



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
FACULTY OF ARTS**

**COURSE CODE: ENG353**

**COURSE TITLE: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

## **COURSE GUIDE**

**COURSE CODE:** **ENG353**

**COURSE TITLE:** **THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to ENG353: The English Language in Nigeria. This Course Guide is a general overview of the course. It provides you with useful information about the structure of the course.

ENG353: The English Language in Nigeria is a three credit unit course meant to be taken by the 300 level students in English department of the National Open University of Nigeria.

## **Course Aims**

ENG353: The English Language in Nigeria. The course aims at giving you an understanding of the socio-linguistic features of the Nigerian variety of English.

The aim will be achieved by:

- introducing you to the nature of Nigerian English.
- familiarizing you with the basic characteristics of Nigerian English and its classifications.
- enlightening you on how to identify the different regional dialects of Nigerian English.
- sensitizing you to identify the relationship between English, Nigerian languages, Pidgin English and Creoles
- Identifying the functions and the status of English language in Nigeria.
- identifying the problems of interference and intelligibility in a second language.
- looking at the English language and the national language question in Nigeria.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

- describe the nature of English language in Nigeria.

- state the basic characteristics and classifications of English in Nigeria.
- identify the different regional dialects of English in Nigeria.
- explain the relationship between English, indigenous languages, Nigerian Pidgin and Creoles.
- describe the functions and status of English in our environment.
- identify the extent of interference of L1 on L2 and the level of intelligibility.
- comment on how to solve the national language problem in your country.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

To be considered fully prepared for the course, you are required to thoroughly read this course material as well as the other sets of books recommended. You are also required to go through the exercises provided in each of the units. The exercises are meant to test your understanding of each unit. At the end of each unit you are to answer in written form the Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA) and submit them to your facilitator for assessment purposes. At the end of the course you will be required as well to write a final examination to test your knowledge on the course.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

The major course materials required for the course are:

- Course Guide
- Study units
- Assignment file
- Relevant textbooks, including the ones listed at the end of each unit

## **STUDY UNITS**

To achieve our sets aims and objectives, this course is divided into 20 units of five modules as shown below:

### **Module 1: The English Language in Nigeria**

Unit 1: Advent of English in Nigeria

Unit 2: Promotion of English Language in Nigeria

Unit 3: The functions of English Language in Nigeria

Unit 4: The Sociolinguistic Consequences of English in Nigeria

### **Module 2: The Classifications of English Language in Nigeria**

Unit 1: The Classification of English Language in Nigeria

Unit 2: The Nigerian English Debate

Unit 3: The Nativisation of English in Nigeria

### **Module 3: The Linguistic Features of Nigerian English**

Unit 1: The Phonological Features

Unit 2: The Grammatical Features

Unit 3: The Lexico-Semantic Features

Unit 4: The Discourse Features

### **Module 4: Varieties of English in Nigeria**

Unit 1: Standard Nigerian English

Unit 2: Non-Standard Nigerian English

Unit 3: Nigerian Pidgin English and its Functions

Unit 4: Creoles

Unit 5: Structural Difference between Pidgin English and English

### **Module 5: English Language and Language Planning in Nigeria**

Unit 1: The Status of English Language in Nigeria

Unit 2: Language Planning ✓

Unit 3: Language Policies in Nigeria ✓

Unit 4: English and the National Language Question

### **ASSESSMENT FILE**

Assessment file for the course will be made available to you by the university authorities. In this file you will find details of work that must be done and submitted within a time frame to your facilitators to mark and score. This will form part of your Continuous Assessment (CA) which will constitute part of your total scores in the final examination on this course. You are expected to pass the CA and the main examination to be considered duly grounded in this course.

### **STRATEGIES FOR STUDYING THE COURSE**

Although you will be required to study the lecture units on your own, the university authorities have made adequate arrangement with the facilitators for regular interaction and to guide you through the course in your various study centres. The facilitators are expected to conduct tutorials and useful discussion sessions with you and other members of your programme at the study centres.

### **PRESENTATION SCHEDULE**

The date to finish the course and the procedure for the submission of your TMA will be made known to you by the authorities in a later date. You are advised to adhere strictly to instructions and regulation on how to go through your TMA and the examinations so that you can come out with good grades in this course.

### **SUMMARY**

This course guide is a general overview of ENG. 353: The English Language in Nigeria. On completion of the course, you will have a good knowledge of the varieties of English used in Nigeria by Nigerians to communicate within and across socio-cultural boundaries. You will also decide whether there is anything called 'Nigerian English' and you will make useful contributions on how to solve the national language question in order to move the country

forward. The course is quite interesting as it deals with familiar linguistic issues around you.  
I wish you all the best in this course.



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## **MODULE 1: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

Unit 1: The Advent of English Language in Nigeria

Unit 2: Promotion of English Language in Nigeria

Unit 3: The Functions of the English Language in Nigeria

Unit 4: The Sociolinguistic Consequences of English in Nigeria

## **UNIT 1: ADVENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

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- 1.2 The Advent of English Language in Nigeria
  - 1.2.1 English in Nigeria before the Missionary Activities
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    - 1.2.2.2 Missionary Activities in Eastern Nigeria
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  - 1.2.3 English after Amalgamation of the Protectorates
- 1.3 Conclusion
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Tutor Marked Assignments
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

English language is a second language in Nigeria. It is a second language because Nigerians already had their first language or Mother Tongue (L1) before the spread of this foreign language called 'English' into the country. In this instance a foreign language (English) left its native environment and met with another language or languages (Nigerian indigenous languages). It is true that the culture and values of the

people are embedded in the language they speak. As such it is said that 'language is culture' and none can be separated from the other.

So, when two languages meet, then two cultures have met and there is likely to be a lot of changes in that society. The changes will affect the culture and the language of the recipient society or speech community, and the effect will impact on the entire recipients' society, which in this instance is Nigeria and its citizenry.

English language did not come to Nigeria just on its own. Its incursion into Nigeria was caused by lots of factors like trading, slavery, colonization and missionary activities in Nigerian by the Europeans and this was done in phases. As such English as a language is a borrowed blanket which has been converted to a personal use by the borrowers so as to suit their purposes.

### **1.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to:

- introduce you to how English language was brought into Nigeria
- make you to be familiar with the situations that lead to the advent of English language in Nigeria
- acquaint you with the different phases of its incursion in Nigeria territory
- let you know how it penetrated the different regions in Nigeria

### **1.2 THE ADVENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

The exact date that English language usage started in Nigeria is not certain. However, it is believed that the first intimate contact between the British and some ethnic groupings in Nigeria was in Southern Nigeria. This must have been at some period before the Atlantic slave trade. It is on records that as from 1553 English men paid frequent visits to the Nigerian shores, especially the ports of Ancient Benin and old Calabar, and the type of communication which evolved between the English men and the Nigerians was a simplified kind of communication in English called Pidgin. Note, however that Portuguese and not English was probably the earliest European language to be used in

Nigeria. According to Adetugbo [1984:8], a certain Oba in Benin was reported to have spoken Portuguese. The language was in use for economic interest and because it was the language of commerce and diplomacy in the ancient Benin kingdom. Actually, the advent of English in Nigerian can be classified into three major periods, namely: the period before the missionary activities, the period during missionary activities and the period after the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorate. It is important to add that there is no clear cut demarcation between these periods as each period shades into another period. Now let us discuss these periods in turns.

### **1.2.1 ENGLISH IN NIGERIA BEFORE THE MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES**

We have earlier said that it is not so easy to exactly pin-point the specific date that the English language came to Nigerian. Historical records have shown that as early as 15 century the Portuguese sea traders and pirates on their trade expedition found their way to the West African Coast. However, historical records have shown that Portuguese was the first European language to be used in Nigeria. Their relationship with Nigeria was quite cordial as it is on records that the Portuguese opened a sea port in Gwarto in the ancient Benin Kingdom. The cordiality developed to the extent that the Oba of Benin in 14<sup>th</sup> Century sent an ambassador to Portugal and Portugal in response sent some agent to Benin (Crowther 1962:57). Portugal for a number of years enjoyed monopoly of trade in West African Coastal areas unchallenged. For the two parties (the Nigerians and the Portuguese) to transact any business they had to communicate and since none understood the language of the other, they had to learn. Nigerians had to learn Portuguese to enhance their penetration of the European market. Christopherson (1953:284) says that during this period many of the Negroes learnt Portuguese...the so-called Negro-Portuguese, which was a kind of Pidgin Portuguese. Crowther (1962) affirms that then a section of the Benin royal palace spoke a language quite unintelligible to the ordinary Bini and this language was suspected to be Portuguese. Even in present day Pidgin English usage in Nigeria, we still have a handful of Portuguese vocabulary items like pikin 'child', boku 'many' etc.

The monopoly of Portugal of West African coast was later challenged by other European countries like Britain which language is English language. An English sailor 'Thomas Windham' was reported to have visited Benin with the son of an English sailor, 'Nicholas Lambert' in 1553 and Windham had to return to England because of incessant malaria attack he could not tolerate. He left behind many English sea men behind (Spencer 1971:10). There was a boom in trading activities between the West African countries and the Europeans in subsequent years, as such trading focus shifted from legal trading on gold, ivory, pepper and malamute to illegal trading in human beings called 'slave trade'.

The period between 1450 -1850 witnessed a heavy traffic in slave trading in African continent by the major European countries. This unwholesome trading in humans brought the culture of the two countries even closer. Within this period some Nigerians have started learning English and some were trained as interpreters and to serve as core of clerks in European companies in Nigeria. Ajayi (1965:89) reports that by the 18<sup>th</sup> century English was the only European language spoken by Calabar traders. We can see that English language got hold in Nigeria through the activities of Nigerians who were taken away for slavery and had returned to Nigeria and those who were at home but learnt to speak English so that they could work as clerks or interpreters for the Europeans. These years of interaction between Nigeria and Europe brought the English language closer to the people.

This early interaction between the Europeans and Nigerians and their languages set the stage and impacted a long lasting influence on the variety of English used in Nigeria today like the Portuguese Pidgin, the English Pidgin and the Anglicization of some Nigerian names.

## **EXERCISE**

What was the first European language to be used in Nigeria? List some vocabulary items of that language which are found in a variety of English used in Nigeria today.

### **1.2.2 ENGLISH IN NIGERIA DURING THE MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES**

The missionary activities in Nigeria led to the abolition of slave trade in West African regions. With the abolition of this illegal trading many Nigerian taken away on slavery returned to Nigeria and other West African sub-regions. Awonusi (2004:53) reports that, some of these Nigerians particularly the Yorubas locally known as ‘Akus’ in Sierra Leone, returned and settled in Lagos and Abeokuta where they were known as Saros and Krios, and they freely used the English language in their new settlements.

The year 1843-1914 witnessed serious missionary activities and the influx of European missionaries into Nigeria to take the gospel to the pagans and the unbelievers. To achieve this it was compulsory for them to preach the gospel in a language or languages understood by the local people. Since the European missionaries did not understand the Nigerian languages they had to use Nigerian interpreters and eventually taught the people how to read the Bible which is written in English. The missionaries in their effort to reach out to people established schools where children were trained and the basic subject was English language. Adetugbo (1979:77) says that, the English language dominated the curriculum under various sub-heads such as reading, writing, dictation, composition and grammar.

#### **1.2.2.1 MISSIONARIES’ ACTIVITIES IN WESTERN NIGERIA**

The western Nigeria was receptive to missionary and colonial incursion, except in few instances as in places like Lagos and Ijebuland where the colonial overlords from Britain had to use force to capture the areas. Rev. Freeman of Wesley Mission arrived Badagry in 1842. Rev. Townsend in charge of the Yoruba CMS Mission visited Badagry and finally settled in Abeokuta in 1843. In 1844 Rev Crowther, a former slave, with two assisted teachers was ordained by the CMS Mission to be in charge of Yoruba regions in Nigeria. The Methodist Mission sent Rev Annear and Mr. Bickersteth to start a church in Abeokuta and the Baptist Convention settled at Ijaiye in 1853. With these the Western Nigeria was set for missionary activities.



#### **1.2.2.2 MISSIONARIES' ACTIVITIES IN EASTERN NIGERIA**

In the Eastern Nigeria, mostly in the Calabar region, the missionary activities were also booming as the Presbyterian Mission settled in Calabar in 1846. Rev. Hope-Waddle landed at Fernando Po on his way to Calabar. The Methodist Mission settled in Ibibio land, Qua-Iboe Mission in Etinan and the Scottish Mission in Itu and Bende, while the CMS and the Roman Catholic Mission settled in Igbo land. In Igbo land the activities of the missionaries were slow as they were not too receptive to foreigners. The Arochukwu oracle which the Igbos worshipped was a major challenge to the missionaries' penetration of the Igbo land; as such in 1902 the colonial administration had to bombard the area to ease their penetration. Another obstacle to missionary penetration of Igbo land was Chief Nana and the colonial administrators sent him on forced exile in 1894 before the missionaries could penetrate the area. King Jaja of Opobo who was hostile to the missionaries' penetration of the Niger Delta region was sent on exile in Ghana in 1887 before the Niger Delta and Methodist Mission moved in, in 1892. It was also difficult for the missionaries to establish their presence in some parts of Benin because of an underground movement called 'the Ekumeku Secret Cult' which made it difficult for the missionaries to cross the Niger bridge through Asaba, they only penetrated this area after the group was crushed by the colonial government.

#### **1.2.2.3 MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

In the North the colonial activities were slow because of its monolithic feudal structure. During the slave trade period, the Hausas taken away for slavery were those from the serfs and 'talakawa' or the classless people while the Masu Sarata Na Asali (hereditary office holders), the Masu Sarauta na Cafka (holders of the office of allegiance) were not tampered with. Those Hausas from the classless group who were taken for slavery on their return after abolition of slave trade could not penetrate the ruling class to teach them English as was done by southerners and westerners when they returned to their individual areas. Also, the British did not involve much force, bombardment and exile in the north as was done in the western and southern Nigeria, rather it compromises its position by discouraging missionary education in the north. Lord Lugard for instance was reported to

have promised the Sultan of Sokoto in 1903 that his administration would not interfere with Muslim religion and would also stop missionaries who might want to do so. The only school set up in Bida in 1903 was only allowed on the understanding that English language would not be taught until the children attain proficiency in their vernacular. The few schools located in the north were established by the colonial government and not by the missionaries. These schools were meant to train only the children from the Hausa-Fulani feudal class. When the North was eventually penetrated the British were responsible for the establishment of schools using Ox-Bridge teachers to teach in them.

### **1.2.3 ENGLISH AFTER AMALGAMATION OF THE PROTECTORATES**

The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 marks the beginning of the colonial interest in standard education in Nigeria. The colonial administration was so dissatisfied with the system of education in the southern Nigerian which Lugard in his hand-over notes in 1919 described as a breeding ground for rebels because they were critical of his administration. Though his administration acknowledged the declining standard in the prevailing educational system he did nothing to improve it. Rather he replaced the few European teachers that manned Nigerian schools with Nigerian teachers, perhaps to cut down overhead cost. The educational policies in this period as well witnessed the development and promotion of indigenous languages as lots of books were published in vernacular and indigenous languages were also taught in schools. A body was created to see to the production of books in Yoruba, Igbo, Efik and Hausa. However, the use of indigenous languages for education purpose was restricted to the primary and lower secondary schools (Adeniran 1978:114), while English was for the Sciences, Mathematics and official usage. English in Nigeria was not integrative enough, when compared to a country like India, as it failed to adopt native words into its vocabulary. Mukherjee (2007: 165) affirms “quite a few Indian words entered the English language...in order to denote Indian items (e.g. curry, bamboo, mango, veranda)”and they have found their place permanently in the English word lists.

The 1945 constitution recommended English as in the West and East, and Hausa in the North as the official languages. Within this period too two model schools were founded:

Barewa College in the North and King's College in Lagos where English was made the language of instruction and interaction. It was used to determine the suitability of candidates in civil service employment and promotion as well as a condition for gaining admission into higher education. It was allocated roles in the legislature: as the language of the national assembly and the regional legislature. On this basis, English was made compulsory in gaining admission into these schools which still continues today.

As the nation struggled towards gaining independence many schools came up and there was need to train and use more indigenous teachers. With this, accent of English got extrapolated with Nigerian accent in the South as they utilized the services of Nigerian teachers in their schools while that of the North ossified towards the direction of RP as they retained many native-English teachers.

The use of English as a language of education, employment, legislation, media and admission placement in schools led to the infiltration of English and European literature in the Nigerian intelligentsia. This later had effect on the British government as Nigerians became familiar with western ideas, culture, values and ideals like democracy, freedom, enlightenment, fundamental human right, self determination and independence. The aftermath of it was the creation of political parties and the insistent demand for self government. Therefore on October, 1960, Nigeria gained independence from British. English language contributed substantially in achieving national integration in Nigeria.

At this phase the English language and the indigenous Nigerian languages intertwined the more and a locally- based English identity emerged, and then entered a long blended process of 'nativization' or 'Nigerianization' or what Adebija (2002:20) calls 'Domestication' of English language in Nigeria where people started expressing English language naturally in a way that reflects their socio-cultural norms without unnecessarily sounding bookish. For example: a Nigerian driver does not 'hoot' a horn, he blows a horn for other vehicle and this is in line with the manner in which our traditional trumpet is blown. There is no road in Nigeria that a driver will be held permanently to a position without a gradual movement no matter how slow, thus, we have 'go slow' not 'traffic

hold ups' on Nigerian roads. One cannot tell a Nigerian driver or vehicle conductor that he wants to 'alight' rather he wants to 'drop', if not he would be taken to an unknown destination. These are all elements of localization or what Ekpe (2004:1) calls 'glocalization' (adaptation of a global outlook to local condition). The nativization was not only limited to the lexis and syntax, it was even more pronounced at the phonological level like in monophthongization of diphthongs such as in 'gate'/geɪt/ and 'so'/səʊ / ([geɪt] / [so]). The process of nativization of English in Nigeria did not stop when Nigeria became independent, it continues and an ongoing process as new coinages are emerging daily as the need arises. For example any corrupt Nigerian lady is derogatorily referred to as 'Etteh' because of the 'former speaker's renovation scandal' that rocked the national assembly. We have also heard of '419 ers' and now 'yahoo-yahoo' they are all parts of the emerging nativization process. We have also heard of 'Obasanjonics' that economic policy as carried out by Obasanjo administration. These are ongoing dynamism, renovative and creative processes in the English language in Nigeria to suit our local context and world view.

## **EXERCISE**

In what way did the colonial administration contribute to the lopsided development of English language between the Southern and Northern Nigerian?

## **1.3 CONCLUSION**

The advent of English language in Nigeria was not an easy task as it went through a tortuous journey of acceptance and rejection of the European presence in Nigeria. The establishment of English language in Nigeria could be merited to the joint effort of the colonial administration, trading activities, missionary activities and the resulting political process in Nigeria. The exact time in which English language got its foothold on Nigerian soil cannot be exactly pinpointed, but available records show that this happened in the 14 century and extended till the present day as the language is still evolving.

#### **1.4 SUMMARY**

English language in Nigeria is a second language. It came to be through a language contact situation, and when two language meet two cultures must also meet because the culture of the people is embedded in the language. Lot of activities led to implantation of English language in Nigeria such as the boom in slave trade and the monopoly enjoyed by England along the West Coast of Africa set the stage for easy permeation and the use of English along the West coast and its land, including Nigeria. This contact situation between Portuguese, English and indigenous Nigerian languages, resulted in the birth of pidgin. In other words, slave trade activities enhanced not only the spread of English in Nigeria but the emergence of English Pidgin.

The spread of English was also enhanced by the native indigenous interpreters, many of whom were trained abroad, and later served as professionals interpreters to slave traders and ship captains,

Ironically, the spread of English in Nigeria was also enhanced with the abolition of slave trade. Free slaves who had learnt some English returned to their original houses in West Africa and were able to introduce the language; and such places include Nigeria. Some of the free slaves had received formal education in English.

Later on, many of the freed slaves were employed by the missionaries, trading companies and British colonial administrators either as messengers, interpreters, and clerks and even as teachers.

Another important factor which made English get a strong foot- hold in Nigeria is that Southern Nigeria with its weak, tiny multi- nationalities or ethnic grouping were too receptive to foreign influence, unlike the Northern Nigeria which had large emirates and kingdoms with a dominant language and culture. With the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, the North had no option but to accept the apparent superiority of the Whiteman, together with the English language as its symbol.

## 1.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Trace the origin and development of the English language in Nigeria from 1553 to present day.
2. Why was the implantation of the English language easier in the Southern Nigeria than the Northern part of Nigeria?
3. List and explain the factors that enhanced the development of English language in Nigeria.

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## **UNIT 2: PROMOTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**




- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Promotion of English Language in Nigeria
  - 2.2.1 Multilingual/Linguistic Heterogeneous Nigerian Society
  - 2.2.2 Language Policy
  - 2.2.3 Lingua Franca
  - 2.2.4 Nigerian Official Language
  - 2.2.5 Attitude of the Society
  - 2.2.6 State of Development of the Indigenous Languages
  - 2.2.7 Weapon for Securing White Collar Jobs
  - 2.2.8 Ticket for Gaining Admission in any School
  - 2.2.9 Prestige Associated with the Language
- 2.3 Conclusion
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 Tutor Marked Assignments
- 2.6 References

### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

English as a language has come to stay in Nigeria. This is made possible by a number of factors. Some of these factors include: the multi-lingual or the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian society, the language policy as adopted by the government, the status and functions of English in Nigeria, the attitude of the society towards English language at the detriment of the indigenous languages, the state of development of the local languages and other factors too numerous to mention here.

## **2.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to,

-  state the factors that contribute to the promotion of the English language in different parts of Nigeria.
-  highlight the contribution of each factor towards the development and the spread of English language in Nigeria.
-  assess the effect of English language spread on the Nigerian indigenous languages.

## **2.2 PROMOTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

The existence of English in Nigeria and its wide acceptance and spread are caused by several factors as discussed herein,

### **2.2.1 MULTILINGUAL / LINGUISTIC HETEROGENEOUS NIGERIAN SOCIETY**

Nigeria is a linguistically diverse region with different ethnic groupings. Different scholars put the number of indigenous languages in Nigeria at between 250 and 450. Most of these languages are not mutually intelligible. This is even worst in the South-South Nigeria where every kilometer is a different language that is why Pidgin English is more dominant in some parts of Nigeria than in some other parts of the country. With these diverse languages the only language that is easily understood by all is the English language which is spoken in different variants like the broken English, Pidgin English and the Standard variant. This is one of the driving forces for the wide spread and promotion of English language in Nigeria.

### **2.2.2 LANGUAGE POLICY**

Another factor that led to the promotion of English language in Nigeria, was the language policy as introduced by the colonial administration and adopted by Nigeria after gaining its political independence. The colonial administration made sure that their language policies in all its colonies were in favour of English language. Most of the countries that made up the Commonwealth of Nations including Nigeria were at



one time in history under British control and these countries are still indirectly controlled linguistically through the use of English as their official language. Even the language policies adopted and still practiced by these countries is still in favour of English language as can be seen in our educational policy where English still remains the major language of instruction in schools, the language of performance evaluation, it is one of the requirements for securing admission into institutions of higher learning and gainful employment in the country. This has therefore facilitated its spread and promotion in Nigeria.

### **Exercise**

1. Trace the various language policies in Nigeria from the colonial era to the present administration. Has any of these policies have a direct effect on national language policy?
2. If Nigeria is to choose a national language which of its indigenous language would you suggest to be adopted and why?

### **2.2.3 LINGUA FRANCA**

English has been the only official and generally acceptable language in Nigeria. It is the only language that has spread aggressively breaking every ethnic and language barriers. There is hardly anywhere in Nigeria that you will not find someone who can speak English, at least the Pidgin or Broken English. Because of the dominance of English language in some parts of Nigeria, some ethnic groups mostly in the South-South Nigeria have lost their indigenous languages in the children coming up can no longer trace or speak their mother tongue any longer. A kind of creolized English has developed as what is found in some parts of River state. English in Nigeria is not an exclusive preserve of any ethnic group, society or culture; it is the language for almost everybody as such its spread and promotion in Nigerian society.

### **2.2.4 NIGERIAN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE**

The status of English as the official language in Nigeria contributes to the promotion of the language in Nigeria. English as an official language has been allocated functions as

the language of the media, education, politics and legal drafting etc. In 1946 constitution of colonial administration first made English language the official language of Nigeria and as the language of colonial administration. On regaining political independence in 1960, English was still adopted as the official language for the country. The 1979 constitution went further to approve the use of English language at the National and State Houses of Assembly; along side any of the three major Nigerian languages: Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba or language of the state in question only and only when adequate arrangements have been made to their use. English as the official language is the language used by government functionaries in carrying out instructions and functions in government offices.

#### **2.2.5 ATTITUDE OF THE SOCIETY**

Arising from the seemingly indispensable roles in virtually all the sectors of the country, the general attitude to English language in Nigeria is favourable to its growth and promotion. In Nigerian society today, literacy is attributed to the ability to speak and write English language. Anybody who cannot read and write is called illiterate. As such everybody strives to speak English at least the patois of the market place or the passable kind of English. In some homes these days, many parents do not allow their children and wards to speak their indigenous languages, it is English language everywhere. Most private and government schools do not allow their students to speak their local languages while in school and even the teachers are prohibited from speaking indigenous languages while in school as well, the penalty ranges from fine to suspension or hard labour. With these everybody wants to be identified with the winning population, who are the English speakers.

#### **2.2.6 STATE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**

Another factor that adds to the promotion of English language in Nigeria is the fact that most Nigerian languages have not developed. Out the about 450 (ethnologue, 2009) indigenous languages in Nigeria less than 30% of these languages have their orthography, primers, elaboration of functions as compared to English language. Most Nigerian

languages lack standard orthography, modernization of the numeration system, creation of metalanguage (this makes it possible for a language to function as a language of study and instruction) and production of literary materials in these languages. English as a language has usurped all these functions thus its fast spread and development, thus relegating Nigerian languages to the backdrop.

#### **2.2.7 WEAPON FOR SECURING WHITE COLLAR JOB**

The ability to speak good English enhances one's opportunity in securing good employment in Nigeria. Interviews for employments are conducted in the English language, no matter the nature of the work. This started during the colonial administration in Nigeria and still continues in the contemporary time. As a weapon for securing employment, everybody learns and speaks English. This in turn enhances and promotes the English language in Nigeria.

#### **2.2.8 IT IS A TICKET FOR GAINING ADMISSION TO ANY SCHOOL**

The English language serves as a filter of entry points into any tertiary institution in Nigeria. The number of people who want to enter schools is too many that the schools have to filter or sift the admissible candidates through effective use of English as this is the dominant language of instruction in schools. With this constraint and limited placements, the aspiring candidates have to learn and be proficient in spoken and written English. This contributes to the growth and promotion of English in Nigeria.

#### **2.2.9 PRESTIGE ASSOCIATED WITH THE LANGUAGE**

Those who are proficient in the use of English are respected and are accorded a place in the society. Good command of English is seen in our society today as a sign of good education and anyone who does not speak the language is not respected as he is regarded as uneducated. It is true that anyone who speaks good English is considered sophisticated and, according to Oriola et al (2000:26), this may result in an upward review of his status. The values and prestige attached to the ability to speak English make many people to crave for learning and speaking English and this leads to its wide spread all over Nigeria.

## **2.3 CONCLUSION**

The promotion of the English language in Nigeria can be attributed to several factors such as the multilingual/ linguistic heterogeneous nature of Nigeria, different language policies as adopted by successive administrations, the status of the English language as a lingua franca and as a Nigerian official language, the attitude of the society towards the English language, the state of development of the indigenous languages, English as a weapon for securing white collar jobs, and admission to schools and the prestige accorded English and its speakers.

## **2.4 SUMMARY**

The English language has come to stay as Nigeria's official and second language. Its wide spread and promotion over the years are dependent on several factors such as the heterogeneous linguistic environment. With this Nigerians find it difficult to adopt a specific indigenous language for use, even the three major languages (Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba) suggested to be used in the educational policy for education is not successful, as such English becomes handy as the only detribalized language without barrier. Secondly, the several language policies adopted in Nigeria thus far favour the English language to the detriment of the indigenous languages. The adoption of English as a lingua franca in Nigeria promotes the language and makes it to penetrate hinterland. In addition, in the Nigerian linguistic market place, English has been allocated the status of an official language and it is used as the language of official communication in government offices. Again, the attitude of Nigerians toward the English language leads to the promotion of the language in the country as many parents and schools make sure that their children and wards use English at homes and in schools and those who cannot speak English are looked down upon. Moreover, many Nigerian languages which could have challenged and competed favourably with English are still at the rudimentary level of development. Some of them do not have standard orthography and literature and this ensures the promotion of the English language. This apart, the English language is a prerequisite for gaining admission into any tertiary institution and a ticket for securing white collar jobs. Finally, the English language speakers are regarded and respected all over the country.

## **2.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. List and discuss the factors responsible for the promotion of the English language in Nigeria.
2. What do you think should be done to promote Nigerian languages?
3. What, in your opinion, is the future of English language in Nigeria?

## **2.6 REFERENCES**

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## **UNIT 3: THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

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### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

The English language has a lot of functions it performs in different aspects of our national life as they differ from those of the native speakers in countries like the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia to mention but a few. The English language in Nigeria is functional in almost every sphere of our lives e.g. education, politics, commerce and industry, national and international; communication, etc.

### **3.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to:

-  discuss the roles or uses of English in Nigeria

- ✚ describe the functional relations between English and other indigenous languages in Nigeria.

### **3.2 THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

English as a language has been nativized or domesticated to suit our socio-cultural context and is made to perform several functions such as:

#### **3.2.1 THE LANGUAGE OF EDUCATION**

English has been widely used in the propagation of education in Nigeria and this is used in all facets of education. This seems to be the most important function of English in our society. In all the levels of education in Nigeria, the English language is the most widely used language of instructions in schools. This has been given backing by the Nigerian Educational Policy (1977) which makes it mandatory for the English language to be the only language of instructions in our schools especially at the secondary and the tertiary levels. The indigenous languages are often used mostly at the primary level of education, though rarely as every school considers the English language as the only suitable language of teaching and learning.

English, though being the language of educational instruction in Nigerian schools also serves as the language of educational evaluation in our schools. This is applicable at all the levels of educational institutions in Nigeria. In the primary schools, English language is used in conducting examinations and the First School Leaving Certificates (F.S.L.S.). In the secondary schools it is used in testing the students' proficiency in the use of English in the Junior Secondary School Examinations (J.S.S.E.) and the Senior Secondary School Examinations (S.S.S.E.). English is also used in evaluating students' communication ability in the University Joint Matriculation Examinations (JAMB) and the Monotechnic/ Polytechnic Joint Matriculation Examinations (POLYJAMB) before they are given placement in these institutions since this is the major language of communication in schools in Nigeria.

### **3.2.2 THE LANGUAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT**

The English language is the language of government in Nigeria because almost all the transactions in government offices are carried out in the English language. Minutes, official correspondences, memoranda, circulars, instructions and directives are given out in the English language. Proceedings of meetings are written and conducted in English in government offices. Most government protocol and propaganda are carried out in English.

The use of English in government ministries, parastatals and corporations can be traced to the imprints of colonial administration in Nigeria. During the colonial administration in Nigeria, English was the only language of communication between the colonial administrators and their Nigerian counterpart. In 1922 Constitution first made English language the official language of Nigeria and as language of colonial administration. On attainment of political independence in 1960, English still remained as the official language of the country. The 1979 constitution went further to authenticate the use of English language at the National and State Assemblies; along side any of the three major Nigerian languages: Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba or the language of the community in question. While the use of the English language is unconditional, the use of the indigenous languages was conditional in that it would only be used 'only' and 'when' necessary provisions have been made, because almost all the houses still conduct the proceedings of the houses in English.

English language has dominated the political arena in Nigerian as the language of political campaigns and propaganda. This is so because Nigerian society is linguistically diverse and for a politician to communicate adequately with a diverse population with different shades of language, English is the only language because it is the language that can be understood by a larger population. Debates in the states and the national assemblies are conducted in English language.



### **3.2.3 THE LANGUAGE OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

Transactions in commerce and industry are mostly carried out in the English language and Pidgin English as well as in some local languages. English is the only language used in the boardrooms during meetings by members of staff. Inter and intra business transactions are done in the English language. Transactions in the banking halls are carried out in English. Trading in the stock exchange market is also performed in the English language. Language choice in the transaction of business depends largely on the location of the business and the type of settlement of the area. In mega cities like Port-Harcourt, Kano, Abuja and Lagos where there is an admixture of people from different ethnic and language backgrounds English will be the dominant language of business transaction, whereas in small settlements like towns and villages where the settlers are likely to be from the same ethnic group and language, business transactions would likely be carried out in the local languages and pidgin or broken English.

### **3.2.4 THE LANGUAGE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

When Nigerians want to engage in international business or transaction of any kind with persons beyond Nigerian geographical boundary, English becomes a readily available language to be used either in the country or outside the country. Announcements at the airports are done in English because foreigners are likely to be among the passengers. It is only in few instances that indigenous languages like Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and at times Pidgin are used in passing information across.

### **3.2.5 THE LANGUAGE OF THE MEDIA**

The English language is the most extensively used language in the Nigerian media. When we refer to the Nigerian media, we mean both the print and the electronic media. The print media started in Lagos. As far back nineteenth century the Lagos Standard and the Weekly Records were in circulation in Lagos. These papers were published in the English language. There were other papers like Irohin in Abeokuta which was published in the Yoruba language about the same period too. Apart from these early papers, majority of the daily newspapers (like The Guardian, the Times, The Vanguard, The Punch, The Sun, This Day, The Independent etc, today publish their news in English with

only a few in indigenous languages. Apart from the daily newspapers, the weekly magazines like, This Week Magazine, the News Watch Magazine etc. equally do their publications in English. Other print media, mostly the soft magazines like, the City People, Today's Choice, and National Encomium etc, publish their news in both Standard and Pidgin English.

