

INTER-LANGUAGE PHONOLOGY AND MOTHER TONGUE INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH LITERACY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Over the years, the flare for native speaker or near native speaker accent was paramount in the study of phonetics and phonology. Today the mode of communication has drastically changed. Most people especially students communicate more in pidgin and slangy expressions. Little or no attention is given to native speaker accent due to the influence of mother tongue and inter-language on English. Language scholars should devote their time to the study of how to modify inter-language and mother tongue influence on English literacy. In a multilingual and multicultural nation like Nigeria, actualization of native speaker accent is obviously elusive; linguists should rather strive to have a developed accent which meets international intelligibility and recognition rather than trying “to force the horse to drink water”.

Keywords: native speaker, phonetics, communication, mother tongue, accent,

Introduction

Language is an arbitrary and specie specific mode of communication among humans and it should be reflected upon that any human infant, no matter what his parentage is, will learn the language of the community in which he is brought up (O'Donnel 1969:161). As a socio linguistic fact when two or more languages and culture come into contact, different types of sociolinguistic chemistry

take place. Sometimes, a diglossic situation may result or language shift, attrition or even language death. In some other instances, it can lead to the formation of a pidgin, a creole or even the birth of a new language altogether as Sebba (1997) observed. When a second language learner (L_2) learns a new language, he tries to approximate sounds that are missing in his language and reproduces sounds that are similar to his first language (L_1) as same. This is simply caused by the influence of mother tongue (MT) on the target language (TL).

Learning goes a long way in grooming the life pattern of an individual in all ramifications. It can affect the life of an individual either positively or negatively. When influenced negatively the individual puts to work all bad effects of his knowledge.

The negative effects of learning affects one's reading and writing but this is more prominent on speech. The term positive transfer is facilitative when there is cross-linguist similarities especially the segmental level. But at the prosodic level, it becomes problematic and as a result negative transfer results. The negative transfer according to Odlin (1989) takes many forms such as underproduction, overproduction, production errors and misinterpretation of the TL forms. Basically, errors in prosody especially stress generate misinterpretation and unintelligibility.

Some Fundamental Problems Of Inter-Language And Mother Tongue Influence on English Literacy.

Over the years, a lot of works have been written on native speaker actualization in a multilingual and multicultural nation like Nigeria and deviations from the British English/received pronunciation (RP) have been seen as errors. Every effort geared towards RP attainment have proved abortive because according to Selinker (1972) the data for inter language should be based on sources other than those used in conventional error analysis. That is "observable data from meaningful performance in controlled

situations (as opposed to classroom drills and experiments with nonsense material) we can establish as relevant for international identification are utterances in the learner's native language produced by the learner's, inter language utterances produced by the learner; and target language utterance by the native speakers of that target language" Warsi (2001). It becomes imperatively impossible or difficult to attain the last part of Selinker's (1972) suggestion. That is bringing the collection.

Should we still aspire for native speaker's accent? Should we continue to see other versions as errors? Or should we domesticate English and accept inter language influence as versions of English?

Linguists like Ubahakwe (1974), Adetugbo (1977, 1984), Adeniran (1979), Jibiril (1982), Obilade (1982), Odumh (1984), Kujore (1985), Afolayeyan(1987) among others researched on Nigerian English (NE) Ogbulo (2005:18-19) sees Nigerian English as "an almost distinctly Nigerian variety of the English language... which is at par with and has much vitality as any other variety of English" Adetughbo (1984:17). Jowitt (1991:x) sees NE as the variety of English that has English as its first mother and Nigeria as its second and has defined nature by undergoing gynecological processing. Banjo (1995:209) also suggests that NE should be "a model of English based on the criteria of social acceptability and international intelligibility... should possess a high prestige at home and reasonable easy intelligibility abroad".

Sequel to this Banjo (1996:35) opines that:

a remarkable feature of spoken English in Nigeria is that it often falls short of the user's ability in written English mainly because English is learnt by most Nigerians in school and the education system has emphasized "the skills of literacy more than those of oracy"

with the result that the system has produced in many case individuals with an impeccable ability to communicate in written English and be understood, even admired internationally, without a matching ability in spoken English.

