

## Language Choices and its Effect in a Culturally Diversified Nigeria Business Places: Adopting Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory

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### ABSTRACT

The research aims at investigating inclusion strategies in Nigeria business places by taking a look at the way buyers and sellers use language while engaging in business transactions and the effect it has in the whole dealings. This is especially as they have diverse choices before them. Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) which addresses convergence and divergence is used as a theoretical framework to reveal the socio-pragmatic elements in the discourse of a multi-cultural Nigeria business places. The research tries to see how inclusiveness is achieved in the face of diversity. Findings reveal that several languages come in contact with one another, including English, Yoruba, Pidgin, Igbo and Hausa in the market transactions in Nigeria. Participants employ various bargaining and pragmatic strategies which include greetings, humour, cajoling, flattery, pleading as well as code-switching and code-mixing. The study helps to establish that both buyers and sellers want to be at an advantage and use languages that accommodate the other party, despite their social, religious, cultural or ethnic differences. Texts were recorded from business places in Nigeria and these include banks, urban markets, and communication outlets. The texts were later transcribed and analysed. While the vendors create room for accommodation as a persuasive strategy, customers do so to get a good bargain for what they want to buy or some other favour from the vendors.

**Key words:** Accommodation, Divergence, Nigeria Pidgin, Nigeria Business Places

### INTRODUCTION

Communication is key in every human relationship or encounter. It is however agreed that the use of language in communication is tied to individual's mastery of such language. Factors such as one's social class, education, position in the society etc. go a long way to influence the individual's ability for language use. When people from different social background or class meet to communicate for whatever reason, efforts are put in place to ensure that there is effective communication between such interactants. The average Nigerian is bi/multilingual. It is observed however, that the choice of language employed by buyers and sellers are carefully and deliberately selected for reasons other than a display of bi/multilingualism. It is for this reason that this research aims to look into how buyers and sellers navigate their ways through a business discourse despite differences in language, culture and belief and how these acts help achieve a successful business dealing. The choice of Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory as a framework for this research is prompted by how the theory explores the different ways speakers shift grounds to accommodate other speakers while interacting. According to Giles and Ogay (2007), Communication Accommodation Theory suggests

that individuals use communication, in part, in order to indicate their attitudes toward each other and, as such, is a barometer of the level of social distance between them. This constant movement toward and away from others, by changing one's communicative behaviour, is called *accommodation*. The scholars vividly capture the whole purpose of Communication Accommodation Theory with the simple illustration in the introductory note of their paper.

'Imagine a conversation between an older male professor of British origin, a male African American undergraduate student, and a female postdoctoral student from Switzerland taking place in an American University. Think of the variety of social dimensions involved in this situation: gender, culture and ethnicity, social and occupational status, age, and so forth. How are the different personal and social identities negotiated during the interaction? Who changes his or her communicative style to accommodate whom? What are the outcomes of such accommodating behaviours on the relationship between the interactants?'

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) provides a wide-ranging framework aimed at predicting and explaining many of the adjustments individuals make to create, maintain, or decrease social distance in interaction. It explores the different ways in which we accommodate

our communication, our motivations for doing so, and the consequences. Such successful communication becomes of great importance, especially in the world of business. This is because the parties involved really want to create a good impression to see that they win the other party to themselves. It is in this light that this research decides to investigate how participants in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious Nigeria business places shift grounds when communicating, in order to accommodate the other party. Business places here refer to everywhere customers/clients meet with vendors/service providers/agents etc. Nigeria provides an interesting context in which to explore the concepts of business place diversity, with its unusually high levels of diversity across ethnic/cultural, racial, linguistic, age and socio-economic dimensions. The goal is to see how languages play out and the effect such has on the overall success of business interactions.

### **Background**

Experiment conducted at Stamford University with data collected from China, Greece, Chile, Indonesia, Russia and Aboriginal Australia has shown that people with different language think differently while those with the same language think in a similar structure (Boroditsky, 2015, in Obot 2015). Language is not merely expressive or informative; it is importantly constructive in a process involving thought (Obot 2015).

Variations in the use of language have been of interest to linguists and sociolinguists in particular. Sociolinguists are more concerned with language and social variation. They try to investigate the variety associated with a specific social class or group, marking that class or group from others. Some sociolinguists have used some of these criteria in their investigation of the relationship between language and social class. Labov (1966) uses some of the criteria mentioned above in his study of language variation in New York City (Wardhaugh 1996:144). They include education, occupation and income.

