



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**COURSE CODE: ENG 251**

**COURSE TITLE: LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY**

## COURSE GUIDE

### ENG 251 LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**ENG 251: Language and Society** is a three-unit course that is available in the second semester of the second year for B.A. English and B.A. (Ed) English programme. This course examines the several ways social factors influence language and the role language plays in structuring and representing social categories. Specifically, the topics to be covered include: socially determined variation in language styles, registers; language varieties as reflected in social and regional dialects; standard and non-standard, native and non-native speakers, slang, jargon, graffiti, etc. It will also examine factors affecting language choice, such as bi-multilingualism, code switching and code mixing and diglossia. Students will also study changes in language status over time; language shift, language maintenance, language death, and new language, such as Pidgins and Creoles.

## **COURSE AIMS**

This course has twenty study units and a course guide. Each of these units has its set objectives. You should ensure that you study the set objectives of each unit, so that they can serve as a guide as you go through the units. The general aims of this course are to:

- introduce you to the study of language and how it relates to the society;
- help you to understand how the context of language use determines the language people use;
- expose you to the different varieties of language in contemporary societies;
- familiarise you with how languages are planned and maintained through official policies in linguistically heterogeneous societies;
- show you the peculiarities in the linguistic behaviour of bi-multilingual speakers;
- help you to understand the general socio-political aspects of language use.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Following the aims outlined above, the objectives for this course are set out below. These are the things you are expected to be able to do at the end of your study. These objectives will enable you to evaluate how much you have learnt and to identify where and what you need to improve in your learning. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- explain clearly the concept of language as a social phenomenon;
- identify the social factors in language;
- describe the varieties of language by being able to explain such concepts as dialect, accent, register, style, slang , jargon, etc;
- explain the concept of bilingualism and multilingualism and the typical features of bilingual discourse, such as code-switching, code-mixing, interference and borrowing;
- discuss the features of language planning, policy and maintenance;
- describe language typologies;
- show how gender is reflected in language use;
- discuss the peculiarities in language use in new varieties such as e-mail and text messages; and
- explain how new varieties emerge from situations of languages in contact.

## **WORKING THROUGH THE COURSE**

In this course, you have twenty study units to go through. In each of the study units, you are expected to thoroughly study the contents. You are advised to pay attention to the objectives of each study unit as they will serve as your guide to knowing what is expected of you. At the appropriate points in each unit, you are assessed through Tutor Marked Assignments. You are also expected to write a final examination based on the entire course.

## **WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE**

This course will introduce you to issues that bother on language as a social phenomenon. It will help you to see language, not just as a tool for communication, but also as an institution that helps speakers to maintain self-identity, their culture and the society. Even instances of language use have social settings or contexts, and this helps to determine how the language is used.

This course will also take you through how language reflects differences in age, status, sex, culture and the ethnic background of the speakers. It will also take you through other aspects of language in social situations, such as how languages are planned and maintained through official policies and how languages shift, die and go extinct.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

The major components of this course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment Files
5. Presentation Schedule

## **STUDY UNITS**

### **Module 1 Introduction to Language and Society**

- Unit 1 Language as a Social Phenomenon and its Functions
- Unit 2 Social Factors in Language Use

### **Module 2 Language Varieties I**

- Unit 1 Dialect, Accent, Sociolect and Idiolect
- Unit 2 Register
- Unit 3 Style

### **Module 3 Language Varieties II**

- Unit 1 Standard, Non-standard, Native and Non-native Varieties
- Unit 2 Deviant/Restricted Varieties (Slang, jargon, Graffiti)
- Unit 3 New Varieties (E-mail, Text Messaging, Mobile Telephoning)
- Unit 4 Languages in Contact (Pidgin and Creole)

### **Module 4 Language Types, Ethnography and Acquisition**

- Unit 1 Language Typologies
- Unit 2 Linguistic Anthropology
- Unit 3 Language Learning and Acquisition

### **Module 5 Multilingualism and Language Development**

- Unit 1 Bilingualism/Multilingualism
- Unit 2 Language Policy
- Unit 3 Language Planning, Maintenance, Shift and Death



## **Module 6 Sociolinguistics and Discourse**

Unit 1	Discourse Analysis
Unit 2	Code Switching, Interference and Borrowing
Unit 3	Linguistic Imperialism
Unit 4	Sociolinguistic Situation of Nigeria
Unit 5	Sociolinguistics and Other Disciplines

### **REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Each unit contains a list of reference materials that you can read in addition to the study units. These references are meant to help you enhance your understanding of the course.

### **ASSIGNMENT FILE**

This file contains all the details of the work you must submit to your tutor for marks. Note that all the marks obtained in all the assignments you do will be part of the final assessment scores for you in this course.

### **PRESENTATION SCHEDULE**

The presentation schedule included in your course materials help you to have an idea of the important dates for the completion of Tutor-marked Assignments and attendance of tutorials. Note that you must adhere to the dates for the submission of your assignments.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Your assessment in this course will be based on Tutor-marked Assignments (TMAs) and a final examination, which you will write at the end of the course.

### **TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMAS)**

Every unit contains at least one or two assignments. You are advised to work through all the assignments and submit them for assessment. Your tutor will assess the assignments and select three which will constitute the 30% of your final grade. The tutor-marked assignments may be presented to you in a separate file. Just know that for every unit there are some tutor-marked assignments for you. It is important you do them and submit for assessment.

## FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

At the end of the course, you will write a final examination, which will constitute 70% of your final grade. In the examination, which shall last for two to three hours, you will be requested to answer three questions out of at least five questions.

## COURSE MARKING SCHEME

This table shows how the actual course marking is broken down

Assessment	Marks
Assignments	Four Assignments, best three marks of the four count as 30% of course work
Final Examination	70%
Total	100%

## COURSE OVERVIEW

Unit	Title of Work	Weeks Activity	Assessment (End of Unit)
	Course Guide	1	
	<b>Module 1: Introduction To Language And Society</b>	1	
1	Language as a Social Phenomenon and Its Functions	2	Assignment 1
2	Social Factors in Language Use	2	Assignment 2
	<b>Module 2: Language Varieties I</b>		
1	Dialect, Accent, Sociolect and Idiolect	3	Assignment 3
2	Register	4	Assignment 4
3	Style	5	Assignment 5
	<b>Module 3: Language Varieties II</b>		
1	Standard, Non-standard, Native and Non-native Varieties	6	Assignment 6
2	Deviant/Restricted Varieties (Slang, jargon, Graffiti)	7	Assignment 7
3	New Varieties (E-mail, Text Messaging, Mobile Telephoning)	8	Assignment 8

4	Languages in Contact (Pidgin and Creole)	9	Assignment 9
	<b>Module 4: Language: Types, Ethnography And Acquisition</b>		
1	Language Typologies	10	Assignment 10
2	Linguistic Anthropology	11	Assignment 11
3	Language Learning and Acquisition	11	Assignment 12
	<b>Module 5: Multilingualism And Language Development</b>		
1	Bilingualism/Multilingualism	12	Assignment 13
2	Language Policy	12	Assignment 14
3	Language Planning, Maintenance, Shift and Death	13	Assignment 15
	<b>Module 6: Sociolinguistics And Discourse</b>		
1	Discourse Analysis	13	Assignment 15
2	Code Switching, Interference and Borrowing	14	Assignment 16
3	Linguistic Imperialism	14	Assignment 17
4	Sociolinguistic Situation of Nigeria	15	Assignment 18
5	Sociolinguistics and Other Disciplines	15	Assignment 19
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Total		17	

## HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecturer. This is one of the greatest advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suits you best, think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to the lecturer. In the same way, a lecturer might give you some reading to do, the study unit tells you when to read, and which are your text materials or set books. You are provided exercises to do at appropriate points, just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise. Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit, and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next to it is a set of objectives. These objectives allow you to know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. These learning objectives are meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you

have achieved the objectives. If this is made a habit, then you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course. The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or form a reading section. The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, please call your tutor. Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need assistance, do not hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

1. Read this course Guide thoroughly. It is your first assignment. Organise study schedule. Design a 'course overview' to guide you through the course. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Important information, e.g: details of your tutorials and the date of the first day of the semester is available from the study centre. You need to gather all the information into one place, such as your diary or wall calendar. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates and schedule of work for each unit.
2. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything to stay faithful to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please, let your tutor know before it is too late for help.
3. Turn to Unit 1, and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.  
Assemble the study materials. You will need your set books and the unit you are studying at any point in time.
4. Work through the unit. As you work through the unit, you will know what sources to consult for further information.
5. Keep in touch with your study centre. Up-to-date course information will be continuously available there.
6. Well before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before the due dates), keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignments carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due date.
7. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials or consult your tutor.

8. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
9. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutor-marked assignment form and also the written comments on the ordinary assignments.
10. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit's objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in the Course Guide).

## **TUTORS AND TUTORIALS**

The dates, times and locations of these tutorials will be made available to you, together with the name, telephone number and the address of your tutor. Each assignment will be marked by your tutor. Pay close attention to the comments your tutor might make on your assignments as these will help in your progress. Make sure that assignments reach your tutor on or before the due date. Your tutorials are important, therefore try not to skip any. It is an opportunity to meet your tutor and your fellow students. It is also an opportunity to get the help of your tutor and discuss any difficulties encountered on your reading.

## **SUMMARY**

This course introduces you to the link between language and society. Basically, you will be taken through the following: (a) how language functions in a society, how the society is stratified and how this affect the way humans use language, (c) the varieties of language that exist within a society, (d) languages in contact, and the result (e) language planning and maintenance., and so forth. All these are aimed at giving you good background knowledge on the interface between language and society.

I wish you every success in this course.

**MAIN  
COURSE**

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## **MODULE 1      INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY**

Unit 1	Language as a Social Phenomenon and Its Functions
Unit 2	Social Factors in Language Use

### **UNIT 1      LANGUAGE AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON AND ITS FUNCTIONS**

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3.1.5	Poetic Function
3.1.6	Other Functions
4.0.	Conclusion
5.0.	Summary
6.0.	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0.	Reference/Further Reading

#### **1.0      INTRODUCTION**

In this Unit, you will learn about language as a social phenomenon and the various functions of language in the society.

The ability of humans to use language to communicate is one thing that makes them different from other creatures. Language should not just be seen as a tool for communicating, but also one for establishing social relationships between human beings. It is the social essence of language and the different ways people use language to achieve socialization that we will be examining in this unit.

#### **2.0      OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the notion of language as a social phenomenon;
- identify the various functions language is put to in the society; and
- differentiate between these functions in any human interaction.



### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Language as a Social Phenomenon

Language, according to Wikipedia Dictionary is a system of signals, including voice sounds, gestures or written symbols which encodes and decodes information.

However, languages are not just sets of symbols. They also often conform to a rough grammar, or system of rules, used to manipulate the symbols. What is more important to us here is that language is constructed by humans, who live in communities to express their way of life. So, whatever system of rules and symbols a language possesses are given to it by its speakers.

Every language use is situated within a group of speakers who have something in common. They may be people living in the same community who may share the same origin, profession, social class, and so forth. Such a group of people tend to behave alike because the environment or context in which they operate constrains them to use language in a particular way. Since language is a system of symbols, the speakers choose from the linguistic system in which they operate only those symbols that will communicate something meaningful to them. The words and the structure of a group of language speakers reflects the way they see the world and these in turn, guide their social interaction. For instance, the world view of Yoruba speakers makes them to see kinship relations in a different way from the way English speakers see them. Someone's brother in the Yoruba world view is not just "a male who has the same parents as the person". Someone's brother includes all male relatives who are slightly older or younger than that person.

It is also important to note that in some cultures, greetings are used more for socialising than in other cultures. In most African cultures, a lot of value is placed on greetings before the commencement of conversation, during conversation and at the end of a conversation.

Different contexts of language use have their distinct social identity and style markers. For instance, the way language is used in casual conversation setting is different from the way it is used in institutionalised discourse setting, such as: Church, debate, quiz, symposium, public lecture, and so forth. There are ways people behave when they speak different languages. This means that language has a connection with behaviour. In fact some scholars have summarised this by saying that language is a form of behaviour. For instance, there are ways to speak and behave in a courtroom, and this is essentially different from the way we behave when we for instance are in the open

market for any form of transaction. The market situation in Africa allows for sellers to advertise their wares by calling out to potential buyers. There are also ways we behave in conversations that makes them look orderly. For instance, participants in conversations will not usually talk all at once. Conversely, there will not usually be stretches of time in which no one talks at all.

Language cannot be discussed without mentioning the culture in which it is used. Culture is regarded as the way of life of a people. The language a people speak is used to express the various elements of their culture. Likewise, we cannot speak meaningfully about culture without talking about the society in which the culture resides. So, we see that the society is the base for all the discussions we may be having about language. And within each society or segments of the society, we have different cultures, which those who belong to them express through their use of language.

### **3.1.1 Functions of Language**

The most basic function of language that readily comes to the mind of every one is the communicative function. This means that language is used to communicate or express the ideas in our mind. These ideas themselves emanate from the world we live in. This however is too simplistic a way of seeing the function of language. In this section, we have identified some major functions of language, which will be applicable to any known human language. They are given below.

#### **3.1.2 Emotive Function**

Language is used to express the state of our mind, the way our mind is working at some particular point in time. The emotive function of language focuses on the addresser and it is also referred to as expressive function. The addresser's own attitude towards the content of the message is emphasized. Each time we use certain expressions, they show how we feel. Such expressions are called emotive utterances. Examples are emphatic speech or interjections, such as: "hurray", "damn it", "oh my God", "wow", "ouch" (English), "ye e" in Yoruba to express pain or sorrow), "aah" (to express surprise), and so forth.

#### **3.1.3 Referential Function**

Referential Function refers to the context.

The function emphasizes that communication is always dealing with something contextual. It is also called representative function of language. Speakers use language to refer to their world. The only thing that accounts for the difference in languages is the fact that speakers'

worlds differ, hence their view, which is expressed in language must equally differ. Most words used in language refer to some entity in the physical or experiential world of the speaker. For instance, the word “chair” refers to an object in the world that has four legs and is used for sitting. However, we are aware that some words we use do not refer to anything in the world as such. For instance grammatical words, such as prepositions and articles do not refer to any concrete object.

### **3.1.4 Social Function**

Language is used to maintain relationships between speakers. This is the social function of language. It is also referred to as **phatic communion**. It is the use of language that helps the speakers to establish contact. By mere exchange of words, ties of union are created. For instance, greetings are regarded as a way of establishing relationship in language. They come before any form of verbal interaction. This function of language signifies the basic human requirement to signal friendship. The function is more about a ritual exchange about speakers’ well-being, e.g.:

Good morning - directed to someone you met in the morning

Bless you - In Nigeria, directed to someone who has just sneezed

Hello - directed to somebody one wants to talk to

### **3.1.5 Poetic Function**

Language is used for creative purposes by some users. Sometimes, our messages convey more than just the content, and until we probe into the deeper meaning being conveyed, we may lose the whole message. Most English words have the ordinary surface day to day meaning and in addition, connotation, i.e., meaning above the ordinary meaning, which is not always directly linked to the surface usage. This function of language is commonly employed in literary works, where writers deliberately deviate in their use of language to create certain effects. For instance, a woman described as a “bitch” is a woman of easy virtue, or simply put, a prostitute.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i Read the first act of the drama text *The Lion and The Jewel* by Wole Soyinka.
- ii Identify the various functions of language in the text.

### **3.1.6 Other Functions**

The functions discussed above are the generally stated functions of language. There are other miscellaneous functions of language functions, which we will discuss briefly below.

Language can be used as a means of expressing one's identity. Speakers' use of language is constrained by the totality of who they are in terms of their social background, age, sex, profession, and region of origin. For instance, certain expressions are generally associated with certain group of speakers. It is on the basis of this function of language that linguists study how language varies, by examining varieties of language peculiar to an individual (idiolect); variety of language peculiar to people from a particular geographical location (dialect); variety of language that reflects features of speech (pronunciation) peculiar to people from the same region (accent); variety of speech peculiar to people of the same profession (register).

Each utterance we make is designed to perform certain functions such as: informing the listener, questioning the listener about some facts, promising the listener that one will do something, and ordering the listener to do something. This, is language study is referred to as speech acts. This means that our utterances make us and our listeners to behave or act in a particular way. Listeners are expected to recognize the speaker's intention or else communication would not be achieved.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

To conclude this unit, it is clear from the discussion above that language is a social phenomenon, which users use not just as a tool for expressing their minds, but also as a means of socializing among the group of users.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit examined language as a social phenomenon. It looked at the nature of human language and how the code used by speakers is derived from their world view of the society in which they dwell. It underscored the importance of culture and society which are both essential ingredients of any instance of language use.

The second aspect of the unit deals with four major functions of language: emotive, referential, social, and poetic functions. It also looks at two other functions, those that view language as a means of expressing our identity and controlling reality.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Language should not just be seen as a tool for communicating, but also one for establishing social relationships between human beings. Discuss this statement.
2. What is ‘**phatic communion**’?
3. Identify two functions of language and explain them.
4. Record your own examples of language forms that perform social and poetic functions in at least two Nigerian indigenous languages.

## 7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READING

Fasold, R. W. and Connot-Linton, .J. (2006). *An Introduction to Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gumperz, J. (1983). *Language and Social Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Yule, G. (1995). *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: CUP.

## **UNIT 2      SOCIAL FACTORS IN LANGUAGE USE**

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- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

As mentioned earlier in the previous Unit, language is a social phenomenon because the users of any particular language dwell in a society, and their interactions through the language reflects the worldview of the society. Certain social factors have been identified, which shape the way we construct meaning in language. Such factors determine what language we use, and how we use such language. They include the context of language use, the social status of the language user, the age of the language user and the sex of the language users. In this unit, we shall see how these factors shape the ways we use language in the society.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to do the following:

- identify how contextual factors affect language use; and
- discuss the role of age, social status, education, sex and gender in language use.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Context as a Factor in Language Use**

It is impossible to determine what most utterances mean without having some knowledge of the situations in which they occur. Such situations are referred to as context. By context here, we mean:

- (i) the physical environment of the language use, ie, where the language is used, the objects there and the actions taking place. This is often referred to as the physical context;
- (ii) the utterances made before and after the one under consideration. This is called the linguistic context;
- (iii) the general rules of behaviour that the language users obey, the background knowledge shared by the users. This is also known as the epistemic context;
- (iv) the social relationship between the language users, which is also known as the social context.

We cannot possibly study language without considering the context in which it is used, because context creates possibilities for interpretation and helps us to remove ambiguities that utterances would have had if they had occurred in isolation. For instance, if someone utters the statement:

I need a mouse urgently

the meaning will depend on the context in which the utterance is made. If this statement was made by a scientist who is running an experiment, the mouse he/she is referring to will then be a rodent with a long tail. However, if the same statement was made by a person who has a computer that he uses to word process his documents, the mouse will then refer to the device we use to do things on a computer screen. We would see that in interpreting the meaning of the statement above, we need to look into the physical context, the people involved and where the discourse is taking place, our understanding of the word mouse, which is not limited to one meaning, and so forth.

Halliday (1973) described the knowledge speakers have of the context of the language they use by identifying three meta-functions namely: the ideational knowledge, the interpersonal knowledge, and the textual knowledge. The ideational knowledge refers to the knowledge of the culture prevalent within the society gained by means of direct experience by the speakers. The interpersonal knowledge is the knowledge of how people behave in particular situations, i.e. the degree of formality that a culture assigns to different situations and the roles people assume as a consequence. The textual knowledge refers to the knowledge gained from the other texts including the knowledge of intra- and inter-textual contexts, conventions for the organization of texts, how texts are made to stick together as a meaningful whole (cohesion and coherence).

### **3.1.1 Social Status**

Every society has a social structure, which usually is based on certain socio-economic indices, such as occupation, the level of education, the income, the dwelling place, and so forth. Status in this sense is therefore anything a set of language speakers have that distinguishes them from other language users. The status of language users influences the way they use language. It is easy to identify the different layers of any society in terms of the status of the people. For instance there is the likelihood that people who live in the same area of a particular society have the same linguistic behaviour. Likewise, those who belong to the same profession tend to speak the same way because the profession that binds them together reflects in the language they speak. People who live in the exclusive areas of the society like the Government Reservation Areas (GRAs) are those who are regarded as the upper class people in the society. In Nigeria, for instance, people in the upper class socialize mostly in English, while the people in the lower class socialize in the local languages.

