The Creativity and Borrowing in the Use of English Language by Second Language Speakers in Nigeria: A Sociolinguistic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The cognitive power of human mind to imagined, create and borrow new skills or ideas in different field of human endeavour such as sciences and technology, the languages users were not left behind. The English language spoken in Nigeria can be identified with many creativity and borrowing in its usage as a result of bilingual, multilingual and sociolinguistic influences on the English language by the native languages. However, the aim of this paper is to discuss the meaning and functions of language and to identify the creativity and borrowing by the users of English language as second language L2/target language TL. The work also, identified the causes of such creativity and borrowing in our daily communication and come up with samples of some native words turned to English. The paper adopts an appraisal to trace these words, their source (language) and their meaning. This major aim was achieved through consultation of bilingual and multilingual users of English, linguist, previous research, language books, journals, newspapers, magazines and other electronic sources of data collection. However, it is observed that a speech community of the users of English as a second language must have certain percentage of their native language.

Keywords: Creativity, Borrowing, Native language, Second language,

INTRODUCTION

The creativity in language is significant as it helps the users of a particular language to form new structures, new words or phrases. The creativity can be seen when a structural elements of human language can be combined to produce new utterances for various reasons in their day to day use of Language and Communication, which neither the speaker nor his hearers may ever have made or heard before and which both sides understand without difficulty. Nigeria is multilingual society with many dialects within the languages, and the speakers of those languages are interacting with one another, and the natives can easily recognize where one comes from through mode and manner of his/her spoken language as well as the influence of his/her mother tongue when employ the medium other than the mother tongue. However, English language has come to take roots in Nigeria, having been inherited through our colonial experience.

It has become the second or official language of many countries, such as Ghana, Australia, New Zealand as well as Nigeria.

Also, in Nigeria a new variety has emerged which is referred to as Nigerian English. Ard (1981) states that ''there is no phonological representation of a second language that is automatically available for a learner. The learner must construct one….'' Therefore, the position of English in language ecology of Nigeria plays a vital role as explain by different scholars. The English language is spoken by the majority speakers of the native languages and that makes it national language. In this sense, it is a lingua Franca, which is a common language that people of different ethnic backgrounds are used to communicate. Roger Bell (1976) states that;'…by adoption of language of the ex-rulers as the national official language on orientation which implies a greater valuation of the achievement of operational efficiency….''

English has number of roles which include the following broad areas; *education*, as medium of instruction, National Policy of Education (1981) states that, 'The junior secondary school student shall study English and two Nigerian languages while the senior secondary school student shall study English and one Nigerian language.' *Social life*, English is used as language of debate in national assembly, state and even the local government legislative council. The Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, (updated in 1999). *Economic life*, Roger quoted in Banjo (1972). '…all other lives in their mother tongue but use English basically for business and official purposes.' *Communication*, it is the language of mass media: radio, TV, newspapers and magazines. *Global life*, the entire world is becoming a small village, and the English language is use for international connection. *Job opportunity*, because it is the language of administration, you will not be able to work in the civil service or any reputable organization if you cannot speak and/ or write in English. However, the main objectives of this study are: –

- To discuss the meaning and functions of language.
- To discuss the terms 'creativity' and 'borrowing' among multilinguals and bilinguals.
- To trace the causes of creativity and borrowing by the users of English as a second language.
- To come up with samples of some native words turned to English and vice versa

The Meaning and Functions of Language

Linguists understand 'language' as a system of arbitrary vocal signs. Language is rule-governed, creative, universal, innate, and learned, all at the same time. It is also distinctly human. (Laurel, 2000). Language is a concept or phenomenon we know, and so many attempts have been made at its definition. Some say "language is a means of communication", but we have found that it is possible to communicate without Language. With facial expressions or looks, you can communicate with another person effectively. Language is a systematic way for communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventional signs, sounds, gestures or marks, having understood meanings (Webster, 1990).

