changing socioeconomic and political factors. Such studies could also explore how these attitudes influence language use in formal and informal settings, both within Nigeria and the diaspora. Further, research could examine the intersections of ethnicity, migration, and intergenerational language transmission, assessing how NP and other indigenous languages are maintained or adapted in diasporic communities.

Finally, future research could investigate the effectiveness of educational programs that incorporate NP and indigenous Nigerian languages in Nigeria. These studies could evaluate the impact of such programs on students' linguistic competence, cultural identity, and academic achievement. In particular, research could explore whether incorporating NP as a medium of instruction or as a subject of study helps bridge gaps between home and school environments, fostering greater inclusivity and engagement among students of Nigerian descent.

8.6. Conclusion

This dissertation has provided a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic behaviors and attitudes of Nigerian-Canadian speakers, contributing valuable insights into the role of NP and other languages in shaping cultural identity and educational practices. The findings highlight the intricate relationship between language, identity, and education, offering a nuanced understanding of how Nigerian-Canadians navigate their multilingual environment. As globalization continues to influence language practices, this research underscores the importance of preserving linguistic diversity while adapting to new sociolinguistic realities. This study has examined the linguistic attitudes and behaviors of Nigerian Canadians, shedding light on the complex interplay of age, gender, ethnicity, and migration in shaping preferences for Nigerian Pidgin, Nigerian English, and indigenous Nigerian languages. The findings reveal significant variation in language choice and attitudes, with younger participants favoring Nigerian English and older participants demonstrating a stronger connection to indigenous languages. Ethnicity emerged as a critical factor, influencing language preferences and attitudes toward NP, particularly among groups that traditionally use NP in Nigeria.

Notably, while NP was acknowledged as a unifying language and a marker of Nigerian identity by many participants, its use and perception were context-dependent. Participants generally reported limited use of NP with non-Nigerian West Africans and Afro-Caribbeans, preferring English for interethnic and intercultural interactions. These findings highlight the nuanced role of NP in the diaspora, where its significance may differ from its role in Nigeria.

This research underscores the importance of considering language attitudes and practices within the broader sociocultural and geopolitical frameworks of migration and diaspora. The findings suggest that language serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a symbol of identity, culture, and belonging. Future research that further investigates these dynamics, particularly in relation to pan-West-African identity, academic and professional outcomes, and intergenerational transmission will contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolving roles of NP and other Nigerian languages in a globalized world.

By situating NP within these broader contexts, this thesis contributes to the growing body of sociolinguistic literature and research on diaspora communities, offering insights into how language use and attitudes are shaped by the intersections of migration, ethnicity, and identity. It is hoped that this work will inspire further research that not only explores the linguistic diversity of Nigerian Canadians but also informs policies and practices that support their linguistic and cultural heritage in a multicultural society.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sociodemographic and ethnic orientation questionnaire:

1. Nationality-----
2. State of Origin -----
3. Age -----
4. Gender -----
5. Languages spoken -----
6. How many years have you lived in Canada? -----
7. How long did you live in Nigeria?
8. How frequently do you go back to Nigeria?
9. Do you think of yourself as Nigerian, Canadian, or Nigerian-Canadian?
10. Are most of your friends in Canada, Nigerians, i.e. do you associate mostly
with other Nigerians in Canada?

Appendix B: Questionnaire for language proficiency and language preference.

Language proficiency:

- a. If you had to describe how well you speak NP, which would you say?

3= Fluent

2= Very well

1= Moderately Well

0= Hardly at all

Language preference:

- b. Which language do you use in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada: Canadian/Standard English, Nigerian English or NP?

- c. What language do you use in conversations with Nigerians from your ethnic group in Canada?

- d. How often do you use Canadian/Standard English, Nigerian English or NP in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada?

3= All the time

2= Most of the time

1= sometimes

0= Not at all

Language preference:

- e. Which language do you use in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada: Canadian/Standard English, Nigerian English or NP?
- f. What language do you use in conversations with Nigerians from your ethnic group in Canada?
- g. How often do you use Canadian/Standard English, Nigerian English or NP in conversations with other Nigerians from different ethnic groups in Canada?
 - 3 = All the time.
 - 2 = Most of the time.
 - 1 = Sometimes.
 - 0 = Not at all.

Appendix C: Matched guise questionnaire

1. What language is used in the recording? Leave it open.
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the individual in the recording in terms of the following:
 - Beautiful/ugly
 - Normal
 - Smart
 - Modern
 - Kind
 - Rich
 - Educated/uneducated.
 - Well-mannered
 - Rude

Appendix D: Open-ended questions for the interview discussion.