It is important to state here that one's status also refers to the roles we take up in different speech situations. People are generally aware of their own status in relation to one another, and will choose the appropriate linguistic forms consciously to reflect this status in different speech situations. For instance, when we are talking to people of higher social authority, our language becomes more formal than when we are interacting with people of the same social status or lower status.

Status also reflects in the medium of language we use, For instance, most writings are formal, probably because most of the relationships that are expressed through writing are formal in character.

### **3.1.2 Age**

Age is a very important factor in language use. As you would recognize people of different age brackets have different linguistic behaviour. Children have their own way of speaking especially when they are just learning the language. Scholars in language acquisition have recognized different stages children go through to acquire language. Each of these stages has its different characteristics. Even adults recognize that we have what we call "baby talk", which is the expression for the sounds and words babies used when learning to speak and the words used by adults when talking to babies. We recognize words like "weewee" (to urinate), "poupou" (to defecate) as part of children's vocabulary.

We also recognize that the young ones, mainly the youths have a linguistic culture different from that of the adults. This culture is further



strengthened by the new technologies for communication. The youth culture is evident in every human culture and since we have established it that language is used to express or transmit culture, then it is clear that the youth culture is projected through their language use. For instance, expressions, as “dad”, “pop”, “popsie” (daddy), “mum”, “momsie” (mummy), “chill” (to relax) are common among Nigerian youths. The way young people use their mobile phones for creative means is increasing. In fact, this generation of young people is often referred to as the “net generation”. Through the new technologies, the youths are reinventing conventional linguistic and communicative practices (Thurlow, 2003). The language of the youth is characterized by non-conventional forms, sometimes deliberately used as a rebellion against the well-known linguistic convention.

Adults also have their own form of language, and it is usually the case that one can recognize the speech of an adult through the lexical items chosen and sometimes the structure. Adults tend to conform more to the conventions of language use. Their language especially those of elderly people is characterized by the use of proverbs and aphorisms.

### **3.1.3 Sex/Gender**

Sex and gender are also very important social variables in language use. Generally speaking research findings have shown that men and women use language differently. Men and women use language in particular ways because of their gender. Apart from the difference in voice pitch of men and women, other findings reveal that women speak in a considerably different way from men.

Coates (1986) studied men-only and women-only discussions and found that when women talk to each other, they reveal a lot about their private lives. They also stick to one topic for a long time, let all the speakers finish their sentences and try to have everyone participate. Men on the other hand, rarely talked about their personal relationships and feelings, but compete to prove themselves better informed about current affairs, travel, sports, etc. The topic change in men’s conversation and they try to establish a reasonably stable hierarchy, with some men dominating the conversation and others talking very little (Coates, 1986). Women are also known to vary the pitch and intonation of their voice more than men.

### **3.1.4 Education**

Education is a very crucial factor in language use. The level of a person’s education determines the kind of language he/she speaks, particularly the variety of language he/she uses. This factor is closely

tied with social status, which we discussed earlier. The more educated a person is, the higher he moves up on the social ladder. For instance in Nigeria, where English is the language of prestige, the standard form of the language is used by the well-educated people, while the base form of the language, generally referred to as Pidgin is used mostly by the people with very low education.]

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Watch a soap opera on the television and identify in what ways social factors affect the language used by the actors.

### **3.1.5 Addresser-Addressee Interactions**

From the discussion so far, you can see that addresser-addressee's relationships vary according to their social roles in the particular communicative context. Below are some examples of speech extracts of some addresser-addressee's interaction.

#### **Boss/Subordinate Conversation**

Boss: Mr. Isaac, get these letters posted for me and buy me two newspapers on your way back  
Subordinate: Yes sir. Which ones sir?  
Boss: Punch and Guardian  
Subordinate: Yes sir.

#### **Teacher/Students Classroom Interaction**

Teacher: Today, we want to examine the functions of language. Before I say anything, Who can tell what a language is?  
Student: Sir (raised up the right hand)  
Teacher: Okay, Sam  
Student: Language is communication  
Teacher: Samuel, you tried but that definition is too general. Does somebody else want to try?  
Student: I, sir.  
Teachers: Yes, Chinedu  
  
Student: Language is what human beings use to communicate. It can either be through speech or writing.  
Teacher: Very good, Chinedu. Let us clap for him.

## **Friend/Friend Conversation**

Bisi: You know, I nearly fainted yesterday when I learnt Bimbo was pregnant.

Uju: Come off it, don't you know the way the girl has been going, she would end up

That way.

Bisi: But it is still a shock to me. So what will happen to her education?

Uju: That is straight forward, she will have to stop until after having the baby.

Bisi: Poor Bimbo, I really pity her.

Uju: Please let's talk about something else. What are your plans for this holiday?

Are you going to spend it in Lagos as usual?

Bisi: I don't know yet. That will depend on what my mum feels about it. Anyway, I am praying she would let me go.

We can see from the two interactions above that the relationship between the addresser and addressee determines the way they speak. For instance, the first conversation is characterized by a command issued by the boss and a response to obey the command by the subordinate. The boss is able to command because of his social role. In the second interaction, we find a question and answer sequence, where the teacher because of his social role as the educator has the right not only to give knowledge, but also to demand for knowledge, approve students who give accurate response, encourage other students to appreciate such student and so forth. In the last conversation, we see a tone of familiarity between the interlocutors because they are friends. An expression such as "come off it" can only be used by someone who is familiar to the addressee.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Social factors are essential determiners of the way we use language. In this Unit, we have been able to see how contextual factors aid meaning in language use. Apart from this, we also look at another related issue - the ways three social factors – social status, age and sex/gender affect the way we use our language.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

The importance of context in language use and interpretations cannot be over-emphasized. Language is a social phenomenon and its use is situated in a context. Users of a language are aware of the different

contexts of language use and they use language to reflect these contexts. They are also aware of their social roles in these contexts and how their social status, age and gender/sex determine the kind of language they use.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What is context?
2. How does context aid meaning in language use?
3. Discuss how social status and age affect language use.
4. Explain Halliday's 'meta-functions'.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **MODULE 2      LANGUAGE VARIETIES I**

Unit 1	Dialect, Accent, Sociolect, and Idiolect
Unit 2	Register
Unit 3	Style

### **UNIT 1      DIALECT,      ACCENT,      SOCIOLECT      AND IDOLECT**

#### **CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main content
3.1	Dialect
3.2	Accent
3.3	Sociolect
3.4	Idiolect
3.5	Other Varieties (Ecolect and Ethnolect)
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

#### **1.0      INTRODUCTION**

Language varies in different ways – from one social group to another, from one geographical area to another, and from even within the same language, speakers speak differently to reflect their unique environment or context of usage. This unit is the first in the series of other units that will be dealing with some varieties of language. The general way of referring to the varieties of language is to call them dialects. The term “lect” is used by some scholars in Linguistics to refer to variety of a language. The different types of lects we shall be discussing in this unit include idiolect, dialect, soiolect, ecolect, ethnolect. The term “dialect” has various applications. In this unit, we shall look at the various applications of the term dialect. For instance, the varieties of speech of speakers of the same language who are located in different geographical areas (dialect). We shall also look at how the social groupings in the society reflect the different ways people who belong to such groups express their world in their use of language (sociolect). Lastly, we shall look at how the features of people’s pronunciation reflect their geographical background (accent).

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to do the following:

- explain the various applications of the term – dialect;
- differentiate between dialect, accent and sociolect; and
- identify the factors that shape regional dialects.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Dialect

What is dialect? Dialect refers to the features of grammar and vocabulary, which convey information about a person's geographical origin. Speakers of the same language spread across different locations may speak in ways that are slightly different to reflect their geographical setting. Dialects often result from historical and geographical dispersal or separation of members from the original speech community. For instance, English, which was originally located in the British Isles has dialects spread across the world far away from its original community. So, English has the native dialect – dialects spoken by some people as their mother tongue in places such as Britain, America, Australia, Canada, and South Africa. It also has non-native dialects, which are also called institutionalized variety – dialects spoken by some people who possess their mother tongue, which is different from English. For such people, English is their second language. Such dialects include the ones spoken in Asia (India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, etc), West Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, etc), East Africa (Kenya, Uganda).

Dialects are often defined as language variety according to user, i.e., they are the product of where the users come from. For example, speakers of English in the different regions where the language is spoken speak it differently to reflect the realities of their linguistic settings. This is particularly noticeable in the lexical items and the structure of the variety. For instance, in the variety of English spoken in Nigeria, there are some lexical items, such as the terms cited below, which do not exist in the native English.

Decampee (someone who decamps from a party to another)

Okada (motorcycles used as means of transportation in the country)

Every language in the world has dialects, however, there is a range of dialects that are considered by speakers to be standard because of the prestige associated with them. It may also be that the speakers of this dialect are the remnants of where it originates from. It should however, be clear that all dialects are equally correct, expressive and logical. In

this sense, no dialect should be seen as superior to the other. Each dialect is used to express the culture of the speakers.

To determine if two varieties are dialects of the same language, they have to be mutually intelligible. Mutual intelligibility refers to the ability of speakers of two varieties to converse fluently with each other.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Identify some dialects of your language. How do these dialects differ from one another?

### **3.2 Accent**

The term accent is different from dialect in the sense that it refers mainly to the features of pronunciation, which indicate the regional or the social identity of a speaker. It is also a characteristic pronunciation determined by the phonetic habits of the speaker's native language carried over to his or her use of another language.

Accent is only part of dialect variation. There is a tendency for people to think that to speak with an accent is to speak a substandard variety. It is however the case that everyone who speaks a language, speaks it with an accent. A particular accent essentially reflects a person's linguistic background. When people listen to someone speak with a different accent from their own, they notice the difference, and they may even make certain biased social judgments about the speaker. However, such biased social judgments are not correct.

### **3.3 Sociolect**

A sociolect is the language spoken by a social group, social class or subculture. It is a portmanteau term combining the words "social" and "dialect", which in this regard differs from an idiolect – which is the form of a language peculiar to an individual – and a dialect, which is a form of speech peculiar to a certain area. However, dialects often have a particular social status, so that a given variant may be considered simultaneously a dialect and a sociolect.

In every society, and regional dialects, these varieties emerge as a result of speakers' education and social status of groups of people who relate often together, thereby, speaking the same way. It is this variety they speak that we refer to as sociolect. For instance, the low class and the impoverished people form a social class or group. In Nigeria for instance, the regional variety, often referred to as Nigerian English, has the educated and the uneducated varieties. The uneducated use a variety that is characterised by wrong use of grammatical tenses for example.

The variety has a low social prestige, when compared with the educated Nigerian English variety. The speakers are mostly people who perform unskilled labour and artisans. The educated English is used by the elites – senior civil servants, educated professionals, graduates and so on. It is regarded as the standard form, which has the British English as its model.

Apart from the educated and the uneducated varieties, other social groups within the society also have their varieties. These include the youths, students, and so forth. Speakers of the educated variety may have difficulty making themselves understood by the less educated speakers. However, most speakers strive to understand the standard variety when seen as the prestige variety – used by the people of importance and the educated.

### **3.4 Idiolect**

Idiolect refers to the features of speech peculiar to individuals in the society. It ranges from phonological features, such as voice and intonation to discourse phenomena in naturally-occurring conversation. A person's idiolect makes another person to recognize his voice when he is speaking in the next room to the person.

### **3.5 Other Varieties**

Other varieties that have been identified by sociolinguists are **ethnolects** (variety of language spoken by people who come from the same ethnic group). The Wikipedia Dictionary defines an ethnolect as a variant of a language spoken by a certain ethnic/cultural subgroup and serves as a distinguishing mark of social identity. The term combines the concepts of a ethnic group and dialect. A good example of ethnolect is the African American variety of American English. It may not be so easy differentiating between 'dialect' and 'ethnolect'.

Another variety that has been identified is **ecolect**. An ecolect is a language dialect unique to a household (from the Greek *eco* (*oikos*) for house, as in economy or ecology, and *lect* for language). An ecolect probably evolves from an idiolect, which is individual specific, when other household members adopt that individual's unique words and phrases that are not in use in surrounding households or the wider community.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Language is a social institution and it varies from one individual to another and from one social group to another. Speakers of the same



language use it differently on account of their experiences. Varieties such as dialects, idiolects, and sociolects can be distinguished not only by their vocabulary, but also by differences in grammar, phonology and prosody.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we examined four different ways a language can vary in its use by individuals and the society: dialect (variety according to user) accent (a variety distinguished by features of pronunciation, which indicate the region of origin of the speaker); sociolect (a variety used by a social group); idiolect (a variety used by an individual speaker); ethnolect (a variety used by people of the same ethno-cultural group); and ecolect (a variety used by members of the same household).

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is **dialect**, and how does it differ from **accent**?
2. Differentiate between **idiolect** and **ethnolect**.
3. Identify and discuss some regional dialects of English across the world.
4. Identify and discuss the social dialects of English in Nigeria.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 2     REGISTERS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 What is Register?
    - 3.1.1 Register Variables
    - 3.1.2 Field
    - 3.1.3 Mode
    - 3.1.4 Tenor
  - 3.2 Variables According to Subject Matters
  - 3.3 Variables According to Attitudes
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, we shall be looking at another variety of language, which is different from the ones we examined in the last unit. This variety has to do with language use that is not dependent upon the user. There is an established way of using some varieties among people who belong to the same profession. They have terms and expressions, which are specifically used for conveying meaning. This does not differ from one individual or region as long as they speak the same language. Such a variety that is determined by ‘use’, rather than the user is referred to as ‘Register’.

In this unit, we shall look at the concept of register and how to recognize a register through its variables. In addition, we shall also look at the different ways registers can be identified.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to do the following:

- define and illustrate the term register;
- explain the three register variables;
- identify the specific linguistic features of some english registers; and
- differentiate between varieties according to subject matter and variety according to attitude.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 What is Register?**

Register refers to a variety of language according to use. It is a subset of a language used for a particular purpose in a particular social setting (Wikipedia Dictionary). The term register was first used by the linguist Thomas Reid in 1956. It was later brought into currency in the 1960s by linguists who wanted to differentiate between ‘variations of language according to user’ and ‘variations of language according to use’ Each user of a language has a range of varieties from which he chooses to reflect the social reality (Halliday, et. al., 1964). Register, therefore refers to varieties used for different occasions characterized by specialized vocabulary and grammar. For instance, the legal language (legalese) is used when speaking or writing on legal issues or when the context of language use is a legal one. The language of journalism (journalese) is used in the context of journalism. Other registers include: baby talk (register used by adults when speaking with children), scientific report register (used in reporting scientific research), cookery register (used when talking or writing about cookery), etc.

Registers operate in a continuum, rather than as discrete varieties. This means that there can be overlap in usage in different registers. It is however clear that each register has its distinctive linguistic characteristics. Most of the expressions we use in ordinary daily interactions may have specialized usage in some registers. For instance, the word minor in the ordinary sense means ‘not important when compared with other things of the same type’. But in the legal register it refers to ‘someone who has not reached the age at which they are legally adult’. Below are some words with their ordinary meanings and their specialized meanings in some English registers.

WORD	EVERYDAY MEANING	SPECIALIZED USAGE	REGISTER
Notebook	A book for recoding notes	A portable computer	Computing
Shoot	To send out from a weapon	To hit or propel the ball towards the goal	Sports
Witness	A person who observes an event	A person who preaches the word of God	Religion
Freeze	When liquid turns to solid	To legally stop the supply of money to somebody	Banking
Share	A part of the total number of something	One of the equal parts of a company that you can buy	Stock Exchange
bill	Amount you owe	Proposal for law	Legal

### 3.1.1 Register Variables

Register is generally determined by what is taking place, who is taking part and what part the language is playing. This is the basis for identifying the register variables, which we shall be discussing in this section. Scholars of Register Studies have identified three abstract situational features which will in any given situation, influence language use. Halliday (1985) particularly developed the three main parameters, which are useful for characterizing the nature of social interaction of participants. These variables or contextual features are **Field**, **Mode** and **Tenor**.

### 3.1.2 Field

The field of a discourse refers to what the text is all about, what is happening or the subject matter of the discourse. The field is most clearly reflected in the lexical items chosen and sometimes the way the language is structured. For instance if two people are discussing agriculture, their vocabulary will reflect the topic. This depends on the specific area of Agriculture they are discussing. Below are some registers and vocabularies identified with their field.

**Publishing:** manuscript, royalty, galley proof, reprint, edit, proof-read, typeface, etc.

**Health:** x-ray, hemorrhage, migraine, vaccination, immunity, surgery, ward, etc.

**Politics:** electorate, ballot, cabinet, constituency, legislature, impeachment, bill, etc.

<b>Computing:</b>	disk, flash pen, PDF, floppy, UPS, CD-Rom, password, attachment, etc.
<b>Finance:</b>	discount, investment, auditor, ledger, capital, turnover, credit, budget, etc.
<b>Road Transport:</b>	speed limit, roundabout, T-junction, zebra crossing, C-caution, etc.
<b>Cookery:</b>	chop, whisk, garnish, grate dessert, buffet, menu, recipe, pastries, etc

### 3.1.3 Mode

The mode of discourse is the channel or medium of communication. There are three major channels of communication: speech, writing and gestures. In considering, the mode of discourse, we have to examine the distance between the activity and the language. For instance, speech is close to the activity it describes, while writing is far from it. We also have to look at how far removed the speaker and the listeners are from one another. For instance, speakers and listeners in face to face interaction are closer than speaker and listener in telephone conversation. Communicating through writing makes the users farther from each other. Communicating through the Internet combines the features of speaking and writing. Gestures are sometimes used to complement speech and when they are used alone, it is usually the case that the person being addressed cannot use speech to communicate.

### 3.1.4 Tenor

The tenor of discourse refers to the people taking part and the relationship between them, e.g: teacher-pupil, parent-child, preacher-congregation, boss-subordinate, etc. Participants in a discourse have social roles, which could be temporary or permanent. Different individuals may assume different roles in different linguistic domains. The tenor of discourse also determines the choice of lexical items. The choice of lexical items may reflect equality, solidarity, friendliness, and so forth. The lexical items may also be highly specialized and technical.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Listen to a discussion programme on the television and note your observation of the register variables.
- ii. Write out some English words that are used across different English registers and identify such registers and the meanings of these words in the registers.

### **3.2 Varieties According to Subject Matter**

When discussing different subject matters, or when we are engaged in different activities, we use language in different ways to reflect the subject matter or the activity we are engaged in. The way we use language in this sense is clearly seen in our choice of lexical items and their collocations. According to Halliday and Hasan (1985: 39),

registers are characterized by indexical features, indices  
in form of particular grammatical signals

Registers vary from restricted language in which the range of discourse is less constrained. For instance, the register of newspaper headlines is more open-ended than that of legal documents.

### **3.3 Varieties According to Attitude**

Our attitude to what we are doing also determines our language. Many a times, we are able to identify clearly our purpose of communication and this determines largely how we speak. For instance, we recognize informal and formal situations and we try to reflect the situation in our language use.

An informal situation is that of familiarity, therefore the attitude of language users is warm and relaxed. This is the kind of situation that exists between friends and acquaintances. Speakers are casual in their choice of language. The variety of language is usually spoken, though sometimes, it may be written. It is marked by common and familiar lexical items and collocations, shortened forms and omitted parts.

A formal situation is that of unfamiliarity, therefore, the attitude is impersonal. It is a situation in which we have a socially superior person and his/her subordinate or people who are not familiar. Speakers are polite in their choice of language. The vocabulary items are the specialized and rare ones. The sentences are also usually non-simple and passive. This is common in official correspondence, scholarly papers, essays, government publications and so forth.

There is also a neutral situation, which is neither formal nor informal. The attitude here is equally neutral. This variety is common in newspapers and conversations with strangers. It combines the least extreme features of both formal and informal varieties.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Identify some of the indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Register is a variety of language according to use. It is a variety that does not depend on the individual language user, but the use the language is put to. A register is identified primarily through specialized lexical items and expression, which characterize it. There are also three register variables identified by Halliday (1985). These variables are also referred to as contextual or situational features. They influence the language used at any particular point in time. .