Another definition of Language by Edward Sapir (1961) as cited by Osondu, (2014) says "Language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntary produced symbols". Among such general definitions of the term "Language" is one which says "Language is a system of human communication, in speech or writing, by means of a structured arrangement of sounds into morphemes which are in turn arranged to form words" (Shirley, 2001). "Language is also regarded as a system of communication. Such communication may be by speech, which is essentially effected with the tongue and lips, or by movements such as gestures, whose meanings are known to the second party.

Language is as old as human because it is their way of communication. Osondu (2014), stated that, "The origin of human language is as old as man since there has not been any record/proof of a no-linguistic era in the evolutionary trend of man's linguistic development, hence man has always communicated, either

through visual (body) or verbal language. The language functioned as phatic, the term 'Phatic communion' was used to refer to a communication between people which is not intended to seek or convey information but has the social function of establishing or maintaining social contact. For example, expressions like 'How are you?' or 'Hello' are used to start the conversation.

"We generally think of language as functioning to give expression to our thoughts ("language as a vehicle for thought"), to transmit information (the "communicative function"), or perhaps to provide the raw material for works of literature (the "narrative function"). But language has many more functions, for example, to get others to do things, to express emotions or feelings, to maintain social intercourse (as in greetings or talk about the weather — the "phatic" function n), to make promises, to ask questions, to bring about states of affairs, to talk to oneself, and even to talk about language itself, what is known as metalanguage 'language turned back on itself', which is common in everyday life, not just among linguists. The idea that language simply expresses thought is a result of the philosophical and logical tradition, which treats language as a collection of propositions consisting of referent(s) and a predication which have truth-value (are true or false). However, in normal language use, speakers are not always committing themselves to the truth of a proposition; in fact, they do so only in the case of assertions or statements. Likewise, the idea that language has a communicative function, that it conveys new information, derives from its use in fairly restricted contexts, such as in the classroom or the newspaper, or when gossiping. In fact, the most important and frequent function of language is probably its phatic function. **Linguistic Signs**, In the view of linguists, human language consists of signs, which are defned as things that stand for or represent something else. Linguistic signs involve sequences of sounds which represent concrete objects and events as well as abstractions. Signs may be related to the things they represent in a number of ways. The philosopher C.S. Peirce, recognized three types of signs: **a. iconic**, which resemble the things they represent (as do, for example, photographs, diagrams, star charts, or chemical models); **b. indexical**, which point to or have a necessary connection with the things they represent (as do, for example, smoke to fire, a weathercock to the direction of the wind, a symptom to an illness, a smile to happiness, or a frown to anger); and **c. symbolic**, which are only conventionally related to the thing they represent (as do, for example, a flag to a nation, a rose to love, a wedding ring to marriage). It turns out that there is very little in language which is iconic. Onomatopoeic words, which resemble the natural sounds they represent, are a likely candidate. However, while "bow-wow" might represent the sound of a dog in English, for example, other languages represent the sound quite differently (for example, "guau" in Spanish or "amh-amh" in Irish). So even such words seem to be highly conventionalized. Certain aspects of word order are indeed iconic." (Laurel, 2000).

However, considering the above definitions and functions of language on one hand, we can see Language as a natural gift to the human beings; on the other hand, every normal child at birth is endowed with the capacity for language. That is the reason the child acquires the sound and the grammar of his native language or mother tongue (L1/MT) as he grows up in the environment of the particular language. There is a close affinity between man and language in the sense that language resembles man in many ramifications. Languages for instance, are born, they grow and develop, they change and shift, and they have families and 'social relations' (Adedimeji, 2005; Lawal, 2004).

Man is a social animal and he loves to interact and share his ideas with the people in the society. According to Humboldt 'Man is man through language alone'. The word communication is derived from the Latin word 'communis' which means to share, to transmit or to impart. Richards, Platt and Weber (1985) define the term communication as 'The exchange of ideas, information etc. between two or more persons'. Peter Little in his book 'Oral and Written communication' defines Communication as "the process by which information is transmitted between individuals and /or organisations so that an understanding response results". According to Wales (1989), 'Communication is broadly the process of exchanging information or messages and human language, the speech and writing are the most significant and most complex communication system' (p. 79). Kaul (2000) comments, 'Communication is a two-way process in which

there is an exchange and progression of ideas towards a mutually accepted direction or goal' (p. 2). Basically communication is the process of transferring meanings. Today a lot of significance is given to the enrichment of communication skills. Good communication skills have become a key to success today. Good communication skills help us in a variety of ways as they play a very significant role in career, building self-confidence and developing social contacts.

