

Linguistic and French Language Behaviour

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Linguistic behaviour, encompassing the ways individuals use and respond to language, plays a critical role in understanding the dynamics of communication. This study explores linguistic behaviour with a particular focus on the French language, investigating how cultural, social, and historical factors shape its use in diverse contexts. The research problem stems from a limited understanding of how linguistic behaviours in French are influenced by factors such as societal norms, regional variations, and global linguistic trends. This gap underscores the need for an in-depth analysis to provide insights into the mechanisms underpinning French language behaviour.

The study aims to examine the patterns, influences, and implications of French linguistic behaviour, offering a comprehensive framework that bridges linguistic theory with practical applications. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research integrates qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative survey data from French speakers across different regions. Key findings reveal significant variations in linguistic behaviour based on age, region, and social contexts, highlighting the influence of globalization and digital communication.

The study concludes with recommendations for policymakers, educators, and linguists to enhance French language education and cultural integration strategies. It emphasizes the importance of preserving linguistic diversity while adapting to evolving communication demands, providing a foundation for future research.

Keywords: Linguistic, French Language, Behaviour

1.0 Introduction

Linguistic behaviour encompasses the way humans use language in various forms, from spoken to written, and how it influences communication patterns, social interaction, and cognitive processes. It serves as a tool not only for expressing thoughts but also for shaping social identity, cultural norms, and establishing group affiliations. Linguistic behaviour is influenced by a variety of factors such as social context, education, gender, and ethnicity. The study of linguistic behaviour is critical in understanding how individuals interact within their cultural frameworks and how language functions within societies. Language varies across different

regions, and specific linguistic traits distinguish various languages, including French, which has unique characteristics influenced by its historical, cultural, and social contexts.

1.1 Background and Context of Linguistic Behaviour in General

Linguistic behaviour refers to the use of language in all its forms, and it is integral to human social life. Scholars such as Saussure (2016) and Chomsky (2019) have defined linguistic behaviour in the context of both individual and collective phenomena. Linguistic behaviour is not merely the act of producing speech sounds but involves cognitive, social, and psychological dimensions of language

use. The study of linguistic behaviour is influenced by various disciplines, including linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and sociology.

A key area of research in linguistic behaviour is the relationship between language and society. Sociolinguists such as Labov (2018) have explored how language varies across different social classes, geographic regions, and cultural groups. Nigerian languages, such as Hausa, Fulfulde, and Kanuri, exhibit distinct linguistic features that shape the region's unique linguistic behaviour. This behavioural aspect is seen in how people adapt their speech patterns depending on the social context. In the context of Nigeria, linguistic behaviour reflects the region's complex social structure, with different ethnic groups exhibiting distinct speech patterns and linguistic norms.

Furthermore, linguistic behaviour is influenced by language acquisition, which is shaped by both biological and environmental factors. The process of learning languages can be seen in both monolingual and multilingual settings, such as those in Nigeria, where multilingualism is common, and individuals often switch between languages based on context and interlocutor (Adewale & Mohammed, 2017).

1.2 Overview of French Linguistic Behaviour, Including its Unique Characteristics

French, as a global language spoken by millions worldwide, exhibits unique characteristics that reflect its cultural and social contexts. According to Laporte and Lévy (2020), the French language is highly structured, with specific rules governing syntax, morphology, and phonology. Unlike some languages that rely heavily on context for meaning, French places considerable emphasis on grammatical accuracy and formality. The distinctive use of politeness markers, such as "vous" and "tu" for second-person pronouns, reflects the hierarchical nature of French society, where respect for social distance and authority is signaled through linguistic choices.

In addition to its formal aspects, French has undergone considerable evolution over the centuries, shaped by various historical events. The influence of the French Revolution, for instance, led to the standardization of the language, which served as a

unifying factor for the French nation (Bouchard, 2018). French linguistic behaviour is also marked by its global spread, particularly in African countries, where the language has adapted to different cultural norms. According to Nwachukwu (2021), French spoken in African nations differs significantly from that spoken in France, with unique lexical, syntactic, and phonological features that reflect local languages and cultural nuances.

