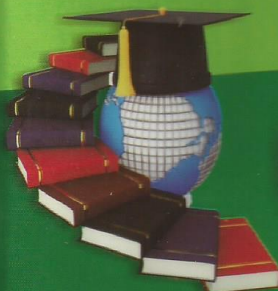


EDITED BY:

- Samuel O. Aje,
- Gbenga S. Ibileye,
- Upah N. Butari,
- Onah E. Patrick,
- Oreoluwa A. Solomon



LINGUISTICS, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

A Festschrift for TAIWO OLUFUNTO GANI-IKILAMA

THIS BOOK

This Festschrift - Linguistics, Language and Literature — contains forty-five scholarly articles presented in fourteen (14) sections. The book is rich because of the diverse papers on almost all aspects of linguistic studies, communication and literature. Some of the areas covered are: Sociolinguistic, Grammar/Syntax, Pragmatics, Semantics, Stylistics, Discourse Analysis, Applied Linguistics, Phonetics & Phonology, etc. It is highly recommended for its range of interest, depth of discourse and academic worth.

THE EDITORS

Prof. Samuel O. Aje studied at the Université de Caen in France and later Université de Paris VIII where he bagged the Licence-ès-lettres, Maîtrise, Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies and the PhD in 1979. Between 1979 when he joined the services of the University of Jos as lecturer II in the Department of Languages and Linguistics and 1992, he rose through the ranks to become Professor of Applied Linguistics. At various moments, he served as Head of Department and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Jos. He was later appointed Director General and Chief executive of the Nigeria French Language Village Badagry from 2003 to 2013. Professor Aje is a seasoned linguist and has worked extensively on language acquisition and the teaching of second language. He has carried out a lot of projects on customized language programs for special purposes.

Prof. Gbenga Ibileye, who was one of Prof. Gani-Ikílama's students, has had over two decades of lecturing experience starting from the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, where he taught from 1992 to 2012, Université Gaston Berger, Senegal (Sabbatical 2004 to 2005) and Federal University Lokoja, since 2012. He specialises in Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics, with keen interest in constitutional and other legal documents as well as in the emerging area of Forensic Linguistics.

Butari Nahum is a seasoned teacher and researcher in the Department of English and Drama, Kaduna State University. He has published numerous scholarly articles in books and journals. He holds BA (Hons), MA, and PhD in the English language from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, he specializes in Semantics, Stylistics, Pragmatics, Syntax and Discourse Analysis.

Onah, Patrick El-kanemi is a lecturer in the Department of English and Drama, Kaduna State University. This trained teacher holds the following academic degrees from the famous ABU, Zaria: NCE, B.Ed (Lang. Arts - English), M.A. and Ph.D (English Language). His teaching experience cut across primary, secondary schools and the foremost teachers' institute (Federal College of Education, Zaria). His academic forte and research interest includes Sociolinguistics, Dialectology, Phonetics and Phonology and Applied Linguistics. He has published extensively in a number of local and international academic journals.

Oreoluwa Abraham Solomon, Ph. D, M. A. English Language, A.B.U, Zaria), B. A. (English Studies, O. A. U. Ile - Ife) has taught English language in many Secondary Schools, St. Gerard's Catholic School of Nursing, Kaduna, Kaduna Polytechnic, and has been a lecturer at the Federal University Dutsinma, Katsina State. His research focus includes Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, and Applied Linguistics. He has published peer-reviewed papers in some national and international journals.



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Izy Mac Fontz
08033845421, 08050517494,
izymac@gmail.com
izymac01@yahoo.com



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EDITORS:

SAMUEL O. AJE
GBENGA SOLOMON IBILEYE
UPAH NAHUM BUTARI
ONAH EL-KANEMI PATRICK
OREOLUWA ABRAHAM SOLOMON

CONSULTANT EDITORS:

PROF. OFUOKWU E. DILI	(Fac. of Arts, ABU),
PROF. ANDREW ILLA	(Fac. of Arts, ABU),
PROF. ABUBAKAR A. LIMAN	(Fac. of Arts, ABU),
PROF. AKUSO S. EZEKIEL	(Fac. of Arts, ABU)

**LINGUISTICS,
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**
A FESTSCHRIFT FOR TAIWO OLUFUNTO GANI-IKILAMA

**EDITED BY: SAMUEL O. AJE, GBENGA SOLOMON IBILEYE, UPAH NAHUM
BUTARI, ONAH EL-KANEMI PATRICK & OREOLUWA ABRAHAM SOLOMON**

**PUBLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,
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Onah El-kanemi Patrick & Oreoluwa Abraham Solomon

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08033846421, 08090517494
izymac@gmail.com, izymac01@yahoo.com

Dedication

To God the ALMIGHTY who has sown a seed, watered it, metamorphosed it into a she, nurtured her, and seen her grow this far.