The English language has twenty (20) vowels and twenty four (24) consonants sounds giving a total of forty-four(44) sounds while the Igbo language has eight (8) vowels and twenty-eight(28) consonant sounds making a total of thirty-six(36) phonemes. This variance in number alone generates a lot Igbo L1 transfer on English language. According to Obemeta (1985: 44-45) “once a person has acquired any language as first language, the sounds which he has acquired and the process of thought in the culture interfere with his learning of another language”. English language phonotactics allow initial consonants cluster. In other words English permits syllables that are more complex than those found in many Nigerian languages such as Igbo language.

Some Contextual and Empirical Works

Many works have been written on contextual and empirical inter language phonology and its influence on TL. Authors such as Elugbe (2000), Banjo (1986), Baldeh (1989), Uzozie (1996) among others have taken laudable stand on some causes of MT influence on TL which invariably cannot come to be if there is no inter language. Elugbe (2000) extensive writes that English is Nigeria’s L₂ and on should not expect the learner to speak it as native speakers but he is of the view that the learner should speak English that meets international standards and intelligibility. The text identifies the near presence of the phoneme [i:] in most of the Nigerian languages and that it is relatively easy to realize. The source suggests that Igbo L1 learner should not be expected to speak like the British that own the language. Banjo (1986) postulates tat oral work is a direct aid to a good written

work and is necessary in language learning because the user will not only read and write it but must be able to speak and understand it when it is spoken. The source posits that rote teaching should be used in the study of phonology which this paper sees as one of the major causes of inter language and Mother tongue influence on English.

Baldeh (1989: 2-67) is one of the view that exercise should be used in the teaching of phonology and not much use of theoretical work. The author deals extensively on segmental and adds that cluster of sounds both at the initial and final position of words pose problems to the learners. The source submits that “wrong pronunciation pattern may therefore, result in unintelligibility and incomprehension, Thus correct stressing and intonations are more important than the mere accurate pronunciation of individual English words” (Baldeh 1986:67).

Uozie (1996:126-134) identifies unequal number of phonemes in English and the indigenous language (e.g. Igbo) as a major constraint to oral proficiency and this is the major cause of ‘under differentiation’ and ‘over generalization’ by Nigerian speakers of English at all levels. The source opines that the complexity of English phonology spoken in non-native environment makes the learner to superimpose his L_1 or L_2 hence, L_1 interference. The author is of the view that pedagogic, Economic and Nigerian learner and that Nigerian linguists “must” strive hard to codify and describe “Standard Nigerian English to supplant RP speech in Nigeria because of socio-cultural and socio-linguistic differences of Britain and Nigeria. Uozie (1996: 135) submits that “RP as erected model for testing our children’ speech performance is an unrealistic ideal”.

Uozie seems capture the concept of inter-language in its reality. Because once there is L_1 inter-language and interference will occur in order to realize L_2 .

Some of the empirical works on influence of mother tongue and inter-language on English literacy tend to draw interference from Uzozie's (1996) work. Authors such as Okunrinmeta (2014:317-332) and Okeke (1992: 151-154) did empirical works with secondary school students and under-graduates on the influence of MT on T1 and how it affects English Literacy respectively. Okunrinmeta (2014) writes on the poor result of students in external exam in spite of the precedence give to English Language in school over other Nigerian languages from the mid-primary level to tertiary level. Okunrinmeta (2014) citing (2013b: 127) by giving a statistical data of students' performance in senior school certificate Examination (SSCE) from (1988-2012) thus:

...between (1998 and 1992), the percentage of failure was high and consistent as it stood between 70% and 75% annually...in 1997, only 6.54% of candidates who took the examinations got credit passes in English Language, while 67% had outright failure...only 29.59%, 25.36%, 34.48% and 29.94% passed English Language at credit level...in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively...in 2012...38.1%...had credit in English Language (Okunrinmeta 2013b :127).

