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## AN ANALYSIS OF THE GLOBAL IMPORTS OF PLETHORA OF ENGLISHES AND IMPLICATIONS ON TERMINOLOGY SHIFT

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### Abstract

*The history of English in Nigeria dates back to the birth of British colonization. This has led to the decline in the use of other languages. Globalization, on the other hand being a multidimensional concept, induces trends that have continued to enhance the use and expansion of English in Nigeria and beyond. There has also been an increased need for the use of a common code, which is the English language, in communication. These developments have brought to the fore the dynamic roles of English and also demonstrate impressive linguistic trends based on the plethora of English in the world. The data used for this paper came from library sources and classroom experiences. The paper provides an overview of changing patterns of terminologies in connection with English language, and explores the movement of societal pattern and education towards a dominant language in Nigeria. This paper, thus, assesses the implications of English language globalization, emphasizing the roles of global English in the expansion of the languages. This paper concludes by affirming that since English language has been an important tool in global communication, it has induced linguistic expansion, creating many variants and labels in the global era. Its expansion should be accepted as the creative imports of globalization.*

**Keywords:** expansion, globalization, English, Nigeria and communication.

### Introduction

The presence of the English language in all the continents of the world makes it a ready tool to unite the world across pluralistic barriers. The worldwide spread of the English language means it has several varieties that are used for different purposes and in varying contexts. The key issue in human language is expansion. Language is never static because of constant changes. Globalization, on the other hand expands the various means of communication, thereby making people from different parts of the world to speak in similar ways. The most preferred language is English. The English language has always been used to fulfill the need for global communication. English has been taught all over the world as a foreign language with many people speaking it as a second language, mother tongue or a lingua franca. The large number of English language speakers has, therefore, increased the need for foreign language learning.

The advent of English in Nigeria is associated with colonialism. Nigeria as a multilingual nation uses English both as a second language and as the major official language in communication. It plays significant roles in the nation's communication need; hence, it is prominently used in education, administration, government, journalism, trade and commerce, legislation, judiciary and even politics. A credit pass in English has been made the main prerequisite for admission into the nation's tertiary institutions. It serves as the base for comprehensive

education in Nigeria. English is used from the pre-nursery to the higher level education. In government, English is used to communicate with the multiethnic and multilingual population.

It is also a course of study in Nigerian tertiary institutions such as colleges of education and universities. Literacy attainment in Nigeria is dependent upon education which in turn relies on English language (Njemanze, 2012, p. 68-69). This expansion has been induced by globalization, thereby enhancing the spread and growth of English as a peculiar language of the many voices in Nigeria. There is also incorporation of English among the diverse linguistic and cultural groups in the world which has created room for the emergence of "New Englishes".

Globalization, being a multidimensional phenomenon is peculiar in academic circles where it accumulates meaning as it expands. It shares an interrelationship with English language because English is used in global communication. The spread of the tenets of globalization is also the spread of English language. Thus, the term "global English" informs the current state of the English as a language that is not particularly reserved for any race or country. English is a link language across the world. The major thrust of this paper is therefore to examine language issues in the Nigerian environment, the major roles of English as a global language, the implications of terminology shifts and the expansion of the English language in the global

era. This paper concludes by affirming that the global influence on the spread of English should be seen as a positive influence in language expansion because the various categories of "New Englishes" are intelligible and relevant to users.

### Language Issues in Nigeria

Language is a productive phenomenon that occupies space; it does not take place in a vacuum. Language is usually contextualized; it is situated within a social or cultural setting so as to express a society's tradition and culture. Language is usually described as a system of sounds by which humans communicate. Language does not only represent speech, it also shows different graphic orientations too.

Language denotes a key concept which has specific usage, communication. Often, a language is equated with any form of communication expressed in any medium. However, linguists define language to apply only to human vocal communication. Language, therefore, is a universal occurrence in human life. It serves as the medium which people use to interact and adjust to the world outside them.

Nigeria is a multicultural and multilingual nation with an estimated population of over 150 million (National Population Commission, 2009) with various categorizations on the number of indigenous languages. Heine and Nurse (2000), Bamgbose (1993) and Lewis (2009) have posited that between 400 and 520 indigenous languages exist in Nigeria. A country with this type of linguistic situation is bound to encounter problem deciding which language to adopt for official purpose. Nigerians are known to demonstrate linguistic attachment to their ethnic language (ethnicity); thus, in order not to breed agitation or conflict from the minorities, whose indigenous languages are not used in official proceedings in the country, this has induced continued dependence on the use of the English language for wider communication in Nigeria.