Picture of the Honoree



FOREWORD

I feel particularly honoured to be invited to write a foreword to *Linguistics, Language and Literature: A Festschrift for Taiwo Olufunto Gani-Ikilama*. This is an uphill task, considering the activities and contributions to knowledge of Professor T. O. Gani-Ikilama at the pre-university and university levels not to talk of the many lives she touched in the course of her very rich career. I have consistently followed Prof Gani-Ikilama's academic prowess over the years and would like to add that I have been privileged to know the celebrant from her primary school days as my senior. Right from that moment she distinguished herself as a quiet, soft-spoken, intelligent, purpose driven and highly principled student.

The career of an academic can often be effectively traced along the trajectory of those who benefitted from the knowledge impart from the academic in his/her unalloyed commitment to mould, educate and empower those who desire to acquire such knowledge; in other words, the students. Prof. T. O. Gani-Ikilama has been able to exhibit these traits in the most credible manner. A festschrift in her honour is therefore appropriate and can serve as a modest way of appreciating her contributions to knowledge and a way of sustaining her legacy.

The sustenance of every institution is dependent on its ability to ensure her existence. This can be observed from the array of contributions in this collection, from the quality and currency of the contributions. Starting from the celebrant's area of comfort of phonological adaptations, this festschrift goes, through grapho-phonemic study of the Nigerian Pidgin, to pragmatic analysis of some Nigerian languages and contemporary speeches to semantic implication of neologism, discuss analysis and transculturalism among others.

These contributions create an exciting level of intellectual discourse as well as an interplay of meaning variables which are necessary in generating and deepening the academic debate in Linguistics, language and literary studies. I would like to invite all researchers, lecturers and students in the aforementioned areas to procure their copies of this Festschrift and contribute in enriching the debate as we rejoice with Professor Taiwo Olufunto Gani-Ikilama and wish her more successful years ahead.

Prof. S. O. Aje, FIAMN, FNITI, FIoTA
Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques
University of Jos – Nigeria.
Department of Foreign Languages

CONTENTS

Professor Taiwo Olufunto Gani-ikilama	v
Acknowledgements	xiii
Foreword	xix
Notes on Contributors	xxiv

SECTION ONE: SOCIOLINGUISTICS

1. African Multilingualism: A Challenge and a Resource Oreoluwa Abraham Solomon & V. O. Faleke	2
2. A Grapho-Phonemic Study of the Nigerian Pidgin Script Onah Patrick El-kanemi	10
3. English Language for National Development in Nigeria Nmadumelu Obi	23
4. Using Pidgin English as a Tool for Poverty Eradication, Self-Reliance and National Development in Nigeria. Idris Mohammed Bdiya	31
5. The Relevance of Pidgin Language to Religion Bartholomew Chidili	37
6. An Appraisal of the place of Nigerian English in World Englishes Esther Rrotekpen Oseghale	48
7. Towards the Revival and Survival of an Endangered Language: Bassa Nge as a Case Study Abaya, Angulu Samson	58
8. English as Nigeria's Lingua Franca: An Asset or a Liability? Chinyere Uchegbu-Ekwueme	65

SECTION TWO: GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX

9. A Study of 'and' in Clausal Coordination: Some Examples from the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria John Toluhi	76
10. The Use of Qualifiers as Elements of Modification in George Orwell's <i>Animal Farm</i> Jacob Hellandendu	96
11. Linguistic System and Transitivity Analysis Isyaku Saminu	105
12. Lexico-Syntactic Patterns in Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Students' Computer-Mediated Communication Rita Bossan	112

SECTION THREE: PRAGMATICS		
13.	A Pragmatic Analysis of Tugbiri Proverbs of Encouragement Elsie Abashe Tamida	129
14.	A Pragmatic Analysis of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's Speech on Fuel Subsidy Removal Saleh Jibir & Josephine Ojima Ohiemi	139
15.	The Ígálà Interpretation of Selected Deictics and Gesture Andrew - Ogidi, Rakiya Christiana	152
16.	Effective Profit Maximization Through Online Advertisement Ayodede Joseph	163
17.	Illocutionary Acts and Rhetorical Devices in General Muhammadu Buhari's Campaign Speech, Chatham House, London Gbenga Joseph	171
18.	Language Strategy in Selected English Advertisements on Plateau Radio Television Corporation, Jos Dajang Innocent Nasuk	183
19.	Politeness Principles and Face Acts among English and Yoruba Interractants Aremu, Moses Adebayo	193
SECTION FOUR: SEMANTICS		
20.	New Trends and Semantic Implications of Neologisms in Christian Religious Proceedings Anyanwu Josephine Igbemma	207
21.	Meaning: A Component of Three Variables Auwal Muhammad	219
SECTION FIVE: STYLISTICS		
22.	Transculturalism: A Case for ESP Ibok, Evelyn U. & Ahembe, Terver Iorde	233
23.	Stylistic Analysis of "Sermon On The Mount" in St. Matthew's Gospel Kwasau, Hannatu	239
24.	A Stylistic Analysis of E. E. Sule's Knifing Tongues Musa Sadiq, Alex, Akor Emmanuel & Ochekwu, Ochanya Faith	252
25.	A Stylistic Analysis of Akurmi (T'kurmi) Proverbs Gada, Jemimah Dan'azumi	261