The author like Warsi (2001) is of the view that there is Nigerian version of English and this effect the source cites; "Nigerian English is a regional variety of English spoken by Nigerians and it has identifiable features which distinguish it from other regional varieties of English especially in terms of pronunciation..." (Okunrinmeta 2013a: 30). The source writes that the Nigerian forms of the English Language should be sustained and not to be treated as errors.

Okereke (1992 :149-156) sees English as a vestige of colonialism that welds the different Nigerian Language groups together, thereby making it possible for people to communicate at all levels with the under-graduate students of UNICAL the source points out some factors that must be addressed if near-native speaker must be attained.

The Theory of Inter-language Phonology

The term inter language (IL) was first introduced by the American linguist, Larry Selinker in 1969 which refers to the linguistic system evidenced in L2 learners in attempt to express meaning in the language being learned. Selinker in 1972 reviewed this theory by stating that:

Larry Selinker's 1972 theory of inter-language states that:

In a given situation the utterances produced by the learners are different from those native speakers would produce had they attempted to convey the same meaning. This comparison reveals a separate linguistic system. This system can be observed when studying the utterances of the learners who attempt to produce a target language norm (Urnera-Okeke 20 13:143).

Inter-language can be defined as an emerging linguistic system that has been developed by a learner of a second language who has not become fully proficient yet but is only approximating the target language preserving some features of his first language in speaking or writing the target language and creating innovations.

Selinker went further to hypothesize that adults use a latent psychological structure against Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device (LAD) to acquire second languages. He divided this latent psychological structure into five - native language transfer, over

generalization of target language rules, transfer of training, strategies of communication and strategies of learning. According to him second language learners who begin their study of second language after puberty do not succeed in developing a linguistic system that approaches that developed by children acquiring the language natively because of fossilization.

In 1992 Selinker revisited this theory and against the 1972 version that restricted the theory to adult learners, he observed that children below puberty stage also fossilize linguistic system with substantial influence from native language transfer. Sequel to Weinreich (1968:7) Selinker (1972, 1992) suggested that: learners make ‘inter-lingual identification’ in approaching the task of learning a second language: they perceive certain units as the same in their NL, IL and TL “...no adult learner can hope to ever speak a second language in such a way that he or she is indistinguishable from native speakers of the language” (Tarone 2006:750-752). Anyanwu (2015: 405-407) writes in support of this view that:

...Inter-language features as a transitional dialect which is developmentally adjusted in favour of the learner who is attempting to master his target language. The learner’s inter-language at any given time is the best attempt he can offer in trying to create order and structure to his linguistic stimuli as he climbs the ladder to the target language norm.

In support of this, Mastsugu and Akiko (2014:9) opine that: “to be ‘fluent’ in a second language is not an easy task, to say the least, especially when it is learned in a situation where the second language is not used in an everyday situation” like in Igbo land. Jenkins (2000:104) affirmatively adds:

The critical question for pronunciation teachers are: in which phonological and phonetic areas does the transfer of L₁ pronunciation militate against EIL intelligibility; and to what extent is it feasible to teach learners to replace their L₁ forms with L₂ forms in these areas?

It is obvious that Jenkins (2000) questions to pronunciation teachers cannot be readily, answered because the inter-language development from native language forms to target language forms involves three stages viz:

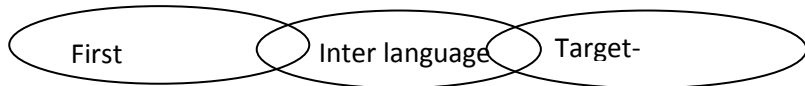
- (a) Basilang - the earliest form of TL development.
- (b) Mesolang - the intermediate form of TLD.
- (c) Acrolang - the final stage of TLD (Mehwish 2014).

Every L₂ learner undergoes these stages and this makes this theory appropriate for this study.

Dadzie (2009) sees inter-lingual manifestation as evidence of localization of a foreign language. To concretize this he writes:

second language situations, where competence has reached a fairly high level, it is our contention that inter-lingual manifestations over a period of time may become systematized and easily identifiable as evidence of the localization processes that must go on in such situations (Dadzie 2009:227).