Despite these different social classes and how they affect linguistic competence, communication is still made possible when these classes come in contact. How and why this happens is the focus of Howard Giles whose theory is being employed here.

### **BUSINESS LANGUAGE AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

Communication is essential in business and management and its optimization inevitably leads to improving the efficiency of business itself. That is why communication competence is a requirement for successful business people.

Several studies have been carried out investigating the kind of interaction that emerges when people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds intermingle. Salvi and Bamford (2007) talk about the close connection between language and business as not limited to trade but permeates the whole of the workplace. According to the scholars, one of the consequences of globalisation is that skills in other languages have come to play an important part at all levels of the business hierarchy, no longer merely at the top. English

as lingua franca is acknowledged to be means of communication of the globalised economy.

Neil (1996) observes that communication differences arise between languages as governing different cultural understanding of when to talk, what to say, conversation control like turn taking, verbal and nonverbal cues, cohesion and coherence. Hassan (2000) study was based on how communication takes place in the intercultural discourse. The study noted intercultural communication entails the use of various strategies by the speakers in order to repair their communication problems and interpret the meaning. The study identified repetition, explication, clarification and information questions as some of the communication strategies (Hassan, A. (2000) *Communication in intercultural discourse*. Unpublished M.A Thesis. Nairobi: Kenyatta University.)

Neustunpy (1985) notes that the participants of intercultural contact situations frequently deviate from the norms and that the ways in which these deviations are evaluated are important processes for attention. Similarly, Conary et al (1993) points out that there need to be more research conducted to better explain the strategies in which people engage to maintain relationships. The study further adds that there is a paucity of research investigating inter-ethnic communication apprehension and inter-ethnic relational maintenance. Kohls (1984) observes that Americans exhibit a high degree of informality in the process of interaction. This takes many forms, for instance, addressing each other, even those in higher ranks by first name. This also involves greeting people informally such as touching one's arm and saying 'Hi'. This can however be perceived by people from other cultures as being impolite. Kohls noted that misunderstanding can occur, for those from some cultures might view easy familiarity as rude and insulting but Americans consider this a compliment. Americans also value directness, openness and honesty. The great difference among cultures regarding this value has particular implications for cross-cultural understanding. Smith (1987) observes that communication problems can occur between native English speakers who do not share the same culture; for example, between English people and Americans or between Americans and Australians. Gumperz (1982) claims that for communication to take place effectively, participants need to draw on their background knowledge and assumptions in order to interpret the social meaning of other speakers. He also shows that perceived dissimilarity of speech convention and mismatching interpretations contribute to cross-culture misunderstandings.

Scollon and Scollon (1980) analyse inter-ethnic communication using politeness theory to assess the communication difficulty between Athbasken Indians and monolingual English speakers. They used politeness theory to assert that taciturnity (the avoidance of talking) reflects an assumption of deference politeness. On the other hand, volubility (much talking) reflects assumption of solidarity. One of their basic findings was that the Athbasken interactional style is characterised by negative (deference) politeness due to reciprocal social distance. The Athbaskens emphasise their distance or dissociated themselves from any infringement by the monolingual English speakers, who, on

the other hand, were displaying positive (solidarity) politeness. Positive politeness assumes little distance between the participants and only a slight power difference. This mismatch made the Athbasken Indians feel incapable of adopting an intimate relationship with monolingual English speakers and were thus discovered to be uncommunicative, that is, said very little or showed little interest in conversation, compared to their counterparts. This current research investigates inter-cultural business communication using Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory to view the shift in communication pattern as a means to accommodate speakers from different ethnic and cultural background in Nigeria business places.

There are lots of interests in the study of language use in Nigeria business places. Alo and Soneye (2014) investigate haggling as a socio pragmatic strategy in selected urban markets. In it, they reveal that languages come in contact with one another in market transactions in Lagos and Ibadan metropolis in Nigeria. The study employs Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication as its theoretical framework. The scholars succeed in bringing out some socio-pragmatic patterns in language use in contact situations in the Nigeria multilingual/ multicultural market contexts. Like Scollon and Scollon (1980), they too realised that taciturnity in the Nigeria urban market place is a sign of deferent politeness. This current research also takes a look at languages in contact, with Nigeria market places as one of the business outlets. Howbeit, its concern is the language techniques used by vendors and customers to create room to accommodate one another despite the diversity in culture, tribes and religion.