SECTION SIX: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS		
26.	Discourse Analysis of Aule Moses' Play <i>Chips in the Game</i> Upah, Butari Nahum	272
27.	Discourse Strategies in Sir Ahmadu Bello's Rhetoric Abdullahi Ahmad	282
28.	Turn taking as a Pedagogical Strategy: An analysis of Lessons in English as a Second Language Mohammed Tajudeen Sadiq	295
SECTION SEVEN: APPLIED LINGUISTICS		
29.	Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to the Study of African Linguistics for Depth, Scope and Accuracy: An Advocacy Samson Olusola OLATUNJI	308
30.	Mother Tongue Influence on Hausa Speakers of English Takim Ajom Okongor	319
SECTION EIGHT: PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY		
31.	Phonological Adaptation of Borrowed Yoruba Words and Their Impact: A Case Study of Nupe Speaking Areas of Kwara State Idris Bida	332
SECTION NINE: PEDAGOGY		
32.	Arabo-Islamic Education as a Capacity Building for National Development in Nigeria Abdulganiyi Musa	347
SECTION TEN: LANGUAGE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT		
33.	Linguistic Communication a Human Preserve M. A. Ajibola	357
34.	English Language: A Tool for Self-Independence and Sustainable Economic Growth in Nigeria James, Andokari Zaku	365
SECTION ELEVEN: TRANSLATION		
35.	Retracing Semantic and Syntactic Shifts in Translatology: An Analysis of Massa Makan Diabate's <i>The Kouta Lieutenant</i> Translated By D.C. Chima Nyitse, Daniel	373

SECTION TWELVE: COMMUNICATION

36. Language, Social Media and Students' Academic Writing
Peace Chinwendu Israel 484
37. Press Freedom, the Nigerian Journalist and the
 Freedom of Information (Foi) Act: What Does the Law Say?
Chidinma Henrietta ONWUBERE 400

SECTION THIRTEEN: LITERATURE

38. Proposing Feminist Pedagogy for the Improvement
 of Northern Nigerian Women's Access to Literacy
Phebe Veronica Jatau 413
39. Urhobowood Home videos and the Poetics of Cultural Documentation
Okpadah, Stephen Ogheneruro 420
40. Tragic Paradigm in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*
Idiamin, Brains OFUM & Yemisi, Folashade FASHAKIN 433
41. Women Struggle for Survival and the Crises of Change
 in Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood*
Sarki, Philip Ereson 441
42. Graphic Devices as Signallers of Meaning in Osundare's
 "Dialogue with my Country"
Isaiah Aluya 454
43. The Emerging Trends in Feminist Criticism in Africa:
 An Overview
Nnawuihe F. Echendu 468

SECTION FOURTEEN: FRENCH STUDIES

44. Enjeu Transculturel et chanson camerounaise
 Contemporaine : cas de la chanson de donny elwood.
Obono Essomba Anne 486
45. L'homme Et Le Destin Dans Kam-Ndjaha La Devoreuse
 De Marie -Christine Koundja
Ahmed, Musa & Onyemelukwe, Ifeoma 495

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Oreoluwa Abraham Solomon is a Lecturer in The Department of Languages and Linguistics Federal University, Dutsinma, Katsina State.

V. O. Faleke is a lecturer in the Department of Modern European Languages, Federal University, Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State.

Phebe Veronica Jatau is a lecturer in the Department of English, Federal College of Education, Zaria.

Isaiah Aluya is a lecturer in the Department of English, Bingham University, Karu, Nasarawa State

Idris Bida teaches English Language in the Department of English Language, Fati Lami Abubakar Institute for Legal and Administrative Studies, P.M.B. 133, Minna, Niger State

James, Andokari Zaku is a lecturer in the Department of English Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State

Takim Ajom Okongor, is a lecturer in the Faculty of General Studies, Federal University Dutse

Obono Essomba Anne, Departement De Litterature Et Civilisation Africaines Universite De Yaounde I

Sarki, Philip Ereson is a lecturer in the Department of English and Drama, Kaduna State University, Kaduna – Nigeria

Dajang Innocent Nasuk is a lecturer in the Department of English, University of Jos

Okpadah, Stephen Ogheneruro is a graduate of Theatre Arts Department, Delta State University Abraka, Delta State where he majored in Media Arts. He is currently a post-graduate student of the Department of The Performing Arts, University of Ilorin.