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this Unit, we have examined the concept of Register - the nature of the concept and how we can determine a register using the contextual features. We also looked at how our attitudes and the subject matter of discourse determine the variety of language that we use at any particular point in time.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the term 'Register'.
2. Differentiate between Register and Dialect.
3. What is tenor of discourse?
4. Discuss the field, tenor, and mode of the following types of discourse:
  - (i) sermon
  - (ii) news presentation on the television
  - (iii) news report in a newspaper
  - (iv) casual conversation

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## **UNIT 3      STYLE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 What is Style?
  - 3.2 Style in Writing
  - 3.3 Style in Speech
  - 3.4 Other Ways of Seeing Style
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Everyday, we are involved in actions and events, thoughts, and perceptions, which our language system accounts for. We have different ways of using the resources of language system to capture the same event and reality. This is generally referred to in Linguistics as **Style**. This unit looks at the concept of style as it is reflected individual ways of using language to represent their experience through speech and writing.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- define the concept of style;
- identify the purpose of style;
- explain how our social context of language use affect our style; and
- analyse the linguistic style of any text.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 What is Style?**

The term style has different applications to different people. However, for us as language specialists style simply refers to how individuals use language to reflect their unique environment. People are always motivated either consciously or unconsciously on the choices they make within the linguistic system they operate in. These choices have a profound impact on the way a text is structured and interpreted. Halliday



(1994) views language as being used to represent what goes on in the physical and abstract world. He says this way of using language fulfils the experiential function of language. The experiential function of language is an important marker of style.

Stylistics is the study of style in language. According to the Wikipedia Dictionary, Stylistics is the study of varieties of language whose properties position that language in context. For example, the language of advertising, politics, religion, individual authors, etc., or the language of a period in time, all belong in a particular situation. In other words, they all have 'place'.

Linguists look at style in the language of writers of prose, poems and drama. The perspective through which a writer tells a story is an important stylistic dimension. For instance, a story may be told in the first person – making the narrator also a character whose actions and events can be shared by the reader of the story. It may also be narrated in the third person by an invisible narrator, who facilitates access of the readers to the thoughts and actions of the characters. This is generally referred to in Stylistics as **point of view**.

Other features of stylistics include the use of dialogue, including regional accents and people's dialects, descriptive language, the use of grammar, such as the active voice or passive voice, the distribution of sentence lengths, the use of particular language registers, etc.

The concept of style is closely related to Register, as style could be formal, informal or plain. It could be described in other ways as frozen, humorous, ironic, poetic, literary, etc. Gairns and Redman (1986) noted that lexical items may be similar in conceptual meaning but differ in style as can be seen in the following items:

Children	-	neutral
Offspring	-	formal
Nippers	-	colloquial, humorous
Kids	-	colloquial
Brats	-	colloquial, derogatory

When studying style in language, we can also look at the principles of stylistic analysis. These include textual cohesion and coherence, modality, transitivity, speech act analysis, the discursal representation of speech and thought, face and politeness, presupposition, etc. Studying the style of an author equips us with an understanding of how language works. Literary linguistics (also known as Stylistics) is often invaluable in attempts to identify the essence of an author's style; it is crucial to understanding how advertisements win us over; it is important in the

identification of weak writing, moments of failure or contradiction in political or persuasive language, and in many other contexts. It is new and central to the study and understanding of literature and the media because contemporary cultures are so rooted in information, communication, and text. Every register has its style. So style is an aspect of register. Though every individual has his/her own style, they try to conform to the general style associated with a particular linguistic situation. For instance the generally accepted style for casual conversation is informal, so the speaker selects colloquial expressions. However, in contrast, the style for application for a job is formal.

### **3.2 Style in Writing**

Style in writing can be studied from different perspectives. That is, when one is looking at the style of a writer, we could mean different things. Basically, the language of the writer is the focus and the basic levels of language can be identified and analyzed in any written text. For instance, the clausal and sentence structure (syntax), the shape of the language on the page (graphology), the words and the constituents structure (morphology), the vocabulary used (lexicology), the meaning of words and sentences (semantics), etc, can be looked into.

In poems, the sound patterning as represented in features such as rhythm and metre can be examined. It is easy to recognize poems when they are read out because they have metres in which the strong and weak syllables are organized.

Narrative discourse may be analyzed by looking at how it is told – the point of view as discussed in the last section. One can also look at the way meanings are encoded in the clauses by looking at the actions, the participants and the circumstances associated with the action (see Halliday, 1994)

Stylisticians (those who study Style) also look at how speech and thought are represented in writing. This way, they examine the methods used by writers for transcribing the speech and thoughts of the imagined or real characters. Speeches can be presented as directly spoken by the character or reported.

Also in Drama, the way the dialogue is ordered is very important. We need to look at the types of interaction taking place between the characters and between the author and the reader. We can also examine the structure of the conversational discourse – how the turns are taken and other discourse features such as interruption, elicitation of responses, etc.

### 3.3 Style in Speech

Style in speech is one area that discourse analysts are interested in. Speech is essentially different from writing in the sense that speech is spontaneous, while writing is a “cold” thoughtful process. Errors in speech are most times pardonable and corrected even by the speaker. However, errors in writing are viewed as more serious. Speech may be monologue (speaking to self, a pseudo audience), dialogue (two or more people exchanging ideas) or multilogue, many people speaking together in unison, e.g.: prayer, football match, etc).

To study style in speech, we need to consider a lot of factors. These include: the tone and intonation, the function of the sentences, (whether they are imperative, declarative, interrogative), pauses, interruption, how speakers are selected in conversations, the kinds of speech acts used, how conversations open and close, extralinguistic features, such as the gaze direction, facial expression, and other gestures.

In studying speech, stylisticians recognize the fact that individuals differ in their speech behaviour. They also recognize that there are certain generally accepted norms for behaving when we are using speech in different contexts of language use. For instance, in any normal conversation, one person holds the floor at a time and the next speaker can be identified after that speaker has finished his speech. Likewise, there are some forms of discourse in which a speaker controls the discourse throughout, e.g.: sermons, lectures, etc. In such contexts, other participants are just to listen.

### 3.4 Other ways of Seeing Style

Style can be seen as a choice, when one considers the various factors that lead users to prefer certain linguistic forms to others. These factors can be grouped into two types: user-bound factors (referring to the situation where the language is being used). These include among others, the speaker’s or writer’s age, gender, idiosyncratic preferences, regional and social background, etc. The other factors are Situation-bound stylistic factors. These depend on the medium of communication, attitude (level of formality), the field of discourse, etc.

Style is also seen as deviation from a norm. This is a term common in literary stylistics, where unusual linguistic forms are used. The ability of literary writers to deviate from the norms of language use is sometimes referred to as “poetic licence”. For instance instead of using the normal syntactic structure as in

He flew away (S P C) where S (Subject) = He; P (Predicator) = flew; and

C (Complement) = away

The author may decide to reorder the forms to read:

Away he flew (C S P)

Above, the C (Complement) is now fronted, while the S and P are pushed inward.

Poetic license also allows literary writers to use unusual collocation, what is generally referred to as “collocational clash” (using words that would not normally go together), e.g.: Once below a time

Two important notions in Stylistics are **Automatization** and **Foregrounding**. Automatization refers to the common use of linguistic devices. It does not attract particular attention by the language decoder. Automatization corresponds with the norm. Foregrounding on the other hand, are unexpected expressions in certain contexts. They are considered conspicuous, therefore, they catch the language decoder’s attention. Foregrounding deals with deviation from the norm.

Another way of seeing **foregrounding** is as an indication of an episode or event in a narrative or drama that is yet to take place. This can be done by using a metaphor or subplot to bring to the fore a major development prior to its occurrence in the narration or play.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Read two short stories written by Nigerian authors and compare the styles of the two authors.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Style is a very important feature of language use. The style of a language is determined by a number of factors, which include the context, the user, the topic of discussion, and so forth. Style in speech is different from style in writing because the mode determines the style. Analysing the style of any particular language use encompasses looking at all the variables that contributes to the meaning – these include the linguistic forms, and how they are arranged, the attitude of the writer (formal/informal), how the sentences are linked (cohesion), and so forth.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this Unit, we have examined the concept of style: its meaning, and what determines the style an individual uses. We also looked at how style differs in speech and writing and how users of language adopt styles that fit into the context of language use. Lastly, we saw style as deviation from the norm (foregrounding) and as the point of view of the writer or speaker.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the term style.
2. What is the relationship between style and register?
3. Compare style in writing with style in speech and point out the essential differences.
4. Write out 10 words that you consider as formal and their informal counterpart.

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## **MODULE 3      LANGUAGE VARIETIES II**

Unit 1	Standard, Non-standard, Native and Non-native Varieties
Unit 2	Deviant/Restricted Varieties (Slang, jargon, Graffiti)
Unit 3	New Varieties (E-mail, Text Messaging, Mobile Telephoning)
Unit 4	Languages in Contact (Pidgin and Creole)

### **UNIT 1      STANDARD, NON-STANDARD, NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE VARIETIES**

#### **CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
	3.1 Standard and Non-standard Varieties
	3.2 Native and Non-native Varieties
	3.3 Vernacular
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Languages generally have more than one variety due to the fact that speakers have different social experiences. The fact that language is used to express the culture of the speakers further buttresses this idea of varieties of language. However, among the varieties of a particular language, one variety is given prominence and prestige by the speakers. This variety is the one all the speakers strive to attain if they were to reach a wider group of speakers. Other varieties are seen as below this variety, which is generally referred to as the standard variety. In this Unit, we shall be examining the idea of standard in language. We shall be answering such questions as: Why are some varieties considered as more standard than the others? Who determines the degree to which a language is standard? What are the roles of a standard variety as opposed to the non-standard ones in the society?

In addition to this, we shall also be looking at native and non-native varieties. Every language has a group of speakers who are the original speakers. However, in the course of the spread of such a language, it may acquire a group of speakers who are learners of the language. Such a group of speakers would make every effort to use the language to

construct their experience, which is considerably different from that of the native speakers. We will also examine what a vernacular language is and its major characteristics.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the time you finish studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the idea of a standard and non-standard varieties;
- list the major features of native and non-native varieties; and
- identify the major features of a vernacular language.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Standard and Non-standard Varieties

A particular variety of a language is given prominence when it is given legal status in the sense that more roles are assigned to it than other varieties. It is usually, but not always, based on the tongue of a major city, where the most educated speakers of the language dwell. It is the variety of a language that is typically taught to learners of the language as a foreign language and most texts written in that language follow the spelling and grammar rules. The standard language is also used for official and business purposes. It is the variety that unites the speakers of the different varieties. The Wikipedia Dictionary identifies ten features that identify a standard language. The features are given below:

- (a) a recognized dictionary or group of dictionaries which embody a standardized spelling and vocabulary;
- (b) a recognized grammar which records the forms, rules and structures of the language, and which commends some forms and castigates others;
- (c) a standard system of pronunciation, which is considered "educated" or "proper" speech by the speakers, and which is considered free from regional marking;
- (d) an institution promoting the use of the language and given some authority in defining the norms of its use, such as the Académie française or the Royal Spanish Academy;
- (e) status or constitutions giving that language an official legal status in a country's system of law;
- (f) the use of the language in public life, such as in the work of courts and legislatures;
- (g) a canon of literature;
- (h) translations of important sacred texts such as the Bible into that language, which are considered to be authoritative by their believers;

- (i) the teaching of the language's standards of grammar and spelling in schools;
- (j) the selection of this particular dialect of a language as being especially appropriate to be taught to learners of foreign languages.

It is however important to know that other varieties that depart slightly from the standard variety are called non-standard varieties. In non-standard varieties, the rules of standard English are not taken as a fixed point of reference. Even so, written standard languages continue to enjoy considerable prestige, and written standard English is clearly useful as a global lingua franca. In comparison, non-standard language has historically been stigmatized, and a debate continues about the extent to which non-standard usages should be encouraged, and even simply tolerated, in education. For instance, in Nigeria, speakers generally aim at the Educated Nigerian English, which is considerably different from the standard British English.

A non-standard form may also be seen as a form used by people who are not educated well enough to use the standard form. Such people use the 'debased form' (Pidgin) of the language, which is sometimes stigmatized in the society.

### **3.2 Native and Non-native Varieties**

A native variety is the variety that is used by the original speakers of the language. It is usually the primary and first language of those speakers and also the predominant language in the community in which they live. It is the first language a child is exposed to in the language community. It is also called the child's mother tongue. Usually children learn the basics of the native variety from their families. Speakers of the native variety are called native speakers. For instance, the native speakers of English are the people of England, Australia, Canada and South Africa.

Non-native varieties are the varieties used by speakers who are far away from the home of the language. Non-native varieties are learnt by these speakers usually as a second language. This means that the speakers had their first language (their mother tongue), which they had acquired earlier in life before this variety. A very good example of a non-native variety is English in North, Sub-Saharan, and some other parts of Africa and Asia. The varieties of English used in Asian and African Countries is described as institutionalized, because English came into those countries as a result of colonialism but it later became the language of unity among the linguistically heterogeneous groups that make up these countries. English now has the status of a second language in these countries being the second language that is learnt by every educated



person. It is also the only language that guarantees the speaker social mobility.

One major feature of non-native varieties is that they are domesticated or indigenised by the users. English language as is spoken in the United Kingdom lacks the necessary resources to express their unique social experience. According to Adebija (2004: 20), non –native users of English in Nigeria have adapted the language for home use and made it applicable to their numerous conveniences, experiences, nuances and sensibilities”. In the Nigerian non-native environment, English is no longer considered as a foreign language because its use is reinforced by the Nigerian social context. It is also the case, that even in situations where English does not have the required expression for an idea, because it is uniquely Nigerian, the compelling urge to communicate often results in peculiar expressions that are most apt for the Nigerian context. Examples of expressions that are typically Nigerian in the use of English are given below:

Chewing stick (a stick used to clean one’s teeth, usually in the morning)  
Okada (motorcycles used for commercial purposes)  
Go-slow (traffic jam)  
419 (a swindler or the act of swindling)

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Identify some non-native Englishes in Africa, and spell out their distinctive characteristics

### **3.3 Vernacular**

Vernacular refers to the native language of a country or locality. In general linguistics, it is used to describe local languages as opposed to linguae francae, official standards or global languages. It is sometimes applied to nonstandard dialects of a global language. In sociolinguistics, the term “vernacular” is sometimes used to refer to casual varieties which are used spontaneously rather than self-consciously. It could also be described as informal talk used in intimate situations. Linguists consider the vernacular to be the first form of speech acquired by a person. Most linguists also believe that the medium of instruction for a child in his/her first few years of education should be the vernacular or the mother tongue of the child.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

A language is not used the same way by its speakers – speakers use language in different ways, depending on their world view. Some

speakers of a language speak what linguists describe as the standard form because they were the original speakers of the language or they are considered as the most privileged members of the society by virtue of their educational attainment. Speakers of other forms are therefore said to be using the non-standard form. The idea of standardness is a relative one. For instance, what is standard English in Nigeria is not standard in England or America. One could see a kind of correlation between the standard, the vernacular and the native tongue and the non-standard and the non-native tongue.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this Unit, we have examined the concepts of standardness and nativeness in language. We looked at those features that characterize standard and non-standard languages, likewise those which characterize native and non-native languages. Our attention is particularly focused on English. We also emphasized the relativeness of the term standard, as it differs from one place to another even within the same language. The term vernacular was also examined.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Differentiate between standard and non-standard language.
2. Differentiate between native and non-native language.
3. Using some specimen of language, identify some features of non-native English variety, using Nigeria as an example.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 2     DEVIANT/RESTRICTED VARIETIES**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 What are Deviant Varieties?
  - 3.2 Deviation and Deviance
  - 3.3 Slang
  - 3.4 Graffiti
  - 3.5 Jargon
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In every society, speakers recognize some norms for the use of their language and they stick to these norms as much as possible whenever they use language. With these norms in place, speakers are able to recognize any instance of the use of the language that deviates either slightly or greatly. In spite of the generally accepted norms for language use, it is still a fact of language use that some speakers are motivated to use language in a different way from the set norms. Such speakers deliberately make the choice to deviate in different ways for different reasons.

It is the deviant use of language that we shall be looking at in this Unit. We shall be primarily concerned with three instances of such usage that have been considered as deviant because of their peculiar expressions, which do not follow the norms of language use. These varieties we are considering are slang, graffiti and jargon.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain with adequate examples what we mean by deviant languages;
- clearly spell out why some varieties are regarded as deviant varieties; and
- explain, using appropriate examples the three deviant varieties treated in this unit.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 What are Deviant Varieties?

Deviant varieties are varieties that deviate from the generally accepted norms of language use in a particular society. Deviant varieties are peculiar creations of an individual or a group of people who just choose to use language the way it suits them for some particular reasons. A deviant variety does not take cognizance of the rules and norms of the language. Its usage is determined by the speaker(s). One group of people who deviate from the norms of language use are the creative writers, especially the poets. They do this to create some effect on the reader or listener and pass across meaning in a very forceful way.

Apart from creative writers, a group of other users in the society may also explore the creativity value of language to formulate their own code, which will only be intelligible to the members of the group. One major feature of deviant varieties is that they are limited in their scope of usage.

#### 3.2 Deviation and Deviance

The term **Deviation** is different from another term, which is closely related to it, i.e **Deviance**. A good writer may choose to deliberately deviate from the norm for creative and artistic purpose. In his deviation, however, such writer makes sure he/she does not break the grammatical rules of the language. A writer may deviate from the standard syntactic, morphological and lexical usage, but the writing of such writer will not be considered deviant. This is common in the writings of some popular Nigerian writers, such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, Ola Rotimi, and so forth.

However, some users clearly deviate from the norms and their usage is considered deviant because they break the rules of grammar. A very good example of this is Chika Okpla (Zebrudaya).

#### 3.3 Slang

Slang can be described as informal, non-standard words or phrases, which tend to originate in sub-cultures within the society. Since slang is an in-group usage, it embodies attitudes and values of group members. Slang expressions may take the form of metaphors, similes and other figures of speech. They may also be old expressions, which are given new meanings or connotations in current usage. They may also be entirely new coinages or neologisms.

Slang expressions are highly colloquial and they are also considered as below the level of educated standard speech. Crystal (1994) describes slang as “language of a low vulgar type”. It has however been observed that slang is not only a feature of speech of the lower groups in the society. Slang is also used by the highly placed members of the society. Some reasons why people use slang are:

- (a) to express concepts in a different way from the generally accepted ones;
- (b) to be novel in their use of language;
- (c) to be humorous;
- (d) to be unmistakably arresting or startling;
- (e) to be secret, so that not many people will understand them;
- (f) to mark their identity as members of a group.

### **3.4 Graffiti**

Graffiti is a form of writing that originated from drawing or inscription scratched on an ancient wall. According to Crystal (1994), graffiti is used nowadays to refer to any spontaneous and unauthorized writing or drawing on walls, vehicles and other public places. Graffiti often has political undertone or character, being used essentially as a humour. In most cases, graffiti is hidden in humour. It can sometimes be obscene, but usually underlying the humour and obscenity is a serious societal issue, which the writer is using the graffiti to highlight.

Graffiti, especially when it is devoted to obscenity and dirty jokes is written on lavatory walls. It is almost the case that the more hidden the graffiti, the more obscene it is likely to be. Graffiti has become a permanent feature of most public toilets, walls, notice boards, public vehicles, train coaches, bridges and even billboards. It is a universal phenomenon and not characteristic of any race, nation, creed, sex or age. Students are the most prolific writers of graffiti. On most university campuses, any release or announcement is surely bound to be blotted by graffiti.

Graffiti is the most powerful outlet of the inner thoughts of language users. They can easily hide their identity and express in the public glare what they would not have ordinarily been able to express because such expressions may outrage the public or even embarrass the government and attract a penalty. People who cast aspersions on other religions, beliefs and the government or a powerful organization in the society find it easy to hide their identity and still cast such aspersions.