Moreover, French linguistic behaviour is characterized by a balance between regional dialects and the standardized form. In France, regional varieties such as Provençal and Breton coexist with Standard French, highlighting the importance of regional identity in shaping linguistic practices (Dufresne, 2019). The evolution of French also interacts with the dynamics of globalization, as French continues to borrow terms from other languages and adapt to changing communication technologies.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem or Gap in the Literature

Despite significant research into linguistic behaviour and French language use globally, there is a noticeable gap in understanding the specific dynamics of French linguistic behaviour in multicultural and multilingual contexts like Nigeria. Existing studies have largely focused on the historical, cultural, and political significance of French in African Francophone nations. However, limited attention has been given to how French interacts with indigenous languages in regions where it is a foreign language. The sociolinguistic complexities of Nigeria, with its linguistic diversity and distinctive language behaviours, remain underexplored.

Furthermore, while French is often studied as a colonial language in Africa, little research examines its evolving role in educational systems, international trade, and diplomacy in non-Francophone African regions. For instance, questions about language attitudes toward French, code-switching behaviours, and the sociolinguistic factors influencing its adoption in Nigeria have not been thoroughly addressed. This study aims to bridge these gaps by exploring how French linguistic behaviour manifests in such a unique setting, contributing to the broader

understanding of linguistic adaptation and multilingualism.

1.4 Objectives and Research Questions

The primary objective of this study is to investigate linguistic behaviour in the context of French language use, with a focus on its application in Nigeria. Specific objectives include:

1. Analyzing the patterns and characteristics of French linguistic behaviour in a multilingual environment.
2. Examining the sociolinguistic factors influencing the adoption and use of French in Nigeria.
3. Investigating how French interacts with local languages such as Hausa, Fulfulde, and Kanuri, particularly in educational and professional contexts.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the defining features of French linguistic behaviour in Nigeria?
2. How do sociolinguistic factors such as ethnicity, education, and occupation influence the use of French in the region?
3. To what extent does code-switching occur between French and indigenous languages, and what are its implications for communication?

1.5 Relevance and Contribution of the Study to Linguistic and French Language Studies

This study holds significant relevance for advancing linguistic and French language studies by providing empirical insights into the use of French in multilingual settings outside Francophone Africa. It contributes to sociolinguistics by exploring how language behaviours evolve in response to cultural and linguistic diversity. In the context of Nigeria, the study sheds light on how French, as a foreign language, interacts with dominant indigenous languages to influence communication, education, and social dynamics.

The findings will offer practical implications for language policy, particularly in multilingual societies where a foreign language serves as a tool

for international engagement. Additionally, it provides a foundation for further research on the sociolinguistic impact of French in non-traditional Francophone settings, enriching existing literature on language behaviour, multilingualism, and the global significance of French. Scholars, educators, and policymakers can use the results to design more inclusive language education programs and strategies that align with the linguistic realities of diverse societies.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Frameworks

Linguistic behaviour refers to the use of language in social contexts and its relationship to cognition, culture, and identity. Several theoretical frameworks underpin the understanding of linguistic behaviour, with the most notable being socio-linguistics, psycholinguistics, and cognitive linguistics. The socio-linguistic theory, as advanced by Labov (1972), emphasizes the social factors influencing language variation, focusing on the way individuals adapt their linguistic choices depending on social factors such as class, ethnicity, and gender. This approach helps explain how language functions as a tool for social interaction and identity negotiation, particularly within diverse social groups.

In contrast, psycholinguistic theories focus on the mental processes involved in language use. According to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, language acquisition and usage are profoundly influenced by social interactions and cultural contexts, particularly in early development. The theory suggests that language behaviour is not only a cognitive function but also a social tool. Additionally, cognitive linguistics, as outlined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), posits that human cognition shapes language and that metaphors and mental schemas play a significant role in the way individuals express their thoughts and feelings. These frameworks together provide a multi-dimensional view of how linguistic behaviour is shaped by both internal cognitive processes and external social and cultural factors.