The Creativity in Language

Language is a unique phenomenon on this earth. Language has creativity and productivity. One of the specialities of language is that a child listens to some utterances from his mother tongue, and he is able to produce new utterances that he has not heard or listened to before. According to some scholars' animals can communicate, however, their messages as well as symbols are limited in quantity and dimension. For example, bees can communicate only about the nectar. It has been observed that Dolphins, in spite of their intelligence, use a large number of clicks, whistles and squawks to communicate merely about the same thing over and over again. Human languages, on the other hand, are much more interestingly unlimited. Human communication is structurally complex while the animal communication is not. Animal communication does not display the feature of creativity, where as human communication is creative.

A lot of new vocabulary items are created in language. For example, Milton has made use of the word 'pandemonium' in 'Paradise Lost'. Creativity may consist in syntactic or semantic deviation. Literary language very often manifests a high degree of creativity. For example, Dylan Thomas in one of his poems uses the phrase 'A grief ago' (Deepak, n.d.).

However, the creativity as an attribute of language does not mean language incomprehensibility. This simply means, the users of a given language made up of various parts but logically connected constituents that can properly joint together to express unlimited ideas. Also, the flexibility attribute of language shows that, language is not an unreasonably rigid means of communication but one that can be modified in different ways to express different ideas.

Osondu, (2014) states that, "the non-human means of communication is not a complex one compared to human language. That is why Monkeys, Birds, etc. make the same sound to alert others of the presence or discovery of something like food in a particular area but the sound cannot show whether the food is maize, rice or meat. As a result of language flexibility, one can say; 'You close that door' (to a subordinate) in a given context. While the same person would say; 'please close that door' or 'kindly close that door sir' and the same message will be understood. One can equally say something and mean the opposite, yet the intended meaning will not be lost.

Another view to unfold the concept of creativity in language by some scholars includes; the definition by Mahfouz, (2007), cited in Tinuoye, (2003), As thus;

"Language is *creative* for it provide the analogical basis for man's ability to generate new sentences and understand utterances heard for the first time. The imaginative manipulation of the interlocking linguistic systems allows orators, poets and writers to explore human emotions and experiences. Language are also *unique* in their own networks of sounds and signs and they are deservedly distinguishable. And at the same time, languages are *similar* and it is this similarity that makes new languages learnable. Language is also *symbolic,* complex and subject to change (Tinuoye, 2003:7-9).

The Borrowing in language

A word copied into one language from another language. The speakers of almost every language are in contact with the speakers of other languages, and very often people take a liking to some of the words used

by their neighbours and take those words into their own language. This process is called *borrowing*, and the words that are taken over are *loan words* in the receiving language. There are several motivations for borrowing a word. The simplest is that the word is the name of something totally new to those who borrow it.

"English, for example, has borrowed whisky from Scots Gaelic, yogurt from Turkish, tomato from Nahuatl, sauna from Finnish, ukulele from Hawaiian and kangaroo from the Guugu-Yimidhirr language of Australia. The reason for this is that English speakers had never seen whisky or yogurt or tomatoes or saunas or ukuleles or kangaroos before encountering these things overseas, and so they simply took over the local names for them. Another important motivation is prestige. At any given time in any given place, some languages typically enjoy more prestige than others, and speakers of less prestigious languages are often eager to show off their command of a more prestigious language by introducing some of its words into their own speech. For example, after the Norman conquest of England, Norman French enjoyed far more prestige than English, and English-speakers reacted by borrowing huge numbers of Norman French words into English, such as picture, courage, army, treasure, language, female and even face, fool and beef; in many cases these fashionable words simply displaced their native English equivalents, which dropped out of use. (Trask, 1999)

English (or any other language) generally borrows words from other languages with which it comes into contact. English continues to enrich it's store of words by such borrowings.

