Reinventing the English Language in Nigeria in the Context of Globalization and Decolonization

Refereed Proceedings of the 23rd Annual Conference of the Nigeria English Studies Association

(NESA)

Held at
University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria.
From October 31 - November 4, 2006

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA: THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC DYNAMICS OF DECOLONIZA TION AND GLOBALIZATION
Professor Fuso Akere,..... 2
THE LANGUAGE OF POST COLONIAL LITERATURE: THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE Prof. Olu Obafemi, ...17
GLOBALIZATION AND THE REPERCUSSIONS OF ENGLISHIZA TION IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION Professor Adebayo Lawa,
..... 22
THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF ENGLISH IN NIGERIA AND THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZATION Mahfouz A. Adedimeji,
.....36
ENGLISH LANGUAGE, GLOBALIZA noN AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT Mrs Asabe Yusuf Mohammed, ...47
ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA: THE POLITICS OF GLOBALIZATION AND DECOLONISATION
David Sunday Folorunsho Ayodele,.....51
NIGERIAN LANGUAGE POLICY, GLOBALIZATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE WHEREWITHAL
Dr (Mrs) F. 0. Adeniyi, ... 59
WILL THE REAL NATIONAL LITERATURE FOR NIGERIA PLEASE STAND UP? Dr. Lere Adeyemi, ... 70
'GLOCALIZING' THE GLOBAL GENDER POLITICS: THE ACCOMMODA TIONIST PERSPECTIVE
Dr Abiodun Thomas Oyatoye, ...80
ENTITY FORMATION AND ORALIST IMAGINATION IN SELECTED YORUBA FILMS Mrs Morenike Adunni Ahmed, ...86
APPROXIMATION TO STANDARD BRITISH ENGLISH: NIGERIAN ENGLISH SUPRASEGMENTALS
0ladimeji Kaseem Olaniyi, ...109
MORPHOPHONEMIC ANALYSIS OF INFLECTIONAL MORPHEMES IN ENGLISH AND mmlo NOUNS: IMPLICATIONS
FOR LINGUISTIC STUDIES Ubong E. Josiah,.....124
THE ENGLISH MODALITY: SOME PROBLEMS OF ESL USERS Dr Johnson 0. Ojo, ...133
LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LEARNING AS INTERACTIVE PROCESSES
Joel Iyiola 0laleye and Mrs Comfort Funmilayo Adegoke, ...142
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC INVESTIGATION OF GREETINGS IN ENGLISH AMONG mE YORUBA PEOPLE OF NIGERIA
0luwagbemileke J. Oke, ... 152
ATTITUDES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS TOW ARDS STUDYING ENGLISH AS A SUBJECT
Mrs Deborah Titilayo Olaoye, ... 167
A SOCIO-PRAGMAnC ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF POLITE TOKENS (HONORIFICS)IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH
Moses Adebayo AREMU, ...178
A STYLO-SEMIOTIC APPRAISAL OF THE REALmES OF GLOBALIZATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
S. A. Ojeniyi and M. A. Alege, ...188
STYLE IN FACTION: A STYLISTIC EVALUATION OF THE GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF SELECTED FACTION TEXTS
Dr. Bassey Ufot, ... 198
THE INTERDEPENDENCY OF THE COMPONENTS OF GRAMMAR AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHING Dr. I.0. Agbaje, Djrector 211
THE NEXUS BETWEEN STYLISnCS AND THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY: AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED POEMS
Dr (Mrs) Victoria A. Alabi and Mr Mahfouz A. Adedimeji,..... 216
LITERACY, SELF-DEVELOPMENT AND CLASS ERADICAnoN: IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIA
Dr. 0luwaseun Rachael Bello and Mr. 0lugbenga E. Crowntney, ...223
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND THE USE OF ENGLISH TEXTS IN THE NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: A CASE OF CONFLICTING
INTERESTS? Dr. S.T. Babatunde, ...232
NIGERIA ENGLISH STUDIES ASSOCIATION NESA: A COMMUNIQuE ON THE 23RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE
KW ANESA 2006 243