The electronic media which comprises the private, the state and the federal owned television and radio stations broadcast most of their news in English. While English dominates news casting in the private and the federal broadcasting stations, some state owned studios have been trying to promote the use of their local languages and the use of Pidgin English as well.

### **3.2.6 THE LANGUAGE OF LAW AND LEGAL DRAFTING**

Almost all the books in law and legal drafting are written in English. All the volumes of the Nigerian constitution from inception till date are written in English. The 1979 constitutions are written in English. All the law books used in all the courts in Nigeria like the Supreme Court, the court of Appeal, the High courts, the Magistrate courts and their proceedings are conducted in English and sparsely mixed with Latin and Greek vocabularies. While as in the some customary courts, their proceedings are conducted in both English and the local languages. While in the Sharia court its proceedings are done in both Hausa and Arabic languages. There is no statute or law book of any of the government establishments, corporations or institutions that is written in any of the Nigerian languages thus far. Every decree, bill, edict, bye-laws etc is written in English language. Even the proceedings and teachings in our legal education are done strictly in English language. In our courts oaths are sworn to in English language as well as affidavit in support of claims and lost documents.

### **3.2.7 THE LANGUAGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Just like in any other areas, the language of science and technology in Nigeria is English. It is true that most of the names of chemicals and scientific formulae are written in

English; perhaps the Nigerian indigenous languages have not developed enough to handle some of these scientific and chemical names. In information and technology, the language used is equally English. Since science and technology have their bases in foreign countries, their terminologies have to be transferred to us in the language of the country of origin which is obviously English. For example in communication technology, there is hardly any language in Nigeria that will suitably have a word to substitute for 'recharge card' used in mobile or cell phones.

### **Exercise**

Replace the following words of science and technology with equivalent in your indigenous languages:

i. Recharge card, ii. Sodium chloride, iii. Telephone, iv. Computer, v. lap top, vi. Video, vii. compact disc, viii. Memory card, ix. Telephone charger, x. Mouse, xi. Oxygen, xii. Carbon dioxide.

### **3.2.8 THE LANGUAGE OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS**

If a Nigerian meets another Nigerian for the first, the first language s/he is likely to use in communication will be English which could be Pidgin, Broken or Standard English. It is after the state of origin has been established and perhaps the language the acquaintants used as s/he first language that s/he may revert to an indigenous language both of them may understand. In most social gatherings in Nigeria, English is used as a means of social interactions. For example, in traditional marriage, naming ceremony, house opening ceremony, parties and child dedication the language mostly used is English and, at times, code-switched or code-mixed with the indigenous languages.

### **3.3 CONCLUSION**

We have seen that the English language performs more functions in the Nigerian environment than the indigenous languages. It is the language of education, the language of instruction in schools, the language of educational evaluation, the language of politics,

the language of commerce and industry, the language of international relation, the language of law and legal drafting and the language of social interaction.

With these multifaceted functions performed by English in the Nigerian environment, we would agree that English promotes understanding and national unity in the country, because without English in a linguistically diversified culture like Nigeria, our environment would have been another episode of 'tower of Babel' where everybody speaks but nobody understands anybody.

### **3.4 SUMMARY**

English language functions in many communicative domains in Nigeria. Firstly, English language functions as the language of education in our schools. Apart from the primary schools, the dominant language of instruction in the secondary and the tertiary institutions is English language. In private nursery and primary schools English language is the only language of instruction. Secondly, English is used as the language of testing students' ability/performance in examinations in schools in all subject areas in the First School Leaving Certificate Examinations (FSLCE), Junior Secondary Certificate Examinations (JSCE), Senior Secondary School Examinations (SSCE), Joint Matriculation Examinations (JAMB), etc. Communication and correspondences in government offices are done predominantly in English language. Also, in Nigerian political campaigns and manifestoes are given in English language. In addition, English has been the major language in business transaction mostly when the business is transacted outside an ethnic enclave and international business transactions. Further, the use of English is greatly felt in our legal document and courts which is inter-sparsed with either Latin or Greek language. Finally, despite continuous calls for the choice of the languages as a national language, English will continue to serve a variety of useful purposes till the time one of the indigenous languages will develop enough to outstep it, if at all it will happen.

### **3.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. List and discuss the functional domains of the English language in Nigeria.
2. English has been the language of national unity in a linguistically diverse environment, discuss.
3. Without the English language Nigeria would have been another 'Tower of Babel' manifestation, discuss.

### **3.6 REFERENCES**

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## **UNIT 4: SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONSEQUENCES OF ENGLISH IN NIGERIA**

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### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

The introduction and spread of English in Nigeria has its consequences on Nigerians and the Nigerian society. It is true that the culture of the people is embedded in the language they speak and, in essence, language is culture. English as we all know is a borrowed blanket in Nigeria and a second language to most Nigerians. It is a native language to

countries like Britain, the United States of America, Canada and Australia. The establishment of English in Nigeria is as a result of language contact situation. As we have earlier said, that culture is embedded in the language of its speakers and English in this instance is used in Nigeria as a second language as a result of language contact. When two languages are in contact the culture of its speakers are also in contact. It is equally true that when two languages meet there must be a change not only in the structure of the two languages but also in the culture of the speakers. The English language spoken in Nigeria is not the same as the variety spoken by the native speakers. So, we have many varieties of English in Nigeria.

#### **4.1 OBJECTIVES**

Our main purposes for this unit are to,

-  highlight the consequences of language contact situation;
-  discuss some of these consequences; and
-  explain how language contact brings about the emergence of varieties of English in Nigeria .

#### **4.2 ENGLISH AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONSEQUENCES IN NIGERIA**

The consequences of the presence of English in Nigeria can be segmented into two broad categories: Linguistic and Social.

##### **4.2.1 ENGLISH AND LINGUISTIC CONSEQUENCES IN NIGERIA**

The Linguistic consequences of English in Nigeria are numerous and they have to do with such phenomena as multilingualism, variants of English, anglicisation of indigenous lexical items and importation of loan words from English into the indigenous languages.

##### **4.2.1.1 MULTILINGUALISM**

One of the consequences of English in Nigeria is that it has succeeded in creating a legion of multilingualism. Multilingualism is a situation whereby people in a speech community speak more than two languages. Nigeria is a multilingual nation in that the national language policy subscribes to the three major languages along side English. As such a typical Nigerian is expected to speak his mother tongue, one of the officially

approved major languages plus English. Nigeria, therefore produce an interesting linguistic situation that attracts attention, not only in terms of its social structure and political integration, but also, even more significantly, in terms of the actualization of the ethnicity-based aspiration within the context of the genuine development of the country as a whole, (Iwara 2008:12).

#### **4.2.1.2 ENGLISH AS THE FIRST LANGUAGE OF SOME NIGERIANS**

The presence and the prestige accorded English in Nigeria, apart from turning Nigerians to bilinguals and multilinguals, has also some Nigerians to speak English as their first language mostly in homes of professional and middle class parents. This is also obtainable in homes where couples engage in inter-ethnic marriages. In these homes children speak English as their first language and thereafter, if at all desired, learn their parent's mother tongues. Udofot (2007:36) affirms that in such homes where children are made to acquire both English and the mother tongues simultaneously, English soon gains dominance over the other languages. Parents feel that since English is the language of education in Nigeria and therefore enjoys a higher prestige, it is better for a child to equip him/herself with such a language so as to get ready to face the challenges of life. This clearly shows that English is not only an official language in Nigeria; it is also the first language of some Nigerians and therefore a language of informal communication even among family members.

#### **4.2.1.3 EMERGENCE OF PIDGIN ENGLISH**

Another consequence of the English language in Nigeria is the emergence of a simplified form of English called Pidgin English. This brand of English is mostly used by the not-so-educated class to interact with other people, mostly in a multilingual environment like Nigeria. This class of people is not competent enough in the use of Standard English; as such they have to simplify the complex structure of English so that they can interact in English. However, this form of English has gained wider currency that even the highly educated people equally use it as well mostly in informal context. This variety of English has permeated the media both the electronic and the print. It is also widely used in advertisements. Right now, there is a radio station in Lagos called 'Wazobia FM' that



does its entire programme in Pidgin English. Because of its wider use and simplicity many Nigerian opine that the Nigerian Pidgin be adopted as the nation's National language.

#### **4.2.1.4 EMERGENCE OF CREOLE**

In some regions in Nigeria, the Pidgin English has been so deep rooted to the extent that some people can no longer speak their indigenous languages. These people now pass on the variety of English to their children in that the new or present generations of children have no contact at all with what was their parents' mother tongue. This new variety of Pidgin has developed and attained some level of sophistication. This process is noticeable in some places in Nigeria in which English based Pidgin has developed over the years and gradually become creolized in some parts of the country like Edo, Delta and Rivers states. These states in Nigeria have native speakers of Pidgin as their mother tongue.

#### **4.2.1.5 INTRUSION OF AMERICANISMS**

Another linguistic consequence of English in Nigeria is that it breeds and brings about the intrusion of the process of Americanization of Nigerian English. Americanisation is the imposition of the American lect on Nigerian English. Nigerian English which ordinarily should be British English norm dependent has acquired a number of Americanisms particularly at the phonological and lexical levels. This could be attributed to the present status of the United States of America in the helm of worlds technological, political, social and economic affairs, as such many Nigerians want to be identified with anything American. Linguistically, Yod dropping (as in student), T-tapping (as in water, better), diphthongization (as in privacy) and near American stress patterns are features of the American English that have intruded into Nigerian English. Awonusi (1994:81) observes that some Nigerians now face a problem of multiple communicative competence in English language...speakers are aware of three standard varieties: British, American and Nigerian and are expected to be proficient in them...thus the influence of societal

structure on linguistic behaviour observed in native speaker English societies, may equally apply in a society like Nigeria, where English functions as a second language.

#### **4.2.1.6 EMANATION OF CODE VARIATION**

Finally, the emanation of code variation is as a result of linguistic consequence of English language in Nigeria. Code variation refers to instances that Nigerian speakers of English as a second language code - switch or code - mix at intervals when engaged in discourse. Different terms have been used like interlarding, code alternation, loans and borrowings. No matter the terms used, code variation is a situation whereby a multilingual uses two codes in communication that is he uses the two languages interchangeably and at times moving from one language to another and yet at others substituting words in one language for another in the same stretch of speech. Here are some of the code variation in Yoruba, Igbo and Anaang:

a) Ema disturb mi rara (Yoruba)

(Do not disturb me at all)

b) Biko yem mirri to drink (Igbo)

Please, give me some water to drink.

c) I came to your house but afo ukubaha ke ufok (Anaang)

(I came to your house but you were not at home)

Code variation is believed to be adopted for ease of articulation and understanding mostly when speakers are in loss of word or the speakers indigenous language does not have an exact word that suit the context or better still when such words are non cultural word.

#### **EXERCISES**

1. What is code Variation?
2. What do you think are the possible causes of code variation?
3. Listen to people in your area and write down ten sentences that have been code varied in their course of communication.

#### **4.2.2 ENGLISH AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES IN NIGERIA**

Language is not studied in isolation but within a social setting, as such language cannot be divorced from the society using that language. This is what socio-linguistics focuses on. Socio-linguistics is the study of language in relation to social factors such as social class, educational level and type of education, age, sex, ethnic origin, etc. It is a well known fact that differences in language are tied to so many factors like education, class, age sex, ethnic, background, culture and perhaps style which Yule (2002:240) calls 'social dialects'. The social consequences of English language in Nigeria are that its presence in Nigeria has caused a lot of changes and these changes come in form of differences in usage in relation to the social class of the speaker, geographical location of the speaker, occupation of the speaker, age differences of the speaker and sex differences.

##### **4.2.2.1 SOCIAL CLASS VARIATION**

Though English is a second language to some Nigerians, the type of lect used by individual speaker determines the social class a speaker belongs. Social class irrevocably determines ones pattern of linguistic variation. This is what Yule (2002:240) calls 'social dialects'. He defines social dialects as varieties of language used by groups defined according to class, education, age, sex and a number of other social parameters; Andson (1996:42) says, one of the characteristics of the hierarchical social structure of a country like Britain is that social class takes precedence over geography as a determinant of speech. In Nigeria, social class is so fluid and unstable. There is no definable class demarcation as what is obtainable in other parts of the world. However, the quality or accent of a speaker could portray one as either literate or illiterate. The illiterate speakers are often identifiable with the sub-varieties in the non-standard English variety while the literate speakers are identifiable with the Standard English variety. In this continuum it is possible and easier for the educated class to descend the linguistic ladder to speak the non-standard variety of English based on where he finds himself or when he wants to be identified with the lower class. Thus, the speakers in the upper or educated class are linguistically mobile as they can switch or change their linguistic habit to be accommodated by other classes. This is not so with the lower class or the illiterate speakers as they can not move up the ladder easily. However, with time and years of training they can move out of the lower class to the upper class.

#### **4.2.2.2 OCUPATIONAL VARIATION**

The kind of vocation or profession one engages in may at times determine the type or variety of English to be used, for example a graduate who decides to do a motor conductor work for a living, though he may be versatile with the correct use of English language would not use it because he would be jeered at by commuters if he uses it and besides the commuters may not even understand him. For example, if a passenger wants to alight at a particular bus terminal, he has to say, “I want to drop”, instead of “I want to alight”. A graduate bus conductor that engages in this kind of vocation has to speak the language his clients will understand. Labov, in his study of Martha’s Vineyard was the first to make the most fundamental assumption about the nature of sociolinguistics. His major assumption is that ‘one cannot understand the development of a language change apart from the social life of the community in which it occurs’ (1972:3). He adds that specific explanation can be found, if the detailed configuration of this change against the social forces which affect the life of the island most deeply is studied (25). Defining the ‘social life of a community’ has been complex and contentious as exhibited by the avalanche of approaches that sociolinguists have taken to operationalize social structure. Labov’s first indications of the conception of the relationship between ‘social forces’ and individual behaviour comes after he has described the declining status of traditional trades, especially fishing, on the island, and the rise of tourism: ‘these economic pressures must be clearly delineated in order to assess the heavy psychological pressures operating on the Vineyarders of old family stock’(28). It implies that ‘heavy psychological pressures’ may have the power to influence linguistic practice. This Labov provides adequate quantitative support to back his position. He painstakingly compares the raw centralization scores across the six informants who centralized (ay) to the greatest level, showing that the older, up-island (‘traditional’) fishermen were the leading group (30). The use of this simple comparison by Labov shows that broad social forces: social and economic changes that affect the whole island-can have such precise influence on linguistic behaviour that even a comparison of only six speakers is informative enough.

In their analyses, the higher socio-economic status and upper middle class are tied to higher education while the lower socio-economic status and lower/working class refer to those with little education. Yule (2002:240) complains that education as socio-linguistic factor makes some professor “talk like a book”, which is possibly a recognition of an extreme form of education

influence. It is this variety of English that Bamgbose (1982) classifies as Victoria English, while Ubahakwe (1974) calls 'Bookish Nigeria English'.

#### **4.2.2.3 AGE VARIATION**

Awonusi (1986) examines the Lagos English to find out whether extra linguistic factors 'trigger off' linguistic change. Some phonological variables were correlated with sociological variables of age. Variation in pronunciation may also be identified within age brackets, the forms heard produced by the younger ones may be quite different from those produced by the older people. Language is dynamic, and the changes in youngsters may be linked with exposure to western movies, foreign magazines, and novels or perhaps a way of group identification. This is so glaring that the younger one's tagged the older forms pejoratively as, "old school", that is, old fashion, forms that are out of vogue. Forms like: "how are you", "take it easy", are common among the older ones, while the younger ones "whatz up", "cool" etc.

#### **4.2.2.4 SEX VARIATION**

'Sex' as a socio-linguistic pattern has to do with variation in pronunciation according to gender. Recent researches show that female speakers tend to use more prestigious forms than male speakers with the same general social background. (Yule 2002:242). As a use of English lecturer, this has been noticed among the students. Most female students pronounce the word /gə:l/ with the insertion of [r] colouration before the lateral /l/ as [gə: (r)l], a variety of American English pronunciation, the same goes for car /ka:/ as [ka: (r)], where as the males use the forms (gə:l) and it is when the male student wants to show some sophistication and a sense of identification, you hear them pronounce as the females students.

#### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

It is true that the introduction and wide spread of English language in Nigeria has its consequences on Nigerians and the Nigerian society. These consequences are linguistic and social as language is a product of the society that uses it. As such language can not be divorced from the society using that language. Some of the sociolinguistic consequences of English language in Nigeria can be seen in the areas of creating a legion of multilingualism, turned some Nigerians to speak English as their first language, the emergence of a simplified form of the English called Pidgin English, emergence of

Creole, intrusion of Americanism, code variation and some variations in relation to social class, occupation, sex and age.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

The intrusion and aggressive spread of English language in Nigeria have some sociolinguistic impacts in the country and its citizenry. English as a borrowed blanket has incubated and produced results that are both negative and positive. These sociolinguistic consequences caused by English language in Nigeria are firstly, it has succeeded in producing avalanche of multilingual society which is linguistically positive because without the presence of English as a common language of communication it would be extremely difficult for Nigerians to communicate with each other. In a way English language serves as a language of unification in the face of tower of Babel situation as we witness in Nigeria. Secondly, English language in Nigeria apart from turning Nigerians to bilinguals and multilinguals has also turned some Nigerians to speak English as their first language. In addition, English language leads to the emergence of a simplified form of the English called Pidgin English. The brand of English is mostly used by the not so educated class to interact with other people, mostly in a multilingual environment like Nigeria. Moreover, it breeds and brings about the intrusion of the process of Americanization of Nigerian English. Fifthly, it brings about instances that Nigerian speakers of English as a second language code - switch or code - mix at intervals where engaged in discourse. Finally, it also creates some variations in relation to social class, occupation, sex and age.

#### **4.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. List and discuss the social consequences of English language in Nigeria?
2. Discuss in details the linguistic consequences that English language has caused in Nigeria.

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## **MODULE 2: THE CLASSIFICATIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

### **Unit 1: The Classifications of English Language in Nigeria**

### **Unit 2: The Nigerian English Debate**

### **Unit 3: The Nativisation of English in Nigeria**

## **UNIT 1: THE CLASSIFICATIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The English language is a major Lingua Franca in the world today. In terms of speaker's population, it is noted to come after Chinese. A fairly estimates put the number of English speakers at between 400 and 700 million {Awonusi, 1994}. The status of English as a world language makes it perform a number of first, second and foreign language functions. Being a world language, it has developed a number of varieties in different parts of the world. Among the notable varieties are: British, American, Canadian and



New Zealand on one hand as native speakers and Indian, Ghana [ian], Nigeria, Singapore, e.t.c on the other as Non- native speakers. Each of these varieties differs from one another at all linguistic levels like phonological, lexical, syntactic and semantic.

As English language has found a new abode in Nigeria its structure has to undergo some changes in line with its new environment. This change in structure to suit its new environment affects English in all the levels of linguistic analysis. By this English language which was once foreign has to be home-grown, nativized, domesticated and adapted to suit our environment. In this new environment the English language has adapted new features in its phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. All these features combined make English language in Nigeria peculiar and different from any other variety spoken elsewhere and we are going to treat some of these features in phases.

### **1.1 OBJECTIVES**

Our major objectives in this unit are to,

- ✚ describe the unique features of English language in Nigeria ;
- ✚ analyze those features from each level of language study;
- ✚ compare each of the features with that of English native speakers.

### **1.2 THE CLASSIFICATIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

Nigerian English is that variety of English used by Nigerians to communicate across socio-cultural boundaries and we know global English is differs from that of the native speaker. However, which educated Nigerians still try to keep certain rules in order to maintain international communication and intelligibility in cross-cultural communication, without necessarily sounding like a native speaker.

Nigerian English is different from the native speaker's of English and other English's in terms of its use of some culture- specific transformations as well as its non-observance of

certain global and surface structure constraints. There is no doubt that there exists Nigerian English and Adetugbo unequivocally states that Nigerian English like British and American English should be regarded as a dialect or a group of distinct form of a language devoid of any perforce connotation of inferiority usually attached to the world.

Socio-linguistically, Akere (1987) says that, Nigerian English has to be seen as a product of its own general social context. Collaborating Akere's position, Adeniran [1987] sums that, language are responsible to the cultures of their users, being themselves part of their respective culture and culture cannot be divorced from Language and vice- versa. Since language cannot be separated from culture the language and in this English, cannot be divorced from the culture of the users. Therefore Nigerian English [N.E] has to be seen as a product of its own general social context. By far the most important function of English is its uses as a medium of social interaction. It is estimated that there are over 400 local languages in Nigeria, and three of these languages [ Hausa, 15,000,000 speakers, Yoruba 10,000,000 speakers, Igbo 6,000,000 speakers] are often regarded to as the major language of the country, but only very few persons speak more than one of these three languages. In essence, therefore English is the only effective medium of communication between Nigerians from different linguistic backgrounds.

As a medium of communication, English has an important role not only internally but also externally that is, for contact between Nigeria and other outside world.

In a situation where English is in contact with many local languages and English is a second language, it is to be expected that the kinds of English found will be different from the varieties of English spoken in countries where English is the mother tongue. The point about English in Nigeria is not just that it is different from British or American English. It is rather that there are several varieties of English ranging from something very near Standard English to the patois of the market place. Since there are different kinds of English based on the different local language, it is difficult to know or draw a line on what to accept as Standard English and what to reject as sub- standard.

Second languages are usually learnt in formal settings as the classroom. One has to go to school to enable the person speak well although attempts has been made by non-school goers to speak English too. This may result to broken or Pidgin English which should not be confused for the Standard English. When an English native speaker pronounces a word, he pronounces it differently, and his accent as well as intonation sounds strange to the non native speakers. This is because we have not learnt lived where it is spoken as a first language and all we hear is the language as spoken by people like us, and we will be able to understand when people in Nigeria speak English.

There are many types of English in Nigeria as there are local languages. The major problem of identification or definition of Nigerian English lies on which of the varieties is to be accepted and adopted as a standard form. Without mincing words, Nigerian English may be defined as the speech form that embraces all the speakers of English in Nigeria. Every grammatical system of Nigerian English offers opportunities for unique solutions and stylistic variation output might be unintelligible to a native speaker of English language. It is difficult to decide on the types of English that exists in Nigeria. However, different approaches have been adopted by different scholars in classifying English types as used in Nigeria.

### **1.2.1 BROSNHAM'S CLASSIFICATION OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

Brosnaham (1958) uses education criterion in classifying English varieties/types. He identifies the varieties of English in Nigeria on levels, which is from level i-iv. Brosnaham Level 1 is the variety called Pidgin English and it is used by the illiterates. This variety of English is spoken by a very large number of speakers, mostly the market women, the artisans, the labourers and at times the educated Nigerians lapse into it when they are in informal environment and they need to communicate across socio-cultural boundary.

His Level II is the variety of English as used by high school graduates, and this is characterized by some degree of communicative fluency and a wide range of lexical items.

Level III is the primary school English. It is the English as used by people with primary school education, and it has the greatest number of users.

Level IV is the university English. This is the English used by the university graduates, and it is characterized by linguistic features close to Standard English.

Thus, Brosnahan submits that university variety provides the best example of Standard Nigerian English out of the many varieties.

People like Wilnot (1979), Adeniran (1979) and Adekunle (1974 and 1979) all depend mainly on education as a yardstick for identifying Standard Nigerian English. However, Afolayan disagrees that educational attainment cannot be a reasonable yardstick for standardizing Nigerian English. This is because it is difficult to conclude on what level of education one must attain before he is considered a speaker of Standard Nigerian English, because most highly educated Nigerian speakers of English lapse into Pidgin and pseudo-pidgin several times in their use of the language.

### **1.2.2 BANJO'S CLASSIFICATION OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

Another scholar, Banjo (1969) attempts describing the varieties of Nigerian English. His classification is rested on the use of the criteria of local acceptability in Nigeria and international intelligibility. This he came up with four varieties which he labels V1-V IV; Banjo's VI is the variety of English used by people with an imperfect knowledge of the language. Linguistically, this variety is characterized by a near total transfer of the linguistic features of the Niger-Congo languages into English. This is linguistically called transliteration

His VII is the variety marked by high social acceptability and it is used by 75% of Nigerian speakers. Linguistically, this variety is syntactically close to Standard British English (SBE) but maximally different from it at the phonological and lexical levels. Examples of this variety as given by Banjo are;

- My change is not complete, conductor balance me, I want to drop here.
- Take the other road there is go slow on the road.

Banjo's VIII is marked by low social acceptability and high international intelligibility. It is used by only 10% Nigerians. Syntactically and lexically, it is closed to Standard British English, but maximally differs phonologically. Banjo describes such variety as having RP deep structure and Nigerian surface structure. Example:

“Our journey was hampered by hold up”.

The V IX is characterised by low social and high international intelligibility. It is the variety used by a handful of Nigerians who are privileged to have English as their L1 either because they were born by the native speakers' parents or were brought up in the native speakers' environments. Linguistically, it equates SBE. It is the VIII that can be tagged standard while V1 and V11 should be regarded as non- standard Nigerian English.

### **1.2.3 BAMGBOSE'S CLASSIFICATION OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

Bamgbose (1982) in his analysis classifies Nigerian English into three varieties. The first variety which he calls the Contact English. The Contact English (CE) is the type found in Antera Duke's diary of events in Calabar between 1785 and 1788, example;

“Soon after I see my men was liv with him to canow com up and tell me Enyong people's tak my canow way for landing, so, I Run and Go Down for landing I find no canow etc.

This kind of English was also found in King Jaja of Opubu (1824) diary and it reads,

Suppose my fader, or my fader fader come up from ground and peak me why English man do dat, I no sabby tell why.

Duke's passage is an example of Broken English while King Opubu's is an example of Nigerian Pidgin. The two are instances of Contact English language. The Broken English is the less popular of the two, never-the-less; it was used in a popular television comedy program like the "New Masquerade" by Chief Zebrudaya, who mixes bombastic English with such ungrammatical Broken English forms as,

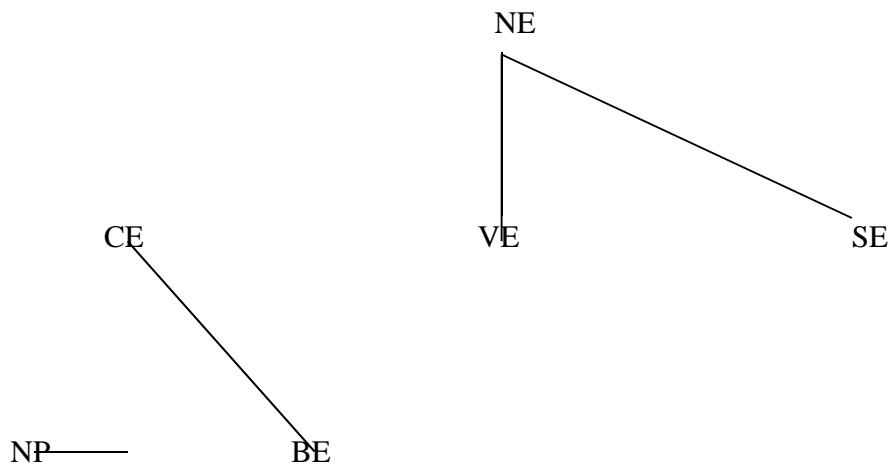
"When am I told you?  
It is surprisaton to me  
Ask Ovularia to look it"

This variety can also be found in Ken Saro-Wiwa's "Sozaboy" where Mene, the semi literate narrator of the event mixes Nigerian pidgin with Broken English (page 30).

Elugbe and Omamor (1999:66) disagree that, Nigerian Pidgin is not a variety of English while Adetugbo (1978:102) says it is but a basilectal form of the English language.

Bangbose's second variety is the Victorian English. His second variety has a close association with the so called cosmopolitan 19<sup>th</sup> century Lagos Negro English. According to Echeruo (1977:109-111), this was the variety spoken by the Lagos doctors, lawyers, educators, missionaries and other professionals, who just returned from Brazil, America, West India and later Sierra-Leone and Liberia. The characteristics of this transplanted variety of English are its cerebral associations with frequent quotations from or allusions to the classics and other display of learning. Example of this variety is seen in an extract from the Observer newspaper (1977:9-10) which reads, "... and I hope he will not put restrain on his pen, but will use it ad libitum... unpalatable but undeniable..." This kind of English he says is replete with bookish lexical items, an idea that could have been expressed in simple and understandable way is presented in a convoluted manner to impress rather than express. Ubahakwe (1974), says it is this type of English that represents the photo-type of bookish Nigerian English with its bombast. Azikiwe's *Renascent Africa* uses "titillate and titivate" to show his competent mastery of English meaning "tickle and dress up".

Bamgbose's third variety is the School English (SE). The school English is the predominant variety which all the three stands contribute to what today is called Standard Nigerian English.



NE: Nigerian English.

CE: Contact English.

VE: Victorian English.

SE: School English.

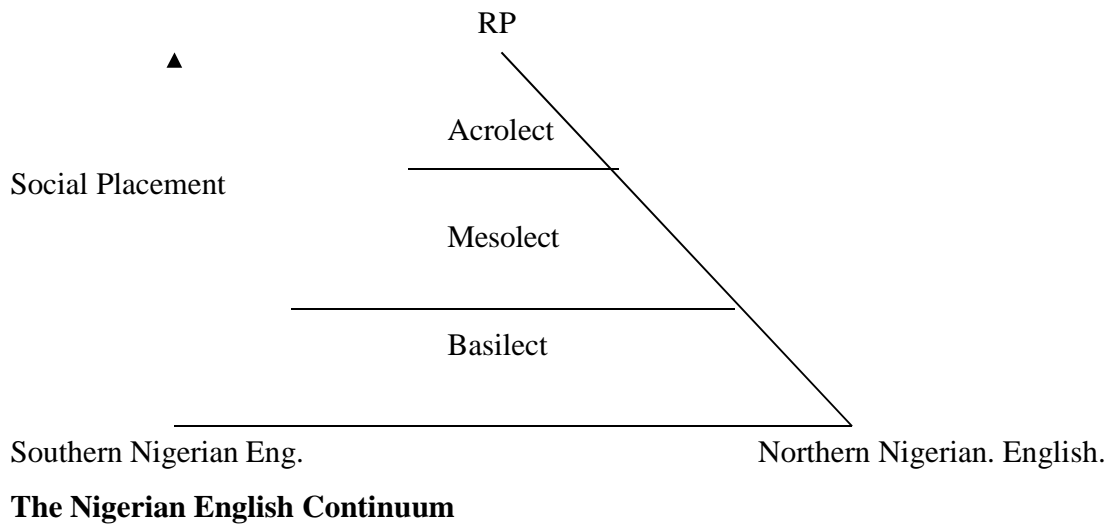
NP: Nigerian Pidgin.

BE: Broken English.

Bamgbose's classification is based on evolution of varieties of English in Nigeria.

#### 1.2.4 AWONUSI'S CLASSIFICATION OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH

Awonusi [1987] in his classification came up with the lectal pyramid to show the Nigerian English continuum. He says that Nigerian English continuum which is pyramidal in shape is socially and geographically motivated, having at its apex, the acrolectal Nigerian English, and, at its maximally broad base, the basilectal Nigerian English, while the mesolectal Nigerian English lies in between the two extremes. On this premise Obilade {1988} says within this frame work, Nigerian English may be defined as the speech form that embraces all the lects spoken in Nigeria; the basilect, mesolect, and the acrolect.



#### 1.2.4.1 THE ACROLECTAL NIGERIAN ENGLISH

The above diagram shows that the acrolectal speakers fall into the minority, while the basilectal speakers form the majority. This is a dynamic continuum and the lects cannot be regarded as distinct groups. By implications, people can move up in the continuum as the level of their competence improves. They can also down shift for stylistic purposes; as can be seen in the works of most Nigerian literary writers like Wole Soyinka, T.M.Aluko, and host of others. It worth mentioning that stylistic down shift is, however unidirectional. At the basilectal level, any attempt to down shift results in code switching and code mixing {with Pidgin and Nigerian languages}.

Awonusi {1984} adds, the acrolectal Nigerian English may also be known or regarded as the Standard Nigerian English. Phonologically, the accent is marked by medium local social acceptability, it closely approximates, but not RP phonetically. At the segmental level, it normally differs from RP phonetically. Syntactically, this lect tolerates no variation from SBE in written and formal usage. In non communication, it is very close to but not identical with SBE. The divergence observable in the deviations may also be accounted for by pragmatics of communication or the sociologist strategies of discourse. Lexically, it is very close to SBE, but allows some divergence from it. Such divergence is widely exemplified in the use of loan words and coinages , example of coinage can be seen in “academician” for “academic” {SBE}, “palm wine” and “fermented juice”, “to



wet flowers” for “to water flowers”, while the example of loan words are; staffers, parastatals, oba, pounded yam, egusi soup, suya, etc.

Socially, this lect can be associated with the Nigerian upper and middle class. In relation to the earlier description, this lect embraces educated Nigerian English and native – speaker English in Nigeria. Brosnaham’s level iv and Banjo’s varieties iii and iv will fall into this lect.

#### **1.2.4.2 THE MESOLECTAL NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

The mesolectal Nigerian English can be described as the general Nigerian English. It is highly socially acceptable locally and has medium intelligibility. Phonologically, it has substantial variation from RP. Syntactically, it is close to SBE in written and formal usage, but maximally deviates in spoken and formal usage. It allows for considerable divergence from SBE, such that it does not make the lect sub-standard e.g, the pluralisation of uncountable nouns (mass/abstract) like \*furnitures, \*informations etc, reduplication and redundancy of some adjectives and adverbs, mixture of tenses and aspects etc.

Lexically, the deviation becomes more marked, and the use of coinages, extended meanings and loanwords become pronounced e.g,

“My wife” for ‘daughter –in- law”, etc.

