SEMANTIC EXTENSION AS A FACTOR INTHE EVOLUTION OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH

MFONOBONG N. EKPENYONG
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF UYO, UYO, NIGERIA
mfonobongekpenyong96@gmail.com
+234 9028338720

ABSTRACT
This study investigates the nature of meaning as a factor in the evolution of the variety of English in Nigeria, which has been developing in the Nigerian situation of English as a second language. The purpose was to show how the coding of meaning leads to the creation of certain expressions that are usually identified in the English expressions of some Nigerian English Speakers/Writers. Using Robert Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis which is based on the idea that a person's native language influences their ability to learn a second language, data were collected from oral and written sources, particularly from the speeches of Nigerian English bilinguals ranging from students at secondary, college and university levels, graduates and post-graduate students and people who belong to different occupational categories. Data were also collected from written essays of some students as well as published texts with samples of Nigerian English expressions. Our findings show that the English expressions that can be identified as reflecting the Nigerian variety of English occur mainly as a result of interference from the speaker's/writer's first language. The meaning being communicated is influenced by the situations of the local environment, including socio-physical features, which usually influences the Speaker/writer initially in his or her first language. In the process, the first language tends to transfer some Nigerian Language expressions into target language, English to complement or capture the experiences and shared view of the people. This does not however, alters the general intelligibility or acceptability of the new variety.

Keywords: Language Transfer, Nigerian English, Semantic Extension, Coding, Decoding, Meaning.

Introduction
Semantics is the technical term for the branch of linguistics which deals with the study of meaning. Defining the term Semantic, Edem, 2022 quotes Lyons (1968) as saying that it was coined from a Greek word meaning to signify. It came into popular use about the first half of the twentieth century. The study of meaning however, took a dramatic turn with the publication of the meaning of meaning by Ogden and Richards in 1923. Semantics was accorded a place as the scientific study of meaning, in line with Bloomlield's and other structuralists' opinion that meaning be studied in an objective and scientific way. This development owes a lot to Ferdinard de Saussure who makes a distinction between diachronic and synchronic studies of language and meaning.

As a branch of linguistics therefore, semantics attempts to study meaning in a scientific and objective manner. It is concerned with the uniformity in the use of language. It tries to study

not the specific instances of language but generalizations, what de Saussure refers to as langue (language) rather than parole (speaking). This distinction is also drawn in Chomsky (1965), Udofot (1998, Edem, 2015b, 2016) as competence and performance. Both sources stress that we cannot be concerned with individual idiosyncratic meanings but the usual meaning of a particular word or expression. It becomes necessary therefore in semantics to draw a distinction between the usual meaning of a word or utterance and the meaning it has in specific circumstances (Edem, 2005, 2022 and 2023). For instance, the word 'sweet' in a sentence like: 'Mary is a sweet girl' means more for a poet than the usual meaning of the word 'sweet' referring to a pleasant taste. Similarly, the word 'start' used by a doctor has a different sense from the usual everyday meaning of the word as can be seen in the following two sentences, one from a doctor and the other from a teacher:

1.   The start dose is four tablets.
2.   It is twelve noon: start.

A start dose here means a treatment that is taken once and for all while the teacher's order means that the students should begin. Thus, a semantic analysis of a given language according to Ndimele (1997) must explain how words, sentences, including non-linguistic features like facial expressions and gestures are understood, interpreted and related to objects and situations in the real world.

The Concept of Implicatures
The concept of implicatures on the other hand, was first introduced into language studies by the philosopher, H. P. Grice, in 1975 to refer to the meaning attached to an expression over and above what is actually said. The essence of implicatures is to account for what the speaker can imply, suggest or mean as distinct from what he literally says, i.e. what is overtly expressed. So the notion of implicatures rests upon a distinction between what is explicitly said and what is implied (i.e. not overtly expressed).

As native speakers of our language, we often notice that there are certain aspects of the meaning of utterances which are not directly observable from their linguistic contexts. Let us examine the following exchange between Rose and Betty cited by Ndimele (1997).
Rose: I would like you to accompany me to Lagos on Friday.