Graffiti are mostly written, but sometimes, they could be pictorial, especially when they are obscene. When written, graffiti may be

reactionary that is, a reaction to an opinion, act or belief. It could also be conversational, in cases where someone wrote graffiti and another replied it, e.g:

- I     G:     Awo the saint, God bless him  
       M:     Awo is a thief  
       F:     Proper, proper, madman (were)
- II    Y:     ABACHA MUST GO!  
       P:     No way, Abacha is our man  
       B:     Then you must go with him

Graffiti I shows different opinions of writers on the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, one of the foremost Nigerian politicians who fought for Nigerian independence. Graffiti II also demonstrates in a humorous way the attitudes of Nigerians to the late despotic head of state of Nigeria, General Sanni Abacha.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES**

- i     Collect some graffiti from any public building. Identify the topics addressed by these graffiti.
- ii    Read a work each of Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka and identify how they deviate from the standard English usage.

### **3.5 Jargon**

Jargon is the specialized or technical language of a trade, profession, or similar group. But the term has also come to mean inflated, vague, meaningless language of any kind. It is characterized by wordiness, abstractions galore, pretentious diction, and needlessly complicated word order. Whenever you meet a sentence that obviously could express its idea in fewer words and shorter ones, chances are that it is jargon.

One important feature of a jargon is that it relates to a specific activity, profession, or group. It is generally used to express ideas that are frequently discussed between members of a group. This makes it possible also to distinguish those belonging to such a group from those who do not. This is sometimes called "guild" or "insider" jargon. Those who are newcomers and those who are unfamiliar with the subject can often be tagged by their incorrect use of jargon.

The use of jargon by outsiders is considered by insiders to be audacious, since it constitutes a claim to membership of the insider group. Conversely, since outsiders may not see the reference made via jargon, they are all the more sensitive to its more visible elitist social framing.

Jargon to the outsider usually comes across as pedantic, nerdy, and divorced from meaning. (Wikipedia Dictionary)

Jargon is not the same thing as the word terminology in that it is informal and essentially part of the oral culture of a group, with limited formal or written expression. Many jargon terms have their non-jargon equivalents which would be used in ordinary daily language use, in print or when addressing non-specialists. Below are some jargons used by some professionals:

Please allow the system to butt before giving it any command or else there may be an error and it could shut down in the process. (Computer Jargon)

His prayer to the court for an interlocutory injunction was answered, so the company had to stay action until the case is finally determined. (Legal Jargon)

He was diagnosed as having kidney sclerosis, since then, he had done several dialyses. (Medical Jargon)

You will notice the specialised use of some lexical items such as butt, command, prayer, interlocutory injunction, kidney sclerosis, dialysis, and so forth.

The other sense of seeing a jargon, ie, as a language characterised by abstraction, and needlessly complicated word order can be seen in the expression below:

A winged nocturnal mammal gyrated into my diomicile through the aperture in my kitchen.

This expression uses unnecessarily complicated items to construct an idea, which would have been expressed with simpler ones as:

A bat flew into my kitchen through the window

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The varieties of language that are used to express the different peculiarities of a group were examined in this Unit. These varieties differ on the extent of their deviation from the norms of general usage and the mode through which the speakers disseminate information. For instance, a slang is openly used, but only by a few members of the group that uses it. Graffiti is more diverse and not restricted to any particular group of users. It cuts across the societal rung. A slang is also restricted to a group in a sense. It could also be the creation of a person who wants to be clumsy in his expressions.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this Unit, we have examined three varieties considered as deviant because of their peculiar use by a group of speakers. We also looked at the different connotations these deviant varieties have been associated with.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What are deviant varieties?
2. Identify the major features of graffiti.
3. Discuss some reasons why people use slang,
4. Explain the two ways the word jargon can be used, using adequate examples.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Crystal, David (1994). *An Encyclopedia of English Language*. London: Longman.



## **UNIT 3      NEW      VARIETIES:      E-MAIL,      TEXT MESSAGING AND MOBILE TELEPHONING**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 New Varieties: An Introduction
    - 3.1.1 SMS Text Messaging
    - 3.1.2 E-mail Messaging
    - 3.1.3 Mobile Telephoning
  - 3.2 Technologically-mediated Discourse and The Challenges to Communication
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this Unit, we shall be looking at the new ways of communicating brought about by modern technology. Communication in the past had been through speech and later writing. However, in the modern period, communication has been made easy, even though we still use speech and writing to a great extent, they are aided by some modern technological instruments, such as the computer and mobile phones.

Our concern in this Unit is to see how the new ways of communicating using these technological media differ from the conventional face-to-face speech communication and writing. We shall be examining the challenges these new ways of communicating poses for language users, particularly learners of language.

Some of the major advantages of the modern ways of communicating through the use of computer and mobile phones are: faster and instant delivery of the message; communication is location independent; communicators can reach a larger number of people at one time, and so forth. These advantages of the modern ways of communicating make it attractive to the youth.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the term “technologically mediated discourse”;
- discuss the major features of technologically mediated discourse;
- explain how technologically mediated discourse differs from the conventional ways of communicating; and
- identify the challenges the new varieties pose for communication.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 The New Varieties of Technologically Mediated Discourse**

According to the Wikipedia Dictionary, Technologically Mediated Discourse (TMD) or Computer mediated Communication (CMC) is any form of communication between two or more individual people who interact and/or influence each other via separate computers through the Internet or a network connection - using social software. CMC does not include the methods by which two computers communicate, but rather how people communicate using computers. It is only peripherally concerned with any common work product created. CMC includes: e-mailing, text messaging, audio and video conferencing, online chats, list servers, bulletin boards, web pages, and so forth.

CMC differs in many respects from the conventional ways of communicating. Some of the variables that make it different from the conventional ways of communicating include:

- (a) synchronicity—this refers to the situation in which two more events happen together at the same time or place. This is possible in CMC because users of computer do many things together at the same time;
- (b) granularity—this refers to the size of the simultaneously executing parts of a parallel program. The size or length of text that can be sent on computer is not limited as such;
- (c) Multi-modality—this refers to the use of more than one mode within the same discourse. As users use the computer they can speak, write at the same time by pressing the right buttons on the system.

With these features one can see that CMC offers the users a lot of

advantages that other ordinary media of communication do not offer. We shall discuss each of the three media of CMC in the next section

### 3.1.1 SMS Text Messaging

This is a modern way of communicating through the use of cell phones. SMS is otherwise an abbreviation for the expression ‘short messaging services’. As the name goes it offers users the opportunity to send messages using limited number of characters (usually between 140 and 160 characters). This affords users the opportunity to be creative with the language so as to maximise space. In the process, users have devised condensed expressions and non-conventional spellings to be able to put their message within the limited space provided.

In text messaging, according to (Bush, 2005),

Users are trying to define themselves stylistically to their groups by playing with the language and creating new prescriptive rules for written language in the process.

It has been observed that since the language of text messaging is fragmented, it gives room for ambiguity. Scholars have identified the major characteristics of text messaging, looking at their linguistic peculiarities. We shall quickly discuss the linguistic devices used in constructing SMS text messages.

- (a) The use of letter homophones or homophonic single grapheme abbreviation, e.g.:

b	-	be
c	-	see
u	-	you
r	-	are
y	-	why

- (b) The use of numeric characters in place of homophones, e.g.:

b4	-	before
l8r	-	later
2nt	-	tonight
cr8	-	create

- (c) The use of abbreviations, e.g.:

cos	-	because
tel	-	telephone
lo	-	hello

infor - information

(d) The dropping of vowels, e.g.:

lnch - lunch  
fwd - forward  
chn - children  
wkd - weekend  
pls - please

(e) The use of acronyms, e.g.:

LOL - lots of love  
TB - text back  
fyi - for your information  
omg - oh my God

(f) The use of Number homophones, e.g.:

4 - for, four  
2 - too, to, two  
1 - one  
8 - eight

(g) The use of non-conventional spelling, e.g.:

luv - love  
gud - good  
kul - cool  
juz - just

Many linguists believe that text messaging is going through a natural progression of language. With the involvement of the youth, what we have at hand is a gradual shift in language – cultural movement. Teachers of English are already apprehensive about the effect of this new style on the formal writing of their pupils.

### **3.1.2 E-mail Messaging**

The Internet e-mail messaging is another technology media, which has considerably affected the use of language in modern times. E-mail is a tool of mass global communication. It is a mode for sending documents ranging from just one single sentence greeting, to reports, newsletters, announcements and academic materials of several pages. E-mail combines the characteristics of both speaking and writing. Cairncross (2000) identifies some advantages of e-mail.

- (a) the users do not need to be logged on when somebody writes them;
- (b) it is flexible, users can attach documents, such as pictures, songs, and so forth;
- (c) it can be forwarded to many users at the same time;
- (d) the attenuation of personal information, such as appearance, stuttering, shyness allows greater freedom of self-expression.

E-mail users are learning new registers – specific words – daily. Such words may be existing English words, whose meanings have been extended within the context of Internet communication, e.g.: junk, surf, chat, box, file, HTML, etc.

### **3.1.3 Mobile Telephoning**

Mobile telephoning is also a relatively new media of communication. Its major advantage over the fixed telephoning is that the phone users can be reached anywhere they are where there is network connection. Mobile telephoning is an expensive means of communicating all over the world, so users have devised means of ensuring they do not spend too much time using it. Mobile telephoning is changing the face of communication as users are getting farther from one another in communicating than they used to be in the past.

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Collect 50 text messages and identify the linguistic devices used in shortening the messages.
- ii. Identify 25 acronyms used in computer technology and supply their full meanings

### **3.2 CMC and the Challenges to Communication in the Modern Age**

One of the major challenges that CMC poses for communication is that it makes composing in language more elastic and less rule-governed. Ellipsis, abbreviations and colloquialism are common features of CMC. This as mentioned earlier, has created some concern for teachers of English, especially those in ESL context. The observation that the style of CMC is creeping into formal classroom writing of students may have grave implications for communication in written English.

Another major challenge is how the users will cope with the learning of new vocabulary that is emerging, especially the ones used in text messaging (mostly abbreviations). These expressions are not

standardized. Each user creates their own forms, though some forms are fairly common. There is tendency for ambiguity, especially in instances where a form could refer to more than one concept, eg: cld may be interpreted as could or cold, since both interpretations are logical. This means that with the kind of fractured language used in CMC, interpreting communication may become more tasking if the forms are not standardized for pedagogical reasons.

CMC is also reducing the social bond that naturally exists between speakers of a language when they interact through speech. Since people can now call rather than see and talk over issues, those who would have been emboldened by the use of face-to-face interaction can hide their real expressions. It encourages anonymity, as people can use the mobile phones for crime and deception.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a major breakthrough in communication is achieved through the use of modern technology in communication. This is generally referred to as computer-mediated communication or technology-mediated communication. This has made communication faster and more efficient. The use of SMS, e-mail and mobile telephoning are common in most urban communities all over the world. These forms of technology-mediated-communication has no doubt revolutionized the spread of English, because English is their major medium. The revolution is evident in the emerging vocabulary and conventions that are radically different from the ones used in the usual daily communication.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This Unit examined how technology has been affecting the use of language. We specifically looked at three technology-mediated-language – SMS, e-mail, and mobile telephoning, and also their nature and how they are changing the conventions for language use. Lastly, we examined the challenges posed by these mediated languages to communication

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Explain the concept “Computer-mediated-communication
2. Identify some major linguistic devices used in SMS, using adequate examples.
3. Discuss the variables of Computer-mediated-communication.

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## **UNIT 4 LANGUAGES IN CONTACT (PIDGIN AND CREOLE)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Languages in Contact
  - 3.2 Creole
  - 3.3 Pidgin
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this Unit, you shall be taken through two special varieties of language, which evolve in situations where two or more languages are in contact for a period of time. In such situations, speakers of these languages need to communicate, but they do not share a common language/. In the process of trying to establish a social relation, a new language evolves which is plain and just basically for meeting the communicative needs of these speakers in a particular domain. Such languages, which evolve in contact situations includes Pidgin and Creole. A pidgin does not have any group of native speakers. It is a creation of a particular circumstance and its use is limited to such circumstance. A Creole, on the other hand, is seen as an advanced Pidgin, which has grown to the level at which it has acquired native speakers. We shall be looking at the features of these two varieties and how they differ one from another.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the idea of languages in contact;
- identify the major features of pidgin and creole; and
- differentiate between pidgin and creole.



### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Languages in Contact**

It is a natural phenomenon for languages to be in contact, just as it is natural for man as a social being to interact. It is in the process of the interaction of speakers that languages come into contact. In a situation where speakers of two or more languages see the need to interact through speech and they could not, a new language may emerge, which will combine the forms and structures of the two languages. Such a new language usually emerges in trade contact situations. Such a language is usually simple and devoid of the complex nature of any of the languages that it arose from.

It is important that we study contact languages in order to deepen our knowledge of language change and contact. Our study of contact languages also helps us to understand how new languages expand, age and decay. Languages will not always remain at one level all through the period of their usage. The lexicon is expanded – old lexical items give way to new ones and entirely new ones are created. It is also a fact of language that when a group of people who possess more economic power live side-by-side with a weaker group, there is the tendency for the economically powerful group to dominate the weaker group, even linguistically. All these issues are important in discussing contact languages.

#### **3.2 Pidgin**

Pidgin is a new language, which develops in situations where speakers of different languages need to communicate but do not share a common language. One major characteristic of Pidgin is that it originally has no group of people who could call themselves its native speakers.

A Pidgin develops for some practical purpose, such as trading among groups of people who had a lot of social contacts, but who did not understand each other's languages. Pidgins lack complex morphology and they have very limited vocabulary. For instance, English Pidgins lack inflectional suffixes such as plural, possessive and past tense. For instance, the expressions two cars and his father's house, have plural and possessive nouns (cars – plural, father's – possessive). However in the Nigerian Pidgin English, they would be expressed as two car and him papa house respectively. These forms have no obvious markers of plurality and possession.

The vocabulary of Pidgin comes mainly from one particular language, after which it is normally named. Such a language is called the 'lexifier'

or the 'superstrate', while the other contact language that does not supply as much vocabulary as the lexifier is called the 'substrate'. Pidgin is totally stripped of everything except what is necessary for basic communication. It is important to note that Pidgins are natural and they developed through contact, they are deliberately invented. They are not artificial because they took after some existing languages.

A good example of English-based Pidgin is the Nigerian Pidgin English. It is widely spoken in the coastal towns of Delta and Rivers and Bayelsa States. It is also common in most major cities where there is a convergence of speakers of different Nigerian languages. Pidgins are restricted in their use - they are used only in situations where speakers have different languages and they cannot communicate without the use of a neutral language. They are also used when two speakers, one with little or no education and another highly educated have to communicate.

The historical explanations for the evolution of Pidgins see them as a product of European colonialism. The colonialists enslaved a group of speakers, shipped them to their non-native environment to work for them and in the process, these languages evolved. Some of these slaves were later shipped back home, but they have already brought with them this language. Naturally the European languages dominate as the superstrate, while the people's languages became the substrate. Since a Pidgin developed to meet the communication needs of its speakers, ie, to talk about less topic (mainly trade and business), it may die as soon as the trade contact ceases. A lot of pidgins survived long enough to develop beyond trade jargons. They gained stability and entered into a process of linguistic and functional elaboration. They develop into a Creole, by having a group of speakers who now use it as their first language. In the next section, we shall discuss Creole, which is generally referred to as an 'adult pidgin'.

Pidgin is the home language of some urban dwellers. For example in Warri and other coastal cities and towns, Pidgin is the major means of communication. It is widely used in the markets and as a means of communication among speakers of low educational status.

### **3.3 Creole**

A Creole, like a Pidgin, is a distinct language. But unlike it, it is the mother tongue of a community of speakers. It is not restricted in use and like any other language, it operates in its full range of functions, not restricted like a Pidgin. A Creole is an advanced or elaborated form of pidgin.

Creoles are distinguished synchronically by the fact that they retain signs of their Pidgin ancestry, such as virtual absence of both inflectional and highly transparent derivational process.

There is a continuum between Pidgin and Creole. Since Creoles developed from Pidgins, they exist most often in post-colonial areas, where they tend to be the vernacular of spontaneous daily use. They are typically related to one widely spoken language, and they are seen as a corruption of that language.

A Creole, though it has limited vocabulary, has mechanisms for vocabulary extension. Such mechanisms include borrowing and neologism. Unlike Pidgin, a Creole has a wider domain of use, since it has a group of native speakers. Some of the Creoles spoken across the world are Krio (Sierra Leone), Patwa (Jamaica), Gualdeloupean French Creole (in Guadeloupe), Hawaii Creole English (in Hawaii), Gullah, Toks Pisin (in Papua New Guinea), Bislama (in Vanuatu), Belizean Creole (in Belize) and so forth.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Watch a play in pidgin. Identify some of the substrate used in the conversation.
- ii. Identify the differences in the Pidgin spoken by a Yoruba speaker and an Igbo person.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Languages get into contact when speakers migrate from one area to another or when speakers interact through trade. When two languages are in contact, another variety may emerge. This is what happens in the case of Pidgin, which may later develop to a Creole, when it acquires a group of native speakers. The dominant language becomes the lexifier or superstrate that is, the language that supplies the majority of the items in the lexicon, while the other language becomes the substrate. Pidgin is not complex structurally because it is a language meant just for interaction. Most Pidgins evolved from colonialism.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this Unit, we have examined languages in contact – Pidgin and Creole. We observed that these languages evolve in trade situations between people who do not understand one another's languages. Pidgins may die, when the trade relations cease. However, when it continues, then it may develop into a Creole, which is often called 'adult pidgin'. Since Pidgin operates as a trade language, the vocabulary is limited.

Though nowadays, Pidgins are used as lingua franca in linguistically heterogeneous communities like Nigeria.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What is Pidgin?
2. Identify some typical characteristics of Pidgin.
3. In what way is Pidgin different from Creole?
4. Explain how the Nigerian Pidgin English is related to standard English.

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## **MODULE 4      LANGUAGE: TYPES, ETHNOGRAPHY AND ACQUISITION**

Unit 1	Language Typologies
Unit 2	Linguistic Anthropology
Unit 3	Language Learning and Acquisition

### **UNIT 1      LANGUAGE TYPOLOGIES**

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#### **1.0      INTRODUCTION**

Within Sociolinguistics, scholars have been working on how codes differ from one another in terms of their evolution, historical antecedents form and structure, and attributes. They also look at how languages resemble each other in terms of the forms and structure, the social functions they perform, and the status they are given as a result of the functions they are made to perform in the society.

The general practice is to see language types along two major parameters – the formal and functional parameters. In this Unit, we shall be examining these two parameters and the typologies that are generally associated with them.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the major language types discussed in this unit;
- differentiate between formal and functional typologies of language;
- identify the major sub-systems of each typology; and
- describe language using these typologies.

## **3.1 Language Types**

Languages are generally classified on the basis of their status, attributes and historical antecedents. Seven types of language will be discussed in this section. They are standard, classical, vernacular, dialect, creole, pidgin, and artificial varieties.

### **3.1.1 Standard**

Standard language is a variety of language, which possesses a mother tongue community of speakers. It is autonomous and has books and dictionaries on its grammar, vocabulary and usage. A standard variety is the variety that is associated with prestige, usually, the variety spoken by the educated speakers. It is also the variety that every other varieties look up to for correctness in pronunciation and usage.

### **3.1.2 Vernacular**

A vernacular is the mother tongue of a group of people who are politically or socially dominated by another group (UNESCO), eg: Yoruba, Igbo, Kanuri are all vernacular languages.

### **3.1.3 Classical**

A classical language is an older variety of language, which differs from the present day standard. It is enshrined in the great works of literature, eg: Latin

### **3.1.4 Dialect**

A dialect was defined by Halliday (1971) as “a variety according to user”. It is a variety of a language that is mutually intelligible with other variants. Most languages have dialects–variants determined by the users. For instance, English has several regional dialects–American English, British English, Canadian English, South African English, Singaporean English and Nigerian English, to mention a few.

### **3.1.5 Pidgin**

A Pidgin is a language that evolved in a situation when speakers of two or more languages cannot speak each others’ languages. It is created from the languages of these speakers. It does not have a community of L1 speakers. It may develop into a Creole.

### **3.1.6 Creole**

As explained in the previous Unit, a Creole is a language that evolved in language contact situation. It evolved from Pidgin when it has acquired its native speakers. Examples of Creoles are Krio in Sierra Leone, Patwa in Jamaica.

### **3.1.7 Artificial**

An artificial language is a language, which is created with the intention of being used for global purposes. It obviously lacks an L1 community of speakers and it is not autonomous. It has highly codified norms of usage. Some examples of artificial languages are Esperanto and Wazobia.

