

**LIN 172**  
**Language Use and Language Attitude**

**Ibadan Distance Learning Centre Series**

**LIN 172**  
**Language Use and Language Attitude**

By

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## **Vice-Chancellor's Message**

I congratulate you on being part of the historic evolution of our Centre for External Studies into a Distance Learning Centre. The reinvigorated Centre, is building on a solid tradition of nearly twenty years of service to the Nigerian community in providing higher education to those who had hitherto been unable to benefit from it.

Distance Learning requires an environment in which learners themselves actively participate in constructing their own knowledge. They need to be able to access and interpret existing knowledge and in the process, become autonomous learners.

Consequently, our major goal is to provide full multi media mode of teaching/learning in which you will use not only print but also video, audio and electronic learning materials.

To this end, we have run two intensive workshops to produce a fresh batch of course materials in order to increase substantially the number of texts available to you. The authors made great efforts to include the latest information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly. It is our hope that you will put them to the best use.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bamiro', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Professor Olufemi A. Bamiro, FNSE**

*Vice-Chancellor*

## Foreword

The University of Ibadan Distance Learning Programme has a vision of providing lifelong education for Nigerian citizens who for a variety of reasons have opted for the Distance Learning mode. In this way, it aims at democratizing education by ensuring access and equity.

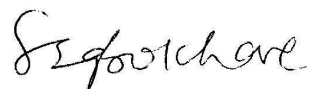
The U.I. experience in Distance Learning dates back to 1988 when the Centre for External Studies was established to cater mainly for upgrading the knowledge and skills of NCE teachers to a Bachelors degree in Education. Since then, it has gathered considerable experience in preparing and producing course materials for its programmes. The recent expansion of the programme to cover Agriculture and the need to review the existing materials have necessitated an accelerated process of course materials production. To this end, one major workshop was held in December 2006 which have resulted in a substantial increase in the number of course materials. The writing of the courses by a team of experts and rigorous peer review have ensured the maintenance of the University's high standards. The approach is not only to emphasize cognitive knowledge but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The materials have had the input of experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind, since such people can often feel isolated from the community of learners. Adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.

The Distance Learning Centre also envisages that regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks will find these books very useful. We are therefore delighted to present these new titles to both our Distance Learning students and the University's regular students. We are confident that the books will be an invaluable resource to them.

We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.



**Professor Francis O. Egbokhare**

*Director*

## LECTURE ONE

# Definition of Terms

### Introduction

Some terms are bound to occur regularly in this course book. These terms are technical and their use may not easily make meaning to a lay-reader who is coming in contact with linguistics for the first time. It is our aim in this unit to explain most of these terms in lucid expressions comprehensible even to a lay reader.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to familiar with the following terms as used in this course material:

1. Bilingualism
2. Codification
3. Dialect
4. Language
5. Language Contact
6. Language Death
7. Language Determination
8. Language Endangerment
9. Language Loyalty
10. Language Maintenance
11. Language Planning
12. Lingua Franca
13. Linguistics
14. Monolingualism
15. Multilingualism
16. Mutual Intelligibility
17. Sociolinguistics

18. Standard variety
19. Standardization
20. Stabilisation

### **Pre-Test**

Write short notes on the following terms:

1. Language
2. Linguistics
3. Language contact
4. Language Maintenance
5. Language Loyalty
6. Language Death

### **CONTENT**

1. *Language*: Is not only a linguistic but also a political, cultural, social and historical term. An Ausbau-type language is a collection of autonomous varieties which consists of an autonomous variety, together with all the varieties that are heteronomous (dependent) on it. Whether or not a group of varieties from an Ausbau type of language will be doubtful, or impossible to determine, where none of the varieties is autonomous. This will also be difficult in situations where the nature of direction of heteronomy is a matter of political or cultural dispute. There are thus disagreements as to whether SerboCroat is one or two languages; whether Macedonian is a language in its own right or a dialect of Bulgarian; whether Sani (Lappish) is one language or six; etc. Abstand-type languages can be considered languages for purely linguistic reasons. Simply put, language is the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs, or written symbols in a human society for communication and self-expression.
2. *Linguistics*: In simple term, is the scientific way of studying language in which scientific principles of explicitness, systematicity and objectivity are employed? All the procedures employed in the empirical sciences, such as : observation, reports of observation, statement of hypothesis, calculations, predictions and testing of predictions by further observations are meticulously and fastidiously applied in the study of languages in general to provide answers to such questions as:



- i. What is language?
  - ii. How does language work?
  - iii. How does human language differ from animal communication?
  - iv. How does a child learn to speak?
  - v. How does one write down and analyse an unwritten language?
  - vi. Why do languages change? Etc.
3. *Language Contact*: A term used to apply to situations where two or more groups of speakers who do not have a native language in common are in social contact with one another or come into such contact. Communication between the groups may be difficult in the short term, and may in the long term lead to the different languages influencing one another, as a result of bilingualism on the part of (some of) the speakers involved. Language contact may lead to or involve phenomena such as borrowing, code-switching, language shift, lingua franca, multilingualism and pidginization.
  4. *Language Maintenance*: The continued use and support for a language in a bilingual or multilingual community. It is the opposite of language shift and language death. Where language maintenance occurs, a community of speakers continues speaking its original language, rather than shifting to some other more powerful and prestigious language. Many minority language communities attempt to secure language maintenance through various language planning activities, such as obtaining a role for the minority language in education.
  5. *Language Loyalty*: The personal attachment to a language that leads to its continued use in a country where other languages are dominant.
  6. *Language Death*: in a situation of multilingualism and language contact, language shift may take place, particularly on the part of linguistic minority groups. If the entire community shifts totally to a new language, the original language will eventually have no speakers left in the community in question, and the end point of the process of language shift will be language death. Some writers distinguish between situations of language loss, where total shift occurs in only one of the communities speaking the language such as the loss of Dutch in immigrant communities in Australia; and language death,

which is the total loss of a language from the world, when all the speakers of a language die, as with the loss of Manx on the Isle of Man. We can also distinguish language murder, when a language dies out as a result of genocide, as in the case of Tasmanian.

7. *Language Endangerment*: A situation in which a language is in danger of undergoing language death or extinction.
8. *Lingua Franca*: A medium of communication for people who speak different first languages. A language which is used in communication between speakers who do not have one native language in common. For example, if English is used in communication between native speakers of Hausa and Yoruba, then, it is functioning as a lingua franca. Lingua franca which are used in a large –scale institutionalized way in different parts of the world include Swahili in East Africa, French & English in West Africa, Hausa in Northern Nigeria and some West African countries – a Pidgin language is a particular form of lingua franca.
9. *Monolingualism*: A sociolinguistic situation in which only one language is involved is said to be a monolingual situation. An individual who speaks only one language is said to be monolingual, and is called a *monoglot*.
10. *Bilingualism*: The ability of an individual to speak two or more languages. In the usage of some writers, bilingualism refers only to individuals who have native command of more than one language. Other writers use the term to refer to any speaker who has a reasonable degree of competence in some language other than their mother tongue. Sociolinguists agreed that bilingualism is so widespread in the world that there are probably more people who are bilingual, at least in the second sense, than there are monolinguals. Many sociolinguists use the term '*bilingualism*' to refer to individuals, even if they are trilingual, quadrilingual, etc. and reserve the term multilingualism for nations or societies, even if only two languages are involved.
11. *Multilingualism*: The opposite of monolingualism. A sociolinguistic situation in which more than one language is involved, usually involving also language contact and individual bilingualism.
12. *Mutual Intelligibility*: The extent to which speakers of one variety of language are able to understand speakers of another

variety. Mutual intelligibility may be a matter of degree – Swedish speakers can understand Norwegian more readily than they can Danish. Note too that the degree of Intelligibility may not be entirely mutual-speakers of variety. A may be able to understand speaker of variety B more easily than vice versa. And mutual intelligibility can also be acquired – speaker can learn to understand a variety that they initially had considerable difficulty with.

13. *Dialect*: A variety of language which differs grammatically, phonologically and lexically from other varieties and which is associated with a particular geographic area and /or with a particular social class or status group. Varieties which differ from one another only in pronunciation are known as accents. Varieties which are associated only with particular social situations are known as styles. Neither of these should be confused with dialect.
14. *Standard Variety*: A variety of language which has undergone standardization and which has acquired autonomy.
15. *Standardization*: The process by which a particular variety of a language is subject to language determination codification and stabilization. These processes may be the result of deliberate language planning activities, as with the standardization of Indonesian, or not, as with the standardization of English.
16. *Language Determination*: A term from language planning not significantly different in its usage from status planning.
17. *Codification*: The process whereby a variety of a language, often as part of a standardization process, acquires a publicity recognized and fixed form, in which norms are laid down for “correct” usage as far as grammar, vocabulary, spelling and may be pronunciation are concerned. This codification can take place over time without the involvement of official bodies, as happened with standard English, or it can take place quite rapidly, as a result of conscious decisions by governmental or other official planning agencies, as happened with Swahili in Tanzania, Yoruba in Nigeria and languages in Rivers State of Nigeria. The results of codification are usually enshrined in dictionaries and grammar books, as well as, sometimes, in government publications.
18. *Language Planning*: Activities carried out by governmental, official or other influential bodies that are aimed at establishing which language varieties are used in a particular community,

and subsequently directing or influencing which language varieties are to be used for which purposes in that particular community, and what the linguistic characteristics of those varieties are to be. Language planning is normally undertaken in order to improve communications and education, and /or achieve language maintenance. Language planning can be divided into two main types of activities, often labeled respectively language determination or status planning, and language development or corpus planning.

19. *Sociolinguistics*: A term used to describe all areas of the study of the relationship between language and society which are purely social scientific in their objectives. Sociolinguistics research intends to achieve a better understanding of the nature of human language by studying language in its social context.
20. *Stabilization*: A process whereby a formerly diffuse language variety that has been in a state of flux undergoes focusing and takes on a more fixed and stable form that is shared by all its speakers. Pidginized jargons become pidgins through the process of stabilization. Dialect mixtures may become Koinés as a result of stabilization which is also a component of language standardization.

