

To The Problem of Linguistic and Cultural Cooperation in the Process of Language Contacts¹

Olga N. Prokhorova², Tatiana G. Voloshina³, Oksana V. Markelova⁴, Elena A. Zueva⁴, & Emilia A. Bocharova⁴

Abstract

The spread of English across the Globe and its status as an official language in many countries, such as the Gambia, India, Cameroon, Canada, Kenya, Malta, Nigeria, the United States, South Africa, has determined its role and impact on a huge number of language versions of modern English variations. Due to the dominant influence of English on the spread of language diversity and the consolidation of its official status, the language policy of many countries, such as India, Pakistan, Nigeria, is carried out in line with the provision of education in English. The role of the English language in the development of the language policy in many countries is activated by both domestic and foreign policy of the state. The aim of domestic policy includes the solution of problems such as the preservation of the status of indigenous languages and strengthening their role in all spheres of society, the promotion of educational programs. However, in practice, this role is played by the English language, as a universal means of academic communication in schools and universities. Foreign language policy is aimed at preserving the status of the English language and is a set of language measures aimed at maintaining the structure of the language and its various forms of existence (Baghana et al., 2014). In our study, we analyze the linguistic, cultural features of such English language variation as the Nigerian English language. Nigeria is one of the largest countries in West Africa today, presenting the mixture of up to 250 language ethnic groups, where English, having the official status, has the role of uniting all ethnic variations as the means of communication. The official language policy of Nigeria is implemented in the promotion of English in all social spheres, such as education, politics, economics, diplomacy, jurisprudence, media. English is the main languages used in modern media and communications in Nigeria, namely television, Internet, etc. Each of the 36 States of Nigeria has its own radio station, which informs residents about the latest development in the country and

¹ Please cite this paper as follows:

Prokhorova, O. N., Voloshina, T. G., Markelova, O. V., Zueva, E. A., & Bocharova, E. A. (2019). To the problem of linguistic and cultural cooperation in the process of language contacts. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 10(SP), 766-774.

² Belgorod State University, Belgorod, Russia

³ Belgorod State University, Belgorod, Russia; tatianavoloshina@rambler.ru

⁴ Belgorod State University, Belgorod, Russia

in each state in English (Cruse, 1998). The English language has exerted a great influence on Nigerian culture, the results of which are the processes connected with losing a part of Nigerian cultural identity.

Keywords: Language Variation; Linguistic Cooperation; Nigerian English; Cultural Identity; Indigenous Languages.

1. Introduction

Language contacts and variations present a significant sector of modern linguistics science analysis today. Language and culture cannot exist independently but present an interdependent structure. Therefore, in our research we pay attention to language and cultural cooperation procedure and investigate the aspects of cultural, historical, linguistic and communicative peculiarities of such language variant as Nigerian English.

Some peculiarities of Nigerian English usage were analyzed in works of foreign linguists of the XX-th century, such as Bamgbose (1998), Bamiro (1998), Osammor (2002), Katchru (2006) and others. In their works the scholars researched semantic change in the lexical sphere of Nigerian English; conducted a comparative analysis of lexical units and expressions from British English semantic variation and regional language of Nigeria; systematized previously obtained theoretical knowledge and on its basis revealed the most common and contrasting characteristics of the English language and the territorial version of the English language in Nigeria (Bamgbose, 1998; Bamiro, 1998; Langlo, 2018; Osammor, 2010; Malamiri, et al., 2016).

The significant contribution to the study of lexical and semantic features of the territorial version of the English language of Nigeria since the beginning of the XXI-st century was made by a famous linguist and sociologist Igboanusi (2001). The author hypothesized the achievement of lexical and semantic innovations in Nigerian English through some linguistic processes, such as semantic shift, functional transformation, reduplication (Katchru, 2006). Unlike the predecessors, the author focuses not only on the lexical and semantic features of definitions, but also reveals their cultural and etymological aspects. In the given article we will analyze the peculiarities of Nigerian English functioning based on the dictionaries of Igboanusi (2001) and Blench (2005).