Examples

Borrowed lexical item	Source language(s)
Guru	Hindi
bazaar	Persian
Sheikh	Arabic
tycoon	Japanese
dame	French

(Source: Bansal, CIEFL – Monograph 10, cited in Deepak n.d.)

Several words of Portuguese and Arabic origin have entered the vocabulary of 'Indian English' via Indian languages – zamindar, chowkidar, davakhana, sepoy (Arabic or Persia languages); ayah, caste, cobra, mosquito, peon (Portuguese); pyjama, compound, godown, bandicoot, bakshish (Asian languages).

Indian English has borrowed heavily from Indian languages. Words from Indian languages have become so much a part of Indian English that they are freely used in English language books, journals and newspapers published in India. The words of this category generally relate to the following topics:

Topic/source	Words in Indian English
Sociology	adivasi, basti, guru, namaskar, rickshaw, tamasha
Mythology	atma, avatar, mantra, Vedas, yoga
Administration	bandobast, lathi-charge, dak, panchayat, sarpanch, tahsil,
Politics	bandh, dharna, hartal, morcha, satyagraha
Titles	Babuji, Mahatma, Sahib, Sardar, Swami
Clothing	churidars, dhoti, dupatta, kurta, pyjama, sari
Food	biryani, dal, pan, papad, puri, tanduri, double-roti

Music	alap, khayal, sarangi, shehnai, table

(Source: Bansal, CIEFL – Monograph 10, cited in Deepak n.d.)

Lexical borrowing

Borrowing is a consequence of cultural contact between two language communities. Borrowing of words can go in both directions between the two language in contact, there is an asymmetry, such that more words go from one side to the other. In this regard the source language community has some advantage of power, prestige that makes the objects and ideas it brings desirable and useful to the borrowing language community. Mostly, some users of the borrowing language know the source language too, or at least enough of it to utilise the relevant word. They adopt the new word when speaking the borrowing language, it most exactly fits the idea they are trying to express. If they are bilingual in the source language, which is often the case, they may pronounce the words the same or similar to the way they pronounced in the source language.

A loan word can be also called borrowing. The abstract noun borrowing refers to the process of speakers adopting words from a source language in to their native language. Loan and borrowing are of course metaphors, because there is no literal lending process. There is no transfer from one language to another, and no returning word to the source language. And the new word can become conventionalised: part of the conventional ways of speaking in the borrowing language. In time, people in the borrowing community do not perceive the word as a loan word at all. Generally, the longer a borrowed word has been in the language, and the more frequently it is used, the more it resembles the native words of the language. (Ignatus 2017)

The origin and development of English language

In its origin, English is the native or mother tongue of the people of Britain and USA. Like any other language, a distinct feature of the English language is its varieties. These include; spoken, written, social, regional, professional and stylistic varieties. For instance, in Britain, English spoken in Northern Ireland, Wales and Yorkshire. Dialectical varieties identified by certain features as conditioned by the environment are present in the utterances. Also, the professional registers like language of law, advertisement, literature, engineering, medicine, architecture and so on. And, later in the process of its development came into contact with French and German. The development of modern English has been divided into three main phases; *The Old English*, When the Celts were influenced by the use of Latin imposed by the Roman invaders made an official language after the invasion. *The Middle English*, the Norman Conquest, which brought and assigned prominence to French, the grammar and vocabulary in this era was heavily influenced by French language. *The Modern English* began to emerge 1450 AD and spans through the renaissance, the Elizabethan era and Shakespeare. It is the period when the nation states of English took their modern form. See Crystal (1997). Brook (1958). Other includes, the Great Vowel Shift (GVS) as coined by the Danish linguist Otto Jespersen (1860-1943). A set of regular sound changes affecting the long (tense) vowels of English (Akmajian 2010).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this paper is based on the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) "convergence model", as it is useful for the discussion of this paper. Convergence (Giles 1978) has been defined as a strategy whereby individual adopt each other's communicative behaviour. Pousada (2007) quotes Guperz and Wilson (1981) saying that convergence leads to language borrowing, semantic extension, calques and increased use of certain structures due to the influence of others. The process of creativity and lexical borrowing in the use of english language among the bilingual speakers in Nigeria will dominate the issues of the discussion of language attrition. And, The English language spoken in Nigeria can be identified with many creativity and borrowing in its usage as a result of multilingual and sociolinguistic influences by

the English language on the native languages. However, being a country of multilingualism and bilingualism, having different languages as their first language (L1) in various communities, English is their second language (L2), the language of administration and instruction in schools. Therefore, the convergence of first and second languages in communication has resulted in to losing some words of the first language through borrowing.