### **Summary**

Twenty terms associated with Sociolinguistics are explained in this unit. This will definitely facilitate easy –reading for students who are coming across linguistics for the first time in life, as a lay- reader. Whenever, they come across these terms in subsequent chapters of this course material, all they need to do is to check their meanings in this lecture.

### **Post –Test**

Discuss the following terms briefly:

1. Language Contact
2. Bilingualism/ multilingualism
3. Dialect
4. Lingua franca
5. Mutual intelligibility

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## LECTURE TWO

# Dynamism of Language

### Introduction

When we talk about language, we do so as if it were entirely uniform; this is not so, because language is by no means MONOLITHIC (UNCHANGING). It changes tremendously with regards to different circumstances of its use. We do not speak the same way all the time. The way we speak to our parents, will be different from the way we speak to our colleagues, and the way we speak in one place will be different from the way we speak at the other, therefore, language use is the study of variation in language. It seeks to identify, describe and explain the systematic difference in the different circumstances in which language is employed. Thus the study of language use can focus on changes or variations that occur within a single language or a dialect and this variation (changes) can be differences in pronunciations, grammar or vocabulary. It can be changes between different languages or dialects.

### Objectives

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

1. realize the fact that language is not monolithic;
2. explain the different factors that bring about a change in the form of language; and
3. give instances of variations in language as a result of these factors

### Pre-Test

What do you understand by the phrase dynamism of language?

## CONTENT

Against this background, it is essential for us to examine different dimensions along which language varies and the changes that are associated with them.

1. **Time:** The first one is time; language varies with time and that gives us temporary variation. That language varies with time can be easily demonstrated with languages that have a long history. In this regard, we shall examine English. English can be categorized into three on the basis of its time of development.

(OE) Old English – 500-1100 AD

(ME) Middle English- 1100-1500AD

(NE) New English – 1500 –till present time

The present day English can still be divided into three namely:

- ❖ Latter English –16<sup>th</sup> century –17<sup>th</sup> century
- ❖ Modern English – 18<sup>th</sup> –19<sup>th</sup>
- ❖ Contemporary English 19<sup>th</sup> – till date

The English we speak today is called contemporary English. The speaker of Modern English will find old English totally unintelligible e.g.

NU Sculon herian- Now we must praise

Meotodes Meahte- The creator's might

Weorc wuldor fader- The work of the glorious father

This is an example of old English, it is not only unintelligible, it is also unreadable, and we can see that it changed with time. 400 years later, we have the middle English which can be understood easily by our present day users of English e.g. from the 'Canterbury Tales'

"When that Aprille with its shoures sootes. The droughte of March hath perced to the roote.

This is middle English; it is closer to the new English than the first example. It is translated into new English thus:

"When April with its sweet showers the drought of March has pierced to the root."

Examples of Latter English are "take heed to what ye hear; with the same measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." who art thou?

Take heed - be careful

Ye - (plural) you

Mete - measure

Art - are

Thou - (singular) you

With all these examples, we notice that changes take place in vocabulary and syntax over time.

2. **Space**: the forms of language are not the same in all geographical areas in which the language is found. This implies that people who speak the same language use it differently when found in different locations (living in different areas). The form of language is not the same in a region. It varies as one move from one place to the other. These changes or variations as a result of different geographical area are known as REGIONAL DIALECT. (A language spoken in a different linguistic and cultural environment). It is characterized by the possession of entirely distinctive features). We can also demonstrate this regional dialect with English. There are two major varieties of English which can be separated from each other considering their geographical location- these are BRITISH ENGLISH & AMERICAN ENGLISH.

The difference between these two varieties can be noticed in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical function of the two varieties. When the difference between two dialects or more is in term of pronunciations that difference is known as ACCENT.

It is not only in English that language varies, it also varies in other languages. For example, the present spoken Yoruba is quite different from that which was used during the days of Bishop Ajayi Crowther. As we have different languages so we have ACCENT e.g. we have YORUBA- ACCENT, IRISH, AMERICAN & BRITISH ACCENTS. English has two major regional varieties- British & American English; each of them – in turn has its own varieties e.g. Black English as opposed to standard American English; so also, we have Cockney as the variety spoken in London and Yorkshire as the one spoken in America. There are variations according to vocabulary in British and American English e.g.



Examples:

**British English**

Petrol  
Apartment  
Sweet  
Pavement  
Cooker  
Lift

**American English**

Gas/ Gasoline  
flat  
Candy  
Sidewalk  
Stove  
Elevator

**NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

Globe  
Minerals  
Gallop  
Go-slow  
Free  
Corner  
Garrage  
Gutter

**BRITISH ENGLISH**

Electric bulb  
soft drinks  
pot holes  
Traffic- hold up/ Jam  
slope  
bend  
motor park  
drainage

Nigerian English has been domesticated, for example “cut your coat according to your size” instead of “cut your coat according to your cloth.”

At the level of grammar, American English is different from British English; some irregular verbs are regularized in American English e.g.

B. E – Burn	burnt	burnt	spell	spelt	spelt
A. E – Burn	burned	burned	spell	spelled	spelled
B.E – Dwell	dwelt	dwelt	spoil	spoilt	spoilt
A.E – Dwell	dwelled	dwelled	spoil	spoiled	spoiled
B.E – Learn	learnt	learnt	get	got	got
A.E- Learn	learned	learned	get	got	gotten

Apart from space, language also varies within the same society; this kind of variation reflects the background or social status of the speaker, people who belong to the same social group show: some similarities in the pattern of language use as opposed to those who belong to another – this variation is called **SOCIAL DIALECT OR**

SOCIO-LECT in short. In Britain, we have three different classes namely: the upper, middle and lower classes, each of these groups has a unique variety of English, which is peculiar to it. In America also, there is difference between standard American English and Black English as can be seen from these examples.

Standard American English	Black American English
AFFIRMATIVE He knows something	He know something
NEGATIVE He doesn't know anything or he knows nothing	He don't know nothing or He know nothing
AFFIRMATIVE He likes somebody He doesn't like anybody or He likes nobody	He like somebody He don't like nobody or He like nobody

Language use also varies with regard to situation; we don't speak in the same way all the time. One talks differently with his friend from the way he talks to his parents or bosses in the office. So also, the way we speak with the people that are familiar to us is different from the way we speak to strangers. All these varieties due to different social situations are called **STYLES**. A speaker of a language is capable of shifting from one style of communication to another, depending on the social circumstances in which he finds himself. There are **FORMAL** and **INFORMAL STYLES** and other types of styles in communication. One American linguist, by name;

Martin Joos in his book titled "the five clocks" described a hierarchy of styles and he distinguished five levels and gave examples which are similar to the **CASUAL** and **INTIMATE** styles.

Styles	Examples
1. Frozen style (highest level of formality}	Participants should remain seated throughout the ceremony
2. Formal style 4	Those taking part should sit during the proceedings
3. Consultative style 3	would you please stay in your seats
4 Casual style 2	Don't get up
5. Intimate style 1	Sit tight

These examples illustrate how we vary our language to suit a particular situation, particular media or particular relationship.

**1. Frozen Style:** It is the most formal style of language; and it could normally occur in the written form. It is characterized by the following:

- (i.) The use of third person as a means of address
- (ii.) The choice of more formal items of vocabulary e.g. remain & throughout.

**2. The Formal Style:** It is less formal than frozen style but it still shares certain degree of formality with the frozen style by the use of the third person as a means of address e.g. “those taking part”; but “should sit” is less formal than. “remain seated” used in frozen style. Formal Style is more common in the written medium too, but it is likely to occur in speech than frozen variety.

**3. Consultative Style:** It is the neutral kind of language used in polite conversation between adult strangers. It is common in both speech and writing as a form of address e.g. “would you please...”

**4. Casual Style:** It is the type used between acquaintances or member of similar sociological sub- groups who feel they share a common background with the other.

**5. Intimate Style:** It is used between close friends or within the members of the same family. The sentences tend to be shorter as we go toward intimate style.

The consultative style is most unlikely to give offence in most situations; this is why it is adopted by adult strangers in their first conversation. It is neither too formal nor too intimate. After the first few exchange of conversation, the people may shift their language from consultative style to a more casual style or even to a more formal style depending on the assessment of each other; we constantly adapt our language- along this scale i.e.

**Frozen → Formal → Consultative → Casual → Intimate**, we can deliberately use a style out of annoyance or to offend. So when we say that a person has FACILITY in language it is not only the knowledge of grammar and phonology but he can manipulate different styles to

suit different situations. The choice of a particular style is guided by certain aspects of situational context namely:

- i. Subject matter of the conversation
  - ii. The speaker's intention
  - iii. The relative social status
  - iv. The feed-back from the addressee
  - v. Rules of social Behaviour and Culture
1. ***The Subject Matter:*** It is not difficult to see how different subject matters affect the choice of styles serious subject matters such as religion ethics philosophy etc. often calls for a more formal expressions. On the other hand, certain subject matters are regarded as taboo and may then not be spoken about in formal conversation except euphemistically. Euphemism or circumlocution is used for taboo or forbidden words. In Yoruba, when somebody wants to go to toilet he says; *mo fẹẹ ẹ ga, mo fẹẹ jawe jẹ n jẹ mii*
  2. ***The Speakers Intention:*** This influences the choice since a style is chosen to suit a particular intention based on the speaker's assessment of the whole situation. If the speaker wishes to persuade, he will avoid the style that offends e.g the sales girls of a shop will always want to convince a customer about her products for him to buy. If he wishes to stand aloof, he will not use a casual or an intimate style.
  3. ***The Relative Social Status:*** This has to do with the position of superior versus inferior. Master- servant, husband – wife. This influences the choice of style particularly in the early encounters in conversation. After this, the speaker may choose to a certain extent unconsciously whether or not to maintain social distance in language.
  4. ***The Feed- back from the Addressee:*** This is important because all conversation is a question of give and take and we can modify our language according to its effect upon the person we are speaking to. We gather information about the effect of our language. From the listeners facial expressions, gestures, nods of agreement etc and we use this information to adopt our language.
  5. ***Style is also dependent on the rules of social behaviour and culture of the people*** e.g. in formal meetings you have to give respect to the chairman regardless of the fact that he is your colleague or your husband. In conversing with someone you must be consciously or unconsciously guided by the rules of social

behaviour and culture of users of the language. You don't call him by name or talk when you are not called. So also, in many African languages, the culture of the people is reflected in the languages in that the elders are respected and respect is reflected in the choice of words when speaking with them e.g. in Yoruba, honorific pronouns (or pronouns of respect) are used for one's superiors e.g. "*mo fe ba yin soro*" ( I want to speak to you) "*Eyin ni mo n ba soro*" (it's you I am taking to).

