

Review

Migration and culture: Implications on Nigerian languages

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Language is important in the society as man needs it to communicate his ideas and experiences. As culture influences the structure and functions of a group, so also does the language influence the individual interpretation of reality. So, cultural identity can be established through the use of language, and a society is based on the language people speak. Migration from one place to another has a far reaching effect and impact on the language people speak. It could lead to a number of linguistic implications such as language borrowing, language shift, creation of a new language and even language endangerment. Equally, the migration bid to different parts of Nigeria has several implications on Nigerian languages. It engenders varieties of languages spoken in Nigeria, especially the official language (English). It affects the phonological production of several items in the language (English). It has also led to diaglossic use of languages in Nigeria. It also shows that these effects are both positive and negative as it (migration) helps to develop and expand the languages spoken in Nigeria; it equally endangers some of these languages.

Key words: Language, culture, migration, development and endangerment.

INTRODUCTION

Language

Language is an important tool in the society, because man needs it to share his ideas, experiences, emotions, and interact with other people in the society or in his environment. Sapir (1921) states that language is a purely human and non-instructive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols. The primary form of language is the spoken medium; language is used for expression purposes. Thus, there are other forms of communications, the non-verbal communication, which is the use of body language, gesture, signs, and signals to pass on information. Adeyemi (2000) says the Sapir – Whorfian hypothesis (1956) views that language influences our world view, and people view the world from the perspective of their different languages. That is, human beings live in different world views because of the different languages they speak. The language a group speaks can also sharpen and influence their beliefs about the world. Because the vocabularies language can limit one's expression of ideas, thought, emotion and feelings about the environment, hence, it is widely claimed that culture influences the structure and functions of a group and

language in turn influences the individual interpretations of reality. It is observed that there are many instances in which the language reflects on the physical environment. The check of vocabulary in language can limit one's perception about his environment. The types of expression or words that are taboo in a particular language are a reflection of the social values and beliefs of that society. Cultural identity can be established through the use of language, and a society is based on the language people speak.

Culture

The term culture was derived from the Latin word 'cultura', which means cultivated land or cultivation. Culture is a unique aspect of people's life which distinguishes them from others. Webster dictionary defines culture as an integral pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generation. The term culture thus refers to the customary belief, social forms, and material traits of racial, religious or social groups. It also depicts the characteristic features

of everyday life shared by people living in a place and at a given period in time. In addition, it deals with the set beliefs, shared attitude, values goals and practices that characterize an institution or organization. The set of values, conventions or social practices associated with a particular activity or societal characteristics.

The way culture influences our language, is also the way that language influences our culture. The particular language we learn through the process of cultural transmission provides us, at least initially, with a ready-made system of categorizing the world around us and our experience of it. The knowledge of our culture is developed only after we have acquired the language. Language shapes and determines peoples' cultural heritage. For example, in the Yoruba culture and some other indigenous languages in Nigeria, the term father (baba) is not used only for one's male parent, but also for male parent's brother or any male who is of one's father's age group or older than one's male parent. The same goes for the term 'brother', which does not only refer to one's male sibling as in some settings.

THE INFLUENCE OF MIGRATION ON LANGUAGE

The search for food and opportunities has been in existence even before the pre-historical time; man moves from one place to the other in search of food and shelter. One of the major reasons for food search is socio-economic factor. In a region where there is no availability of natural resources, such as good land for cultivation of food, hunting, etc., people living in those areas will tend to move or relocate to a place where the resources are available. For instance, the nomadic in the northern part of Nigeria often move to the southern part of Nigeria for greener pasture. This process is known as "migration". People of different cultures have migrated to most countries of the world with their cultural heritages. Herman (2005: 94) states that one of the causes of language shift is the socio-economic circumstances which comprises of social and economic factors like as migration into other communities, causing economic dependencies, inter-marriage between different social groups because people migrate with their languages, cultures and traditions. In a situation where the migrants are of a minority, they will be influenced by their hosts. In most countries, immigrants are expected to assimilate, to adapt to the norms and cultures of the host country where they reside. On the other hand, when the migrants are of majority, they will influence the hosts with their cultures, languages and customs because when people come into contact with one another there is always a possibility to influence one another, either through their languages, belief systems and customs. People of different geographical locations speak differently because of their socio-cultural and educational backgrounds. In the cause of interaction with the different speakers, they tend to encounter new words,

expressions and pronunciation, and integrate them into their own speech.