English has thus been the language of wider communication. Its entrenchment has remained unchallenged in the Nigerian environment, and this has given the English language a pride of place. English has been used to simplify communication around the world. In Nigeria, there is no viable alternative to English language, hence, the use, spread and relevance of English have become a major factor in the nation's survival.

### Major Roles of English as a Global Language

The importance of English as a global or international language has created room for a large variety of speakers of the language across the globe. In the words of Njemanze (2012, p.657) "many diverse groups have and use different tongues, yet English language stands tall in the global village". The nationwide spread of English has made it impossible for most countries, including Nigeria, to choose another viable alternative. According to Crystal (1997, p.54) "although most nations recognize English as an international language, they do not have a history of colonization, nor have they given English any special status." This population of speakers has the fastest-growing speakers of English around the globe.

Thus, the knowledge of English languages according to Dom (2003) enhances the following:

#### i. Access to knowledge and modernization

According to Penny Cook (quoted in Burns & Coffin, 2001, p. 85) the spread of English has facilitated the spread of the discourses and agendas coming from the inner circle: It is in this sense that the world is in English. The potential meaning that can be articulated in English is interlinked with the discourses of development, democracy, capitalism, modernization, and so on. In recent times, most scientific, industrial, and technological-breakthrough have come from the West, with American technology being extremely influential, having between 80-85% of all scientific and technical information available in the world today, either written or abstracted in English" (Kaplan, 1987, p.139). As a result of the global importance of English in an era of mass communication, the leading-edge in information and communication technology is largely based in the US and the users need to know English for international exposure.

However, the fact that these innovations were pouring out of an English speaking country meant that those from outside the country who wished to learn about them would need to learn English and learn it well if they wished to benefit (Crystal, 1997, p.72). Also, the influence of the Internet has played a tremendous role in spreading information and the English language: "Nine out of ten computers connected to the internet are located in English-speaking countries and more than 80% of all homepages on the web are written in English," "(BBC News, 2001) Therefore, modernization, despite possible resentment from non-Western people, is closely tied to Westernization and by extension, to the availability of the English

language. Most countries also have little choice but to bring English terms into their own languages to express new technical terms.

## **ii. Education and Career Opportunities**

Students learn English because of the many functional roles it plays in their everyday lives. Because books of higher education and many doctoral theses are written in English and top research universities are in the US, it is necessary for university students to have a high understanding of written English. With the internationalization of business, politics, and education, "English is increasingly used at the university level to equip graduates to function effectively in the global competition" (Huntington, 1996, p. 63). In other countries, such as Korea, many study English primarily for better career opportunities, which is not surprising since "more than four fifths of all international organizations use English as either their main or one of their main operational languages" (BBC News, 2001: para 2). Thus, good knowledge of English paves the way for good jobs.

**iii. Relaxation and Entertainment:** The presence of English is also used at many other levels. Advances in transportation have made international travel a reality, and the tourism industry has continued to expand with English being the preferred language in use. Speaking English is not only an educational or academic skill but also a cultural aspect of life. However, while exposure to Western culture may contribute to changing social attitudes. Entertainment in the words of Huntington (1996, p. 59), "does not equate to culture conversion, rather it helped people to interpret communications in terms of their own preexisting values and perspectives." The English language, thus, fulfills most of the roles it plays as an international language and has additional functions not usually found in the expanding circle (Crystal, 1997, p. 54).

**iv. Creation of New Languages:** Some people learn English as an additional or second language and use oral and vernacular varieties of English which are mixtures of Standard English and local languages. Crystal explains, "When communities begin to trade with each other, they communicate by adopting a simplified language, known as a pidgin which combines elements from their different languages". This new language can even become a native language (or Creole) for some speakers. Pidgins are used to fulfill narrow and particular

functions in restricted set of domains that have a simplified structure and a smaller vocabulary than fully developed languages. In other words, the widespread status of the Pidgin is an indication that "English is no longer the sole property of native speakers. English users have, thus, gone through the processes of acculturation and nativization and this has induced tremendous diversification of the English language into many new varieties, "New Englishes".