Elsie Abashe Tamida is an M. A. student in the Department of English and Drama, Kaduna State University, Kaduna.

Abdulganiyi Musa is a lecturer in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Kogi State University P.M.B 1008, Anyigba, Nigeria

Saleh Jibir is a lecturer in the Department of Hausa Language Yobe State University P.M.B. 1144 Damaturu, Yobe State

Josephine Ojima Ohiemi is a lecturer in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Federal University Lokoja, Lokoja.

Andrew - Ogidi, Rakiya Christiana is a lecturer in The Department of General Studies, Nigerian Defence Academy Kaduna

John Toluhi teaches English at Uncle Bado Memorial College, Kaduna

Idiamin, Brains OFUM is a postgraduate student, Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Yemisi, Folashade FASHAKIN is a postgraduate student Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Ibok, Evelyn U. teaches English in the Department of Languages, Federal Polytechnic, Mubi Adamawa State.

Ahembe, Terver Iorde teaches English in the Department of Languages, Federal Polytechnic, Mubi Adamawa State

Auwal Muhammad is a Lecturer in the Department of English and Literary Studies Ahmadu Bello University Zaria

Upah, Butari Nahum is a senior lecturer in the Department of English and Drama Kaduna State University

Jacob Hellandendu is a lecturer at The Federal Polytechnic, Mubi Adamawa State

Nmadumelu Obi is a lecturer in The Department of English Federal College of Education, Zaria

Idris Mohammed Bdliya is a lecturer in The Department of English Federal College of Education, Zaria

Ayodede Joseph is a senior lecturer in The Department Of Mass Communication Kaduna State University, Kaduna

Ahmed, Musa is a lecturer in the Department of French Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Onyemelukwe, Ifeoma is a professor in the Department of French Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Samson Olusola OLATUNJI is a lecturer at the Linguistic Immersion Centre Faculty of Arts University of Ilorin

Gbenga J. Joseph is a lecturer in the English Department, Federal College of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State.

Kwasau, Hannatu is a lecturer in The Department of English and Drama Kaduna State University Kaduna.

Nyitse, Daniel is an M. A. student in the Department of French, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Onah Patrick El-kanemi is a lecturer in the Department of English and Drama, Kaduna State University, Kaduna

Bartholomew Chidili is an Associate Professor in the Department of Christian Religious Studies, Kaduna State University, Kaduna

Gada, Jemimah Dan'azumi is a lecturer in The Department of English and Drama Kaduna State University

Chidinma Henrietta ONWUBERE is a lecturer in the School of Arts and Social Sciences National Open University of Nigeria Victoria Island, Lagos

Rita Bossan is a lecturer in the Department of English and Drama Kaduna State University, Kaduna, Nigeria

Chinyere Uchegbu-Ekwueme is a lecturer in the Department of English, Federal University, Dutse, Jigawa State

M. A. Ajibola, is a lecturer in the Department of Primary Education Studies Federal College of Education, Zaria.

Abaya, Angulu Samson is a senior lecturer in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Isyaku Saminu is a lecturer in the Department of English and Literary Studies Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Musa Sadiq is an M. A. student in the Department of English and Drama, Kaduna State University, Kaduna

Alex, Akor Emmanuel is an M. A. student in the Department of English and Drama, Kaduna State University, Kaduna

Ochekwu, Ochanya Faith is an M. A. student in the Department of English and Drama, Kaduna State University, Kaduna

Oyelakin Gbenga Samson is a graduate of the Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State.

Abdullahi Ahmad is a senior lecturer in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Mohammed Tajudeen Sadiq is a lecturer in the Department of English, Federal University, Dutse, Jigawa State.

Esther Rotekpen Oseghale is a Ph.D candidate in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Aremu, Moses Adebayo is a lecturer in the Department of English, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education Oyo (Lanlate Campus), Oyo State.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to the Study of African Linguistics for Depth, Scope and Accuracy: An Advocacy

Samson Olusola Olatunji

Linguistic Immersion Centre

Faculty of Arts

University of Ilorin

samsholat@gmail.com, olatunji.so@unilorin.edu.ng

+234806 2674 66

Abstract

This paper is an advocacy for multi-disciplinary approaches to the study of African linguistics. It delineates the concept of African linguistics and the rationales for ample attention to a special branch of linguistics to take care of the peculiar needs of the African people. It takes a critical look at the problems that have arisen concerning African linguistic issues as a result of isolationist and parochial approach to the enterprise. It also exposes the disadvantages to include inability to come up with terms that are universally acceptable, formulation of contentious translation of terms, inadequate documentation and transmission of historical and cultural facts and realities, among others. It then explores the advantages accruable from employment of a harmonized multidisciplinary approach.