## **3.2 Formal Language Typology**

Formal typology deals with the forms of the language. When we talk about forms here, we are referring to the structural similarities, i.e: how languages resemble in terms of their phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical structures.

According to Bell (1976:14) “two fundamental systems can be seen in the internal structuring of languages”

- (a) analysis, in which items consist mainly of free morphemes, i.e, items can function as words without the addition of any kind of affix. This is common in Chinese language, where the word is an immutable monosyllable

- (b) synthesis, in which items tend to be mainly bound morphemes, i.e: they cannot stand as individual words. This is common in Classical Greek, Latin and Turkish.

The internal structuring of English reflects these two fundamental systems. Many English words are analytic, e.g; shoe, book, watch, bed. However, English also makes use of synthetic processes for marking plurality, tense, degree and so forth, as can be seen in the following words: biscuits, carried, greater.

Three major subsystems of synthetic processes can be identified – agglutination, flexion and fusion. We shall take each of these in successive order.

### **3.2.1 Agglutination**

Agglutination is the process of expanding the root through the addition of affixes, which modify both the meaning and form. It is common in Turkish. The English system also reflects agglutination in words like re – organ – ise – ation, where the root is organ and the affixes re- (a prefix) –ise, ation (suffixes) are added to the root.

### **3.2.2 Flexion**

Flexion is common in Semitic languages, such as Arabic, where an affix is added to the root to the extent that they both become fused. English also reflects this in the verb were, which has the information – be + past + plural. It is however impossible to separate these information because everything has become fused into one unit.

### **3.2.3 Fusion**

This is the incorporation within a single word, the information one would have found spread out amongst several words.

It is important to note that no language is a total reflection of one of these major sub-systems. In terms of its structure, languages tend to favour one process rather than another. For instance, English is basically analytic, but makes use of the synthetic processes of agglutination and flexion.

## **3.3 Functional Typologies**

Functional typologies, unlike formal ones, emphasize the external social functions of language. The functional typologies are also called



sociolinguistic typologies. Stewart (1962) proposed a typology, which depended on four attributes:

Standardization  
Vitality  
Historicity  
Homogeneity

### **3.3.1 Standardization**

This refers to whether or not a language has an agreed set of codified norms generally accepted by the speakers. These norms form the basis for teaching and learning the language formally. Codification of a language means that such language has an existing grammar spelt out in book and dictionaries, which are generally accepted to the speakers. Any language that does not possess these features is described as non-standard.

### **3.3.2 Vitality**

Vitality means that a language has a living community of native speakers. A language may lose its vitality if its community of first speakers dies out. An example is Gaelic in the Isle of Man. Conversely, a Pidgin may acquire a community of first language speakers, thereby becoming a Creole as in Sierra Leone.

### **3.3.3 Historicity**

Historicity indicates whether the language has grown or grew through use by some ethnic or social group. This attribute differentiates an L1 from an L2 and an artificial language.

### **3.2.4 Homogeneity**

Homogeneity implies whether or not the basic grammar and lexicon of the language are derived from the same pre-stages of the language. Some languages are derived from mixed languages. Examples of such languages derived from mixed languages are Creole, Swahili, Maltese and even, English.

The functional typologies can be used to analyze language types. Table 1 below shows the sociolinguistic typologies of some language types.

<b>Language Types</b>	<b>Standardization</b>	<b>Vitality</b>	<b>Historicity</b>	<b>Autonomy</b>
<b>Standard</b>	+	+	+	+
<b>Classical</b>	+	-	+	-
<b>Vernacular</b>	-	+	+	-
<b>Dialect</b>	-	+	+	-
<b>Creole</b>	-	+	<u>±</u>	-
<b>Pidgin</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Artificial</b>	+	-	-	+

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Select 20 Nigerian languages and use the functional typologies to classify them.
- ii. Identify 10 Nigerian languages that have been standardized and 10 others that have not been standardized.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this Unit, we looked at language typologies based on the statuses and historical antecedents of such languages and we identified seven types, namely: standard, classical, vernacular, dialect, Creole, Pidgin and artificial. We also identified the functional typologies: standardization, vitality, historicity, and autonomy. We also identified the major subsystems of synthetic processes: agglutination, flexion and fusion. A language could favour one process rather than another.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

Languages can be typologized according to the structures that realize them or according to the functions they perform. They are also classified according to their status, attributes and historical antecedents. The functional typologies can be used to analyse language types.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Explain the major language types identified in this Unit.
2. What does it mean when we say a language is standardised?
3. Select 5 Nigerian languages and use the sociolinguistic typologies to analyse them.
4. Differentiate between Pidgin and Creole.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 2 LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY

### CONTENTS

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sociologists deal with how speakers in a particular language community organize their social relationships in language use. Another group of people who work closely with sociologists are anthropologists and ethnographers. Ethnography and Anthropology are closely related. In fact the ethnographic approach to communication is a method grounded in Anthropology. The Ethnographic approach is a perspective, which seeks to establish the study of communication in its wider social and cultural context. The approach based on a detailed study, which reflects the patterns of custom and communication of the culture being studied is generally referred to as **Ethnography of Communication**.

In this study, we shall be looking at the concept of speech community, the involvement of ethnographers in language study and the field that emerged from this involvement – Ethnography of Communication.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- identify clearly the relationship between language and social and cultural values;
- explain the concept of ‘speech community’;
- explain how ethnography relates to language study; and
- use the essential concepts of ethnography of communication to analyse speech situations.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 What is Linguistic Anthropology?**

The term Linguistic Anthropology is used to refer to the North American approach to linguistics, which according to Hymes (1964: xxiii) falls outside the active concern of Linguistics. It can be defined as the study of language within the context of Anthropology. Anthropological linguistics is the study of language through human genetics and human development. It is a branch of anthropology that studies humans through the languages that they use. According to Duranti (2001: 5), Linguistic Anthropology has to do with “the roles played by language and other semiotic resources in the constitution of society and its cultural representations”.

Linguistic Anthropologists are concerned with ethnographic field-work, and we would soon see in this unit, there is a very close relationship between the subject and Ethnography. Anthropological linguistics focuses more on the interplay of language and culture. It is traditionally divided into three branches: descriptive linguistics, the systematic study of the way language is constructed and used; historical linguistics, the study of the origin of language in general and of the evolution of the languages people speak today; and sociolinguistics: the study of the relationship between language and society.

#### **3.1.1 Ethnography**

Ethnography is a branch of anthropology that studies people in their natural settings and gives a descriptive account of social life and culture in a defined social system, based on qualitative methods by detailed observations, unstructured interviews, analysis of documents. The term “Ethnography” derives from the Greek *ethnos* = nation and *graphein* = writing). Ethnographers are those who practice Ethnography and also study sub-cultures, such as drug cultures, soccer hooligans, sex workers etc and other institutions, such as the Police, etc.

Cultural and Social Anthropology place a very high value on research through the ethnographic methods. He studied the Trobriand Islanders of New Guinea in the southwest Pacific. One of the earliest scholars who saw the link between language and ethnographic practice was Malinowski, who founded the field of Social Anthropology known as Functionalism, holding the belief that all components of society interlock to form a well-balanced system. He emphasized characteristics of beliefs, ceremonies, customs, institutions, religion, ritual and sexual taboos. He used a holistic approach in studying the native’s social interactions including the annual Kula Ring Exchange, finding it to be

associated with magic, religion, kinship and trade. He contributed to a cross-cultural study of psychology through his observations of the relationships of kinship.

### 3.1.2 Speech Community

To fully have an understanding of how language relates to social and cultural values, you need to understand the concept of speech community. You will be aware that the way people speak vary from one community to another. To know why a group of speakers use their language the way they do, we have to look into their speech communities. What are their practices and what is their worldview, etc. What then is a speech community?

Hymes (1972: 54) defines as speech community as “A community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation at least one linguistic of speech, interpretation of variety”. A Speech Community refers to a group of speakers, whether located in one area or scattered, who recognize the same language or dialect of a language as a standard. It is a concept in sociolinguistics that describes a more or less discrete group of people who use language in a unique and mutually accepted way among themselves.

A speech community can comprise members of a profession with a specialized jargon, distinct social groups like university students, or even tight-knit groups like families and friends, co-workers. In addition, in the modern age of technology, online and other mediated communities, such as the Internet forums, people who exchange mails and text messages often constitute speech communities. Members of speech communities will often develop slang or jargon to serve the group's special purposes and priorities.

Definitions of speech community tend to involve varying degrees of emphasis on the following:

- Shared community membership
- Shared linguistic communication

Scholars differ in their definitions of speech community. Some believe that a speech community must be a real community, ie, a group of people living together in the same geographical location – village, town, city, country, etc. Others would argue that all people are indeed part of several communities (through home location, occupation, gender, class, religious belonging, and more), and that they are thus also part of simultaneous speech communities.

Similarly, what shared linguistic communication entails is also a variable concept. Some would argue that a shared first language, even dialect, is necessary, while for others the ability to communicate and interact (even across language barriers) is sufficient.

The underlying concern in both of these is that members of the same speech community should share linguistic norms. That is, they share understanding, values and attitudes about language varieties present in their community. While the exact definition of speech community is debated, there is a broad consensus that the concept is immensely useful, if not crucial, for the study of language variation and change.

A person can (and almost always does) belong to more than one speech community. For example a Nigerian youth belongs to the following speech communities – his mother tongue community, the Internet community, the English language speakers' community, etc.

One major characteristic of a speech community, according to Gumperz is the frequency in the social interaction among the members. It is therefore the case that members of a given speech community communicate more within the group than with other speech communities. Speakers of the same speech community also have a set of shared norms, which could be observed in their linguistic behaviour.

### **3.1.3 Communicative Situation**

Communicative situation is any situation predisposed towards communication. Situation here should not necessarily be equated with location, even though location is a part of situation. Situation changes and it is possible for the same location to play host to more than one situation. This means that situations can be created within a particular location. For instance, one location can serve as a worship center, a classroom, and even a public lecture venue. The happenings in a communicative situation are constant, even when the location changes. The situation determines the roles of the participants. For instance, the location of the NTA Network News is NTA Abuja, but the situation is the news, which can as well and does take place in other locations.

### **3.1.4 Communicative Event**

Communicative events are named by conventional meanings, such as wedding, symposium, lecture, etc. Communicative events are therefore seen as events in which communication takes place. Communicative events are defined by a unified set of components. They have the following major features:

- (a) the general topic is maintained;
- (b) the same participants are involved;
- (c) the same rules of interaction operate in the same kind of setting
- (d) the participants use the same language variety.

A communicative event therefore terminates when there is a change in the major participants and their role relationships.

### **3.1.5 Communicative Act**

A communicative act is also called a speech act. This could easily be illustrated as a single interactive function, such as a request, a command, a statement, and so forth. A communicative act uses verbal signals to achieve a purpose. Communicative acts are not mono-dimensional. Here, we are dealing with the actions that the communication produces. For instance, if someone makes any of these statements:

- (a) I would love an orange.
- (b) Do you have an orange?
- (c) Can I please have an orange?

They would all accomplish the same act of communication, but in three different ways.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Identify a conversation and describe the communicative situation, communicative event and communicative act.

## **3.2 Ethnography of Communication**

The object of the ethnography of communication is to document and analyze communicative practices and to investigate how they fit into broader social contexts. Such communicative practices run the gamut from ritual invocations of ancestral spirits to idle gossip. Ethnographers of communication also examine the complexities of communication between anthropologists and the people that they study.

Anthropologists do not themselves have a unified conception of ethnography, especially of ethnography in relation to the study of institutions of our own society, such as education. One difficulty with the notion of ethnography is that it may seem to be a residual category, associated with the study of people not ourselves and with the use of methods other than those of experimental design and quantitative measurement.



The key goal of ethnographers is to examine how members of a speech community interpret meaning from their experience and how they communicate such interpretations. Hymes provides a particular methodology for the study of communicative events and the units, which make them up: the SPEAKING grid.

<b>S</b>	<b>setting/scene</b>	physical circumstances
<b>P</b>	<b>participants</b>	speaker/hearer, producer/receiver
<b>E</b>	<b>ends</b>	purposes, goals
<b>A</b>	<b>act sequence</b>	message form and content
<b>K</b>	<b>key</b>	tone, manner, spirit of encounter
<b>I</b>	<b>instrumentalities</b>	channel (verbal/non-verbal, Spoken/written)
<b>N</b>		<b>norms of interaction</b> production and perception of language
<b>G</b>	<b>genre</b>	discourse textual categories

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Language and Anthropology have a meeting point – Linguistic Anthropology. This meeting point has become an approach to the study of language. This approach had its root in the United States. Fieldwork is emphasized in Linguistic Anthropology. It also approaches language through the study of speech communities, communicative event, communicative act, communicative situation and Ethnography of Communication. The goal of Anthropological Linguists is to study how language functions in speech communities.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this Unit, we looked at language as a social phenomenon. We considered an approach to language which connects it with the culture of the speakers. We examined such concepts as speech community, speech act, communicative situation, and communicative event. We also discussed Hymes’ Ethnography of Speaking.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Differentiate between communicative event and communicative situation.
2. Using Hymes’ Ethnography of Communication, identify 2 communicative situations and analyse them.
3. Explain the term ‘Ethnography’

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## **UNIT 3      LANGUAGE LEARNING AND ACQUISITION**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Competence and Performance
  - 3.2 Language and Thought
  - 3.3 Second Language Learning
  - 3.4 Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Language is a natural human phenomenon, which every normal child will acquire when he/she reaches the age of acquisition. With children's exposure to the language of their immediate environment, they gradually develop ability in the language and use it naturally in communicative situations. This is quite different from the experience of a person who is exposed to a second language. Linguists have a way of explaining the two different experiences and the entire idea of how humans have come to use language in different ways to reflect the society they live in.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- differentiate between the process of a child's language acquisition and an adult's language learning;
- explain the relationship between language and thought; and
- discuss the basic content of sapir-whorf hypothesis.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Competence and Performance**

Chomsky (1965) coined the term competence to account for the unconscious knowledge speakers have of their language. This unconscious knowledge refers to what someone knows about the language, the mental representation of the language (Fromkin and Rodman, 1981). Competence, however, has been subdivided into two

broad areas, namely, linguistic competence and communicative competence.

O'Grady, Dobrovolsky and Aronoff (1993) define linguistic competence as the ability speakers have "to produce and understand an unlimited number of sentences, including many that are novel or unfamiliar" (p. 3). Normally, language users speak a language without consciously knowing about the rules governing it, i.e. the grammar behind it. For this reason, some authors refer to linguistic competence as grammatical competence. This knowledge has five main components: phonological, syntactic, semantic, lexical and morphological. Phonological competence refers to the knowledge speakers have of the sounds and possible sound combinations of a language. Syntactic competence refers to the knowledge the speakers have about the possible syntactic combinations of their language. Semantic competence refers to the knowledge speakers have of the meanings of words in their languages. Lexical competence refers to the knowledge speakers have of an extensive amount of words in their language. It also refers to the ability that speakers have to use these words according to the appropriate context. Morphological competence refers to the knowledge speakers have of the formation of words in their language, or better said, word structure.

Communicative competence is a broad term that involves not only the structural features of language, but also its social, pragmatic and contextual characteristics. Therefore, it is necessary to understand communicative competence as the sum of a series of competences.

Performance can be seen as the physical representation, usually in utterances of any type, of the human competence (Chomsky, 1965). It refers to "how" someone uses language. Chomsky considered performance as a faulty representation of competence because of psychological restrictions such as memory lapses and limitations, distractions, changes of directions halfway through sentence, hesitation and so on. Performance, in a way, accounts for the failures language users have when they transpose their competence into actual linguistic production.

### **3.2 Language and Thought**

Linguists have been doing research on the relationship between the language we speak and our thought. Some of the questions they ask are "which one comes first: language or thought? Do we think before we talk or our language shapes our thought?", "how does thought translate into language?" and so forth. However the general feeling is that we think in the language we speak. For instance, Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis stipulates that the structure of our mother tongue influences the way our

minds perceive the world we live in. Speakers of different languages notice different things and so make different distinctions.

One view, Bloom points out, "is that there exists a universal core of meaningful distinctions that all humans share, but other distinctions that people make are shaped by the forces of language. On the other hand, language learning might really be the act of learning to express ideas that already exist."

The classical theories of the relation between language and thought in developmental psychology are those of Piaget and Vygotsky. Piaget's claim is that language depends on thought for its development, and is based on four sources of evidence: the period of infancy, in which fundamental principles of thought are exhibited well before language; the simultaneous emergence of language, deferred imitation, symbolic play, evocative memory, and mental imagery, suggesting language is but one outcome of more fundamental changes in cognitive abilities; the lack of effect of language upon reasoning abilities in middle childhood; and the nature of speech in early childhood, the claim being that the communicative function of speech results from cognitive developments. By contrast Vygotsky, while seeing thought and language as initially separate systems, considers the two merge at around two years of age, producing verbal thought. Mental operations are regarded as embodied in the structure of language, and hence cognitive development results from an internalization of language.

### **3.3 Second Language Acquisition/Learning**

According to The Wikipedia Dictionnary, Second language learning is the process by which people learn languages in addition to their native language(s). The term second language is used to describe any language whose acquisition starts after early childhood (including what may be the third or subsequent language learned). Scholars (for example Krashen (1981) often differentiate language learning from language acquisition. The former being seen as 'formal' (what is done in the classroom or other formal situations), while the latter is seen as 'natural' (which is not necessarily taught, but naturally acquired). However, today, most scholars use the terms interchangeably. Applied linguists focus more on the experience of the learner in the classroom, while most psycholinguists focus on the processes a child goes through to acquire a language.

According to Krashen (1981), Language acquisition is a subconscious process not unlike the way a child learns language. Language acquirers are not consciously aware of the grammatical rules of the language, but

rather develop a "feel" for correctness. "In non-technical language, acquisition is 'picking-up' a language."

Language learning, on the other hand, refers to the "conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them." Thus language learning can be compared to learning about a language.

The acquisition-learning distinction hypothesis claims that adults do not lose the ability to acquire languages the way that children do. Just as research shows that error correction has little effect on children learning a first language, so too error correction has little effect on language acquisition.

Krashen's theory of second language acquisition consists of five main hypotheses:

- the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis,
- the Monitor hypothesis,
- the Natural Order hypothesis,
- the Input hypothesis,
- and the Affective Filter hypothesis.

The **Acquisition-Learning** distinction is the most fundamental of all the hypotheses in Krashen's theory and the most widely known among linguists and language practitioners. According to Krashen there are two independent systems of second language performance: 'the acquired system' and 'the learned system'. The 'acquired system' or 'acquisition' is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act.

Learning is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge 'about' the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules. According to Krashen 'learning' is less important than 'acquisition'

The Monitor hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning and defines the influence of the latter on the former. The monitoring function is the practical result of the learned grammar. According to Krashen, the acquisition system is the utterance initiator, while the learning system performs the role of the 'monitor' or the 'editor'. The 'monitor' acts in a planning, editing and correcting function when three specific conditions are met: that is, the second language

learner has sufficient time at his/her disposal, he/she focuses on form or thinks about correctness, and he/she knows the rule.

The Natural Order hypothesis is based on research findings (Dulay & Burt, 1974; Fathman, 1975; Makino, 1980 cited in Krashen, 1987), which suggested that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a 'natural order' which is predictable. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early, others late. This order seemed to be independent of the learners' age, L1 background, conditions of exposure, and although the agreement between individual acquirers was not always 100% in the studies, there were statistically significant similarities that reinforced the existence of a Natural Order of language acquisition. Krashen however points out that the implication of the natural order hypothesis is not that a language program syllabus should be based on the order found in the studies. In fact, he rejects grammatical sequencing when the goal is language acquisition.

The Input hypothesis is Krashen's attempt to explain how the learner acquires a second language. In other words, this hypothesis is Krashen's explanation of how second language acquisition takes place. So, the Input hypothesis is only concerned with 'acquisition', not 'learning'. According to this hypothesis, the learner improves and progresses along the 'natural order' when he/she receives second language 'input' that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to 'Comprehensible Input' that belongs to level 'i + 1'. Since not all of the learners can be at the same level of linguistic competence at the same time, Krashen suggests that natural communicative input is the key to designing a syllabus, ensuring in this way that each learner will receive some 'i + 1' input that is appropriate for his/her current stage of linguistic competence.