Also in certain societies there are taboo words, i.e. words that are forbidden from being used. Again these reflect the particular custom and views of societies.

In these societies, certain words may be used in certain circumstances but not in others. For example, among the Zani Indians, it is improper to use the word '*takka*' which means frog during a religious ceremony instead of this, another word is used. In Yoruba we say '*alafia*' for peace when referring to "left" because 'left' is associated with "bad omen" or bad luck" so, when giving direction or location of a place; we just say the place is on the side of peace (*O wa ni apa alafia*) instead of saying it is on the left ( *o wa ni apa osi*).

Similarly, words relating to sex organs and natural body functions make up a large part of the set of taboo words of many cultures. In Yoruba, when a king dies in Yorubaland instead of saying '*Oba ku*' they say "*Oba waja*". We don't refer to our sex organs openly. Similarly, an unpleasant thing like death is referred to in a euphemistic way. Just as language varies according to different situations, it also varies with regard to occupation.

## **6. Occupation.**

Every occupation, profession or trade has its own JARGONS OR ARGOT or a set of words. In linguistics for example we have jargons like phonemes, lexicon, morpheme etc. which are also known as ARGOT. In Law, we have specialized language intelligible to legal practitioners e.g. plaintiff, defendant, jury, complainant, habbis corpus etc.

The people of the underworld also have their own slang (which is peculiar to them). Youths, academics, etc, also have their own jargons or slangs.

Jargons can spread from a narrow point to the whole society until it is used and understood by a large segment of the population.

Eventually it may lose its status as either jargon or slang and gain entrance into the respectable circle of formal everyday usage.

6. Language also varies at the level of the individual; this implies that no two speakers of a language speak exactly alike. There will be certain things which will reflect particular idiosyncratic features peculiar to individual in his language. These differences may be due to age, sex, state of health, personality, emotional status, etc. From the foregoing, it should be observed that language use is very broad and it must be described in a systematic way the variations that occur when language is used in different circumstances. Changes occur in any given language even though it may not be immediately noticed.

### **Summary**

This lecture discussed the fact that language is not ‘monolithic’, it changes from time to time, place to place, person to person, subject to subject, situation to situation and from occupation to occupation. These different factors that affect the form of language are explained briefly in this lecture.

### **Post-Test**

1. Write short notes on each of the following terms
  - i. Dynamism of language
  - ii. Dialect
  - iii. Accent
  - iv. Styles
2. Discuss four different dimensions along which language varies.

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## LECTURE THREE

# Domains of Language Use in Nigeria

### Preamble

*It is something of a norm that certain languages are intimately bound to a particular domain. With regard to the Nigerian situation, the polarity between indigenous Languages and foreign languages comes to the fore when the various domains of language use are examined. The two types of languages are mutually exclusive such that the high domains are marked for the foreign languages, notably English, while the primary domains are reserved for the indigenous languages numbering up to four hundred or a little above.*

*(Oyetade, 2001:15)*

### Introduction

The concept of domain is employed particularly in studies of language in multilingual contexts and in the study of other situations where different languages, dialects or styles are used in social contexts. A domain is a combination of factors which are believed to influence choice of language by speakers. Such factors might include participants (in a conversation), topic and location.

### Objectives

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

1. explain the concept 'domain';
2. identify the different domains of Language Use in Nigeria; and
3. discuss the use of language in the different domains identified

### **Pre-Test**

What do you understand by the concept 'domains of language use in Nigeria'?

## **CONTENT**

### **Domains of Language Use**

Fishman (1972a) opines that there are certain institutional contexts, called domains, in which one language or language variety is more likely to be appropriate than another. Domain therefore refers to the spheres of activities where specific languages or language varieties are used. Domains vary from one scholar to the other and it is doubtful whether their number can be exhausted. Scholars have made distinctions between primary and secondary domains. Primary domain refers to the soft sectors of life such as family and friends, local markets and domestic services, traditional social institutions and religion, cultural life, kinship etc. Secondary domain has to do with advanced areas of life such as education, science, and technology, administration/ government, law-making. In Nigeria, the primary domains of life are marked for Nigerian languages while the secondary domains of life are marked for English.

In this section, we shall discuss the following domains in relation to language use in Nigeria:

1. Public Administration/ government
2. Commerce and industry
3. Education
4. Judiciary
5. Mass media
6. Religion
7. Entertainment

#### **1. Public Administration**

In every part of Nigeria, English Language remains officially dominant in all administrations above the local level. At the state government level, even in a linguistically homogenous state( such as Oyo, Osun, Ekiti etc), all edicts, policy decisions, formal discussions among government official of all status and discussions on behalf of the government are carried out in English. Because of the dominant position of English in this domain, high standard of attainment is required of all government employees above the level of clerical



assistants. Even at the lower cadre, a fair knowledge of English is required.

## **2. Commerce and Industry**

The situation here is similar to that of public administration. From the management down to the clerical level, English is the language of formal transaction in employment, negotiations, especially in application and interview, business consultations (between suppliers and buyers). Even when company employees speak a common language, English formalizes their official relationships. However, there is a division of commerce and industry where knowledge and skills in the indigenous languages is often required. This division is sale canvassing and advertisement.

Consumer articles, such as drugs, beverages, cosmetics, etc are introduced into the market on posters, written or printed in indigenous languages, English and Pidgin English. In addition to this, bilingual advertisements are predominant on radio and television Nigerian pidgin (NP) is recently becoming popular in this aspect.

## **3. Education**

In Nigeria, English Language is the dominant medium of instruction at all levels of education from pre-primary to tertiary institutions. The reason for this is not far fetched, English is regarded as the language of education, science and technology in Nigeria as well as internationally.

Nevertheless, indigenous languages are used in the early stages of primary education in varying degree. There is fee- paying nursery and primary schools owned by private proprietors and proprietresses where English language is used exclusively as the language of teaching for all subjects to the detriment of Nigerian languages. However, some Nigerian languages like Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Fulfulde (spoken by the Fulanis), etc are taught as subjects to varying degrees in the school curriculum right from primary school to the university level.

## **4. Judiciary**

The judiciary can be broadly divided into two- higher and lower judiciary. In Nigeria, the higher judiciary consists of the Magistrate, high courts, court of appeal and the supreme courts. Proceedings in these courts are patterned after the English legal system and as such they operate mainly in English. Even though, magistrates and judges may be able to speak their respective native languages fluently, they

are presumed not to understand indigenous languages, so they operate strictly in English. Where a party in the suit is monolingual (in his native language), his statements are meticulously translated to English by the court registrar and recorded by the judges. The verdict of the judge is delivered in English while the paraphrase is given by the registrar into any language (when necessary).

The lower judiciary has three grades of customary courts, namely A, B and C. The suits heard in such courts are those in which customary laws and traditions are applied, such as divorce of marriages contracted by customary courts, land disputes etc. Most of the time litigants (people involved in cases) in these courts are monolinguals, so judgments are delivered in indigenous languages, but the court clerk makes his records in English because such cases may be referred to a higher court. The grade C court is presided over by a local traditional chief; he and the jury may not necessarily be literate in English.

## 5. Mass Media

The media is divided into two broad groups- electronic and print. There are many English medium papers in circulation at present in the country. Examples are The Tribune, The Guardian, Vanguard, Comet, This Day, etc which are printed daily and magazines, such as Tell, Newswatch, etc which circulate monthly. There are others in indigenous languages e.g. Yoruba, such as *Iwe Iroyin*, *Alaroye*, *Omo Odua*, *Alawiye*, *Alukoro*, *Bojuri*, *Obalonile*, *Eletì –Ofẹ* etc. In the East, the first newspaper produced was ‘*Anyawu*’ in the mid-1950s, this was followed around the same period by ‘*Onuora*’, these two newspapers remained in circulation until independence. However, they both went out of circulation during the Civil War (1968-1970). Others emerged in the 70s- ‘*Ogene*’, ‘*Udoka*’, ‘*Oku Ekwe*’. In 1991, *Ohu Umu Igbo* (a bi-monthly bilingual newsletter) published by Igbo indigenes resident in the United States. In 2001, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Owerri introduced *Ozisa*, a quarterly religious newspaper edited by Rev. Father Longinus C. Chinagoron. *Akuko Uwa*, another Igbo weekly newspaper appeared on Thursday, December, 6, 2001. This was followed by *Ozi*, a bi-weekly publication of Sunrise Communications Limited, Lagos. In Northern Nigeria, we have the following examples- ‘*Jarida, Nigeriya Ta Arewa*’ (meaning Northern Province News), a trilingual (Hausa, English, Arabic) newspaper (1932), *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* (Meaning “truth is worth more than a penny”) January 1939 till date. The paper began as a monthly newspaper, later it became a weekly publication, now it circulates thrice weekly. Others are

*Albishir, Alfurkan, Gamzaki, Zabi Sonka, Inidiyana*, etc. it should be noted however that “*Iwe Iroyin*” was the first indigenous newspaper in Nigeria. It appeared first in 1859.

### ***Electronic Media***

There is multiplicity of state owned radio and television in Nigeria. They are owned by all the states in Nigeria which attract the listening attention of their local audience in bringing to them a wide spectrum of programmes ranging from public enlightenment, news and broadcasts, etc. these stations operate in English and the local language(s) of the state. A comparison of the use of English and indigenous Nigerian languages in the series of programmes on radio and television reveals that English programmes are relatively more numerous than programmes in Nigerian languages.