Headbloom's (1979: 37) diagrammatic conception about inter-language gives a vivid illustration of what happens to the brain of a second language learner are shown below.



Tarone (2006:747) is of the view that what gave rise to this theory was the claim by contrastive analysts who asserted that second

Language usage was controlled by L₁ transfer. According to Nemser (1971:116) the inter-language is explained as: “Learner speech at a given time is the patterned product of a linguistic system... distinct from NL (Native Language) and TL (Target language) and internally structured”. Jowitt (1991:52) is of the view that: “it can be regarded as the production of psycholinguistic interaction between two linguistic systems, those of the MT and the TL”.

Scovel (1988) like Selinker argues that the causes of phonological fossilization are neurolinguistic in nature and related to the process of cerebral lateralization, which is completed at puberty. Han (2004:12) describes fossilization as non- progression of learning despite continuous exposure to impute, adequate motivation to learn, and sufficient opportunity for practice.

Having seen the different angles of the reasoning of the different authors let us look at how English Literacy (reading and writing of English) is affected as L2 in Nigeria English Literacy/introduction of English Literacy.

English Literacy And The Learner

English literacy implies ability to hear (understand) speak, read and write English. The ability to understand English when spoken marks the beginning of learning the language. This is not easily accessed unless the listener replies back and this is done through speech. Speech is universally accepted as the primary function of language and the basis for writing. Contact with any language begins with speech and because of this, it is pertinent to give speech attention especially in a foreign environ so that it will be done well.

Nigeria is a multi-lingual nation and has different mother tongues with which its people did their communication before the coming of the missionaries especially to the Southern part in

1842. Boyd (1961:74) suggests “...the church undertook the business of education not because it regarded education as good in itself, but because it found that it could not do its own proper work without giving its adherents, and especially its clergy, as much of the formal learning as was required for the study of the sacred writing and for the performance of their religious duties”.

With the presentation of education and white-collar jobs, literacy in the English Language spread fast. Most Nigerians were eager to learn the new language so as to communicate effectively. But a fact in the study of language is that naturally one's diction is environmentally controlled. The Federal government like the missionaries presented western education as package for mobilization and economic recovery. But the botch of this intension was on English literacy because the national curriculum planners had already stated that “at pre-primary and junior primary levels the language of instruction should be mother tongue or the language of immediate community...” (National Policy on Education 2014:12, 16). Based on this premise, English language being a foreign language in Nigeria, could not easily ‘germinate’ naturally. Some factors militated against it.

Every language is rule governed at all levels of description (Anyanwu 2006:15) and in support of this view, Clark and Yallop (1994:148) in Anyanwu (2006) opine that; at that point, morphophonemic rules show us how the ensuring words are to be pronounced while the morphographemic rules show us how they are to be written or spelt. These two rules (Morphophonemic and Morphographemic rules) are always influenced in the study by IL and MT/NL.

Morphophonemic rules show how morpheme combinations are to be pronounced. The morphemic changes in L_2 affect the learner who by analogy coins his forms of pronunciations. Similarly, the

syllable structure of the L₂ affects the L₂ Learner because he has acquired and used his L₁. For instance, words with consonant cluster constitute pronunciation problem for Igbo L₁ learner of English. Epenthesis and allophonic use of /l/and/r/ among Igbos, /p/ and /f/ among Hausas and elision and addition of phonemes by Yorubas constitute MT interference in use of English. Examples

/rori/-lɔri/-lorry	}	Igbo
/sikiliu/-skru:-screw		

/fæn/-pæn/-pan	}	Hausa
/fiə/-piə/-peer		

/and/-ənd/- hand	}	Yoruba
/hand/-ənd/-and		

The way one speaks affects his reading and writing and these are made prominent in reading. According to Luna(2010:66) rather than seeing these deviations as errors, inter-language features (which generate mother tongue influence on target language) are perceived as interesting deviations from the native production which also result in all well formed linguistic system.