Socially, this lect is mostly associated with Nigerian middle class [minus the upper middle class]. This lect will fit into Brosnaham’s Secondary School English, and Banjo’s level ii. The mesolectal Nigerian English can be referred to as the “sub-standard” or “non standard” Nigerian English. Phonologically, it has a low to medium social acceptability and very low international intelligibility. Its phonetic and phonological patterns approximate those Nigerian languages.

Syntactically, it is marked by widespread divergences from SBE in the use of tense, number and concord. Lexically, it is characterised by loanwords and coinages as well as extension of meanings.

Socially, it can be associated with lower middle class and the lower class. It equates Banjo's variety 1, Brosnaham's II, but clearly excluded Pidgin.

#### **1.2.4.3 THE BASILECTAL NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

The basilectal Nigerian English can be described as the low or uneducated Nigerian English. It has local acceptability and lacks international intelligibility. The greatest number of Nigerian English speakers is found in this group. It is widely used by the market women, motor conductors and those who have no formal education. To be succinct, it tantamounts to the patois of the market place. Its phonological pattern, morphological affixation, syntactic arrangement and perhaps its semanticity of this lect is grossly coloured with the features of indigenous languages.

Having gone through the different theoretical framework in search of Nigerian English, it is found that majority of the schools rely on the levels of education in deciding the categories of Nigerians who speak Standard Nigerian English as it differs from non-standard Nigerian English.

#### **EXERCISE**

1. Considering Awonusi's classification of English language in Nigeria, which of his varieties do you think you are using and why?
2. In all the classificatory types select a variety from each that would qualify as standard usage in Nigeria.

#### **1.3 CONCLUSION**

In a quest to identify the variety of English in Nigeria, many linguist and scholars have adopted different theoretical modules in establishing the variety of English language spoken in Nigeria. These scholars adopted different yardstick like education, international intelligibility and evolutionary criteria. However, all the methods point back at education as the major criterion for the identification of the varieties of English used in Nigeria. Out of the many classifications there is no doubt that the variety of English spoken in

Nigeria is different from the varieties spoken in other parts of the world. However, in making our variety intelligible to other speakers of English a standard has to be established and maintained, that is the major reason all the classifications try in establishing and drawing a line between the standard and the non-standard Nigerian English.

#### **1.4 SUMMARY**

Nigerian English is that variety of English used by Nigerians to communicate across socio-cultural boundaries and we know global English is differs from that of the native speaker. Nigerian English is different from the native speaker's of English and other English's in terms of its use of some culture- specific transformations as well as its non-observance of certain global and surface structure constraints. There is no doubt that there exists Nigerian English and Adetugbo unequivocally states that Nigerian English like British and American English should be regarded as a dialect or a group of distinct form of a language devoid of any perforate connotation of inferiority usually attached to the world. It is on this basis that different scholars in Nigeria have in establishing the different varieties of English language spoken in Nigeria using different methods.

#### **1.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Using the criterion of international intelligibility, discuss the English language in Nigerian.
2. Considering all the classificatory yardsticks of English language in Nigeria, which of the methods do you think is encompassing? Support your answer with tangible reasons.
3. Write short notes on the following;
  - i. Acrolect
  - ii. Mesolect
  - iii. Basilect

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## **UNIT 2: THE NIGERIAN ENGLISH DEBATE**

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### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

There is no doubt there is Nigerian English. The challenge now is which of the varieties in Nigerian English should be adopted as the Nigerian English. Among the varieties of English used in Nigeria are the standard Nigerian English and the non-standard Nigerian English. In the non-standard Nigerian English there are so many varieties like Nigerian Pidgin English, Nigerian Broken English etc.

### **2.1 OBJECTIVES**

Our objectives in this unit are to,

-  outline the varieties of English used in Nigeria;
-  describe the functional statuses of the varieties; and
-  recommend the varieties that should be regarded as Nigerian English.

### **2.2 THE NIGERIAN ENGLISH DEBATE**

The global spread of the English language as one of the most far-reaching linguistic phenomena of our time is already an established fact. Evidence of this worldwide phenomenon of language contact, variation and change can be seen through such designations as world Englishes, new Englishes, modern Englishes, West African Englishes, South African English, Australian English, Indian English, to mention just a few. The phrase “Nigerian English” has also appeared in the last four decades or so.

It is true that the varieties of English spoken by educated Nigerians, no matter what their language, have enough features in common to mark off a general type, which may be called Nigerian English. Bokamba (1982, 1991) recognized the existence of a Nigerian English and referred to it as a variety of what he called “West African Vernacular English” (WAVE). Similarly, Jibril (1982) saw Nigerian English as part of the continuum of “West African English.” Akere (1982) likewise spoke of the emergence of a “Standard Nigerian English.” Odumuh (1987, 1993) recognises Nigerian English as one of the new Englishes and says that, “our position is that there exists at the moment a single super ordinate variety of Standard English in Nigeria which can be regarded as ‘Nigerian English.’” Several other linguists (e.g., Salami 1968; Adekunle 1974, 1985; Adetugbo 1979; Balogun 1980; Kujore 1985; Adegbija 1989; Kachru 1986, 1992a, 1992b, etc; Jowitt 1991; Atoye 1991; Bamiro 1991, 1994; Goke-Pariola 1993; Ekpe 2006 to mention just a few) have written on this variety of English language. Finally (and definitely not the least), Bamgbose, not only recognizes the existence of a NE, but also has written extensively on this variety of English language in his article, “Standard Nigerian English: Issues of Identification” (1982) not only identifies Nigerian English, but also analyzes some of its identifying features.

However, not everyone believes in the existence of a Nigerian English. Theo Vincent (1974), for instance, sees it as “bad English.” Likewise, Salami (1968) contends that what has been identified as Nigerian English is in reality “errors of usage.” Vincent and Salami are to a large extent saying the concern of a host of English language instructors in Nigerian institutions of learning who find it quite derogatory and rather insulting to refer to such a variety of English language. They rather see any departure from the British variety (which was imported into Nigeria) as either deviant or incorrect.

According to Wolfson (1989), although English language has gained worldwide prominence, it is not used exactly the same way everywhere. In the same vein, Ashcroft et al. (1989) point out that, although British imperialism resulted in the global spread of English language, the English of Nigerians is not the same as that of Britons or Americans, and that a continuum exists between the various practices constituting English language usage throughout the world. It is a well-known sociolinguistic fact that

when two or more languages and cultures come into contact, different types of sociolinguistic interaction take place. Sometimes a diglossic situation may result, or language shift, attrition or even language death. In some other instances it can lead to the formation of a pidgin, a Creole, or even the birth of a new language altogether (Sebba 1997). Instances of these various possibilities can be found in different contact situations around the globe. Kachru (1992b) has described English language in terms of three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. According to this classification, Nigerian English belongs to the Outer Circle, defined by Kachru as regions of the world that were formerly colonized by Britain and the US, where English language was the language of empire building. In this circle, societal penetration has resulted in the development of different sub-varieties, depending on the geographical, cultural and linguistic contexts. The identifying features of these varieties given by Kachru include elements from phonology, grammar, lexis, collocations, idioms, discourse and style, code-mixing and code-switching, and a lack of homogeneity. The characteristic features of these so-called “non-native institutionalized varieties” of English language (NNIVE) as identified by Kachru are the following:

- ✚ An extended range of uses in the sociolinguistic context;
- ✚ There is an ongoing process of nativization of the registers and styles;
- ✚ There is a body of nativised English language literature with formal and contextual characteristics marking it as localized.

Platt et al. (1984) also believe that for any variety of English language to qualify as a “New English” it must fulfill the following criteria:

- ✚ It must have been taught as a subject as well as used as a medium of instruction in places where languages other than English language were the main languages;
- ✚ It has developed in an area where a native variety of English language was not the language spoken by most of the population;
- ✚ It is used for a range of functions among those who speak or write it in the region where it is used;

✚ It has become “localized” or “nativized” by adopting some language features of its own, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words and expressions. Usually it has also developed some different rules for using language in communication.

A combination of the two criteria above gives us a more fine-tuned picture of the defining features of New Englishes. A close examination of these characteristic features shows that Nigerian English easily fits into this category of English language. A quick glance at Nigerian creative writing, especially the works of such well-known authors as Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka (winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize in literature) serves to buttress this assertion. English as a second language in Nigeria has been subjected to social and cultural norms of the people, which create a difference between the native and the local varieties in terms of local flavour. Thus, English as used in Nigeria has undergone various changes in all the linguistic levels to suit the new environment, concept and perception of its users. This is why Ekpe (2006) says we should no longer talk about globalization, rather glocalization of English. Glocalization is an admixture of the local socio-cultural phenomena in a language with that of a widely used language to portray the native worldviews, social life, culture and religion of its users. This localization has forced the English language to play unaccustomed roles as it can be seen in words such as shakara (show up), efiko / efiwe (study hard), amebo ( a gossip), carry go (continue), chacha ( brand new), shine your eye (be vigilant

Although write ups at the syntactic level are not as numerous as those at the vocabulary domain, it appears to be the most interesting of all (albeit very subtle and not as easily detected) and it is at this level that Nigerian creative writers have blossomed and excelled, as they use different innovative strategies and structures from the local languages: what Sridhar refers to as “culture-bound speech patterns” (Sridhar 1982: 297, 299). We witness here a lot of expressions that are English at the surface but have L1 underlying structures (i.e. the vocabulary is English but the syntax is from a substrate language). Reduplication, translation of L1 proverbs and sayings are just but a few of these strategies. Most African languages, especially those of the Kwa group, are well known for their use of reduplication for grammatical purposes, such as intensification and



change of grammatical category. These strategies have been the hallmark of Soyinka and Achebe, as well as many other Nigerian creative writers. This type of transfer is not limited to writers and literary texts alone. It is also common in day to day conversations among Nigerians with varying levels of Western education. Other differences characteristic of Nigerian English include the transfer of categories, generalization of forms, omission of certain obligatory grammatical elements (in British English). There is no doubt there is Nigerian English.

Ethnologue (2009) ranks Nigeria as the third largest English population speakers in the world after India and the United States of America. The entire English speaking population in Nigeria is put at 79,000,000 while those that speak it as their first language in Nigeria is put at 4,000,000. Ethnologue comments that these figures are for speakers of Nigerian Pidgin, an English-based Pidgin or Creole. Whether standard or non-standard English, Pidgin English or Creole the truth remains that English language has come to stay permanently in Nigeria and will remain so till the time any other language will be powerful enough to challenge and uproot it from the shores of Nigeria. Meanwhile, English language in Nigeria is functional in almost every sphere of our lives like education, language of instruction, language of educational evaluation, language of government, language of politics and language of law and legal drafting.

Since English language has come to stay in Nigeria and has inundated roles in all ramifications of our lives and we know that we can not do without it meanwhile many people have suggested that it should be adopted as a Nigerian national language. If it is to be adopted as a Nigerian national language, which of the variety should we adopt? Is it the standard Nigerian English or the Nigerian Pidgin? If we are adopting the Pidgin, which of the variety do we adopt? As we know that the Nigerian Pidgin differs from region to region and secondly it has not been standardized. Several comments and write-ups have been made on internets on the debates on Nigerian English (visit <http://www.jstor.org/>, <http://www.topix.com/forum/world/nigeria>). Obe (2006) says,

*“It will take a long and hard process, probably costly to re-train each one of us and to print books, documents etc even governmental papers in all 3 major languages. You are right though, we do need to give this topic a*

*serious consideration. It's a disgrace to depend on foreign language; no secret or security for a nation using another country's language to transact daily businesses.*

*Speaking English doesn't give us any respect either within or outside Nigeria either. Many times the Europeans or Americans still insult us as not speaking good English. Why speak the language at all. Let them learn any of our languages like we studied theirs right from Elementary schools to Universities and critique their own pronunciation or level of understanding in someone else's language. No pride or self esteem for Nigerians outside the country. All in government and all citizens of Nigeria need to consider this issue. We put too much worthiness in what is not ours and less in what's ours such as languages, culture etc. It's sad, but not too late. God that gave us that language expects us to thrive in it and use it gloriously. We should not just retain it and not use it thereby go into extinction, neither should we just throw it out of our systems but use it and refine our languages to the level of International acceptance. May the Lord help us all in our endeavors”*

While it is true that a national language should be one of the indigenous languages, it is a reality that none of the Nigerian indigenous languages has been developed enough to handle many of the functions of a national language and besides the government has not given any serious consideration on developing any of the indigenous languages to becoming a national language perhaps for the fear of incurring the wrath of other language speakers that their languages would not be used. Besides the government has been tactically avoiding issues that relate to language that is why it has never formulated any national language policy for the country. For Obe to say that, it is a disgrace to depend on foreign language because there is no secret or security for a nation using another country's language to transact daily businesses and that speaking English does not give us any respect either within or outside Nigeria either, is something we do not understand and we wonder the language he uses when he communicates with other Nigerians who do not understand the Yoruba language or the language he uses communicating at Houston (USA) that he resides. Okafor (2007) who resides in Dublin responses to Obe’s comment on the internet by saying,

*“Your idea of one language sounds fantastic but it seems you do not get the compound problems in Nigeria. We have 100's of spoken dialects and tribes coupled with religious believe that are among our problems in that nation. Introducing one language to a country like Nigeria is going to be a big issue that will add to the current political/leadership turmoil in the*

*nation. He queries, please I will like you to suggest which/what dialect/language to be used?"*

Okafor's comments and questions are quite thoughtful, realistic and practical because as a multilingual nation with about 450 languages (not dialects) where every tribe looks at another tribe with suspicion, we join Okafor in asking which of these languages should be adopted as a national language without any rancour and sentiment ?.

### **Exercise**

1. Which of these languages should be adopted as a national language without any rancour and sentiment?
2. If we are to adopt English as a national language, which of the varieties should be adopted and why?

On the same website an anonymous contributor who resides in the United Kingdom says,

*Pidgin can be adopted as a national language. I believe anything else would lead to divisions among ethnic lines. However, any of the three major languages can be regionally adopted if the laws of what is "officially correct" can be modified. Let us consider English to be just another language as opposed to being the "official language". e.g. Senators can address the Senate with their mother tongues and interpreters can be used to translate their speech".*

This contributor fails to understand that Nigerian Pidgin also varies from place to place. Dialects of Nigerian Pidgin may include the Lagos, Onitsha, Benin City, and Ibadan dialects. There is also the Warri dialect of Pidgin which includes a lot of slangs that are constantly being added and replaced. Sometimes the language may vary even in different parts of the same city. Each of the 450 or more ethnic groups in Nigeria can converse in this language, though they usually have their own additional words. For example, the Yorubas add the words 'Şe' and 'Abi' to mark out their variety of the language. These are often used at the start or end of an intonated sentence or question. For example, "You are coming, right?" becomes "Şe you dey come?" or "You dey come abi?" Another example the Igbos added the word, "Nna" also used at the beginning of some sentences to add

effect to the meaning of their sentence. For example, "that car is beautiful" becomes "Nna men, dat motor fine no be small". The Hausa's may add, "walai" and "the contract was profitable" becomes "Walai, the contract was flopitebul". With these variations in the use of Pidgin English in Nigeria it is crystal clear that there is no consistency in its orthography and no standardization of its grammar. Besides it would not make any sense for the government to develop a language that would not compete with other languages in the linguistic market place when it comes to usage in the economy and education.

Since the adoption of any of the indigenous languages is not feasible as at now and the development of Pidgin not profitable then we suggest since English has come to stay as a lingua franca in Nigeria and we have acculturized, Nigerianized, domesticated, nativised and hybridized to meet the socio-cultural needs of the people, we have to make it serve us the way we want it. For example because revolution of English in China has been consistent and because of this there are lot of Chinese vocabularies borrowed into English language. (*Schneider's (2003)*, Mukherjee (2007: 165) affirms "quite a few Indian words entered the English language...in order to denote Indian items (e.g. curry, bamboo, mango, veranda, chin-chin, chopsticks, ginseng, kaolin, ketchup/catsup, kung fu etc)" and they have found their place permanently in the English word lists. English in Nigeria is not integrative enough, when compared to a country like India, as it fails to adopt native words into its vocabulary. According to Ekpe (2007) the process of nativization (in the sense of transplanting English to Nigeria and consolidating it in the new environment) is more or less over. This endonormatively stabilized variety has come to stay, though there are still some minor remaining features of phase 3, which is a prove that Nigerian English is gearing towards what Kachru (1983) calls "the inner core", such Nigeria should carve out its English as China has done in what it calls Chinglish (also: Chinglish) a portmanteau of the words Chinese and English and refers to spoken or written English which is influenced by Chinese. Other countries that have carved out niche and names for their varieties of Englishes are Benglish (Bengali English), Czenglish (Czech English), Danglish (Danish English) , Dunlish (Dutch English), Engrish (Japanese English), Finglish (Finnish English), Franglais (French English) Denglish/Germlish/Genglish/Ginglish/Germish/Pseud-Anglicism (German English),

Hebrish (Hebrew English) - also sometimes used to refer to English written with Hebrew characters, Hunglish (Hungarian English) Italish (Italian English), Japlish (Japanese English), Konglish (South Korean English) Poglish (Polish English, Porglish (Portuguese English), Punglish (Punjabi English), Rominglish/Romglish (Romanian English), Runglish (Russian English), Serblish (Serbian English), Spanglish (Spanish English), Swanglish/Kiswanglish (Swahili English), Swenglish (Swedish English), Taglish (Tagalog English), Tinglish/Thailish (Thai English), Vinish (Vietnamese English), Wenglish (Welsh English), Yeshivish (Yeshiva English), the list is endless. As such since our variety of English has been nativised or glocalized already to serve Nigerians the way we want it, there is nothing wrong for Nigeria to develop a standard variety of its English that can compete favourably well with other varieties of English elsewhere and this variety can be called “Ninglish”.

“Ninglish” is a portmanteau name, combining the words "Nigeria" and "English" to have “Ninglish”. This may be the starting point to standardization of Nigerian English as Hudson says,” this intervention called standardization produces a standard language where before they were just dialect.” (1980:32). For a language to be standard, there must a model which that language must follow and there have to be prescribed grammatical rules of that language, which, when one fails to follow, an incorrect, ungrammatical and unintelligible forms are produced which is a total deviance with the model. Quirks adds,

“Standard English is basically an ideal, a mode of experience we seek when we wish to communicate beyond our immediate community with members of the nation as a whole or with members of a wider community: English- speakers as a whole”, (1962: 100)

As an ideal, it cannot be perfectly realized, and we must expect that members of different wider communities and of course, ‘Nigeria’ may have different realizations operating in a continuum, but gearing towards what Kachru (1983) calls “the inner core”. Ahulu corroborates Quirks’ position when he says,

*“The concept of ‘standard English’... is over the pedagogic principle or notion of ‘correctness’ that is, the educational concept of correctness which is prescriptive*

*and its discrimination between usages that are acceptable or unacceptable as standard practice''.* (1999: 33).

We have to be realistic and should not shy away from the truth that no Nigerian indigenous language is ready for now to be used as a national language. Secondly, Nigerian Pidgin which is widely spoken has not been standardized and cannot compete favourably well with other varieties of English at the linguistic market place. As such the already domesticated or glocalized variety can be further developed into “Ninglish” to be our variety of English conditioned to contain some of our local words which can be used to communicate across our socio-cultural boundaries.

## **2.3 CONCLUSION**

Whether we like it or not English language has come to stay in Nigeria and our variety or dialect of English is called the Nigerian English. The variety of English used in Nigeria is quite different from the varieties used elsewhere in the world. The Nigerian English variety can be singled out on the bases of its phonology, grammar, lexis, collocations, idioms, discourse and style, code-mixing and code-switching, and a lack of homogeneity. There have been debates all over mostly on the internet and at the academics on what should be adopted as Nigerian English. Some favour the adoption of one of the Nigerian indigenous languages while others favour the adoption of the Nigerian Pidgin English. As none of these languages can compete favourably with other languages in terms of development and contemporary usage, we suggest that the standard Nigerian English can be given more and better local content and be called “Ninglish” just as it is done in other countries like the Chinglish, Benglish, Czenglish, Danglish, Dunglish, ,English and Finglish to mention but a few.

## **2.4 SUMMARY**

The global spread of the English language as one of the most far-reaching linguistic phenomena of our time is already an established fact. Evidence of this worldwide phenomenon of language contact, variation and change can be seen through such designations as world Englishes and of course “the Nigerian English”. English as used in

Nigeria has undergone various changes in all the linguistic levels to suit the new environment, concept and perception of its users. Since English language has come to stay in Nigeria and has inundated roles in all ramifications of our lives and we know that we can not do without it meanwhile many people have suggested that it should be adopted as a Nigerian national language. There have been debates all over mostly on the internet and at the academics on what should be adopted as Nigerian English. Some favour the adoption of one of the Nigerian indigenous languages while others favour the adoption of the Nigerian Pidgin English. As none of these languages can compete favourably with other languages in terms of development and contemporary usage, we suggest that the standard Nigerian English can be given more and better local content and be called “Ninglish”

## **2.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. On your own assessment, is it possible to adopt any of the Nigerian indigenous languages as a national language? Discuss this with copious evidence.
2. With lots of facts to back your argument, discuss the possibilities or the impossibilities of adopting the Nigerian Pidgin English as a national language.
3. Considering the “lishes” do you think it is feasible for Nigeria to have its “Ninglish?” Back your discussion with ample data.

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## **UNIT 3: THE NATIVISATION OF ENGLISH IN NIGERIA**

### **CONTENTS**




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- 3.1 Objectives
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### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

English as a global language has developed many varieties, which differ from the 'standard' to 'non-standard' varieties. Some of the varieties of English are the American English, British English, Australian English, Ghanaian English, Cameroonian English, Nigerian English, the list is inexhaustible, as its global importance emerges everyday. Nigerian English as one of the varieties of global English is that variety of English used by Nigerians to communicate across socio-cultural boundaries, and we all know that our variety of English is different from that of the native speaker. However, we still try to keep certain rules in order to maintain international communication and intelligibility in cross-cultural communication, without necessarily sounding like a native speaker.

### **3.1 OBJECTIVES**

Our major objectives in this unit are to,

-  describe Nigerian English as a variety or dialect of English language;
-  examine the level the variety of English used has been nativised to meet some of our local needs; and
-  analyze the peculiar features of English language in Nigeria.

### **3.2 NATIVISATION OF ENGLISH IN NIGERIA**

English is a second language to some Nigerians and yet a first language to a fraction of Nigerians. English language as used in Nigeria is a variety of British English as there are some features that keep it apart from other varieties of English as American English, British English, Australian English, Ghanaian English, Cameroonian English and a host of other types of English. English as used in Nigeria has been acculturized, Nigerianized, domesticated, nativised and hybridized to meet the socio-cultural needs of the people or what Ekpe (2006:29) calls Glocalization, that is, the admixture of the local socio-cultural phenomena in a language with that of a widely used language to portray the native world view, social life, culture and religion of its users. He adds that his Glocalization has forced the English language to play unaccustomed roles. This is actually the use of a English (a global language) to project local customs and traditions. English in Nigeria is not a global phenomenon, because it has been homegrown, turned around and made different to suit the Nigerian environment. Adegbiya (2004:20) affirms, we may say that English language in Nigeria has been nativised, Nigerianized or has been given Nigerian citizenship, just as a domestic servant does what the master requires, s, English in Nigeria in now made to do precisely what Nigerian want it to do.

Since English has been adapted for home use and made applicable to our numerous conveniences, experiences, nuances and sensibilities, we can no longer talk about British or Queens English in Nigeria, but rather nativization of English language in Nigeria, which is the use of English language in Nigeria to portray our world's views, social life, culture and religious life. Bamgbose 1995:26) quips that the English language has been pidginised, nativised, acculturated and twisted to express unfamiliar concepts and modes of interaction.

The domestication, Glocalization, Nigerianization, nativization or pidginization has given birth to a variety or a dialect of English called Nigerian English which is unique and different from other Englishes all over the world and the differences can be seen at the different levels of linguistic analyses like phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, and Awonusi (1990) rightly adds that, English has come of age in Nigeria.

Nigerian English as one of the varieties of global English is that variety of English used by Nigerians to communicate across socio-cultural boundaries, and we all know that our variety of English is different from that of the native speaker. However, we still try to keep certain rules in order to maintain international communication and intelligibility in cross-cultural communication, without necessarily sounding like a native speaker. Based on the extent of research thus far, there is no doubt that Nigerian English exists and among all the varieties, the Standard Nigerian English (SNE) has evolved as an emerging stable variety.

English as a global language has developed many varieties (ranging from standard, non-standard, dialect, national, regional, Creole, hybrid, pidgin, rotten to broken), resulting in different classifications as “World Englishes” or “New Englishes”. Scholars like Kachru (1985) in his “three-circle model” and McArthur (1987) in his “wheel model” have tried in their models to capture these new varieties into new classification of varieties of English around the world. In McArthur’s wheel model, World Standard English forms the hub of the wheel. Outside the hub are eight broadly defined regional standards and emerging standards, i) “British and Irish Standard English”, ii) “American Standard English”, iii) “Canadian Standard English”, iv) “Australian, New Zealand and South Pacific Standard English”, v) “Caribbean Standard English”, vi) “West, East and South(ern) African Standard(izing) English”, vii) “South Asian Standard(izing) English, and viii) “East Asian Standard(izing) English. In this classification a distinction is made between regions with established standards, those where standards are about to be established, and regions with an ongoing process of standardization. Outside this first circle around the hub, a wider circle includes national varieties within the eight regions (e.g. Nigerian English, Singaporean English), subnational varieties (Yoruba, Scots English), and other subvarieties (e.g., BBC English, VON English). The most important aspect of this model is that the established native varieties and the New Englishes are given a comparable status in terms of the process of standardization, their differentiation into subvarieties, and their contribution to World Standard English.

Kachru's (1985b) famous "Concentric Circle" also emphasizes the potential of New Englishes for the development of standard norms. The "outer circle," which is the middle circle in his model, is reserved for institutionalized second-language varieties of English (ESL), while the inner circle is for native varieties of English (ENL), and the expanding circle refers to the use of English as a foreign language (EFL). This model shows that ESL varieties like Nigerian English have some common features with EFL varieties, especially their nonnative status, while they share some features with ENL varieties, in particular the potential for the development of norms. The most important thing about the "Wheel" and the "Concentric" circles is the idea of nativization in outer-circle varieties. That is the adoption of a once foreign language so that it becomes indigenized and fully adapted to the new local context. "Nativization" has to do with the degree of functional nativeness of English in a given social context, in particular the range of functions of English in general and its use for literary writing in particular. Kachru (1985a:211) says,

*The institutionalized second-language varieties have a long history of acculturation in new cultural and geographical contexts, they have a large range of functions in the local educational, administrative, and legal systems. The result of such uses is that such varieties have developed nativized discourse and style types and functionally determined sublanguages (register), and are used as a linguistic vehicle for creative writing in various genres.*

The notion of nativization, which manifests itself as the "Nigerianization" of the English language in Nigerian, has attracted special attention because it is a concept that bridges the gap between the norm-producing inner circle and the norm-developing outer circle.

And this has helped to establish New Englishes as full-fledged varieties alongside the native varieties of Englishes.

Kachru's concentric model was so successful because it opened up new arenas in the description of World Englishes (second - language varieties) like Nigerian English which was seen as mere deviance. This model has become increasingly accepted as regionally entrenched and acceptable forms of English which are developing their own norms and

standards. It is specifically a paradigmatic format of a variationist-oriented and largely synchronic conceptualization of both the wide range of Englishes globally and the range of variants of English within outer-circle varieties as Nigerian English.

In a quest to provide a larger sociolinguistic framework to accommodate the emergence of new Englishes from a diachronic perspective, Schneider (2003:241) suggested a “Dynamic Model” to conceptualize the evolution of new varieties of English. His model rests on the fundamental assumption that there is a shared underlying process that drives the formation of New Englishes, accounts for many similarities between them, and appears to operate whenever a language is transplanted. This model will be applied in the Nigerian context in order to describe in more details the evolutionary status of “Standard Nigerian English”.

### **Exercise**

1. What do you understand by the concept, “Glocalization” and “Nigerianization”
2. List some English words you know that have been glocalized or nativised.

Ekpe (2007:75) says, the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 marked the first step towards the beginning of the nativization of the English language in Nigeria, that is, phase 3. The colonial government from now became more interested in the standard education. More Nigerian teachers replaced European teachers and the use of indigenous languages alongside English was encouraged through production of books in Nigerian languages. However, the use of indigenous languages for education purpose was restricted to the primary and lower secondary schools (Adeniran 1978:114), while English was for the Sciences, Mathematics and official usage. English in Nigeria was not integrative enough, when compared to a country like India, as it failed to adopt native words into its vocabulary. Mukherjee (2007: 165) affirms “quite a few Indian words entered the English language...in order to denote Indian items (e.g. curry, bamboo, mango, veranda)” and they have found their place permanently in the English word lists.

As the nation struggled towards gaining independence many schools came up and there was need to train and use more indigenous teachers. With this, accent of English got extrapolated with Nigerian accent in the South as they utilized the services of Nigerian teachers in their schools while that of the North ossified towards the direction of RP as they retained many native-English teachers.

The use of English as a language of education, employment, legislation, media and admission placement in schools led to the infiltration of English and European literature in the Nigerian intelligentsia which later had a boomerang effect on the British government as Nigerians became familiar with western ideas, culture, values and ideals like democracy, freedom, enlightenment, fundamental human right, self determination and independence. This of course led to the creation of political parties and the demand for self government in 1960. English language contributed substantially in achieving national integration in Nigeria and intensification of nativization of English in Nigeria.

At this phase the STL and the IDG strands intertwined the more and a locally- based English identity emerged, and then entered a long blended process of nativization or Nigerianization of English language in Nigeria where people start expressing English language naturally in a way that reflects their socio-cultural norms without unnecessarily sounding bookish. For example: a Nigerian driver does not ‘hoot’ a horn, he blows a horn for other vehicle and this is in line with the manner in which our traditional trumpet is blown. There is no road in Nigeria that a driver will be held permanently to a position without a gradual movement no matter how slow, thus, we have ‘go slow’ not ‘traffic hold ups’ in Nigerian roads. One cannot tell a Nigerian driver or vehicle conductor that he wants to ‘alight’ rather he wants to ‘drop’, if not he would be taken to an unknown destination. These are all element of localization or what Ekpe (2004:1) calls ‘Glocalization’ (adaptation of a global outlook to local condition). The nativization was not only limited to the lexis and syntax, it was even more pronounced at the phonological level like in monophthongization of diphthongs such as in ‘gate’/geɪt/and ‘so’/səʊ / ([geɪt] / [so]). The process of nativization of English in Nigeria did not stop when Nigeria became independent, it continues and an ongoing process as new coinages are emerging

daily as the need arises. For example any corrupt Nigerian lady is derogatorily referred to as 'Etteh' because of the 'speaker's renovation scandal' that rocked the national assembly. We have also heard of '419 ers' and now 'yahoo-yahoo' they are all parts of the emerging nativization process.

Within this nativization phase, there are many varieties like the Standard and the non-Standard Nigerian English. The nature of Nigerian English has attracted a lot of scholarly interest some of which include Banjo (1971, 1995), Adesanya (1979), Jibril (1979, 1982), Akere (1982), Eka (1985, 1993), Odummuh, (1990), Jowitt (1991), Bamgbose (1995), Udofot (2004) and Awonusi (2004). A look at the various classifications polarized Nigerian English into standard or non- standard varieties.

While the non-Standard variety still undergoes nativization process, the Standard Nigerian English is no longer in the process of ongoing nativization it has passed on to phase 4 in the 'Scheiner's Dynamic Model', that is, in a state of 'endonormative stabilization'. This phase is evolutionary and metamorphic, as such; it is difficult to precisely identify the beginning of the phase 4 in the history of Nigerian English.

For a variety to enter endonormative stabilization there must be some kind of inner agreement in the speech community on the status and the usefulness of the English language. Politically, endonormative stabilization is a stage that requires the independence of a country as a criterion, because it is at this political atmosphere that the new nation-state can decide in its own status of language policies without external interference. In Nigeria, the status has been allocated as the official language and a Lingua- Franca.

The Standard English (SE) is the variety of English, which Bamgbose says is the school, with its heavy dose of Christian religious literature. This is the variety that the present Nigerian English emanates from.

Ekpe (2007:78) adds that, from 1960 onward, 'Standard Nigerian English' has been marked by the features and characteristics typical of phase 4: (the endonormative stabilization) which are:

- It is used in a wide range of communicative situations such as administration, politics, media, education and academia, trade and commerce, book publication and film industry.
- It is used by Nigerian creative writers to express their world view and as communicative vehicle. This can be seen in the creative works of esteemed and award winning writers as Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and Chimamanda Adichie.
- The standard Nigerian English comes out of the development of the local form of English (non-standard). The Nigerian English is an evident that English in Nigeria is now widely seen as an indigenous language with acceptable local features.
- This variety being an emerging acceptable local variety of English has passed through a lot of linguistic filters as many scholars like Jowitt (1991), Adegbija (2004) among others have made conscientious efforts in describing it. This has exerted much influence on this evolutionary phase of Nigerian English.

### **3.3 CONCLUSION**

English has been adapted for home use and made applicable to our numerous conveniences, experiences, nuances and sensibilities; we can no longer talk about British or Queens English in Nigeria, but rather nativization of English language in Nigeria, which is the use of English language in Nigeria to portray our world's views, social life, culture and religious life. English in Nigeria is not a global phenomenon, because it has been homegrown, turned around and made different to suit the Nigerian environment. English language in Nigeria has been nativised, Nigerianized or has been given Nigerian citizenship, just as a domestic servant does what the master requires, English in Nigeria is now made to do precisely what Nigerian wants it to do.