Finally, the fifth hypothesis, the Affective Filter hypothesis, embodies Krashen's view that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to 'raise' the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. In other words, when the filter is 'up' it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, for acquisition to take place.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Study an adult learner of your language and a child acquiring the language. Identify the differences in their performance in using the language. For instance, notice how they pronounce certain words and their understanding of the meaning of such words.

### **3.4 Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis**

The Sapir-Whorf theory, named after the American linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, is a mould theory of language. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf brought attention to the relationship between language, thought, and culture. Neither of them formally wrote the hypothesis nor supported it with empirical evidence, but through a thorough study of their writings about linguistics, researchers have found two main ideas. Writing in 1929, Sapir argued in a classic passage that:

human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. (Sapir, 1929: 69).

This position was extended in the 1930s by his student Whorf, who, in another widely cited passage, declared that:

We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds - and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way - an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns



of our language. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees. (Whorf 1940: 213-14)

It was on the basis of these statements by the two scholars that the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis was formulated. Whorf distanced himself from the behaviourist stance that thinking is entirely linguistic (Whorf 1956, p. 66). In its most extreme version 'the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis' can be described as consisting of two associated principles. According to the first, linguistic determinism, our thinking is determined by language. According to the second, linguistic relativity, people who speak different languages perceive and think about the world quite differently.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Language and thought are inextricably bound together, so it is very clear that they influence one another. What we know, how we learn the language and our actual language performance are also connected with our thought. All these have been the subject of our discussion in this Unit. A major theory at the back of all these discussions is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this Unit, we have examined the thinking of linguists on how we learn and acquire a language. We looked at Chomsky's ideas of competence and performance (what we have internalized and what we actually use). We also examined the theories of language acquisition and Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which explains how our world view affect the way we use language.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What is the relationship between language and thought?
2. Explain the terms 'competence' and 'performance'.
3. Explain Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.
4. Is there any difference between language acquisition and learning?

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## **MODULE 5      MULTILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

- Unit 1      Bilingualism/Multilingualism
- Unit 2      Language Policy
- Unit 3      Language Planning, Maintenance, Shift and Death

### **UNIT 1      BILINGUALISM/MULTILINGUALISM**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    What is Bilingualism?
    - 3.1.1    Types of Bilingualism
    - 3.1.2    Balanced vs. Non-balanced Bilingualism
  - 3.2    Coordinate, Subordinate and Incipient Bilingualism
  - 3.3    Multilingualism
  - 3.4    Diglossia
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

#### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

Two thirds of the world's population is bilingual to some extent, hence from an international perspective speaking more than one language is the norm rather than the exception. Bilingualism is a feature of a linguistically heterogeneous community, i.e a community, which has several speakers of different languages. The tendency is that as these language speakers have contact, they would learn each other's languages. Bilingualism is more common in the developing countries of the world, especially the former colonies, where the local languages exist side by side with the languages of the colonial masters.

In this Unit, we shall be examining the notion of Bilingualism, its meaning, the types, how people come to be bilinguals, and how languages are assigned roles and statuses in bilingual settings.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the concept; bilingualism;
- identify the types of bilingualism; and
- discuss the notion of diglossia in relation with bilingualism.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 What is Bilingualism?**

Bilingualism can be seen from two different perspectives: from the individual's perspective and the societal perspective. In essence, we have individual bilingualism and societal bilingualism. When an individual in a community possesses two languages, he/she is described as a bilingual. Likewise, when in a society, two languages dominate others and most of the dwellers in that community speak or use those languages in communication, we can call that society bilingual. It is important to note that an individual, who is bilingual may reside in a society, which is monolingual. Likewise, in a bilingual society, it is not all the residents that are necessarily bilingual. In the case of societal bilingualism, the two dominant languages become the primary means of communication because they have been assigned significant roles in the society. For instance, in Nigeria, English is dominant because it is the legacy left behind by our colonial masters. It is also the language of unity, i.e, the language that unites the different speakers in Nigeria. Most Nigerians are bilingual because they have their mother tongues, which they have acquired in their immediate community and they also have English, which is the country's official language.

Definitions of bilingualism range from a minimal proficiency in two languages, to an advanced level of proficiency, which allows the speaker to function and appear as a native-like speaker of both languages. Persons may describe themselves as bilingual but this may refer only to an ability to converse and communicate orally. Others may be proficient in reading in one or more languages. To be 'bilingual' means different things to different people. So, a definition of bilingualism will need to acknowledge the learner's proficiency, the purposes for which they use the languages, and the contexts in which they use their languages. The young child entering school may be called bilingual but it may be that he or she only speaks their home language for domestic and familial purposes and that English is the preferred language for communication outside the home. A recently arrived asylum seeking pupil may have some level of literacy in English but may be unable to converse or use

spoken English in the classroom context. Many pupils described as 'bilingual' may in fact routinely use three languages or more.

A common definition of bilingualism is “a native-like control of two languages”. This definition was given by Bloomfield (1933).

Another one is “the point where the speaker of one language can produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language: (Haugen, 1953)

### 3.1.1 Types of Bilingualism

#### 3.1.2 Balanced vs. Non-balanced Bilingualism

In terms of purpose, bilingualism may be described as balanced or non-balanced. **Balanced bilingualism** refers to the notion of having equal proficiency in two languages across a range of contexts. It means the individual uses the two languages for the same amount of functions. **Non-balance bilingualism** is the one in which the individual uses the languages for different functions. Balanced bilingualism is very rare, while non-balanced bilingualism is the norm in most bilinguals. To expect someone to be equally proficient in two languages is a simplistic and unrealistic viewpoint.

### 3.2 Coordinate, Subordinate and Incipient Bilingualism

Individual bilinguals can be described on the basis of the extent or degrees of their bilingualism. Rubin (1970) identifies the three types of bilingualism we are discussing in this section.

A **coordinate bilingual** is a person who is able to speak two different languages and understand them well. Such a bilingual has near native-like competence in the two languages. In other words, whenever they speak either of the two languages, listeners do not easily identify the one that is their mother tongue.

**Subordinate bilinguals** are fluent in one of the two languages, but is able to speak but not fluent in the other one. Interference is easily discernible in the speech of a subordinate bilingual.

**Incipient bilinguals** speak one of the two languages that exist in the community fluently but only understand the other one partially. This is common among people who have lived long enough in a community to understand the language but do not make any appreciable effort to speak the language.

Other types of bilingualism, which people have identified are:

**Dominant bilingualism** - where one of the languages is used most often and is the one in which the speaker operates with the greatest proficiency.

**Semilingualism**- a controversial term used to describe people whose two languages are at a low level of development.

**Prestigious bilingualism**- typically, but not exclusively referring to those who speak two high status languages.

### 3.3 Multilingualism

Multilingualism simply refers to the ability to speak more than two languages or simply proficiency in many languages. Just like bilingualism, it could be seen in individuals or the entire society. A multilingual person, in a general sense is anyone who can communicate in more than one language, be it active (through speaking and writing) or passive (through listening and reading). More specifically, the terms bilingual and trilingual are used to describe comparable situations in which two or three languages are involved.

### 3.4 Diglossia

Diglossia, according to Ferguson (1959) refers to the circumstance where each language in a bilingual society is systematically employed in certain domains and events. For instance each of the languages in a bilingual community has to be assigned certain functions. The functions of the two languages may indicate whether they are high or low languages. In such instances, the high language is reserved for formal public use, and often given the function of official language. The use of the low variety is limited to spoken situations at home and in casual conversations. For instance in Nigeria, English is assigned the role of the official language – the language of education, politics, the media, trade, and so forth, while Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba are assigned the role of regional languages.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Identify a bilingual community in your area and describe how bilingualism works in that community.
- ii. Identify 10 friends who are bilingual. What type of bilingual are they?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Bilingualism is a phenomenon generally discussed in Sociolinguistics. It is a feature of linguistically complex communities. In defining it, we approached it from two different dimensions: the individual and the society. In societies where there is bilingualism, the government further strengthens it by assigning roles to languages. Individuals who are bilinguals have different degrees of mastery of the two languages.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The Unit focuses on the concept of bilingualism. We examined the various definitions of bilingualism from different scholars and discussed the different types of bilingualism. Lastly, we examined diglossia: a situation in which the two languages in a bilingual society are assigned different roles.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is bilingualism?
2. Identify and discuss types of bilingualism.
3. Explain the term Diglossia.
4. Write an essay on Bilingualism in Nigeria.

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## **UNIT 2     LANGUAGE POLICY**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Nationalism and Nationism
  - 3.2 National and Official Languages
  - 3.3 Language Policy
  - 3.4 Endoglossic, Exoglossic and Mixed States
  - 3.5 Types of Language Policy
    - 3.5.1 Type A Policy
    - 3.5.2 Type B Policy
    - 3.5.3 Type C Policy
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In any language community, the government will naturally adopt a kind of language policy that will regulate the use of language in the community. The kind of policy adopted by a country will be determined by the nature of the linguistic environment. For instance the kind of policy adopted by a monolingual community, which is linguistically homogeneous, will be different from that of a bi-/multilingual community, which is linguistically heterogeneous. . In this Unit, we shall be taking you through how the different kinds of state determine the kind of policy adopted by different governments.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to do the following:

- explain the term language policy;
- describe the different types of state we have; and
- describe the kinds of policy that can be adopted by a government.



### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Nationalism and Nationism**

Nationalism describes the belief that groups of people are bound together by territorial, cultural and (sometimes) ethnic links. It is loyalty and devotion to a nation or ethnic group that places emphasis on promoting the interests, cultural and social values, or religion of one group above all others. National solidarity is typically expressed by such outward signs as a national flag, anthem and a national language (Bell, 1976: 169).

Nationism deals with a complex situation in which a group of people see the need to be united in spite of their cultural and linguistic divergences. The outward signs of nationism will be seen in state-operated education, transport, finance, justice systems in order to achieve political integration. Such a state also has a national language, which can act as the vehicle of communication between the government and the people and between the government and the government of other states.

These concepts describe different kinds of states and their compositions. For instance, where the different units that make up a state express strong nationalistic tendencies, it will be difficult for the government to assign the role of a higher language to any of the local languages. However, where there is less emphasis on nationalism, a language spoken by the majority may assume a higher role in the state.

#### **3.2 National and Official Language**

A national language is the language that is chosen in order to achieve the goal of nationalism. It is usually a language seen as binding the state together. An official language is a language that is given a unique status in the state. It is typically the language used in a nation's legislative bodies, and political discourse. Though the law in many nations requires that government documents be produced in other languages as well. In most countries, the national and official languages are one, eg, English in America, United Kingdom, and so forth.

#### **3.3 Language Policy**

Language Policy refers to what government does officially – through legislation, court decisions, executive action, or other means to:

- (a) determine how languages are used in public contexts,

- (b) cultivate language skills needed to meet national priorities, or
- (c) establish the rights of individuals or groups to learn, use, and maintain languages.

It is also government regulation of its own language use, including steps to facilitate clear communication, train and recruit personnel, guarantee due process, foster political participation, and provide access to public services, proceedings, and documents.

### **3.4 Endoglossic, Exoglossic and Mixed States**

An endoglossic state is one in which the national-official language is the mother tongue of the vast majority of the population. The United Kingdom is a typical example of this kind of state. In the UK there are minority language speakers like the Welsh, the Gaelic speaking Scots and Asian and Caribbean migrant workers. English still remains the national-official language.

An exoglossic state is typically linguistically heterogeneous, due to the large number of non-standard indigenous languages. Some languages might have gained wider currency as *lingua franca* within some regions within the state. It is however not possible to pick any of them as the official language, so the ex-colonial language is retained to serve the role of the national-official language, while the majority languages within the regions are given the role of regional languages. Examples of this kind of state can be found in Nigeria, Ghana, and some other African and Asian countries.

A mixed state is a state between the two extremes of endo- and exoglossic states. In such a state, the national and official functions are split between an indigenous language and a non-indigenous language. India is a good example of such a state, where Hindi and English share the role of national-official language.

### **3.5 Type of Language Policy**

Fishman (1971) identifies three major types of language policy. All these three types hinge on the concept of 'Great Tradition' and its relationship to the concepts of 'nationalism' and 'nationism'.

A Great Tradition has to do with assumed existence of a set of cultural features – law, government, religion, history – which is shared by the state and can serve to integrate the members into a cohesive body. Below are the types of policy.

### **3.5.1 Type a Policy**

Under this type of policy, there is no great tradition, so the likelihood is that the state directs its policy towards the creation of an exoglossic state by adopting the language of the ex-rulers as the national-official language. This is common in multi-ethnic, multi-tribal communities, which were forced to belong to one state as a result of the political arrangement of the colonial masters. Most of the African nations would naturally adopt this kind of policy.

### **3.5.2 Type B Policy**

Type B policy is adopted when there exists a great tradition that brings together the different, but related languages in the community. The language of the great tradition is adopted as the national-official language. The aim is to achieve the goals of nationalism and nationism simultaneously. Since the national –official language is indigenous, an endoglossic state can be created with the hope of success. Examples of countries that have adopted this policy type are Ethiopia, Somalia and Thailand.

### **3.5.3 Type C Policy**

Type C policies arise from a situation in which there are several great traditions competing, each with its own social, religious, geographic and linguistic base. Such states aim at the twin goal of nationalism and nationism. In such states, sectionalism is further aggravated by physical distance and non-contiguity between the component regions of the state. Such states set up a central government, which retains a neutral language as the national –official language and adopt the major local languages as regional official languages. This necessarily leads to educated individuals in the nation being bi-/multilingual.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Describe in details the language policy adopted by any six African countries.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Language policy is essential in any state in order to regulate the use of language. The type of policy adopted by any state is largely determined by the composition of the state, typically, how linguistically complex the state is. The existence of a ‘great tradition’ plays an important role in the choice of language policy for any state

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this Unit, we discussed language policy, the concepts nation and nationalism and how they affect policy. We also looked at the types of state we have, which will determine the kind of policy that will be adopted. Lastly, we examined three types of policies as identified by Fishman (1971).

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Explain the concepts 'nationalism' and 'nationism'.
2. Define language policy and explain the Nigerian language policy.
3. Is there any difference between a national and an official language? Explain.
4. What is "Great Tradition"? Explain how Great Tradition affects the type of policy chosen by any two former colonies.

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## **UNIT 3 LANGUAGE PLANNING, MAINTENANCE, SHIFT, DEATH**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Language Maintenance and Development
    - 3.1.1 Language Planning
    - 3.1.2 Factors that influence Language Planning
  - 3.2 Language Shift
  - 3.3 Language Death
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Language, just like any other natural resource must be planned in order to ensure its appropriate utilization. The challenges of language planning are more evident in multilingual settings where several languages exist side by side. Language is planned so that the users can derive the maximum benefits from such languages.

In this Unit, we shall be examining the idea of language development and planning. In addition, we shall also look at language shift and language death.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the concepts of language development
- describe language planning and the factors that influence it; and
- explain language shift and language death

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Language Development and Language Maintenance**

Language, like any other phenomenon develops, advances and is better organized in terms of its functions. Just like any other phenomenon, language has to be maintained if it has to grow and use more effectively. Language is a crucial part of a people's culture and a powerful

instrument for preserving and transmitting values and systems from one generation to another. People with a well-developed language will naturally be developed because language is the vehicle for the expression of concepts in our culture. Well-maintained languages will naturally develop in terms of the roles and functions they are used to perform.

### **3.1.1 Language Planning**

Language planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure or functional allocation of languages. It involves the development of goals, objectives and strategies to change the way language is used in a community.

Language planning involves the following:

- (a) Evaluation: placing value on language. Such values may result in its selection and assignment of roles.
- (b) Regulation: controlling language by means of rules and policies. This then determines the extent to which such a language can be used
- (c) Decision making: choice and judgment on what is best to do at a point in time. This presupposes that there were problems and difficulties.

Language planning is not only done by the society, it is also done by individual bilingual or multilingual, who makes conscious choice of what language to use at any particular time.

The basis of language planning is that the society needs common publicly standardized language. The objective is to establish, maintain and develop such a language. Language planning is more necessary in multilingual settings, typically in Africa and Asia. In such multilingual communities, the choice of a common language among the indigenous languages for inter-ethnic communication is always a difficult task. The result is the adoption of a neutral language, typically, the language of the ex-colonial rulers for political stability. Language planning leads to the adoption of language policy by the government.

Language planning usually takes place through government agencies and academic centers. The typical tasks of such agencies are to:

- (a) devise orthographies for unwritten languages;
- (b) revise spelling systems;
- (c) coin new words;
- (d) produce literature and textbooks in the language.

In developing nations, the first task in language planning is to determine which language or languages should perform the role of national language. This is called language selection. The government also considers the roles of the minority languages. By assigning minority languages certain roles, they are helped to develop and not decay. Other things done in the process of language development include:

- (a) codification: making explicit statements on the code through dictionaries, grammars, pronunciation, spelling, punctuation and pronunciation guides. Codification leads to the establishment of a standard variety.
- (b) Graphization: the reduction of spoken language to writing or devising graphic symbols to represent the spoken form. The first decision in graphization is the choice of alphabet or scripts
- (c) Modernization: Making the language to belong to the world community of languages that can express modern terminologies. This will necessitate the expansion of the lexicon and creation of lexical items to talk about the modern scientific and industrial world

### **3.1.2 Factors influencing Language Planning**

Certain factors influence the planning of language in any community. They are discussed below:

- (a) Socio-demographic factors: The number of languages spoken, the number of speakers, and the geographical distribution of the languages;
- (a) Linguistic factors: similarities and dis-similarities between languages, the degree of modernized development, the literary tradition.
- (b) Socio-psychological factors: Attitudes of people towards their language and towards other languages around them
- (c) Religious factors: The functions of the languages in relation to the religious inclinations in the community. For instance, the Christian mission promoted the local languages for their evangelical interest.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Choose two African countries, two Asian countries and two European countries and describe how they planned their languages.

### 3.2 Language Shift

It is sometime referred to as language transfer. Language shift is the process whereby an entire speech community shifts to speaking another language. Language shift is determined by the rate of assimilation, which refers to the percentage of individuals with a given mother tongue who speak another language often at home. The process whereby a community of speakers of a language becomes bilingual in another language, and gradually shift allegiance to the second language is called assimilation. When language shift involves the loss of the first language, it can lead to cultural disintegration and a variety of social problems.

Language shift results mostly when language is not maintained. The ultimate result of shift is language death. The language users simply become a sub-set of speakers of another language. The rate at which a language is transferred to another generation determines whether the language will survive, shift or ultimately die. For instance in Nigeria, quite a number of educated parents are bringing up their children as monolingual speakers of English. This may eventually lead to language shift by the time the generations of the children of these speakers grow up. They will eventually bring up their own children in the same manner.

### 3.3 Language Death

Language death also known as language extinction is a process that affects speech communities where the level of linguistic competence that speakers possess of a given language is decreased. Language death may manifest itself in the following ways:

- (a) gradual language death;
- (b) total language death;
- (c) sudden language death (**linguicide**)

Gradual language death is a process in which a language is being lost as a result of the speakers' abandonment of such language.

Total language death occurs when no speaker of a particular language remains where the language was previously used (i.e, all native speakers die.

Sudden language death occurs when all the speakers of a language are wiped out through genocide or any natural disaster.

The most common process of language death is one in which a community of speakers of one language becomes bilingual in another



language and gradually shifts allegiance to the second language until they cease to use their original language. This process is called assimilation. It may be voluntary or forced. A language is effectively dead when it is no longer used actively for communication. This may not necessarily mean that all the speakers have died.

Language death is a slow process. For instance, when all a language has left are a few elderly speakers, such a language is declared moribund and the process of its death has already begun. When each generation learns less of their first language and more of their second language, the language has started the process of death. A stage in the process of language death is language attrition – the loss of a portion of a particular language by the speech community.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Language, is like any other human resource and if it is not well maintained and developed, it could be lost. The process of language loss begins with the attitude of the speakers of the language to their language and other languages around them. For instance, if the speakers have a negative attitude to their own language and a positive attitude to another language, the tendency is that they would lose their language for the other language. The extreme of language loss is language death, when the language ceases being used by anybody.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this Unit, we examined the concept of language maintenance and development and how these affect language retention and loss. We discussed how planning helps to make a language develop. We also looked at the role of attitudes in determining language development. We observed that language death is hardly a sudden phenomenon (though there may be rare instances of sudden language loss if a whole community of speakers are wiped out). Language death begins as a process from negative attitude to linguistic attrition, to shift and then death.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What is language planning?
2. Discuss factors that influence language planning.
3. Explain the process of language shift.
4. How does a language die?
5. Identify those things that can be done in order to make a language to develop.