The Learner and His Reading Pattern

Reading means ‘mental’ speech and speech in turn means the spoken or oral form of the language, whether vocalized or not, one’s L₁ ordinarily affects his mode of reading. A learner who has learnt to produce words without consonant cluster like in Igbo language will always find it difficult to pronounce words like ‘Pneumonia’, ‘diarrhoea’ school, tray etc since Igbo Language has VCV, C V C V,

CV (V-vowel, C- consonant) word formation. Such learner also would have epenthesis to any word that ends with a consonant because his vocal cords have been conditioned by his L₁. Example, an Igbo learner will realize the following words as shown below:

Igbo				English	
Tabulu	for	table	-	/teible/	
Sukuru	for	screw	-	/skru/	
Patina	for	partner	-	/pa:tn/	
Moni	for	money	-	/ma:ni/	
comu	for	come	-	/ kAm/	

Apart from word formation discussed above, Igbo Language has eight vowel sounds while English has twenty. Therefore, the Igbo L₁ learner tries to approximate sounds which are lacking in his L₁ with the closest sound in English (L₂). Also Igbo Language has no mid vowels. This greatly affects the voice pitch of the learner since he is acquainted with either high or low vowels because Igbo is a tonal language. He changes sounds like /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɜ:/, /ə/to/a:/or/ɔ:/ to suit his tongue. For example:

Word	L ₂	L ₁
Snatch	/snætʃ/,	/snaʃ/
Son	/sʌn /,	/sɔn/
Under	/ʌndə/,	/ɔnda/

According to Onunji (2003:188) Oral English deals with the knowledge of sounds. This knowledge of sounds has undergone different developments. In 1917, Jones (1979: v) came up with what he called Public School Pronunciation (PSP) which he saw as the language of the educated Southern English people. In 1926, he abandoned PSP for Received Pronunciation (RP). We also have BBC

accent. These versions of pronunciation have influence of borrowed words and MT.

The absence of correct accent makes it difficult for an average, literate Nigerian to read 'correctly' because the role model also has the challenge of IL and MT. This has diverse defects on the learner, such as:

- i. Not having adequate reading speed of about 3000- 8000 words per-minute in fast reading.
- ii. Wrong syllabification of words during reading.
- iii. Body movement viz lips, finger pointing or head movement.
- iv. Repetition of words etc.

Oral proficiency (reading) can only be achieved when a speaker must have learnt about the organs involved in speech production, the segmental and non-segmental of the language because speech may be regarded as succession of articulation of the speech organs and in continuous speech, the sequence of movement is broken from time to time. When we read the conventional letters, indirectly we are practicing stress, intonation, assimilation and elision. A good reader observes these English prosodies consciously mindful of his MT and IL influence on the language. Let us look at these prosodies as they influence reading.

The Learner and His Stress Pattern

In linguistics stress refers to the degree of force or energy with which a syllable or word is pronounced. Strang (1970:16) defines it as intensity of utterance derived from the relative force of the chest-pulse. Abercrombie (1964:56) supports this view by adding that: "each muscular contraction and consequent rise in air pressure is a chest-pulse and each chest-pulse constitutes a syllable". E.g. and, am, an, day, some etc. A unit of sound said with one breath or effort is called a syllable. A stressed syllable is longer, louder and the pitch of

voice rises as it is said with more energy. The influence of IL and MT does not allow an L₂ learner to realize the sounds correctly as seen from the examples below.

L ₂	L ₁
'favour /'feivə/	/f'evɔ/
'flatter /'flætə/	/fla:'ta:/
Agri'culture /'ægrikʌltʃə/	/a:'grikɔltʃɔ/
Demo'cracy /dimɔ'krəsi/	/demɔkresi/
edu'cation /edʒu'keɪʃn/	/edukeʃɔn/n

The wrong stress placement on words are caused by MT influence. Stress is of two types, Viz: primary and secondary stress.