### NIGERIA'S DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

A brief look at the entity called Nigeria will go a long way to explain the interest of this research. Nigeria's peoples belong to 250–400 different ethno-linguistic groups, with three major groups accounting for almost 70 per cent of the population, and several minority groups, some numbering more than 10 million. There have been arguments that this level of ethnic diversity has been an obstacle to economic development in Nigeria and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa with similar levels of heterogeneous populations (Easterly and Levine, 1997; Sowell, 2004). Nigerians belong to several different religions as well, with Islam and Christianity accounting for approximately 50 and 40 per cent of the population, respectively. Islam is dominant in the northern region while Christianity is the major religion in the south; indigenous African religions are also commonly practised around the country. In terms of age, 41.5 per cent of the total population is in the 0–14 years bracket, 55.5 per cent in the 15–64 range and 3.1 per cent are aged 65 and over (Onyejeli, 2010). The intersection of ethnic and religious identities in Nigeria, and the circumstances in which the country was created, has been an incessant source of civil strife in the country several decades after the attainment of political independence (Sowell, 2004). These challenges have been compounded by blatant educational, economic and social horizontal inequalities among the ethnic/religious groups and regions (Mustapha, 2009).

The business environment in Nigeria however does not bother itself with this diversity. It is so organised that banks are seen in every parts of the country, irrespective of the tribe/group their owner(s) belong and such banks are patronised by people from every tribes and regions. True to it, there are banks that may be said to belong to a region (e.g. Bank of the North), or religion (e.g. Jaiz Bank), but not only are their branches spread nationwide, they also don't reject customers for coming from certain parts of the country. It is also realised that people from different sections of the country succeed in certain businesses more than others. The Igbos from south-east Nigeria are said to be the most successful business people, however, the Hausa people from the north are known to thrive in some other businesses more than any other tribe. It is so established that when mention is made of some businesses, one could easily relate it to a particular tribe. Every state in the country however has Igbos plying their trades and same thing goes to the Hausa people and some other tribes. As would be seen in subsequent parts of this write up, there are markets and business places that host people with these diversity in culture, tribe, religion etc. The focus of this research therefore is on how these business places pursue inclusiveness in the midst of this diversity. It is realised that despite the challenges earlier stated, the Nigeria business places have a way they put up inclusive mechanisms that foster successful business meetings among the many tribes. The smart businessman is more concerned with making profits, as the currency has neither tribes nor culture written on them. When it comes to having successful business sales, the average Nigerian forget tribe, religious or sexual orientation. Money has a way it establishes the slogan 'One Nigeria'. It is therefore imperative to look at how the Nigeria business places include everyone, in a bid to make the most in their businesses.

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\*Many Nigerians owe their allegiance first and foremost to their ethnic/religious group than to an entity called Nigeria. (Mamman and Baydoun, 2009, p. 194)

### REVIEWS AND FINDINGS

Among the different accommodative strategies that speakers use, *convergence* has been the most extensively studied – and can be considered the historical core of CAT (Giles, 1973). It has been defined as a strategy whereby individuals adapt their communicative behaviours in terms of a wide range of linguistic (e.g., speech rate, accents), paralinguistic (e.g., pauses, utterance length), and nonverbal features (e.g., smiling, gazing) in such a way as to become more similar to their interlocutor's behaviour. When groups coexist in a society for a long period of time, they establish norms about how members from the groups should interact with each other. As such, intercultural encounters provide perhaps the richest basis for understanding the theory, even though each intergroup context has its unique characteristics (Fox, Giles, Orbe, & Bourhis, 2000; Watson & Gallois, 2002; Williams, Giles, Coupland, Dalby, & Manasse, 1990). The Nigeria business place is a good ground for language and culture in contact, given its diverse cultural background. As we see

earlier, the entity called Nigeria is a collection of diverse groups and subgroups. Despite this, they still come together to have successful business dealings. There's no doubt that business calls for inclusion, irrespective of the divergent nature of the people involved.

The analysis of the data is with the following aim:

- i. To determine communicative strategies aimed at fostering unity among interactants with different cultural/social backgrounds in business places .
- ii. To find out how these strategies affect the communicative behaviour of each interlocutor in the course of communicating.
- iii. To establish the resultant effect of such communication on both parties when languages come in contact.