## **6. Religion**

There are three religions in Nigeria – Christianity, Islam and traditional religion. Language use in these religions varies considerably as each of them has typical languages associated with it. Christianity is an open religion, there is no rigid adherence to a language and so the Bible has been translated into many Nigerian Languages. In this aspect, the activities of the Bible society of Nigeria are notable. They are still busy translating the Bible to other Nigerian languages. There is a fair balance in the use of Nigerian languages and English in conducting services. In the rural areas, services are conducted in the native languages. In urban cities, services are conducted in English with simultaneous interpretation to indigenous languages spoken in the areas. In the Roman Catholic Churches, regardless of whatever language being used, the preachers sometimes revert to the use of expressions in Latin.

The dominant language of Islam is Arabic and it is believed to be the best language for conveying religious message to Allah. There are many religious literatures written in Arabic. The preacher sometimes uses Arabic and the indigenous languages together but the use of Arabic is still predominant because it is the language of the Holy Quran. It is only relatively recently that the Quran was translated to local languages. For the traditional religion, the languages used are indigenous languages mostly; sometimes cultic languages which are believed to be efficacious in controlling the supernatural are used by the priests.

## **7. Entertainment**

Indigenous languages are also used in story telling, drama and in music. In different ethnic groups, moonlight folktales, local festivals and social gatherings are conducted in Nigerian languages which are sometimes translated to English for others to understand. In the entertainment industry, English does not seem to enjoy dominance over the indigenous languages. Language does not enjoy the kind of monopoly it has always enjoyed elsewhere. Indigenous languages are widely used. In many traditional societies in Nigeria, moral and social values are inculcated to children through the use of story telling, songs, poetry and drama in indigenous languages. Pidgin is also sparingly used in this domain.

### **Summary**

In this lecture, you have been exposed to the concept of domains of language use in Nigeria. You have been told that language choice in each domain (sphere or aspect of life) is determined by a combination of factors such as participants in conversation topic and location. A distinction has also been made between primary and secondary domains. Finally seven domains have been discussed.

### **Post-Test**

1. Comment briefly on the use of language in religion and entertainment in Nigeria.
2. Critically examine the role of English in the domains of education, judiciary and mass media in Nigeria.
3. Compare the use of language in the domain of education with that of judiciary in Nigeria.

## References

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## LECTURE FOUR

# Language Use in Nigeria's Rural and Urban Communities

### Preamble

*Charles V of Germany (who ruled from 1558) is said to have spoken French to men, Italian to women, Spanish to God, and German to horses!*

### Introduction

Every culture which has been investigated, no matter how 'primitive' it may be in cultural terms, turns out to have a parable to those of the so-called 'civilized' nations. Anthropologically speaking, the human race can be said to have evolved from primitive to civilized states, but there is no sign of language having gone through the same kind of evolution. No language has been found to be monolithic'. Every language has the ability to manifest variation- in terms of style, structure and use in different contexts. It is our aim in this lecture to discuss language use in Nigeria's Rural and Urban Communities.

### Objectives

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

1. explain what a speech community is;
2. discuss vividly the use of language in Nigeria's rural and urban centers; and
3. compare and contrast the two.

### Pre-Test

Discuss the use of language in Nigeria's rural and urban communities

## CONTENT

Every community is built and held together by people. Inhabitants of a particular community spend much of their energies communicating with one another, and sharing common ideas about a peaceful and productive existence. An urban or rural center is a speech community. A speech community, in its idealized sense, is a group of people who:

- i. are linked by some form of social organization
- ii. talk to each other, and
- iii. all speak alike (Halliday, 1978:154)

A critical look at the above definition of speech community in a Nigerian context shows, for instance, that our urban and rural communities may be linked by some form of social organization. They may also have ways of talking to each other. But they certainly do not all speak alike. Language use in a typical Nigerian village is bound to be different from language use in the cities. In most Nigerian villages, ethnic Nigerian languages are likely used. This is because villages do not often attract people from other ethnic groups who speak different languages. Both pidgin and English are less likely used in rural areas because of the absence of the young educated people who may prefer their use. Village values, topics of discussion and rural situations are often better discussed / expressed in ethnic languages.

On the contrary, the urban speech community is a heterogeneous unit, showing diversity not only between one individual and the other, but also within one individual. While only one ethnic language may often be used in a village, several languages- English, pidgin, major and minority languages may all be in use in a particular city in Nigeria. Several educational institutions and industries are concentrated in the urban centers. Consequently, cities attract many educated people, foreigners and people from other ethnic groups. This factor is responsible for the complexity in urban communication.

Whereas, many people residing in the rural areas may be monolingual, many urban dwellers are bilinguals. And so, the use of more than one language as well as the use of code-mixing or code switching will be more commonly noticed in the cities than in the villages. Even in using the same language, people in cities are more likely to speak the standard varieties of a Nigerian language than rural dwellers. While it is possible for most people in a particular village to use the same dialect, it is more likely that urban dwellers speak different dialects of the same language; as a result, they are likely to speak the standard variety to facilitate communication and understanding.

**Summary**

This lecture has discussed the use of language in urban and rural communities with specific reference to Nigeria. The concept of speech community has been discussed. If this definition given above by Halliday will be applied to Nigeria, then our urban and rural centers are not qualified to be individual speech communities because they certainly do not speak alike.

**Post-Test**

1. What is a speech community?
2. Discuss concisely the use of language in Nigeria's rural and urban societies.

**References**

Crystal, D. (1987) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* Cambridge University Press.

Igboanusi, H. (2007) *Lecture notes for LIN 172 Language Use and Language Attitude*.



## LECTURE FIVE

# Factors that Influence Language Use in Nigeria

### Preamble

*When someone sneezes, the English stock response is 'Bless you'... In German, one says Gesundheit? (health), in Mende (Siera Leone) the word to use is 'biseh' ( thank you), in Bembe (Congo), it is 'kuma' (be well), in Malagasy , it is 'velona' (alive), in Yoruba it is 'e rora' or ' e pele' ( roughly meaning 'sorry) adapted from Crystal D.1987:10.*

### Introduction

It is never possible to make a simple statement about language variation and social class because other influential factors are involved such as the sex of the speaker, and the formality of the situation. The choice of language is determined by different factors. Some of these factors are the speaker, the addressee, the place, the topic, ethnicity (tribal background), the mode of discourse, the situation at hand etc. These factors are the focus of our discussion in this lecture.

### Objectives

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

1. identify the different factors that influence the choice of code in any community; and
2. discuss these factors briefly

### Pre- Test

Mention some factors that influence the choice of language in different communities.

## CONTENT

1. The speaker: the most important factor in the choice of language in different communities is the personality of the speaker. Is he a man or a woman? Is he old or young? Is he monolingual, bilingual or a polyglot? Is he educated or uneducated? Where does he come from (ethnicity)? Etc. questions like these will influence his choice of language or style.
2. The Addressee(s): The person being addressed is equally important in the choice of language or style. Questions such as who is he? What is his status? Is he educated or not? Monolingual or bilingual? Is he a friend or a stranger? Is he older or younger to the speaker? What role does he perform in relation to the speaker- Is he a boss or a subordinate? A priest or an ordinary person? Etc.
3. The Place: Language choice varies depending on the place – urban or rural area, within the home or outside the home, in the school, on the sport field, in the market or in the church, etc. The use of English or Pidgin is more likely in the urban center, than in the rural areas. In the family (home), Nigerian mother tongues are likely to be used, except in ethnically mixed homes where English or Pidgin may be used. Outside the home, Nigerian lingua francas (major Nigerian languages- Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba) and Pidgin become more appropriate. In administrative or business offices English is more likely to dominate. In schools and hospitals, English is usually heard (or at least a mixture of English with the indigenous languages) because of technical vocabulary needed which may not be available in Nigerian languages.
4. The Topic: Whereas, news and politics are the domain of Nigerian languages, economics, natural sciences and even literature are discussed at least partly in English. The language an individual will use when teaching will be different from the one he will use when preaching.
5. Ethnicity (Tribal background): In ethnically homogenous groups, the mother tongue is used, whereas in mixed tribal groups, pidgin (among the less educated) or English will be used.
6. Mode of Discourse: (i.e. whether written or spoken): In oral communication, Nigerian languages may be more often used. In written communication, the role of English is usually much

more elitist and selective. Writing letters requires literacy in English or Nigerian languages and some familiarity with the formal system of mailing, and as a result, English is- in absolute terms, in contrast to Nigerian languages- chosen in writing much more often than in speaking even when the same people are involved in the communication. Besides writing, choice in reading is also important but here the choice is determined by the availability of reading materials, be it from bookshops or libraries. In many countries, it is much easier to obtain books, periodicals and even newspapers in English than in local languages. And again, there is an increase in the volume of books written in English, from literary, social science, economics to the natural science books, and of course, from popular to scientific literature. However, in question of language choice, the prestige choice should not be underestimated. In the Nigerian society it is fashionable to read the English edition of a Newspaper if available rather than the one in a Nigerian language, although, they may be similar in content and even style.

7. The (formality of the) situation: Official matters are more likely to be conducted in English. However, official matters involving people of the same ethnic group may sometimes be conducted in the ethnic language.

### **Summary**

The focus of this lecture was on the choice of language in Nigeria. Factors, which influence language choice in different context, have been examined. This buttresses the fact we have emphasized earlier that language is not monolithic.

### **Post-Test**

1. Your father teaches Geography in school, in the church he is a pastor, at home he is a husband and a father. Which language is he likely to use in these different contexts and why?
2. Enumerate the factors that influence language choice in Nigeria.
3. Discuss any four of them.

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Crystal, D. (1987) “The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language” Cambridge University Press.

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## LECTURE SIX

# Stereotyped Notions about Language

### Preamble

*The American linguist, Leonard Bloomfield (1887-1949) tells the story of visiting a doctor who was quite firm in his view that the Amerindian language Chippewa had only a few hundred words. When Bloomfield attempted to dispute the point, the doctor turned away and refused to listen. Irrational responses of this kind are unfortunately all too common; but everyone is prone to them- linguist and non- linguist alike.*

*(Crystal, D 1987:2)*

### Introduction

Different people have expressed opinions about the ‘natural’ superiority’ of certain languages over the others. Latin and Greek were for centuries viewed as models of excellence in Western Europe because of the literature and thought which these languages expressed; and the study of modern languages is still influenced by the practices of generations of classical linguistic scholars. The idea that one’s own language is superior to others is widespread, but the reasons given for the superiority vary greatly.