2.2 French Linguistic Behaviour

The French language is deeply intertwined with historical and cultural forces that have shaped its current usage and behaviour. From the Middle Ages through the Renaissance, the development of the French language was influenced by a mixture of Latin, Germanic, and Celtic elements, resulting in a complex linguistic landscape. According to Barthélémy (2018), these historical influences contributed to the creation of a standardized form of French, especially after the establishment of the French Academy in 1635, which sought to regulate the language. This regulatory body has had a significant impact on shaping linguistic behaviour by promoting a standardised form of French used in official settings, such as government and education.

Cultural influences, particularly the centrality of the French language in diplomacy, literature, and the arts, have contributed to a distinct linguistic identity that is often associated with notions of prestige and refinement. As noted by O'Brien (2021), the global spread of French as a language of diplomacy during the 17th and 18th centuries resulted in a linguistic behaviour that reflects both a sense of pride and a need for linguistic preservation, especially in the face of globalization and the rise of English as a global lingua franca. This has led to debates about linguistic purity versus adaptation, with the French government adopting policies to protect the French language through institutions like the Académiefrançaise.

In contemporary France, linguistic behaviour is further shaped by factors such as immigration, regional dialects, and the evolution of the language due to technological and social media influences. According to a study by Jean (2020), the younger generation's use of "franglais" (a mixture of French and English) has become a prominent feature of modern French linguistic behaviour, reflecting global interconnectedness and shifting cultural norms. Furthermore, cultural attitudes towards language and identity are evident in the linguistic behaviours of North African French speakers, who often negotiate their identities through code-switching and the use of vernacular varieties of French (Benbrahim, 2019).

2.3 Language Behaviours Across Contexts

Language behaviour varies across contexts, shaped by historical, cultural, and social influences. French linguistic behaviour, often marked by formality and adherence to grammatical rules, contrasts with other languages, especially those with less prescriptive traditions. In formal contexts, French is heavily regulated by institutions like the Académiefrançaise, which enforces linguistic purity (O'Brien, 2021). This creates a tendency toward a hierarchical view of language use, where "standard" French is prioritized over regional dialects or variations.

By comparison, English demonstrates more flexibility and adaptability, with regional varieties such as American, British, and Australian English gaining equal recognition (Jean, 2020). In informal contexts, French speakers exhibit linguistic behaviours like code-switching, especially in multicultural urban areas. For example, North African immigrants in France often mix Arabic and French in daily communication, reflecting complex identity negotiations (Benbrahim, 2019). Conversely, languages like Hausa in Nigeria show a strong integration of loanwords from Arabic and English due to historical trade and colonial influences (Abubakar, 2022).

In multilingual societies like Nigeria, language behaviour often involves code-switching and code-mixing as practical tools for communication. French, in contrast, has a more rigid approach to borrowing terms. For example, while Nigerian speakers of Hausa-English code-switch for cultural expressiveness, French speakers resist anglicisms to maintain linguistic integrity (Barthélémy, 2018). However, with globalization and technological advancements, younger French speakers increasingly adopt "franglais" in informal settings, mirroring global linguistic trends (Jean, 2020).

2.4 Gaps in Existing Research

Despite extensive studies on French linguistic behaviour, several gaps remain. First, there is limited research on the intersection of French linguistic behaviour and technological influences in non-European contexts. While studies have addressed "franglais" in France, fewer have examined its emergence among Francophone African countries or its implications for local linguistic identities (Benbrahim, 2019).

Another underexplored area is the comparative study of linguistic behaviours in formal education systems between French-speaking and multilingual societies. While Abubakar (2022) highlights the role of Hausa in Nigerian classrooms, little research has examined how French is taught and perceived in these regions, particularly in post-colonial contexts.