Olas Ventures: 01-815 3766, 878 1309, 0802 346 6916

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LEARNING AS INTERACTIVE PROCESSES

Joel Iyiola Olaleye and Mrs Comfort Funmilayo Adegoke, C/O University of Ilorin, Ilorin

Abstract

In this paper, the authors reported an investigation of behaviour of selected Nigerian children with a view to identifying the linguistic elements in their performance. Using different theories of developmental psychology as a base, they observed the language acquisition and learning skills displayed by the respondents. The observations indicated several features of the children's language development behaviour at the phonological and syntactic levels and also showed that the environment and technological invention had an impact on their linguistic behavior.

Key words: language acquisition/learning, developmental psychology, linguistic behaviour

Introduction

One specific domain of applied linguistic work is the area of language acquisition and language development. The interest of sociolinguistics as a major aspect of Applied Linguistics also covers Development Psycholinguistics which is the study of stages and processes involved in child language acquisition. This paper intends to present an account of linguistic peculiarities observed in child language development, to explain the source of the changes that are noticeable within the framework of both sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic theories of language acquisition and language development and to consider the impact of technology on the language acquisition of a child.

Research Methodology

The data used in the writing of this paper was collected through participatory observation. The extracts used for the analysis are parts of the data collected from a child named Orundun Abigael Arike, aged four; over a period of one and half month. The second data is from a child named Eunice, aged 3. The data are constructed within the last stage of the stages in language development in children called "True-speech", i.e. 3-6years. The children's utterances were recorded using the notebook and pen and are analyzed using various theories of language acquisition.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to emphasize the place of applied linguistics in the reinventing of English Language in Nigeria. Re-invention here would be explained in terms of the effort the home, society school and technology can put into the language acquisition and learning of a child, so that we can have a better future for the speakers of English Language in Nigeria. Since language is dynamic, one has to be dynamic in the approach to teaching and exposure of the children to English Language hence, the use of technology would be greatly emphasized in this write-up.

Thèoretical Framework of Language Development

Several scholars have attempted to describe language development in children. Some of these are mentioned here because they are considered relevant to the analysis of data observed in our respondents. McLaughlin (1987) presents an overview of the monitoring model proposed by Krashen (1979) as a psycholinguistic theory of language acquisition. The theory provides five central hypotheses. The first is based on the Acquisition – Learning Hypothesis that the adult acquires language as children do because they both use the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) of Chomsky. The second

is the monitoring hypothesis, that children are superior language learners because they do not use the monitor as adults do. The third is the Natural Order Hypothesis which explains that learners acquire language in a predictable order; some rules come early while some come later. The fourth is called the input Hypothesis; - that learners progress through natural developmental sequence; by understanding or by receiving comprehensive input. The fifth is called affective filter Hypothesis; - that there are barriers to language acquisition due to internal processing system.

The Monitoring Model Hypothesis discussed above is crucial to the present study in that it provides us with a basis to explain language development sequence in children.

Larsen, et al. (1991) also present an overview of the Chomskyian model, called "linguistic universals", which emphasizes processes in language development. Chomsky proposes that there are ideas inherent in the mind specifically for language acquisition, that with the aid of what he calls Language Acquisition device (LAD), a child is able to perceive and produce novel utterances. This theory emphasizes competence and performance.

A detailed account of the Interlanguage Model is presented by Larsen, et al (1991). They also present the list of the major proponents of the theory which include Selinker (1972), Adjemiah (1976) and Tarone (1979). To them, Interlanguage is defined as the learner's linguistic system at a given point in time and the range of interrelating systems that mark the development of learners over time". The theory has to do with learner's progress in language development as a result of the input the child receives from the adult world. The data at each point makes him competent. A child could stop at a point if comprehensive data is not provided to him/her.

Daramola (2004) asserts that one of the most interesting and highly influential accounts of a research ever conducted on language development of a child was by Halliday (1975). This work is remarkable in that it sets up a textually-oriented theoretical model. Halliday's sociolinguistic approach is premised on the social foundations of language. It assumes some general framework of social structure and social process in terms of which its functional potential becomes relevant. As the child uses language on his/her part, s/he is not only learning "to be" and to do but also to act and interact with other people in meaningful and acceptable ways.