A language might be viewed as the oldest, or the most logical, or the language of gods, or simply the easiest to pronounce or the best for singing. Arabic speakers, for example, feel that their classical language is the most ‘beautiful’ and ‘logical’, with an incomparable grammatical symmetry and lexical richness. Classical Arabic is strongly identified with religion, as the language of the Quran is held to provide miraculous evidence of the truth of Islam. From this viewpoint, it would be self-evident that since God chose Arabic as the vehicle of his

revelation to his Prophet, this must be the language used in heaven and this must be superior to all others. However, similar arguments have been applied to several other languages, such as Sanskrit and Classical Hebrew. Aramaic was the language Jesus spoke. To Christians, the language spoken by Christ surely must be the language of God and the original language. Notions like the above are stereotypical and biased. It is our objective in this lecture to examine some of them.

### **Objective**

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to discuss some popularly held views about language, which are stereotypical.

### **Pre-Test**

The Swedish writer, Andreas Kempe (1622-89) expressed the view that in Paradise Adam spoke Danish, God spoke Swedish, and the serpent spoke French. Do you agree to this assertion? Support your answer with detailed discussion.

## **CONTENT**

### **Stereotyped Notions about Language**

Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language in general may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, the degree of importance or status it has in the community or even the importance of the people who use it as a first or second language. Sometimes one hears language described as “beautiful” or “precise”. These characteristics are to a large extent subconscious and it is not possible to explain them fully on a purely rational basis. They seem to be directly related neither to phonological, morphological or semantic features of the language so described, nor to the sociolinguistic background of the informants’ speech community, although both must obviously contribute to the stereotype.

Interestingly enough, English is believed, in many countries in Africa (including Nigeria) to possess certain qualities. These are often characterized by adjectives like “beautiful”, “rich”, “logical”, “sophisticated” or even “pleasing to the ear”. English seems to enjoy high international prestige as an idealized world language.

The label “beautiful” seems to describe a very general aesthetic impression. “Rich” refers to the fact that English has a very extensive vocabulary. The stereotyped notion ‘precise’ is normally taken to refer

to the exactness of lexical items, which is valued very highly by Nigerians in Science and technology and in academic teaching. Similar to “precise” is “logical”, because this is associated with exactness at the grammatical level.

The notions “refined”, “sophisticated” and “superior” relate to the state of language development. This is why Nigerian languages are often ranked lower than English in this respect. Whereas, the labels “refined” and “sophisticated” are taken to characterize a language that can be used in scientific discourse or for academic purposes, “superior” may be referring to a language’s geographical range or international communicative power. It is, however, a dangerous term, as it may be given the undesirable interpretation of a colonial language attitude.

Other notions, such as ‘intimate’ or ‘sacred’ derive from particular purposes or preferences in language use. It goes without saying that as a ‘sacred’ language, English cannot compete with Arabic (for Muslims) or Latin (for some Catholics), and that as an “intimate” language, a language in which personal feelings, love, etc are expressed and which is affectively very close to a speaker, English cannot compete with Nigeria languages; although there are instances, for example, when a young man finds it easier to propose (a modern marriage) in English.

### **Summary**

We have examined some stereotyped notions about language in this lecture. Some of the descriptive words popularly used in this context, such as ‘beautiful’, ‘precise’ ‘rich’, ‘logical’, ‘sophisticated’, ‘refined’, etc have been highlighted. From a linguistic point of view, all languages are equal and there is no ‘primitive’ language. All languages are equally complex and capable of expressing any idea in the universe. Every language can be expanded to include new words for new concepts as they emerge. This is one of the universal attributes of language.

### **Post-Test**

1. The Latin language is superior to any other language in the world. Do you agree to this view? Support your answer with detailed discussion.
2. Discuss some stereotyped notions about language

**Reference**

Crystal, D. (1987) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*  
Cambridge University Press.



## LECTURE SEVEN

# Language Purism

### Preamble

*The Latin rule is not universal. In Arabic, for example, **be** is followed by the accusative. In English, **me** is the educated informal norm; **I** is felt to be very formal. In French, only **moi** is possible (c'est moi, etc).*

*(Source: David Crystal 1987:3)*

### Introduction

All the main European Languages have been studied prescriptively, especially in the 18<sup>th</sup> century approach to the writing of grammars and dictionaries. The aims of these early grammarians were threefold:

1. they wanted to codify the principles of their languages, to show that there was a system beneath the apparent chaos of usage,
2. they wanted a means of settling disputes over usage ,
3. they wanted to point out what they felt to be common errors, in order to 'improve' the language .

The authoritarian nature of the approach is best characterized by its reliance on 'rules' of grammar. Some usages are 'prescribed', to be learnt and followed accurately; other are 'prescribed', to be avoided. It is our objective in this section to examine the concept of linguistic purism, which gave rise to 'prescriptivism'.

### Objectives

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

1. discuss the concept of language purism satisfactorily; and
2. give instances of language purism in natural languages of the world

## Pre-Test

What do you understand by the concept language purism?

## CONTENT

Purism can best be described in terms of feelings and attitudes towards an ideal form of a language, usually in a written state, and dissociated from everyday speech. This form of language is associated with specific aesthetic and sometimes moral values which represent the speech communities social ideal and is the norm. its mastery ensures social recognition and is therefore promoted by social institutions such as the educational system, or official organizations such as language academies. As a result, deviant varieties have negative connotations, their use being discouraged in public domains.

For example, it is in line with language purism that the French Academy prescribes some fine for anyone who uses English loan words where their equivalents exist in the French language. In Italy, the Accademia della Crusca was founded as early as 1582, with the object of purifying the Italian language. In France, in 1635, Cardinal Richelieu established the Academie francaise, which set the pattern for many subsequent bodies. The statutes of the Academie define as its principal function:

*To labour with all possible care and diligence to give definite rules to our language, and to render it pure, eloquent and capable of treating the arts and sciences.*

The Spanish Academy was founded in 1713 by Philip V, and within 200 years corresponding bodies had been set up in most South American Spanish countries. The Swedish Academy was founded in 1786; the Hungarian in 1830. There are three Arabic academies, in Syria, Iraq and Egypt. The Hebrew Language Academy was set up in 1953. In England, a proposal for an Academy was made in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the support of such men as John Dryden and Daniel Defoe. In Defoe's opinion the reputation of this academy.

*“would be enough to make them the allowed judges of style and language. No author would have the impudence to coin without their authority. There should be no more occasions to search for derivations and constructions, and it would be as criminal then to coin words as money.*

In the same vein, Jonathan Swift presented his proposal for correcting, improving and ascertaining the English tongue, in which he complains to the Lord Treasurer in England, the Earl of Oxford, that:

*Our language is extremely imperfect, that its daily improvements are by no means in proportion to its daily corruptions; that the pretenders to polish and refine it have chiefly multiplied abuses and absurdities; and that in many instances it offends against every part of grammar.*

Again, the influence of American technology and entertainment is reflected in the languages of many countries. Mainly for that reason, the congress of the countries and Spain in 1960 approved a resolution in which it was recommended that each academy should create a commission on technical vocabulary. The commission of the Columbian Academy has proposed many Spanish terms to replace English loans which have been approved by the other Academies.

### **Summary**

In this lecture, you have been exposed to the concept of ‘language purism’ which refers to feelings and attitudes towards an ideal form of a language, usually in a written state and dissociated from everyday speech. This concept is the motivating factor behind the setting up of language academies all over the world to preserve the language from corruption and contamination and thereby keep it pure. Unfortunately, the nature of language does not permit this kind of attempt, because language is not ‘monolithic’.

See LIN 101 course Material Fadoro 2007.

### **Post-Test**

1. Discuss the term ‘language purism’ in details.
2. Cite examples of language Academies around the world which have been set up to ensure language purism.

## **References**

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## LECTURE EIGHT

# Linguistic Imperialism

### Preamble

*The Igbo language... has restricted ways of translating physical phenomena; it also lacks the specificity of the English Language... it does not have long established writing , not to talk of metalanguage, hence it suffers a dearth of adequate vocabulary for the generation of scientific thoughts and conceptualization.... Abstract ideas and concepts in Physics are readily written and expressed in English,... while there may be no substitutes or equivalents for scientific terms in the Nigerian languages, which have not yet fully developed the terms for communicating ideas in physics ... it can be perceived that the vernacular has limitations and lacks the semantic subtleties and nuances abundant in the English Language in which scientific terms have been completely categorized.*

*Nwokedi (1984:)*

### Introduction

According to Bamgbose 1985, the attitude of the Nigerian elite to indigenous languages reflects that they are plagued by “linguistic imperialism” (Ansre 1975)- an altitude that recognizes as normal the continued use of European languages in all advanced sectors of life.

## **Objectives**

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

1. explain in details the concept of linguistic imperialism; and
2. discuss the different manifestations of linguistic imperialism

## **Pre-Test**

What is linguistic imperialism?

## **CONTENT**

Imperialism is the policy of extending control or authority over foreign entities as a means of acquisition and /or maintenance of empires, either through direct territorial control or through indirect methods of exerting control on the politics or economy of other countries. The term is used by some scholars to describe the policy of a country in maintaining colonies and dominance over distant lands, regardless of whether the country calls itself an empire. In other words, imperialism aims at dominating colonies or former colonies.

Linguistic imperialism is seen as an aspect of cultural imperialism. Cultural imperialism is the practice of promoting the culture and language of one nation in another particularly when the former is a large powerful nation and the latter a small poor one. Since the publication of Robert Phillipson's "Linguistic Imperialism" in 1992, the concept linguistic imperialism has attracted the attention of scholars in the field of English applied linguistics.. Phillipson in his book raises the point that English Language teaching does not operate in a vacuum, that it is connected with politics and economy. He argues that the center (i.e. the English speaking countries of the West) has used English to suppress the people of the former colonies; and that English is Promoted at the detriment of smaller Languages.

## **Different Manifestations of Linguistic Imperialism**

Linguistic imperialism is a pandemic which manifests in many ways. Some of the different manifestations are highlighted below:

- i. Many parents, especially the elite send their wards to fee-paying nursery and primary schools where the medium of instruction is English. According to Oyetade (2001) this is predicated on the belief that the earlier a child begins learning English the higher his chances of better mastery of the

language. This will ultimately guarantee good performance at the subsequent levels of education and eventually a good job.

