

**LINGUISTIC CREATIVITY: THE STUDY OF THE INNOVATIVE LINGUISTICS AND
TEXTUAL STRATEGIES IN THE NIGERIA ACADEMIC DISCOURSE.**

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ABSTRACT

In any geographical contact zone, where the diverse languages and cultures intersect, there would inevitably be linguistic and cultural integration and assimilation. This is the situation with the English expressions in Nigeria where important social-cultural habits and traits are expressed in a foreign Language. Based exclusively on the data collected from 'Purple Hibiscus' by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and 'The secret lives of Baba Seyi's wives' by Lola Soneyin, this study therefore is an attempt to examine how the authors appropriated and reconstituted the English Language to embody the energies of their respective cultural sensibilities. Secondly, the study equally tries to examine those innovative linguistic and textual strategies used by these writers to bear the burden of their cultural experiences or to convey in a language that is not their own the spirit that is their own. The theoretical frameworks that piloted this study are the Giles and Coupland's "Language Accommodation Theory" and John Grunpez's 'Theory of Speech community'. These theories presented a systematic framework for the categorization of the mutual influence and mixing that takes place when different languages and cultures come in contact. This study is an explanatory research design. This method of analysis involved studying the literary texts, examining the use of the nativized variety of English in them, extracting excerpts from the literary texts and describing/analysing them. The nativized variety was extracted and analysed to establish if they have aesthetic values they add to these literary texts in terms of the functions of language. The study finds out that the English language was indigenized by creative writers to perform culture specific functions. The study equally observed that the creative writers use of English is no doubt seen as an acceptable departure from the rules in diction or from what is generally regarded as the standard but nonetheless, it possesses mutual intelligibility and acceptability even at international level. The discourse is concluded from the perspective of the local languages, for not only has English influenced the languages with which it has come into contact around the world with, but English itself has been and continues to be influenced by other languages and this influence is responsible for the new forms of English mushrooming all over the globe. The study recommends that this variety be developed, standardized and identified as Nigerian because it has been used by some writers to win international awards.

INTRODUCTION

The worldwide dissemination of the English language and the western culture has diametrically shaped the identity, language and culture of the non-western nations. In Nigeria, the English language has fully entrenched itself as a permanent member of the nation's linguistic family. Since its adoption as the official linguistic medium in the country, its influence has continued to spread, in almost every sphere of the nation's life. There is no doubt that wherever two or more than two languages and cultures interface, there would inevitably be linguistic and cultural hybridity. In view of this, the researcher has observed that the English Language use in Nigeria is however different from the variety used as a yardstick for standard English, but it is nonetheless, intelligible and not in any way inferior to any other variety by linguistic standard. Nigeria, indisputably, one of the largest populations of speakers of English as a second language in the world now uses the language with some measures of dexterity to instill their distinctive cultural, national and ideological traditions in their academic and multiple discourses. For example, notable writers like Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie have won prizes in literature as a result of their literary prowess in the English Language medium. In lieu of this status, it is high time true recognition is accorded the emerging phenomena which has been nativized by the way the language has been and is still constructed and reconstructed to suit the native environment. Creativity as a language feature has greatly influenced the English use in the world and this is also a factor that has helped in giving birth to the Nigerian variety of English. It is this variety that has helped Nigerians especially academics and creative writers to express their world view, their own way.

Although, English as used by Nigerian's may not and cannot be the same as used by the native speakers, but the Nigerian attempt at domesticating the language to suit domestic purposes is no doubt fast becoming a variety.

Funso Akere (2004) defines domestication of English as the transformation of English as alien medium to make it respond to local imageries, figures of speech, sound patterns and the general cultural milieu of the region.

According to Herbert Igboanusi (2002), what is found in creative writing is deliberate but significant stylistic device which arises from the influence of the local language and culture on English. He argued that this phenomenon has spawned what has been categorized as ethnic literary tradition and as such, Nigerian literature today is characterized by linguistic diffusion and cultural diversity. Igboanusi goes on to assert that: there is today, the distinctiveness of Nigerian English writers, which manifest itself in experimentation in language; in recreating distinct discourse in English and in stylistic innovation. The various manifestation of this distinctiveness could be seen in the Nigeria academic environment and in the works of Woke Soyinka, Gabriel Okara, Flora Nwapa, Adichie et cetera.