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) can be applied to explain language borrowing. As its suggests that individuals adjust their communication style to accommodate or align with others. In the context of language borrowing, people might adopt words or phrases from another language to align with or accommodate a specific group or cultural context. This can occur for various reasons, such as social identity, assimilation, or the desire to convey a particular message effectively within a specific linguistic community.

In Nigerian context, the languages play some vital roles, here we have major languages which include; Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, and many more languages in different part of this country. Our society is multi-ethnic and multi-religious. And, English language is one of the predominant languages spoken by Nigerians, the various kinds of English spoken by Nigerians include Pidgin (broken) and standard English. Furthermore, some Nigerians are bi-lingual while others are multi-lingual, they can speak more than two languages including English which is the official or national language spoken in Nigeria. The school and our home play an important role in our ability to learn how to speak and write the English language effectively. Although some factors militate against children learning English effectively. Obayan, et al (1991) discovered that "the first problem which faces the Nigerian child learning English for the first time at the primary school level is how to adjust the mouth and ears to the new language which is very different from most Nigerian languages".

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section of the research showcase the findings of this work from different sources and the result is outlined and discuss as follows;

Reasons for language borrowing

The reason why bilingual or multilingual borrow a word from another language is, one language may possess words for which there are no equivalent in the other language. There may be word for object, social, political and cultural institutions and events or abstract concepts which are not found in the culture of the other language. For example, the large number of words denoting items relating to the advancement in the technology and ICT have to either be borrowed or coined with guidance from the languages in which such terms and concepts are found.

As mentioned earlier, English is a second and national language spoken in Nigeria. Irrespective of the fact that English language has its roots in British colonial rule in Nigeria, it is indeed now a language that distinguishes a person's social status and the class he/she belongs in the society. In her work, Christopher, states that:

Those who speak English are perceived as learned and vice versa; Nigerian want to be seen as learned or urbane. More important, attaining proficiency in the English language is imperative for those who want to advance educationally, since they must pass the English subject, and use it as the medium for learning other subjects. (p. 87-88).

However, as a result of bi-lingual and multilingual nature of the Nigerian society, there is a tendency for people to code-mix, code-switch from English to their mother tongue. For instance, semi-literate people

such as the traders in our society, since they may not be able to communicate effectively speaking standard English, they seem to prefer making use of Pidgin English as a foam of communication in order to sell their product and services.

Therefore, the above mentioned factor of bilingualism and multilingualism gives room for creativity and borrowing in English language in Nigerian setting, and, it leads to creation of Nigerian english. According to Crystal (1995) British colonial power and the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of the 20th century are the two main factors responsible for the spread of English language all over the world. This has resulted into national varieties of English like British English, American English, Australian English, West African English, Indian English and Singapore English. British English and American English are native varieties while Indian English and Singapore English are non-native varieties of English. These varieties are identifiably different from each other. The user acquires native variety as the mother tongue. The non-native variety is learnt in schools. The former is used in varied contexts whereas the latter is used in limited contexts. The national varieties of English are similar in their inflectional system and syntax. They vary considerably with respect to sounds, vocabulary, word formation and usage especially in some literary expressions.