- ii. Some parents ban their children from using their mother tongue at home even though both parents speak the same language.
- iii. In certain schools, particularly the indigenous languages are described as vernaculars', pejoratively used to refer to the indigenous languages as local, primitive and non- standard. Therefore in such schools, the moment you get to the compound, you will see an inscription boldly written in a conspicuous place: "Vernacular speaking is highly prohibited". This is in preference for English and any student caught speaking any language but English or French is heavily punished by beating or fining.
- iv. Proprietors of Nursery and primary schools disregard the provision in the National policy on Education with impunity.
- v. Indigenous languages are accorded an inferior status on the curriculum
- vi. There is a great disparity in the amount of time devoted to the study of indigenous languages compared with English at school. For example in secondary schools in the Yoruba-speaking states, Yoruba is taught for three periods of 40 minutes each per week, whereas English language and literature are taught for five and three periods respectively, making eight periods per week, regardless of the fact that English has only two components whereas Yoruba has three components- language, literature and culture, altogether share three periods, this is lopsided.
- vii. In the recruitment of teachers and allocation of teachers to schools, English and science teachers are given priority by the Ministry of Education and school principals. Even when the schools' Board or the Ministry of Education cannot immediately provide such teachers, they are appointed and paid under the auspices of Parents Teachers' Association.
- viii. In some cases graduates of other courses like History, Political Science, Sociology, Religious Studies, etc who are native speakers of Yoruba are asked to teach Yoruba to make up their periods. This is predicated upon the erroneous belief that anybody who is a native speaker of a language can teach it regardless of his area of specialization

**Summary**

This lecture has discussed the concept 'linguistic imperialism' by explaining it comprehensively. You have also been shown different instances of the manifestation of this 'epidemic'. It is an epidemic because it is responsible for the high rate of language death we can safely conclude that linguistic imperialism is to language what HIV/AIDS is to men.

**Post-Test**

1. Linguistic imperialism is to language what HIV/AIDs is to the human race. Discuss.
2. Discuss five manifestations of linguistic imperialism in Nigeria

**References**

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## LECTURE NINE

# Linguistic Pluralism

### Preamble

*People brought up within a western society often think that monolingualism that forms a routine part of their existence is the normal way of life for all but a few special people. They are wrong. Multilingualism is the natural way of life for hundreds of millions all over the world. There are no official statistics, but with around 5,000 languages co-existing in fewer than 200 countries, ... it is obvious that an enormous amount of language contact must be taking place; and the inevitable result of languages in contact is multilingualism, which is most commonly found in an individual as bilingualism.*

*(crystal, D.1987:360)*

### Introduction

There is no clear indication as to whether there is a limit to human multilingual ability. Cardinal Giuseppe Mezzofanti (1771-1849) a librarian at the Vatican, is reputed to have been able to speak 50 languages (most with great fluency), to understand a further 20, and to translate 114. The Victorian diplomat Sir John Bowring (1792-1872) was said to have spoken 100 languages and read another 100. There was a Hungarian who learnt seven languages during his life, but five became dormant. His mother tongue was Hungarian. At the age of 4, he moved to Poland, learned polish, and stopped using Hungarian. When he was 6 he returned to Hungary, and had to relearn Hungarian. At the age of 10, he moved to Romania, using Romainian in school and Yiddish socially. Two years later he returned to Hungary where in school he learnt German, English and Hebrew. This was followed by

six years in Germany, during which time German became his dominant language. At 25, he moved to the US where English became dominant. This lecture examines the concept of linguistic pluralism, a situation whereby the co-existence of different language groups and their right to maintain and cultivate their language on an equitable basis are promoted by the government.

### **Objectives**

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

1. explain the concept of linguistic pluralism vividly; and
2. cite instances of countries where linguistic pluralism is practiced

### **Pre-Test**

What do you understand by ‘linguistic pluralism’?

### **CONTENT**

Linguistic pluralism is a deliberate attempt to promote and encourage the coexistence of different language groups and their right to maintain and cultivate their languages on an equitable basis. In Belgium, for example, French is officially recognized in the South Flemish in the North, German in the east, while Brussels forms a bilingual French – Flemish district.

The United States has also promoted some forms of pluralism at different times in its history. Louisiana was granted official bilingual status prior to its statehood. Let us now come down to our immediate constituency- Nigeria. Nigeria language policy promotes linguistic pluralism. This has been done through the government policy that states that at the pre-primary level of education the medium of instruction will be principally the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community.

At the primary level, the medium of instruction at the initial level i.e. primary 1-3 is the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community and at a later stage e.g. primary 4-6 English. At the secondary level, the medium of instruction is principally English while the government also recommends that in order to appreciate the importance of language in the educational process and as a means of preserving the people’s culture, and in the interest of national unity,

each child should learn one of the three major languages, other than his own mother tongue. This policy tends towards trilingualism/multilingualism. At least an average Nigeria is expected to know three languages by this policy statement.

In India, Hindi, English and 14 regional languages are officially recognized as official languages. Most of the Arabic speaking countries of the world recognized Arabic and English officially and most African countries officially recognize English, French and other national languages, depending on whether they are Anglophone or Francophone (English-speaking or French speaking Countries).

Although a policy based on a linguistic pluralism appears to be a democratic way of dealing with co-existing linguistic varieties, it nevertheless has its own weaknesses. Canada for example, has a language policy based on both territorial and individual rights. Both French and English are recognized as official languages and speakers of both languages have access to public services in their own languages. Yet, this policy has failed to reduce the rate of discrimination against and assimilation of French-speaking minorities living in Western Canada where the overwhelming majority is English-speaking. In New Brunswick, the only officially bilingual province of Canada (since 1969), French speakers find it difficult to assert their rights even though they make up 34.5 percent of the provincial population.

### **Summary**

This lecture focused on the concept of linguistic pluralism. It cited several examples of countries where government policies promote linguistic pluralism, these are Belgium, USA, Nigeria, Canada etc. the lecture also emphasizes clearly that multilingualism is the norm, while monolingualism is the exception in the world.

### **Post-Test**

1. What is 'linguistic pluralism'?
2. Many countries of the world officially promote the co-existence of different language groups and their right to maintain and cultivate their languages on an equitable basis. Discuss

## References

Crystal, D. (1987) *“The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language”* Cambridge University Press.

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## LECTURE TEN

# Methods of Language Attitude Research

### Preamble

*Why does language provide such a fascinating object of study? Perhaps because of its unique role in capturing the breadth of human thought and endeavour. We look around us, and are awed by the variety of several thousand languages and dialects, expressing a multiplicity of world views, literatures, and ways of life.*

*(Crystal, D.1987:1)*

### Introduction

Every man or every group of people reacts in quite different ways to different things, ideas, events etc. not excepting language. By broad classification, such attitude or reactions are either negative or positive. A reaction or attitude of a kind is believed to be dependent on, and informed by, a number of factors- historical, political, economic, ethnic, educational or religious. And, at times, an attitude can be a product of an unexplainable phobia or love for a given phenomenon (see Babajide 2001). Just like any other sensitive academic issues, language attitude has been studied by scholars through different methods. It is our goal in this lecture to examine some of the methods of determining attitudes towards language.

## Objectives

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

1. identify different methods of language attitude research;
2. discuss the direct and indirect methods of language attitude research; and
3. illustrate the methodological problems associated with language attitude research and how to overcome them.

## Pre-Test

Enumerate the three best – known methods of language attitude research associated with the direct method

## CONTENT

Attitudes towards language are often the reflection of attitudes towards members of various ethnic groups (Fasold, 1984:148)

## Methods of Language Attitude Research

Methods for determining attitudes about language can be either direct or indirect.

- A. **Direct:** There are 3 best – known methods of language attitude research. They are questionnaire, interviews, and observation
- i. **Questionnaire:** This can have one of two types of questions – open or closed. Open questions give the respondent maximum freedom to present her views, but also allow her to stray from the subject and are very difficult to score. In an open –questionnaire, respondents may be asked: “Describe your reactions to this speaker” after they have heard a taped sample. In a closed question, the respondent is given a particular format to use in recording responses. Most closed question formats involve Yes-No answers, multiple choice, or ranking schemes. Closed questions are much easier for respondents to deal with and are easy to score, but they force respondents to answer in the researcher’s terms instead of their own.
  - ii. **Interviews:** Interviews are like open-questionnaire but without the questionnaire. A fieldworker personally asks attitude questions and records the responses orally. The burden of recording open questions is removed from the subject, making it easier to elicit open responses, and the

interviewer can guide the conversation if the subject – tends to stray from the point. The major disadvantage in interviewing is that it is extremely time-consuming and expensive. It takes a fieldworker longer time to conduct one interview than to administer 50 or 100 questionnaires in a group session.

- iii. **Observation:** This is the least obtrusive method and the one designed to collect the most naturalistic data. A favoured method for anthropological or ethnographic research, observation refers to the recording of people's activities by the researcher as he watches them. Attitudes must either be assumed to be the same thing as overt behaviour, or be inferred from observed behaviour. Agheyisi and Fishman (1970:50) fault observation for its "excessive subjectivity and privacy", but believe that "such data can be subjected to the same rigorous standards of scoring, counting and rating as data collected through more formal methods.

- B. **Indirect:** A totally indirect method would be designed to keep the subject from knowing that her language attitudes are being investigated. One example of this kind of approach is described by Cooper and Fishman (1974:16-17). They were interested in testing the hypothesis that attitudes towards Hebrew in Israel make it more effective as a language for scientific arguments. Arabic on the other hand, would be more effective for conveying traditional Islamic arguments. To test the hypothesis, a group of Muslim adults who were bilingual in Arabic & Hebrew were asked to listen to four one- minute passages recorded by a fluent speaker of both languages one passage decried the evils of tobacco and gave scientific evidence in support of that position. It was recorded once in each language. The other passage, also recorded once in each language, argued against the use of liquor, and used traditional Islamic arguments for support. The respondents were divided into two groups, one of which listened to the tobacco passage in Hebrew and the liquor passage in Arabic, and the other group listened to the reverse combination. Respondents were then asked if they would support increased taxes on tobacco or liquor to discourage their use.