For an explanation of the language development of a very young child, unlike the adult system, Halliday postulated the following set of functions: instrumental, regulatory, interaction, personal, heuristic, imaginative and informative. The instrumental function explains the use of language to serve a child's material needs. It includes a general expression of desire and a typical example is the "I want this or that object" (in context of utterance). The regulatory function explains the use of language by parent to control the behaviour of their children. The child recognizes this aspect of the adult behaviour and soon adopts it to control the behaviour of others with whom s/he interacts as generalized request by a child such as "Do that again".

The interactional aspect concerns the use of language by the child to interact with others. A common way of interaction is the greeting "Bye-bye daddy". Next is the personal function in which the child uses language to express his/her uniqueness. A child uses it to express personal feelings; this points to the use of language in the development of the child's personality. A typical example is "it is my own".

The child uses the heuristic function to explore his/her immediate environment. It begins from the child's inquiry into something when s/he asks "why daddy"? In using language to explore his/her immediate environment, the child begins

the imagination function. A child for example says before acting a play, "I'll be your father". This creative essence allows the child to display an imaginative function.

Finally, the informative function in a transactional stage from a childhood to adulthood is no doubt the most dominant in the adult's use of language. It evolves very late after the earlier six functions have been developed in a child, who, in an unsubdued anxiety, wishes to pass some information which may serve as a great delight to the addressee.

Jolayemi (1999) itemizes five stages in language acquisition proposed by scholars such as Steinberg (1982), Brown and Bellug (1972), McNeil (1970) and Briane (1963) as:

i. Crying and Cooing stage
ii. Babbling 6-12 months,
iii. Holophrastic stage 1-$1^{1}/^{2}$ years
iv. Telegraphic State $1^{1/2}$- $2^{1/2}$ years
v. True Speech 3-6 years.

Stages in Language Acquisition and Development

Developmental Psycholinguistics is the study of stages and processes involved in child language acquisition". However, it is not only children that acquire language, adults do too. There are five different stages in language acquisition in children and the areas are as follows:

Crying and Cooing

This is the stage when the baby cries and coos to communicate his/her needs for food or attention and the muscles of the organs of speech are built and strengthened.

Babbling 6-12 months

Steinberg (1982) is of the view that children all over the world make the same kind of sounds; even those who may not develop speech in future such as the deaf and dumb still babble. Jolayemi (1999) also observed that children babble through consonants and vowels required to learn any language. Some of the sounds said at this time are:

Ka-ka-ka-ka
gu-gun-gun guuun.

Holophrastic Stage (1-$1^{1/2}$ years)

Here, the baby transists from babbling to the one word stage. It has been discovered that the child is not merely making indiscriminate sounds but sensible utterances. So the child can be said to be graduating from the phonological level to the morphological and to syntactic levels. When the baby sees a female adult (any female adult) s/he utters "mama' and likewise call the male adult 'Baba'. At this stage, the child may utter a number of word called 'holophrases' where one word may mean many thing . Children also name object e.g. prait (plate), poon (spoon), yice (rice), etc.

Telegraphic Stage. (1 ½ -2 ½ years)

At this stage, there is tremendous expansion in the child's vocabulary Brown and Bellugi (1972) have one of the most valid pieces of information on the telegraph stage of child language acquisition. They carried out a study on this topic with two children named Adam and Eve (1962) while Adam was 27 months old and Eve 18 months old. The research went on for several years. Fortnightly, the researchers visited the children to record by cassette tape, the utterances of each of the children. Each visit lasted for at least 2 hours. Other researchers whose works were studied include McNeil (1970), Brown (1973), Peters (1980) and Steinberg (1982). Below are some of the utterances of the Children and the grammatical classes to which each belongs:

Baby highchair	noun + noun
Mummy sandwich	noun+ noun
Sat wall	verb+ noun
Throw daddy	verb+ noun

(Brown and Bellugi 1972:139)

Big boy	Adjective+ noun
Red car	Adjective + noun
More milk	Adjective+ noun

(Steinberg 1982:152)

Some of the utterances are the three words e.g.:

See truck mummy. Brown and Bellugi (1972)
Give me bread.