Level of language borrowing

It is common to dictate certain creativity and borrowing among the second language speakers of English language in Nigeria at various grammatical/structural levels. Examples;

1. **Phonological borrowing:**

The borrowing at the phonological level shows that; The consonant sounds like; /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /v/, /Ө/, /ð/and/ʃ/.are absent in most of the native languages in Nigeria, this cause a problem in attempting to utterer a received pronunciation by most Nigerians. This finding supported the assertion of M. Finochiaro (1974) which states that, 'the individual learner restructures in his own way, the materials we may present based on his past experiences.' e.g. The labio-dental /v/ is wrongly pronounced as bilabial /b/. Bilabial /p/ as labio-dental /f /, while /Ө/ and /ð/ are replaces with the nearest similar sounds. Therefore, some people produce sound

Which is entirely different from the Received Pronunciation (RP) as in the following table:

Borrowed phoneme	Borrowed language	Source language	Gloss	Pronunciation
*[best]	Hausa	English	Vest	/vest/
*[shen]	Hausa	English	chain	/tʃein/
*[den]	Hausa	English	Then	/ðen/
*[teori]	Hausa	English	– theory	/Өiəri:/

Source: Survey, 2023

2. **Lexical/word borrowing:**

As the vocabularies differs between American and British. A visitor to the US generally comes across the differences in the English vocabulary which she/he knows and what he finds in the US e.g. whatever is 'time table' in British English is 'schedule' in American English, other examples include;

American English	British English
Truck	Lorry
Elevator	Lift

Baggage	Luggage
Cracker	Biscuit
Candy	Sweets

Source: Survey, 2023

The Nigerian English borrow some vocabularies from the native languages, as shown in the table below;

Borrowed lexical items	Source language (Nigerian native language)	Borrowe language	Meaning
Suya	Hausa language	English language	a marinated spicy kebab
Okra	Igbo language	English language	the green cases of okra plant, eaten as a vegetable
Okada	Yoruba language	English language	motorcycle taxi

Source: Survey, 2023

While the native's language especially Hausa language borrow many from English language, once this loan words established, they will undoubtedly be pronounced according to English phonetic rules although there is variation in spelling and the articulation change, in most cases the semantic meaning seldom shifts. This finding agreed with Ignatus (2017) "In time, people in the borrowing community do not perceive the word as a loan word at all. Generally, the longer a borrowed word has been in the language, and the more frequently it is used, the more it resembles the native words of the language". Examples;

English	Hausa
Minister	Minister
Captain	Kyaftin
Secretary	Sakatare
Colonel	Kanar
Report	Rahoto

Source: Survey, 2023

The reasons for borrowing is, when the speakers had never seen an item in their language or have no the name, and so they simply took over the local names for them. Another important motivation is prestige. At any given time in any given place, some languages typically enjoy more prestige than others, and speakers of less prestigious languages are often eager to show off their command of a more prestigious language by introducing some of its words into their own speech.

3. Syntactic/Figurative expressions borrowing:

This is the various use of language which words are used to express more than their ordinary or conventional usage, in order to make the idea very effective. some speakers employ the use of metaphorical expressions used in Nigerian context while using the English language as their medium. These expressions include;

Type of Figurative expression	Example of Figurative expression	Context	Medium
Simile	As big as elephant,	Nigeria	English language

Metaphor	Bukar is the pillar of the family	Nigeria	English language
Personification,	I saw poverty moving in the town.	Nigeria	English language
Euphemism,	The thug has gone to the white college	Nigeria	English language
Hyperbole,	I saw a man who is taller than a Iroko tree	Nigeria	English language

Source: Survey, 2023

Others includes; litotes, apostrophe, oxymoron, paradox. Climax, anti-climax and rhetorical question and some other expressions alike;

- "I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody" and
- "I hope this act of accepting defeat by outgoing president will become the standard of *political conduct* in the country". (Buhari, 2015).

These and many more are samples of creativity and innovations found in English language by some native speakers.

CONCLUSION

Language being a medium of communication of human beings, is very unique compared to non-human medium of communication. There are a lot of factors that strike the differences in which man tend to be so special creature than any other living creature on earth, like animals, birds, etc. and, due to nature and function of the human language it become highly creative and innovative among the users. A user of one human language can construct a sentence or phrase that he/she has never heard before, in an attempt to pass a message to another person or group of people, and the meaning would be successfully understood by the listener. However, some human languages share common words.

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