### **3.4 SUMMARY**

English as a global language has developed many varieties (ranging from standard, non-standard, dialect, national, regional, Creole, hybrid, pidgin, rotten to broken), resulting in different classifications as “World Englishes” or “New Englishes”. English has been adapted for home use and made applicable to our numerous conveniences, experiences, nuances and sensibilities. English in Nigeria is now made to do precisely what Nigerian wants it to do. The notion of nativization, which manifests itself as the “Nigerianization” of the English language in Nigeria, has attracted special attention because it is a concept that bridges the gap between the norm-producing inner circle and the norm-developing outer circle. And this has helped to establish New Englishes as full-fledged varieties alongside the native varieties of Englishes.

### **3.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Discuss the concept of nativization of English in Nigeria.
2. With copious data show how the English language in Nigeria has been domesticated.
3. Trace the historical evolution of English language in Nigeria in relation to its nativization

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## **MODULE 3: THE LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

**Unit 1: The Phonological Features**

**Unit 2: The Grammatical Features of Nigerian English**

**Unit 3: The Lexico-Semantic Features of Nigerian English**

**Unit 4: The Discourse Features in Nigerian English**

### **UNIT 1: THE PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit examines the features of English language in Nigeria at the phonological level. It is truism that the variety of a language or the dialectal variation of a language form is more noticeable at the phonological level than any other level of language analysis. The phonological features in Nigeria English substantially mark it out from other varieties of world Englishes. This variation in the phonological structure of Nigerian English affects the sounds and the suprasegments. The way Nigerians make use of these sounds and the suprasegments vary from the way the English native speakers make use of them. These differences are caused by social and linguistic factors.

### **1.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to,

-  examine the phonological structure of English language in Nigeria;
-  describe the sounds in Nigerian English;
-  analyse the suprasegments of Nigerian English; and
-  examine the areas of differences in the Nigerian English Phonology and the Natives' Speakers Phonology.

### **1.2 PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

Nigerian English is a dialect or variety of English as spoken in Britain, Australia, Canada and the United States of America. Kachru says, Nigerian English is indeed a vital component of world Englishes, (1995: VI). English is a second language to most Nigerians, having acquired indigenous languages as their mother tongue (L1). This came about either through trade, wars, and colonisation or simply as a desire for adventure as a result of communication across geolinguistic borders. The resultant contact leads to what Dadzie calls 'linguistic ferment; (2004: 85), which leads to linguistic forms or a shift from the contact language, a sort of interlanguage is created, which has some admixture of the features of the L1 and L2. Dadzie adds, this process, a new language may be born reflecting the characteristics of both languages, (2004: 85). The admixture of these features according to Adetugbo is prominent at the phonological level, (1993: 124),

though they are also present in other linguistic levels like morphology, syntax and semantics. Dadzie corroborates Adetubgo when he says,

*‘ these changes may also be reflected in the sound patterns of a language, its grammar and its meaning mechanism, all of which are the matrices within which a language may be described,’ (2004:86).*

It is linguistic truism that when a language is removed from its native habitat or domain to some other environment, there is always a tendency for the language to assume forms, which are quite different from the characteristics of the old language. The difference might be so wide that at times it is difficult to approximate or know that they are from the same stock. For example, ‘seo eaxl’ bears no resemblance whatsoever to its contemporary equivalent ‘the shoulder’. Nigeria, according to ethnologue has 521 languages, out of these, 510 are living languages, 2 of these languages are without mother tongue, while 9 languages are extinct,” (2005). In contact with English language, we assume there are 510 varieties of English in Nigeria, which for simplification sake will be classified in line with the three major linguistics groups: the Hausa, the Igbo and Yoruba or what Dadzie classifies as North, East and West, (2004:91). On this basis Bamgbose observes that one could determine the first language of a speaker of English from the way he pronounces English utterances, (1993:124). Our identification of specific variables in Nigerian English will be done in line with Dadzie’s classification as North covering the Hausas, East covering the Igbos and other linguistic groups in that region (as they are the most diversified) and West covering the Yorubas.

Linguistic differences are elements in a language that have different realizations, which at the phonological level, could be in terms of the sound segment and suprasegmental features. Richards et al define variables as linguistic items, which have various forms (variant). The different forms of the variables may be related to differences in style or the differences in the socio-economic background, education, age, or sex of the speakers, (1985: 304). The example in English is as shown in the use of ‘ng’ variable as in ‘coming’, ‘working’. In careful formal speech it often occurs as [ I ŋ], as in i-iii below,

- i) coming [kʌ mɪ ŋ]
- ii) working [wɜ:kɪ ŋ]

But in the informal or regional speech, it is often realized as in i-iii below,

- i) com'n [ kʌ mn ]
- ii) Work'n [ wɜ:kn ]

Hughes et al affirm in RP, for example there is tendency at present for certain triphthongs and diphthongs to become monophthongs. Thus, the word 'tyre', which was once most commonly pronounced [taɪə] triphthong came to be pronounced [taɪ] diphthong and is now increasingly reduced to [ta:] (monophthong with the same pronunciation as the word, 'tar'), (1979: 3). In British English their investigation shows that the word 'tyre' has three variants as in i-iii below,

- i. [tɪ aɪ] triphthong
- ii [taɪ] diphthong
- iii [ta:] monophthong

These differences are attributed to both linguistic and sociolinguistic factors.

The differences according to Jowitt are the use of certain linguistic features that are different in certain respect from the standard item, (2000:58). In Nigerian English these differences can be found in the sound segments and the suprasegments.

### 1.2.1 THE SOUND SEGMENTS IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH

The sound segment comprises the consonants and the vowels. These segments in English are quite different from that of the Nigerian indigenous languages. For this reason Adetugbo says, second language speakers of English (Nigerians) have a number of difficulties in the pronunciation of utterances in English. Difficulties arise mainly from interference of the sound patterns of their native languages on the sound system of English. These difficulties create variation in Nigerian English based on the geolinguistic area the speaker comes from. He shows that most Nigerian speakers because of these difficulties, substitute English [t] for [θ] and [d] for [ð] as shown in variant i-iii below,

	British English (BE)	Nigerian English (NE)
i	thin [θɪ n]	[tɪ n]
ii	this [ðɪ z]	[dɪ z]

This is because most Nigerian languages do not have dental fricatives; the closest to these sounds in their native languages are therefore substituted for these sounds.

### **1.2.1. 1 CONSONANTAL DIFFERENCES IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

There are some consonantal sounds that exist in British English variety (BEV) that do not exist in Nigeria English Variety (NEV): (NNEV- Northern Nigerian English variety, SNEV-Southern Nigerian English Variety and Western Nigerian English variety). Such consonants are as presented below.

#### **1.2.1.1.1 THE PLOSIVES**

##### **a) THE VOICELESS BILABIAL PLOSIVES /P/**

‘Parlour’ [ pa: l ɔ̃ ]

I. [ ɸ al ɔ: ] NNEV’

II. [ pal ɔ: ] ‘SNEV’

III. [ Kpal ɔ: ] ‘WNEV’

BEV as a control variety has the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ in its sound inventory as in park, pepper and wrap in all phonological distribution. The SNEV has /p/ in its inventory, and produces the same variant as that of native speakers (BEV). This voiceless plosive does not exist in Hausa consonant sound inventory. There does not seem to be any consensus among scholars on the existence of this sound in Hausa.

Jibril’s version of Hausa consonant chart shows the existence of /p/, (1989:67), while Sani’s version does not have /p/, (1989:13). We agree with Sani’s version because the Hausa voiceless bilabial fricative [ ɸ ] is phonetically an intermediate sound between the English [p] and [f] and it is articulated with the contact of the two lips as in the articulation of [p], but with a partial closure of the vocal tract, which causes some friction as in the articulation of the English [f]. According to Amin, this special phonetic feature of the Hausa [ ɸ ] appears to be largely responsible for confusing the phonemic status of the English [p] with that of the English [f]... (1997:41). Nuttal confirms, the two sounds [p] and [f]... are frequently used in Hausa, but they are never distinctive and are completely interchangeable in most positions... (1965:20). Kraft and Kirk - Green also confirm this confusing status of [p] and [f], that often Hausa /f / is produced nearer the

English /p/, (1973:8). Jibril agrees that there is an overlap between /p/ and /f/ in Hausa English (1980:83), as shown in i-v below,

	NNEV	BEV
i. female	[ɸɪ :mɛl]	[fi:mɛl]
ii. prefect	[ɸriɸɛkt]	[pri:fɛkt]
iii full page	[ɸu:lɸɛ:dʒ]	[fulpɛldʒ]
iv pathfinder	[ ɸasɸaɪnda]	[ pa:θfaɪndə]
v defender	[ dɪɸɛnda]	[dlfɛndə]

In iii above, orthographically, the WNEV (Yoruba) has the voiceless bilabial plosive, but phonologically there is no /p/ in WNEV, every /p/ is represented as a diagraph /kp/ as in i-iv below,

	WNEV	BEV
i pan	[kpa:n]	[pæn]
ii paper	[kpekpa]	[pɛlpə]
iii pulp	[kpulɒkpɒ]	[pʊlp]
iv palour	[kpəlɔ]	[palə]

So, Nigerian English has the variant of English /p/ as [p],[ɸ], [f] and [kp]

/p/	—————→	[p] SNEV
		[ɸ] NNEV
		[f] NNEV
		[kp] WNEV
/p/	—————→	[ɸ] ~ [f] ~ [kp]

#### b) THE VELAR PLOSIVE /g /

The voiced velar plosive is often devoiced by the SNEV of the Ibibio, but to other variables the realization is the same as that of BEV as in i-iii below,

	gate	/ geit /
i	[get]	NNEV
ii	[ket]	SNEV (Ibibio)
iii	[get]	WNEV

/g/ → /k/

Ekpe confirms, there is the phonological problem of phonemic indistinctiveness and distributional overlap between English /g/ and /k/ in Ibibio English, he quips that it was mostly the characteristics of uneducated speakers, (2000:88)

### C) THE VOICELESS ALVEOLAR PLOSIVE /t/.

This sound is realized by Nigerian speakers as the BEV, except at the final word position, which is reduced to the voiced counterpart /d/ as in a.i-iii and b. i-iii

- |     |          |            |      |
|-----|----------|------------|------|
| a.  | market   | [ma: kɪ t] |      |
| i   | [ma:ked] |            | NNEV |
| ii  | [ma:ked] |            | SNEV |
| iii | [ma:ked] |            | WNEV |
| b.  | Parked   | [pa:kt]    |      |
| i   | [pa:kd]  |            | NNEV |
| ii  | [pa:kd]  |            | SNEV |
| iii | [pa:kd]  |            | WNEV |
- /t/ → [d]

#### 1.2.1.1.2 THE AFFRICATIVES /tʃ/, /dʒ/

The BEV usage of voiceless palatal alveolar affricative is at times substituted with [s] by the variants spoken in Nigeria; as found in i-iii below,

- |     |          |                |
|-----|----------|----------------|
|     | church   | /tʃɜ:tʃ/       |
| i   | [tʃɜ:tʃ] | ‘NNEV’         |
| ii  | [tʃɜ:tʃ] | ‘SNEV’         |
| iii | [sɜ:s] ~ | /[tʃɜ:] ‘WNEV’ |

The variant in iii above occurs because the sound does not exist in Yoruba consonant sound inventory; as can be found in the pronunciation of i-iii below,

- |    |       |                     |
|----|-------|---------------------|
|    | child | /tʃaɪ ld/           |
| i  | child | [tʃaɪ d] / [saɪ ld] |
| ii | watch | [wɒtʃ] / [wɒs]      |



iii chapel [ʃapɛl] / [sapɛl]

/ʃ/ → [ʃ] ~ [s]

There is no major difference in the pronunciation of its voiced counter-part between BEV and NEV, only that some SNEV speakers particularly the Ibibio substitute variant [j], while the Ijaw speakers substitute it with [z] as presented in i-iii below,

Joy /dʒɔɪ/

i	[dʒɔɪ]	NNEV
ii	[jɔɪ]	SNEV (Ibibio)
	[Zɔɪ]	SNEV (Ijaw)
iii	[dʒɔɪ]	WNEV
/dʒ/ → [j] ~ [z]		

#### 1.2.1.1.3 THE FRICATIVES

The following English fricatives have different variants in Nigerian English and the variables differ regionally.

##### a) THE LABIO-DENTAL FRICATIVES /f, v/.

The voiceless labio-dental fricative /f/ of BEV has the variants [p] in the NNEV, as also showed in 6 i-v, there is always phonemic confusion between the use of the English [p] and [f] in NNEV, which an allophonic voiceless bilabial fricative /ɸ/ is substituted. The SNEV and WNEV have the same form with the BEV as in i-iii below,

four /fɔː/

i	[ɸɔː]	NNEV
ii	[fɔː]	SNEV
iii	[fɔː]	WNEV
/f/ → [f] ~ [ɸ]		

The voiced labio-dental fricative /v/

The variables of /v/ in Nigerian English (NE) can be found in NNEV, WNEV, and non in SNEV as in i-iii below,

Never /veɪ vƏ /

i [neba] NNEV

ii [neva] SNEV

iii. [nefa] WNEV

/v/ → [b] ~ [f]

**b)** The dental fricative / θ, ð /

The voiceless dental fricative / θ / has the variant [t ]and [s ] in NE, as shown in i-iii below,

think / θɪ ŋk /

i [sɪ ŋ k] NNEV

ii [tɪ ŋk] SNEV

iii [ tɪ ŋk] WNEV

/ θ / → [s] ~ [t]

The voiced counterpart [ð] has the following variants [ d ] and [z ] in NE as in i-iii below,

Cloth / klɒθ ð /

i [ klo:z] NNEV

ii [ kl ɔ: d] SNEV

iii [ kl ɔ: d ] WNEV

/ ð / → [z] ~ [d]

Jowitt affirms that,

*“lack of differentiation of / θ / and /t/, (/ð / and /d/), causes the confusion in speech... of such pairs as ‘fate’ and ‘faith’, and deviant spellings such as \*authomatic, and perhaps, \*lenght and \*strenght,” (2000:79).*

**c)** The Voiced Alveolar Fricative /z/

This sound does not occur in most Nigerian languages. A Nigerian speaker of English as L2 produces many variants different from the BEV; as in i-iii below,

lies

/ laɪ z /

- |     |           |      |
|-----|-----------|------|
| i   | [ 1a1 s ] | NNEV |
| ii  | [ 1a1 s ] | SNEV |
| iii | [ 1a1 s ] | WNEV |

Jowitt confirms that since this sound is lacking in most Nigerian languages, speakers generally adopt spelling pronunciation as a solution to the problem of correctly differentiating voiced and unvoiced sibilants, especially in final position. This strategy frequently yields the variants [s] where BEV has the more occurring /z/ as shown above. Even when there is no suggested spelling of such, the voiceless substitute is still made as in, ‘increase’ /ɪ nkri: s/ BEV; NEV will be [ɪ nkri:z]

$$/s/ \longrightarrow [z]$$

### d) THE PALATAL ALVEOLAR FRICATIVE

The English voiceless palatal alveolar fricative  $\int$  /  $\int$ , has different variables in Nigerian English phonology. Awonusi confirms that... ‘this may be accounted for the accent - specific phonological interference.’ (2004:214)

These variables are in i-iii below,

- |     |        |       |
|-----|--------|-------|
| 19. | Shoe   | /ʃu:/ |
| i   | [ʃu:]  | NNEV  |
| ii  | [su:]  | SNEV  |
| iii | [ su:] | WNEV  |

Awonusi adds, ‘the variant of [s] in ‘shoe’ is used by some Yoruba speakers in the Oyo/Ibadan area. Jowitt affirms that this is also a feature of Ijaw speakers of English’, (2000:79)

//  $\int$  // [s]

The voiced palatal alveolar counterpart / ʒ / also has variants in NEV. Adetugbo says “few contrast exist between this sound and /ʒ/, (1993:141), and some would substitute [s] as in i-iii below,

Vision /vɪʒ n /

I [ ɸɪɪ ɓ n ] / [ ɸɪ sɪ ɓ n ] NNEV

II [ vɪɪ ɓ n ] SNEV

III [ fɪsɪ ɓ n ] WNEV

Amin observes that the Hausa speakers of English generally find the articulation of this sound extremely difficult, if at all attainable, (1997:45). Nuttal confirms that /ʃ / and /ʒ / is a problem of a /p/ and /f/ kind to Hausa speakers of English, (1965: 10). Ekpe confirms this devoicing process in Ibibio English, as well, (2000: 96)

/ ʒ /  $\longrightarrow$  / s / ~ / ʃ /

#### e) THE GLOTTAL FRICATIVE / h /

The glottal fricative /h/ does not have variables in any NEV. Most Nigerian do not have problem in its production except by some WNEV speakers where they either drop or insert /h/ where it does not exist. Jowitt says,

*‘/h/ is rare in Yoruba, speakers tend to omit it from its syllable-initial position... there is a converse tendency...sometimes to insert a word-initial /h/ when it is not required...’ (2000:79).*

Awonusi identifies five types of “aitches” in NEV as;

- H- Weakening- the weakening and consequent non-articulation or loss of /h/ in words as in ‘his’ /hiz/ \* [Is] in connected speech.
- H-restoration- the use of /h/ in words which are /h/ less in BEV as in hour, honour. /aʊθ / and /ɒnə / \* [ hawa ] and \* [ hɓn ɓ ]
- Categorical H-dropping- the non- articulation of /h/ in ‘h-full’ words like ‘house’ / hauz / \* [αus]
- Variable H dropping- the dropping or retention of /h/ in words like ‘hotel’ / hɒtəl / [hɒtəl] ~ [ɒtəl]
- H- insertion – the use of /h/ in normally h-less words like egg /eg/ \*heg, (2004: 214)

Awonusi quips that some of these phenomenon have been reported in BEV, though limited to uneducated speakers. (2000: 215)

The example of /h/ deletion is shown in (i) and an insertion in (ii) below,

- i. home/ həʊm/  
 ii. [om]WNEV  
 Oral /ɔ: rəl /  
 ii [ hɔ:r əl] WNEV  
 i. / h / \_\_\_\_\_ → / Ø /  
 ii. / Ø / \_\_\_\_\_ → / h /

#### 1.2.1.1.4 THE LIQUIDS /l, r /

These liquid sounds are often confused in usage by some NEV speakers. BEV operates three variants of /l/ as clear /l/, dark /ɫ/ and syllabic /l/; which are determined by phonological environments. These variant are not observable in NEV, they are all represented by the clear /l/ variable as in i-iii below;

- told / t əʊ ɫ d /  
 [told] NNEV  
 [ told] SNEV  
 [ told] WNEV  
 / ɫ / \_\_\_\_\_ → / l /

As earlier said, these liquids are often confused as shown in i-iii below,

- Lorry / lɔ:ri /  
 i [ l ɔ: ri ] NNEV  
 ii [ l ɔ: li ] SNEV  
 iii [ l ɔ: li ] WNEV  
 / r / \_\_\_\_\_ → / l /

#### 1.2.1.1.5 THE VELAR NASAL /ŋ /

The variant of the velar nasal produced by NEV speakers is the diagraphs /ŋk/ and /ŋg/ or the nasalization of the preceding vowel as below,

- a) Sing / sɪŋ /  
 i. [ sɪŋ k] ~ [ sɪ̃ ]

b) Hanging / haŋɪ ŋ/

[ Haŋɪ ŋk ]

/ ŋ /  $\longrightarrow$  [ ŋ k ] ~ [ ~ ] ~ [ ŋ g ]

### 1.2.1. 2 THE VOWEL DIFFERENCES IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH

Comparatively, BEV has a larger number of vowels than NEV. The BEV vowel has been classified into monophthongs, diphthongs and triphthong. While the monophthongs and some diphthongs are found in some Nigerian languages, there is no evidence of triphthong in any Nigerian language. There are lots of variables in NEV in terms of tense and lax vowels. Some “English central vowels are usually substituted with other vowels, and the diphthongs and triphthongs are monophthongized. These and other factors bring about the reduced number of vowels in NEV and the variables in the realised vowel sounds.

#### 1.2.1 .2.1 THE MONOPHTHONGS

The variables of monophthongs in NEV are in the areas of tense and lax vowels; and substitution of the central vowels with nearby vowels. The difference between [i:] and [ɪ], [u:] and [ʊ], [ɔ:] and [ɒ] is hardly observed by NEV speakers. Those that make any difference at all use length as a criterion on the grounds that tense vowel is longer than the lax vowel, as show in i-ii below,

sin -/sɪ n/

i. [si: n] NNEV

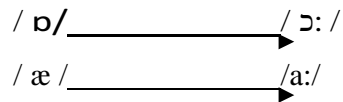
ii. [si: n] SNEV

iii. [si: n] WNEV

Jowitt says, in “Hausa there is a phonemic distinction between / i:/ and /ɪ/... in Yoruba and some other Kwa languages...there is no such distinction and in Yorubɪa / / is realised as /i:/...”, (2000:72). Awonusi confirms this when he says, “the sound /i/ corresponds to RP /i:/ as well as / /... which have a quantity difference as in RP...” (2004:218). This affects other sounds in this series as below;

/ɪ/  $\longrightarrow$   $\rightarrow$  i:/

/u/  $\longrightarrow$   $\rightarrow$  u:/



#### a) THE CENTRAL VOWELS.

The BEV central vowels constitute a major problem to NEV speakers of English; as such different variables are realized. This affects sounds like  $/\text{ʌ}, \text{ə:}, \text{ə}/$ . Adetugbo in his analysis says West African speakers of English substitute  $[\text{ʌ}]$  for  $[\text{ɔ}]$ ,  $[\text{a}]$  for  $[\text{ə}]$  and  $[\text{a}]$  or  $[\text{e}]$  for  $[\text{ɜ}]$ , (1993:145).

The Central Vowel  $/\text{ʌ}/$  has the following variables as in i-iii below,

26. luck  $/\text{ʌk}/$
- i.  $[\text{ʌk}] \sim / \text{luk} /$  NNEV
  - ii.  $[\text{l ɔ k}]$  SNEV
  - iii.  $[\text{l ɔ k}]$  WNEV

The NNEV variety corresponds to BEV. Jowitt opines that it is used mainly by acrolectal speaker...of Hausa English (NNEV), (2000:73).



Another central vowel that does not exist in NEV is the  $/\text{ə:}/$ , as such many variants are realised as shown in i-iii below,

- girl  $[\text{g ə: l}]$
- i.  $[\text{ga:l}]$  NNEV
  - ii.  $[\text{gel}]$  SNEV
  - iii.  $[\text{ga: l}]$  WNEV

The differences differ based on spelling correlations like -ur, -or, -ir, -ear, -er, etc.



The schwa  $/\text{ə}/$ , is another central vowel that has a variety of realization. In BEV, it occurs only in ‘unstressed’ syllables. Ekpe stresses that, “many ESL speakers find it extremely difficult to identify all the phonological contexts in which it is found...

(2000:106). As such different varieties are realized. This problem gets worse by the fact that this vowel is the most widely represented orthographically. In NEV, it can be realized as {a, i, e, ɔ, o} differently as compared to BEV as shown in i-iii below,

‘arrears’	/ ə rɪə z /
[a:rɪ as ]	NNEV
[a:lɪ as]	SNEV
[a:rɪ as ]	WNEV

#### 1.2.1.2.2 THE DIPHTHONGS

Generally, most Nigerian languages lack these glide sounds of English. The basic glide vowels attested in NEV are / ai /, / ɔ I / and / au /; which Awonusi (1986) confirms that a few basilectal speakers realize them as separate vowels. The English diphthongs are often monophthongized by NEV speakers as shown below,

Go	/ gəʊ /
i. [go]	NNEV
ii. [ko]	SNEV
iii. [go]	WNEV

#### 1.2.1.2.3 TRIPHTHONGS

The triphthongs are lacking in Nigerian languages, thus an average Nigerian speaker of English monophthongized them in line with the rules of his indigenous language. a few basilectal speakers realize them as separate vowels. The English triphthongs are often monophthongized by NEV speakers as shown below,

Flower	/ flaʊə /
i. [flawa]	NNEV
ii. [flawa ]	SNEV
iii. [flawa ]	WNEV



### 1.2.2 THE SUPRASEGMENTALS

The suprasegmentals or prosodic are the features larger than the segments in any language. They are the features superimposed on segments to bring about distinctiveness in the meaning of utterances. The suprasegments of English are quite different from that of Nigerian languages.

English is a stress - timed language, in that, the rhythm of English is based primarily on stressed syllables occurring at regular intervals no matter how many unstressed syllables occur in between them. This isochronicity in English makes it to be quite different from Nigerian languages, which are syllable - timed.

Stress placement in English starts from the individual words (word stress) and stretch to sentences. This gives BEV accent that makes their utterances to be different from that of the ESL. Adetugbo opines that, “the first step ...for the mastery of English rhythm is to learn words stress, which in the larger utterance is usually observed and to maintain it in the larger utterance” (1993; 127)

Jowitt adds that,”...accent, rhythm or timing, and intonation... operates at word and sentence level and appear to be superimposed on the intrinsic meaning of a word or a sentence...”(2000; 88).

Intelligibility is mostly affected by the suprasegmentals than the segments, as they are largely meaning-carriers. In NEV, there are several variables at the word and sentence levels; due to the fact that Nigerian languages are tonal languages, which have two major tone levels: high /      / and low /  $\searrow$  /.

### 1.2.2.1 WORD STRESS

Stress in English deals with the level of distinctive pitch, with the most prominent being the primary stress. The NEV has different variables of word stress placement as shown in i - iii below,



	calculator		<b>CAL</b> culator
i.	Cal <b>CU</b> lator		NNEV
ii.	Calcu <b>LA</b> tor		SNEV
iii.	Calcu <b>LA</b> tor		WNEV
	CAL	→	CU ~ LA

This affects a whole lot of words as listed in below,

<b>BEV</b>		<b>NEV</b>
<b>BATH</b> room	、	bath <b>ROOM</b>
<b>NOTE</b> book		note <b>BOOK</b>
<b>CH</b> allenge		cha <b>LL</b> enge
<b>MA</b> dam		ma <b>DAM</b>
<b>PLA</b> ntain		plan <b>TAIN</b>
<b>HE</b> len		he <b>LEN</b>
<b>SA</b> lad		sa <b>LAD</b>
In <b>VEST</b> igate		investi <b>GATE</b>
<b>RA</b> diator		rad <b>IA</b> tor
<b>TA</b> xi		ta <b>XI</b>
<b>KE</b> rosene		ke <b>RO</b> sene
<b>PE</b> troll		pe <b>TROL</b>

This variation in stress placement is also attestable at the intonation level on the sentences. Emphasis is hardly observed on a stretch of utterance that needs emphasis. On

this basis, it is at times difficult to differentiate a statement from a question in NEV as shown below;

He has eaten		(statement)
He has eaten?		(question)

### 1.3 CONCLUSION

Nigerian English variety (NEV) has different forms in terms of segments and the suprasegmentals. These differences are determined by a lot of factors like social, geographical location, education, age, sex, status and linguistics. It is important to add that most of the differences used in this text are realisations from the basilect and mesolect groups. However, some speakers in the acrolect, based on their field of education may still find their utterance in the described data.

- (i) All varieties of Nigerian English are non-rhotic in pronunciation
- (ii) There is a tendency towards syllable timing, that is., each syllable in a word is given equal prominence
- (iii) There is less vowel contrast. Often, there is no distinction between [i:] and [I]; [3:] and [ə ], as in the following pair of words: cheap and chip; court and cot; sheep and ship.
- (iv) There are differences in the pronunciation of consonants in different parts of the country. For instance, [θ] in think and [ ð ] in then are realised as [t] and [d] in the Southern part of Nigeria and as [s] and [z] in the North

### EXERCISE

With copious examples access the variety of English you are speaking as a Nigerian and show the areas of differences with the English native speaker variety.

## **1.4 SUMMARY**

Nigerian English Phonology affects the sounds and the suprasegmentals. The way Nigerians make use of these sounds and the suprasegmentals vary from the way the English native speakers make use of them. These differences are caused by social and linguistic factors. At the sound level there is a great difference in the realization of the consonant and the vowel sounds by a Nigerian speaker of English as a second language as compared to that of a native speaker. These segments in English are quite different from that of the Nigerian indigenous languages. For this reason second language speakers of English (Nigerians) have a number of difficulties in the pronunciation of utterances in English, difficulties arising mainly from interference of the sound patterns of their native languages on the sound system of English, these difficulties create variables in Nigerian English based on the geolinguistic area the speaker comes from. This is not limited to the sound segments alone but also to the suprasegments as is evident in the use of word stress and intonation by Nigerian speakers of English as a second language.

## **1.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Nigerian English variety is more noticeable at the phonological than any other level of analysis, discuss.
2. With adequate examples discuss the monophthongization of English diphthongs and triphthongs as a phonological process in Nigerian English.
3. Show how the English language in Nigeria differs from that of a native speaker in terms of word stress and intonation.

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## **UNIT 2: THE GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

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### **2. 0 INTRODUCTION**

Before delving into the grammatical features of Nigerian English, it is pertinent to consider the concept of “deviance” and “deviation”. Deviance and deviation presuppose that there is a particular variety of the English language that is considered the model that all speakers should aspire to speak. It has a set of rules or conventions which guide its structure and function. This variety has no regional colouring either in accent, pronunciation or grammar. In essence, Standard English is the form assumed to be shared and accepted by educated speakers throughout the English speaking world despite great variant in accent, grammar and vocabulary by different speakers. Nigerian English, as it

has shown some marked departure from the native speakers' usage of English. There have been attempts at distinguishing between instances of departure that are decidedly bad or wrong, having gone against known grammatical traditions and instances of departure that are still manageable. The former is deviance while the latter is deviation.

It can be rightly considered therefore that instances of departure recognised as deviation do not constitute any impediment to mutual intelligibility. Adetugbo (1980) even sees them as the features which characterise Standard Nigerian English. Some of these features are found at the grammatical level of Nigerian English and grammar refers to the whole structure of a language including the naming of its parts, its rules of tenses and its sounds system. Our grammar here refers strictly to the relationship between the grammatical components of the English language in Nigeria unless otherwise stated.

## **2.1 OBJECTIVES**

Our objectives in this unit are to;

- ✚ describe the English language in Nigeria at the sentence building level;
- ✚ discuss the structure and the rules that govern its structuring
- ✚ examine the features that make it different from the natives' speakers variety
- ✚ highlight features of Nigerianness in this variety of English.

## **2.2 THE GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

Grammar means rules and these rules are operative at all the levels of language analyses. It is a comprehensive term because it covers the naming part of a sentence, its rules of tense usage, structuring of affixes on words and the sound system of a language. The grammatical features in this unit cover the syntactic aspect which deals with the parsing of words into larger units in a language and in this instance the English language. English as a language has its own rules on how words should be structured into phrases, clauses and sentences. English as we know is a contact language in Nigeria and most Nigerians use it as a second language in addition to their first language or mother tongue. Being that these Nigerians have their first language already before learning English as a second language they have to structure English at times to be in line with their first

language and this makes the English language used in Nigeria unique. Some of the features that make English in Nigeria different from that of the neighbouring environment or that of the native speakers are faulty structuring, deviance in correlative conjunction, wrong use of phrasal verbs, omission of articles, wrong use of pronouns etc.

### **2.2.1 FAULTY STRUCTURING OF WORDS**

Firstly, faulty structuring of words results from using the wrong form of verb or, wrong verbalization, wrong usage of nouns, etc. Most of the examples as shown below in this unit are extracted from our national dailies. For example,

The police action “tantamount” to declaring a war on OPC

The word, “tantamount” is an adjective and it is therefore not grammatically correct to be used as though it were a verb. A separate verb should be used as in:

“The police action is tantamount to. ....”

The man is obviously an “illiterate”

Illiterate is an adjective but it is used here as a noun, hence it takes the indefinite article ‘an’. This should be:

“The man is obviously an illiterate person”

Or

“He is obviously illiterate”.

Nigerians are advised to be rest assure that fuel prices won’t be increased.

The use of ‘Be’ is not necessary and is uncalled for here. ‘Rest assured’ or ‘rest easy’ means one and the same thing; ‘there is no need to worry or panic’. The sentence ought to read:

‘Nigerians are advised to rest assured/easy’

‘You had better written your name on the book should in case it gets lost’



“Had better” is used to give advice or to make a threat. When used in this way it takes the infinitive form of the verb without ‘to’. ‘Should’ plus ‘in case’ is tautological; only one of the two should have been used. So the correct sentence will read:

‘You had better write your name on the book in case it gets lost’

This phenomenon, Chief Akinyele said made the country lost several millions of its inhabitants to the Europeans.

The sentence has the verb pattern *sub+ vb+noun/pron. + infinite phrase*; as in:

‘I saw the man across the road’

I heard someone say that

They made the murder look like an accident

Ajasin lived to see himself become a statesman.

In essence, this sentence pattern requires the use of the infinite form of the verb where lost is used such that the sentence would read:

‘This phenomenon, Chief Akinyele said, ‘made the country to lose several...’

For further examples, Hornby (1975:64) provides detailed explanation as in:

‘As last week Thursday evening the fuel scarcity was still biting hard’.

The problem here is that of the sequence of the adverbials “last week Thursday evening”. According to Hornby (1975: 178), when two or more adverbials of the same class or different classes are to be used in a sequence, the adverbial indicating a point of time or the period of time is usually placed first. When adverbials designating location are being used, they must come last. Consider the following examples:

‘I arrived on Thursday evening last week’.

‘We saw the man at 5 o’ clock yesterday’.

‘We met at Onikan Stadium on Lagos Island’.

The ordering “last week Thursday evening” is erroneous. It should be; Thursday evening, last week or last Thursday evening.

‘The official that referred the match was fair’.

A teacher teaches and a driver drives; but a referee referees a match: So, referred ought to be “refereed”.

‘The tradition dated back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century’.

This ought to be:

‘...dates back’.

‘Page what? I mean where is the answer?’

‘What for? Why should I get out?’

The problem here is basically that of the structuring of the sentences. The speaker’s mother tongue has interfered in the structuring of the sentence. These ought to be:

‘What page?’