## **English Language, Globalization and the Plethora of Englishes: The Terminology Shift Perspective**

The various forces of globalization have in recent times abridged and harmonized the world linguistic heterogeneity. English has maintained its international lead as a second language to speakers in several countries across continents. The introduction of missionary activities, trade, commerce and more brought about the expansion of English in many parts of Africa including Nigeria. The expansion of English made it the universal medium of interaction and this is the correlate of globalization. Globalization as a process widens developmental avenues in any nation. Reigh (1991) describes the process of globalization as "living through a transformation that will re-arrange the politics and economics of the coming country. All that will remain rooted within national borders are the people who comprise a nation. Each nation's primary asset will be its citizens, skills and insights"

Globalization has introduced new words into English language lexicon, thus, we discuss issues such as "global English" and "New Englishes". These are variations within existing variety of the English language. English is used for almost all purposes in Nigeria. This has not enhanced the development of other languages especially the indigenous languages in Nigeria. It is also easy to use such terms as, 'browse', 'go on-line', 'navigate', 'e-mail' etc in language communication in the global era. These incursions are products of globalization of the English language. English has been very essential in global communication it has been a natural force in interaction. It has expanded and enriched the lexicon of many languages.

The current shifts in terminology and usage of English language has induced changes that have been variously described by scholars. These terminologies have posed ideological difficulties for linguists Holland (2002,p.21) stresses that, "it is no longer admissible simply to accept as a given, the status of English as prime international tongue:

a critical appreciation of its roles, and a critical approach to English language pedagogy, are indispensable". This expression exposes how the perception of English has changed simultaneously with the growing awareness about globalization. The recognition of other varieties of English in the present era as well as its continuing spread have encouraged a linguistic approach that accommodates the re-branding of the multiple uses of English around the globe.

Thus, the result of this shift is prominent in the words of the following scholars: "The meaning of English has changed" because it is a "transnational or international medium for the great majority of users" and its national users are the exception rather than the rules" (Bowers, 1999, p.243). "The closing decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century marked a major change in the worldwide perception of English" (Mc Arthur, 2001:7) "There is no English language anymore, rather, the English language we think of as a global thing, is something totally different" (Cox in an interview with Dale & Robertson 2003, p.16-17). These impressions have brought to the fore the global expansion of English as a language that has helped many nations to shape their linguistic identities.

Again, Strevens (1982) argues that "English belongs to everyone who wants or needs it, and it belongs exclusively to no nation, no community, no individuals" (p.427). English is an international language that serves a wide range of users. It transcends traditional and cultural boundaries and as such it is not a special preserve of native speakers. This generated a wide range of labels for the English language and these are discussed below.

### English Names in the Global Era

The recognition that English is no longer the sole property of its native speakers brought about variance in use and a shift in terminology in the language. English has been transformed into several distinctive varieties around the globe. Below are some of the labels used in describing English in the global era.

- New English (es)
- International English
- World English (es)
- Global English

### New Englishes (NE)

According to Mc Arthur (1992, p.688), New English is a "...term that generally refers to emerging varieties of English in non-western settings such as

Nigeria, India or Singapore". New English (es) according to Kachru (1997a, p.212) "symbolizes the functional and formal variations, divergent sociolinguistic contexts, ranges and varieties of English in creativity, and various types of impacts of the western and non-western world". He also insists that this term accurately depicts the many global functions of English. Again, Platt, Weber and Ho (1984, p.2-3) describe new English variety as one that was developed through an education system where English is a medium of instruction but it is not the main language spoken by most of the population.

New English is used in varied settings such as literature, media, government, advertisement and more. It is a notarized language of users. It accommodates some linguistic features which vary from British or American norms. There is significant difference in the intonation of users or pronunciation pattern and a slight difference in grammar and sentence structure. New English accepts different words and expressions which include borrowing from contact languages. Proponents of new Englishes in Nigeria include, Akere (1982), Bamgbose (1982) and Jubril (1982).

### International English (IE)

This kind of English has been used to mean English for specific purposes (ESP) or a register of English. It has been variously used in different ways, some of which are contradictory. However, IE emphasizes a kind of English used as a lingua franca for communicating basic information in a simplified form and in a set out context.

It is mostly used by people who need access to international scholarship, policy making and administrative bodies, commerce and technology that do not use English as a community or national language (see Johnson 1990). In the words of Widdowson (1998, p.400) international English is a "composite lingua franca which is free of any specific allegiance to any primary variety of the language". These impressions give an overview of what international English is

Scholars such as Smith (1983, p.vi) argue that these interpretations reduced IE to a limited range and patterns of communication. In other words IE performs elaborate functions in global communication rather than the ascribed functions. IE, thus, provides the core of English which is common to users globally.

### World English (es) (WE)

The term "World Englishes", came up as a replacement of International English. "It is

considered a more universal term, which explicitly acknowledges the planetary reach of the language" (McArthur, 1998, p.86). The term suggests a global dominance by English and English speaking countries thereby reducing the relevance of other languages. World Englishes symbolize English as a world language which has given users opportunity to maintain stable multilingualism or bilingualism. It also allows change and creation of new varieties which has resulted in Englishes.