Delineation of African Linguistics

A proper and adequate understanding of a concept is imperative for a meaningful relation with and maximal exploitation of the benefits afforded by the concept. Linguistics, unfortunately, is a term commonly misinterpreted by non-linguists. Therefore, they cannot adequately and appropriately appreciate the functions of a linguist or fully appropriate the potentials of such practitioners. For example, according to Awonusi (2007), many people express the misconception that being a linguist is synonymous with being a polyglot. So, their natural reaction to anybody's claim of being a linguist is to ask, "How many languages do you speak?" or exclaim "So, you speak many languages!"

This conception of linguistics is both erroneous and misleading (McGill's Linguistics Department, 2010). It presupposes that a person who has mastered about seven languages as a result of wide travels by reason of trade is a linguist. But this is not true because the ability to speak a language is not a sure sign that the speaker knows the science of such a language. Therefore, it is considered pertinent to delineate the concept of linguistics before going further to discuss African linguistics.

Linguistics is known as the scientific study of Language. It is that wide area of academic enterprise that is preoccupied with endeavours to analyse a language using scientific methods and procedures that can be replicated under similar circumstances to obtain similar results or logically arrive at the same or similar conclusion. Branches of linguistics include Morphology, Syntax, Phonetics and Phonology, Semantics, and Pragmatics.

African Linguistics is everything about the scientific study of Language with particular focus on African languages. It is that branch of invaluable enquiries in which the beauty of African languages is preserved from adulteration, meanings are not distorted and other distinctive features of every language are retained in their pure forms. The meanings are not construed according to the dictates of the Western world's philosophies (Freeborn, 2005).

African Linguistics in the fate of Globalisation

Globalisation has been conceived and explained in diverse ways by various scholars. To some scholars, it is a ploy to propagate Western values so widely that such values may subsume all the distinctive features of all other cultures. The effect would be a forced homogenisation of all the nations of the world by converting all other nationalities into mere caricatures of the Western culture (Salawu, 2006). The cultural and linguistic "genocide" manifesting in most Africans' aversion for anything indigenous to them, including their mother tongues, has been interpreted as a product of globalisation, that is, globalisation of Western language (i.e. English) and culture at the expense of the much-needed preservation and development of the various ethnic languages of the world.

At the alarming rate at which this is being achieved, one may not be unreasonable to conclude rhetorically with Graddol (1997, 2000) that "If the rest of the world isn't talking English, they are borrowing English words to add to their own languages" and conclude with the question, "If the whole world is speaking English, why learn another language?" Since an overwhelming percentage of Africans, the illiterate inclusive, would prefer their children to speak what they have come to dub "the language of civilisation and globalisation" (that is English) even in the most informal circumstances, is there any need to study African linguistics at all, talk more of advocating advances in the study of such endangered languages?

If truly, as opined by Salawu (2006:3), the goal of globalisation is to make most people of the "fringe" countries "unwittingly become cloned Americans or Westerners", then vigorous efforts must be invested into the study, preservation and propagation of African languages as an antidote to whatever poison globalisation is injecting to the world system. Our languages, described by Salawu (2006:3) as "the whole essence of our being", constitute an asset that we "cannot afford to lose" to the forces of globalisation.

Globalisation could also be construed, and is actually explained by some optimistic scholars, as a platform for giving a worldwide space for as many local languages, cultures, and products from various countries that are ready to take adequate advantage of the available array of technologies like the Internet, the global system of mobile communication (GSM), the video industry, and so on. Viewed thus, globalisation calls for advances in the study of any African

language that is to enjoy relevance in this age of globalisation, and such advances include the use of multidisciplinary approaches to study of the elements of such a language. Any African language that is not rigorously and widely studied will certainly be left out of the globalisation process.

Ouane and Glanz (2010:19) have identified "the language industry and the creative sector" as lucrative and vibrant labour markets, offering services such as language training, language testing, translation, interpretation, dubbing, editing and writing, proof reading, language technology development, and terminology development. They also point out that the language and creative firms generated sales of 404.1 million Canadian dollars including interest and dividends of nearly 410 million Canadian dollars. Exports generated about 25 per cent of the overall revenue. If African languages and linguistics are not adequately studied and developed to the level of international commodities, then Africa's relevance in the era of globalisation as well as legitimate exploitation of the economic dividends of the era will forever be elusive.

Theoretical Framework of Study

Our framework is known as the Systems Theory propounded in 1928 by Ludwig von Bertalanffy to correct the notion that each constituent piece of a system could be analysed in isolation from the whole before proceeding to consider the whole. Bertalanffy argued that no part has a meaning outside of the whole because its relevance is found only in the context of its relations with the others in the system. This means the actual meaning and relevance of any part of the human body derive from its interactions with the other constituents of the human body structure and system.