In the Nigerian novels under study, what has come to be referred to as 'The Achebe Model' has become a standard practice namely: the deployment of supra- linguistic, para -verbal nuances as folktales like proverbs, wise sayings, folk songs and other similar forms of language games and stylistic strategies which emboss Africanity or the sense of place in the novel. Based on excerpts that were randomly selected from the texts under study , the study tries to examine how the authors appropriated and reconstituted the English Language to embody the energies of their respective cultural sensibilities. Secondly, the study equally tries to examine those stylistic devices used by these writers to bear the burden of their cultural experiences or to convey in a language that is not their own the spirit that is their own.

Thirdly the study tries to know how these writers managed to maintain a balance between local color, international intelligibility and acceptability.

Finally, how the deployment of supra-linguistic, para -verbal nuances such as proverbs, wise saying and other forms of language games influence the English language use in Nigeria in their texts through some linguistic processes such as semantic extension, transliteration, translation, interference, Neologism, loan blends.

Statement of problem

It is obvious that when two or more languages come into contact, there is necessarily going to be mutual influences. Most of the works done thus far on these influences on the Nigerian scene have been from the perspective of English and same cannot be said of the native language. Now, the questions become, how do authors appropriate and reconstitute the English Language to embody the energies of their respective cultural sensibilities. What are the stylistic devices used by these writers to bear the burden of their cultural experiences or to convey in a language that is not their own the spirit that is their own. Through some linguistic processes such as transliteration, translation, interference, semantic extension, neologism, loan blends.

Purpose of the study

A great deal has been done on the nativized variety(ies) of the English language (new Englishes) both in written and oral communication. The overall purpose of this study is to examine how cultural nuances affect the English language use in Nigeria.

This research work seems to ascertain how the authors appropriated and reconstituted the English language to embody the energies of their respective cultural sensibilities. It equally explores those stylistic devices used by these writers to bear the burden of their cultural experience or to convey in a language that is not their own the spirit that is their own through some linguistic processes such as transliteration, translation, interference, semantic extension, neologism, loan blends.

Significance of the study

This research makes a significant contribution to knowledge by showcasing the underlying creativity embedded in the nativized variety of English. It creates awareness on the aesthetic value of nativising the English language both in the written and spoken forms of communication and show how it contributes to the creative nature of African writers which leads to a better comprehension and appreciation of literary works.

Conceptual framework

Nativization of English

The nativization of English in a multi ethnic and multi linguistic environment like Nigeria has given rise to the varieties of Nigeria English as affected by mother tongue interference notwithstanding the effort that is being made towards preserving and advancing the standard English. English due to its long stay in Nigeria, has been adopted and appropriated by Nigerians and used as official language and made to fulfill all roles normally reserved for the mother tongue.

Nativization of English is a way of decolonizing the English language. It produces a new form of English that is cooked with an unmistakably distinct African flavor enriched with African culture and terms. It ends up as a new English, still in full communion with its' ancestral home but altered to suit its new surroundings. (Achebe 1963).

According to Pandharipande (1987), the term nativization has been described variously as acculturation, indigenisation or hybridization of a language in a non- native sociocultural context. The term is used to describe the divergence of varieties of a language from a parent source. In the content of English, the term nativization refers to the changes which English has undergone as a result of its contact with various languages in diverse cultural and geographical settings in the outer circle of English which includes South Asia, South East Asia, West Africa etc.

Ekpe Mfon (2009) developed a new version of nativization called glocalisation which means the adaptation of a global outlook to local condition. He asserts that:

English as used in Nigeria has been acculturated, Nigerianized, domesticated, nativized and hybridized to meet the socio cultural needs of the people or what she calls glocalisation, that is the admixture of the local socio-cultural phenomena in a language with that of a widely used language to portray the native world view, social life, culture and religion of its users.