1. Are most of your friends in Canada Nigerians? Why or why not?
2. Are people in your neighborhood Nigerians? What about people you work with?
3. Do you consciously try to sound Canadian?
4. What languages do you speak in Canada? In what situations do you speak them?
5. Can you think of any scenario where any of these languages were used here in Canada and it was inappropriate? What about NP?
6. What is your favorite Nigerian language in Canada, and why is it your favorite language?
7. How will you rate your NP speaking ability on a scale of 1 to 10?
8. If you want others to identify you as a Nigerian through the language you speak, which would you speak and why?
9. What language do you prefer to speak with your friends who are Nigerians who do not share the same indigenous language with you?
10. What languages do you speak with migrants from other West African countries? NP or English? And why?
11. What experience (if any) do you have with speakers of Caribbean creoles?

12. What language does your family speak when you get together?
13. What languages do you speak at home?
14. How would you describe NP to a foreigner?
15. Would you like your kids to speak NP? What would be your take on that? (follow-up question).
16. Between English, NP, your indigenous language(s) and other Nigerian languages, which would you prefer to be the national/official language of Nigeria? Can you give reasons for your choice?
17. What is your take on English being taught and used as a medium of instruction in school and not NP?
18. What is your take on the development/production of NP textual materials like stories and moonlight tales? (Follow-up question: would you buy it for your kids?).

Appendix E: Content of the matched-guise recording

Title: The Importance of family (adopted from: TOPPR- 500 words essay on importance of family for students and children)

In today's world when everything is losing its meaning, we need to realize the importance of family more than ever. While the world is becoming more modern and advanced, the meaning of family and what it stands for remains the same.

A family is made strong through a number of factors. The most important one is of course love. You instantly think of unconditional love when you think of family. It is the first source of love you receive in your life. It teaches you the meaning of love which you carry on forever in your heart.

Families boost our confidence and make us feel loved. They are the pillars of our strength who never fall instead keep us strong, so we become better people.

We learn the values of love, respect, faith, hope, caring, cultures, ethics, traditions, and everything else that concerns us through our families.

NP:

Topik: Di Impotans of famili (dem kari am from: TOPPR- 500 wods ese on impotans of famili for studens an chudren)

Fo world tude, wey evri tin don lu:s im minin, wi gas sabi haw famili mek sens wel wel pas bifo.

As awa wod don de tush de cheng levelz de go, wetin famili bi stil de stand gidiba

Famili de taiyt onto meni tins, bot di number wan na lov. wen yu risin lov wey no de finish na famili yu risn. Na di fes ples wey yu get lov fo yo laif bi dat. E de tich yu wetin lv min wey yu go kari fo yo hat fo laif.

Famili de mek us get maind an e de mek us fil laik dem lov us. Na bicos of dem wi de stan strong, dem no de disappoint, bot de mek os strong , na im de mek os beta pipu.

Wi de len di impotans of wey lov rspekt fet, hop, kia, kolcho, tradision, an evritin wey konsan os from awa famili.

Hausa:

Taken: Muhimmancin dangi (an karfa daga: TOPPR- 500 kalmomi na rubutu akan

mahimmancin dangi ga dalibai da yara)

A duniyar yau lokacin da komai ke rasa ma'anarta, muna buƙatar fahimtar mahimmancin dangi fiye da kowane lokaci. Yayin da duniya ke zama mafi zamani da ci gaba, ma'anar iyali da abin da yake tsaye ya kasance iri ɗaya.

An yi dangi mai ƙarfi ta hanyar abubuwa da yawa. Mafi mahimmanci shine ainihin ƙauna. Nan take kuna tunanin soyayya mara tsari lokacin da kuke tunanin dangi. Shine farkon tushen ƙaunar da kuka karɓa a rayuwar ku. Yana koya muku ma'anar ƙauna wacce kuke ci gaba har abada a cikin zuciyar ku.

Iyalai suna haɓaka ƙarfinmu kuma suna sa mu ji ƙaunarmu. Su ne ginshikan ƙarfinmu waɗanda ba su taɓa faɗuwa ba maimakon su riƙe mu ƙarfi, don haka za mu zama mutane mafi kyau. Mun koyi dabi'un ƙauna, girmamawa, imani, bege, kulawa, al'adu, ɗabi'a, al'adu, da duk wani abin da ya shafe mu ta hanyar danginmu.