In the first three decades after the Second World War, many western European countries experienced large scale migration across their frontiers in search for food, work and better living conditions. In some cases, they took their families with them; others got married from the host country and other ethnic groups. This has really influenced the cultures and languages of the people. The consequence of this is a close contact with other linguistic groups which always result in bilingualism or language shift. Carter (2011) says there was a great influence of immigration on American culture, which resulted in multi-cultural and multi-lingual diversity in that region. He further states that during the twentieth century, there were waves of immigration. Mexican, Cuban Jamaican, West Indian and other Latin Americans and Caribbean immigrants arrived in America in large numbers. More European immigrants arrived after the world wars because of greener pasture there. These entire immigrants came into America with their different cultures and languages which eventually influenced the culture of the American people. Today, there are lots of cultural diversities in the United States of America. He further states that, the immigrants who came from the British Isles after the sixteenth century brought their language and political ideals. The political institutions were influenced by the British institutions and by western culture.

Michelle (2011) states that there has been a notable change to British society as a result of mass migration of individuals from different nations and different cultural groups at different points in time in their history. Immigrants in Britain have often done so because of the political and socio-economic boom in the country. In the cause of migration, these immigrants brought their own cultural beliefs and languages that have influenced the British society. This includes, music, the food they eat, the books, political and religious beliefs.

IMPLICATIONS ON WORLD LANGUAGES

Language borrowing

This is a way in which a language can be influenced by other languages, for example, contemporary borrowing of English words into other languages. So, many languages have borrowed so much that they can hardly be recognized. For instance, Armenian borrowed so many words from Iranian languages. It was at first a branch of the indo-Iranian languages. It was not recognized as an independent branch of the indo-European languages for many decades. There is also the issue of adoption of other language features. Equally, English had a few phrases, adopted from French in which the adjective follows the noun. Examples are: attorney general, court

marital. Also, language shift can also occur as a result of contacts between two or more languages in a way that one replaces the other. This happens when one language has a higher social position.

When language shift occurs, the language that is replaced (substratum) can leave profound impression on the replacing language (superstratum). When people retain the features of the replacing language as they learn the new one and pass these features on to their children, it will lead to the development of a new variety. For example, the Latin came to replace the local language in present day France, during Roman time; it was influenced by Gaulish and Germanic. The distinct pronunciation of the English spoken in Ireland comes partially from the influence of the substratum language of Irish. Outside the Indo-European phylum, Coptic, the last stage of ancient Egyptian, is a substratum of Egyptian Arabic.

Creation of a new language

Language contact can also lead to the development of a new language when people that do not have a common language communicate closely, they may develop a pidgin, which may become a full-fledge Creole, through the process of creolization. For instance, saramaccan, spoken in Suriname, which has vocabulary mainly from Portuguese, English Dutch, but its phonology and even tones which are closer to African language. Language contact may also lead to mutual exchange, although this exchange may be confined to a particular geographical region. For example, in Scotland, the Scots language has been influenced by English, and many Scots terms have been adopted into the regional English dialect.

The search for food has been a significant factor in bringing people of different cultural backgrounds together, which results in the influence of one culture on language. In essence, language, food and culture are the pivotal elements that unite people and distinguish them from other groups in the world.