The Primary Stress is on the syllable that has the highest pitch in a word while the secondary stress is less and falls on the other syllables in the word or sentence. In a word or sentences, primary stress is the most important. It also gives emphatic or contrastive effect to words and utterances. This is not usually same in Igbo language where the whole sentence is stressed to achieve emphasis. e.g.

- i. Did you eat rice or beans this morning? I ate Rice not beans this morning. (contrastive)
- ii. John ate the food (emphatic)
- iii. God is my creator (emphatic)
- iv. I go to Church every Sunday. (emphatic)
(Stressed words are in capital letters).

When a word can function as a noun and a verb, the noun form is stressed on the first syllable while the verb form is stressed on the second syllable. This variation is never (or slightly) observed by careful speakers. Such words are simply realized as homophones. For example:

Noun

‘Export /’ekspɔ:t/
 ‘Import /’impɔ:t/
 ‘Present /’prezənt/
 ‘Contract /’kɒntrækt/
 ‘Transport /’træn’spɔ:t/

Verb

Ex’port /ik’spɔ:t/or/ek’spɔ:t/
 Im’port /im’pɔ:t/
 pre’sent /pre’zənt/ or /pri’zent/
 Con’tract /kən’tɹækt/
 Trans’port /træn’spɔ:t/

The Learner and His Intonation Pattern

To avoid monotony of voice in an utterance the voice rises and falls at different points. This rise and fall in the pitch of an utterance is referred to as intonation. According to Strang (1970:89) “intonation is patterning of the pitch-variable in speech, a variable depending on the relative tension of the vibrating vocal cords in voiced speech”. Nwachukwu (1998:109) adds that in normal speech, the voice rises and falls in certain ways to convey meaning. Word tone is called pitch, speech and sentence tone are referred to as intonation.

Intonation helps the listener to know the kind of sentence the speaker has made (i.e. its function grammatically) e.g. command, question or statement. It also helps to convey certainty or uncertainty, willingness or unwillingness, enthusiasm or sarcasm in the speaker. Rising tone depicts uncertainty or fear while a falling tone assures confidence and firm feelings. These are only “observe” by few careful speakers of L2. Oftentimes the rise in pitch is always wrongly accepted as command. Examples include:

- i. I Will go home ‘after this ‘seminar (statement)
 [aɪ wɪl ɡəʊ həʊm aftə ðɪs semɪna:]
- ii. Will you cry if you lose your money? (question)
 [wɪl ju: krai ɪf ju: lu:s jɔ: mini?]
- iii. Shut the door (command)
 [ʃʌt ði: dɔ:]

- iv. Stand up (command)
[Stænd ʌp]

Intonation is stress in connected speech.

The Learner and His Assimilation Pattern

Phonologically, assimilation is the process that involves the modification of a sound in order to make it more similar to another in its neighbourhood. According to Anyanwu (1999:10) “words do not strictly observe their boundaries in speech as they do in writing”. Assimilation results in a smoother and a more effortless or economical transition from one sound to another. When assimilation occurs, a more dominant sound around takes the place of the original one. It disrupts word boundaries resulting in the removal of the phoneme of a word to another word which now accepts it as part of it. This smooth transition from one word to another is not easily observed in L₂ environ like Igbo because of epenthetical and allomorphic nature of Igbo language by some users. The presence of MT or IL will always make the reader to break his reading at wrong syllables. Example, the word: “Newspaper” /nju:z peipə /- /nju:speipə/ has /z/ which is a voiced alveolar fricative sound change to /s/ which is a voiceless alveolar fricative because of the voiceless /p/ sound in order to be like it for easier pronunciation, this is not so for an L₂ learner who will rather prefer /nuzupepa/ to /nju:speipə/. Another example is the word: Thank you /θæŋk ju:/ /θæŋ kju:/. The /k/ in “thank” which is a voiced velar plosive changes position to join /ju:/ thereby giving/kju:/ because/ŋ/ is a voiced sound. The L₂ learner would realize this as /tanku u/ to break the cluster of /k/ and /y/ in the phrase.

