



**Enugu State University
of Science & Technology**
Journal of Social Sciences
& Humanities



Journal of Social Sciences

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published by

Faculty of Social Sciences

Enugu State University of Science & Technology

www.esutjss.com



PHONOLOGICAL INTERFERENCE AMONG IGBO-ENGLISH BILINGUAL STUDENTS IN CARITAS UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This research work examines the phonological problems that Igbo-English bilinguals have. The purpose of this study is to identify the phonological problems Igbo-English bilinguals have while using spoken English. This research is important as its aim is to find out the phonological problems of students who are of Igbo origin and proffer solution to the problems. It will also help to improve the communicative competence of an Igbo child, since English language will continue to be an important school subject for many years to come. It will also serve as a communicative tool both for interpersonal and interethnic interactions in their everyday life. To achieve this, the researcher administered a test on the second year and third year student's Igbo-English bilinguals of the Department of English, in Caritas University, Amorji-Nike Enugu. The researcher distributed 50 copies of questionnaire and used a tape recorder to record student's pronunciations. At the end, it is found out that most of the students find it difficult to pronounce some English words wrongly. Findings from this work will also be of importance to language policy makers, language teachers and educators as well as linguists. Finally, it is hoped that if these recommendations are carried out successfully, the dignity of the spoken English will be restored in our dear nation (Nigeria).

Keywords: Bilingualism, Phonological problems, communicative, Igbo Bilingual and Interference.

INTRODUCTION

Language can be defined as a means of communication. Language is the use of rare organized words that have meaning and is conveyed by speech, writing or by gestures. Every language has two forms which are speech and writing speech is paramount and Important to every language because it enables us interact and communicate effectively with one another.

Phonology is the study of the speech sound of a language and the laws that govern them. It is the study of different sounds and the way they combine to form morphemes, words and eventually form sentences. Speech is an important aspect of any language, no language can be appreciated without proper use of a speech sound. Bilingualism is the ability to speak two languages, so any country that speaks two languages is known as a bilingual country. Nigeria is a multilingual country but we have English as our second and official language. There are also vernacular languages, Igbo Hausa and Yoruba which are called the major languages. There are indeed more than 400 other local languages in the country. A child at an early age would be sensitive to the sounds he or she hears and will begin to imitate these sounds. Hearing and imitation of the sounds of the language he or she hears will enable the child



acquire the language which is the first language or the mother tongue. This process is called language acquisition. According to Ogbuehi (2003), every normal child acquires the sound system and the speech patterns of his mother tongue in a normal way through imitation of sounds from adult members of the speech community. After acquiring the first language, learning to speak a second language can prove difficult for the learner. WHY? You may ask. Well this is because the learners mind is already consolidated with the first language, so adjusting to learn the phonemes, morphemes, semantics and syntax of a second language would definitely be challenging. Onuigbo (1990), says that learning to speak a second language is psychologically demanding because the learners already feels comfortable towards the phonological system of his native language. Mackey (1965), agrees that a person who has been using only one language since early childhood has habits and thoughts which are closely tied to the habits of a language, the language is already part of his experience. He concludes that in learning a second language, they have to adjust his speech habits to accommodate those of the target language.

In Nigeria, we have the Igbo language which is one of our major languages. Igbo language is spoken in the eastern part of Nigeria; Abia, Imo, Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi and parts of Rivers and Delta states. Igbo language is the mother tongue of the above states. As citizens of Nigeria, you are expected to learn and speak our official language which is the English language. English language is the language of our government, economy, it is the language of entertainment, education and so on. This is why it is important for every citizen to learn it. In the process of learning the English language, these learners or speakers allow the speech habits of their mother tongue which is the Igbo language to interfere with the speech sounds and habits of the target language (English language).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English language as a second language in Nigeria performs many functions, so it is impossible for any citizen of the country or student of any institution to decline not learning and using the English language. English Language poses some language learning and usage problems to Igbo language students. One of these problems is in its phonology. A lot of Igbo language students tend to mix the speech sounds of Igbo language with that of English language.

Though many studies in linguistics have focused on the morphological, semantic and syntactic aspects of these problems, this study is geared towards the phonological aspect which deals with basic pronunciation and speech sounds. The focus is to identify the phonological problems of Igbo-English bilingual students, using Caritas University as a case study.



PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is aimed at identifying the phonological Problems of English-Igbo bilinguals and finding out specific ways to reduce them or totally correct them.