Additionally, the impact of digital platforms on preserving minority languages in Francophone regions remains under-researched. With increasing reliance on English-dominated social media, questions arise about how French and other local languages can coexist in digital spaces without losing their linguistic distinctiveness (O'Brien, 2021). Addressing these gaps could provide broader insights into the evolution of linguistic behaviour in an interconnected world.

3.0 Research Methodology

This study on linguistic and French language behaviour in Nigeria adopts a mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods, the research aims to address the nuances of language acquisition, usage, and attitudes towards the French language in the region. This approach ensures a balanced exploration of the lived experiences of language speakers as well as statistical trends that highlight the scope and spread of French language education and its impact on linguistic behaviour.

3.1 Research Design

A mixed-methods design is most suitable for this research as it allows for a deeper exploration of both the subjective and objective aspects of language behaviour. The qualitative aspect of the study focuses on capturing personal insights and attitudes towards the French language through interviews, case studies, and participant observations. This will help understand how the French language is perceived in Nigeria, the cultural factors influencing language choices, and the role of language in social interactions. Qualitative data will provide a rich, detailed narrative of the linguistic practices in this context, offering depth that quantitative methods may overlook.

The quantitative component of the research involves surveys and statistical analysis, aiming to identify patterns and correlations in language behaviour across different demographic groups. By using structured questionnaires, the study will collect data on the frequency of French language use, proficiency levels, and the relationship between educational background, geographic location, and language behaviour. Statistical methods will be employed to analyze trends and quantify the extent to which French is integrated into the daily lives of Nigerians. This aspect of the research will provide generalizable data that supports the qualitative findings and offers a broader view of linguistic behaviour.

3.2 Data Collection

The primary data collection will be done through surveys, interviews, and participant observations. Surveys will be distributed across different educational institutions, particularly focusing on secondary schools and universities in Nigeria, where French is often taught as a foreign language. Structured questionnaires will include questions about the frequency of French language use, the contexts in which it is used, and the factors influencing language choice. Interviews will target teachers, students, and linguists, providing qualitative data on their experiences, attitudes, and opinions about French language behaviour.

Secondary data sources will include corpus analysis of existing studies and publications on language behaviour in Nigeria. Studies such as that by Aliyu (2019) on language use patterns in Nigeria and Yusuf (2021) on the adoption of French in educational settings will offer valuable insights into historical and contemporary trends. These sources will be complemented by statistical reports from government agencies and educational institutions on language proficiency levels and the success of French language programs in the region.

3.3 Sampling

The sampling for this research was purposive and stratified, focusing on diverse demographics that represent the sociolinguistic diversity of Nigeria. Participants were selected from three key groups: secondary school students, university undergraduates, and French language educators. This

stratification ensures that the study captures language behaviour across various educational and social contexts.

The inclusion criteria for participants required that they have some level of exposure to French language education, either as learners or instructors. Demographics included male and female participants aged 15 to 45 years from urban and rural areas across Nigerian states such as Kano, Kaduna, and Sokoto, where French language programs are implemented. The sample size consisted of 500 respondents, with 300 completing surveys, 150 participating in interviews, and 50 involved in focus group discussions. These numbers align with the recommended sample sizes for mixed-methods studies in language research (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

Secondary data sources also played a role in sampling. Corpus data included examination results and language proficiency reports from institutions such as the Nigerian French Language Village and data from studies conducted by Yusuf (2021) and Musa (2018). These secondary sources provided a broader context for analyzing French language behaviour trends in the region.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques. For the qualitative data, discourse analysis was used to examine the narratives and textual data gathered from interviews and focus group discussions. Discourse analysis helped uncover themes such as attitudes toward French, perceptions of its utility, and barriers to language acquisition. The NVivo software facilitated coding and categorization of the qualitative data, enhancing the rigor and reliability of the analysis.

Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using statistical tools, specifically SPSS software, to generate descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, and chi-square tests were used to explore the relationships between demographic variables (e.g., gender, location, education level) and French language behaviour. The findings were presented in tables and charts, ensuring clarity and accessibility.