2. Methods

This article is based on the systemic approach to the interdisciplinary analysis. Due the cognitive cross-disciplinary approach we take into consideration the anthropocentric factor, linguistic and non-linguistic information, intercultural analyses, especially dealing with the problem of mentality and language correlation.

3. Results and Discussions

The aim of our study is to identify the lexical and semantic features of the territorial version of the English language in Nigeria through its linguistic and cultural peculiarities. The purpose of the study determined the range of its tasks, which are to identify historical and cultural factors affecting the formation of the lexical composition of the territorial version of the English language of Nigeria; to determine the semantic features of the lexical features: to identify the features of such semantic derivation as narrowing and expanding the meaning of Nigerian English; to determine the specific features of modern Nigerian English peculiarities.

In the course of linguistic interaction of English and indigenous languages in Nigeria there were varieties of Nigerian English variants fixed on its territory (Alo, 2004). Based on the principle of territorial division, the well-known Nigerian linguist D. Cruz distinguishes Eastern English, Western English and Northern English (Crystal, 2003). Another famous linguist, D. Crystal, identifies the typology of English language groups in Nigeria, based on variations in the English language of the largest indigenous language groups, which are usually referred to as “Igbo English”, “Yoruba English”, “Hausa English” (Cruse, 1998).

In the typology and language variation of the Nigerian English language, developed by Falola (2009), based on the principle of linguistic criteria, the rule of derogation from the norms is the key factor. In the process of analyzing this parameter, the researcher identifies four varieties of Nigerian English: 1) a complete deviation from the norm of the English language, while noting the impossibility of using this form at the international level; 2) approximation to the standard of the English language from the standpoint of syntactic features, but with pronounced phonological and lexical characteristics, this option is considered socially acceptable, but not on the international level; 3) the language variation, which has a great similarity in syntax and semantics with the standard English language, but has some phonetic and lexical features, due to the use of linguistic elements from local languages; such options are socially acceptable in the communication on the international level; 4) this variant is identical to the British English language in terms of syntax, semantics, phonology, phonetics and is socially acceptable and applicable on the international level (Falola, 2009).

The third parameter, which determines the level of English as a foreign language, is the level of professional education of a Nigerian. Given this parameter, it is customary to distinguish three types of English language proficiency: (1) lower level of English proficiency acquired by Nigerian students at the primary level of education and continuing their studies at the secondary level; 2) the average level of English language proficiency associated with the continuation of the study of English in High School and improving the level of English in Institutions and Universities; this category also includes undergraduate students and aspiring journalists; 3) professional level of English; this level of proficiency is typical for most teachers

of higher education institutions, judges, representatives of the administration, editors of publishing houses (Ogbulogo, 2005).

All the above-mentioned parameters have an impact on the level of English proficiency among Nigerian residents. It should be noted that the educational level of Nigerians does not only serve as a material for a detailed empirical study, but also raises many unresolved questions about its relationship with the norms of the Standard English language in terms of syntactic, semantic, phonological, phonetic features with some lexical variations.

The peculiarities of lexical-semantic variation representations in the territorial varieties of the English language in Nigeria have been described in works by A. Bamgbose. The author conducted a systematic analysis in the study of internal indicators of lexical and semantic variations and investigated such aspects as demographic and geographical (Bamgbose, 1998; Radhy, (2019).

In the works of African linguist Oyegoke (2002), the analysis focuses on the classification of lexical and semantic innovations in the sphere of semantic deviations. The author believes that lexical innovations are not able to function in the process of applying certain registers, since they include lexical units typical only for the presentation of certain professional fields (Oyegoke, 2002).