Igbo

Aha: Mkpa nke ezinulo bara (sitere na: TOPPR- 500 edemede edemede banyere mkpa ezinulo maka umu akwukwo na umuaka)

N'uwa nke taa mgbe ihe niile na-efunahu ihe o putara, anyi kwesiri ighota mkpa ezinulo di karia mgbe o bula. O bu ezie na uwa na-emewanye nke ohuu ma na-aga n'ihu, ihe ezinulo putara na ihe o na-anochi anya ya ka bu otu.

A na-eme ka ezinulo sie ike site n'otutu ihe. Nke kachasi mkpa bu n'ezie ihunanya. Ozugbo i chere banyere ihunanya na-enweghi atu, ka i na-eche banyere ezinulo. O bu isi mbido nke ihunanya i na-enweta na ndu gi. O na - akuziri gi ihe ihunanya putara nakwa otee i si egoziputa ya ruo mgbe ebighi ebi n'ime obi gi.

Ezinaulo na-eme ka ntukwasi obi anyi sie ike ma mee ka anyi nwee mmetuta nke ihu anyi n'anya. Ha bu ogidi nke ike anyi nke na-adaghi ada kama na-eme ka anyi sie ike, yabu anyi ghororo ndi ka mma.

Anyi na-amuta mkpuru nke ihunanya, nsopuru, okwukwe, olileanya, nlekota, odibendi, mkpuru omume, odinala, na ihe o bula ozo metutara anyi site na ezinulo anyi.

Yoruba:

Akole: Pataki ti ebi (ti a gba lati: TOPPR- 500 oro aroso lori pataki ti ebi fun awon omo ile-iwe ati awon omode)

Ni agbaye ode oni nigbati ohun gbogbo n padanu itumo re, a nilo lati mo pataki ti ebi ju lailai.

Lakoko ti agbaye ti di die igbalode ati ilosiwaju, itumo ti ebi ati ohun ti o duro fun tun je kanna.

A se ebi lagbara nipase nomba awon okunfa. Okan pataki julo je ti ife dajudaju. O lesekeke ronun ti ife ainidi nigbati o ronun nipa ebi. O je orisun akoko ti ife ti o gba ninu igbesi aye re. O ko o ni itumo ti ife eyiti o tesiwaju lailai ninu okan re.

Awon idile se igbelaruge igbekele wa ati je ki a nife si olufe. Won je awon owowon ti agbara wa ti ko subu dipo je ki a lagbara, nitorinaa a di eniyan ti o dara julo.

A ko awon iye ti ife, owo, igbagbo, ireti, abojuto, awon asa, ihuwasi, asa, ati gbogbo ohun miiran ti o kan wa nipase awon idile wa.