When this migration takes place, the resultant effect is that some people tend to relinquish the types of foods they have already been used to, their ways of preparing their food; and the manner in which they eat what is prepared. These effects are evident in the lives of people who migrated from one part of their country to another as it is with those who migrate from their country to another. The search for food or means of livelihood can make a monolingual person become a 'sudden' bi/multilingual person. For example, in Nigeria where the official language is English, most people learn the language for economic reasons. That is, they know how important the ability to communicate in English is to their getting a good job. And as such, they are left with no choice but to learn the language. It is just like the case of some people who travel to Germany in search of job or study but made to learn their language (German) first before they can start

working or schooling there. The nomadic Fulani in Nigeria is another very glaring example of how people's language is influenced by the search for food. These people move from one town to another in Nigeria and in some cases, from one region to another. And as they do this, they learn the languages of those places they get to in order to communicate with the people around them. There are some who in Akwa-Ibom State can speak a little of the Ibibio language and those in southwest, Yoruba, and those in the southeast Ibo and so on. This way, such a person's language has been influenced by his or her search for food or means of livelihood. The same goes for a Yoruba/English bilingual who must learn at least a little of French because he or she wants to start trading or buying things to sell from Cotonou (where their official language is French). All these instances are cases where the search for food has influenced the acquisition of more than one language thus promoting bilingualism. Furthermore, a Yoruba corps member posted to a place like the South-South (for example, Delta State) may end up learning how to communicate in pidgin (which is more less the general or lingua franca of that State).

IMPLICATIONS ON ENGLISH IN NIGERIA

A white man that leaves his country for Nigeria as a diplomat may have to learn some of the languages spoken in Nigeria such as Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Fulani, Urhobo, Efik and so on. This migration spirit may lead to language varieties like we have some Yoruba in Togo and Abidjan, speaking different varieties of the Yoruba language; for instance, the Yoruba name 'Adebayo' is 'Adebayor' in another region. This has equally led to proliferation of varieties of English spoken in Nigeria such as Yoruba variety of English, Igbo variety of English, Hausa variety and so on, including the Nigerian English (NE). As people migrate to different parts of Nigeria, the English language, which is the official language, becomes equally impaired phonologically, as there are many phonological deviant usages (errors) among users of English in Nigeria, regardless of the specific features of their L1 (mother tongue). Table 1 shows some examples of deviation from Received Pronunciation (R.P). In Nigeria, it is always the case that the listed words are realised as in Table 1.

Similarly, contrastive stress resulting in grammatical and meaning differences is often flouted for the listed items in Table 2. Deviation from the stress-timed to syllable timed rhythm produces spoken forms which may be quite unintelligible to other users of English. Some examples of the utterances are given thus:

/hiz intəpre'teiʃn əv juð mə'nɪrɪzəm 'izig'zædðdreɪtɪd/

His interpretation of your mannerism is exaggerated.

/dɛə ʌndə'stædɪŋ əv bɑ:bərɪzəm ɪz 'beɪzɪkəli dæ seɪm əzəwz/

Table 1. Examples of deviations.

Word	Received pronunciation (R.P)	Nigerian English pronunciation (N.E.P)
Football	[ˈfʊt:bɒl]	[fu:tb'ol]
Madam	[ˈmædəæm]	[m'da:m]
Maintenance	[ˈmeɪntɪnəns]	[men'tenans]
Category	[ˈkætɪgəri]	[ka'ti:gori]
Tribalism	[ˈtraɪbəlɪzəm]	[tai'ba:lizim]
Mechanism	[ˈmekənɪzəm]	[me'ka:nizim]
Tolerate	[t'olə'reɪt]	[tolo'reit]
Saturate	[ˈsætʃu'reɪt]	[satʃu'reit]
Groundnut	[ˈgraʊnd nʌt]	[graʊnd'nʌt]
Seat	[si:t]	[sit]

Table 2. Contrastive stress.

Word	Stress reflecting nominal	Stress reflecting verbal
Export	[ˈɛkspo:t]	[ɪk'spo:t]
Increase	[ˈɪnkri:s]	[ɪn'kri:s]
Insert	[ˈɪnsɛ:t]	[ɪn'sɛ:t]
Permit	[ˈpɛ:mit]	[pɛ'mit]
Project	[ˈprɒdʒekt]	[prɛ'dʒekt]
Transfer	[trænsfɛ:]	[træns'fɛ:]

Osakwe (2011: 37-38).

Wrong pronunciation of English words is also rampant among the Nigerian users of English. This could be found in words such as hotel, our, honour, teeth, birthday, bird, etc. Nigerian languages and cultures are fused into English language in a manner that a bilingual's fusion is often arrived at by bending or breaking the rules at all levels of the language use.