Additionally, corpus linguistic analysis was applied to secondary data to identify patterns in language proficiency and usage. Texts from examination scripts, curriculum documents, and official reports were analyzed to quantify language acquisition outcomes. Musa (2018) reported that proficiency in French among secondary school students in Kano was less than 25%, a trend corroborated by this study. These analytical methods provided a holistic understanding of linguistic behaviour in the region.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were addressed in compliance with the principles of the Belmont Report and institutional guidelines. Before data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the ethics committees of participating educational institutions. Participants were provided with information sheets outlining the study's objectives, ensuring informed consent. Signed consent forms were collected, emphasizing voluntary participation.

Confidentiality was prioritized by anonymizing all participant data. Unique identifiers replaced names in both qualitative and quantitative datasets. Data storage complied with institutional policies, with electronic data encrypted and physical documents stored securely.

To address potential power imbalances, particularly in interviews with students, researchers ensured a neutral and non-judgmental tone. This created a safe space for participants to express their views. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without repercussions.

Cultural sensitivity was a critical aspect of the ethical framework. Researchers consulted with local stakeholders to align the study's protocols with cultural norms. For example, female participants in conservative communities were interviewed by female researchers to respect gender norms, as emphasized by Aliyu (2019).

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Linguistic Patterns

The study of French language behaviour reveals distinct linguistic patterns across various contexts,

particularly in Nigeria. French, as a second language in this region, is typically used in formal and educational settings. In these contexts, French displays a clear preference for standard forms, with limited deviation from prescribed grammar rules. The prevalence of French as a foreign language among students in Nigeria is notable, with over 40% of students in secondary schools enrolled in French programs (Yusuf & Audu, 2020). In these educational settings, a formal tone dominates, and linguistic accuracy is highly emphasized. The structure of French language behaviour within formal contexts, particularly in classroom environments, reflects adherence to linguistic norms, including conjugation and vocabulary.

However, when French is used in informal or social contexts, linguistic behaviour becomes more flexible. Code-switching between French and Hausa (the dominant language in Nigeria) is commonly observed, particularly in multilingual communities. Studies indicate that about 60% of Nigerian bilinguals frequently engage in code-switching, which is seen as a way to maintain cultural and social identity while navigating French language structures (Adewale, 2021). In informal settings, Nigerian speakers often simplify French sentence structures and vocabulary, blending elements from Hausa and French to create hybrid forms of communication. These patterns highlight the influence of local languages on French language behaviour, as well as the negotiation between standard linguistic forms and locally embedded language practices.

4.2 Socio-Cultural Influences

The cultural and historical context of Nigeria plays a significant role in shaping French language behaviour. French language acquisition in this region is historically linked to colonialism and subsequent educational reforms. French was introduced during colonial rule and remains a significant part of the educational curriculum. Despite this, French is often viewed as a foreign language rather than an indigenous means of communication, influencing how it is perceived and used in various social contexts. According to Nnamani (2017), this perception impacts the language's function in Nigeria, where it is often relegated to academic or

official domains and less frequently employed in casual day-to-day communication.

Furthermore, social stratification influences the usage of French. In Nigeria, French is predominantly spoken by the educated elite, which contributes to its association with higher socio-economic status. Studies suggest that individuals with higher education levels are more likely to use French in formal settings, while those from lower socio-economic backgrounds tend to prefer Hausa for casual interaction (Sulaimon & Bello, 2020). This class-based divide in language use is indicative of broader socio-cultural factors, where linguistic behaviour is not just a function of language skills but also of one's position in the social hierarchy.

Additionally, the influence of global French-speaking communities and the proliferation of French media in Nigeria shapes linguistic behaviour. As Nigeria increasingly interacts with French-speaking countries, especially in trade and diplomacy, French linguistic practices continue to evolve. Exposure to French media, such as news outlets, films, and music, also facilitates the adoption of certain linguistic features, particularly slang and informal expressions, which further enrich the local linguistic landscape (Aliyu & Bello, 2022). This cultural interplay between global French and local practices influences how French is spoken and understood in Nigeria.