\***Key:** **BE** stands for Bank Employee while **BC** stands for Bank Customer

#### Text 1

**Context:** The demand for Bank Verification Number (BVN) was introduced to check financial activities in the country. It demanded registration at one bank and an update in other banks where the customer has accounts.

**BE:** Have you been to any bank to do it?

**BC:** No

**BE:** (*focusing on the computer screen*): You have done it before.

**BC:** Ehm this FCMB.

**BE:** Why you no tell me say you don do am before?

*Why didn't you tell me you've done it before?*

Go to them, na there your BVN number dey.

*Go to them. That's where your*

*Bank Verification Number is.*

**BC:** And dem tell me say...

*And they told me that...*

na from there dem been tell me that day...

*It was there that they told me that day...*

last month I been ask, dem say make I come here.

*Last month I asked they told me to come here.*

**BE:** Shey dem no do am for you? *Didn't they do it for you?*

Dem don do am for you, see for computer.

*They have done it for you. It shows you*

so na the place your BVN dey.

*have done it before.*

*That is where your*

**BE:** *BVN is.*

#### Nigeria Pidgin as a Unifying Language

With the bank as a corporate entity, communication is usually in Standard English, with a mix of the Nigerian flavour. However, this is not always the case as customers are people from all walks of life. One way customers are accommodated during communication is through bank employees' ability to switch to languages that would enable customers communicate easily, rather than stick with Standard English. Nigeria Pidgin is one language that comes to the rescue when languages come in contact in Nigeria. This is the situation in text 1 above. The customer above even has a case of non-fluency. These include: Silent pause, filled pauses (er, erm), repetition, false start. They have many functions

in spoken language, including dramatic effect, yet the bank staff was patient with him until his need was met. This is apart from putting aside her social status in order to be at par with the customer.

In pidgin, interference is what Weinreich (1974) refers to as a deviation from the norms of either of the languages of a bilingual. Interference in pidgin is a result of contact between at least two languages, i.e. in the Nigerian situation, English and other local languages. This is why there is a series of arguments as to whether Nigerian Pidgin is a variety of English or not. According to Igboanusi (2008), pidgin is assuming a significant role in Nigerian social transactions. Such a language is created for very practical and immense purposes of communication between people who otherwise have no common language.

#### Text 2

**Context:** Sellers sit in front of their shops to invite passers-by to patronise them. This is especially when it seems the person shows interest in what they sell.

**Seller:** Brother come inside come check am.

*Brother come inside and check.*

We get better polo and jeans.

*We have good polo shirts and jeans*

**Buyer:** Shey una get Tommy Hilfiger chinos?

*Do you have Tommy Hilfiger chinos?*

**Seller:** We no get that one but we get Levi and that one good too.

*We don't have that but we*

**Seller:** *have Levi and that one is also good.*

**Buyer:** No, na Tommy Hilfiger I need.

*No. It's Tommy Hilfiger that I need.*

**Seller:** Brother follow me buy. This one dey ok.

*Brother buy from me. This one is ok.*

**Buyer:** No. (*Makes to leave*)

**Seller:** Oya wait. Sidon make I go bring am for my brother shop.

*Ok wait. Sit down let me*

**Seller:** *bring it from my brother's shop.*

**Seller:** Which size?

**Buyer:** Size 34.

**Seller:** Ok.

(*Dashed to the next shop and brought the trousers.*)

#### Text 3

**Seller:** Uncle, network wo le need?

*Uncle, which network do you need?*

**Seller:** Sebi efe ra line ni.

*You want to buy a sim card, I guess.*

Shey MTN, GLO abi AIRTEL le fe?

*Is it MTN, GLO or AIRTEL that you need?*

**Seller:** Ti aba register yin,

*If we register you, we will give you 200 naira card*

ama fun yin ni card 200 si ke fi recharge line yin.

*to recharge your line.*

**Buyer:** Glo ni mo fe. Mo de fe ma lo fun browsing ni.

*I need GLO and it is for browsing.*

Mogbo pe oun lo da ju fun browsing.