As one of the tools of colonialism, the post colonial African writers view the nativization of English language as an avenue to decolonize his thoughts while striving to write "without chains on his leg, without chains on his mind, without chains in his soul. (Thiong, 1977).

Post colonial writers constructed and reconstructed the English language to suit their purpose and as Achebe adds,..... to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost, with this, the authors linguistic identity is brought to limelight.

Languages in Contact

When languages are in contact situation, it is bound to affect each other, hence, language contact occurs when two or more languages interact. It can occur at language borders as a result of conquest, immigration etc. Most languages have been influenced at one time or another and this has resulted in varying degrees of transfer of features from one language to the other.

A cursory look at history reveals that this phenomenon is not new. Similar occurrences have taken place in the past and their results are still with us. Today the effect of Latin for instance gave birth to the present day Romance language (French, Spanish and Italian) during the renaissance period. Arabic culture gave rise to the various regional dialects in North Africa and the Middle East - Egyptian Arabic, Algerian Arabic and Tunisian Arabic language contact is everywhere; there is no evidence that any language has developed in total isolation from other languages.

Socio-linguistic Outcomes of Languages in Contact.

No language is inferior to another; instead languages complement themselves in every language contact situation. Contact between people that speak different languages can have a wide variety of outcome. A few words may be borrowed or a whole new language may be formed depending on the length and for intensity of contact between the group.

Another type of contact situation involves the use of different languages within the same community by individuals/multi) this leads to a high degree of convergence between the different languages. Some bilingual speakers are able to manipulate the two codes which gave rise to code -switching and code -mixing. Some communities switch codes according to the setting which results in diglossia. One code is used in informal settings while the other is used in formal settings The socio linguistic outcomes of

language contact can be categorically grouped as, Language interference, Bilingualism and Multilingualism, Diglossia, Code -Switching and Code-Mixing and Linguistic borrowing etc.

A. Language Interference

In the course of learning a new language, learners consciously or unconsciously tend to seek similarities between their native language and the language being learnt.

Language interference could therefore be seen as the transference of elements of one language to another at various levels of linguistic analysis (phonological, morphological, Lexical)

- I. **At phonological level: Rhyme**, stress, intonation and speech sounds from the first language influences the second language. For instance, in Igbo context, there is an absence of schwa sound //, hence Igbo learner of English will substitute //;with /a/ and therefore will pronounce father as /fada/ instead of /fa:a/.
- II. **Grammatical level:** Here, tenses, determiners, articles, use of pronouns, are affected. In a situation where a native language lacks articles, the learner of the Target language will find it difficult to use article.
- III. **Lexical level:** Here, words are borrowed from one language and converted in another.

B. Bilingualism and Multilingualism

When speakers of two or more languages live together in one community, this gives rise to bilingualism or Multilingualism. Bilingualism is simply the ability to speak two languages effectively while Multilingualism is when a speaker speaks three or more languages.

C. Diglossia

In certain speech communities, there is usually one particular kind of standardization where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play (Ferguson 1958). The varieties are termed 'H' variety and the 'L' variety, that is high and low varieties. The high variety is usually the official language used in conducting official affairs in the community while the low variety is usually a vernacular. The high variety is learned through education while the low variety is typically acquired at home.

D. Code - Switching and Code Mixing

Code - switching and code mixing are consequences of language contact and bilingualism. They are language choices available to bilingual/Multilingual individuals. According to John Grumperz (1982) - switching is the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystem.

Code - mixing on the other hand, refers to all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence (Akindele & Adegbike, 2005).