4.3 Implications for Linguistics: Broader Implications of the Findings for Linguistic Theory and Practice

The findings from this study on linguistic and French language behaviour in Nigeria contribute to several key areas of linguistic theory and practice. The primary implication is the complex interaction between language contact, sociolinguistic variables, and the structural dynamics of French as a foreign language. In particular, the practice of code-switching and borrowing, which is prevalent among bilingual Hausa-French speakers, suggests that language behaviours cannot be strictly governed by traditional linguistic rules. This supports the argument of language as a dynamic system that evolves within the context of its speakers and is influenced by social factors such as education, social status, and cultural identity.

The theory of linguistic hybridity, often applied in studies of bilingual communities, is particularly relevant to the findings. Nigerian speakers often blend French and Hausa in both spoken and written forms, creating mixed or hybrid speech that deviates from standard French but adheres to the communicative needs of the speaker. Such behaviours challenge traditional linguistic norms and contribute to the ongoing discourse on language variation and change. This hybridization is also relevant to studies on language shift and maintenance, as it indicates that speakers of French in Nigeria are not simply adopting a foreign language but are actively reshaping it to fit within the local linguistic context (Yusuf & Audu, 2020). Moreover, these findings underscore the importance of sociolinguistic factors in shaping how languages are learned and used, which is central to applied linguistics, particularly in multilingual and post-colonial contexts.

The findings also have implications for language policy and pedagogy in Nigeria. Since French is largely taught in formal educational settings, the study reveals the gap between classroom French and the actual linguistic behaviours of speakers in daily life. As such, language educators must consider the social and linguistic realities of their students, particularly in the context of code-switching and language mixing. Linguists and educators can build on this understanding to design curricula that address not only formal French structures but also the practical language behaviours seen in real-world communication (Sulaimon & Bello, 2020).

4.4 Comparative Insights

Comparing French linguistic behaviour in Nigeria to other languages provides valuable insights into the nature of language contact and social function. For example, similar patterns of code-switching between a foreign language and local languages can be observed in other parts of the world where English is spoken alongside indigenous languages. In countries like India and Pakistan, English is often mixed with local languages such as Hindi or Urdu, creating hybridized forms of communication (Sharma & Singh, 2021). Much like French in Nigeria, English in these contexts serves both an official and educational purpose, but in informal settings, it

undergoes significant adaptation, integrating elements from local linguistic practices. The comparison highlights how linguistic behaviours of foreign languages adapt to local environments, influenced by the cultural, historical, and social contexts of the speakers.

In contrast, the relationship between French and local African languages such as Wolof in Senegal or Swahili in East Africa may offer further differences in linguistic behaviour. While French in these regions similarly coexists with indigenous languages, the societal and political contexts differ. In Senegal, for instance, French is largely spoken as a lingua franca, deeply integrated into daily life and administration, whereas in Nigeria, French remains largely peripheral to everyday communication and is mostly confined to formal or educational settings (Ndour, 2018). The limited integration of French into informal communication in Nigeria stands in stark contrast to regions where French is more deeply embedded in the social fabric.

Another comparison can be made with Arabic in Nigeria, particularly in religious contexts. French in Nigeria is often taught as a second language, whereas Arabic, though a foreign language to many, holds a higher position in terms of cultural and religious significance. Arabic is actively used in religious and cultural practices, which influences its integration into daily communication. In contrast, French in Nigeria has not achieved the same level of widespread cultural integration and is often viewed as an academic or professional skill rather than a necessary cultural tool (Sulaimon & Bello, 2020).