Though the Systems Theory was postulated by a biologist primarily for biological disciplines and it is not without logically proven deficiencies, its application has spread to various disciplines like safety and security (Young and Leveson, 2014), electrical engineering (McNeill and Freiburger, 1993); the social sciences applied cybernetics, Operational Analysis, information Science, and so on (Hjørland and Nicolaisen, 2005); Philosophy (Heylighen and Joslyn, 1992), Psychology, Psychotherapy and Sociology (<http://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/types/systems-theory-therapy>).

The theory finds relevance in the context of the current discourse in that extant literature has shown that an isolationist approach to the study of African linguistics cannot achieve desired outcomes. African linguistics can be well situated in the realm of local relevance as well as global prominence only when significant inputs of specialists from all other fields of endeavours dealing with components of African cultures and histories are employed. For example, one cannot understand why the word "dowry" is not applicable to most African languages except with an adequate understanding of the fact that it is the groom that pays on the bride but not the other way round. The import of Ajayi Crowther's translation of "midwife" as "Awon iya agba" (literally meaning "old women") in the Yoruba version of Exodus 1:15-21 can be grasped only by resorting to the historical background of the Yoruba culture that would reveal that midwifery was a preserve of very old women among the Yorubas of Ajayi Crowther's time unlike the present-day proliferation of the practice by young women in this dispensation of western medical practices.

Multidisciplinary Approach for African Linguistics

Having established that the study of African linguistics is deserving of priority, it is pertinent to identify very effective ways to carry out such a crucial enterprise. While the issue of an appropriate approach to the study of African linguistics can be viewed from various angles, the focus of the current article is an examination of the prospects of multidisciplinary approaches to such a laudable academic venture. The following paragraphs shall thus engage the issues at stake.

The failure of some concepts translated from the English language into some African languages to achieve anticipated success can be blamed on failure to employ multidisciplinary approaches. According to Kolawole (1996), the products of the metalanguage project aimed at modernizing Yoruba orthography and capturing science and technology terminologies could not attract satisfactory success because people at the grassroots could not relate with the formulated terms. This implies that the project executors did not give adequate consideration (or any at all) to the socio-cultural variables of their assignment. When an African country depends on wholesale and indiscriminate adoption of linguistic materials from languages that its elites have little knowledge in and which the teeming population finds strange, true development of such a country remains a perpetual illusion (Ouane and Glanz, 2010). An effective measure against such a failure is for the linguists working on an assignment of that nature to avail themselves of the input of experts in sociology and cultural studies.

It has been pointed out that lot of invaluable technical know-how, values, norms, mores and technologies have been lost to their Western counterparts as a result of the fact that efforts to translate them into European languages, mostly English, were based on the prejudices of the whites and the limited English proficiency of their African linguistic disciples. This is testified to by Ekeke and Ekeopara (2010), too. Ouane and Glanz (2010:5) acknowledge that:

There are brilliant African elites that have "tamed" the formerly colonial languages so masterfully that they have appropriated these languages and contribute skillfully and creatively to the development of new knowledge, integrating sometimes African reality or reading the world from African perspectives. However, an African Renaissance calls for a deeper understanding of and greater resort to African know-how, values and wisdom, and a new lens through which to read the world and participate in the sharing of knowledge and use of technologies to open up new paths and ways of living.

Examples abound in the prejudiced translation of several concepts from Yoruba to English and vice versa. Terms that do not have any common representations in both target language and source language are sometimes erroneously interpreted to share the same referents. Ezema (2013:222), too, has rightly observed that "no two languages are, therefore, ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality". For example, the concept of "Esu", "Ori", and "owo ori iyawo" do not have any direct references in English but are erroneously translated and equated with the Judeo-Christian Satan, destiny, and dowry respectively. It has been noted that the Judeo-Christian Satan or Devil is all evil but no good while Esu in Yoruba traditional religion is an embodiment of both good and evil, according

every person and situation as appropriate. Therefore, Esu cannot be a correct translation of Satan. Revd Samuel Ajayi Crowther who translated the Bible from English to Yoruba could not have had a good understanding of this significant difference between the two personalities (Esu and Satan) because he was just 12 years old when he was sold into slavery before he was rescued and taken to Sierra Leone (African Renaissance Movement, 2011). Inputs from people that had participated in the Yoruba culture for a longer period probably could have averted this translation error. Al-Masri's (2009) assertion that understanding of cultural dimensions during the process of translation is extremely crucial as the translator must retain the cultural dynamics of the source text in the target text thus finds justification in this very important case.