A Nigerian scholar Igboanusi (2001) is not a supporter of this theory. The researcher emphasizes that although the use of many Nigerian English-language innovations in everyday speech has reached demographic, geographical and authoritative levels, at the moment, there are still difficulties in the process of codification and decodification of information, speech intelligibility and adequate perception of various lexical innovations among the population (Katchru, 2006).

In his dictionaries Igboanusi (2001) identifies the semantic expansion of lexical units, which is characterized as a process in which certain lexical units acquire additional meaning. One of such specific features of the lexical units of Nigerian English is semantic shift. The concept of the semantic shift of the Nigerian English language is considered as differentiation in its meaning from the British English language (Katchru, 2006). In the process of studying the range of lexical units in the English language of Nigeria, the author believes that English is able to cover aspects of Nigerian culture only to some extent, this “partial interpretation” leads to meaning narrowing of Nigerian English lexical units (Katchru, 2006).

For example, analyzing the terms of the Yoruba language presenting *kinship*, the well-known Nigerian linguist Alo (2004) stresses some semantic properties associated with the use of the lexemes “*father*”, “*mother*”, “*brother*”, “*sister*”. In English, these lexemes are used for the description of blood relatives, representatives of the nuclear family. In Nigerian English for these tokens not only this value is typical, but also they are characterized by *the expansion of the meaning*. Lexemes “*father*”, “*mother*”, “*brother*”, “*sister*” are also used in Nigerian English

as a presentation of relatives of different generations, as well as to appeal to older people (Alo, 2004; Baghana et al., 2018).

In the process of studying the semantic properties of Nigerian English, an African linguist Ogbulogo (2005) concludes that lexical innovations retain the values of the British English but lacks the opportunity to retain the specific properties of the Nigerian culture. In his research, the author analyzed the features of Igbo lexemes representation of terminological series in the sphere of science and technology and derived a number of innovative lexical meanings, for example:

1. *Igwe* (Nigerian English) – *Machine* (British English)

The lexeme in Igbo – *Igwe*, which in English corresponds to the meaning of *machine* – that is, *any mechanical structure that is used for the movement and movement of any objects* - acquires in Nigerian English a number of additional meanings, indicating *the expansion of the meaning* of the original unit, namely

Bicycle – bike,

Engine – motor (Blench, 2005);

2. *Ogbunigwe* (Nigerian English) – *Missile* (British English) (Soneye, 2011).

The lexeme of Nigerian English *Ogbunigwe* in English corresponds to the meaning of the *missile*, which is interpreted as a *rocket, projectile*. However, in Nigerian English, the word acquires a number of *additional meanings*, such as – *bomb, grenade, machine gun*. Thus, in this example, the lexeme *Ogbunigwe* acquires a kind of semantic derivation as an *extension*.

3. *Ogwu* (Nigerian English) – *Medicine* (British English) (Blench, 2005).

In Nigerian English, the *Ogwu* lexeme corresponds to the meaning of *Medicine* in English, which implies a drug of the widest spectrum. In the language of Igbo, the word acquires *additional properties* due to the *expanding meaning: a drug that has a narcotic property, charm, attractiveness, talisman*. In this example, we can also observe a kind of semantic derivation as an *extension of the meaning*.

4. *Mmiri* (Nigerian English) – *water* (British English) (Igboanusi, 2001).

The lexeme of the English language *water*, interpreted in the Nigerian English as *Mmiri*, as well as previous examples, acquires a number of *additional values* indicating the *expansion of the meaning* of the original definition, for example: *any kind of liquid, syrup, glaze* (Melzian, 2001).

However, in the Nigerian English there is another trend, namely the *loss of the uniqueness of cultural identity* in the interpretation of certain lexical units can be observed. This process is associated with the *narrowing of the meaning* of many lexical units and the loss of the cultural heritage of Nigeria. The process of *narrowing the meaning* of lexical units is particularly clearly possible to trace in the interpretation of lexical units of the thematic group “National Clothes and Shoes”.