However, some linguists have not been able to differentiate code- switching from code- mixing. Michael Clype (1967) argues that code - switching and code- mixing refer to the same linguistic situation in which the speaker stops using language 'A' and employs language 'B'. It is important to note that code-; switching/inter-sentential switching occurs at sentence boundaries while code-mixing/ intra- sentential switching occurs within the sentence or sentence fragments. Examples (English & Igbo)

- I. A di m very angry - (code mixing).
- ii. I asked her ma o ga – eje ahia. (Code mixing)
- iii. E na apuara. Didn't you see me (code switching)
- iv. Ina ezuzu-ezuzu? Are you stupid (code switching)

E. Linguistic Borrowing.

Borrowing/ loan words is a consequence of language contact between two different speech communities. It's a process whereby speakers adopt words from a parent language into their native language. Borrowing involves mixing the system themselves, because an item is borrowed from one language to become part of the other language.

The English language for example has borrowed extensively from other languages. With the advent of Christianity, many Latin words were borrowed into the English language. Words like priest, angel, pope, temple have Latin origin.

Lexical Improvisation/ Innovation in Nigeria English

In meeting the cultural and communicative needs of the people that speak English in Nigeria, new words are coined daily to express the Nigerian socio- cultural realities. Lexical innovations according to

Udom (2013) are labels that have been used to describe many of the English words that have been nativized in new environment. Innovations are acceptable varieties that are well differentiated from errors. Nigerian English is replete with many linguistic improvisations. Some Lexical items acquire new meanings in Nigeria English. (Semantic extension) while some words acquire meanings different from their meanings in standard English (Semantic shift).

Examples

- A. To take in – pregnancy
- B. Put to bed - give birth
- C. Ghost workers - a non- existent worker
- D. Pollute – fart
- E. Keke napep - Tricycle

These examples and many others were invented to reflect the happenings in Nigeria. They are not usage errors. Examples of semantic Extension in Nigeria English. These words exist in standard English but they have acquired meanings in Nigeria English in addition to the meanings they possess in.

Standard English

- a. Expo
- b. Yellow
- c. Chase
- d. Chairman
- e. boss

Originally, 'expo' is the short form of exposition. But in Nigeria, it represents some forms of examination malpractice. People called 'Yellow fever' are traffic wardens in Nigeria. They represent the traffic section of the Nigerian police force which deals with the enforcement of road traffic rules and regulations.

'Chase' in standard English means to be in pursuit of something or someone especially an animal but in Nigeria, it also means to woo a girl. 'chairman' and 'boss' in Nigeria English means a rich person, someone of a superior status or a mentor.

The above words mean one thing in America/Britain but more than that in Nigeria. The shift in meaning equally represents the situation of things in Nigeria. In summary, language and society are intertwined, the former should not be analysed outside the society that uses it.

Empirical Studies

In 1998, Qiang Hu conducted a research on "the changing tongues of Chinua Achebe: Language as a Developing Theme in Things Fall Apart, 'A man of the People and Anthills of the Savannah'. The study examined the development of three language strategies modes of narrations, English language, pidgin English and African proverbs used by Chinua Achebe. It showed the different functions Achebe assigned to these language strategies were used creatively to effectively and credibly reflect the changing realities of West Africa. The researcher concluded that the author Africanized/decolonized the English language to carry the energies of African experiences.

In 2011, Christopher Anyoku conducted a study entitled "Igbo Rhetoric and the New Nigeria Novel: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 'Purple Hibiscus'. Anyoku believes that Adichie follows the pragmatic example of Achebe, in constructing the Igbo English. Adichie's aesthetic and creativity is seen as one that points the way to the future of literature in Africa. The researcher concludes that in the literary text, English cannot remain pure neither can Igbo, an osmotic interpretation must result in their interaction. This, the resulting product is a most veritable pointer to the currents of globalization at work in contemporary culture and society.

Ebi Yeibo (2011) discussed nativization of English in African literary text: a lexico- semantic study

of transliteration in Gabriel Okara's 'The voice'. The aim of the research was to enhance understanding of the literary texts. The research paper highlighted how an African nativized the English language in order to interpret his socio linguistic environment.