*I heard it is the best for browsing.*

**Seller:** O to ni. E wa ka se pa pa pa.

*It's true. Come let's do it quickly.*

E ma gbadun e fun browsing gan.  
*You will enjoy it for browsing.*

**Buyer:** Mo tie gbo pe won se promo bai.  
*I even heard there's a promo going on now*

**Seller:** Exactly.

### Relational Terms as an Inclusion Strategy

The use of kinship or relational terms is one major communication technique in Nigeria business places. This is also a subtle accommodation strategy. In this, there is meaning extension beyond what is attributed to most kinship and relational terms. Because Pidgin dominates the market places, there are shifts in the intonation of the lexical pragmatic form of these kinship terms e.g. 'Uncle', 'Brother' as seen in texts 2 and 3 have their stress on the second syllable instead of the first. Establishing such kinship relationship with a would-be customer or even a customer with whom one has no relational ties gives them a sense of belonging that makes them feel accepted. Among Yoruba traders, there are many such honorific tags such as 'my father', 'the father of my husband', 'my mother', etc. used to address buyers as a way of giving them a feeling of acceptance and oneness. Alo and Soneye (2014) assert that one of the haggling strategies is the application of honorific tags such as giving titles to either the customer or the seller. According to them, an honorific is a title of respect:

S: Oga... (Text 6)  
 A: Madam... (Text 6)  
 B: Aunty... (Text 1)

Honorifics such as "madam" and "oga" are used by the sellers to appeal and persuade prospective buyers. By addressing the buyers using the honorific, the buyers feel esteemed and appreciated, thus, are lured into purchasing from the seller. (Alo and Soneye 2014).

Most of the kinship status in Yoruba land is formed by the base of people's idea about society and good behaviours, just like Forshee (2006) conveys of the Indonesians. Inclusion strategies employed by buyers and sellers include but is not limited to meaning extension and observation of cultural and societal norms.

#### Text 4

**Context:** Bank customers, as earlier stated, are drawn from all walks of life. Among them are the aged and this group sees speaking to them in the local language as not just a show of respect for their status but a sign of acceptance.

**BC:** Pele O omomi.

*Well done my daughter.*

**BE:** Ah! Daddy ekasan sir. Ejoko sir.

*Daddy good afternoon sir; please sit.*

*Kila lese fun yin?*

*What can we do for you?*

**BC:** Owo wa ti won man san fun wa

*I came to see if our monthly stipend for last  
 ni mo ni kin wa bere boya wan ti san t'osu to koja.  
 month had been paid.*

*Awon elegbe mi so pe awon ti gba ti won.*

*My colleagues have had theirs.*

**BE:** Daddy, se e man gba alert ti owo oun ba ti wole ni?

*Do you receive alert when paid.*

**BC:** Wan man ran se, sugbon mi ti ri t'osu to koja.

*I do receive but I have not seen that of last month.*

**BC:** Awon elegbe mi de lawon ti ri tiwon.

*My colleagues said they've seen theirs.*

**BE:** Se banki kan na lede jon gba owo?

*Do you use the same bank?*

**BC:** Rara, bank imi lawon lo.

*No, they use a different bank.*

**BE:** Daddy, boya ke ni suru die.

*Daddy, maybe you be patient a little.*

*O le jepe ipele si ipele ni wan san owo oun,*

*It could be that the money is paid in batches*

*ko de je pe tiwon ni wan koko san*

*and theirs was paid first.*

**BC:** (stands to leave): O se omo mi. Thank you my daughter.

#### Text 5

**Context:** When buyers and sellers from with different language backgrounds come in contact, the switch in language to that of the listener is usually to gain one favour or the other. In this case, the buyer seeks a better bargain for what she wants to buy.

**Buyer:** Danwa ya de? Nawa kongo wake?

*Brother, how are you? How much is kongo*

**Buyer:** of beans?

**Seller:** Wone wake, kerimi ko kato?

*Which type of beans? Is it small or big?*

**Buyer:** Kerimi ne nna so nsiya.

*I want to buy the small one.*

**Seller:** 500 ne.

*It's 500 (naira)*

**Buyer:** Haba danwa, ba 450 ba?

*Brother, can't it sell for 450 (naira)*

**Seller:** Sofo wake ne.

*Haka ne mu ne seri.*

*It's old beans. That's how we sell it.*

**Buyer:** To, na seni.

*Ama ze ka seri min 450.*

*Ok, I know but you will sell it to me at 450.*

**Seller:** Kawo 480 nseri ki.

*Pay 480 let me sell it to you.*

**Buyer:** Zen ba ka 470.

*I will pay you 470*

(To her friend, in Yoruba)