Betty: My elder sister is getting married that day.
As speakers of English, we can infer from Betty's response that Rose's 'request is not granted. Betty's elder sister's wedding is an excuse for not accepting the offer from Rose. This implied meaning of refusal is not directly deducible from the linguistic context of the expression. A much more direct refusal would have been something like:
I'm sorry; I'll not be able to go because my elder sister is getting married that day.

In talking about semantic implicatures, it is Imperative to mention the terrr~ 'pragmatics'. This is because implicatures belong to the domain of pragmatics. Pragmatics deals with the appropriate use of language as a branch of linguistics to which semantics rightly belongs. Pragmatics, for the purpose of linguistics is defined as the study of meaning in relation to speech situations. It has also been defined as 'the ability of language users to pair sentences with the context in which they would be appropriate (Levinson, 1983, Edem, 2005, 2015, 2016 and 2017).

For an utterance to be meaningful, it must be appropriate to a given situational context. This appropriate use of language is the concern of pragmatics (Edem, 2022 and 2023). Again it is concerned with how words are used and what speakers mean. Sentence meaning and speaker's meaning are not always in consonance. For example, one who says: Is that your daughter? May mean any of the following:

    a. I didn't know you have a daughter.

    b. So you are married and now have a daughter.

    c. What a beautiful girl you have.

The implication is that an utterance/expression can have various meanings, ranging from admiration to disapproval, warning and so on.

The English Language in Nigeria

One of the most striking features of the English language today, according to Eka (2000 and Edem, 2018), is its unprecedented spread to nearly all parts of the world. Numerous research findings have also tend to conclude that English is the most viable candidate for a world language (Edem, 2018, 2019). Thus we might say that English is a language having many different varieties, spoken in different countries or in different parts of the same country. This situation therefore accounts for the issue of Nigerian English as distinct from the English spoken in other parts of the world.

Eka (2000) and other scholars such as (Edem, 2016, 2018, 2022 and 2023) opine that it is almost certainly true that whenever a language leaves its original home to another geographical region, it must acquire the local colours of the new environment, thus, English, having been established as a second -language in Nigeria, has adopted the local colours of the Nigerian environment, hence we have "Nigerian English Usage", which reflects the culture and identity of Nigerian people, for as Essien (1977) will say, language is not only a part of a people's culture but also a medium through which that culture can be -transmitted. It is true that some aspects of a people's culture - the visual arts for example, can influence other cultural traits of a linguistic nature that can easily be transferred or acquired when one learns another language. Such cultural traits are what have been transferred into the English language in Nigeria, thus giving rise to what is called Nigerian English (Edem 2018, Eka 2000).

In Nigeria, which is a multilingual state, numerous interference problems occur, which led some scholars to believe that it is impossible to have one Nigerian, 'English', that it is more realistic to talk about Nigerian varieties of English, in which case we would have Hausa English, Igbo English, Yoruba English, Ibibio English among others. It is no gainsaying, therefore to say that, for such a country like. Nigeria; the meanings which Nigerian English convey are often times different from that of the English of the native speakers, having adopted the local colours of the Nigerian environment. However, scholars have often made the point that there is a difference between correctness and acceptability. A communication issue which is productive is most likely to be acceptable even if it is not correct in the old sense. Thus, in Nigeria, we have kinship terms like fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and a child can claim to have ten fathers or three mothers-referring to those who can take care of him. Such usage, though unknown among native speakers is quite acceptable in Nigeria, having logical semantic implications (Edem, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2023b).

In view of the fact that English is a second Language in Nigeria, semantic extensions play a vital role as the meaning of utterances are often not deduced from the way it is overtly 'expressed but implied. For instance, in parting with a friend at night, a true Ijaw man would say; "may we live to see ourselves tomorrow", while the Igbo's would say; "May dawn come" or "May it dawn". This expression has a deeper and implied meaning of a wish or a prayer because the grave is sometimes likened to an endless night and it is only the dead that go to the grave, so as people who are living, they don't wish to have an endless night so they pray that the dawn should come so they can see one another again. This is a way of expressing the people's thoughts and sensibilities.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian learner or user of English is regarded as a bilingual because apart from his mother tongue he has learnt English as a second language, and in the process of using English, the Nigerian has often produced statements that are regarded as distinct from other varieties of English. So what is known as Nigerian English today according to Enang and Edem (2022, p.446) "is usually identified along the lines of grammar, idioms, translations and transliterations and cultural influence. However, the underlying factor in the production of expressions in English is what constitutes meaning in utterances. This making of meaning comes from attempts to convey local concepts and phenomena in English. Thus the Nigerian English speaker has to represent the words of his mother tongue in English. In the process, the first language or mother tongue of the bilingual Nigerian often interferes because meaning is involved. This is why Robert Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis which postulates that structures of a first language can significantly influence second language acquisition is best suited in carrying out this investigation.