Table 6: Participants' responses to the demography questionnaire

What is your name?	Nationality	State of Origin	What is your Age-range	Gender - Selected Choice	Languages Spoken	How many years have you lived in Canada	How long did you live in Nigeria?	How frequently do you go back to Nigeria? - Selected Choice	Do you think of yourself as a Nigerian, Canadian, or Nigerian-Canadian - Selected Choice	10. Are most of your friends in Canada, Nigerians, i.e. do you associate mostly with other Nigerians in Canada? - Selected Choice
Oluwagbemisola ariyo	Nigerian	Lagos	18-29 years	Female	Yoruba, English, french	4-6 years	15-20 years	Never-since you arrived Canada	Nigerian-Canadian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Jacintha Bent	Nigeria	Adamawa State	18-29 years	Female	English	4-6 years	15-20 years	Once a year	Nigerian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Jane cole	Nigeria	Anambra	30-49 years	Female	English, Igbo and Yoruba	1-3 years	15-20 years	Once in 3 years	Nigerian-Canadian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Onyinye	Nigerian	Ebonyi State	30-49 years	Female	Canadian English, Nigerian English, Nigerian Pidgin and Igbo	1-3 years	15-20 years	Once a year	Nigerian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Faith Moses	Nigerian	Edo State	18-29 years	Female	English	4-6 years	15-20 years	Once in 2 years	Nigerian	Yes, they are mostly Nigerians
Ethan	Nigerian	Akwa Inom	18-29 years	Male	English	4-6 years	15-20 years	Once in 3 years	Nigerian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
BG	Nigerian	Lagos	30-49 years	Male	English, Yoruba, French	7-10 years	21-30 years		Nigerian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Rotimi Fadiya	Nigerian	Lagos	18-29 years	Male	English, Yoruba (can understand, speech is limited)	More than 10 years	15-20 years	Once in 2 years	Canadian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Bola Adetunji	Nigerian	Osun	50 years and above	Male	Yoruba, English	More than 10 years	21-30 years	More than once a year	Nigerian-Canadian	Yes, they are mostly Nigerians
Thom Oguntuyinbo	Nigerian	Ogun	18-29 years	Male	English, Pidgin, Yoruba	7-10 years	15-20 years	Once in 3 years	Nigerian	They are mostly Canadians
Ifeoma	Nigeria	Anambra	30-49 years	Female	English and ibo	1-3 years	21-30 years	Never-since you arrived Canada	Nigerian-Canadian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Nnamdi	Nigerian	Anambra	30-49 years	Male	English, Ibo, Pidgin	4-6 years	21-30 years	Once in 3 years	Nigerian-Canadian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Debo	Nigerian	Ondo State	30-49 years	Male	Yoruba and English	4-6 years	21-30 years	Once in 2 years	Nigerian-Canadian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Abasiakan Asikpo	Nigeria	Akwa Ibom	30-49 years	Male	English	7-10 years	21-30 years	Once in 3 years	Nigerian-Canadian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Ifeoluwa	Nigeria	Ogun state	18-29 years	Female	Yoruba	1-3 years	15-20 years	Never-since you arrived Canada	Nigerian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Gregory Akerete	Nigerian	Delta state	30-49 years	Male	English	1-3 years	31-40 years	Once in 2 years	Nigerian-Canadian	Yes, they are mostly Nigerians
Barr Godfrey	Nigerian	Edo	50 years and above	Male	English, Esan	1-3 years	More than 50 years	Once in 2 years	Nigerian	Yes, they are mostly Nigerians

Chiedozie Ndukwe	Nigeria	Imo	50 years and above	Male	English, Igbo	4-6 years	31-40 years	Never-since you arrived Canada	Nigerian-Canadian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Imaobong Abasiakan	Canada	Ontario	30-49 years	Female	English	More than 10 years	21-30 years	Once in 3 years	Nigerian-Canadian	Yes, they are mostly Nigerians
Kash	Nigerian	Anambra	18-29 years	Male	Spanish, English, Igbo	1-3 years	15-20 years	Never-since you arrived Canada	Nigerian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Eli	Nigerian	lagos	18-29 years	Male	english	1-3 years	15-20 years	Once a year	Nigerian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Inimfon Udokang	Nigerian	Akwa Ibom	30-49 years	Female	English, Ibibio	4-6 years	21-30 years	Once in 3 years	Nigerian-Canadian	Yes, they are mostly Nigerians
Mrs Suzzy	Nigerian	Nigerian	50 years and above	Female	English, Nigerian Pidgin, Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo (understands)	More than 10 years	More than 50 years	More than once a year	Nigerian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Mrs Cordelia	Nigerian	Delta	50 years and above	Female	English, Izon French and Pidgin	More than 10 years	31-40 years	Once a year	Nigerian-Canadian	Yes, they are mostly Nigerians
Temidayo Adesanya	Nigerian	Ogun state	18-29 years	Female	English, Yoruba and Pidgin	1-3 years	21-30 years	Never-since you arrived Canada	Nigerian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Mr. Yekeen Otedola Ajanaku	Nigerian	Ondo State	50 years and above	Male	English Yoruba Nigerian Pidgin, Igbo (intermediately)	4-6 years	41-50 years	Never-since you arrived Canada	Nigerian-Canadian	Yes, they are mostly Nigerians
Mrs Bose	Nigerian	On do	50 years and above	Female	English, Yoruba	More than 10 years	21-30 years	Once a year	Nigerian-Canadian	Yes, they are mostly Nigerians
Mr. Felix Omololu	Nigerian-Canadian	Kwara State	50 years and above	Male	Yoruba, English, Understands Nigerian Pidgin	More than 10 years	31-40 years	Once in 4 years	Nigerian-Canadian	No, they are not mostly Nigerians
Mrs. Aishatu	Nigerian	Kanu	50 years and above	Female	Hausa, Fulani, English, Nigerian Pidgin	More than 10 years	21-30 years	More than once a year	Nigerian-Canadian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities
Mrs Amaka Osai	Nigerian	Enugu	50 years and above	Female	English, Igbo, Nigerian Pidgin, Yoruba	4-6 years	21-30 years	Never-since you arrived Canada	Nigerian	They are a mixture of Nigerians and other nationalities