Towards the end of this stage, children are capable of uttering some four-word utterances. However at this stage, the child's language is characterized by content words in the classes of noun, verb and adjectives while function words in the classes of noun, verb and adjectives while function words in the classes of adverb, conjunction, preposition, etc. are almost always excluded. This can be likened to an adult's telegram message. "Father died, come home" and it is from here that the term telegraphic, used for this stage, has been derived. Jolayemi (1999).

True Speech 3-6 Years

From age three, a normal child is already attempting to use true speeches that are syntactically complex. S/he now uses various transformational rules s/he has internalized to generate complex sentences. Although s/he sometimes over-generalizes the rules. For instance, the child may says: 'A bags' or ' I digged the hole' as said by Adam and Eve (Brown Bellugi 1972:141) instead of 'A bad' and 'I dug the hole', thereby overextending the rules for plural and paste tense formation respectively.

Another sociolinguistic theory of language acquisition and development is the behavioral theory which claims that language acquisition is the product of habit formation. Habit could be constructed through stimulus response- Positive reinforcement. This theory sees environmental input as useful for language development. Having explored various psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic theories in the preceding paragraphs, it becomes imperative to add here that though many

propositions of the various theories may be of unproven adequacy, they are relevant to the present study.

Data for The Present Study

The conversation below was recorded. The dialogue was between the child and the Pastor who visited her parents.

Text 1

Parent (Mummy):	Arike, come and greet daddy
ARIKE:	Good afternoon Sir (kneeling down)
PASTOR:	Hello, Child
ARIKE:	Fine thank you Sir
PASTOR:	What's your name?
ARIKE:	My name is AWIKE
PASTOR:	AWIKE?
ARIKE:	No. AWIKE.

In the extract above, the child's response to the Pastor's question presents a humorous event. The account shows that the child recognizes correct forms of pronunciation even though she seems unable to produce correctly./ærike/.the play-acting continues until the pastor produces it correctly. "Oh! Your name is ARIKE" and the little girl answered "yes; AWIKE".

The Chomskyian Principle of Competence explains this puzzling reaction. The child shares the same competence even though she could not produce the correct form for whatever reasons. She still recognizes that what was produced (if replicated) was wrong. The child has acquired what is called a native speaker's intuition.

Text 2: (between our information and uncle)

UNCLE:	(Calling the child) ARIKE!
ARIKE:	Sir
UNCLE:	Do you know where your mother kept my food?
ARIKE:	Me, I don't know *(Where she kept it)*

The immediate relevance of the above extract reveals the syntactic construction of the child's response; which is characterized by a shorter sentence, devoid of subordinate clause(s), even where such is required. The elliptical construction in "Me, I don't know" shows a very simple grammatical relation. The relevance of this shows the language development of the child from simple construction to complex construction some weeks after the present data. (Dialogue 3 exemplifies this)

Text 3: (between the child and the researcher) 5 weeks later

RESEARCHER:	Let me see your new shoe
ARIKE:	I wear it to church Yesterday.

The use of the present for of the verb "wear" in relation to yesterday is absurd. The child is unable to coordinate appropriate syntactic relationship between the time mentioned and the verb used ". Also, the word YESTERDAY was used as a reference to "Sunday" by the child, whereas the dialogue took place on Thursday: This reveals that the child's language competence perceived any previous days in the past to be

yesterday. However, the dialogue below shows the improvement in the child's language over time: (4 weeks later).

Text 5; (between the researcher and the child)
RESEARCHER: Why didn't you go to school yesterday?
ARIKE: No, I go to school "yesterday", but on Saturday.

The dialogue shows that the child could use yesterday better in another context. This may partly be that the child knows that they don't always go to school on Saturdays. However, the use of the present tense "go" shows that there is no marked difference in tense relation with time in the child's language.