Theoretical framework

The theory in which this research work is based is Giles and Couplands Language Accomodation Theory, formerly called Speech Accomodation theory which was developed by Howard Giles and Nikolas

Coupland(1973). This theory deals with language, context and identity and argues that people adjust their speech to accommodate other interlocutors. It's a process through which interlocutors adjust their diction, accent or other non- verbal behavior according to the speech style of other interlocutors " we tend to accommodate" our speech to the speech of the people we are talking to in the hope that they will like us more for doing so (Hudson 1980) John Grumperz theory of the Speech community arguably is equally an interesting theory to this study. The researcher's interest in this theory is its recognition of the result of two languages or cultures in contact

Summary of literature

The English language is a global language. It is the language of international communication and has spread to places. It is not spoken as a native language. In the new habitation, the researcher observed that it has been heavily influenced by the culture of the people who speak it as a second language. This influence has given birth to different varieties and these varieties are deeply rooted in Nigeria society and culture.

Research Design

The research is an explanatory research design from where the researcher obtained evidence which addressed the questions.

Population of the Study

Some literary texts written in the nativized variety of the English language constitute, the population of the study

Sample and Sampling Technique

The samples for the study are literary texts written by bilingual Nigeria authors namely; Purple Hibiscus (2006), Chimamanda Adichie, The secret lives of Baba seji's wives(2010) Lola Soneyin

Method of Data Collection

Significant excerpt in the literary texts that portray the nativized variety of English formed the data for the study. These excerpt were randomly collected from the instances of nativization of English in the literary text under study

Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis for this study was textual analysis. This method of analysis involved studying the literary text, examining the use of the nativised variety of English in them, extracting excerpt from the literary text and describing/analysing them. The nativized variety was extracted and analysed to establish if they have aesthetic values they add to these literary texts in terms of the functions of language.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Let's examine using data drawn from Adichie's Purple Hibiscus (PH) and The Secret lives of Baba Seyi's wives. Different creative strategies such as: semantic extension, transliteration, interference, loan and lends, lexical infusion leading to code- mixing and code- switching, neologism.

A. Semantic Extension

Semantic extension is the process of making English word acquires extended meaning. It is one of the devices creative writers employ to contextualize the English language. For instance

*Nwunye m, sometimes life begins when marriage ends (83) 'Nwunye m' in SBE means my wife (PH)

*Lunch is ready, 'nne' (29) 'nne' denotes - mother (pH)

*Your 'papa-Nnukwu' is a pagan (89) 'papa nnukwu' means grand father in (SBE) PH

In the above examples, the kingship terms wife, grandfather, mother undergoes what Akintunde Akinyemi (cited in Theodore Anyaeneh 2010) says is a kind of culture linguistic recontextualizations. These aforementioned terms are not used in the Nigeria context as things that are in the English cultural environment. In Nigeria, every elderly man or woman is referred to as father or mother respectively

B. Transliteration

By transliteration here, we mean direct translation of an expression in L1 to L2 such that the structure of L1 is so domineering that the resultant expression in L2 appears strange. Below are some examples from the novels under review.

* Thank you for returning our mouth to the matter at hand my friend (5) (TSLBSW)

The above expression is unlikely in SBE. The equivalent of which is likely to be, Thank you for bringing us back to the matter at hand my friend. What is evident here is that there has been a digression, to which one of the discussant is trying to steer others back on course

*Laughter kills me when I think of it (6) (TSLBSW). The expression laughter kills me in SBE can be paraphrased thus, I laughed hysterically

* Has this woman's head scattered that she now scrubs my mouth (62) (TSLBSW).

This expression is not likely to have an equivalent in SBE to express the real thought. The closest paraphrase will be: is this woman insane that she now argues with me?

Excerpt from (pH) includes

* Are you up?(66)

The expression 'are you up?' which means 'have you woken up' is not what can be understood by people who are used to standard British English. Here, it has been specifically used for the purpose of literature in the novel.

* And with his eyes he said, we can spend time together then (66)

Although, this expression may occur in SBE as a figurative expression which is not the sense in which it is used here, the equivalent of which is likely to be "He clearly said or he unequivocally said."

*Mama was already 'making me' ofe nsala. The SBE is 'preparing ofe nsala' for me.