The differences were dramatic. The respondents who had heard the scientific tobacco passage in Hebrew said they supported the text on tobacco by a two-to-one ratio over those who had heard the same kind of argument in Arabic. The reverse results were obtained in the

case of the traditional arguments against liquor; twice as many of the respondents who heard the argument in Arabic said they supported the tax increase than those who heard it in Hebrew. The hypothesis appears to be supported, but the subjects had no idea that their language attitudes were being investigated at all. Their attention had been diverted to the issues of the evils of tobacco and liquor.

### **Methodological Problem of Language Attitude Research**

Attitudes are sometimes felt to be a sensitive personal or even a sensitive political matter. As a result there is often a marked difference between attitudes uttered in public and those uttered privately – as well as those uttered in an interview situation. For this reason, the relationship between the interviewer and the informant is of crucial importance. Informants must be assured of the interviewer's good intentions and solidarity with the speech community, if they are to express their opinions freely and openly.

#### **Summary**

This lecture has discussed the methods of language attitude research. The lecture identified two basic methods of language attitude research- Direct and indirect. The direct method has three approaches, these are: questionnaire, interviews and observation. All these have been comprehensively discussed. The lecture is rounded off with a brief discussion on methodological problems of language attitude research.

### **Post-Test**

1. A totally indirect method of language attitude research is designed to keep the subject from knowing that her language attitude s being investigated. Discuss.
2. The direct method of language attitude research has three approaches, what are they? Discuss each of them briefly

### **References**

- Agheyisi, Rebecca and Fishman, Joshua (1970) *Language Attitude Studies: A Brief Survey of Methodological Approaches*, Anthropological Linguistics, 12(5): 137-154.
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## LECTURE ELEVEN

# Language Shift

### Introduction

Language shift is a process whereby a community (often a linguistic minority) gradually abandons its original language and shifts to another language. For example, between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, Ireland shifted from being almost entirely Irish-speaking to being almost entirely English speaking. Shift, most often, takes place gradually and domain by domain, with the original language being retained longest in informal family-type contexts. The ultimate end-point of language shift is language death. It is our aim in this lecture to discuss the factors that occasion language shift.

### Objectives

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

1. explain the concept of language shift; and
2. discuss the factors that cause language shift

### Pre-Test

What do you understand by language shift?

### CONTENT

Language shift simply means that a community gives up a language completely in favour of another one. The members of the community, where the shift has taken place, have collectively chosen a new language, where an old one was in use before. Usually, language shift concerns the shift of small, low- status linguistic groups who shift to the language of a larger, higher- status linguistic groups.

### **Causes of Language Shift**

1. *Migration*: When people move from their original habitation to another place, they encounter a new language, as a result of their need to communicate with the people they meet in the new environment; they may have to learn the language of the new place. After learning the new language, they may voluntarily give up their former language in favour of the new language. A typical example here is the Turks in Germany and Bulgaria.

2. *Industrialization*: Urbanization and other economic reasons can cause language shift. Industrialization and urbanization attract people from different linguistic backgrounds. When this happens, there is language contact which results in language conflict and competition. This may eventually result in language shift.

3. *Higher Prestige of the language being shifted to*: When a small, low- prestige language is in contact with a big, high- prestige language, the former gradually yields to the latter. The obvious example is English and many African languages. Also, in Northern Nigeria, many languages (for instance Kanuri) are losing their speakers to Hausa which is a language of high –prestige in Nigeria.

4. *Conquest*: With the Arab conquest of Egypt in the 7th century, the process began which finalized the displacement of Coptic. Before then, Coptic had been the spoken language of Egypt. The decline of Coptic as a spoken language was caused by heavy discrimination from the new Arab rulers. Soon after the conquest, Arabic became the only language used in administration and the pressure to convert to Islam increased.

5. *Religion*: people may wish to learn a language because of its significance as a language of religion. A typical example here is Arabic (the language of Islam) which is spreading by leaps and bounds in Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Northern Nigeria, etc.

6. *Government Policy*: When government policy favours a language, that language attracts speakers from different linguistic background. For example, Nigerian policy recognizes English as the official language and medium of instruction in schools. As a result many of the elite have completely shifted from the use of their native Nigerian

languages to the use of English. This has brought about a new generation of Nigerians who are monolingual in English.

7. Natural disaster such as floods, volcanic eruptions, famine and other such events can be the cause of major movements of population. New language contact situations then emerge as people are resettled. This may eventually force the people affected to shift completely to the use of the new language.

### **Summary**

This lecture explained the concept of language shift expositively and cites examples of communities that have collectively abandoned their language and acquired a new one. Seven factors which can cause language shift are highlighted.

### **Post- Test**

1. What is language shift?
2. What are the factors responsible for language shift?

### **References**

- Peter Trudgill (1992) *“Introducing Language and Society”*  
Penguin Books Limited
- Crystal, D. (1987): *“The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language”* Cambridge University Press.

## LECTURE TWELVE

# Factors that influence Language Attitude

### Introduction

Language attitude refers to the predispositions, reactions or feelings of people towards a particular language. It may be positive or negative, favourable or unfavourable. People tend to be more favourably and positively disposed to a language that has:

- i. a considerable national/ international coverage of users;
- ii. a metropolitan or cosmopolitan status
- iii. a considerable numerical strength and some measure of economic or political power; and
- iv. a sufficiently reliable codified form (orthography).

On the other hand, people's attitude towards a language will be negative if the language is:

- i. restricted in use to a few native speakers;
- ii. a mere vernacular; not yet codified
- iii. associated with rurality
- iv. irrelevant to the socio-economic and political needs of the people.

Our goal in this lecture is to examine factors that influence language attitude.

### Objectives

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

- 1. identify the factors that influence language attitude; and
- 2. discuss them convincingly

### **Pre-Test**

Discuss five factors that influence language attitude.

### **CONTENT**

Factors that influence language Attitude

1. **Historical Factor:** Questions of history may influence language attitude either positively or negatively
2. **Socio-cultural Factor:** A language associated with rich cultural practices may attract positive attitude. Examples are Greek and Latin in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century
3. **Economic Reasons:** A Language that offers benefits capable of empowering individuals will attract a positive attitude. English language attracts positive attitude from Nigerians because it is seen as a language that offers economic benefits, people regard it as a language of upward mobility.
4. **Political Reasons:** political domination can attract hatred towards a particular language, in the same vein, language associated with power is more likely to attract positive attitude. In Nigeria and other Anglophone (English-speaking countries) in West Africa, English language is regarded as a language that is associated with power.
5. **Ethnicity:** Attitude towards a particular ethnic group may also affect attitude towards the language of that group. Hausa has assumed the status of a lingua franca in Northern Nigeria as a result of positive attitude towards the Hausas.
6. **Religion:** A language that is associated with a particular religion may attract positive attitude from people. For this reason Latin attracts a positive attitude from Roman Catholic and Arabic attracts positive attitude from Muslims
7. **Rivalry/ competition:** Rivalry leads to mutual suspicion which often results in prejudice, stereotypes and subtle linguistic hostility. This is the kind of situation among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria. No Nigerian language has been able to assume the status of national

language ‘as a result of healthy rivalry and competition among the different ethnic groups.

8. **Language Policy:** When the policy of the government of a particular country recognizes a language and confers a specific status upon it, such language attracts positive attitude from people. English and the three major languages of Nigeria- Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo continue to attract positive attitude from Nigerians because of the recognition given them in the constitution of Nigeria.

9. **Education:** In many countries of the world, English language has continued to attract a positive attitude from many people as a result of the fact that people regard it as the medium of instruction in schools.

10. **Inexplicable love or hatred for a particular language:** People may have negative or positive attitude towards a language for reasons unknown to them.

#### **Summary**

This lecture explained the concept of language attitude. It looks at factors that can confer positive attitude on a language and at the same time explores factors that may attract a negative attitude to a language. Finally, it examines ten factors which influence people’s attitude (either positive or negative) towards a language.

#### **Post-Test**

1. What do you understand by language attitude?
2. Discuss seven factors that influence people’s attitude towards a language

#### **References**

Peter Trudgill (1992) “*Introducing Language and Society*”  
Penguin Books Limited

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## LECTURE THIRTEEN

# Attributes of Language

### Introduction

It is customary to hear people commenting about a language or its dialects. Such comments do not only tell us about the language or the dialect in question, but they reflect the people's attitude and prejudices to the language and its speakers because attitude towards a particular language is a reflection of attitude to its speakers. It is this comment and statement of prejudices that constitute attitude. Language attitude is distinguished from other attitudes by the fact that they are precisely about language.

*Language attitude studies that are current in sociolinguistic are categorized into three:*

1. Those which are about language itself. Under this kind of study, people are asked if they consider a given variety of language or the language itself as rich or poor, beautiful or ugly, harsh, etc.
2. Those which deal with community –wide stereotyped impressions towards a particular language or variety i.e. how the community as a whole regards the language. This kind of study reflects the value attached to particular language in a community i.e. the Received Pronunciation of B.B.C. English spoken in Southern England is regarded as the Queen's English, (the standard variety), Oyo variety of Yoruba which is the closest among the dialects to the standard variety is prestigious as a result of the group of people who speak it.
3. Studies about all kinds of language behaviour towards a language as a result of specific attitude or beliefs. Under this, topics like language usage and choice, language planning and reinforcement, language learning and views about interdialectal mutual intelligibility. It is our aim in this unit to examine four

attributes highlighted by Stewart (1968) which contribute to language attitudes.

### **Objectives**

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

1. identify three types of language attitude studies that are current in sociolinguistic; and
2. highlight four attributes of language which contribute to language attitudes as identified by Stewart (1968).

### **Pre-Test**

List and discuss the four attributes of language which according to Stewart (1968) contribute to language attitude.

### **CONTENT**

Stewart (1968) highlights four attributes which contribute to language attitudes. The attitude of a speech community towards their language will be favourable or unfavourable depending on whether their language itself satisfies the requirements of these elements. These are standardization, autonomy, historicity and vitality.