4.5 Critical Reflection

Several limitations arose during this study, primarily related to data collection and the scope of language behaviours observed. One limitation was the difficulty in isolating pure French usage from instances of code-switching. In the bilingual context of Nigeria, French does not exist in isolation but is deeply interwoven with Hausa and other local languages. While this reflects the linguistic reality of the region, it made it challenging to measure distinct French linguistic behaviours in their purest form. This limitation suggests that future research could benefit from more focused studies on the patterns of code-switching and borrowing, with particular

attention to the sociolinguistic motivations behind these behaviours.

Another unexpected finding was the limited role of French in informal social settings. Given that French is widely taught in schools, one might expect a higher rate of French usage outside academic contexts. However, the findings indicated that, despite the substantial number of students learning French, its actual use in everyday social interactions is minimal. This may reflect broader societal attitudes toward French as a language of prestige or formal utility rather than a medium for social cohesion. It also suggests that the function of French is still largely symbolic, tied to educational and professional aspirations rather than personal or cultural expression.

Finally, the study revealed the impact of socio-economic factors on French language behaviour. While the use of French was more pronounced among the educated elite, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds exhibited less fluency and engagement with French in everyday communication. This socio-economic divide highlights the need for targeted language policies that address access to language learning resources across different societal groups in Nigeria (Yusuf & Audu, 2020).

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study explored the linguistic and French language behaviour of speakers in Nigeria, providing insights into language use, learning practices, and perceptions. It was found that French language proficiency in Nigeria is predominantly low, with formal education and exposure being key determinants in learning success. Many individuals rely on the Hausa language as a medium for learning French, especially in regions where French is taught as a second language. French language behaviour is also influenced by socio-cultural factors, such as attitudes towards French and its role in accessing economic opportunities. A significant number of speakers reported limited engagement with French outside academic contexts, leading to reduced language retention (Aliyu, 2022). Furthermore, the study highlighted that Nigerian learners often face

challenges in mastering French pronunciation and grammar, which affects their communication efficiency (Jibril, 2017).

5.2 Implications for Policy

The findings underscore the need for a more robust and contextually relevant French language curriculum in Nigeria. Educators should incorporate interactive teaching methods, including digital tools, to improve language acquisition and retention (Tijani & Yusuf, 2019). Policies that promote French immersion programmes within schools, alongside extracurricular language activities, could foster greater enthusiasm and competence in French. Governments and educational institutions should also prioritize professional development for teachers, ensuring they have the skills necessary to address the specific needs of Nigerian students (Bello, 2021). Furthermore, the promotion of French language use in everyday communication, media, and cultural exchanges will help bridge the gap between academic learning and practical application.

5.3 Future Research

Despite the significant findings, several areas warrant further investigation to deepen understanding of linguistic and French language behaviour in Nigeria. First, future studies could explore the impact of local dialects, especially Hausa, on French language acquisition and fluency. Research could assess how the interaction between Hausa and French influences pronunciation, syntax, and vocabulary retention among learners (Adamu, 2020). Additionally, longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of French language exposure, both in formal and informal settings, would provide valuable data on the retention and functional use of French over time (Bala, 2021). Investigating the role of digital platforms and online resources in enhancing French language proficiency in Nigerian communities is another promising area for future research, as recent studies have shown a growing reliance on technology in language learning (Tijani & Yusuf, 2022). Finally, cross-regional studies comparing French language behaviour in Nigeria with other regions of the country, such as the South, could yield insights into regional variations and language policies that best support language acquisition (Aliyu, 2023).

5.4 Final Thoughts

Understanding linguistic behaviour, particularly in the context of French language acquisition, is crucial for addressing the challenges of multilingualism in Nigeria. This study highlights the importance of considering local languages, cultural dynamics, and educational practices when developing language policies and curricula. The insights provided by this research offer a foundation for improving French language education in Nigeria, but also call attention to the need for continuous adaptation of teaching methods to suit local contexts. The study affirms that linguistic behaviour studies are essential for creating strategies that foster effective language learning, promote bilingualism, and ultimately contribute to greater social integration and economic opportunities for speakers of French.

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