This shows that Shorter's (1975:39) warning that "without an adequate methodology, the riches of African Religion cannot be revealed and the scholar is tempted to despise the little he can see" cannot be safely waved aside. It can be rightly emphasised that the required method to reveal the beauty and depth of African religions cannot be discovered if linguists continue to work as an exclusive and parochial cult. African linguistic studies just have to go multidisciplinary.

A multidisciplinary approach to African linguistics has the capacity to greatly reduce potential misconceptions that Africans harbour against other African languages. Roots of positive and negative sentiments would be adequately taken care of through public enlightenment. Appropriate measures of public enlightenment and feedback from the public would be properly incorporated. Thus, situations in which gross intolerance to African languages other than one's mother tongue results in the repression and suppression of such languages and consequently the death of such languages would be greatly minimized if not completely prevented. It is worthy of note that Childs (2009) makes reference to an occasion in which two old Mani women were denied opportunity to render their songs in a Guinean cultural festival and the reason given was that people would not understand the messages of the song as a result of language barrier. According to Childs (2009), even little So-So-speaking children hold Mani language in absolute derision. Without a good focus on multidisciplinary approach, a great deal of unnecessary, artificial and home-made obstacles to the sustenance of African languages will flourish without any restraints.

A masquerade is not watched from one spot (Danfulani, 1999). A good knowledge of history and anthropology would also be very helpful to linguists working on translation from one non-African language to an African language and vice versa. As observed by Woodson (2005), proper knowledge of history is a potent weapon against the gross mis-education of the less privileged race by the whites. If Africans are to experience linguistic decolonization, historical facts about words in their indigenous languages cannot be ignored. An understanding of the etymological and socio-cultural properties of words constituting the source text as well as the knowledge about the target language is sine qua non to appropriateness and aptness of the terms arrived at in the exercise. Lakshmanan (2015:2) identifies the relevance of some disciplines to linguistics thus:

- (i) Languages in Space (including geopolitical, sociological, psychological, neurobiological and educational perspectives);

- (ii) Languages in Time (including evolutionary, real-time processing, acquisitional and life-span developmental perspectives);
- (iii) Languages in Interaction (including perspectives from research on translation, language mixing, cross-language and cross-modal influences and cross-cultural communication).

The fact that renowned universities are now paying so much attention to the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to linguistics by deliberately offering interdisciplinary linguistic courses shows that African linguistics cannot afford to lag behind anymore. For example, Wake Forest University, USA established an Interdisciplinary Linguistics Minor programme in 1993, drawing faculty from the departments of Anthropology, Classics, Communication, Education, English, German-Russian, Humanities, and Romance Languages, thus achieving comprehensive understanding of the languages concerned (<http://college.wfu.edu/linguistics/home>). Interdisciplinary approaches to study programmes have become so popular that other fields of academic enterprise have started adopting the same principle. For example, the Faculty of Humanities, Rhodes University in South Africa commenced an interdisciplinary Masters Degree programme in Integrated Development. The multi-disciplinary approach to intellectualism employed in the programme requires students to interact with professors from various departments (ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS - INTERDEPARTMENTAL STUDIES).

Ouane and Glanz (2010:13), asserting that it is high time interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of African linguistics was emphasised, observe that:

- (a) the connection between development and language use is largely ignored;
- (b) the connection between language and education is little understood outside expert circles; and
- (c) the connection between development and education is widely accepted on a priori grounds, but with little understanding of the exact nature of the relationship.

They, therefore, recommend consciously effected synergy among linguists, educationists, economists, anthropologists and sociologists because linguistic phenomena are too wide and complex for any of the specialists to unravel without the contributions of the others.

Adeyemi (2010) advocates the multidisciplinary, also called integrated, approach to the study of African linguistics as very relevant to the current era of globalisation because the culturally and linguistically diverse units constituting the entity called "globe" cannot be functionally understood except in an integrated way, thus bringing the connectivity to the fore. The intricate interrelatedness of linguistics with sociology, psychology, or anthropology, and speech communication is so obvious, according to Garvin (1974), that each of them is also a science of language in its respect, thus sharing significant features with linguistics. This being the case, it becomes obvious that any efforts at studying linguistics in isolation will end in futility.

Symbiotic relationships can be expected between African Linguistics on one hand and other disciplines when multidisciplinary approaches are employed in the study of the former. Just as African Linguistics will draw epistemological materials from the other disciplines, such relationships will equip African Linguistics to be of tremendous benefits to the others. For example, what is known as Forensic Linguistics could not have come to be without multidisciplinary approaches. Forensic Linguistics, according to Olsson (2004), is the application of linguistics to legal issues, employing findings from disciplines as diverse as language and memory studies, Conversation Analysis, Discourse Analysis, theory of grammar, Cognitive Linguistics, Speech Act Theory, *etc.* to language drawn from (i) legal cases or proceedings or (ii) private disputes between parties which may at a later stage result in legal action of some kind being taken.