‘For what or for what reason?’

Secondly, wrong Use of preposition is predominant in the grammatical structure of Nigerian English. The use of preposition in Nigerian English differs greatly from what it obtains in Standard English. The following are examples from educated Nigerian users of English.

‘Go and ask from the man what he wants’.

The use of the preposition from is not needed here. The sentence is complete as;

‘Go and ask the man...’

‘An attempt was made on the life of Senator Adesanya in Lagos Island’.

(The Guardian, 16 Jan. 1997).

‘The proliferation of secret cults in our campuses is the result of the authority’s inability to allow democracy thrive’.

(Editorial, National Concord, 18 Feb. 1999).

When prepositions are used to refer to the position of a person or an object relative to another location, we usually use either under, in or on. But since the implication here is that of “the surface; the best option is the preposition “on”. For instance:

‘An attempt was made on the life of Senator Adesanya on Lagos Island’.

‘The proliferation of secret cults on our campuses...’

‘The angry residents lay siege at NEPA district office in the area’.

Soldiers or a mob and sometimes people can lay siege on, at, or is a deviance use of the plural verb “lay to”. A person or group of persons, institution or a place can however be under siege.

‘Present at the occasion were local members of the party’.

The right preposition is on and not at. The sentence ought to be present on the occasion...

The preposition on equally collocates with “congratulate” where an average Nigerian English speaker is most likely to use for.

‘People do not save money like they used to do’.

Both like and as can be used for comparison when we are considering somebody’s action as being similar or dissimilar to the person’s earlier action. The use of as is however

preferable in the above sentence. Here, it has the implied meaning appearing to be or not appearing to be. For example:

‘The match was temporarily regarded as having been lost’.

‘She was praised as a tennis player’.

‘At around 4.30pm in the afternoon a doctor came out of the intensive care unit and at some minutes to 5pm, he went back’.

Besides the tautology in the use of p.m. and “in the afternoon”, the use of “at” is superfluous.

‘The car was parked 500 metres to his house’.

The use of ‘to’ is wrong; this ought to be ‘from’; i.e. measuring the distance from his house. The sentence should rather be.

The car was parked 500 metres from his house.

### **2.2.2 DEVIANCE IN CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTION**

The use of correlatives is quite different from what obtains in the native speakers use of the language. Correlative conjunctions are used in pairs to join two clauses. One of the conjuncts serves as the real subordinate while the second only emphasises the logical relationship between a subordinate clause and the super-ordinate clause as in:

‘Though he is rich, yet he is not satisfied with his success’.

The way Nigerian English users use these correlative conjuncts are however different from the way native speakers would do. The following examples are taken from Nigerian English speakers:

‘Hardly had the retired cops reached Lagos than they discovered that they had virtually walked into a sort of frying pan’.

‘No sooner had he reported the coup when he was arrested’.

‘The members of the sect were anxious not only to see their leader but eager to bail him out’.

The pairings are quite wrong. They ought to have been used as:

‘Hardly had the retired cops reached Lagos when...’

‘No sooner had he reported the coup than ’

The third example equally has to do with the right pairing but besides this, the placing is equally bad. In using correlatives, the simple rule to be followed is that each member of a pair should be placed before the same part of speech or class of word or the same kind of phrase. So, the example above ought to be:

‘The members of the sect were not only anxious to see their leader, but also ready to bail him out’.

‘Not only’ refers to anxious and therefore should be placed directly before it. But also is the other part of the pair and not ‘but’. Other examples of the correlatives are:

Scarcely...before; although/though... or; whether...or, if then, and etc.

### **2.2.3 THE WRONG USE OF PHRASAL VERBS**

These equally abound in Nigerian English.

‘Please, I am asking of Mrs. Tabitha Brownson’.

‘Asking of’ is wrong in this context when the speaker means that he would want to see the person in question. The right phrasal verb is as ‘asking for/ after’; meaning to demand. ‘Asking of’ is used to require a favour from somebody.

‘The lady could not cope up with the job’s demand’.

The use of ‘up’ is wrong here. This ought to be ‘cope with’.

Mr. Edun Duke, your Charisma, lofty mien and humility in your dealings and interaction with people has now put paid to this rare honour.

(Nigerian Tribune, 28 Feb. 1997)

Besides the error of Concord in using the singular verb *has* for the compound subject (*mien and humility*) the phrase ‘*put paid*’ is also wrongly used. ‘*To put paid*’ means to destroy or prevent something or someone as in:

‘The knee injury *put paid* to his football career’.

But in the sentence what the writer ought to have used is ‘*paid off for*’ as in

‘... and your interaction with people have now *paid off* this...’

‘In politics, democracy has resulted into the principle of one-man, one-vote’.

Instead of ‘*in*’, the writer has used ‘*into*’ and this is wrong. A similar judgment or analysis applies to the sentence.

‘The robbers’ confession *led into* the gang leader being arrested by the Police’.

It should be ‘*led to*’, and not ‘*led into*’

‘None of the candidates has shown any interest to step down for the other’.

‘To step down/ aside’ means to leave a job or vacate a position so that another person can take one’s place, e.g.

‘*Omotola plans to step down as the University’s Vice Chancellor before the next election*’.

What the writer ought to have used is ‘*stand down*’. So the sentence would have read:

‘*Omotola plans to stand down as the university’s Vice-Chancellor before the next election*’.

‘The religious leader advised parents to steer their children from a life of crime’.

The adverb ‘*away*’ is missing here. The correct usage is ‘*steer away from*’.

‘We all heard the news ‘*from*’ a radio broadcast yesterday’.

We listened to radio, but we hear news bulletin ‘*on*’ radio. The use of ‘*from*’ is wrong, a clear deviance from Standard English.

#### 2.2.4 THE USE OF ARTICLES

It is not uncommon to find expressions of educated Nigerian English speakers lacking the definite article 'the'. The use of articles is often considered as luxury in Nigerian English. Quite ironically, such speakers often use the same article where it is absolutely not necessary. For example,

'What does the privatisation means to the masses?'

Somehow, the first definite article 'the' is uncalled for.

'We would play for you the kinds of music that were popular in 1960s'.

The definite article, 'the', is missing before 1960's.

'I don't think he has experience for this kind of a job.'

Article 'the', is missing before experience, while 'a', that is not required before job has been inserted.

'Please don't make noise'.

This ought to have been:

'Please, don't make a noise'.

#### 2.2.5 WRONG USE OF PRONOUNS

It is equally common to find the expression of educated Nigerian English containing the wrong forms of pronoun.

'Due to me being a newcomer. I did not know what to do'.

'Where **me** is ought to be **my**'.

‘It was them that did the work’.

The objective case is being used where there is no object. The slot actually requires the use of the subjective case. Since the pronoun us, the antecedent of that the subject of the verb did. So, the sentence ought to read:

‘It was they that did the work’.

‘Me and you would go and see the man’.

Besides the fact that the sentence is wrong, a wrong case has equally been used. The pronouns constitute the compound subject; they therefore ought to be in the subjective case as in:

‘You and I would go...’

‘Armed robbers are human beings like you and I, please expose them’.

When a preposition comes directly before a pronoun, the pronoun must be in the objective case. The above is therefore wrong. It ought to be:

‘Armed robbers are human beings like you and me, please expose them’.

One should protect himself from the robbers.

‘Oneself’ ought to have been used in place of ‘himself’. ‘Himself’ does not go with its antecedent here.

## **2.2.6 WRONG FORMS OF PLURALS**

Deviations are usually found in the use of non-count noun as plural, the use of inappropriate words and most of the time, the use of local language in the structure of



sentences, restructuring of English idioms. All in all, deviation could either be lexical or sentential.

#### **2.2.6.1 INFLECTIONAL USE OF WORDS**

Deviations here show no breaking of any grammatical rules. The problem with the expressions is simply that, this expression will definitely not be used by native speakers to say the same thing intended by the speakers of the following expressions:

‘NEPA has taken the light’.

‘Light’ refers to the brightness that comes naturally from the sun, moon and a flame of fire. It may also come from an electricity bulb. But what the speaker is referring to here is ‘electricity’ or ‘power supply’. So, the sentence will read:

‘NEPA has cut power supply’

or better still;

‘There is power outage’ (failure or interruption)

Even with this error, any listener can readily infer the full implication of this expression.

‘We entered a bus because the distance was longer than we could possibly trek’.

What is intended here is ‘board’ or ‘got on’. ‘Enter’ cannot be used in place of ‘board’ or ‘get on’. This is a direct translation of an idea from the indigenous language. So, the sentences ought to read:

‘We board a bus...’ or ‘we got on board a bus’.

A similar thing applies to another expression with the same structure.

‘Because we were in a hurry we had to enter the rain’

‘If you fail to take necessary precautions, you are only doing yourself’.

This is a case of another direct translation from the local language. It should have been:

‘... you are doing so at your risk’.

‘The ill-fated commuter bus carried not less than forty-five passengers’

‘Less’ is inappropriately used with a count noun (passengers). ‘Less’ is used to refer to the amount of things that are regarded as non-count nouns. But since a count noun is involved here, the right word ought to be ‘fewer’ so, this sentence should have been:

‘The ill-fated commuter bus carried not fewer than forty-five passengers’.

We would say: *much* or less crowd, but many more or fewer police officers, *much* or *less* traffic, but *many* or *fewer* cars.

‘Driver stop for me, let me go down’.

To fall on the ground, or be reduced or be remembered is not what is intended by the speaker. The speaker means to say he wants to ‘get off’ or ‘alight’ from the bus.

#### **2.2.6.2 DEVIATION OF NON-COUNT NOUNS**

Another deviation from Standard English in Nigeria is the use of non-count nouns, whether concrete or abstract, as though they are count nouns, carrying ‘-s’ plural inflection. Some of these non-count nouns are known to several people and are used appropriately. Examples of such are: furniture, information, advice, and equipment.

The situation however, is not the same with several other non-count nouns as the examples below, drawn from Nigerian standard usage would show. For example while we are not likely to hear educated Nigerian speakers say:

‘I need three *furnitures*’.

The school laboratory needs some equipments.

*An* information given to me.

Your advices are quite encouraged.

The same cannot be said of the following from educated Nigerian usage.

‘During his *heydays*, Abacha was the sole ruler’.

‘Heyday’ is a non-count noun. It does not take ‘-s’ inflection.

Machineries, stationeries and infrastructures jointly take the largest share of the Ministry of Defence budget.

The underlined words do not take ‘-s’ plural inflection marker. Machinery refers to all machines and equipment used by somebody or an organisation. Stationery refers to all items such as paper, pen, pencil and envelopes needed for writing while infrastructure refers to all the social amenities like water, road, electricity and other structure and systems on which a country or society is built. They therefore do not take a plural ‘-s’ inflection.

The same goes for all the other non-count nouns used in the following sentences.

‘The whereabouts of some of Abacha’s men are still unknown’.

The mistaken use of whereabouts as plural lead to the erroneous use of plural verb ‘are’. Both should be in singular.

‘Does the budget contain all the essential elements and *inputs*’?

‘Input’ is a non-count noun.

(Business Week Page, The Guardian, 9/2/97)

The hospital has no pipe-born water, no sewage system, no beddings.

‘Bedding’ is non-count. It takes no ‘- s’.

Prof. Mulani Jibril present responsibilities make it mandatory that he warns the nation of possible unsavory fall outs.

The Guardian Edition (June ’97).

‘The rural folks are quite dissatisfied with the distribution of the oil revenue’.

‘The incidences of armed robbery is getting too much’.

‘The wise counsels of the elders should always be valued’.

‘Obasanjo has not disappointed the electorates’.

Electorate refers to generality of the people that ballot. Voters can be pluralized as ‘voters’ but ‘electorate’ cannot be.

‘Ladies with different *make-ups* visit the hotel regularly’.

‘Make-up’ is a non-count noun and it refers to powder and coloured substances used on one’s face to improve or change one’s appearance. The use of ‘-s’ inflection with it is a deviation from the standard usage.

‘The bomb exploded on the laps of Omotoshola’.

(The Guardian, 29/11/96)

‘Lap’, though a count noun is usually used as a singular noun as in:

‘The baby sat on his mother’s lap’.

‘The babies sat on their mother’s laps’.

As used here, lap means ‘the part from waist to knees of a person when they are sitting down’. Thereafter, it ought to read lap.

‘The bomb exploded on Omotoshola’s lap’.

‘I had only fruits for my lunch’.

*Fruit* can be used either as singular or plural. But sadly enough, most educated Nigerian English speakers do not distinguish between the contexts that call for singular and the one that calls for plurality, e.g. plural form is required as in:

‘You need tropical *fruits* like mango, paw-paw’.

### **2.2.7 THE USE OF IDIOMS**

Nigerian speakers of English do not only deviate from the norms in the use of simple words in the structuring of their sentences, but also in the way they use the English idioms. The way Nigerians employ these expressions is, to say the least, very faulty.

Grammatically and semantically, idioms have special characteristics. They must be recorded in our mental dictionary as single lexical items, having a particular meaning, for example, ‘throw in the sponge’ means ‘to accept defeat’ or to surrender.

We must equally learn the syntactic constraints in the use of idioms. Most idioms do not allow re-structuring or rephrasing, and substitution of items. We cannot re-arrange.

‘I cannot put up with these things’.

To read:

‘These are the things up with which I can’t put’.

Or, in the alternative, try to substitute an item in,

‘He continues to throw his weight around’.

To read:

‘He continues to throw his body around’.

These are things that one learns to incorporate in one’s usage of idioms. With Nigerian speakers of English however, this is not the case. An average educated person while speaking deletes substitutes and sometimes restructures idioms at will, not minding whether or not it conforms to the norm. The following are examples of such Nigerian-English usage of the English idioms:

M.K.O.’s generosity was well known to all and sundries.

‘All and sundry’ means everybody, that is, all types of people. It does not take a plural marker ‘-s.’

If the team wants to qualify they should gather their acts together.

‘Act’, as used in this context should not take is ‘-s’. It is fixed.

The plan was not allowed to see the light of day.

The addition of article *the*, before day is necessary. The idiom to the native speakers is, ‘...*see the light of the day*’.

‘The robbers did not know what the day held in stock for them’.

The replacement of ‘store’ with ‘stock is unacceptable. The idiom is ‘hold in store’. ‘Stock’ as used here means the supply of something.

‘Many unscrupulous Nigerians joined the bandwagon of Abacha’s cronies’.

The idioms, as used by the native speakers are to jump/climb/get on the bandwagon. The replacement of ‘jump’ with ‘join’ is totally Nigerian in origin.

‘Your elevation is another feather *to* your cap’.

‘*A feather in one’s cap*’ means an honour one has won or something to be proud of. The right arrangement is:

“...another feather in your cap”

‘President Obasanjo has been *on* the saddle for more than eight years’.

The correct expression is: to be “*in the saddle*”.

‘By his refusal, he has bitten the *finger* that fed him’.

“To bite the hand that fed one” is to act badly towards one’s benefactor. It is not substituted with ‘finger’.

‘Those calling for national conference and yet want the government to provide social amenities are only trying to eat their cake and have it’.

This is a re-arrangement of idiom by Nigerians. To educated speakers, whether they are natives or bilinguals, this should be; ‘...have their cake and eat it’

‘There is a rumour *making the rounds* that the military want to strike again’.

The formal idiom is “to go the rounds”, meaning to be passed from person to person or place-to-place. ‘*Making the rounds*’ is a typical Nigerian deviation.

‘The Abacha family is not ready to give up their “*ill-gotten fortune*”.

Standard English knows ‘ill-gotten gains or ‘wealth’.

‘If nothing else, this new exchange rate will satisfy those who have consistently argued that the market-led value of the Naira *sets no score* by the national currency’.

(Tempo Editorial, 9 Jan., 1997)

“To set or lay store by something” is to value such a thing greatly. It is a formal idiom and it does not allow any restructuring or replacement. The replacement of ‘store’ with ‘score’ is a total deviation.

## **EXERCISE**

From at least ten Nigerian newspapers sort out the grammatical characteristics of Nigerian English citing the pages they are extracted from and give their correct or standard forms.

## **2.3 CONCLUSION**

The characteristics of Nigerian English appear in all the levels of language analysis. The grammatical characteristics of Nigerian English have to do with the deviation from the rules of combining of words into phrases, clauses and sentences. These deviations can be seen in the areas of faulty structuring of words, wrong use of correlative conjunctions, wrong collocation of verbs and phrasal verbs, wrong application of pronouns, plurals and idioms. Though these mark out Nigerian English from that of a native speaker this does not mean that Nigerian English is filled with errors. In every language there is always a standard and non-m standard forms. These have been fully discussed in module 4 units 1 and 2.

## **2.4 SUMMARY**

Drawing a line between the two terms, deviance and deviation, should not pose much problem, given the illustrations so far made. At this point, we must have discovered that the difference between the two is that of conformation to the grammatical norms, and of general acceptability. Both terms mark obvious departure from the conventions of the language. But, while one is taken as being typical, the other is not. As the examples have shown, deviance cuts across levels of usage of the language. That is, it covers



morphemes, syntax, pronunciation and etc. Deviation on the other hand is usually restricted to lexical item and at times too, idiomatic expressions. Finally, it must be said that both are adaptations of English language to a new environment. But far from suggesting any inability for appropriate usage on the part of Nigerian English speakers, the foregoing are only signs of how a healthy language is capable of responding to new social and cultural conditions and it is not enough to say that there is no Nigerian English or what we have is just errors.

## **2.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. With copious data, discuss the features of Nigerian English at the grammatical level.
2. Someone you met argued that there is nothing like Nigerian English, all we have is package of errors. What will be your reaction to this argument?

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## **UNIT 3: THE LEXICO-SEMANTIC FEATURES OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

### **CONTENTS**

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 The Lexico-Semantic Features of Nigerian English
  - 3.2.1 Loan Words
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### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

Lexico-Semantics as a language concept is derived from the combination of “lexical” and “semantics”. ‘Lexical’ is derived from the word “lexis” and lexis is the word lists in a language or the set of all the words and idioms of any language. These are the smallest units in the meaning system of a language that can be distinguished from other smaller units. “Semantics” is the study of the meaning of words in a language and meaning plays an important part in grammatical analysis of a language. The term “Lexico-semantics refers to the relationship between the lexicon of a language (i.e., its root-words and word-stems) and the various possible semantic categories created by the human mind. Every language (and particularly every language family) divides the word up differently in terms of what sorts of concepts are made into words and how the meanings of those words reflect the reality around us. In other words, the lexico-semantics of a language answers the questions, what semantic concepts does this language have? Psycho-linguistics categorizes words into autonomous words and how each of these categories is internally organized. Some words are used mostly in the Nigerian context and would be unfamiliar to people who are not natives are familiar to a Nigerian or Nigerian language

itself. Certain words might have more than one meaning ascribed to it in different geographical areas and this can bring about controversy, misunderstanding, ambiguity and misconception.

### 3.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to,

- ✚ explain lexico-semantics as a resource of language development;
- ✚ describe how the lexes in Nigerian English are formed;
- ✚ identify the processes involved in the Nigerian English Lexico-semantics; and and
- ✚ show how these lexes and meaning are related in Nigerian English.

### 3.2 THE LEXICO-SEMANTIC FEATURES OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH

Lexico-semantics is the lexically or semantically ordered list of words in a language, dialect or socio-lect or a list of terminology for a specific discipline. At the lexical level, it is observed that there are transfers from the local languages (especially the three major, regional languages: Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa) and mostly from the following areas: music, clothing, indigenous foods, traditional religious beliefs, local institutions, flora and fauna, etc. as well as different creative strategies, such as the lexification of acronyms, neologisms and semantic extension. Generally, most of the items from music, clothing and foods are left intact in their substrate forms for want of better terminology. Examples of this is clearly illustrated in Wole Soyinka's *Collected Poems 2*

(1) Towards the end of this speech the sound of 'gangan' drums is heard, coming from the side opposite the hut. A boy enters carrying a drum on each shoulder (CP2: 152).

(2) A man in an elaborate 'agbada' outfit, with long train and a cap is standing right, downstage, with a sheaf of notes in his hand (CP2: 167).

In examples (1) and (2) above, we see instances of direct transfer from Yoruba language. The strategy Soyinka uses here is to leave the Yoruba words in quotes to signal to the reader that these are direct loans. 'Gangan' is a type of drum, also referred to sometimes as the "talking drum," the latter being itself a coinage. This type of drum is

common among the Yoruba and it is used to sing praises of people, following the tonal patterns of Yoruba language. 'Agbada' is to the Yoruba what the suit is to the Britons and the Americans. In fact, in Nigeria it has been officially designated the national dress and could be worn on formal occasions, including official government functions, in place of the British-introduced suit. It is also referred to as the 'flowing gown' (also a coinage).

Another example is a conversation that ensued in a restaurant and is between a hungry customer and a waiter;

*Bola:* What do you have on the menu today?

*Waiter:* We have dodo, akara, amala, eba and tuwo.

*Bola:* What about soup, what kind of soup do you have today?

*Waiter:* We have egusi soup, ewedu and ogbono. Which one would you prefer?  
We also have bush meat, obokun, oku-eko and ponmo.

*Bola:* Okay, give me a plate of amala, egusi soup and bush meat...

How much will that be?

*Waiter:* Three hundred fifty naira.

In the examples above, there are lots of names of indigenous foods – akara, eba, egusi, tuwo, amala, ogbono, ewedu, etc, which vocabularies are taken directly from the three majority languages of Nigeria. Special mention, though, needs to be made of the lexical item “soup”, in the examples above which witness a lot of names from the indigenous soups: egusi soup, ewedu and ogbono, etc. – with vocabulary taken directly from the three majority languages of Nigeria.

Mention though, needs to be made of the lexical item “soup” in the above example. In Nigerian English soup has a far broader semantic range than its British English

counterpart. While it is mainly eaten as an appetizer, at the beginning of a meal, or even taken just by itself, in both British English and Standard American English, in Nigerian English soup is generally used as a side dish to eat the main meal, especially the traditional food from root-related tubers such as yam, cassava, cocoyam, etc. It is prepared from leafy vegetables mainly, and could be cooked with meat, fish or other sea foods. It is generally not eaten alone. This lexical item is a good example of semantic extension that is a common feature of Nigerian English.

Semantics is the conventional meaning of words, phrases and sentences in a language, but the linguists and philosophers believe that semantics deals with meaning. According to Yule (2002:114), semantics is the branch of linguistics study that deals with the study of the conventional meaning of words, phrases and sentences in a language. In semantics focus is always on what the words conventionally mean rather than on what a speaker might want the words to mean on a particular occasion. Some of the lexico-semantic features that are dominant in the structure of English language in Nigeria are; loan words, coinages and shifts. The use of certain lexical items with meanings that are understood only in the Nigerian context and by Nigerians only has been identified as characterizing Nigerian English, and generally, nativization (is a process whereby a language that is not indigenous to a community adapts to the culture and language of a particular community) manifest in the following forms at this level. In this case, four groupings will be considered under the Nigerian English lexical/semantics items: loanwords, coinages, and semantic shifts

### **3.2.1 LOAN WORDS**

Loan words are the wholesale transfer (or borrowing) of lexical items from Nigerian languages into English notable are the following:

“*Agbada*” a kind of flowing dress for men, especially among the Yoruba.

For example, ‘Chief Ogini wore agbada to the wedding ceremony.’

“*Babanriga*” a kind of long, loose dress for men, especially among the Hausas.

For example, ‘I really like your babanriga.

“Akara” an item of food, also referred to as ‘bean cake’

“Akamu” *pap*.

For example; This morning I ate *akara* and *akamu*.

Other loan words found in the structure of English language in Nigeria are: *akpu*, *banga*, *eba*, *egusi*, *ogbono*, *tuwo* ‘soup’ (in various Nigerian languages).

For examples: ‘Anytime I eat *eba* I have stomach upset’

‘Can I eat some *tuwo* rice?’;

‘I don’t like the smell of *akpu*’;

‘I will like to eat *ogbono* soup mixed with *egusi*

‘*Danfo*, *okada* a mode of transportation as in,

‘You either go by *danfo* or you take an *okada*.’

*Adakaji* and *oba* are chieftaincy titles, as in:

‘The *Adakaji* II was at the coronation of the *oba* of Lagos.

Such instances indicate clearly that items have been borrowed into the language because they cannot be accurately translated into English and still maintain the speakers intended meaning. However, once a word has been borrowed into English in Nigeria they become part of the vocabulary of English in Nigeria in the same way as such now widely used former borrowings as *agenda* from Latin, *cosmos* from Greek, and *rendezvous* from French. These particular words have been universalized, but communities of users of English everywhere have their distinctive vocabularies. The range of loan words used in Nigeria is entirely pragmatic and particularly rich. Without such words, cultural expression and identity as regards food and mode of dressing, transport, customs and so on would not have been possible. They bridge a gap that English could not easily handle without such a straightforward process of absorption, a process which has enlarged and enriched the vocabulary of English for centuries, whether or not such terms are (eventually) internationalized, as with *agenda* from Latin, *chaos* from Greek, and *kangaroo* from an Aboriginal Australian language. All such borrowed words serve to fill the inevitable gaps in all languages. As a result, in this instance, where English was originally unable to handle distinctively Nigerian and other West African phenomena and concepts, it becomes capable of doing so and in the process itself becomes a language of

West Africa. Mother tongue (MT) word counts as loan words in Nigerian English as long as it satisfies the following conditions if;

- a. It has no exact English equivalent.
- b. It is used in preference to the English equivalent if such an equivalent exists.
- c. It occurs regularly and systematically in the English speech of Nigerian users.

Loan words are categorized into four groups as:

- a. Loan-words which are in fairly general use throughout Nigeria.
- b. Loan-words in general use and are mainly in either the Northern or the Southern of the country.
- c. Loan-words that are restricted in usage to the ethnic groups from which mother tongue they are derived.
- d. Loan words that are partial and such are referred to as ‘particles’ if it is found in one geographical area only.

Some examples of loan-words are shown below:

<b>Word in NE</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Definitions / Remarks.</b>
Akamu	Hausa	Guinea Corn gruel / hot pap.
Suya	Hausa	Strips of cow meat grilled over open fire on skewers.
Agbada	Yoruba	Long gown worn by men.
Fura	Hausa	Balls of millet flour
<b>Partial loan-words.</b>		
Oga	Yoruba	Big man, master.
Sisi	“	Young woman.
Bo	Pidgin	My friend. Love.
Ya dabe	Hausa	May you live long.
Oho	Hausa	‘What do I hear?’



## EXERCISE

1, a) What are loan words?

b) With copious examples discuss the sources of loan words in Nigerian English Lexico-semantics.

### 3.2.2 COINAGES.

Certain words or lexical items have meanings that are understood only in the Nigerian context and these lexical items are borrowed into or coined in local English to suit the Nigerian environment, to such an extent that, when they are used, they immediately mark a statement or a piece of writing as characteristics of Nigerian English. Often, however, local words are not adopted but the forms and meanings of everyday English words are extended, and perhaps adapted, to cover particular local phenomena and situations.

Some examples: “*backyard*”.

This is normally used to refer to pieces of wood used in cooking, as in

‘The firewood is in the backyard’

But can also be used in vulgarity to refer to ‘buttocks’, as in,

‘Look at that lady’s backyard!’

“Been-to” is a person who has returned to Nigeria after a long stay overseas: ‘the way he speaks, everybody knows that he is a been-to.

“Chewing-stick” a piece of wood which can be softened by chewing and moisturing and which serves the purpose of teeth-cleaning, as in,

“‘Give me a *chewing stick*; I need to clean my teeth”.

“Cover-cloth” is a long piece of cloth usually wrapped around the body when one lies down to sleep as,

‘The boy is sleeping, where is his *cover-cloth*?’

“Ghana-must-go” is a jut bag used mostly by Ghanaians in packing their property in a haste when the illegal Ghanaian resident in Nigeria were ordered to go back to their country in 1982. Today this bag is a symbol of bribe, as in:

‘*Ghana-must-go* bags exchanged hands in the National Assembly.’

“*Half-current* voltage” from electricity that is not fully generated: ‘NEPA [the electricity company] brought *half-current*.’

*Overload* an excess number of passengers or goods carried by a vehicle:

‘The lorry has bad tyres, yet it is carrying *overload*.’

*Scale through* move easily through in solving of a problem:, as in;

‘At last, I have *scaled through*

The acronym *J.A.M.B.* which stands for Joint Admission and Matriculation Board a national Board that standardizes and administers admission examinations to all Nigerian public universities and polytechnics– has now been frozen into a single lexical item: *Jamb*. But this coinage has even a broader semantic scope. It is used to refer to both the board that administers the examination as well as the examination administered by the board: the Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination (J.A.M.E.). Similarly, ABU is a lexical item coined from the acronym for the Ahmadu Bello University, the foremost tertiary institution in northern Nigeria. UI, like ABU, is also another frozen acronym for the University of Ibadan, ‘Nigeria’s premier university’. ‘Ife’ is the name of the traditional cradle of the Yoruba as well as the name, by extension, of the University located in that city (University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, ‘O.A.U’).

### 3.2.3 SEMANTIC SHIFTS OR EXTENTIONS.

In Nigerian English, some lexical items have had their meanings shifted, restricted, or extended, as with: “*trek*” walk a short distance. For example,

‘Are you going to *trek* to your house?’

“Machine” is a general name for a motor cycle, as in,

‘I will climb *machine* to the junction, I cannot trek.’

‘Station’ is used for the place where one works, as in,

‘I will go back to my *station* on Monday morning.’

‘Settle’ for *offer* of gratification of one form or another in order to win favour or bribe: as in;

‘I have *settled* all the members of the House of Representatives.’

‘Long legs’ for corruption involving nepotism, as in,

‘Your father should use his *long legs* to get you a job.’

‘Big/senior boys are used is used for men who are rich and influential as in,

‘That hotel is for *big boys* only.’

‘Four-one-nine (‘419’)’ refers to a fraudster or cheat as in,

‘Jerry is a *four-one-nine*. He has duped me!’

In addition to these examples, there is the extension of existing meaning and use to cover new areas of experience. This is particularly observable with reference to kinship terms, which reflect the structure of the Nigerian family and society. The words father, mother/mummy, sister, brother, and uncle are being extended to cover someone with no biological relationship to the person concerned. The term ‘brother’ may have an extended meaning that includes a man of the same tribe or denomination, and ‘uncle’ may be used to refer not only to one’s mother or father’s brother (or even one’s sister’s husband), but also to any man much older than a younger person or a man whose name is not known.

In sum, it may look as if Nigerian English is all about wrong usage or aberrant structures. That is very far from the truth. One of the most interesting facts about this dialect is its close affinity to Standard British English. With very strong adherence to the requirements of formal, pedagogic and standard usage, Nigerians’ use of English may be described as ‘excessively correct’, a fact constantly attested by the tenor observed even in very relaxed fields of usage.

It has been made clear that the features discussed in this work are indexical markers in Nigeria and most importantly the Nigerian English, but also obvious that English has become a Nigerian language and ‘dialect’ by its opportunity of being nativized i.e. fusing into it local cultural elements particularly in the lexical, semantics and pragmatic dimension, yet, it is still not indigenous to Nigeria but borrowed.

### **3.3 CONCLUSION**

The Lexico-Semantics of Nigerian English is extrapolated with the structure of Nigerian indigenous languages. Most lexical items are borrowed from the three major indigenous languages and few other from other Nigerian languages based on the area the English language is used. However, there are some lexical items that have wider coverage of usage than others. Some of these lexes are coined, borrowed or neologized from the Nigerian local languages and they have extended meaning. Though some of these lexes

constitute total deviation from the norms of Standard English usage they should not be considered as deviance structures as these are the elements that give this variety a special flavour. This is what makes it to be different from the varieties spoken in other parts of the world. This is what makes the variety domesticated, nativized and Nigerianised.

### **3.4 SUMMARY**

Lexico-Semantics refers to the relationship between the lexicon of a language (i.e., its root-words and word-stems) and the various possible semantic categories created by the human mind. Every language (and particularly every language family) divides the word differently in terms of what sorts of concepts are made into words and how the meanings of those words reflect the reality around us. Most lexical items are borrowed from the three major indigenous languages and few other from other Nigerian languages based on the area the English language is used. However, there are some lexical items that have wider coverage of usage than others. Some of these lexes are coined, borrowed or neologized from the Nigerian local languages and they have extended meaning.

### **3.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. List and discuss the major processes that the Lexico-semantics of English language in Nigeria are derived from.
2. With what is evolved from the processes in Nigerian Lexico-semantics, would you say that English language in Nigeria is a bunch of deviant or deviation from standard.

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## **UNIT 4: THE DISCOURSE FEATURES IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

### **CONTENTS**




- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 The Discourse Features in Nigerian English
- 4.3 Conclusion
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 4.6 References

### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

Discourse is language use in relation to social, political and cultural formation of the society that uses it. Discourse encompasses the use of spoken, written and signed language and the different forms of communication in a society that define social relations and social identity of its users, and is not restricted to 'non-fictional' (eg. stylistics) nor verbal (eg. gesture and visual) materials. As a language can not be separated from the culture of its users, the discourse feature of a language must surely reflect the socio-cultural norms of the speakers.

### **4.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to;

-  assess Nigerian English in relation to discourse features
-  discuss the discourse features of Nigerian English.
-  list the factors influencing the choice of discourse particles in Nigerian English.

## **4.2 THE DISCOURSE FEATURES IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

Linguists had predicted the phenomenal diffusion and adaptation of English nearly a half century ago. For example, Halliday, MacIntosh and Stevens (1964) and Greenberg (1966) cited in Norrish (1997) had anticipated two changes. First, the ownership of the so-called native English countries and native English speakers would come to an end. Secondly, English would diversify, and consequently local varieties of the language would develop. To use Thumboo's (2001) words, the language would set into new habitations, and re-orientate itself to serve other cultures and, as a result, would acquire new names such as Nigerian English, Indian English, Filipino English, South African English, and so on.