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## **MODULE 6      SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND DISCOURSE**

Unit 1	Discourse Analysis
Unit 2	Code Switching, Interference and Borrowing
Unit 3	Linguistic Imperialism
Unit 4	Sociolinguistic Situation of Nigeria
Unit 5	Sociolinguistics and Other Disciplines

### **UNIT 1      DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

#### **CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Text and Discourse
3.2	What is Discourse Analysis?
3.3	Interactive and Non-interactive Discourse
3.4	Discourse Structure
3.5	Discourse Features
3.5.1	Turn Taking
3.5.2	Overlaps
3.5.3	Adjacency Pairs
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
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#### **1.0      INTRODUCTION**

In this Unit, we shall be looking at Discourse Analysis, a discipline which emerged from Sociolinguistics. Discourse Analysis studies naturally-occurring discourse, which could be spoken or written. It arose in an attempt by linguists to study the organization of language above the sentence. It is an approach that is a departure from the traditional approach to the study of language that focuses on the structure of language. The Unit will discuss the notion of discourse and text, interactive and non-interactive discourse, the structure and features of discourse.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the time you finish studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of discourse analysis;
- identify the major features of a text or discourse;
- describe the structure of discourse; and
- differentiate between interactive and non-interactive discourse.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Text and Discourse**

The terms discourse and text are used interchangeably, though there is a way in which scholars use them differently. A text simply refers to any instance of language use spoken or written. A text ranges from a word to a group of words that is meaningful in any particular context. A text is situated in a particular context (environment in which it is used). The meaning of a text can be deduced in the context in which it is used. One major feature of a long text is cohesion or the ties that exist within it, among the words and the clauses that make it up. A text is also said to be coherent or has coherence if the whole text is seen as being logically connected.

A discourse on the other hand is any connected, naturally occurring language. It may also be written or spoken. A discourse is not meaningfully interpreted without a look at the social context in which it is produced. The context will take into consideration many other things which we normally take for granted, such as pauses, gap fillers, mannerisms, interruption, kinesics, facial expression, and other physical acts which contribute to the interpretation of the discourse.

### **3.2 What is Discourse Analysis?**

The term Discourse Analysis refers to an attempt to study language above the sentence or above the clause. It is concerned with the study of linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges and written texts. It involves an investigation of rules governing the production and perception of discourse.

Discourse Analysis is an area of interest to scholars in other disciplines such as literary critics, communication scientists, media scholars, philosophers, sociologists and anthropologists. It describes different kinds of discourse such as conversations, e.g.: doctor-patient conversation, family conversation, casual conversation, telephone conversation, court room discourse, political interviews, and so forth.

Other forms of discourse studied include: the Internet discourse, SMS text messages, newspaper reports, service-encounter, market discourse, talk shows, commercial advertisements, pulpit talk, and so forth.

The study of language in relation to the context in which it is used was greatly influenced by Bronislaw Malinowski, an anthropologist. He realized that the description of the language of a people is not complete without the cultural history behind the participants and the practices of their culture.

The modern approach to Discourse Analysis took its root in the work of M.A.K. Halliday and other scholars. The first attempt to study the structure of discourse from linguistic point of view was the work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1976). These scholars studied the organization of classroom discourse and published their findings in a book titled: *Towards an Analysis of Discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils*.

Earlier before Sinclair and Coulthard, sociologists and anthropologists have shown some interest in conversation. Scholars such as Graffinkel (1967), Sacks, Schegloff and Jeffersons (1974) examined the structure of talk and looked at such issues as turn taking in discourse, opening and closing in discourse, topic management, overlaps in conversation, and so forth.

### **3.3 Interactive and Non-interactive Discourse**

An interactive discourse is a discourse in which two or more people share ideas, taking turns and focusing on one or more topics, e.g., conversation. In an interactive discourse, there is cooperation between the interlocutors to ensure that the discourse is successful. In most cases, the interlocutors share a common cultural context; therefore, some contextual cues aid the interpretation of the discourse.

A non-interactive discourse on the other hand, has as its major characteristic, the domination by a speaker, who is constrained by the situation to control the discourse by determining who speaks, when they speak, and how they speak. Examples of non-interactive discourse are highly institutionalized discourses, such as public lecture, sermon, speech making, etc.

### **3.4 Discourse Structure**

The Birmingham School sees discourse as a level above the sentence. Using the classroom discourse, Sinclair and Coulthard (1976) divided

discourse into a five-unit scale called the discourse rank scale. The units are: Lesson, Transaction, Exchange, Move and Act.

Lesson occupies the highest rank in the scale and it refers to everything that takes place in the classroom from the point the teacher enters and the time he leaves. Transaction is the basic unit of interaction, which consists of minimal contributions made by two participants in the discourse. An exchange is a dialogue or discussion. It is one of the fundamental units that realise social interaction. The structure of an exchange is IRF (where I = Initiation, R = Response, and F = Feedback). The teacher initiates the discourse, the pupil gives the response and the teacher gives the feedback, eg;

T (I): What is a noun?

P (R): A noun is the name of a person, animal, place or thing

T (F) Correct

Move is a single minimal contribution of a speaker at once. It consists of one or more acts. Act is the smallest unit in the discourse stratum. It has no structure except one goes below the level of discourse. Sinclair and Coulthard identify several classes of act used in discourse.

### **3.5 Discourse Features**

Scholars have identified different features of discourse. Some of them, which will be discussed in this section are: turn taking, overlaps, adjacency pairs, and insertion sequences.

#### **3.5.1 Turn Taking**

Turn taking simply refers to the negotiation of the floor by the participants in a discourse. In conversations, speakers take turns. At any given moment, the turn that is in progress will typically belong to a single speaker. Participants in a conversation will not usually talk all at once. Conversely, there will not usually be stretches of time in which no one talks at all. This is not to say that simultaneous speech and silence never occur in conversations – they do. But when they occur, they are always treated as problems, which need to be ‘repaired’.

Sacks and Schegloff (1974) observe that turn taking system provides a basic framework for the organization of interaction, since it allows participants to alternate the floor, so talk is not uncoordinated.

Speakers are aware that a turn consists of one or more (but not fewer) “turn construction units” (grammatical entities like a complete clause or sentence). Turn construction unit may be delineated by intonation, stress

or pause rather than grammar. Participants can use their knowledge of possible types of unit to project the end-point of the turn currently in progress. At the end of the turn or construction unit, is the “turn transition relevance place” (a point at which speaker- change may occur. To determine the end of a turn, the speaker needs to note a lot of things, such as:

- the content of what is said
- the prosodic structure of the speech
- the grammatical structure of the speech
- aspects of non verbal behaviour, such as gaze direction, etc.

When the turn transition relevance place is reached, what happens is not just a random, free for all situation. There is an ordered set of rules for the allocation of the next turn. Below are the possible options:

- the current speaker selects the next speaker
- the next speaker self-selects
- the current speaker may (but does not have to) continue

Turn allocation mechanism involves the current speaker doing any of the following:

- asking the next speaker a question
- naming the next speaker
- aligning the body or gaze so that the speaker is seen to be addressing a specific person at the end of his conversation.

### **3.5.2 Overlaps**

Overlaps are simultaneous speech. Overlaps result from the speaker’s failure to project the end of the last speaker’s turn with complete accuracy. One kind of overlap is the one in which the new speaker comes in at the point where they think the last speaker will finish. This is regarded as unintended. The other type is the one in which the new speaker may start to speak at the point in the last speaker’s utterance. This is regarded as interruption, which is intended.

An overlap may not necessarily be in form of speech. The source may also be other things such as the ringing of a phone, a knock on the door, a sudden loud bang or sound, and so forth.

### **3.5.3 Adjacency Pairs**

Most conversations, especially between two participants are coordinated in such a way that what the last speaker says constrains what the next

speaker will meaningfully say. Thus, a question requests an answer, a greeting requests a greeting, an offer requests an acceptance or a rejection and so forth. Spoken interactions are typically structured around pairs of adjacent utterances (utterances that occur one after the other). However the pairs of utterances may be separated, by some elements as we can see in the conversation below:

- A: What is your name?  
B: Why do you want to know?  
A: I just like you and want to be your friend.  
B: Anyway I am Sandra.

In the conversation above, the question asked by A did not elicit an answer until B was sure of A's intention. So B's utterance rather than be an answer, was also a question, which A had to answer before B's real response finally came. The embedded sequences of question and answer within the original pair are called **insertion sequences**.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Study the following interactions and bring out the salient discourse features in them:

- (a) doctor-patient interaction
- (b) preacher-congregation interaction
- (c) buyer seller interaction in an open market

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The study of Discourse Analysis points to the fact that language use is not socially unstructured. It shows clearly that people involved in naturally-occurring discourse are aware of some rules that guide their interaction. They know when to speak and when not to. Their speech is not always smooth as there are certain paralinguistic and non-linguistic factors that help to shape what they say.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this Unit, we have examined Discourse Analysis, an offshoot of Sociolinguistics, which is the study of naturally occurring discourse (talk or writing). The Unit is an exploration of the nature of Discourse Analysis, its features and the structure.



## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is Discourse Analysis?
2. Differentiate between interactive and non-interactive discourse.
3. How does a participant recognize his/her turn in a conversation?
4. Explain the term 'adjacency pairs'.
5. Explain the discourse structure using the discourse rankscale proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard.
6. Collect and record your own examples of a Nigerian language performing different functions.

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## UNIT 2 CODE SWITCHING, INTERFERENCE AND BORROWING

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

One major feature of bilingual communities is the ability of bilinguals to alternate codes (languages) in one discourse. An alternation may be a total switch from one code to another or a mixture of two distinct codes in one discourse. This concept is widely known as **code-switching**. Other features of a bilingual speech are **interference** – transfer of elements of a language into another and **borrowing** – the use of items from one language in the utterance of another.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the time you finish studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the concept of code-switching and interference;
- differentiate between the two concepts;
- identify the reasons why people code-switch; and
- discuss the different levels at which interference occurs in the speech of bilinguals.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Code Switching

Code switching refers to the use of two languages simultaneously or interchangeably in a communication. Code switching is an

intersentential phenomenon specific to bilinguals. It involves the use of two or more language codes from one sentence to another. Code switching may be language switch or variety switch. Language switch is a switch from one language to another in one communication, while variety switch is a switch from one variety of language, e.g, a dialect (social, regional) or even a register to another. It is a deliberate act whose motivation is usually clear to the people involved in the discourse.

Code-mixing on the other hand is an intrasentential phenomenon; that is the use of two or more language codes within a sentence. It is also referred to as interlading. Codemixing involves the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes, words, phrases and clauses in the speech of a bilingual. According to Akindele and Adegbite (1999: 37), it is “a situation whereby two languages are used in a single sentence within major and minor constituent boundaries. The term codemixing emphasizes hybridization, and the term code-switching emphasizes movement from one language to another.

Code switching has the following functions:

- (a) Translation: A bilingual speaker who is addressing a mixed bilingual audience who has different levels of competence in the two languages may need to switch from one language to another to reach the audience.
- (b) Tenor: Bilingual speakers switch from one language to another when they consider the participants in the speech event – their age, status, and relationship between them and the speaker.
- (c) Attitude: A speaker’s attitude to what is going on in the speech event determines the extent to which they switch from one language to another.
- (d) Stylistic: A writer may switch from one language to another. This is especially common in creative writing in order to get their message across to bilingual readers.

People code-switch for several other reasons, such as:

- (a) To exclude others or some people from the conversation;
- (b) To mark group identity;
- (c) To serve a linguistic need of providing lexical, phrasal, or sentence filler in an utterance;
- (d) To quote someone;
- (e) To amplify parts of an utterance, etc.`

## 3.2 Interference

Interference is an instance of transfer of elements from one language into another. This is also a feature of bilingualism. This kind of transfer may cut across any level of language – lexical, phonological, syntactic, semantic, etc.

Scholars have identified two basic kinds of transfer – positive and negative transfer. A positive transfer refers to a situation in which the bilingual learner transfers the similar structures and concepts of their mother tongue into the target language (the language being learnt). This is described as positive transfer because it facilitates learning.

Our concern here however is on the other type of transfer, described as negative transfer. This transfer leads to incorrect expressions in the target language. It is called Interference. For interference to occur, there must be two languages which overlap. However, one of the languages is dominant. Interference occurs when the features of the dominant language are transferred to the subordinate or target language. This can occur at any level of language. In the next section, we will quickly discuss the different kinds of interference on the basis of the level of language in which they occur.

### 3.2.1 Syntactic Interference

Let us examine the following utterances by a Yoruba-English bilingual:

- 1 \*My biro fell down from my pocket.
- 2 \*The people they are stingy.
- 3 \*You suppose to know the truth.

These utterances manifest different negative transfers. In the first one, there is the wrong use of the phrasal verb \*fell down from instead of fell off. This is as a result of the translation equivalent in the mind of the speaker (jábó, Yoruba for fall down).

The second sentence is an instance of subject copying. The subject – The people is copied by replacing it with a pronoun they, which is redundant in the context. The utterance is also a translation equivalence of the Yoruba sentence Awon eniyan yen, won ya ahun.

In the third sentence, the word ‘suppose’ is normally preceded by an auxiliary, and in this case, the auxiliary ‘are’. However in Yoruba, the idea is expressed with one word yẹ as in ó yẹ. The correct English expression is ‘you are supposed..’.

### 3.2.2 Lexical Interference

This occurs when speakers semantically extend the meaning of some English words, coin or create new words to express ideas that English do not have expressions for. For instance, the word brother has been semantically extended in Nigerian English to include any body from one's ethnic group. In Nigeria, there are coinages such as go slow, chewing stick, long leg, which are meant to uniquely express concepts that cannot be found in the standard British English, but are realities in Nigeria.

### 3.2.3 Phonological Interference

This occurs in situations where bilinguals lack some sounds in their mother tongue, which are present in English. There is a tendency to simply replace the sound with the one closest to it in the mother tongue. For instance, a Yoruba English bilingual will naturally replace the labio-velar sound as represented in the first sound in think with /t/. It is also likely that a Hausa speaker will substitute the sound /p/, which is absent in their language with /f/, which is the closest to /p/ in the language.

## 3.3 Borrowing

Borrowing in language terms refers to the act of picking words and expression from other languages and using them in a language because the concepts the expressions talk about do not exist in the language we speak. Borrowing is a very common language feature. It is a feature of situations in which speakers of different languages interact. In the course of interaction, words and expressions filter into each of these languages from speakers' usage. When the borrowing is a lexical unit, it is called a loanword. Usually loanwords adjust their external form to the rules of the grammar and phonetics of the receiving language. Neologisms are words that have appeared in a language in connection with new phenomena, new concepts, but which have not yet entered into the active vocabularies of a significant portion of the native speakers of the language.

English has borrowed a lot of words and expressions from other languages in the world. Some of such borrowed words and the languages where they come from are listed below

Afrikaans:	apartheid, commando, slim, trek
Egyptian:	ebony, ivory, paper.
French:	ambulance, diplomat, restaurant
Hebrew:	amen, messiah, hallelujah
Latin:	calendar, data, maximum

German:	dollar, quartz, kindergarten
Greek:	athlete, museum, democracy
Arabic:	alcohol, clibre, zero
Turkish:	yoghurt, tulip, kebab
Russian:	mammoth, vodka, perestroika
Portuguese:	marmalade, flamingo, breeze

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Watch video in any of the local languages in Nigeria and identify the types of interference that manifest in the utterances of the actors.
- ii. Write out 50 borrowed lexical items in your local language.
- iii. Listen to the speech of some bilinguals you know and identify how they code-switch and code-mix.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This Unit examines the common features of languages in contact. We observed that when two or more languages are in contact, they influence one another somehow. Then users of these languages may either start interlading the forms of one language in the other, or they, in the process of learning make faulty generalizations, which leads into error in performance. It may also be the case that they would borrow lexical items and expressions where they lack the appropriate ones for expressing some ideas.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this Unit, we examined three features of languages in contact: code-switching, interference and borrowing. We looked at how these features creep into the language of bilinguals, especially in linguistically bi-/multi-lingual communities.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What is code-switching?
2. Explain the possible types of interference that may occur in a Nigerian speaker's speech.
3. Why do people code-switch?
4. Write out some borrowed English words and the languages from which they were borrowed. Do the same for your language.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## UNIT 3 LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Linguistic Dispersal
  - 3.2 Linguistic Power
  - 3.3 Linguistic Imperialism
  - 3.4 English Linguistic Imperialism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Language contact is a national social phenomenon. Most languages at one time or the other have been influenced by contact. A group of speakers of a language may migrate from their immediate environment for various reasons, which may include war, famine, search for better economic fortune, and so forth. The result of this migration is language contact.

Language contact may result in different things, depending on the extent of the contact. Some of the likely results of language contact are:

- (a) lexical borrowing, i.e.: one or the two languages borrowing lexical items;
- (b) evolution of a mixed language, combining the features of the two languages;
- (c) language displacement, i.e.: one of the languages, which is more powerful, displacing the other.

The latter is sometimes referred to as **linguistic imperialism**. In the process of language contact, speakers assign different values to the languages involved. The language that is rated higher than the other, probably due to the advantage of having more educated people may soon dominate the one rated lower. The result may be the total relegation of the lower language to non-prominent domains of discourse or the total extinction of the language with time.

In this Unit, we shall be discussing the concept of linguistic imperialism. First, we shall look at how languages disperse and how some languages



come to acquire power and prestige over the others and how this hegemony leads to linguistic imperialism.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the time you finish studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain how languages disperse;
- discuss the idea of language and power;
- identify the factors that lead to linguistic dominance; and
- explain English linguistic imperialism.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Linguistic Dispersal**

Linguistic dispersal is the spread of a language as a result of the movement of its speakers to different parts of the world. A group of speakers of a particular language may move from their original place to another place for different reasons – war, famine or pestilence, search for better economic fortune, and so forth. The survival of their language in the new community will be determined by the strength of the language in terms of what it has to offer the people of the community. If the community has a dominant language, which has been established as a lingua franca, it may be difficult for the new language to gain prominence. The languages of the colonial masters gained prominence over the local languages in the colonies because they had already been codified and standardized, while the local languages were not.

Many of the languages in the world have dispersed far beyond their immediate community of original speakers. English language is one of the most dispersed languages in the world. It spread mainly through colonialism. But in the modern times, English is being further dispersed through technology. French also spread through colonialism. Arabic spread through the religion of Islam, but unlike English, its use in most of the places it spreads to is limited to the domains of religion. For instance, in Nigeria, Arabic is popularly used in the context of Islamic religion.

### **3.2 Linguistic Power**

A language is said to have linguistic power when it is given legal status by reinforcing its role and status in the society. In any multilingual society, languages are naturally assigned roles by the speakers. A language may be assigned a higher role because speakers have a feeling that it has some things to offer which other languages do not. Usually,

whatever the language has to offer must be a thing that will unite the speakers of the different languages and help to advance the society, for instance, education, religion, and so forth. English has linguistic power in virtually all the former British colonies in Africa and Asia, because apart from being the language of education, it is the language that unites the speakers of the different languages in the linguistically heterogeneous societies of the former colonies. It also connects the countries to the other parts of English-speaking world.

### **3.3 Linguistic Imperialism**

Linguistic Imperialism is the dominance asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between a language and other languages. Phillipson (2003) applies this concept to English, which is no doubt an international language because it is not only established in most countries of the world, it continues to maintain its current dominance, even in the post-colonial contexts like Nigeria, India, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Ghana, and so forth.