The next data in this research work is a confirmation of the assertion of Brown and Bellugi (1972). A child sometimes overgeneralises the rules. This implies the transformation rules s/he has internalized. The following conversations ensued between two children:

Text 6
JOSEPH: Where is your mummy?
EUNICE: She has go.
This is similar to the report on Adam and eve (Brown & Bellugi 1972: 141).
Here, Eunice has generalized the use of the verb go. Overextending the rule for present tense formation so whether the situation has to do with the present or past tense. All she knows is go. The researcher corrected the child.

Text 7 (between a visitor and the child)
VISITOR: Where is your father?
ARIKE: They are inside.

In the above adjacent pair, two aspects deserve mentioning in language development of this child. The child on the one hand has begun to demonstrate the linguistic nativization of his speech: The initial consonant in the word "they" /...eI/ is realized as /deI/ . Also, the word "they" manifest culture-specific vocabulary item of the child: The use of this honorific expression for elder, shows the child's pragmatic competence.

The researcher corrected the child and watch the child language performance keenly to know whether the child had internalized the appropriate inputs:

Text 8 (between the researcher and the informant) 3 weeks later
RESEARCHER: When did your father travel?
ARIKE: He travel yesterday

The child's response attests the interlanguage theory and monitoring model, that emphasizes exposure to comprehensive input for language development. The child used Pronoun "He" as a reference to her father correctly. This is as result of the child's ability to respond to the correction. However, as noted in Dialogue 5, the child still maintains the present tense form of verb.

Text 9 (between the informant and her elder sister)
ABIGAEL: (Presents two toys of different colours) Take this
ARIKE: No, I want the red one.

ABIGAEL: If you don't take it I will drop it down.
ARIKE: Don't drop it; give me this.

The above data is relevant to the discussion of the sets of function discussed by Halliday: The child is using her first response to signal the sage of language development she currently belongs to. She was using it to perform what Halliday calls Instrumental function; as an expression of desire. The use of imperative expression in the second response shows the use of language for regulatory function which explains ability to control other behaviour.

Text 10 (betweenthe informant and a peer group) 4 weeks later.
KUNLE: I will be your father
RACHEAL: I will be your mother
ARIKE: I will be your child
KUNLE: (He sees a worm); Yeh! Come and see.
ARIKE: Is it a snake? Can it bite?

The child's participation in the above playlet shows a transition from the previous stage in Dialogue 8 to fifth stage which Halliday calls "Imaginative function". This stage affords her the opportunity to develop interactional concern in the use of language.

Technology and Child Development

Young children have needs that are real and different from those of older children and adolescents. Children from age eight are learning rapidly, using all their senses and their entire bodies to take in sensations and experience the world around them. During this period of their lives, they learn through their play and exploration across five essential development dimensions (Kagan, Moore & Bredekamp, 1995)which include:

Social and Emotional Development: The ability to form and sustain relationships gives meaning to learning experiences. Response interactions provide a sense of well-being that enables children to form attachments with others and to represent their thoughts, feelings and experiences.

Language Development Language empowers children to participate in both the cognitive and affective parts of the educational programme. The experience with written and oral language provides children with the tools to interact with others and to represent their thoughts, feelings and experiences.

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development: A child's health is connected to preparedness for and performance in learning activities. Healthy children are able to focus on and actively engage in experiences crucial to the learning process.

Cognition and General Knowledge: Children need opportunities to interact with the people and objects in their environment and to learn from their surroundings. Experiences and interactions with peers and adults allow children to construct knowledge of patterns, understand relationships between objects or events and learn ways to solve problems.

Approaches towards Learning: Children can be successful learners in many different ways. By understanding the predispositions and learning styles that influence a child's response to learning opportunities, adults can encourage and increase engagement

Research on Technology and Child Development

There is a substantial body of research on technology use with young children. A large portion of this research focuses on the use of computers to enhance social language and cognitive skills. Studies highlight the opportunities for language use and social interaction that technology offers, along with increased motivation. Computers also make possible experiences and representations that cannot take place in the real world, providing new experiences and improved understanding.