Obviously, the Thumboo's prediction has come true and the new varieties require fresh terms to designate the processes that characterize them. Therefore, it is no wonder that critical literature is replete with a whole bunch of expressions to describe the diffusion and nativization of English: pluralization, diversification, globalization, internationalization, universalization; hybridization, localization, indigenization; decolonization, dehegemonization, liberation of the English language, and so on.

Nigerian creative writers like Soyinka, Achebe and Ojaide consciously deviate from the norms of the so-called native varieties of English. Thus, the adoption of English for literary writing is another instance of nativization, which extends the process to expressive domains. The new users of English exploit the protein potential of English to satisfy their communicative needs. The creative users of English possess it, make it their own, bend it to their will, and assert themselves through it rather than submit to the dictates of its norms. They borrow it, and recreate, stretch, extend, contort, and indigenize it.

Needless to say, these linguistic changes are beyond the control of the linguist and the language planner. When English migrates to foreign countries, it diffuses and internationalizes, acculturates and indigenizes, and adapts and diversifies. The new users absorb, re-orient, appropriate and transform it. They liberate it to embody the energies of

their respective sensibilities. The linguistic, social and cultural contexts of Nigeria necessitate, initiate and propel the development of new varieties of English. Thus, the different dialects of English serve as acts of identity. In this view, English is no longer a Western language with Western canonicity (Kachru, cited in Prendergast 1998). The major varieties of English in Africa have broken the umbilical ties with the language.

A logical parallel of the above deconstruction of the native variety myth is the justification of the hybridization of the language by non-native creative writers. It would be in the fitness of things to note how some Nigerian creative writers perceive the adoption of English for literary creativity.

Achebe (1965, p. 29) feels that it is neither necessary nor desirable for him to use English like a native writer does. He (1975, p. 62) wants the English language to carry the weight of his African experience. Obviously, the native variety in its unchanged form is incapable of serving that purpose. To achieve that objective, it will have to be new English, still in communion with its 'ancestral home' but altered to suit its new African surroundings. Ojaide (1987, pp. 165-167), also, professes that the English that he writes and speaks is neither mainstream British nor American, and he cherishes this uniqueness. The sensibility that he expresses is African sensibility, which is different from Western and Asian sensibilities, though a little closer to the Asian sensibility. His writing, though in English, has its roots in Africa, not in England or North America. Being a cultural standard bearer of the African world, not of the British or Western world, he is free to manipulate English to his advantage. Soyinka (1993, p. 88) regards native English as a linguistic blade in the hands of the traditional cultural castrator, which black people have twisted to carve new concepts into the flesh of white supremacy.

Raja Rao (1938) echoes the views expressed by Achebe, Ojaide, and Soyinka. In the foreword to *Kanthapura* he admits that "a language that is not one's own" is inadequate to express "the spirit that is one's own". He confesses that the various shades and omissions of certain thought-movement look maltreated in a foreign language. Perhaps it is because of this inadequacy that Dasgupta (1993, p. 201) labels English as an alien language, an aunt, not a mother. His contention is that even if Indians have been using and exploiting

English, it has not got close to their hearts. It is not one of them although it is an important presence to be respected.

Each of the new Englishes has distinct characteristics, as well as distinct linguistic and cultural identities, largely due to the different historical, geographical, political and socio-cultural factors that gave birth to them. Thus, Nigerian English will differ from either Ghanaian or Indian English. Each variety, however, will also have various sub-varieties or dialects, reflecting its multilingual environment. The depth of impact at various linguistic levels in each variety will be determined by the degree of localization of English.

Likewise, Adekunle (1985), using the theory of language change and linguistic variation, puts forth cultural needs, geographical and linguistic factors as responsible for changes in English language usage in Nigeria. These changes, according to him, are rapid and most far-reaching in the semantic component of the language and are the result of inexorable pressure in the social environment of the language. According to Akere (1982), Nigerian English is an aggregate of heterogeneous grammatical structures common to Nigerian usage, having varying pronunciation peculiarities as well as socially constrained usage of some lexical items.

Jibril (1982) too is quick to warn that there is no unanimity in the assessment of Nigerian linguists as to what he calls the “citizen status” of Nigerian English. He nevertheless proceeds to argue that Nigerian English does not have to possess a common linguistic feature to qualify it as Nigerian, since even British English (BE) itself has local variations and dialectal features. This further buttresses Odumuh’s argument that English language does not have to be homogeneous to qualify as being indigenous to Nigeria

The features that have been proposed as identifying characteristics of Nigerian English are mostly similar in nature at the levels of phonetics and phonology, syntax, lexis and semantics; discourse, speech acts and stylistics. These features share a lot of common ground with those of the new Englishes advanced by Kachru (1982, 1992b, etc.) and several others. According to most of the contributors and analysts of the Nigerian



situation, Nigerian writers have been some of the major contributors to the standardization of Nigerian English. At the lexical level, there is a wholesale transfer from the local languages (especially the three major, regional languages – Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa) and mostly from the following areas: music, clothing, indigenous foods, traditional religious beliefs, local institutions, flora and fauna, etc. as well as different creative strategies, such as the lexification of acronyms, neologisms and semantic extension. Generally, most of the items from music, clothing and foods are left intact in their substrate forms, for want of better terminology. Words such as *dodo*, *akara*, *amala*, *eba*, *egusi*, *ewedu*, *obokun*, *oku-eko* and *ponmo* are all direct loans from Yoruba language into Nigerian English; *tuwo* is a popular food among the Hausa, while *ogbono* is a sauce (“soup” in NE) common among the Igbo. *Dodo* is the Yoruba language name for fried plantain; *akara* is a snack made from black-eyed peas; *amala* is a meal from yam flour while *eba* is made from cassava grit popularly known as *gari* - a popular cereal-type snack among Nigerians, *egusi* is melon-seed sauce, whereas *ewedu* is a leafy vegetable sauce. *Obokun* is an expensive type of fish while *oku-Eko* is a popular and relatively cheap frozen fish and *ponmo* is cow-hide.

Morpho-syntactically, discourse features in Nigerian English are not as numerous as those at the vocabulary domain, it appears to be the most interesting of all (albeit very subtle and not as easily detected) and it is at this level that Nigerian creative writers have blossomed and excelled, as they use different innovative strategies and structures from the local languages: what Sridhar refers to as “culture-bound speech patterns” (Sridhar 1982: 297, 299). There are a lot of expressions English Nigerian discourse that are English at the surface but have the Nigerian indigenous languages underlying structures (i.e. the vocabulary is English but the syntax is from a substrate language). Reduplication, translation of L1 proverbs and sayings are just but a few of these strategies. Most African languages, especially those of the Kwa group, are well known for their use of reduplication (*katakata* (scatter) - confusion, chaos, *wakawaka* (walk) - wander perpetually, *toktok* (talk) – gossip) for grammatical purposes, such as intensification and change of grammatical category. These strategies have been the hallmark of Nigerian creative writers. This type of transfer is not limited to writers and literary texts alone. It is

also common in day-to-day conversations among Nigerians with varying levels of Western education. Other differences characteristic of NE include the transfer of categories, generalization of forms, omission of certain obligatory grammatical elements (in BE).

At the discourse level, which is the focus of this unit, there are a lot of features transferred into English language from the L1, especially since rules of appropriateness differ from society to society and from culture to culture. It therefore goes without saying that communicative strategies in Nigerian English will definitely be different from those in British English. Most of these are used either to avoid direct confrontation or even to give respect to an older person during a conversation (cf. face works, Goffman 1955; cooperative principle, Grice 1975; ethnography of communication, Hymes 1974). Among the Yoruba, especially, and in most of Africa, it is not socially and culturally appropriate to confront people directly and the “age factor” (i.e. respect for age) always requires certain discourse strategies to avoid face threatening acts as well as to save face. At times proverbs are used to avoid direct confrontation during communicative acts.

Another important aspect of Nigerian English discourse pattern is that of code-switching (or even code-mixing – a phenomenon Agheyisi (1977) refers to as “interlarded speech”), also referred to as “speech stratification” by Sridhar (1982). Many Nigerian creative writers use this a lot in their writings as a means of signaling changes in the linguistic environment of characters, such as the switch to and from different varieties of Nigerian English, Pidgin or an L1, depending on change in addressee or even the status or age of different addressees. In day to day speech among Nigerian English speakers, a lot of code-switching takes place, and serves as discourse markers or indicators.

“No mind am, jare”. (i.e. Please, don’t mind him)

This is a very common occurrence in Nigerian English, due largely to the wide linguistic repertoire of an average Nigerian English speaker. For instance, the same Nigerian English speaker could switch from standard Nigerian English to a less standard Nigerian English and move from there to Yoruba or Igbo and then to Pidgin, or even Yoruba,

depending on the changes in the sociolinguistic environment. These switches will also be accompanied by appropriate changes in discourse strategies, depending on the age or status of the interlocutors involved.

Another discourse feature of Nigerian English that we observe in conversations is the repetitive use of the term of title words by some speakers when talking with their superiors like “sir, chief, doctor, prof; madam” etc. These discourse patterns are transfers from Nigerian indigenous languages where respect is sometimes marked by the repetitive use of terms of address or titles. Sir and Ma, although loans from English language, have come to acquire a far wider range of usage and connotations in Nigerian languages, and these in turn are transferred into Nigerian English by the Nigerian speakers. There are many other discourse or communicative strategies in Nigerian English than what are discussed in this unit.

### **EXERCISE**

- a. Identify discourse features of any variety of English of your choice.
- b. What is reduplication and how does it function as a discourse strategy in Nigerian English?

### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

The linguistic, social and cultural contexts of Nigeria necessitate, initiate and propel the development of new varieties of English. Thus, the different dialects of English serve as acts of identity. Nigerian English differs from other varieties of English in its lexis, syntax and discourse features. It is mostly at the syntactic and discourse levels that Nigerians show their creativity as they use different innovative strategies and structures from the local languages to make a foreign language submit to a local use.

### **4.4 SUMMARY**

The features that have been proposed as identifying characteristics of Nigerian English are mostly similar in nature at the levels of phonetics and phonology, syntax, lexis and semantics; discourse, speech acts and stylistics. At the lexical level, there is a wholesale

transfer from the local languages (especially the three major, regional languages – Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa) whereas at the morphosyntactic level different innovative strategies and structures from the local languages have been used as discourse strategies.

At times proverbs are used as discourse strategy in Nigerian English to avoid direct confrontation during communicative acts. Another important aspect of Nigerian English discourse pattern is that of code-switching depending on the changes in the sociolinguistic environment. These switches will also be accompanied by appropriate changes in discourse strategies, depending on the age or status of the interlocutors involved as well as the repetitive use of the term of title words by some speakers when talking with their superiors.

#### **4.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Discuss the various discourse features in Nigerian English at the lexical level and morpho-syntax level.
2. List and discuss the different discourse strategies in Nigerian English.
2. Language cannot be divorced from the culture of its speakers. Discuss this in relation to the Nigerian English.

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## **MODULE 4: VARIETIES OF ENGLISH IN NIGERIA**

**Unit 1: Standard Nigerian English**

**Unit 2: Non-Standard Nigerian English**

**Unit 3: Nigerian Pidgin English and its Functions**

**Unit 4: Structural Difference between Pidgin English and English Language**

**Unit 5: Creoles**

### **UNIT 1: STANDARD NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Standard English
  - 1.2.1 Standard Nigerian English
- 1.3 Conclusion
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Tutor Marked Assignments
- 1.6 References

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION,**

Several articles and learned treatise have been written in the last decade or two on the concept of Nigerian English. This development is in consonance with the notion of institutionalized ‘non-native Englishes’: the new Englishes which have emerged in recent years. English has long ceased to be the sole property of the English people, having gained widespread use in the domains of education, journalism, public administration, sophisticated commerce, formal social intercourse and creative literature in the nations where it has taken roots. The heterogeneous nature of such nations (i.e. regional varieties)

has led to the emergence of different varieties of the language; hence the search for a Standard form.

The question of whether Nigerian English exists or not is now a non-issue, since it has been duly established that it does exist. Awonusi (1987) says, estimate shows that the speakers of the non-native Englishes clearly outnumber the native speakers of English. Consequently, native speakers now face the reality of communicating in their language with millions of people across the globe who believe that their competence in the language closely approximates that of native speakers. The native speakers, therefore, can be justifiably worried, not only because their language is becoming ‘polluted’ – as some conservatives would want to claim – but also because communicative realities often show that intelligibility cues sometimes fail in the emerging lects of English.

### 1.1 OBJECTIVES

Our objectives in this unit are to,

- ✚ describe the structure of the English language in Nigeria.;
- ✚ explain the notion of Standard English;
- ✚ examine the features of Standard Nigerian English

### 1.2 STANDARD ENGLISH

The notion ‘standard English’ is somewhat imprecise and a direct and deliberate invention by the society to create a class and standard for a language. Hudson (1980:32) says ‘...this intervention called standardization produces a standard language where before they were just dialects’. When the words and sentences of English are described, it is in fact the features of the standard variety we are concentrating on. Yule (1985:180) defines Standard English as:

*“the variety which forms the basis of print in newspapers and books, which is used in the mass media and in schools...it is the variety normally taught to those who want to learn English as a second language”.*

For a language to be standard, there must be a referent and a model which that language must follow and this has to be the prescribed grammatical rules of that language, which when one fails to follow, an incorrect grammar is produced which is in total deviance with the model. Quirk (1962:100) says:

*“standard English is basically an ideal, a mode of expression that we seek when we wish to communicate beyond our immediate community with members of the nation as a whole or with members of a wider community; English-speakers as a whole”.*

As an ideal, it cannot be perfectly realized, and we must expect that members of different ‘wider communities’ and of course, ‘Nigeria’ may have different realization operating in the continuum, but gearing towards what (Kachru 1983) calls in his model, ‘the inner core’. Even the acclaimed ‘inner core and Standard English’ according to Allan (1999:32) can be further generally trichotomized into Scots, Welsh, and English varieties. Ahulu (1999:33) corroborates Quirk’s statement as he says,

*The concept of ‘standard English... is over the pedagogic principle or notion of ‘correctness’, that is the educational concept of correctness which is prescriptive and its discrimination between usages that are acceptable or unacceptable as a standard practice.*

Bobda (1988) argues that, there are systematic contrasts which constitute conflicting competing multiple standards between Standard British and American forms on one hand and standard form of English in the outer and expanding circles ‘as in Nigeria’ on the other hand. The principles which underline such a selection or discrimination on standard usage are not always clear. For example, the use of the double negative is regarded as non-standard in expressions like;

You don’t know nothing.

But as standard in expressions like:

It is not uncommon.

It is not unconnected...

I am not ungrateful for your help.

Ahulu (1999:39) posits that:



*problem of multiple standards is exacerbated in countries like those of the former British Empire where indigenized varieties of English have already established themselves tacitly as local standard... the most interesting manifestation of this 'double scale' is when a local English form establishes itself and differs from British English forms.*

Examples are:

i You relax in:

- (a) a sitting room (in Britain).
- (b) a living room (in America), and
- (c) a parlour (in Nigeria).

ii You:

- (a) fill in a form (in Britain).
- (b) Fill out a form (in the U.S.A.)
- (c) Fill a form (in Nigeria).

These are all stylistic variations of mother tongue in 'standard practice'.

Ahulu (1999:36) adds,

*"for a language to be standard it must pass through a filter... usages are not labeled standard merely because they are used and found acceptable by native speakers. The additional criterion... is the acceptability of such usages among educated people..."*

Hudson (1996:33) comes up with the criteria or the filter which a language must be sifted before it is said to be standard which are: selection, codification, elaboration of function, acceptability (by the educated class) and intelligibility (international).

The grammatical systems of Standard English are linked to the various national, regional and local dialects in a taxonomic way; it is directly tied to the way in which English is used in a particular area. According to Achebe (1965:29), it is the price of a world language (English) must pay in submission to many kinds of use. He adds that, it is neither necessary nor desirable for speakers of English to use it as the native speakers. Modiano (1999) supports Achebe's position when he posits that a standard variety of English is that variety which functions well in cross-cultural communication and the speakers need not necessarily be or speak as the L1 speakers. Nigerian speakers of

English know quite well that their variety of English is different from that of the native speakers and thus try to keep certain rules in order to maintain international communication and intelligibility in cross-cultural communication; and these rules are set to be in line with the criteria or the maintenance of standard in the English language.

Nigerian English as a variety of language spoken by Nigerians intra-nationally and internationally mostly by the educated class has met the universal standard and criteria of a standard language and as such, should be regarded as Standard Nigerian English, such criteria according to Hudson (1996:33) are selection, codification, elaboration of function, acceptance (by the educated class) and intelligibility (international). Using Hudson's theoretical framework for standardisation of language, Nigerian English is standard considering the selection criterion. This criterion as a condition for standardisation deals with a particular variety selected and developed into use, and the choice for such selection has its basis on a matter of great social, economic and political importance, as the chosen variety gains prestige and so the people who already speak it share in this prestige and those who are not, gear towards speaking it to share and be identified with it. The variety selected is close to that of the native speaker which is the educated English variety. This point has been previously explicated when we talked about the various linguist views on what variety should be regarded as standard.

The variety selected as standard Nigerian English can be codified through written dictionaries and grammar books to fix the variety so that everyone knows and agrees on what is correct. On this, the government has institutionalised the variety selected into the school curricula to be taught and learnt by its citizenry. Once codification has taken place, it becomes necessary for any ambitious citizen to learn the correct forms and not to use any incorrect forms that may exist in other varieties. The Standard Nigerian English according to Walsh (1967), should provide a realistic model for the schools to aim at. Kachru's (1985) model of the concentric circles of World Englishes support the fact that the local varieties of English (outer circle) such as Nigerian English should be used as the educational model, and it is imperative that codifications are carried out through the writing of dictionaries, grammar and other educational materials so that speakers can

approximate the proficiency of a native speaker. To this effect, work has already started on a mono-lingual dictionary of Nigerian English by some Nigerian linguists. The dictionary as reported in Banjo and Young (1982), would deal basically with the Standard Nigerian usage, to the extent that this can determine and also indicate the diatypic status of each item and thus reflect a fair amount of non-standard usage. According to Modiano (1999), this will improve on the apparently chaotic systems. Todd (1999:31) adds, it will move successive generations closer and closer to international English, helping people to understand each other better.

Another criterion for satisfying Standard Nigerian English is that of elaboration of functions. The Standard Nigerian English variety elaboration of function is associated with the central government allocating functions to the different languages or varieties of language that exist in its territory. The Standard Nigerian English has been allocated functions in different areas in the society as it is the language of the media, parliament, law, education, science and technology to mention but a few. The elaboration of functions in a language to standardize it may require extra linguistic items to be added to the variety, especially technical and cultural words, and new conventions may be developed for using existing forms, as in formulating examination questions, how to write formal letters and so on, all in the name of cross-cultural communication and international intelligibility and acceptability. An example of how Standard Nigerian English performs the elaboration of function criterion is seen in this excerpt from one of the national newspapers.

Today, the traffic situation in Lagos is a little better than it was in the 1970s.

But long hold-ups, locally termed 'go-slow' are still very much a feature of the city. (The Punch, 24.3.2008)

Also, criterion needed in the identification of Standard Nigerian English is that of acceptability. This means that the variety must be acceptable by the 'relevant population' as the variety of the community, usually the variety used as the national language. Once this happens, the standard language serves as a unifying force for the language community and as a matter of its difference from other isoglosses.

Apart from the criterion of acceptability, other criteria for standard language (English) which are linguistic universals are selection, codification, elaboration of function, acceptance and intelligibility.

### 1.2.1 STANDARD NIGERIAN ENGLISH

As earlier pointed out, it is no longer a controversy that Nigeria English exists. The controversy now is that out of the many varieties that have emerged in Nigeria, which one can be described as the standard variety and which one is not. In identifying the Standard Nigerian English, scholars have identified varieties noticeable among Nigerians and the criteria of local acceptability and international intelligibility have rated high among other criteria for measuring standard.

Banjo identifies four (4) varieties of English in Nigeria as follows:

- ✚ English as used by people with imperfect knowledge of the language is characterized linguistically by a near or total transfer of a linguistic feature of the Niger-Congo languages into English.
- ✚ English as used by 75% of Nigerians which is marked by a high social acceptability. Although it is syntactically close to SBE, it is maximally different at the phonological and lexical level.
- ✚ The third variety is marked by a high social acceptability and high international intelligibility. It is used by perhaps less than 10% of the population. It is close to Standard British English (SBE) both in syntax and semantics, similar in phonology, but different in phonetic features and with some lexical peculiarities. It has RP deep structures and Nigerian surface structures. “It is the variety that every Nigerian would like to acquire and therefore, which should be actively taught throughout the country”.
- ✚ The fourth is characterized by low social acceptability and high international intelligibility. It is used by a hand-full of Nigerians who are privileged to have English as their first language, because they were born by native speakers’ parents or were brought up in native speakers’ environment. Linguistically it equates SBE.

Having identified the four varieties of English in Nigeria using Banjo's parameters, there is need to pose the question; what should the delimitation be, that is, what categories of Nigerians should be regarded as speaking Standard Nigerian English?

In answering the question, some observers have felt that the cut-off point should be at the secondary school level, while others felt that it should be at the post-secondary school level and so on. But such an arbitrary delimitation of users is not without its problems. This is due to the fact that there cannot be any uniformity in communicative competence among any given group of users of a language, especially a second language. In other words, the fact that a speaker of such a language has passed through secondary school, for example, does not necessarily guarantee that he has acquired an acceptable measure of communicative competence in a language.

Conversely, a child who grows up in an educated home can acquire adequate competence without even having attained the secondary school age.

Therefore, it is unnecessary to delimit the category of Nigerians who should be regarded as speaking the Standard Nigerian English. Instead, once an acceptable criterion for determining what the standard should be is established, then whatever his educational qualification, can be viewed either as speaking the Standard Nigerian English or not, based on linguistic performance. What then should be regarded as the Standard in Nigerian English?

### **1.3 CONCLUSION.**

In conclusion, it could be submitted that although the problem of delimiting a Standard Nigerian English from Non-Standard usage or errors is not as simple as it may seem on the surface, SNE has been able to undergo the aforementioned criteria somewhat to emerge as a Standard comparable to the World Standard English (WSE). As such any other variety of English that has not conformed to the set criteria remains a Non-Standard Nigerian English.

#### **1.4 SUMMARY**

Standard Nigerian English is the variety of English used in Nigeria to communicate across Nigerian socio cultural boundary. A Nigerian speaker Standard Nigerian English may not sound like an English native speaker but should be able to speak internationally intelligible and acceptable variety of English that will not obscure understanding despite the fact that some vocabulary items have been brought into it to reflect the speakers socio-cultural norms. However, this variety should be able to meet the set down criteria of what make a language standard such as selection, elaboration of function, codification, acceptability and intelligibility, any other variety that fails to meet these criteria is considered to be Non-Standard Nigerian English.

#### **1.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. List and discuss factors that make a language standard.
2. Considering the factors suggested in 1 above, which of the varieties of English as used in Nigeria do you consider standard?
3. The criterion of intelligibility is more noticeable at the phonological level than any other level of Nigerian English. Discuss with corpus examples.

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## **UNIT 2: NON-STANDARD NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

### **CONTENTS**



- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Non-Standard Nigerian English
  - 2.2.1 Out-Right Errors
  - 2.2.2 Misuse of Codes
  - 2.2.3 Peculiar Nigerian Expressions
  - 2.2.4 Expressions with Distinct Local Flavour
  - 2.2.5 Tautology/Redundancy
- 2.3 Conclusion
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 Tutor Marked Assignments
- 2.6 References

### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

Just as there is Standard Nigerian English we also have Non Standard Nigerian English. The Non Standard Nigerian English is the English speech form used in Nigeria that does not conform to the set down rules of English language. This variety of English may be acceptable and intelligible locally but it lacks international acceptability and intelligibility. This variety also fails to meet the criteria as set up by Hudson (1996:33) for standardization of a language.

### **2.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to:

-  describe non-standard Nigerian English
-  identify the features that make a variety of English non-standard

## **2.2 NON-STANDARD NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

In an effort to establish the Non-Standard Nigerian English/ Sub-Standard Nigerian English variety, Okoro (1986:95) examines this through 4 (four) sub- categorizations of expressions commonly used by Nigerian speakers in addition to the common-core features shared with other geographical varieties of English such English as British and American English. These are as follows:

- (a) outright Errors
- (b) those that are misuses of the codes
- (c) those that are ‘peculiarly’ Nigerian; and
- (d) those that have a distinct localised Nigerian flavour.

### **2.2.1 OUT RIGHT ERRORS**

These are errors that do not conform to the rules of normal English usage. The example of outright Errors examples;

- \*He is experienced, matured and able...
- \*This comprises of several factors...
- \*I remember a certain day...
- \*(a) He has just come back from health centre.
- \*(b) Consult doctor if you have a fever.
- \* That your friend is very rude
- \* She was the most happiest on her wedding day.

The errors in sentences ‘1’ and ‘2’ are no doubt as a result of wrong analogy to other superficially related forms. For example, the adjective form of the noun “experience” is “experienced”. By wrong analogy to this form, the speaker of sentence 1 uses \*“matured” as an adjective instead of the correct form “mature”. The usage is also probably further prompted by a similarly erroneous notion that “mature” is a noun form, like “experience”. “Comprises of” in sentence ‘2’ is clearly the result of a wrong analogy to the form “consist of”. The word “comprise” does not take any preposition. The writer is unaware that this word does not go with a preposition.



Sentence '3' involves the erroneous substitution of the past tense modal 'could' for its present tense analogue 'can'. This is a phenomenon that is frequently observable in the speech of many Nigerians.

Sentence '4a' and 'b' has to do with the omission of an important structural items, 'the articles' (definite and indefinite) which many Nigerian speaker of English considers as a luxury.

Sentence 5 involves the co-occurrence of mutually exclusive determiners, namely, 'demonstrative' and 'possessive', while sentence '6' has to do with double marking in inflections.

These errors reflect imperfect competence, and thus are outright errors and sub-standard Nigerian English. When these usages occur in speech of Nigerians, they should be regarded as errors reflecting imperfect competence and no more.

### **2.2.2 MISUSE OF CODES**

Misuse of codes is error of inappropriateness. These are expressions which are grammatical by analysis but turn out to be inappropriate in the particular context of usage or have different meaning from what the speaker intends. Care should be taken in distinguishing between 'breaches of the code' and 'misuse of the code' (cf. Corder 1974). "Breaches of a code" refer to grammatical errors of a type analysed above. But "misuse of the code" refers to errors of inappropriateness. That is, it includes all those expressions which, while remaining grammatical by analysis, turns out to be inappropriate in the particular context of use, or has a different meaning from what the speaker intends. Examples of misuse of codes commonly found among Nigerians include:

1. I can hear English. (Understand)
2. I can hear a smell. (Perceive)
3. I purchased a packet of detergent at the shop. (Bought)

4. He is marrying my sister. (Married to)
5. They love themselves. (When the reference is mutual: each other or one another)
6. The dowry, one is expected to pay for a wife in Africa is high. (Bride-price)

The underlined expressions in sentence 1, 2, 3 and 4 are appropriately used, while those in 5 and 6 have different meanings from the intended meanings. Thus, while no rule of grammar has been broken, intelligibility is clearly threatened and here we are not thinking of intra-national but international intelligibility. Instances of misuse of the code should not be regarded as “Standard Nigerian English” but Sub-, or Non-Standard Nigerian English. Like out-right errors, they are merely a reflection of an imperfect transitional competence. They occur more frequently among those down the acquisition continuum, who soon learn to discard many of them as their competence grows.

### **2.2.3 PERCULIAR NIGERIAN EXPRESSIONS**

Peculiar Nigerian Expressions refer to those expressions coined by Nigerians and influenced or not influenced by the elements of transfer from the mother tongue. Such expressions remain perfectly grammatical by analysis and at the same time do not obscure intelligibility to the native speakers of English even though they will never use them. They include the following, (some of which were taken from Adetugbo, 1977):

1. The accountant is not in seat. (not immediately around)
2. He is a big man in his office. (important personality)
3. That girl has bottom power. (wield undue influence with sex)
4. These are my invitees. (invited guests)
5. Mr. Thomas is a retiree. (retire from circular work)
6. That woman used long leg to get the contract. (Personal connection with an important person which is used to obtain some favour)
7. He is a senior service man. (belong to the senior ranks of the civil service)
8. She is my intended (fiancée).

#### **2.2.4 EXPRESSIONS WITH DISTINCT LOCAL FLAVOUR**

Expressions that have a distinct local Nigerian flavour are the expressions that are seriously being extrapolated with the features of the mother tongue lexically. The examples of expressions that have a distinct local Nigerian flavour are;

1. You met me /us well (invitation to a visitor who arrives at meal time)
2. Your legs are good. (invitation to a visitor who arrives at meal time)
3. We hope you didn't see the rain. (Expressing the hope that the Addressee was not drained by rain)
4. Well done, Olu... (greetings to someone performing a task)
5. Sorry! (Expression of sympathy to someone's misfortune even when one is not to be held responsible)
6. How are your home people? (members of one's family)

At first glance, it is interesting to note that they do not appear to be any different from the previous category of expressions. Actually, differentiate from others by the following criteria:

1. They are all literal translation of structures of expressions from the M/T, hence the reference to them as having a 'distinct local flavour'.
2. They are ready or apt equivalents of L2 as far as they are expressing their culture-bound objectives. We must be careful at this point however, because the more educated Nigerians, in whose speech some of these forms actually occur less frequently, will more readily use substitutes that are more acceptable to native speakers.
3. Unlike the previous group of expressions above, their meaning may not be readily obvious to the native speaker of English, though they remain quite grammatical.

#### **EXERCISE**

Analyse the following sentences and identify what makes them ungrammatical;

- i. The soup is sweet.
- ii. The man reversed back the car.
  - i. The lecturer has been on sabbatical leave for over two years.
  - ii. We had a vigil night in our church last week.

- iii. The reason why I could not attend your party was that I had no money.
- iv. I am not hearing you.
- v. She is resembling her father.
- vi. He returned back yesterday.
- vii. My father bought a new coloured television.

Egbe (1997) says the issue of lexical usage borders on the fact that words are deployed in phrases, clauses and sentences for the purposes of communication. More so, they are part of the syntactic framework that yields some form of meaning implication. The analysis of the sub- or non-Standard Nigerian English reveals lack of adequate knowledge of morphological processes, lexical relationships such as synonyms, antonyms and collocation principles etc, as shown below:

1. Kindly borrow me your pen  
Kindly lend me your pen
2. She is my tight friend  
She is my fast friend
3. Your soup is sweet  
Your soup is tasty
4. The rest water is not good  
The remaining water is not good
5. The meeting has closed  
The meeting has ended
6. Go and cook the yam  
Go and boil the yam
7. He wets the flower everyday  
He waters the flower everyday
8. Her insult made my blood rise  
Her insult made my blood boil

The above expressions are errors

### 2.2.5 TAUTOLOGY / REDUNDANCY

- 1) I will give you full details  
I will give you the details
- 2) Raise up your hands  
Raise your hands/ put up your hands
- 3) When are you going to return back  
When are you going to return?
- 4) Tell the driver to reverse back  
Tell the driver to reverse
- 5) I have cold iced water  
I have cold water or ice water
- 6) I told him to change, still yet he refused  
I told him to change, yet he refused
- 7) The lecturer is going on sabbatical leave  
The lecturer is going on sabbatical/leave
- 8) There was a night vigil yesterday  
There was a vigil yesterday
- 9) I bought a short knicker yesterday  
I bought a pair of knickers/ short

Semantically, there are instances of absolute deviance. Adeniran (1987:92) concludes that, “deviance in Nigerian English usage reflects the user’s ignorance of the rules of collocation or failure in the application of the rules”. These deviant features are shown both by the users of English by the low and the well educated people as follows;

a) i. Wrong use of prepositions

\* Congratulations for...

Congratulations on

\*Accustomed with...

Accustomed to...

\*In consideration for...

\* In consideration of

ii) Total removal of prepositions

\* Condole the bereaved family...

Condole with

\* Protect the non-payment of the debt...

Protect against the non-payment of the debt

iii) Inappropriate insertion of prepositions

\*The panel comprises of...

The panel comprises

b) The non-standard Nigerian English exhibits insertion and omission of articles

e.g. \* By any stretch of imagination....

By any stretch of the imagination

This is a mark of interference at the syntactic level as the indigenous Nigerian languages do not have the definite and indefinite articles. Thus, a Nigerian speaker, and even the educated Nigerian consider their use a luxury

e.g. \* Phrase is a group of word...

A phrase is a group of words.

\* He bought oranges

He bought some oranges.

There are moments Nigerian speakers may wrongly insert an article where it is not required e.g.

\* On the condition that...

On condition that

\* To keep an open house...

To keep open house

\*Ask from him...

Ask him

Features of non-standard English can also be seen in the use of idioms in Nigeria

e.g. \*The boys had their meal turn by turn...

The boys had their meal by turns.

Adeniran (1987:93) argues that the adaptation of English idioms in Nigerian context is of socio-linguistic interest. He describes some deviation in Nigeria usage as adaptations of idiomatic phrases and proverbial expressions. Actually, what is noted in the Nigerian usage is the fact that the standard forms have been expanded or contracted.

Adeniran (1987) further argues that in the cases of expansion and contraction, there is no “violent wreckage” that is done to syntax and thus meaning is not distorted. He adds that in some cases, this adaptation often turns out to be more analytic, more literal, thus making meaning more explicit e.g.

\*From frying pan to fire...

Out of frying pan into fire

\*What is good for the goose is also good for the gander...

Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander

\*A beggar has no choice...

Beggars are no choosers

\*Cut your coat according to your size...

Cut your coat according to your cloth

\*More grease to your elbow...

More power to your elbow.