As expansion process set in for English, it had to integrate the people's culture. The human environment (that is, the people) was the most influential part of the new environment. The L1 interference, gave the L2 (English Language) a new African flavour; spoken more like a Nigerian language than a European intonation language. The use of the L2 supra-segmental phonemes to show contrasts or feelings was no longer considered necessary for intelligibility within the community. Each L1 group spoke the L2, with some interference features typifying the particular group: the replacement of the L2 palato-alveolar affricates (/tʃ/dʒ/) with the alveolar fricatives /s/ for example, is common to most speakers of English in Nigeria (Osakwe, 2011)

DIGLOSSIA, PIDGIN, ENGLISH AND NATIVE LANGUAGES IN NIGERIA

Diglossia refers to two varieties of a language that exist side by side throughout the speech community, with each

having a definite role to play. On the other hand, the term 'pidgin' is used by linguists as the label for speech varieties that develop when speakers of two or more different languages come into contact with each other and do not know each other's language. A pidgin is not the native language of any group. Pidgin arises as a result of the apparently quite normal tendency for speakers in language contact situations to 'simplify' their speech both syntactically and lexically. Pidgins are an important subset of a larger group of languages termed 'lingua-franca'. A lingua franca may be a pidgin or native languages of a people. They are languages used for communication among speakers of different languages.

As a lingua franca for social inter-ethnic interaction, English has no doubt simplified communication among Nigerians who control 500 languages (Adegbite 2010), and contributing to the emergence of pidgin, which is now competing fiercely with English for dominance in domains hitherto considered exclusive to English. Definite social functions are assigned to English and Pidgin. English as the 'high' or prestigious language is the formal language for official government administration, business, education, literature, the mass media, political speeches and sermons. Pidgin, like the local languages, is the 'low' or common language and is more restricted to informal use at home, among children at play, as lingua franca among the uneducated or half educated, and for informal discourse and jokes among the educated. It is widely

spoken in some states of ethnic groups in Nigeria. Such states include Delta, Edo, Rivers, and Lagos, and enjoy almost the same status with the indigenous or native languages in some states of the federation.

Negative effects

It should also be mentioned that the search for food and opportunities leading to migration also poses a serious danger to languages as it could result in language endangerment. On this, there is no exact agreement as to the number of living languages in the world. There is, however, growing agreement that most dying languages are caused by abandoning the languages for an obvious reason, for searching for opportunities (migration). When people migrate, they may eventually leave their formal language and this could result in the loss of languages especially when it is not orally transferred to their children or the next generation. In Nigeria today, the native languages stand the risk of being endangered as education and modernization are fast eroding the native cultures and local languages. For instance, children in the nursery and primary schools in the present day Nigeria are finding it difficult to speak their native languages such as Nupe, Fulani, Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa, and so on. Even some educated adults are not better off in this problem.

CONCLUSION

Language is needed for interaction in the society and to share ideas and experiences with others. Culture too is another important aspect of people's life and it is one of those things that distinguish men from one another. People of different cultures often migrate to other places where there are opportunities. In the course of their interaction with people of different cultures, they tend to encounter new words, expressions and pronunciation, and integrate them into their own speech, which consequently results in multi-cultural and multi-lingual diversities leading to language borrowing, language shift, creation of new languages and so on.

In addition, it is discovered that migration venture usually engenders language varieties. Because as people migrate around with the common language spoken within the country (English in the case of Nigeria), they spread the varieties of the language and embrace the variety spoken in the environment they migrate to.

In Nigeria, this has led to proliferation of English spoken in different parts of the country such as Yoruba variety of English, Igbo variety of English, Hausa variety of English and so on. It is also discovered that as people migrate to different parts of Nigeria, the English language becomes mostly phonologically impaired as the L1 (mother tongue) interferes with the L2 (English Language).

In a nutshell, the study shows the role of migration and culture on language use, development and expansion in Nigeria. The paper also shows the manifestation of diglossia in the language-use situation in Nigeria; and highlights the negative linguistic effects of the interplay among language, migration and culture.

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