### **Global English (GE)**

The evolution of globalization has attracted much attention to the point that it has become a point of global consciousness. Global English is seen as the language that has attracted the reformation processes, largely because globalization is the process of change. Global English, thus, refers to the world wide use of a language which attaches no special consideration to users around the world. It is the English language used by people of different ethnicity in any international setting. It is intelligible to any race or individual users.

### **Implications of the Terminology Shift of English in the Global Era**

Since English has become an international language used in multinational and multicultural communication, with numerous indigenous languages and a multiplicity of the culture of the different peoples of the world that speak it, there has emerged many forms of the English language which are identifiably different from each other. Such forms as American English, British English, Indian English, West African English, and more have emerged.

This trend has led to the use of a new lexicon such as the SMS style of communication. See Njemanze, (2012). Although, English may not be the official language in many countries, it is currently the language most often taught as a second language around the world. Because of this global spread, English has developed a host of English dialects and a host of English-based Creole languages and pidgins.

The existence of different varieties of English could therefore be attributed to the multiplicity of the culture of the different peoples of the world that speak English. Although no variety is clearly considered the only standard, there are a number of accents considered as more formal, such as Received Pronunciation in Britain or the Bostonian dialect in the United States of America. In his word, Kachru (1977) advised that for any variety to be

regarded as standard, that variety should be assessed from the point of view of relevant factors of appropriateness, acceptance and intelligibility"

Languages in contact are bound to develop variations; this is because such languages are forced to accommodate the variations of locality. Since English is the language of the world, it is no longer the possession of the British, and a non-native speaker is not subject to English assumptions of correctness. As the spread of English progresses, English is bound to reflect a diversity of disparate cultures since no language is used to its maximum, except its native speakers.

The implication is that the existence of such varieties of English creates difficulty to the second language learner, but when learned, it enhances his effective use of the language. Again, as a result of the afore-mentioned factors, there have been cases of borrowing, confused linguistic allegiance and the interference phenomena. In terms of the first, a second language learner is faced with the task of acquiring communicative competence in a language that belongs to an entirely different society and culture.

There could emanate cases of the interference of the mother tongue on English and this could affect the learner's performance in the target language. This is one of the problems Nigerian users are facing because their mother tongue interferes with the target language.

### **Classifications of the Globalized English**

Since English is a global language, this paper examines the various classifications of English; they are categorized as follows:

#### **English as a mother tongue (EMT)**

A mother tongue is the only language of a monolingual person which is acquired naturally in his native environment which meets all his linguistic needs. English being a world language serves as the first language or MT in some countries such as Britain, USA, Australia and more.

#### **English as a foreign language (EFL)**

This is a situation where the users learn English as an additional language and use it when necessary, especially outside their countries. Such countries include China, Japan, France, Germany, Saudi, Arabia, and Spain.

#### **English as a second Language (ESL)**

English is used as a second language in a country that has other indigenous languages. English is used compulsorily in official and public affairs;

hence English performs two different roles as a primary and secondary language.

### **English for Academic Purposes (EAP)**

As an academic language, it is used in the transmission of knowledge and instruction. It transmits knowledge to students which in turn develops them. It also helps learners develop fluency in language expression which instills confidence in the learners to communicate to the outside world. This view is supported by Hermer (1990) who identified the variety of needs of English language in the achievement of the new millennium literacy goals.

The needs include:-

- English as target language (ETL)
- English for special or specific purpose (ESP)
- English for school curriculum
- English for advancement

These needs are unique and they will help learners to accomplish their communicative task, academic expectations and job advancement.

### **Conclusion**

Although there is the existence of many other languages in the world, none can favorably compare

with the English language in global communication and international status. English language has been important in human communication. English has been a unifying force which has provided solutions to the problems of evolving lexicon and usages in the world. It stands out as the major language of global communication. The current rate of globalization of the English language in the present era, is evident in the changes in usage and names given to worldwide English.

The various terms used to describe English shows the open arms of English in accommodating native and non- native speakers. It presents the picture of the people that have command over the English language, thereby making the English language to mean many things to many different people around the globe.

Finally, English has continued to be one foreign language that serves as the first language, second language and lingua franca in modern times. Therefore, the upsurge of the many new varieties of the English language in the global era should be accepted as a trend that portrays all round creativity in linguistic expansion and as an answer to the quest for a common code of communication around the globe.

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