## **2.3 CONCLUSION**

Non-Standard Nigerian English has its features that mark it off from the Standard Nigerian English. Its features make it internationally intelligible though it is locally intelligible. This variety is filled with outright errors like wrong analogy to other superficially related forms. Misuses of the codes like expressions which are grammatical by analysis but turn out to be inappropriate in the particular context of usage or have different meaning from what the speaker intends. Peculiarly, Nigerian features like those expressions coined by Nigerians and influenced or not influenced by the elements of transfer from the mother tongue. And some features that have a distinct localised Nigerian flavour expressions that are seriously being extrapolated with the features of the mother tongue lexically as well as wrong analogy to other superficially related forms.

## 2.4 SUMMARY

The Non Standard Nigerian English is the English speech form used in Nigeria that does not conform to the set down rules of English language. This variety of English may be acceptable and intelligible locally but it lacks international acceptability and intelligibility. This variety of English is tainted with outright errors, misuses of the codes; features that are ‘peculiarly’ Nigerian; and features that have a distinct localised Nigerian flavour.

## 2.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Distinguish between Standard and Non-Standard Nigerian English.
2. List and discuss the basic features of Non-Standard Nigerian English.

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## **UNIT 3: NIGERIAN PIDGIN ENGLISH AND ITS FUNCTIONS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Nigerian Pidgin English and Its Functions
  - 3.2.1 Brief History of Nigerian Pidgin English
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    - 3.2.2.1 Nigerian Pidgin Lexis
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- 3.3 Conclusion
- 3.4 Summary
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### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

The global spread of the English language is one of the most far-reaching linguistic phenomena of our time is already an established fact. Evidence of this worldwide phenomenon of language contact, variation and change can be seen through such designations as world Englishes, new Englishes, modern Englishes, West African Englishes, South African English, Australian English, Indian English, to mention just a few. The phrase “Nigerian English” has also appeared in the last four decades or so. Out the Nigerian variety of English some sub-varieties have emerged like the Nigerian Pidgin English.

### **3.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to:

-  find out what Nigerian Pidgin English is.

- ✚ examine the features that make Nigerian Pidgin to be different from other varieties of Nigerian English.
- ✚ identify the characteristics of Nigerian Pidgin English.
- ✚ discuss the functional domain of this variety of English in Nigeria.

### **3.2 NIGERIAN PIDGIN ENGLISH AND ITS FUNCTIONS**

A pidgin is a simplified language that develops as a means of communication between two or more groups that do not have a language in common, in situations such as trade. Pidgins are not the native language of any speech community, but are learnt as second languages. Pidgins usually have low prestige with respect to other languages. The word 'pidgin', formerly also spelled '*pigion*', derives from a Chinese Pidgin English pronunciation for '*business*'. This was originally used to describe Chinese Pidgin English; it was later generalized to refer to any pidgin. Pidgin may also be used as the specific name for a local pidgin in places where they are spoken. For example, the name of 'Tok Pisin' is derived from the English words 'talk pidgin', and its speakers usually refer to it simply as "Pidgin" when speaking it.

#### **3.2.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF NIGERIAN PIDGIN ENGLISH**

The Portuguese were the first Europeans who traded pepper and slaves from the Nigerian coastal area. They first arrived in Benin (city) at the end of the 15th century. From the mid 16th century, the British took over as major trading partners. With the abolition of the slave trade at the beginning of the 19th Century, British colonial interests shifted to agricultural production for exportation to Europe. In 1842 and 1846 the first missionary stations were established in Badagry (near Lagos in the Southwest) and Calabar (in the Southeast) respectively. The missionaries were mainly interested in spreading Christianity among the African pagans. In the schools they established in the Southern part of Nigeria (they were not allowed to settle in the Islamic North of the country) they also taught agriculture, crafts and hygiene. In order to easily reach the population, the language of instruction was usually the mother tongue of the natives. But the Africans refused to send their children to school because they needed them to work in the house and on the farms. Consequently, the missionaries paid compensation to the parents. All the

same, the first generation of students was made up mainly of children of slaves who the village communities thought they would not miss much.

The British colonial government increasingly felt the need for Africans who were literate in English and would serve British colonial and trade interests (for instance as teachers, interpreters and clerks for local native courts and the trading companies). Therefore, missionary stations were ordered in the 1880s to teach English in their schools. In the long run, however, the missionary schools were unable to meet the demands for educated Nigerians, and the colonial government began to establish state schools from the turn of the century. The first state school was in fact founded as a result of pressure from Muslims in Lagos in 1899 who had no access to missionary schools and felt they were at a disadvantage. Despite all these efforts, communication was indeed difficult between the Nigerians and the colonial masters thus a means of easy communication had to be devised which was a simplified way of structuring and speaking English. The simplification could be seen in all the levels of a new contact language that emerged (Pidgin).

### **3.2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF NIGERIAN PIDGIN**

The new contact language is a simplified language in the areas of Lexis, Phonology and Grammar

#### **3.2.2.1 NIGERIAN PIDGIN LEXIS**

Pidgin draws its lexical items from the dominant language namely English, while others are drawn from the indigenous languages. For examples,

Yoruba: oyibo – ‘white man’,

wahala - trouble

Portuguese: pikin – ‘child’

palava – ‘trouble’

sabi – ‘to know’

Hausa: wayo – ‘tricks’

Secondly, there is extensive use of reduplication in its lexis. This is partly to identify meaning and partly to avoid confusion which could result from phonological similarity. Examples: katakata (confusion, chaos), wakawaka (walk or wander perpetually), toktok (talk, gossip). In addition, Pidgin lexis is filled with Compound Words like ‘kresman’ – (crazy man), ‘switmaut’ – (flattery), ‘wochnait’ – (night watchman).

### **3.2.3 THE GROWTH OF NIGERIAN PIDGIN**

The growth of Nigerian Pidgin from a rudimentary speech form which was strongly aided by gesture to an elaborate form is examined in some details by Elugbe and Omamor (1991). At first, it was used between the visiting English and their Nigerian hosts. Later, the Nigerians, who had no common language of their own, began to use this form among themselves. This had the effect of stabilizing and expanding the language because it then had to cope with the expanding experiences of its Nigerian users.

The continued use of the English in Nigeria made the number and interest of its speakers to continue to expand, and this encourages the growth of Nigerian Pidgin. The continual growth and use of Pidgin English challenges was a challenge and threat to the existence of English and this brought about the emergence of Standard English. This development was a logical consequence of two factors.

In the first place, the English recognized that they could not do business in a language in that they could keep records, which they considered inferior and was unintelligible to English speakers newly arrived from Britain. Nigerian pidgin was thus relegated to situations involving only Nigerians, or the English and those Nigerians who could not speak or understand the standard variety of English.

Secondly, schools were established and a standard variety of English was being taught. This variety became the language of trade and industry, missionary work and

government. So important did this variety become that its possession became a passport to a good position in society, with its social and material benefits.

The growth of English in Nigeria did not remove the usefulness of Nigerian Pidgin. Not everyone had access to a school and the process of acquiring English was decidedly longer and more tedious than that of 'picking up' Nigerian Pidgin. It remains a hallmark of Nigerian pidgin that its speakers use it with a lot of freedom and creativity.

In the days of the colonial government, the missionaries were very influential and they used that influence to ensure that activities leading to the development of Nigerian languages were not banned. Adopting a mother-tongue approach to evangelism, they believed that the gospel was best delivered to potential converts in the language they understood best. Thus, they doubled as missionaries and linguists, studying the local languages, committing them to writing and attempting to translate the Bible, or parts of it, into these languages. There were also colonial administrators who doubled as civil servants and linguists. Thus, the colonial government had to grant some recognition to the 'vernaculars' - as the indigenous languages were called.

The recognition of the local languages did not extend to Nigerian pidgin. Even those who helped to sustain it by speaking it refused to recognize it, a situation that exists even today. One meets highly placed government officials who speak Nigerian Pidgin but do not believe it should be allocated a role in the language policy in Nigeria. It is therefore obvious that Nigeria Pidgin has survived and flourished by generally being readily useful and handy, thus filling a veritable communication vacuum in Nigeria.

### **3.2.4 THE BENEFITS OF NIGERIAN PIDGIN**

Nigeria Pidgin has major benefits which are not exploited in language planning in Nigeria. Since the search for unity is a primary concern of government, one would have thought that Nigerian pidgin would be brought into the planning process. It is a major asset, for example, it shares with English the unique feature of being the only ethnically neutral language in Nigeria.

Another of its assets is that it is a national language. As Elugbe (1990: 10) has pointed out, a language may be national by being spoken all over Nigeria, by being indigenous and by being declared 'national'. Nigerian Pidgin is national because it meets two of these requirements:

- 1) It is geographically spread all over Nigeria and spoken by Nigerians of different ethnic origins.
- 2) It is indigenous to Nigeria because it originated, is sustained and is expanding here in Nigeria.

It should be added that Standard English meets only the condition of being spoken all over Nigeria. In fact, only Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, which are the major indigenous languages, meet all three criteria in the definition of 'national' in Nigeria.

In education, Nigeria has a mother-tongue policy which requires that every child be taught in a mother-tongue medium at the pre-primary level and during the first three years of primary school. The policy also states that, where the mother tongue should be used as the language of the immediate community (LIC), that is, the dominant language of the community which the child already speaks is recommended. There are areas in Nigeria where Nigerian Pidgin has acquired the mother tongue status and there are many Nigerians for whom it is as much a first language as the mother tongue (because they speak it with the same facility as they speak their different mother tongues, such that they are bilingual in their mother tongues and Nigerian Pidgin). It therefore follows that Nigerian Pidgin can be used in teaching many Nigerians where many local languages would have been required. This would remove the psychological shock which pupils experience when they leave home and find a new language which they do not speak and understand well. It is also a matter of common sense that a child (or anybody for that matter) learns better when taught in a language he understands very well. Therefore, our language policy ought logically to lead to the development of Nigerian Pidgin for use as official medium for teaching in our schools.

Recognition and development of Nigerian pidgin would also greatly reduce the cost of implementing the language provisions of our educational policy because the LIC option is basically a cost and time saving device and because Nigerian Pidgin is a dominant language in many communities across many states. This was the thinking of the national Commission for mass literacy, adult and Non-formal Education in 1992 when it set out to produce literacy materials in Nigerian Pidgin. Unfortunately, the project has since been suspended.

Nigerian Pidgin as a veritable tool of interaction serves as a ‘bridge’ between the mother tongue and Standard Nigerian English (NSE). According to Faraclas (nd),

*‘Nigerian pidgin has most of the linguistic features of (NSE) and those that typify many other Nigerian languages. Therefore, as long as Nigerian Pidgin is not accorded the place it deserves in Nigerian education, an invaluable tool for the teaching of English will continue to lie wasted and unused’.*

Faraclas concludes by recommending that ‘official recognition should be extended to Nigerian Pidgin as a major Nigerian language’. Such a step would make Nigerian Pidgin fully national in all the three senses of the terms, as mentioned above.

The creativity of Nigerian Pidgin which has been mentioned is probably linked to the relative ease with which it is acquired or learned. A simple comparison shows what the difference is between learning Standard English and learning Nigerian Pidgin:

<b>Nigerian Pidgin</b>	<b>English</b>
Rait	Write
I de rait	He is writing
I rait	He wrote
I don rait	He has written

The invariable form of Nigerian Pidgin ‘rait’ contrast sharply with the parsing of ‘write’ in English.

In addition, Nigerian pidgin is made easier by the fact that its lexicon can and does take words not only from English but also from other Nigerian languages. This means that speakers resort to words in their own languages where they think that the Nigerian Pidgin form should be strengthened. Elugbe and Omamor (1991) suggest that such creativity is reflected in the ease with which songs are composed and sung in Nigerian Pidgin. One should now add that songs written or song-composed require a certain relaxed and assured ease with a language. Therefore, Nigerian Pidgin speakers are always very much at ease with it. This creativity also reflects in a popular comedy show called 'Night of Laughter' where the entire programme is done in Nigerian Pidgin English. The modern information technology (Mobile Phone) on seeing the ease and creativity in Nigerian Pidgin has created a soft ware in Pidgin for its teaming population of clients. To be sincere, prompt customer care information service are better and are more understandable in Nigerian Pidgin than in Standard English. People from Warri, sapele, Kwale, benin-city, Ibusa among others are famous for their excellent ability to communicate eloquently in the language. Interestingly even the country leaders, clergy men and women, Justices, Judges, professors, the educated and non-educated understand and fully communicate in Pidgin English.

The language is fast growing and the idea once held that the language is a language of the illiterates is fast eroding and gradually getting replaced as the unique language of Nigerians as even national team footballers of the country use the language as means of communication on the pitch. At least Nigeria now has a name in Pidgin English which is "Naija" so the next time you hear Naija mentioned know it refers to Nigeria our beloved country.

## EXERCISES

- i. What are the three conditions that could make a language national?
- ii. Which of the conditions considered in one above has the Nigerian Pidgin has met?



### **3.3 CONCLUSION**

Nigerian Pidgin English emanates out of a language contact situation. It came up as a language of necessity as the colonial masters on their arrival in Nigeria had to communicate in their new environment with the real inhabitant of the land. In that none of the parties understood each other they had to devise a means of communication and in this instance a simplified language (Pidgin) of communication had to be devised. Nigerian Pidgin English has functioned beyond colonial era. In the West African region, Nigeria easily distinguished in fluency and profuseness as far as this language is concerned. And Nigerians have continued to add glamour to the language. As a matter of fact, with the development of Nollywood and the hip-hop, Pidgin English is fast becoming a language of Nigerian music and films, stand-up comedy and the government is promoting the presentation of programs, advertorials and news in this language. More so, some radio stations now broadcast in the Pidgin. It is spoken by everybody both the educated and the uneducated. It has permeated every fibre of our social lives in terms of domain of use. Its structure, lexis and use are simplified and easy to learn and understand.

### **3.4 SUMMARY**

The Nigerian Pidgin English is a simplified language that develops as a means of communication between two or more groups that do not have a language in common, in situations such as trade and social interaction. In a heterogeneous and linguistically diverse environment like Nigeria it becomes readily handy as a means of communication because of its simplicity in phonology, lexis and grammar. Its simple structure is because it borrows its components from the English and the indigenous languages and restructures them to be in line with the rules of the new emerged language called 'Pidgin'. Pidgin English is functional in areas like education, print media, broadcasting, political campaign, advertisement, information technology and commerce.

### **3.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Explain how Pidgin English got its hold in Nigeria.
2. List and explain the different domains of Pidgin English in Nigeria.

3. Compare and show the areas of differences in Standard English and Nigerian Pidgin English at the phonological and lexical levels.
4. With copious examples, discuss the areas of creativity in Nigerian Pidgin English.

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## **UNIT 4: STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PIDGIN ENGLISH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

### **CONTENTS**




4.0	Introduction
4.1	Objectives
4.2	Structural Differences between Nigerian Pidgin English and English Language
4.2.1	Nigerian Pidgin Phonology
4.2.2	The Grammar of Nigerian Pidgin
4.3	Conclusion
4.4	Summary
4.5	Tutor Marked Assignments
4.6	References

### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

It is glaring that there is a tremendous difference in the structure of Nigerian Pidgin and the English language. Pidgin, we know is a simplified form of Standard English as its structure is simplified to suit the usage of its users. Nigeria is fast colonizing the West African region with Pidgin English. Pidgin English as spoken in Nigeria is a kind of language derived from English, Portuguese and Dutch. This difference is reflective in its entire structure of Pidgin as a language such as its Phonology, morphology and syntax.

### **4.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to;

-  compare the structure of Pidgin English and Standard Nigerian English.
-  examine the areas of differences in the two varieties of English
-  assess the extent of differences and similarities.

## **4.2 STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PIDGIN ENGLISH AND ENGLISH**

It is certain that there is a major difference in the structure of Nigerian Pidgin English and that of the Standard Nigerian English. These differences show on all the levels of Nigerian Pidgin English such as the Phonology, morphology and syntax.

### **4.2.1 NIGERIAN PIDGIN PHONOLOGY**

Like the British English, the Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) also has Vowels and Consonants. The vowel sounds are: /I, e, ɛ, a, o, u/, while the consonant sounds are: /p, f, m, b, v, t, s, n, d, z, l, r, tʃ, dʒ, j, k, ɲ, g, kp, gb, w, h/. It should be noted that some of the sounds in NPE are adopted from the Nigerian indigenous language. Example: /kp/ and /gb/ sounds are got from the Yoruba and the Igbo Languages.

### **4.2.2 THE GRAMMAR OF NIGERIAN PIDGIN**

Some of the main grammatical characteristics of Nigeria Pidgin English are:

- a) They have few inflections in their nouns, pronouns, verbs and adjectives especially in phrases.
- b) Nouns are not marked for number or gender.
- c) Verbs have no tense markers.
- d) Pronouns are not distinguished for case so that most Pidgins use 'mi' to indicate 'I' and 'me'.

This can be seen in the examples below.

#### **Pronouns**

##### **Subject:**

**Singular**

**Plural**

- |         |     |
|---------|-----|
| 1. a    | wi  |
| 2. yu   | una |
| 3. i/in | dem |

### **Object**

- | Singular | Plural |
|----------|--------|
| 1. mi    | wi/os  |
| 2. yu    | una    |
| 3. am/in | dem    |

### **Qualifier**

- | Singular | Plural  |
|----------|---------|
| 1. mai   | ia/awa  |
| 2. yo    | una     |
| 3. in    | dem/den |

Other features are:

### **Pronominal**

- | <u>Singular:</u> | <u>Plural</u> |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. mi            | wi            |
| 2. yu            | una           |
| 3. in            | dem           |

### **Definite Article**

- |                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <u>Singular:</u> di + noun | <u>Plural:</u> di + noun + dem |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|

### **Indefinite Article**

Singular: won + noun

Plural: plenti, meni etc. + noun

### **Demonstrative Article**

Singular:

- dis + noun
- dat + noun

Plural:

- dis + noun + dem
- dat + noun + dem

### **Numerals**

won - one, tu - two, tri - three, etc.

di tu - both, di tri - all three, di faif - all five, etc.

won won - one each, tu tu - two each, tri tri - three each, etc.

fes - first, sekon - second, nomba tri - third, nomba faif - fifth, etc.

### **Prepositions**

Little usage of prepositions, all-purpose „fo(r)“, occasional fixed verb-prepositions, as in ‘I vex wit di man’.

### **Emphasis**

Na (it is) / No bi (it is not) + emphasized part of clause + rest of clause

## Imperative

Singular: kom kwik! folo am go!

Plural: mek una getop! una sidon!, mek wi go nau

## Subordinate clauses

se - that, we - who, di tin we - what, wetin - what, til - until, if - if, wen - when, wie - where, bifo - before, mek - so that, etc.

## Questions

Yes/No Question: Shebi + clause (no inversion)? - Isn't it the case that...?

Clause-initial question item: (Na) wetin i de du?

nko = what about?: Una mama nko? (How is your mother?)

nko = what if?: If a si di man nko? (What if I see the man?)

Non-verbal clauses: Hau nau? (How are things?), Hau bodi? (How are you?), No be so? (Is it not so?)

## Tense and Aspect

	Present	Past	Future
1. neutral		i kom	i go kom
		He came	he will come
2. imperfective	i de kom	i de kom	i go de kom
	he comes/is coming	He is coming/usually comes	he will be coming/continue coming

3. perfective			
a) inchoative	i don de kom	i don de kom	i go don de kom
	he has started coming	He had started coming	he will have started coming
b) terminative	i don kom	i don kom	i go don kom
	he has come/arrived	He has come arrived	he will have come/arrived

### *Aspect and Tense: Examples*

#### 1. Past or Present? Watch out for indications of past tense and/or context.

- Wen yo mama rich hie yestade, a de chop- ‘When your mother arrived here yesterday, I was eating’.
- A si am las mont, i stil de krai- ‘I saw him/her last month, he/she was still crying’.
- Dem don chop di chop finish, wen a rich haus las nait- ‘They had eaten the food completely, when I arrived home last night’.

#### 2. Present Perfective

- A don de tek bat- ‘I have started taking my bath (and am still bathing)’.
- A don tek bat- ‘I have taken my bath (and am clean now)’.

#### 3. Future

- A tel mai papa se a go de kom si am evri de- ‘I told my father that I would (will) be coming/will continue coming to see him every day’.
- If wi go fo Lagos fo ivnin, NEPA go don tek lait- ‘If we go to Lagos this evening, NEPA will have taken the light/will have switched off electricity’.
- A go don de kuk di sup wen yu de rich haus fo ivnin- ‘I will have started cooking when you arrive home tonight’.

#### 4. Past marker: bin

- A bin chop- ‘I ate’.
- A bin de chop- ‘I was eating’.



- A bin don chop- 'I had eaten'.

#### 5. Translation of the English to be

- as 'zero', with an adjective:
  - A veks – 'I was angry'.
  - Di tin fain tru tru- 'The thing is really/truly beautiful'.
- as 'de', with a location:
  - I still de fo haus- 'He is/was still at home'.
  - Wi de fo Lagos- 'We are/were in Lagos'.
- as 'na', when linking to noun phrases (esp. in 1st person singular also 'bi'):
  - Mercedes na dash- 'Mercedes (cars) are a bribe'.

A bi jos wuman- 'I am only a woman'

### 4.3 CONCLUSION

The structure of Pidgin is quite different from that of Standard English in its Phonology, Morphology and Syntax. Nigeria is fast colonizing the West African region with Pidgin English. Pidgin English as spoken in Nigeria is a kind of language derived from English, Portuguese and Dutch. Pidgin English as spoken in Nigeria is interesting with very unique pronunciations. Words in Standard English could turn out to mean or denote something else in Pidgin.

### 4.4 SUMMARY

Pidgin English as spoken in Nigeria is interesting with very unique pronunciations. Words in Standard English could turn out to mean or denote something else in Pidgin. As Platt, Weber and Ho accurately observe in their book, *The New Englishes*, (RKP 1984) "In some nations...the New Englishes have developed a noticeable range of different varieties linked strongly to the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of their speakers." It borrows words, patterns and images freely from the mother-tongue and finds expression in a very limited English vocabulary.

#### **4.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. In what ways do the tense and aspect of Pidgin English differ from that of Standard English?
2. Discuss in details the grammatical characteristics of Nigeria Pidgin English.

#### **4.6 REFERENCES**

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## **UNIT 5: CREOLES**

### **CONTENTS**



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### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

A Creole language, or simply a Creole, is a stable language that originates seemingly as a nativized Pidgin. This understanding of Creole genesis culminated in Hall's notion of the pidgin-Creole life cycle. While it is understood that Creoles have certain grammatical similarities to each other and, arguably, not languages that they are derived from, no theory for explaining Creole phenomena has been universally accepted. The relationship between pidgins and creoles and their similarities means that the distinction is not clear-cut and the variety of phenomena that arise to create pidgins and creoles are not understood very well. Likewise, efforts to articulate grammatical features (or sets of features) that are exclusive to creoles have been unsuccessful thus far.

### **5.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to;

-  describe Creole generally as a variety of English;
-  examine the different classifications of Creole as a variety of English;

- ✚ assess the different theories of Creole;
- ✚ examine the development of Creole ; and
- ✚ determine which variety of Pidgin has creolized and indicate where it is spoken.

## 5.2 CREOLES

The term Creole is a French word “créole”, derived from Spanish word “criollo”, and probably from Portuguese “crioulo”, which meant a black person born in Brazil, a home-born slave, stemming from the verb ‘criar’ (‘to breed’) from the Latin word ‘creare’ meaning ‘to produce, create’. The term was coined in the sixteenth century during the great expansion in European maritime power and trade and the establishment of European colonies in the Americas, Africa, and along the coast of South and Southeast Asia up to the Philippines, China, India, and in Oceania.

The term "Creole" was originally applied to people born in the colonies to distinguish them from the upper-class European-born immigrants. Originally, therefore, "Creole language" meant the speech of those Creole peoples.

As a consequence of colonial European trade patterns, many Creole languages are found in the equatorial belt around the world and in areas with access to the oceans. Such areas include the Caribbean as well as the north and east coasts of South America, western Africa and the Indian Ocean. The majority of Creole languages are based on European languages with substrate elements from Africa, although some creoles (such as Sango) show little to no contact with European languages. The extent to which substrate features are significant in the genesis or the description of Creole languages is a heated dispute.

According to their external history, four types of creoles have been distinguished: plantation creoles, fort creoles, maroon creoles, and creolized pidgins. As to their internal history, there are four preconceived assumptions,

- ✚ Creoles are more alike than other languages
- ✚ Creoles exhibit more internal variability than other languages
- ✚ Creoles are more mixed as to their grammars and vocabularies than other languages

### Creoles are more simple than other languages

Because of the generally low status of the Creole peoples in the eyes of European colonial powers, Creole languages have generally been regarded as degenerate or at best as rudimentary dialects of one of their parent languages. This is the reason "Creole" has come to be used in opposition to "language" rather than a qualifier for it. Prejudice of this kind was compounded by the inherent instability of the colonial system, leading to the disappearance of Creole languages, mainly due to dispersion or assimilation of their speech communities. Another factor that may have contributed to the relative neglect of Creole languages in linguistics is that they comfort critics of the 19th century neogrammarian "tree model" for the evolution of languages and their law of the regularity of sound change (such as the earliest advocates of the wave model, Johannes Schmidt and Hugo Schuchardt, the forerunners of modern sociolinguistics). This controversy of the late 19th century profoundly shaped modern approaches to the comparative method in historical linguistics and in creolistics. Since then, linguists have promulgated the idea that Creole languages are in no way inferior to other languages and use the term "Creole" or "Creole language" for any language suspected to have undergone creolization, without geographic restrictions or ethnic prejudice.

As a consequence of these social, political, and academic changes, Creole languages have experienced a revival in recent decades. They are increasingly and more openly being used in literature and in media, and their community prestige has improved. They are studied by linguists as languages on their own. Many have already been standardized, and are now taught in local schools and universities abroad.

By the very nature of the subject, the creoleness of a particular Creole usually is a matter of dispute. The parent tongues may themselves be Creoles or Pidgins that have disappeared before they could be documented. For these reasons, the issue of which language is *the* parent of a Creole, that is, whether a language should be classified as a "Portuguese Creole" or "English Creole", etc, often has no definitive answer, and can become the topic of long lasting controversies, where social prejudices and political

considerations may interfere with the scientific discussion, thus the concepts: substratum and superstratum




The terms substratum and superstratum are often used to label the source and the target languages of a Creole. However, the meaning of these terms is reasonably well-defined only in language replacement events, when the native speakers of a certain language (the substrate) are somehow compelled to abandon that language for another language (the superstrate). The outcome of such an event will be that erstwhile speakers of the substrate will be speaking a version of the superstrate, at least in more formal contexts. The substrate may survive as a second language for informal conversation (as in the case of Venetian and many other European non-official languages). Its influence on the official speech, if detectable at all, is usually limited to pronunciation and a modest number of loanwords. The substrate might even disappear altogether without leaving any trace.

However, these terms are not as meaningful where the new language is distilled from multiple substrata and a homogeneous superstratum. The substratum-superstratum continuum becomes awkward when multiple superstrata must be assumed (such as in Papiamentu), when the substratum cannot be identified, or when the presence or the survival of substratal evidence is inferred from mere typological analogies. However, facts surrounding the substratum-superstratum opposition cannot be set aside where the substratum as the receding or already replaced source language and the superstratum as the replacing dominant target language can be clearly identified and where the respective contributions to the resulting compromise language can be weighed in a scientifically meaningful way; and this so whether the replacement leads to Creole genesis or not. With Creole languages, "superstrate" usually means European and "substrate" non-European or African as what is found in some parts of Port Harcourt. A post-Creole continuum is said to come about in a context of decreolization where a Creole is subject to pressure from its superstrate language. Speakers of the Creole feel compelled to conform their language to superstrate usage introducing large scale variation and hypercorrection.

Comparing the different Creoles in any theory-orientated perspective, whether phylogenetic or purely typological in nature, leads to widely divergent results. The score of similarities will be higher when the comparison is restricted to European-based creoles and excluding non-European-based Creoles such as Nubi, Nigerian and Sango. French Creoles show closer affinities with Koiné French than with other European-based creoles. The comparative work of Bickerton (1981) argued against the monogenetic theory of pidgins according to which, most European-based Pidgins and Creoles emanate from a Mediterranean Lingua Franca through a ‘broken Portuguese’ relexified in the slave factories of Western Africa.

Particularly worrisome is the evidence that definite articles are predominantly prenominal in English-based Creole languages and English whereas they are predominantly postnominal in French Creoles and French koinés. Moreover, as already noted by Whorf (1956), the European languages which gave rise to the colonial Creole languages all belong to the same subgroup of Western Indo-European and have highly convergent systems of grammar to the point where they form a homogeneous group of languages Whorf called Standard Average European (SAE) to distinguish them from languages of other grammatical types. French and English are particularly close since English, through extensive borrowing, is typologically closer to French than to other Germanic languages. According to Vennemann (2006), most European languages themselves might even share a common substratum as well as a common superstratum.

There are a variety of theories on the origin of Creole languages, all of which attempt to explain the similarities among them. Arends, Muysken & Smith (1995) outline a fourfold classification of explanations regarding Creole genesis:

-  Theories focusing on European input
-  Theories focusing on non-European input
-  Gradualist and developmental hypotheses

### **5.2.1 THEORIES FOCUSING ON EUROPEAN OUTPUT**

The European linkage to the origin of Creole has four sub-originating theories which are: the monogenetic theory of pidgins and creoles, the Domestic Origin Hypothesis, the European dialect origin hypotheses and the Foreigner talk or baby talk.

#### **1. The monogenetic theory of pidgins and creoles**

The monogenetic theory of pidgins and creoles hypothesizes a single origin for these languages, deriving them through relexification from a West African Pidgin Portuguese of the 17th century and ultimately from the Lingua franca of the Mediterranean. This theory was originally formulated by Hugo Schuchardt in the late 19th century and popularized in the late 1950s and early 1960s by Douglas Taylor, as well as in Whinnom (1956), Thompson (1961) and Stewart (1962).

#### **2. The Domestic Origin Hypothesis**

Proposed by Hancock (1985) for the development of a local form of English in West Africa, the Domestic Origin Hypothesis argues that, towards the end of the 16th century, English-speaking traders began to settle in the Gambia and Sierra Leone rivers as well as in neighboring areas such as the Bullom and Sherbro coasts. These settlers intermarried with the local population leading to mixed populations and as a result of this intermarriage, an English pidgin was created, which in turn was learned by slaves in slave depots, who later on took it to the West Indies and formed one component of the emerging English creoles.

#### **3. European dialect origin hypotheses**

The French creoles are the foremost candidates to being the outcome of "normal" linguistic change and their creoleness to be sociohistoric in nature and relative to their colonial origin though there are some similarities with Hancock's domestic origin hypothesis.



#### 4. Foreigner talk or baby talk

The foreigner talk hypothesis (FT) argues that a Pidgin or Creole language forms when native speakers attempt to simplify their language in order to address speakers who do not know their language at all. Because of the similarities found in this type of speech and the speech which is usually directed at children, it is also sometimes called baby talk.

Arends, Muysken & Smith (1995) suggest that four different processes are involved in creating Foreigner Talk: accommodation, imitation, telegraphic condensation and conventions. This could explain why Creole languages have much in common, while avoiding a monogenetic model. However, Hinnenkamp (1984), in analyzing German Foreigner Talk, claims that it is too inconsistent and unpredictable to provide any model for language learning.

While the simplification of input was supposed to account for creoles' simple grammar, there are a number of problems with this explanation which are,

- ✚ There are too many grammatical similarities amongst Pidgins and Creoles despite having very different lexifier languages
- ✚ Grammatical simplification can be explained by other processes, that is, the innate grammar of Bickerton's language bioprogram theory.
- ✚ Speakers of a Creole's lexifier language often fail to understand, without learning the language, the grammar of a Pidgin or Creole.
- ✚ Pidgins are more often used amongst speakers of different substrate languages than between such speakers and those of the lexifier language.

Another problem with the FT explanation is its potential circularity. Bloomfield (1933) points out that FT is often based on the imitation of the incorrect speech of the non-natives, which is the Pidgin. Therefore one may be mistaken in assuming that the former gave rise to the latter.

#### 5.2.2 THEORIES FOCUSING ON NON-EUROPEAN INPUT

Theories focusing on the substrate, or non-European, languages attribute similarities amongst Creoles to the similarities of African substrate languages. These features are

often assumed to be transferred from the substrate language to the Creole during the relexification process. The problem with this explanation is that the postulated substrate languages differ amongst themselves and with Creoles in meaningful ways. Bickerton (1981) argues that the number and diversity of African languages and the paucity of a historical record on Creole genesis makes determining lexical correspondences a matter of chance. Dillard (1970) coined the term "cafeteria principle" to refer to the practice of arbitrarily attributing features of Creoles to the influence of substrate African languages or assorted substandard dialects of European languages.

For a representative debate on this issue, see the contributions to Mufwene (1993); for an up-to-date view, Parkvall (2000). Because of the sociohistoric similarities amongst many (but by no means all), the Atlantic slave trade and the plantation system of European colonies have been emphasized by linguists such as McWhorter (1999).

### **5.2.3 GRADUALIST AND DEVELOPMENTAL HYPOTHESES**

One class of Creoles might start as pidgins, rudimentary second languages improvised for use between speakers of two or more non-intelligible native languages. Keith Whinnom (in Hymes (1971)) suggests that Pidgins need three languages to form, with one (the superstrate) being clearly dominant over the others. The lexicon of a pidgin is usually small and drawn from the vocabularies of its speakers, in varying proportions. Morphological details like word inflections, which usually take years to learn, are omitted; the syntax is kept very simple, usually based on strict word order. In this initial stage, all aspects of the speech: syntax, lexicon, and pronunciation tend to be quite variable, especially with regard to the speaker's background.