This making of meaning could be said to be central to the variations that constitute Nigerian English. It is therefore worthwhile for the present study to examine or investigate the role of meaning, the samples of English expressions used by Nigerians in the context often regarded as Nigerian English.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to achieve the following aims among others:
To investigate the nature of the English expressions made by Nigerian English bilinguals. The study aims to contribute to the scholarly interest in extension and meaning by looking into the extent of interference of the first language L 1 on the English expressions of the people in the speech community.

By studying the phenomenon of extensions in the speeches of our subjects and the written expressions, our focus is to examine and discover the implied meaning encoded in these expressions other than the literal meaning presented overtly and to proceed from the meanings so discovered to arrive at some conclusions in relation to the role of extensions in Nigerian English.

The overall purpose of the study is to establish and portray instances of Nigerian English expressions whose meanings differ in most cases from those of the native English and thus confirm the reality of the existence of a district Nigerian variety of English.

Review of Related Literature

In Nigeria, we have often heard people talk about a "Nigerian English" and according to Ogu (1992) when he quotes Walsh (1967) as saying that:

> The varieties of English spoken by educated Nigerians,
> no matter what their language, have enough features in
> common to mark off a general type, which may be called
> Nigerian English (Ogu, 1992, p.88).

Since then, scholars and linguists of repute have endorsed their stamp on it, legitimacy and a socio-linguistic reality (Eka 2000, Bamgbose, et al1995, Adetugbo 1979, Edem 2018, Enang and Edem 2022, Edem 2020) and have shifted their concerns to issues of its identification and characterization. It is no longer seen as a derogatory term or debased variety characterized by errors and non-standard forms as language purists tend to view it, neither is it one of an inferior status to others like British, American, Canadian, Australian English.

The English language in Nigeria has undergone "domestication" (Achebe, 1975), "localization" (Adetugbo, 1979) and "Nativization" (Eka 2000, Edem 2018). This is indicative of the fact that the English language is getting used to its non-native environment. Thus in Achebe's view, we should bend the language to accommodate our thought patterns and perform tasks suitable to us instead of looking at it as the language of the colonizers.

The Nigerian English variety is different in a number of features. These differences of Nigerian English may be phonological, syntactic, lexical, semantic and pragmatic in outlook. This paper addresses the semantic components or semantic extension in Nigerian English, taking note of the influence of the 'local colouration' (Edem 2016), the socio-cultural as well as the physical non-native Nigerian environment are embedded in this work using Robert Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis as the theoretical pivot.

Implications for Intelligibility and Acceptability

In the face of the foregoing semantic extensions/shifts that distinguish the Nigerian English variety from the variety introduced by the colonial native Speakers, brings us closer to the problems associated with the intelligibility and growing acceptability of the Nigerian variety of English.

This is made worse when foreign standards are used in measuring the acceptability or intelligibility of our variety of English. It is however, out of place to import a standard for measuring Nigerian English from outside because the standard of the variety is derived from within the socio-cultural or geographical milieu but as (Bamgbose et al, 1995) pointed out, this is not necessarily so mutually exclusive with the world standard as to impede international intelligibility or acceptability.

Nigerian English is indigenous to Nigeria and its most basic usage is intra-national, a role it plays very well. In terms of international intelligibility, standard Nigerian English is to a large extent intelligible and whatever difficulties encountered thereat are not peculiar to Nigerian English Speakers but also prevalent among Speakers of other world Englishes.

It is very important to point out that, to do away with Nigerian English on account of the perceived difficulties examined in this paper or to be forced to adapt to foreign standard ratings of intelligibility and acceptability will be tantamount to undermining the variety which gives Speakers a sense of belonging or deny that variety the special role it plays in the Nigerian socio-cultural configuration.