Examples:

1. *Agbada* (Nigerian English) – *Flowing gown* (British English) (Nukoya, 2006).

An element of *agbada* dress is a national type of clothing for men and is a necessity for any African man who wants to make a proper impression on others in the respected society. Such clothing presents a long shirt of a bright color, which is decorated with embroidery, typical for cultural identity of a particular ethnic group of Nigeria. These clothes have a long history rooted in the cultures of the indigenous peoples of Nigeria. However, the English version of the analyzed word *flowing gown*, being interpreted as a common element of the male wardrobe, loses most of the meaning of this definition, as it reflects only the external qualities of clothing (flowing dress), which indicates a *narrowing of the meaning*.

2. *Abada* (Nigerian English) – *White Clothes* (British English) (Nukoya, 2006).

National African clothing *Abada* can refer to both women's and men's clothing ensemble. The costume is an exclusively white garment worn by Muslims during prayer. In Nigeria, the female type of *Abada* clothing is a long white tunic, and the male clothing set consists of white trousers and a white shirt. In the Igbo language, which is in the rank of interethnic means of communication, the analyzed lexical unit has its own characteristics and is interpreted as *women's belt, twice wrapping the waist* (Melzian, 2001). In the Nigerian language, *Abada* is a representation of the ethnic culture, while the English version of the Nigerian language displays only the white colour of clothes.

3. *Adire* (Nigerian English) – *Clothes* (British English) (Katchru, 2006).

Adira is a special type of fabric used in the Nigerian industry, stands out for its bright color. Initially, *Adira* material was an ordinary cotton fabric with bright embroidery. The basic form of clothing, made of *Adira* fabric, was a combination of two fabrics sewn together, forming a kind of dress.

Over time, the clothing of *Adira* was made not only manually, but also in factories. Now such cities of Nigeria as Abeokuta, Ibadan, Osogbo are the largest shopping centers of sales of national Nigerian clothes from *Adira* material. Modern *Adira* varies in its embroidery in colours from purple to blue. The Indigo coloring tradition has its roots in West Africa, symbolizing well-being and nobility. The lexical version of the definition of the English language – *Clothes* – does not reflect the cultural characteristics of the Nigerian people and represents any kind of clothe. In this example, as in the previous ones, we observe such a phenomenon as the *narrowing of the lexical meaning*.

4. *Boubou* (Nigerian English) – *Gown* (British English) (Katchru, 2006).

Boubou is a special type of clothing worn in West Africa by both men and women. Sewn from a large cloth fabric, *Boubou* is an elegant outfit that reaches the ankles. Traditionally, this garment is ordered in special workshops, female and male versions differ in the shape of the collar. *Women's Boubou* has a rounded collar, symbolizing fertility, and the *male Boubou* is the suit forming a long V-neck garment, which is a symbol of good luck and prosperity. The English equivalent, *Gown*, is not able to express the true meaning and cultural aspects of the lexical unit.

5. *Cover shoe* (Nigerian English) – *Shoes* (British English) (Katchru, 2006).

The lexical unit – *Cover shoes* – represents the type of shoe that does not cover the entire foot, such as sandals. English analogue, *Shoes*, does not give a full idea of true characteristic.

6. *Danshiki* (Nigerian English) – *Jumper* (British English) (Katchru, 2006).

The element of Nigerian clothing, *Danshiki*, is a men's and women's clothing in bright colors, covering the upper part of the body. For Nigeria, this type of clothing has a characteristic feature – the absence of sleeves and the design of the armhole contrast piping. The modern variation of *Danshiki* is represented by costumes of different combinations from simple draped clothes to multi component costumes. The English version, *Jumper*, which is an element of knitted clothing with long sleeves and a high collar, does not reflect the peculiarities of the national clothing representation.

4. Conclusion

To sum it all, the global spread of English in the modern world has resulted in the fact that today the English language has an official status in many countries of the world, one of which is a West African country Nigeria.