If a pidgin manages to be learned by the children of a community as a native language, it may become fixed and acquire a more complex grammar, with fixed phonology, syntax, morphology, and syntactic embedding. Pidgins can become full languages in only a single generation. "Creolization" is this second stage where the Pidgin language develops into a fully developed native language as what is obtainable in the Port Harcourt area of

River state in Nigeria. The vocabulary, too, will contain more and more words according to a rational and stable system.

#### **5.2.4 UNIVERSALIST APPROACHES**

Universalist models stress the intervention of specific general processes during the transmission of language from generation to generation and from speaker to speaker. The process invoked varies: a general tendency towards semantic transparency, first language learning driven by universal process, or general process of discourse organization. The main source for the Universalist approach is still Bickerton's work. His language bioprogram theory claims that Creoles are inventions of the children growing up on newly founded plantations. Around them, they only heard Pidgins spoken, without enough structure to function as natural languages; and the children used their own innate linguistic capacities to transform the Pidgin input into a full-fledged language.

#### **EXERCISE**

1. What is Cafeteria principle?
2. What is the relationship between Pidgin and Creole?

#### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

Creole is a developed stage of Pidgin English. It results when a generation of people mostly children grow up to pick Pidgin as their first language and these children used their own innate linguistic capacities to transform the Pidgin input into a full-fledged language. This variety of Pidgin can be found in the riverine area of Port Harcourt in Rivers state of Nigeria where children grow up to pick Pidgin as their first language and innately transform this pidgin into a more sophisticated language. There are many theories that suggest the origin of Creole ranging from the European linkage to the origin of Creole to non-European, languages attribute similarities amongst Creoles to the similarities of African substrate languages.

## 5.4 SUMMARY

The European linkage to the origin of Creole has four sub-originating theories which are: the monogenetic theory of pidgins and creoles, the Domestic Origin Hypothesis, the European dialect origin hypotheses and the Foreigner talk or baby talk. Theories focusing on the substrate, or non-European, languages attribute similarities amongst Creoles to the similarities of African substrate languages. These features are often assumed to be transferred from the substrate language to the Creole during the relexification process. The problem with this explanation is that the postulated substrate languages differ amongst themselves and with Creoles in meaningful ways. The number and diversity of African languages and the paucity of a historical record on Creole genesis makes determining lexical correspondences a matter of chance. The term "cafeteria principle" was brought up to refer to the practice of arbitrarily attributing features of Creoles to the influence of substrate African languages or assorted substandard dialects of European languages. On this theoretical basis had thus far it is evident that some aspect of Nigerian Pidgin has developed and has become creolized.

## 5.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. List and discuss the theories focusing on the substrate or non-European development of Creole.
2. List and discuss the theories focusing the European linkage to the origin of Creole.
3. Discuss the concepts of substratum and superstratum as the major components in the development of Creole.

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## **MODULE 5: ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE PLANNING IN NIGERIA**

**Unit 1: The Status of English Language in Nigeria**

**Unit 2: Language Planning**

**Unit 3: Language Policies in Nigeria**

**Unit 4: English and the National Language Question**

### **UNIT 1: THE STATUS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 The Status of English Language in Nigeria
- 1.3 Conclusion
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Tutor Marked Assignments
- 1.6 References

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria as a multilingual nation has many indigenous languages spoken in the country apart from English and other foreign languages like English, French German and of recent the intrusion of Chinese language in some Nigerian schools. In the multitude of these languages, Nigeria is a multilingual nation which its citizens have to speak more than a language in order to interact properly with other Nigerians. In the mist of these different languages one of the languages is most widely used than the other languages because of its prestige. This prestige-laden attitudinal differential is in favour of English language which gives it a status.

## 1.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to:

- overview the linguistic situation in Nigeria;
- designate the situations leading to the enviable position of English language in Nigeria; and
- comment on the prospect of English language in Nigeria

## 1.2 THE STATUS OF ENGLISH IN NIGERIA

Among the different languages spoken in Nigeria, English as a language has carved a niche out for itself. It is a language of its own class that emerged out of a mammoth of other languages. English language did not come to Nigeria just on its own. Its incursion into Nigeria was caused by lots of factors like trading, slavery, colonization and missionary activities in Nigerian by the Europeans and this was done in phases. English language in Nigeria was imported from Britain and adequately modified from time to time through the process of adaptation since its incursion in Nigeria environment. Its dominance in government circle in the colonial times and particularly in the 1950's to the present is an uncontroversial fact. In fact, its dominance in recent times has reached an unbearable peak with the increasing impact of globalization in world economy and technology. In terms of English language aggressive expansion and spread, recently the British council in its English 2000 Project made some interesting and impressive statement about the extent in which the English language is used in the world today. It says that it is used in over 70 countries as an official or semi official language and it has important status in over 20 countries, *including Nigeria.*, (the italics is mine). It is evident that one out of five of the world's population speak English to some level of competence and the demand for the other four fifths is increasing on a daily basis as it is the language of books, newspapers, airports and air traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, sports, international competitions, pop music and advertising. It is true that over two third of the world's scientists read in English. Third quarter of the world's mail is written in English; while 80% of the world's electronically stored information is done in English. Of the estimated 40 million users of the internet, the majority of its users communicate in English, (Arsoba, 2000:1).

English language at the linguistic market place is highly demanded and used by participating countries because of its benefits and uses, including Nigeria.

Nigeria as a country has its own variety of English which differs from that of other countries. On investigation of the English language in Nigeria thus far, there is no doubt that there is Nigerian English. Adeniran (2005:1) as quoted from Adetugbo (1977) says that academic considerations of the status of Nigerian English (NE) have established the distinctiveness of this dialect of the language and taken perceptions of its existence beyond the realm of fiction. Bamgbose (1982) says that, the debate over whether NE exists has by now become a non-issue as features of instances of its spoken and written forms have been described and the descriptions published in outlets within and outside its territory. Ekpe (2007) writes extensively in the emerging evolutionary of world Englishes and the varieties that have developed especially in Nigerian English, which he says English as a global language has developed many varieties (ranging from standard, non-standard, dialect, national, regional, Creole, hybrid, pidgin, rotten to broken), resulting in different classifications as “World Englishes” or “New Englishes”. A look at the various classifications polarized Nigerian English into standard or non- standard varieties.

The Non-Standard Nigerian English is the English speech form used in Nigeria that does not conform to the set-down rules of the English language. This variety of English may be acceptable and intelligible locally but it lacks international acceptability and intelligibility. This variety equates with Brosnahan’s (1958) varieties two (speakers with only primary Education attained) and three (speakers with only Secondary education), Banjo’s (1971) varieties one (based on speakers of this variety who mastered pidgin based on the necessities of their occupation. Broken English is mostly used by these speakers) and two (the speeches in this variety shows signs of methodical learning and its speaker would have at least Primary Education and it represents most Nigerian bilingual speakers of English), Bamgbose’s (1995) Contact English (CE) (which are Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and Broken English (BE) as well as Awonusi’s (1987) basilect and mesolect



The Standard Nigerian English (SNE) is the variety of English used by Nigerians to communicate across socio-cultural boundaries, which corresponds to Brosnahan's Level II and Level IV (characterized by some degree of communicative fluency and a wide range of lexical items/ the English used by the university graduates, and it is characterized by linguistics features close to Standard English), Banjo's VIII (is marked by low social acceptability and high international intelligibility), Bamgbose's third variety ( is the School English (SE), the school English is the predominant variety which all the three stands contribute to what today is called Standard Nigerian English) and Awonusi's Acrolect (this lect embraces educated Nigerian English and native –speaker English in Nigeria). Bamgbose says the School English, with its heavy dose of Christian religious literature, is the variety that the present Nigerian English emanates from. The notion 'Standard English' is a direct and deliberate attempt by the society to create a body of rule or yardstick by which grammaticality of English could be measured. According to Adeniran (2005) there are still pockets of linguistic pundits and purists who are products of traditions of classical grammars and of English language syllabuses of the Victorian era, they either doubt the existence of NE or simply remain contemptuous of its forms. For instance Bamgbose (1982:99) reports the published view of a Nigerian linguist and professor of English language education who did not believe in the existence of NE in spite of his 50 years of learning, teaching and examining the language, a contrary view, legitimate even if not valid. The number of those who was skeptic about the existence of NE started reducing drastically since the publication of the Grieve Report in 1966 and the institutionalization and implementation of its recommendations in School Certificate English examinations and other public measurements of competence in the language, including the use of English in creative writing. This skepticism was due the myriad of varieties or regional dialects of English that cropped up. Now that a standard has been created and a particular variety selected for use in international and intranational communication, this variety has been allocated status and functions as internationally intelligible variety (the Standard Nigerian English) From 1960 onward, 'Standard Nigerian English' has been marked by the features and characteristics typical of endonormative stabilization, (Ekpe 2007). This variety has been allocated lots of functions as it is used in a wide range of communicative situations such as

administration, politics, media, education and academia, trade and commerce, book publication and film industry.

It is used by Nigerian creative writers to express their world view and as communicative vehicle. This can be seen in the creative works of esteemed and award winning writers like Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and Chimamanda Adichie and others.

The Standard Nigerian English comes out of the development of the local form of English (non-standard). The Nigerian English is an evident that English in Nigeria is now widely seen as an indigenous language with acceptable local features, which is modified to suit our daily need of usage.

This variety being an emerging acceptable local variety of English has passed through a lot of linguistic filters as many scholars like Jowitt (1991), Adegbija (2004) among others have made conscientious efforts in describing it. This has exerted much influence on this variety of Nigerian English and has enhanced its status in its different ramifications of usage.

The Standard Nigerian English has gone through the criteria for standard language which are selection, codification, elaboration of function, acceptance and intelligibility. In the identification of Standard Nigerian English, scholars have identified varieties noticeable among Nigerians on the criteria of local acceptability and international intelligibility.

The English language has come to stay as an unrivalled language of communication in Nigeria and will remain so for a very long time till the government is ready to be serious with its national language policy, (which is not foreseeable in the nearest future). Since we have come to the reality with the existence and the status of Nigerian English, Awonusi (2007) recommends that in order to crawl out of the quagmire of the use of non-standard forms that impede spoken and written communication in English in Nigeria, teachers, researchers and the government must brace up for new challenges. He recommends that the Federal Government as a matter of urgency should establish a

National English Language Centre to see to the development of Standard Nigerian English. It is sad and ironical that, while other exoglossic languages like French and Arabic have such centres or “language villages”. The local languages also have the National Institute for Nigerian Languages which is meant to promote the growth, use and documentation of indigenous languages. English with its myriad of functions and its enviable status in Nigerian society does not have any. English which remains our national language deserves one of such centres if we are to compete favourably in the linguistic market place with our variety of English. This is even more imperative considering the reoccurring high failure rate in English in the just released General Certificate Examination (GCE) and Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) results. It was a similar awful performance that prompted the establishment of a National Mathematics Centre. One wonders why the same should not be done on a language adopted as a national language.

### **1.3 CONCLUSION**

English language has come to stay and compete favourably well with other languages in Nigeria. In a multilingual environment, it is the usefulness of a language that determines the status or importance of the language in the mist of other competing languages in the linguistics market place. English language has been adopted as a national language in Nigeria because it is the only language commonly used by everybody as a medium of communication. It is a language that has unified people of diverse cultures and languages. It is the language of politics, government, commerce, education, instruction in schools, mass media, and law. It is the language of international and intranational interaction. It is the language of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic communication in Nigeria. The status of English language in Nigeria cannot be compared with that of any other language because of the various roles it plays in our society and it will remain so for a long till the time another language will be developed enough to challenge it.

#### 1.4 SUMMARY

Nigeria as a multilingual nation has many indigenous languages spoken in the country apart from English and other foreign languages. In the mist of these different languages one of the languages is most widely used than the other languages because of its prestige: English. English has a myriad of functions as the language of politics, government, commerce, education, instruction in schools, mass media, and law. It is the language of international and intranational interaction. It may simply be referred to as “access language” and will remain so till any other language will be bold enough to challenge it.

#### 1.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Why do you think the status of English in Nigeria will remain unchallenged for a long time?
2. What do you understand by English being an “access language”?

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## **UNIT 2: LANGUAGE PLANNING**

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- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
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### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

Language planning is always embedded in the language development of a country. Language development is the advancement of a speech form in terms of existing orthography, primers, literary texts, literatures and dictionary and when such language is used as a language of instruction in schools and the media. For a language to be developed there must be consistent planning, policy and maintenance by the authorities.

### **2.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to;

-  explain the notion of language planning;
-  discuss the various attempts made by successive government towards language planning in Nigeria.

### **2.2 LANGUAGE PLANNING**

Language planning is usually done by a government or by government agencies concerning the choice of national language or official language(s), ways of spreading the use of a language, spelling reforms, the addition of new words to the language and other language challenges. Through language planning an official language policy can be established and implemented.

Language policy has been one of the biggest challenges to every successive government in Nigeria. Sir. Author Richard, one of the colonial administrators in Nigeria in 1949 had observed that language is one major factor that could threaten the unity of the country. This observation is still valid after 48 years of independence. In realizing this danger Adebija (1989) says, successive Nigerian governments have steered clear of issues relating to language and where any has tried at all, it has to do so with utmost caution.

Nigeria has never had any well defined language policy that could enhance language planning and development. The only language policy that touched or partly addressed this issue was the 1977 National Policy on Education brought up by the then military government, tagged “Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education” and this was not a national language policy but “National Policy on Education”, which introduces a three language formula for Nigeria. Section 1, paragraph 8 of that policy states inter alia, “in addition to appreciating the importance of a language in the educational process and as a means of preserving the people’s culture, the government considers it to be in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his own mother tongue. In this connection, the government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

This was the very first time an official pronouncement was made on language issues, which ended up creating ethnic classes and clashes in the different linguistic blocks in Nigeria. By defining the three indigenous languages as “Major” while others become “Minor” by implication. The sociopolitical implication created by this kind of declaration is that of domination and marginalization. Our language policy imbalance as codified in the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1981 and the 1989 constitution would not provoke such animosity between minority and majority ethnic groups nor threaten language minority’s survival if it did not wantonly deny the minorities access to the national cake, political power and economic success. This policy has not only devalued their language and culture but has also given the speakers a sense of economic

worthlessness and political disempowerment, (Noah 1990). For this reason other language blocks, the so labeled minorities have been looking the so-called majority languages with suspicion. It is said that the Hausas have dominated the country politically for long; the Yorubas have lorded over the economy why the Igbos griped the commerce. For them to be allowed to lord over the minorities again linguistically would be amount to annihilation of the minority groups. This is the major reason the WAZOBIA issue has not and will never work as a language policy in Nigeria. Noah (1990) in one of his protest against the tyranny of WAZOBIA over the non WAZOBIA languages in Nigeria says that a cursory look at the social functions of language in Nigeria with a little attention to government position regarding such functions can further reveal the tyranny of the majority over the minority languages. Noah (1990) quoting Mansour (1993:110) says, ‘how we wish our 1995 constitution were as populist and minority –friendly as the Swiss constitution which provides that, ...each individual, no matter in which canton he resides, has the right to address the Federal Government agencies in his mother tongue and will receive an answer in the language”

This was also the first time a role would be assigned for the indigenous languages in the National Education system (1977: Section 3:15). Which states that, “Government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community, and at a later stage, English”? This mother tongue education is most stressed at the junior primary school level. This undertaking by government regarding the use of the local language as medium of education at the junior primary school level echoes strikingly the provision of “the use of vernacular languages in education” as called for by UNESCO (1953:11), that “it is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic system. The question is, “how workable is this notable suggestions as postulated by the UNESCO in Nigeria. Its inscription in the National Educational Policy serves as a paper tiger as the Nigerian educational system over the years has

witnessed the establishment of elitist private “international” schools alongside the public institutions. Though the public schools might try, the policy of using the mother tongue as medium of education does not apply in the private schools. English is the medium. Most of the pupils begin at a very age attending day-cares where the infants are exposed to the use of English even before they advance to the nursery and the junior primary classes.

Another policy that touches on language policy was that of 1979:51 Federal Constitution which touches on the functional status of languages in the country for official legislative and governing purposes, and it states that, “the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English language and in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, when adequate arrangements have been made therefore. Till now no adequate provision has been made for the use of the three majority languages. The same (1979:91) states that, “the business of the States House of Assembly shall be conducted in English, but the House may in addition to English conduct the business of the House in one or more other languages spoken in the state as the House may by resolution approve. At the state level, when no consensus regarding one or more local languages to be used besides English, English continues to enjoy the monopoly of functioning as the language of legislation.

Moreover, in October 1991, the government sponsored a seminar on the implementation of the language provision of the National Policy on Education on realizing the failure of the 1977 National Education Policy.

The likely language planning policies in Nigeria have been tainted with political and ethnic undertones, rather than linguistic or demographic. As Oladejo (1991) rightly puts it, “the problems with the policy are numerous and they require fundamental reworking”. It is no exaggeration to that Nigeria has no language policy or planning; the little it had died right from birth, unless it is reworked on as suggested by Oladejo no amount of effort can reawakened it to work. A good language planning must have rational planning model in which goals are established, means are selected and outcomes are predicted in a systematic manner (Rubbin, 1971:218).



## **EXERCISE**

In your own opinion which of the Nigerian languages should be given the status of a national language and why?

## **2.3 CONCLUSION**

Assessing the language planning policies in Nigeria thus far reveal that Nigeria has no language development policy at all. The few language issues the country had dabbled with had nothing to do with national language, but official language. When few things have been touched on function allocations, there has been no sincerity of purpose as such plans are always tainted with political undertones. The declaration of some languages as “major” and others as “minor” further deteriorate issues. For this reason and in a situation of language confused state like ours, English as a neutral language has to come in to save the chaotic situation and it will remain as the only language of communication for long till the time Nigeria is ready to be sincere about its language policies.

## **2.4 SUMMARY**

Nigeria has never had any national language planning. It has never had any genuine language policy that geared toward a national language development. The few policies the government has come up with had to do with education, majority and minority languages and legislative allocation of functions to languages. The government always avoids anything that bothers on national language planning so as not to incur the wrath of its populace as Sir Author (1949) had rightly observed that language is one major factor that could threaten the unity of the country.

## **2.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. What is language planning?
2. Based on the different language policies thus far, do you think there is language planning in Nigeria?

## **2.6 REFERENCES**

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## **UNIT 3: LANGUAGE POLICIES IN NIGERIA**

### **CONTENTS**




- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Language Policies in Nigeria
- 3.3 Conclusion
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 Tutor Marked Assignments
- 3.6 References

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Language policies of any country are always part of the language planning to develop and adopt a language or group of languages for use in a country. This is often done through language planning or engineering of the chosen language(s). In Nigeria the government has been so careful on issues that bother on National Language. The few policies it had tried had nothing to do with National Language Policy, rather it touches on education policy and language function in legislation.

### **3.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to:

-  argue about existence or nonexistence of any National Language Policy in Nigeria;
-  evaluate the extant Language Policies in the country so far; and
-  comment on the extent to which these policies have worked.

### **3.2 LANGUAGE POLICIES IN NIGERIA**

The first language policy ever in Nigeria was in 1977 and this was on education. The National Policy on Education introduces a three language formula. Three parts of the policy specifically mentions language related matters. Section 1:8 of the policy states that, in addition to appreciating the importance of a language in the educational process,

and as a means of preserving the people's culture, the Government considers it to be in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his own mother tongue. In this connection, the Government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Hausa. It suffices to say that though this is not a language policy in itself, it was the first time official pronouncement was made that defines three of the indigenous languages as major while others are by implication "minor". It was also the first and only document that assigns a role for the indigenous languages in the National Education system. Section 3.15 (4) adds that, "Government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community and at the later stage, English.

The 1979 Federal Constitution in its own part contains provision for the functional status of languages in the country, mostly for official, legislative and governing purposes. Paragraph 51 of this Constitution spelt out that, "the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English language and in Hausa, Igbo and Hausa when adequate arrangements have been made therefore". Paragraph 91 of the same Constitution went further to state that, "the business of the House of Assembly shall be conducted in English, but the House may in addition to English conduct the business of the House in one or more other languages spoken in the state as the House may by resolution approve".

These attempts were made to address the Nigerian national language question. The implementation of these policies has met with little or no success at all. It was in recognition of the failure of these policies that the government sponsored a seminar on the implementation of the language provisions of the national policy in education in October 1991. The importance of the seminar to the language was underscored by the fact that participants comprises not only top government dignitaries but also some of the best brains and renown linguists and language education experts in the country, many of whom were the brain behind the language policy itself. Some the reasons for the failure of the policy were discussed in this seminar and some recommendations were made to

serve as guide to the government for future amendment to the language policy and its implementation. Some of the recommendations made are as presented below:

- ✚ The seminar endorsed the Nigerian policy of multilingualism but it called on the government to review and restate in a clearer form the language provisions of the National Policy of Education.
- ✚ The seminar suggested to the government to provide active encouragement to the implementation of that part of the National Policy on Education on the use of the language of the immediate community as the language of primary education.
- ✚ It also recommended that languages in the country should be defined according to their status, functions and contexts of use.

Contrary to expectation, the panel seem not have made any pronouncement on issues such as major and minor languages, language of the immediate environment, which the present documents on the National Language Policy still use and these terms seem to have political rather than linguistic or demographic connotations. The panel seemed not to be happy about the use of such terms yet they did not openly condemn it during their sitting and was not made part of the recommendations.

- ✚ The seminar in addition recommended that the language of the immediate community or an indigenous second language should be taught as a core subject.
- ✚ Finally, it also called for a revision of the curricula of the major Nigerian languages and those of the language of the immediate community to reflect the national goals and to emphasize communicative skills and competence.

It was also recommended that teachers be trained in Nigerian languages as a necessary step towards a successful implementation of the language policy. It also recommended research on Nigerian languages and evaluation of all aspects of the implementation of the language policy. The recommendations made by the panel no doubt emphasized on practical aspects of the implementation of the language policy, mostly as it relates to the language of education. These recommendations were not carried out and were ignored immediately the panel members left, because the policies and the recommendations lack sincerity of purpose because goals were not set and means had not been selected for their effective implementation. They remained a paper tiger because there was no enabling

decree for its implementation. For example the policy recommended the three major indigenous languages to be part of the education curriculum and it is entrenched in the education policy, yet it has not been implemented in the ongoing national educational process.

It is also necessary to note that the policy in its present state assumes that deciding on the language of the child's immediate environment is not easy. It is certain that for many children, mostly in the main cities, there are many competing languages in their immediate environment. For example, let us assume an Igbo child who lives in Lagos and his mother's tongue no doubt is Igbo (provided too that both parents are themselves Igbo). The main languages in the child's environment are English, Yoruba and Igbo each competing for dominance. Which of these languages will eventually become the dominant one will depend on the child's age, education and of course his level of social interaction and linguistic exposure? Initially, Igbo or even English may be the language the most commonly used language for most of his communication needs considering the urban nature of his immediate environment. Considering the scenario just described it is a bit tasking to determine which of these languages will be the child's initial language of primary education. The issue is not just the language of his immediate environment, but of the functional languages of his immediate environment, an environment which in itself is not static. On the bases of what is in the language policy, one might want to assume that Yoruba is the language of the child's immediate environment, but such assumption could be erroneous because for the child the immediate language to him is the parent's language (Igbo) and Yoruba / English are less predominant to the child. The linguistic situation just described is not peculiar to only Lagos. There is hardly any city or town in Nigeria that can claim linguistic homogeneity.

The panel for implementation of the language provisions of the National policy on education in October 1991 partially addressed the problem of definition of the language of immediate community in its recommendations. However, there are still some abysses that need be filled before the language policy can function properly. Fundamental among these is the fact that the trilingual policy is not sensitive to its geo-political environment.

Two issues relevant to this lack of sensitivity are firstly, the struggle for political power for Federal offices in the country is always between these so called “the majority three”. This same struggle resulted in the break out of the first civil war in 1964, thus pronouncing the end of the first Republic. In fact the linguistic blocks in the country have been forcefully welded within these three major languages despite the fact there are glaring differences between the three major and the minor languages forcefully attached to them. Till moment that same struggle that resulted in the war still lingers and generates mutual suspicion among the three groups and there has been no legal provision in place to checkmate this linguistic imbalance and this is at the detriment of the so labeled ‘minority’.

Secondly, even if adequate legislative provision has been made and sufficient facilities have been made available to reduce the factors of linguistic suspicion among the three major tribes, little can be done to convince the minority language group to accept the majority languages. To the minority group, the imposition of the majority languages on them is a denial of their right of survival and growth for their own languages. It is pertinent we ask the same question Fakunle (1989) asked, “will people of Benue, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa and other minority groups be willing to learn any of the three major languages when they know that nobody will be ready to learn their own in return? Your answer is as good as mine.

### **EXERCISE**

If a National Language Policy is to be adopted in Nigeria, which of the language do would you suggest should be adopted, and why? Your reasons must be based on demographic and linguistic grounds and not on sentiment.

### **3.3 CONCLUSION**

The National Language Policy has lots of challenges that confront it. For any language policy to succeed the right infrastructure must be put in place and a conducive atmosphere must be created for it to work. The efforts thus far by the government to re-examine the failure its former policy on language and the panel’s recommendations are

not enough. The two bodies have neglected the most fundamental issue to its workability like adequate socio-political level ground in which the policy would have operated. Unless this is done and all the languages that exist in the country is given equal attention no language policy will ever work in this country.

### **3.4 SUMMARY**

The first language policy ever in Nigeria was in 1977 and this was on education. The National Policy on Education introduces a three language formula. Three parts of the policy specifically mentions language related matters. In this connection, the Government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Hausa. It suffices to say that though this is not a language policy in itself, it was the first time official pronouncement was made that defines three of the indigenous languages as major while others are by implication “minor”. It was also the first and only document that assigns a role for the indigenous languages in the National Education system. Also, the 1979 Federal Constitution in its own part contains provision for the functional status of languages in the country, mostly for official, legislative and governing purposes. Considering language policies thus far, all we have had, had been either language policy on education or functional status policies and not a national language policy.

### **3.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Trace the issue of language policy in Nigeria from independence till date.
2. Nigeria as a country does not have any National Language Policy, discuss.
3. List and discuss the recommendations of the panel for implementation of the language provisions of the national policy in education

### **3.6 REFERENCES**

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## **UNIT 4: ENGLISH AND THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE QUESTION**

### **CONTENTS**




- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 English and the National Language Question
- 4.3 Conclusion
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Tutor Marked Assignments

### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

The language situation in Nigeria as a multilingual nation had and has continued to generate various debates from different quarters. It is truism that “languages are the pedigree of nations” and for a language to be adopted as a national language it must be an indigenous language because language is the reflection of the social, cultural and values of its speakers. In a multilingual environment like Nigeria with an estimated 515 languages, national question is not therefore a simple task as such an easily assessable language “English” has to be adopted as a commonly used language and not a national language.

### **4.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are to:

-  designate the position of English in the National Language question;
-  argue for which of the indigenous languages in Nigeria should be adopted as a National language.
-  examine if none of the indigenous languages meet the conditions for a National language which of the variety of the English language should be adopted as a National language..

## **4.2 THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE QUESTION IN NIGERIA**

Nigeria is regarded as a multi-lingual country, that is, a country that has many languages. Various linguists have tried to estimate the number of languages in Nigeria. Tifen (1968) approximates it to be 150, Bamgbose (1971) concludes that Nigeria has 400 languages, K.J Hansford (1976) identified that 394 languages were spoken in Nigeria. Afolayan (1977) however concluded that the number of Nigerian languages is higher than all figures speculated by other linguists Ijo language is said to be seventeen different languages rather than a dialect. Of recent Grimes (2000) estimated 515 languages.

In the various languages in Nigeria, it is known that some languages are regarded as living and non- living. The number of languages listed in Nigeria is 521. Of those, 510 are living languages, 2 are second language without mother-tongue speakers, and 9 are extinct.. some of these living languages and their population includes: Abanyom (12500), Abon (1000), Abua (25000), Aduge (1904 Afade (25000) ,Agoi (12000), Agwagwune (20,000), Ahan (300), Ake (2000), Akpa (26894), Avhianwu (20,000), Bade (250000), Ebira (100000), Efik (40,000), Fulfulde, Gwari, Hausa (18525000), Ibibio (2000000), Idoma (60,000), Igala (80,000), Igbo (18000000), Yoruba (18850000), kanuri (3000000), Nupe (80,000). Some of the extinct languages, that is, languages that do not have native speakers are: Ajawa, Auyokawa, Basa-Gumna, Holma,

A national language which should be the language of political, social and cultural group of a particular country and this is a vital issue in Nigeria. The question of which language should be the national language is posed. Should it be English language or the indigenous languages of Nigeria? This question has led to a lot of controversies. Linguists like M.A Adekunle and D. Olagoke present Nigerians arguments for the choice of national language. A sect of Nigerians are in full support of English language being the national language of Nigeria, another maintains that the major languages of Nigeria which emanate from the three major ethnic groups of Nigeria namely the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa, should be Nigeria's national language as it is known to be spoken by over nine million native speaker. The others advocate for minor languages of Nigeria like Ogoni, Gwari, Igede e.t.c as its national language. Another group of Nigerians holds the

position that a language should be derived from the existing Nigerian languages by combining them.

Looking at the first group of Nigerians who believed that English language should be Nigeria's national language, it is claimed that English plays a crucial role in the life of a country. As it is known as a language of commerce, education, communication and it is global, adopting it as the national language is making Nigeria at par with developed countries of the world. M. Kebby (1986) posits that "no Nigerian language can serve scientific and technological needs....because none is complete".

It has been acclaimed that English language is a neutral language, since it does not belong to any ethnic group, it should therefore be adopted as the national language of Nigeria.

The notion that supports English language as being adopted as Nigeria's national language is counteracted by the sect who is of the belief that adopting English language which is a foreign language and a product British colonialism, means that we are not politically independent and this will further debase our culture and national pride and unity, therefore local language should be adopted.

To drive the point home, Olagoke (1982) says:

*"There are many Nigerians who feel strongly that the country needs a lingua franca other than English, not only to foster national unity but also to facilitate self discovery and pride."*

Adoption of local language as the country's national language will eliminate the elitist society English as created through its adoption as the language of instruction in Nigerian schools as this will afford the children of the poor and illiterates the opportunity to be educated.

Olagoke further argues that it would easier to learn the adopted local language for those whom the adopted local language is not their mother-tongue than learning English or French "because of it's greater first hand contact with speakers of the former."

The problem is now which local language should be chosen. Should the national language be chosen from the major or minor languages? The supporters of the major

language groups claim that since these languages have the largest number of speakers and also reasonable amount of literatures have been developed from these languages, they stand a great chance of being adopted. The problem is which languages amongst these major languages will be chosen? Will it not cause conflict? The minority language option also poses the same problem, which of the numerous minority languages will be selected as Nigeria's national language?

Due to these discrepancies between the major and minor language choice of national language, it was recommended that a neutral language be adopted which should be derived from mixing the existing Nigerian languages as this is regarded as a new and neutral language. Igbeneweka (1983) claims that since the language are neutral, no ethnic group will lay claim on it. The concept of WAZOBIA came into bear. This was derived from Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo languages. 'WA' is a Yoruba word, 'ZO' is a Hausa word and 'BIA' is an Igbo word, they all mean "come". This new language did not hold water as it was jettisoned. It is not all encompassing, that is, it did not represent all Nigerian languages.

The provision in the 1979 constitution for Business in the National Assembly to be conducted in Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo was rendered null and void.

Another language was formed by Igbeneweka (1983) called 'GUOSA'. This comprises vocabularies from different Nigerian languages. But this did not work because it was difficult in learning and also developing literatures in them, this language was therefore rejected.

From the formation of new languages that were rejected, it can be seen that no ethnic group wants to accept the language of another as they see this as an effort of imposing languages on them. This has on several occasions resulted to disagreement and some war. The language policy of "Hausa-isation" implemented by The Sardauna of Sokoto gave rise to the TIV riot in 1962 as people of TIV rejected the policy.

With the rejection of the use of indigenous languages as Nigeria's national language, another option which is making the round in Nigerian is the Nigerian English- a derivative of the Standard English with its uniqueness in sound and structure has been suggested by many scholars.

Another group of Nigerians agitated for Nigerian Pidgin English as the national language due to its popularity in terms of usage. But this was also rejected as it was regarded as "debased" "bastardized" and "corrupt" form of English. Adedipe (1986) and Bamgbose (1971) see it as a form of English that would not command respect especially amongst the elites and the educated in the country. However what was needed is not Pidgin but an indigenized version of the Standard English which will have its own vocabulary, grammar, phonology and syntax but will still be strictly Nigerian. It should be acknowledged that any educated Nigerian accent that displays international intelligibility should be accepted.

#### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

The national language question has generated a lot of controversies in the country. It is quite difficult to decide which language should be adopted as a national language in a multilingual nation as Nigeria. Nigeria as a country has not had any language policy not to talk about choosing a national language. How several efforts have been made by scholars in ways of suggesting the adoption of English, Hausa, Pidgin, Swahili and even the purposely "created" artificial "Eguosa" or "WAZOBIA". However, the majority of people prefer English because of the multi-ethnic situation in Nigeria and the subsequent emotional feeling of ethnic identity and fear of marginalization of the minority linguistic groups because of its neutrality.

#### **EXERCISE**

Discuss the concept of "Eguosa" and "WAZOBIA" as choices of national languages.

#### 4.4 SUMMARY

In a multilingual nation with an estimated 515 languages it is difficult to decide on a national language mostly when there is emotional feeling of ethnic identity and fear of marginalization by the minority linguistic. Several efforts have been made by scholars in ways of suggesting without any being acceptable. At the face of these controversies many believe that English language should be Nigeria's national language, because it plays a crucial role in the life of a country. As it is known as a language of commerce, education, communication and it is global, adopting it as the national language is making Nigeria at par with developed countries of the world, not minding the colonial vestiges left on it.

#### 4.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Which of the Nigerian languages do you consider suitable as a choice of a national language and why?
2. In your opinion, do you think it is right to use any of the varieties of English as our national language? Which of the varieties do you suggest? Give your reasons.

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