Theoretical Framework/Research Design

This work deployed Robert Lado's (1957) Constructive Analysis Hypothesis as a theoretical framework. The approach is based on the idea that a person's native language influences their ability to learn a second language. Contrastive analysis is the systemic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying structural differences and similarities. Simply put, Lado's Hypothesis argues that difficulties in acquiring a new (second) language are derived from the differences between the new language and the native (first) language of a language user. Other scholars such as (Eka 2000, Edem 2016, 2018 and Enang and Edem 2022) have researched on the concept of Nigerian English and its role in communication process by Nigerian Speakers of English using different approaches and data but this work is an ongoing discourse on Nigerian English but varies as it played more attention to semantic extension as a factor in the evolution of Nigerian English.

According to Ndimele (1997:1), "semantics is an area of linguistics which studies the meaning of words and sentences in language" Although the term 'semantics' came into popular use about the first half of the twentieth century, it does not suggest that the study of meaning is as recent as that.

Language and Meaning

Language as defined by Udofot (1998) is the means by which people from the same and related communities interact and express their thoughts and feelings to one another while Edem (2005) sees language as a means of conveying information from one person to another for purposes of spread and mobilization.

Eka (1996) sees language as the most brilliant and also about the most useful of human inventions. A classic explication of language is that of Sapir (1921), which explain language as 'a Purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desire by means of a system of a voluntarily produced symbols" (Eka, 1996, p.1, Edem, 2015 p.5).

Language has several definitions. Thus, Udofot (1998) opines that it is difficult to give a comprehensive definition of language. A necessary implication of tile use of language for the purpose of communication is that information expressed by language has to be meaningful to the hearer; otherwise, communication or interpretation does not take place. This idea is stressed by Gimson's (1980 p.45) description of language as: 'A system of conventional signals used for communication by a whole community. This pattern of convention covers a system of significant sound units, the inflection and arrangement of words and the association of meaning with words.

Thus Edem (2023), quotes Bloomfield and Haugen (1974) as seeing language to be by far the most ingenious, flexible and productive of all the communication systems used by human

beings. These view were collaborated by Edem (2015, Enang and Edem, 2022, Edem, 2020, Edem 2022 and Edem, 2023, and Edet and Edem, 2024)

Discussions of Findings

At this stage, focus was on the observations and findings from the analysis so far carried out as shown below:

Group A:

The data in this group are 25 in number, categorized according to the kind of expressions they are. In this categorization, six expressions are translated from the speakers' mother tongue. These include: samples A3, AS, A10, A18, A19 and A25. Seven expressions are direct transfers from mother tongue, in other words transliterations. These include samples A4, A9, A 11, A 12, A 13 A 14 and A2t.1. Three expressions are idiomatic; these include samples A 1, A 7, and A 15. Five expressions are proverbs; these include samples A6, A8, A21, A22 and A23. Three expressions are, colloquial, this include samples A16, Ai7 and A20. And finally one expression is drawn from culture and that is sample A2.

This is summarized in table 1 below:

Table 1: Incidence of occurrence of features of Nigerian English in Group A

'Transfer and	Translation	Idioms	Proverbs	Culture	Colloquial
Sample A4	Sample A3	Sample A1	Sample A6	Sample A2	Sample A16
Sample A9	Sample A5	Sample A7	Sample A8		Sample A17
Sample A11	Sample A10	Sample A15	Sample A21		Sample A20
Sample A12	Sample A18		Sample A22		
Sample A13	Sample A19		Sample A23		
Sample A14	Sample A25				
Sample A24					
Total 7	6	3	5	1	3

Total number of sample = 25

From what we have for group A data in table 1 above, a greater transfers and transliterations from mother have the highest number of samples. This situation could as a result of the interference of mother tongue in spoken by the Nigerian subjects observed. This follows from the fact that in a situation where two languages overlap, the features of the dominant language are transferred into the subordinate language at the phonological lexical and grammatical levels. This situation also accounts for the cause of deviations from the norms or standard native English (See Edet and Edem, 2024).