The study examined the historical, cultural and linguistic features of the process of Nigerian English formation, and identified some of its lexical and semantic characteristics.

The complex of external circumstances in which the process of functioning and development of the language takes place, namely the social structure of the society, the differences between native speakers due to age or social status, level of education and culture, influenced the level of English proficiency of the inhabitants of modern Nigeria. The geographical boundaries of the distribution of languages in Africa do not coincide with the political ones, so in Nigeria there are many variations of language groups, which determine the internal structure of the sociolinguistic situation in Nigeria.

English in Nigeria has the status of the official language, which unites representatives of different ethnic major and minor groups, and is the language of

politics, economy, judiciary, media, education. The language policy of the state is aimed at promoting the role of the English language in all spheres of life of Nigerians, which undoubtedly affects the fate of indigenous languages in the direction of gradual extinction.

Sociolinguistic analysis of language material in the study was carried out using the method of correlation analysis, which is based on the correlation of social parameters and language phenomena as dependent elements. Taking into account the principle of linguistic criteria underlying the classification of variants of the English language in Nigeria, the work investigates the peculiarities of the lexical units functioning in Nigerian English, which is a language variant that has similarities in syntax and semantics with the Standard English language.

In the course of the study, we concluded that the territorial variant of the English language of Nigeria has specific features at the lexical level due to the influence of indigenous languages. Different variations of lexical innovations are a characteristic feature of historically formed and culturally conditioned features that influenced the state and functioning of the modern English language in Nigeria. A specific feature of the lexical system of the modern Nigerian English language is the development of semantic derivation, namely the expansion and narrowing of the semantic meaning of language units, which leads to a change in the content dynamics of the language.

References

- Alo, M. A. (2004). Prototype approach to the analysis of meaning of kinship terms in non-native English. *Language Sciences*, 15, 159-176.
- Baghana, J., Voloshina, T. G., Kotch, K. I., Rodina, L. I., & Radovich, M. A. (2018). Theoretical issues of language contacts, borrowings and interference. *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication*, 12, 1074-1079.
- Bamgbose, A. (1998). Torn between the norms: Innovations in world Englishes. *World Englishes*, 17(1), 1-14.
- Bamiro, E. (1998). Lexicosemantic variation in Nigerian English. *World Englishes*, 5, 47-68.
- Blench, R. (2005). *A dictionary of Nigerian English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cruse, D. (1998). *Lexical semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as the global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Falola, T. & Genova, A. (2009). *Historical dictionary of Nigeria*. USA: Scarecrow Press

- Igboanusi, H. (2001). *Lexico-semantic innovation processes in Nigerian English*. Ibadan: Afa Publications.
- Katchru, B. (2006). *The handbook of world Englishes*. Malden: Blackwell publishing Ltd.
- Langlo, T. (2018). *Dictionary of Nigerian English*. USA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Melzian, H. A. (2001). *Concise dictionary of the Bini language of southern Nigeria*. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.
- Malamiri, A., Jahankhah, A., & Namdar, Sh. (2016). The jurisdiction of the successor in law and jurisprudence Iran. *UCT Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research*, 4(2), 1-9.
- Nukoya, E. (2006). *Nine lives*. Lagos: CG&S Books.
- Ogbulogo, C. (2005). *Concepts in semantics*. Lagos: Sam Iroanusi Publications.
- Osammor, I. (2010). *The triumph of the Water Lily*. Lagos: Kraft Books Limited.
- Oyegoke, L. (2002). *Ill winds*. Ibadan: Afa Publications.
- Radhy, Z. H. (2019). Application of multiply regression linear model and new technology method in estimating learning and education of students. *International Electronic Journal of Mathematics Education*, 14(1), 87-90. <https://doi.org/10.12973/iejme/3978>
- Soneye, T. (2011). The English language as a cultural transmitter: The African experience. *Advanced Studies of Africa Society*, 12, 1-11.