Social and Emotional Development

Technology can not and should not replace human interaction or relationships, or take the place of activities such as reading stories together or sharing conversations with children. Properly used, however, computer and software can serve as catalyst for social interactions and conversations related to children's work. A classroom set up for interactions and the appropriate use of the technology will increase, not impair, language and literacy development, strategies to build socialization into computer use, include placing two seats in front of the computer to encourage the children to work together, placing computers close to each other to facilitate sharing ideas, locating computers in a central spot to invite other children to participate in the activity. When used appropriately,

- Computers are intrinsically motivating for young children, and contribute to cognitive and social development (National Association for the Education of Young children [NAEYC], 1996)
- Computers can enhance children's self-concept and improve their attitudes about learning.
- Children demonstrate increased levels of spoken communication and cooperation during computer use
- Children share leadership role on the computer, and initiate interactions more frequently.

Language Development

The variety of rich experiences that promote early literacy, including conversation with caring adults, storytelling, drawing and painting and pretend play, is critical in the development of both oral and written language. Everyday, playful experiences in print-rich environments expose children to the processes of reading and writing for real purposes (International Reading Association [IRA) and NAEYC, 1998). Technology has a place in this environment; language and literacy development are major strength of technology use with young children through the opportunities and motivations it provides. While critics express concerns that computer use will inhibit language development and lead to social isolation, rather than isolating children, research shows that:

- Computers play encourages longer, more complex speech and the development of fluency.

- Children tend to narrate what they are doing as they draw pictures or move objects and characters around the screen
- Young children interacting at computers engage in high level of spoken communication and cooperation, such as turn-taking and peer collaboration. "Compared to more traditional activities, such as puzzle assembly or block building, the computer elicits more social interaction and different types of interaction"

CONCLUSION

Having observed the data obtained from the children above, one would discover that development manifests in a child at all linguistic levels. Phonologically, she could perceive the correct pronunciation even if she could not produce the correct form. At the syntactic level, an appreciable contribution of the interlanguage model, monitoring model, explain the child's linguistic development over time. However, the child's failure to respond to correct input could not be adequately accounted for by these theories. This is properly handled by the Mentalist theory that the child is responding to internalized rules though the child does not know the limitation of the rules. Also, the use of the honorific expression such as "They" for "he" marks the child's environmental influence.

The modern use of technology, especially the computer, if properly monitored, can help in the development of "high levels of spoken communication and co-operation, turn-taking and peer collaboration" Used appropriately, computers can be a positive element of children's play and learning as they explore and experiment, since the child's language development is always in a progressive manner.

References

Brain, M.D.S (1963) The Ontogeny of English Phrase structure: The first phase. *Language* 39, 1-13.

Brown, R. (1973) *A First Language: The Early Stage* . Cambridge Mass: Havard University Press.

Brown, R. and Bellugi, U. (1972) Three processes in the child's acquisition of syntax. In A. Cashan & E. Grugeon (eds) *Language in Education: A source book.*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 136-144.

Daramola A. (2004) Language Acquisition and Learning in Nigeria. In A.B.A. Dadzie and S. Awonusi (Eds) *Nigerian English Influences and Characteristics*: Lagos Concept Publication.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1975) *Learning How to Man Explorations in Development of Language.* Edward Arnold.

Jolayemi D. (1999) Language Acquisition: Its implication for English studies in a second language context" in E.A. Adegbija (Ed.) *The Language and Literature in English: An Introductory Handbook.* Ilorin. The Department of Modern European Language.

Kelin Wothany (1980) *Second Language Acquisition.* New York: Cambridge University Press

Larsen–Freman, Diane and Longs H. M. (1991) *An Introduction to second language acquisition research.*. USA Longman Group.

Mclaughlin , B (1987) *Theories in second language learning.* London: Arnold.

Mc.Neil D. (1970) *The Acquisition of language.* New York: Harper & Row.

Peters, An. (1980) The Units of Language Acquisition. *Working Papers in Linguistic.s.* University of Hawaii, pp. 1-72.
Steinberg, D. (1982) *Psycholinguistics.* London: Longman.

Home, up and coming, Programs and Projects, People, Products and Publications; By Request Topics © 2001 North West Regional, Educational Laboratory Email Webmaster. Tel: 503.275.9500