The Learner and His Elision Pattern

Elision or disappearance is a deliberate attempt to leave out the sound of a letter or of a part of a word. It helps the speaker to say words fluently and smoothly without gaps or hesitation in the middle.

In connected speech, the end of a word flows straight on to the beginning of the next word unless it is deliberately broken by the speaker. E.g.

Grandson /gænsʌn/ /gandusʌn/

/castle/ /Ka:səl/ /ka:stlu/

Christmas /krisməs/ /kristimas /or krisimasi/

Fasten /fa:sən/, /fastini/

Cupboard /kʌbəd/ /kabʊdu/

An Igbo L₁ learner would find it difficult to observe elision in words or in speech rather he adds extra vowel sound to words as seen in the above examples.

Most often, the oral production of an L₂ learner goes a long way to mark his competence in the language. L₂ learners of English in Nigeria, find it difficult to observe these prosodies because of their L₁ which is mostly tonal in nature. This inefficiency is not often predominant in writing. The manifestation of IL phonology is more on speech than in writing that of writing is usually seen when it is subjected to syntactic and semantic tests.

The Learner and His Writing Pattern

Writing means making letters or numbers on a surface especially with pen or pencil. This paper is not interested in examining the different developmental stages of writing. Reading and writing most often go hand in glove but at times the learner learns how to speak or read without actually knowing how to write. Writing is the final and most difficult stage of learning. When we narrow this down to language, one cannot write a language he is not conversant with; if he does he is bound to make numerous mistakes.

It is in writing that the technicalities of a language are seen i.e. the punctuation marks. At this stage the Igbo L₁ Learner of English tends to dot “o”s as done in Igbo Language or may even tend to write Igbo language as English language. E.g.

- i. 'O bu m' instead of Ọ bu m meaning it is me, or it is I.
- ii. O tara azu instead of Ọ tara azu meaning He ate fish.
- iii. O zuru ihe n'ahia instead of Ọ zuru ihe n'ahia meaning He bought things from the market.

Wrong punctuation can give a wrong interpretation to an utterance like in e.g. iii, the unpunctuated sentence means 'he stole things from the market'.

The presence of IL and MT generate a lot of spelling errors especially in words that have sound clusters and silent sounds as in com(b), (p)sychology, tom(b), (p)neumonia etc.

In writing, we have the conventional form (i.e. using the letters of the alphabet) and transcription which provides one symbol for every speech sound. Works are written in the conventional form and could be read and understood by literates, if the words are not wrongly collocated.

The Learner and His choice of Collocation Pattern

In writing, wrong arrangement of words is noticed easily. The Igbo L₁ speaker tends to transliterate his L₁ into English. He sometimes does this either grammatically or semantically e.g. (i) Mụ na gi tara azu (me and you ate fish) instead of 'you and I ate fish'. (ii) Nwa ewu anwughi, Ọ ga-eru ikenga (if a child of goat does not die it will reach mother goat) instead of 'the young shall grow' this is just as a result of the presence of MT which the learner short changes with the TL because the presence of IL sometimes completely brings out a new form of language.

Conclusion

In language literary, a second language is bound to be influenced by its linguistic environment. This is buttressed in the international acceptability of different Englishes among linguists. Chukwuma (1997) opines that the aim of teaching the learners is to make them speak unambiguously and not to make them speak like

native speakers. Uzozie is of the view that using RP to test Nigerian child is unrealistic. Tiffen and Williams (1973) observed that there is no one type of English pronunciation which is universally regarded as correct and Jowitt (1993) also observed that no two individual pronounces exactly alike and that standard does not exist.

The brain/mind of a L₂ language is pre-occupied with his L₁ which does not easily allow him/her to hear, understand, speak or write the L₂ as the natives. IL and MT/NT influence over L₂ do not exclude English language. This situation is worse in multi-lingual and multicultural country like Nigeria. Having seen the “chemical reaction” that takes place in the brain of an L₁ who trying to learn, read or write, it becomes obvious that it is difficult to have a native speak accept from L₂ learners of language

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