C. Interference

This is common in any language contact situation as the L1 structures bear heavily on L2. It is heavily used by Nigerian writers as a way of domesticating the English language to carry the weight of their cultural sensibilities in an international language. In (TSLBSW) the following examples demonstrate the phenomenon of interference that occur in the English language in contact with Yoruba Nigeria language.

* My mother despised her; she said the woman had the disease of the eye: everything she sees, she wanted (121).

Here, the disease of the eyes, as used in the novel is for the purpose of literature means 'greed', 'avarice'. This meaning is not hidden from Nigerian users of English as a second language, but may be strange to those used to only standard British English

* Iya Femi picked me up with her eyes and threw me to the floor (55)

The above expression is metaphorical and may not be easily understood by a reader who is not grounded in the writer's first language. It is a direct transfer from the structure of L1. In SBE, the closest rendition is 'Femi's mother despised me'.

* Now you want to remove yourself (56)

The SBE version of this expression is 'now you want to exonerate yourself.

D. Loan Blends

This is a stylistic creative device writers employ to 'situationalize' English. It involves bringing together Lexical items of the indigenous and target languages to form a compound word. The words of the local language lack English equivalent for expressions. Excerpt from (PH) includes:

* Onugbu soup(19)- bitter-leaf soup

* Catholic fada(287)- Roman Catholic ordained priest.

* Ezi butterfly(58)- a specified play ground

* Aro festival (13)- a traditional festival where masquerades display to people's admiration and excitement.

* Ochiri bird(30)- a type of bird.

* A ripe agbogho(99)- agbogho is igbo for maiden or damsel

E. Lexicon Infusion Leading to Code Mixing and Code Switching

Code mixing and code switching are natural outcomes when languages are in contact. These are common features in many Nigerian novels and very evident in the novels used for this study. Adichie and Lola Soneyin's ability to apply different language codes to varying situations in various instances confirms their bilingual nature. In (PH), there are infusion of L1 lexicon :

* Please come and help me biko(16)

* Chinwe wore 'isiwu' that week(58).

* Do you have Panadol, mama? Cramps abia (109)

* You sit here and watch her desecrate the Eucharistic fast, 'maka nnidi'(112)

In (TSLBSW) we have:

* Names of food items

He pulled the stool towards his crotch and proceeded to demolish the mountain of 'amala' morsel by morsel, catching every string of 'ewedu' that dripped down his wrist with his tongue (9) deities. She thought I would die in hospital but 'Eledumare' did not permit it (144)

F. Neologism

This involves the formation of new words and expression. The use of coinages is inevitable in creative writing, especially with regards to the expression of culture - bound Nigerian concepts without corresponding English equivalent. Coinages involves the employment of compounds created by combining two English words. Such coined words usually stand out in creative works. Instances abound in (PH)

Big man (139) wealthy or influential man in Nigeria.

Bush woman (44) an illiterate, local and unsophisticated woman usually brought up in the village.

Fufu (19) cassava flour meal

Walking slick (75) a support stick used for walking by aged men.

Yeye- woman (235) a crazy woman.

Finally, from the analysis of the two texts examined, it is established that Purple Hibiscus and The Secret lives of Baba Seyi's wives are bilingual texts in the sense that they render the social Linguistic features of their L1, in the Target language or L2. Thus, the finding is that a lot socio-cultural and even historical variables affect the English language use in Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

This study finds out that the English language was indigenized by creative writers to perform culture specific functions.

Again, the researcher discovers that in the post colonial texts, therefore, English cannot remain pure neither can natives: an osmotic interpretation must result in their interaction

CONCLUSION

It is obvious from this study that when two or more languages and culture comes into conduct, there is of necessarily, going to be mutual influences. Most of the works done so far on this influence on the African scene has been from the perspective of the local language for not only has English influenced the language with which it has come into conduct around the world, but English itself has been and continues to be influenced by other languages and this influence is responsible for the forms of English mush rooming all over the globe

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the data collected and analyzed, there are preponderance of evidence for the existence of a Nigeria variety of English. This study therefore recommended that this variety should be developed and identified as Nigeria because it has been used by some writers to win international awards.

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