The origin of linguistic imperialism is colonialism. During the colonial period, between 1500 and 1900, the Europeans exercised economic and political control over some areas in North and South America, Africa and Asia. The major purposes of colonialism include economic exploitation of the colony's natural resources, creation of new markets for the coloniser, and extension of the colonizer's way of life beyond its national borders. Colonial masters send settlers to populate the areas and take control of governments. The first colonies were established in the Western Hemisphere by the Spanish and Portuguese in the 15th–16th century. The Dutch colonised Indonesia in the 16th century, and Britain colonised North America and India in the 17th–18th century. Later British settlers colonised Australia and New Zealand.

The colonisation of Africa only began in earnest in the 1880s, but by 1900 virtually the entire continent was controlled by Europe. The colonial era ended gradually after World War II. Though we still have a few areas governed as colonies in contemporary times, they are mainly small islands in the Pacific.

Linguistic imperialism is the after effect of colonization, since part of the policy of colonisation is to merge people of different culture and geographical areas together for easy administration. It then follows that after the end of colonialism, these nations had no choice than to pick the languages of their former colonial rulers, since none of the indigenous languages can perform the function of uniting the people.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Write an argument for or against Linguistic Imperialism in Africa.
- ii. Identify instances of Linguistic imperialism of a local language over the other within Nigeria and other African countries.

### 3.4 English Linguistic Imperialism

When discussing linguistic imperialism, English is one of the languages usually in focus. This is not surprising if one looks at the way the language is spreading all over the world in contemporary times.

Phillipson's (2003) theory of English linguistic Imperialism provides a powerful critique on the historical spread of English as an international language and how it continues to maintain its current dominance particularly in postcolonial contexts in places like Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda, Zimbabwe, etc. English is also spreading even in "neo-colonial" contexts such as continental Europe.

One of the central themes of Phillipson's theory is the series of complex hegemonic processes which, he asserts, continue to sustain the pre-eminence of English in the world today. According to Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia, in his book, he analyzes the British Council's use of rhetoric to promote English. He also discusses some of the key underlying tenets of English applied linguistics and English language teaching methodology, such as:

- English is best taught monolingually ("the monolingual fallacy")
- the ideal teacher is a native speaker ("the native speaker fallacy")
- the earlier English is taught, the better the results ("the early start fallacy")
- the more English is thought, the better the results ("the maximum exposure fallacy")
- if other languages are used much, standards of English will drop ("the subtractive fallacy")

According to Phillipson the organizations that promote English (like the British Council, the IMF and the World Bank) or single individuals, (those who operate English language schools, for instance) use three types of argument:

- English intrinsic arguments describe the language as God-given, rich, noble and interesting. These arguments usually assert what English is and other languages are not.
- English extrinsic arguments point out that English is well established: there are trained teachers and a multitude of teaching

material. There are also abundant immaterial resources like knowledge of the language

- English functional arguments emphasise the usefulness of English as a gateway to the world.

Other arguments for English are:

- Its economic-reproductive function: it enables people to operate technology.
- Its ideological function: it stands for modernity.
- It is a symbol for material advance and efficiency.

Phillipson also identifies what he calls **linguicism** the processes by which endangered languages become extinct or lose their local eminence as a direct result of the rising and competing prominence of English in disparate global contexts.

The increasing economic and political power of the English-speaking nations is also aiding the spread of English across the globe. There is no doubt that for some time to come, English will remain a global language, which as some fear will increasingly lead to the diminishing power of other languages. There is particularly a great fear for indigenous languages in the former colonies, which are gradually becoming extinct as a result of the growing popularity of English as the dominant medium of expression.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Linguistic Imperialism is a concept that emerged from the concern of people about the way some languages, due to their overbearing influence are suppressing the others. Linguistic Imperialism started with colonialism and still continues till date. It is an expression of power by the speakers of a language that has economic and political influence over the speakers of other languages that lack these. English is always a language of reference in the discussion of Linguistic imperialism. This is due to its spread beyond its immediate domain in the colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial era.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This Unit focuses on the discussion of Linguistic Imperialism, a notion that expresses a concern about the way some languages are dominating others in the world due to their influence. The starting point of Linguistic Imperialism is linguistic dispersal, a situation in which a language leaves its immediate domain as a result of the migration of the original speakers. Such a language may end up overshadowing another

language if its speakers have some economic and political power. The overall effect, if the other languages possess less power, is for the language of influence to become the exclusive language in most domains of usage.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Explain the term ‘linguistic imperialism’.
2. Is English really dominating other languages in the world? Explain.
3. What is linguistic power? How do languages or their speakers acquire power over other languages?
4. Explain the process of language dispersal.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 4      SOCIOLINGUISTIC SITUATION OF NIGERIA**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 A Brief History of Nigerian English
  - 3.2 Multilingualism in Nigeria
  - 3.3 Nigerian English
  - 3.4 Language in Education
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit is an overview of the sociolinguistic situation in Nigeria. It is used to further drive home some of the important points that were made in Unit Fourteen on Bilingualism. Nigeria is a linguistically complex nation with several languages. In this Unit, we shall be seeing how the country manages the linguistically complex situation. We shall also examine the concept of Nigerian English, the localized variety of English. Also, we shall be seeing the role of language in education in Nigeria

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of your study of this Unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the extensively multilingual nature of nigeria;
- explain the concept of nigerian english;
- describe the features of nigerian english; and
- discuss the role of language in education in nigeria.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 A Brief History of Nigerian 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 on. The first state school was in fact founded in 1899 as a result of pressure from Muslims in Lagos who had no access to missionary schools and felt they were at a disadvantage.

### **3.2 Multilingualism in Nigeria**

Nigeria is a nation of about 140 million people. The country is made up of people from different ethnic groups, which speak different languages. According to Ethnologue.com, the number of languages in Nigeria is 510. Among these languages, 3 are known to have very large numbers of speakers. These three languages are located in three of the geo-political zones of the nation – Hausa in the North, Igbo in the East and Yoruba in the West. These languages, because of their widespread use as lingua franca in these regions, are tagged as regional languages. There are several other languages that have appreciable number of speakers in their domains of operation. They are Edo, Urhobo, in the mid- western area, Igala, Idoma, Tiv in the Middle Belt, Anang, Ibibio, Efik, Ijaw and Kalabari in the South-south, and Kanuri and Ffulde in the North East. There are several other hundreds of languages spread across the nation.

The language situation is so complex that in some states, there are several competing languages, and there is hardly a language that

commands a majority of speakers. Such states include Edo, Kwara, Niger, and so forth. However, some states have a particular language that is dominant, eg: Osun State (where Yoruba is the dominant language, Kano State (where Hausa is the dominant language; Abia, Imo, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu (where Igbo is the predominant language).

In some of the coastal states, namely Delta, Rivers and Bayelsa states, a variety of English generally referred to as the Nigerian Pidgin English is commonly used as lingua franca because of the linguistic heterogeneous nature of the areas. This variety of English first emerged as trade language between the early residents of these communities and the British traders, but it later became widely accepted as a form of communication among the people of different cultures. This form of English is also fast becoming a Creole as it is now acquiring a group of native speakers. The variety is also gaining wide acceptance in the nation as it is fast becoming one of the means of communicating across different cultures. The government also seems to have embraced it, as some national agencies now see it as a veritable tool for jingles on radios and televisions.

Nigeria is a creation of the British colonial rulers. The country Nigeria was created for easy economic and political management. English, the language of the colonial master became the language of administration and later the official language. Though the colonial rulers encouraged the development of the local languages, English inevitably became the language of unity, due to the complex linguistic situation. To attain any appreciable level of education, English became a necessary language. It was not only taught in the classroom, it was also the language of interaction for official purposes.

By the time the colonial masters left after independence, the new government adopted their policy and English became the country's national and official language. English has become so much a part of an average Nigerian's experience that even the people who have little or no education use a variety of the language.

### **3.3 Nigerian English**

Nigerian English is a variety of English used in Nigeria to express the unique Nigerian experience. The standard British English has failed to express the country's cultural artifact, so like any other language, Nigerian English has emerged to express the world-view of the speakers. In Nigeria today, there are different varieties of English, which correspond with the level of education of the speaker. At the topmost end of the scale is the standard or educated Nigerian English, which is



commonly spoken by the elite. At the lowest rung of the scale is the Nigerian Pidgin English, which is common among the people with little or no education, though highly educated Nigerians sometimes also use this variety in order to ensure intelligibility. Some scholars such as Jowitt (1991), Dadzie and Awonusi (2004), Adegbiya (2004) have identified some features of Nigerian English. Some of them are discussed below:

**Category Shift:** reclassification of noun/adjective/adverb as verb, e.g.:

- 1 Horn before overtaking!
- 2 Off the light!
- 3 I was not chanced/opportuned to come.

**Reclassification of countable nouns as uncountable:** give chance, take bribe, make mistake

**Progressive in Stative Verbs:**

- 1 I am seeing/hearing/smelling.
- 2 I am not having much money.
- 3 Let me be going.

**Object Patterns:**

- 3.1 He allowed them go.
- 3.2 She made him to work hard.
- 3.3 The child refused going to bed.

**Prepositional and Non-Prepositional Verbs:**

1. You should dispose your car.
2. Why did you not reply my letter?
3. The library comprises of many sections.
4. They are demanding for money.
5. He emphasized on the importance of rest

**Indiscriminate Use of Infinitive/Basic Form:**

1. Yesterday they go to your office.
2. She cook delicious peppersoup.

**Double marking:**

1. He did not went.
2. Did she wanted him?

### **Wrong Formation of Parts of Irregular Verbs:**

- 3 The car hitted his car
- 4 They splitted the money into two
- 5 Have you grinded the pepper?

**Spelling Errors** (faulty inflexions due to wrong analogy): dinning, strength, maintainance

### **Wrong use of prepositions:**

- 3.1 at: at my old age
- 3.2 as at now
- 3.3 I left Lagos to Ibadan
- 3.4 Nobody knows the answer, unless myself
- 3.5 You cannot receive the money except you show your I.D. card

### **Object Copying in Relative Clauses:**

The car which he bought it last year is already giving trouble.

### **Relative and Possessive Sequence:**

I know the man who his father died.

### **Wrong ordering**

this our town

### **Loan Words**

**Food:** akara (Yoruba: small deep-fried bean balls), buka (Hausa: cheap eating-place), ogbono (Igbo: soup based on the seed of the Williamson tree), ogogoro, kai-kai etc. (various languages: local gin)

**Dress:** agbada (Yoruba: large gown worn by men, often embroidered at the neck and cuffs and with flowing sleeves that can be hitched over the shoulders), danshiki (Hausa: gown with wide armpits reaching to the knees)

**Forms of Address and Titles:** alhaji (Hausa: Muslim who has been to Mecca), oba (Yoruba: primarily a specific title, often used loosely to refer to any traditional ruler), obi, eze (Igbo: specific titles), oga (Yoruba: big man, master, fairly general in the South), baba (Hausa, Yoruba: father, old man, fairly general in the West and North)

**Traditional Religion:** babalawo (Yoruba: diviner), Ifa (Yoruba: oracle), chi (Igbo: personal god)

**Interjections, Discourse Particles:** a-a! (Yoruba: strong surprise, disbelief), ... abi? (Yoruba: isn't it?), kai, chei (Hausa, Igbo: strong surprise), ooo! (various languages: yes)

**Source:** David Jowitt. *Nigerian English Usage: An Introduction*. Ikeja: Longman Nigeria, 1991.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Observe and record the speech of some Nigerian English speakers in different domains of interactions. Discuss the major features of the language
- ii. Write out 10 instances of the following you have noticed in the utterances of Nigerian English speakers:
  - (a) category shift
  - (b) spelling error
  - (c) wrong use of prepositions

### **3.3 Language in Education**

The major language for education in Nigeria is English. Though in the National Policy on Education, it was stated that the language of immediate environment be used for educating the child in the early years of education, this is not practiced in reality. Most children still study in their early years in English, especially with the fact that private schools have taken over the early childhood education in Nigeria. The few government owned schools are not considered good enough by most Nigerians since their running by the government has not been efficient. The school year is not run smoothly due to labour and industrial problems between the teachers and their government employers. The attitude of an average Nigerian to the idea of early childhood education in the mother tongue is completely negative, because there is the general fear that the children trained under this system may not be good speakers of English.

The National policy on education published first published in 1977 and revised in 1981, 1998, and 2004 states the following:

- (a) in primary School, which lasts six years, each child must study two languages, namely:

- (b) (i) his mother-tongue (if available for study) or an indigenous language of wider communication in his area of domicile, and (ii) English language;
- (c) in Junior Secondary School (JSS), which is of three years' duration, the child must study three languages, viz: (i) his mother-tongue (if available for study) or an indigenous language of wider communication in his area of domicile, (ii) English language, and (iii) just any one of the three major indigenous language in the country, namely, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, provided the Language chosen is distinct from the child's mother-tongue;
- (d) in Senior Secondary School (SSS), which also lasts three years, the child must study two languages, viz: (i) an indigenous language, and (ii) English language.

This policy has not worked because people generally do not believe in it. The minority language speakers also resist it as they see it as a way of de-emphasizing the importance of their languages.

The government also backs up these policies with statements in the constitution by stating the educational objectives of the Nigerian state policy. The subsection in question, viz: sub-section 19(4), says simply that

"Government shall encourage the learning of indigenous languages."

Thus, it sanctions the policy requiring the teaching at the Primary and Junior Secondary School levels of the child's mother tongue or, in the alternative, some indigenous language of wider communication in his place of domicile.

English is taught as a school subject and it is compulsory for every student from the primary to the tertiary level. A credit pass in English is a compulsory requirement for candidates to enter any higher institution. It is also a compulsory requirement taken in the first year toward from higher institutions in the country.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The language situation in Nigeria is no doubt a complex one. Nigeria is a country with a population of about 140 million people and estimated 510 languages. The language policy of the country has adopted English as the national-official language, while some of the local languages are given roles in education in the early years. Nigerians are also encouraged to learn the indigenous languages. It is however clear that in

spite of the stipulations in the Nigerian Constitution and the National Policy on Education, English is still the dominant language in the various domains of the Nigerian discourse. It is the language of the media, politics, official business, and even in some homes it is the language of conversation.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this Unit, we have examined the sociolinguistic situation in Nigeria. We have been able to identify the emergence of English in Nigeria, multilingualism in Nigeria, Nigerian English and its features, and language in education in Nigeria.

## 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. How did English get to Nigeria?
2. Explain the role of English in education in Nigeria.
3. Discuss some features of Nigerian English.
4. Write an essay on 'Multilingualism in Nigeria'.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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# **UNIT 5    SOCIOLINGUISTICS        AND        OTHER DISCIPLINES**

## **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Sociolinguistics and Sociology
  - 3.2 Sociolinguistics and Psychology
  - 3.3 Sociolinguistics and Anthropology
  - 3.4 Sociolinguistics and Education
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assessment
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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this Unit, you will be taken through how Sociolinguistics relates to other disciplines, which study human behaviour in relation to the society. It has been established that language is a form of behaviour. Thus, every discipline that has to do with human behaviour in the society shares some things in common with Sociolinguistics. However, we have identified four disciplines that are closely related to Sociolinguistics. We shall examine the extent of the relationships and the points of divergences. The disciplines we shall be examining are Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology and Education.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of your study of this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the major concerns of sociolinguistics;
- discuss how sociolinguistics relates to other allied disciplines discussed in the unit; and
- identify the points of divergence between sociolinguistics and the disciplines discussed in this unit.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Sociolinguistics and Sociology**

Sociolinguistics has a lot in common with Sociology. Sociology according to Giddens (1989) “is the study of human social life, groups

and societies. It is a dazzling and compelling enterprise, having as its subject matter our own behaviour as social beings. The scope of sociology is extremely wide, ranging from the analysis of passing encounters between individuals in the street up to the investigation of world-wide social processes". Sociolinguistics, on the other hand, is the study of human language but from the point of view of its impact on social life in a given society. Sociolinguists attempt to isolate the linguistic features used in particular situations that mark the various social relationships among the participants and the significant elements of the situation. Factors influencing the choice of sounds, grammatical elements, and vocabulary may include age, gender, education, ethnic identity, occupation, and peer-group identification. So, the meeting point is the focus on the human institution and how what humans do in the society, and how the society constrains human behaviour.

To the end that Sociolinguistics and Sociology study the same phenomenon, they also have the same approach to their study. The two disciplines often rely on quantitative and qualitative methods of social research to describe patterns in social relationships. Quantitative methods include the use of statistics, while qualitative methods involve the use of focus group interviews, group discussions and ethnographic methods. All these allow for a better understanding of social processes.

One strong link between Sociolinguistics and Sociology is Ethnomethodology, a sociological discipline which focuses on the ways in which people make sense of their world, display this understanding to others, and produce the mutually shared social order in which they live. The term was initially coined by Harold Grafinkel to describe the methods by which the social order is produced and shared. The approach of Ethnomethodologists just like Sociologists is field methods, which makes the researcher to conduct his/her research by being a participant observer in the community he/she is investigating. This is also used in Sociolinguistic research.

The results of sociolinguistic and sociological research aid educators, lawmakers, administrators, and others interested in resolving social problems and formulating public policy.

### **3.2 Sociolinguistics and Psychology**

Psychology, just like Sociology, can be said to belong to the Human or Social Sciences. It is the scientific study of human and animal behaviour and mental processes. It relates to Sociolinguistics in the sense that it is concerned with the study of human behaviour – particularly with reference to the human mind. Language takes its source from the mind, because it is what the mind perceives that finally comes out as language



(spoken, written or gesture). Psychology is however different from Sociolinguistics because it also studies animal behaviour in addition to that of man. Sociolinguistics is purely concerned with human behaviour as they use language in the society.

There is an aspect of Psychology that is concerned with human behaviour and that is Social Psychology. Social Psychology is the science that studies individual beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in settings where other people are present. So the focus in Social Psychology is the individual within the group, rather than the individual in isolation. Sociolinguistics may study both the speech of an individual in the society and that of a group of individuals also in the society.

Just like other social sciences, the method of inquiry is scientific and the data may be qualitative or quantitative. The goal of Psychology is similar to that of Sociolinguistics. They both study human behaviour with a view to be able to explain why humans behave the way they do. To this extent, any finding from these two disciplines can be relevant for public policy makers.

### **3.3 Sociolinguistics and Anthropology**

Sociolinguistics equally shares something in common with Anthropology—the study of the races, physical and mental characteristics, distribution, customs, social relationships, etc. of humankind, its study is often restricted to the institutions, myths, etc. of primitive peoples.

Anthropology is closely related to Sociology because it also studies aspects of human life (customs, beliefs, social relations, myths, etc), which govern their behaviour.

Two fields have grown out of the close relationship between Linguistics and Anthropology—**Anthropological Linguistics**, which is the study of the relationship between language and culture. In the United States this close relationship between Anthropology and Linguistics developed as a result of research by anthropologists into the American Indian culture and language. This discipline strongly overlaps, but is somehow different from **Linguistic Anthropology**, which is the branch of anthropology that studies humans through the languages that they use.

### **3.4 Sociolinguistics and Education**

Sociolinguistics also shares a lot in common with Education in the area of language learning, especially, when language is learnt formally in schools. This therefore links language with schooling. Some of the areas

of concern of sociolinguists in Education are: the role of mother tongue in education, how attitudes of the learners affect their learning in the language classroom, and so forth. Sociolinguists play significant roles in the designing of curriculum on languages and policy on language in education, especially in bilingual/multilingual educational setting. Since education is an integral aspect of human experience, and an agent of development of humans, the sociolinguist will naturally be interested in it.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Arrange for a discussion with students studying Sociology and Anthropology, Psychology, and Education. Discuss with them and find out how language is related with their disciplines. Document your observations and findings.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Sociolinguistics is a discipline that has a lot to do with other disciplines that concentrates on studying human behaviour in the society. The inter-relationships between these disciplines have been clearly shown in this Unit.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this Unit, we examined how Sociolinguistics is related to other disciplines in terms of the object of their study – the human social life. Specifically we looked at how Sociolinguistics relates with Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology and Education. Due to these relationships, some new disciplines have emerged.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. How does Sociolinguistics relate with Sociology?
2. What is the difference between Anthropological Linguistics and Linguistic Anthropology?
3. Discuss the aspects of Sociolinguistics that relate to Education.

### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Alatis, J.E. (1985). *Perspectives on bilingualism and bilingual education*. Georgetown University Press.

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Coulmas, F. (1998) (Ed.) *The Handbook on Sociolinguistics*. Blackwell Publishers.