It is noteworthy that religiosity, whether overt or covert, is significantly determined by language factors (Mazrui, 1978). This is what necessitates intralingual translation of religious texts to religious adherents. Also of importance is the fact that each religion is either indigenous to a particular language or has been largely propagated through one or more distinct languages. For example, Mohammedan Islam is indigenous to and has been propagated through Arabic language. The two have become so inseparable that the positive or negative sentiment that the religion elicits in a person cannot be divorced from the language of its origin and spread. Similarly, since Christianity came to Nigeria through English-speaking missionaries, there are Nigerian families, especially in the muslim dominated northern parts, abhor the language. People from such families are apt to proudly and sometimes aggressively declare their illiteracy in English language with "Ba turu enchi", meaning "I don't understand English".

That religious intolerance is much more pronounced in the northern states of Nigeria where religious sentiments are extended to the languages of introduction of the religions than the southern states where there is a degree of distinction between the religions and their languages of introduction is highly instructive. Moslems in Southern Nigeria have come to see English as Nigeria's official language rather than narrowly as a language of Christianity, hence they send their children to English-speaking schools. This shows that the linguistic need in the northern Nigeria goes beyond mere language teaching and learning but must employ the services of psychologists, sociologists, historians, anthropologists, and others to desensitise the people from overly religious views of the languages. One of the most obvious benefits of this would be the manifestation of more of religious tolerance.

Mazrui (1978) points out that there was a version of Kiswahili that was associated with the predominantly Moslem coastal community and the other which was not. English was, on the other hand, associated with Christianity and Christian civilization. He noted that psycho-linguistic differentiation was resorted to in order to neutralise the religious sentiments attached to role distribution among the languages in Kenya. It should be noted that psycho-linguistics is a hybrid of psychology and linguistics, a product of multidisciplinary synergy.

Since a poorly documented language is on the path of death (Childs, 2009) and Linguistics is without doubt a veritable tool for proper documentation of any language, adequate attention to the study of African linguistics is sure to be of great advantage to the quest to preserve as many African languages as possible. But this can be achieved much easily only as a multidisciplinary approach is employed. Psychological, social and linguistic inputs will be useful in pursuing such objectives of keeping African languages and their components ever relevant (Yanga p.234).

If the project of multidisciplinary approaches to African linguistics is successfully implemented and sustained, the effects will include the decolonization of the colonized as well as the colonizers. Africans' mentality will be decolonized as they are enabled by the synergy of historians, anthropologists, religionists, linguists and so on, to rediscover their pristine pre-colonial identities through a return to the original meanings of concepts that have been demonized. The colonizers from the western world, too, would consequently be decolonized from their colonized mentality of misconceptions held about the Africans. Kortright's (2003) call for the decolonization of both the colonized and the colonizers would thus have been achieved.

Conclusion: The Advocacy

It has been made clear that many African languages will die and eventually go extinct unless concerted efforts are made to conserve and preserve them. The forces of globalisation that could be exploited to make the languages ever vibrant also have the potentials to repress and suppress African languages and Anglicise the whole world. Many Africans look at the world through the windows of the languages of their former colonial masters. They, therefore, lose sight of most of what is good in the worldview, cultures, traditions and languages of their indigenous people.

With copious reference to extant literature, it is proved that lack of coordination among practitioners that should contribute to proper understanding of various concepts constituting many African languages have resulted in the promotion of misconceptions both inadvertently and deliberately peddled by the colonialists. Lost or distorted meanings can be rediscovered through cross-fertilisation of educated ideas from historians, anthropologists, linguists and others and thus replace Western misconceptions with authentic meanings. Also, formation of millennium-compliant terms in various emerging disciplines in this modern technological global community can be made easy, effective and acceptable only through multidimensional and multidisciplinary approaches involving specialists from different fields.

Recommendations

The following recommendations flow from the discussion and conclusion in the current discourse:

1. The governments of the various African countries need to encourage the linguists in their countries working on metalanguage projects to enlist the services of specialists from all relevant fields so as to make their products acceptable to the whole societies for which such projects are meant. The governments should not shy away from the financial implications of such decisions because the dividends from such will outweigh the cost.
2. Linguists in all African communities should set up interest groups comprising people from all walks of life that will work in translating concepts from European languages into African languages and vice versa and also in formulating new ones that will be acceptable to the current users both in the urban and rural areas.
3. No efforts and resources should be spared by governmental and non-governmental organisations in placing well researched linguistic products from Africa on the Internet to stand our languages in good stead among relevant languages in the ever-evolving global communities. This will yield a great deal of economic, social and political benefits to the concerned languages and their speakers.

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