*O better ni bi. The other man taku si 500 sha.*

*It's better here. The other man insisted on 500.*

*Oya kongo biyar.*

*Ok, five kongos.*

*Measure am well make you put jara o.*

*Measure it well and add extra.*

### Switching and Mixing Codes

Because of the bi/multilingual nature of language users in Nigeria, speakers easily mix or switch codes to accommodate their interlocutors. Code mixing and switching is one major aspect that Communication Accommodation Theory stress on (Bissoonaath & Offord, 2001). Employees, vendors and customers do this for different reasons and this

brings us again to the motive for accommodation as earlier discussed. In the business world, employees and vendors do it mostly for profit while customers do it in order to have a good bargain or quality services. Code-switching and code-mixing contain elements of at least two languages in a communicative process. These terms are prominent features of the language of different situations in a multilingual country like Nigeria (Banjo 1996). The switching and mixing of codes can be seen as markers of some sort of familiarity as well as a kind of distancing device; the prevailing situation surrounding the use is a determining factor. In this situation, it is a marker of familiarity and a way to accommodate interlocutors.

Previous data also reveal that customers avoid the use of Standard English in market places. The reason is because this would not allow them bargain properly and could lead them to being cheated by vendors, especially if they let out their status. It is observed that buyers tend to put aside their status and communicate in Pidgin when dealing with vendors because this puts them at par with vendors and help them get a good bargain.

In text 4, the entire conversation was in Yoruba language. This is because of the status of the customer. The decision to call him 'daddy' even though he is not the employees' father has been discussed earlier. It is also observed that situations such as this is also considered when bank staff are being posted to different branches. Converging to a common linguistic style also improves the effectiveness of communication, this, in turn, has been associated with increased predictability of the other and hence a lowering of uncertainty, inter-personal anxiety and mutual understanding (Gudykunst 1995).

Byrne's 1971 assertion on the motive for convergence is well spelt out in text 5. According to him: 'An important motive for convergence is the desire to gain approval from another. The premise is that similarity attracts: the more similar we are to our conversational partner, the more he or she will like and respect us, and the more social rewards we can expect.' We see this play out between the Hausa beans trader and the Yoruba buyer in text 5. Her decision to carry out her conversation in Hausa language helped her beat the price of the beans down a little, compared to the previous shop she had visited. The researcher got to know about this when she switched again to Yoruba to talk to the person she came with. This is apart from the non-fluency in her Hausa usage. Byrne's assertion also accounts for what was earlier observed about buyers wanting to be at par with sellers by using Pidgin English with sellers.

#### Text 6

**Context:** Again, the text below reflects the deliberate choice of language by buyers and its effect on sellers. It also shows the attachment Nigerians have to their local languages.

**Seller:** Customer come follow me buy ugu.  
*Customer buy fluted pumpkin from me.*

**Buyer:** Ego ne bu nka?  
*How much is this one?*

**Seller:** Ha! A maom nibu onyigbo.  
*I didn't know you are an Ibo person.*

O nkaun ki cho?  
*Is that the one you want?*

**Buyer:** Eeh. Yes

**Seller:** Ngwa weta N50 kan re si gi ya.  
*Okay bring N50 let me sell it to you.*  
Maka na nfu ni bu nwannem.  
*Because I can see that you are my sister.*

**Buyer:** Lekwa ya. Thank you. Ka chi gozie gi.  
*Here it is. Thank you. God bless you.*

**Seller:** Ngwa bye bye. Jisike.  
*Okay goodbye. Take care.*

#### Language Choice and Human Psyche

The incidence in text 6 establishes CAT's early exploration. There was a change in the attitude of the seller towards her buyer immediately she noticed that the buyer was a fellow Ibo woman. The buyer deliberately chose to speak in Igbo language despite the seller's initial use of Pidgin and this took a psychological turn on the seller. This simply validates Giles and Ogay's claim as quoted below:

'SAT (CAT) was first formulated in order to explore the socio psychological parameters underlying the moves speakers make in their speech behaviours. What is the motives and intentions behind speakers' conscious (or unconscious) linguistic choices? How do listeners perceive these choices and react to them?' Giles and Ogay (2007)

#### Text 7

**Context:** Sellers learn to use the language of their immediate environment when transacting business, as a way to show solidarity and acceptance of such environment and its people and buyers tend to appreciate this, irrespective of how poor such sellers are in the usage.