1. Standardization is associated with codification and acceptance within a community of users of a norm defining correct usage. The two operative words in this definition are: codification and acceptance. Codification involves postulation of rules as to how a language should be written or spoken. It could be a specialized endeavour on the part of government or privates who are actively interested e.g. writers and teachers. Having codified a language, it must satisfy people's acceptability. For example, an agent can codify and undertake to make it acceptable to people, it can be an educational system or mass media. Standardization facilitates a positive attitude towards a language because it makes the language accessible to many people. Standardization is of particular importance in situations where there are several dialects of a language. For example, in the Yoruba speaking areas, people are favourably disposed towards the standard Yoruba because it brings people of various dialect backgrounds together. It also enables teachers to reach out to a wide spectrum of students who speak different dialects. The general attitude towards a standard language is



favourable. While some are willing to learn it, others will be willing to perfect their knowledge in it.

2. Another factor which engenders a positive attitude towards a language is AUTONOMY. It refers to the status of linguistic system as an independent one, one that does not have to be referred to in connection with another language. It is unique. The issue of autonomy borders on some questions: Is the language a complete whole or an entity on its own? Is it a dialect of a bigger language? In relation to these questions, two types of relationship are usually established between languages. They could be ABSTAND or AUSBAU relationship.
  - i. ABSTAND: Refers to languages that are logically different and that the relationship between them hardly needs to be proved. For instance English and Yoruba or English and Igbo are distinct autonomous languages.
  - ii. In ASBAU relationship, the languages are similar enough to make people think one may likely be a dialect of the other. For example, Yoruba, Isekiri and Igala are closely related languages as to suggest that they are dialects of the same language. Other examples are: French and Italian, Cantonese and Mandarene, Isoko and Urhobo.
3. The third input to language attitude is HISTORICITY. This is closely related to autonomy. This is the effort to establish a certain history for the language. This again relates more to language in AUSBAU relationship. For languages in AUSBAU relationship there is need to prove that each developed normally over time, that they existed in the distant past and not recent development. The speakers may defend their language by saying it belongs to their progenitors and any attempt to subjugate the language is usually rebuffed or frowned at.
4. Another factor which provides motivation for positive attitude towards a language is VITALITY. It refers to the existence of native speakers of a language. It also refers to the use a particular language is put within a speech community. For instance, it may be used for vital purposes e.g. official and educational purposes, apart from the day to day use.

**Summary**

In this lecture, we have examined four attributes of a language which according to Stewart (1968) can attract positive attitude to a language. These are:

- i. standardization
- ii. autonomy
- iii. historicity, and
- iv. vitality

**Post-Test**

1. Mention the four attributes (identified by Stewart) of a language that attract a positive attitude to it.
2. Discuss any three of them

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## LECTURE FOURTEEN

# English Language in Nigeria

### Preamble

*English is used as an official or semi- official language in over 60 countries, and has a prominent place in a further 20. It is either dominant or well established in all six continents. It is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, medicine, diplomacy, sports, international competitions, pop music, and advertising.*

*(Crystal,D. 1987:358)*

### Introduction

Over two- thirds of the world's scientists write in English. Three-quarters of the world's mail is written in English. Of all the information in the world's electronic retrieval systems, 80% is stored in English. English radio programmes are received by over 150 million in over 120 countries. Over 50 million children study English as an additional language at primary level; over 80 million study it at secondary level (these figures exclude China). In any one year, the British council helps a quarter of a million foreign students to learn English, in various parts of the world. In the USA alone, 337,000 foreign students were registered in 1983. It is our aim in this chapter to explore the role of English language in Nigeria.

### Objective

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to discuss the role of English language as a linguistic asset in Nigeria.

## **Pre-Test**

What role does English language play in Nigeria?

## **CONTENT**

### ***Historical Background***

Hook (1975) opines that English language began from being spoken by a relatively few thousands Anglo-Saxon invaders in the fifth century. Between that time and now, the language has experienced some 'invasions' which rather than lead to its death resulted in making it a global language. Broughton et al (1980) stressed that of the four or five thousand living languages, English is by far the most widely used because it is either used as a mother tongue in some countries or as a second language in others.

English language penetrated Nigeria as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century through the Europeans who came for the purpose of trading, explorations, evangelizing and colonizing Nigeria in particular, and Africans in general (Baugh and Cable 1978). In this same way, the language has spread to other parts of the world and has become a permanent linguistic feature of the people with whom it has had contact. English language as an international language is spoken in all the continents of the world today, although, the degree of usage as well as functionality differs from place to place. In Nigeria, a country which is linguistically fragmented, the English language is today playing a messianic role because it facilitates inter- ethnic communication among the multi-faceted, multi- lingual and multi-cultural people of Nigeria. But for the language, it would have been impossibility for the people of Nigeria to live, trade and interact meaningfully among themselves irrespective of the variants of the English language used in the country (Kolawole, 2004).

*The role of English language in Nigeria can be summarized as follows:*

- i. English language is the legacy of colonialism in Nigeria
- ii. It is Nigeria's second language
- iii. It is taught as a subject from pre-primary to tertiary level of education in Nigeria.
- iv. It is the medium of instruction in schools (language of teaching).
- v. It is a restricted lingua franca in Nigeria (among the educated Nigerians).

- vi. It is predominant in all domains; public administration, education, commerce, industry, mass media, religion, law, entertainment etc.
- vii. It is regarded as the language of upward mobility by Nigerians; therefore, people have a positive attitude towards it.
- viii. It is the official language of Nigeria
- ix. Nigerians study it in higher institutions more than any other language.
- x. It is the language of politics, legislation, law, literature, romance, science and technology.

### **Summary**

This lecture discussed the role of English language in Nigeria. It traced its origin to the 15<sup>th</sup> century when the Europeans had contact with the country. The conclusion we can draw from the important roles played by English in Nigeria is that it is no more a foreign language in the country. It is our second language which plays more important role than any of our indigenous language.

### **Post-Test**

1. English language is not a foreign language in Nigeria. Discuss
2. Discuss the roles played by English language as a linguistic asset in Nigeria.

### **References**

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## LECTURE FIFTEEN

# Consequences of Language Attitude in Nigeria

### Preamble

*Because of the heterogeneous multiplicity and cultures in Nigeria and because English language is the unifying tongue with great instrumental significance, the attitude of Nigerians to English is strongly positive... Nigerians are more favourably disposed in attitudes to French than other European languages and the Muslim majority in Northern Nigeria has positive attitudes towards the use of Arabic. As far as Nigerian indigenous languages are concerned, they draw positive attitudes only from their native speakers and a few non-native speakers who were born or have lived long enough among the native speakers of such language in their land as to have fallen in love with it.*

*(Babajide, 2001:11-12).*

### Introduction

The extent to which one language or type of language is favoured or preferred depends on the community's perception of the role or status of that language type in the context of the prevailing linguistic attitude in the society. English and other European languages will continue to have a favourable attitude.... With the upsurge in nationalism, however, one wonders whether the status of indigenous language will remain the same in the near future. (see Oyetade, 2001:25).

Every decision that is taken in life has a consequence, likewise, every attitude one manifests towards a thing, a person, or a language has a definite consequence. It is our aim in this unit to discuss the possible consequences of language attitude.

## **Objective**

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to expatiate the consequences of language attitude.

## **Pre- Test**

What do you think are the likely consequences of language attitude?

## **CONTENT**

Negative or positive attitudes towards a language can have a profound effect on the users of the language. one effect concerns the learning of that language, in situations of language contact between major and minor languages, the majority language is often regarded with positive attitude and it is often learned both by the majority and minority language speakers. Hausa is the major language of Northern Nigeria. It is officially recognized as one of the three major languages in the country. As a result of this many other languages are giving way to it. Although, the Fulanis conquered the Hausas during the Fulani Jihad ( ) yet, Ffulde is bowing to Hausa language because of its perceived prestige.

French is not the only language spoken in France, but French is being encouraged at the expense of other smaller languages and that is why the interest for French is looming. Some of the other languages spoken in France are Breton and Alsatian. In Canada, the majority are English speakers while the minorities are French speakers, but we discover that the French speakers understand and are able to speak both English and French; while the English speaking Canadians are not able to speak French but English alone. There are two sets of language speakers in Belgium, the Walloons and the Flemish the former speaks Dutch and the latter French. One observes that those that speak Dutch also understand French but the other cannot speak Dutch with French. In United States of America, English is not the only language spoken. Other languages that are spoken are Haitian Creole, Armenian, Portuguese, Italian, Chinese, Spanish, etc (see Crystal 1987:361).

Language attitude also influences the learning of first language. In her study of German Hungarian bilingualism in Oberwert, Gal reports that because German is the national language and symbolizes the urban feature- oriented society, it is preferred over Hungarian, the language of the old way of life of the peasant community. Therefore, children of monolingual German or bilingual German- Hungarian virtually never learn Hungarian. In fact, parents make sure their children speak

faultless German, so that they can pass as monolingual and dissociate themselves from the stigmatized Hungarian peasant identity.

Negative attitude towards language can affect its everyday use. e.g. speakers of a language may refuse to speak it in public. John J. Gumperz reports that in an Australian village, on the Dustnian-Yugoslav border, where both sloven and German are spoken, it is considered impolite to speak Sloven in the presence of German speakers, whether they are from within or outside the village. He noted that the injunction against speaking Sloven is so strong to the extent that tourists can live in this village for weeks without noticing that any other language is spoken apart from German.

However, the stigmatization of any language may engender a positive attitude towards the language. It may help its speakers to reinforce the solidarity and loyalty of their group to the language. Even though, the use of a stigmatized language may be associated with a less prestigious group, at least in the eyes of the majority group, it may reinforce the groups' quality and symbolize solidarity for them. In summary, language attitude can lead to language loyalty, language maintenance, language shift, language deprivation and language extinction (death).

### **Summary**

Language attitude either positive or negative has a sure consequence. If positive, it can lead to language learning, language loyalty and language maintenance. If negative, it can lead to language stigmatization, language shift and eventually language death, which is the final stage.

### **Post-Test**

1. What are the effects of positive attitude towards a language?
2. What are the possible consequences of negative attitude towards a language?
3. What is your attitude towards your mother tongue?



## References

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