Group B: The data in this group are those collected from students' essays, subdivided into Bi and 82. In group Bi, the total number of expressions analyzed is fifteen out of this; two expressions are translated from mother tongue. This includes samples (Bi) 3 and (Bi) 12. Three expressions are idiomatic and figurative usages, this include samples (B1) 1, (Bi) 9 and (Bi) 10. Two expressions are drawn from culture. This includes samples (Bi) 8 and (Bi) 11. And eight expressions reflect grammatical error. This include samples (Bi) 2, (Bi) 4, (Bi)5, (B1)6, (B1)7, (Bi) 13, (B1)14 and (Bi) 15. This is summarized in table 2 below:

(i) I gave the policemen <u>kola-nut</u> (bribe) before I was released.
(ii) I <u>saw</u> the man and I passed his course (sorting or bribe).
(iii) Don't mind that girl, she used <u>long legs</u> to get a job in an oil firm (she is highly connected).
(iv) You will <u>see</u> me (a threat).

Table 2: Incidence of Occurrence of Features of Nigerian English in Group 81

Transfer from Mother Tongue	Idiomatic and Figurative Usages	Errors	Expressions drawn from Culture
Sample 3	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 8
Sample 12	Sample 9	Sample 4	Sample 11
	Sample 10	Sample 5	
		Sample 6	
		Sample 7	
		Sample 13	
		Sample 14	
		Sample 15	
Total **2**	**3**	**8**	**2**

Total number of sample =15

		Sample 14	
		Sample 15	
Total 2	3	8	2

Total number of sample =15

For the data In B2, four expressions are translated from mother tongue, these are samples (B2) 1, (B2) 7, (B2) 9 and (B2)15. Five expressions fall under colloquial and coinages. This include samples (B2)2, (B2) 3, (B2)4, (B2)11 and (B2) 12, Two expressions are idiomatic and figurative usages. These are samples (B2) 6 and (B2)13. And four expressions depict error, this include samples (B2) 5, (52) 8, (52)10 and (52)14. Examples of Nigerian English are:

(i) Don't make me a <u>visitor</u> here (let me feel at home).
(ii) He is a total <u>stranger</u> (though he is a native but behaves like a visitor).
(iii) He <u>stayed</u> in Lagos for years (lived).
(iv) Okon <u>hears</u> English language very well (understands)

(v)   Cut your coat according to your size (for British English' cut your coat according to your cloth').

(vi)   One tree cannot make a forest (British English, 'one swallow does not make a summer')

(vii)   I will declare surplus (British English, 'I will spend lavishly').

(viii) A woman has taken in (to mean pregnant).

(ix)   To put sand in one's garri (to mean spoil opportunity for somebody).

(x)   She has not <u>seen her period</u> (she is pregnant).

The highlighted words 'kola-nut', 'stranger', 'stayed' and 'hears' each maintain their standard English meanings but also acquire additional ones. 'Kola-nut' refers to the seed of a tree that can be chewed but its extended to mean 'bribe', 'stranger' which refers to a person you don't know is extended to mean 'visitor', a 'visitor' could also mean stranger but extended to mean someone though an indigene of a place but knows nothing about his locally. She has not seen her period (means she has not experienced her menstrual circle or she is pregnant).

Also, within Nigerian English are loan words or coinages that attract different meanings based on the local colourations from the speech environment such as: talking drum, long leg, high life music, tight-friend, go slow, impregnate, headtie, ogbono soup, Edikang Ikong soup, Edita Iwa, Ekpang Nkukwo, etc.

Conclusion

This paper has harped on semantic extension which has been a unique characteristic of the Nigerian English variety, which has been localized or nativized to be in line with the socio-cultural milieu of the non-native environment. An array of semantic features or implicatures of the Nigerian English variety have been investigated and findings show that these semantic features which are common in Nigerian English make it distinct from all other varieties known as New Englishes.

The paper also concludes that the problems of intelligibility and acceptability of the new variety could be addressed by looking inwards for a standard Nigerian English as applicable to other varieties in the world, and that despite these differences, the Nigerian variety still shares a common core of aspects or world Englishes which guarantees mutual intelligibility amongst English Speakers anywhere in the world.

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