**Buyer:** Aboki, how much be aya?  
*Friend, how much is tiger nut?*

**Seller:** Which one?  
*(pointing to his measuring containers)*

**Buyer:** This  
*(pointing to one)*

**Seller:** That one na N50.  
*That one is 50 naira.*

**Buyer:** What of this one?  
*(pointing to another) What about this one?*

**Seller:** That one na N30  
*That one is 30 naira.*

**Buyer:** Oya measure this one.  
*Ok, measure this one.*  
*(Bends to his wheelbarrow and begins to measure the tiger nut.)*

**Buyer:** Baba I won kini yen dada o.  
*Measure that thing well.*

**Seller:** Ka shey mey?  
*You said what?*

**Buyer:** I say make you measure am well.  
*I said you should measure it well.*

**Seller:** Ba damuwa, I go do am well.  
*No problem, I will do it well.*  
*(Measures into a nylon and about handing over to him)*

**Buyer:** Ha! O ni fisi ni?

*Won't you add extra?*

**Seller:** Na sa jara mana.  
*I added extra already.*

**Buyer:** Tun fisi jor.  
*Add again please.*  
*(Added a little more.)*

**Seller:** *(laughing)* Kei alaroro ne.  
*You are a stingy person.*

**Buyer:** *(laughing)* Mogba pe alaroro ni mi.  
*(paid and left) I agree am a stingy person.*

### Keeping Friends through Banter

Customers and vendors believe that making conversations easy for each other matters so much in having a successful business transaction. One of the elements of making conversation easy and creating a lighter mood is jokes as seen in text 7. After all said and done, the Hausa tiger nut seller addressed his Yoruba customer as stingy, using Yoruba language. To this the customer agreed, understanding the joke in it. Vendors have a sense of humour and this is one strategy with which they handle their different customers.

One survival feature of traders and other businessmen is learning the language of their host community, however little of it they grab. Despite the inability of both buyer and seller to understand each other's language, they still found a way to communicate and carry out transactions. And to think that the seller's joke is a blend of Hausa and Yoruba words only exposes his attempts to understand the language of his immediate environment so as to be at par with his buyers.

### CONCLUSION

This research captures language choice in Nigeria business places and its effect on interactants. Communication in Nigeria work and business places has been a subject of interest to scholars over the years (Adegbite and Odeunmi (2006), Ayeni (2020)). Previous studies (Ayodele 2009, Alo and Soneye 2014) take a look at haggling in the Nigeria market settings, with a focus on South-West Nigeria. While both previous and current studies agree that language choice has a psychological effect on users, the current research reveals the language techniques used for inclusion (accommodation) as a persuasive strategy in the Nigeria business places. The research looks at:

- i. The choice of language for effective communication and
- ii. A deliberate shift in language use in order to accommodate the other participant and the reasons for this.

Inclusion here is achieved through the use of Nigeria Pidgin, relational terms, code switching and mixing when interacting with people of different languages and backgrounds, in order to create a sense of belonging. The Nigerian Pidgin is used in an informal situation between buyers and sellers in the market situation, especially in communication between diverse groups, irrespective of their social status or educational level. The mixing and switching of codes are the consequence of the multiple language situation in Nigeria. Buyers and sellers in a market situation use these with a view

to communicating effectively with one another. People from the upper class who are competent bilinguals are not left out in the mixing and switching of codes. The change of codes helps people of different linguistic backgrounds to grasp the major registers that are needed in the business and market situation.

In all, the research helps answer the questions on how language is used when people of different gender, culture and ethnicity, social and occupational status, age, and so forth meet at different business places in Nigeria. It brings to the fore:

- i. How the different personal and social identities are negotiated during the interaction.
- ii. Who changes his or her communicative style to accommodate whom and
- iii. What the outcomes of such accommodating behaviours on the relationship between the interactants are.

This establishes Giles' assertion that accommodation has both a linguistic and psychological output except that in a business situation, this is mostly for personal gain.

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## APPENDIX

### *Lexical Choices and Language Choice*

The lexical choices include 'jara' (gratuitous items) **Text 5** and **7**, 'efisi' (add more), **Text 7**, 'kongo' (measuring vessel) **Text 5**