To find out different ways to help Igbo-English bilingual students in Caritas University, Amorji-Nike in particular and other bilingual students to speak English fluently without the interference of their mother tongue.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are;

1. To carry out intense research on the phonological interference problems that Igbo-English bilingual students of Caritas University, Amorji-Nike have.
2. To identify their causes.
3. To identify their solutions.
4. To make recommendations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This work will aid in the provision of teaching materials on this particular area. This work will also serve as reference materials for future researchers interested in this field.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to identifying the few phonological problems that occur between Igbo-English bilingual students of the Department of English, Caritas university.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This work intends to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the phonological problems Igbo-English bilingual students of Caritas University have?
2. What are some ways to solve these problems?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Bilingualism: Bilingualism can be seen or defined as the ability to speak two languages. It may be acquired early by children especially those who live in an environment where the adults speak two languages. Children can also become bilingual by learning languages in two



different social settings. For example, an Igbo child that is going to school in a Yoruba state can learn the Yoruba language.

Bilingualism brings the question of how the two languages interact at the cognitive and behavioral levels have been of long-standing interest to psycholinguists as well as to neurologists, clinicians and educators. Bilingualism as an individual condition is nested within a distribution of broader societal circumstances that cause language contact. Bilingual may be the result of growing up in a bilingual community or neighborhood. However, that is different from bilingualism that results from growing up in an official bilingual country such as; Canada, where its two official languages are separated by geographical region. Bilingualism that is accompanied by literacy in both languages is different from bilingualism in which schooling is available in one language (the one that also carries social prestige) but not the other. It is thus necessary to begin an understanding of bilingualism from its social bases. Being bilingual comes with many benefits, from improved cognitive abilities to greater cultural awareness, understanding, and creativity.

Considering only bilingualism involving English, the statistics that Crystal has gathered indicate that, of the approximately 570 million people worldwide who speak English, over 41 percent or 235 million are bilingual in English and some other language. One must conclude that, far from being exceptional, as many lay people believe, bilingualism/multilingualism—which, of course, goes hand in hand with multiculturalism in many cases—is currently the rule throughout the world and will become increasingly so in the future.

Canada as stated above is a good example of a bilingual speech community. Official bilingualism" is the term used in Canada to collectively describe the policies, constitutional provisions, and laws that ensure legal equality of English and French in the Parliament and courts of Canada, protect the linguistic rights of English- and French-speaking minorities in different provinces, and ensure a level of government services in both languages across Canada.

Igbo Bilinguals: This is when Igbo native speakers learn or speak another language and in this case English language. Igbo bilinguals in the context of this research study refer to students of Igbo origin who speak English as their second language. Igbo is a sophisticated language therefore its native speakers tend to mix their second language (English) with their mother tongue (Igbo). Igbo bilinguals tend to have difficulties in pronouncing and speaking the English language.

Multilingualism: Multilingualism is the use of more than two languages, either by an individual, group of speakers or by a country. The vast majority of the world's population is either bilingual or multilingual. With over 5,000 distinct languages spoken around the world, numerous words are "borrowed" by different languages to create a global definition of specific names, nouns, or descriptions. Multilingualism is advantageous for people wanting to participate in trade, globalization and cultural openness. Owing to the ease of access to



information facilitated by the internet, individual's exposure to multiple languages has become increasingly possible.

Multilingual speakers have acquired and maintained at least one language during childhood. The first language (sometimes also referred to as mother tongue) is usually acquired without formal education. Multilingualism can be difficult and challenging. At times, some people are born into situations where they must learn multiple languages in their youth because that is the only way to function in a multilingual society successfully.

Phonology: Phonology is a branch of linguistics that structures how languages or dialects systematically organize their sounds. According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English; phonology is typically defined as the study of speech sounds of a language or languages and the laws governing them. According to S.R Anderson in international Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences (2001), phonology deals with the sound structure in individual languages. Feller (2007), agrees that phonology studies the ways in which speech sounds form system and patterns, it looks at mental knowledge and describes it. It allows speakers of a language to produce meaningful sounds or to recognize a foreign language. Phonology analyses the sound patterns of a particular language by determining which phonetic sounds are significant and explains how these sounds are interpreted by the native speaker. Phonology and phonetics both involve sound in natural language, but differ in that phonetics deals with sound from a language. While phonology studies the ways in which they are distributed and deployed within a particular language. Phonology originated with the insight that much observable phonetics detail is irrelevant or predictable within the system of a given language. This led to the positioning of phonemes as minimal connotative sound units in language, each composed of a collection of distinctive features of contrast.

From the above definitions and explanations, Phonology is simply the study of sound patterns and their meanings. It is the study of how different sounds came together to form and produce speech and word. Example:

Sound /æ/ and /t/

When they come together they form /æt/ AT

/k/ /a/ /t/ - cat

/m/ /a/ /t/ - mat.

Importance of phonology

One benefit of studying phonetics is that it shows the difference between languages through the different sounds that the languages in question have. It is also important to note that phonology also helps in learning and understanding a language more. The more one gets to understand the different sounds that used in a specific language, the more they get to understand the pronunciation of that language and how this affects other languages.

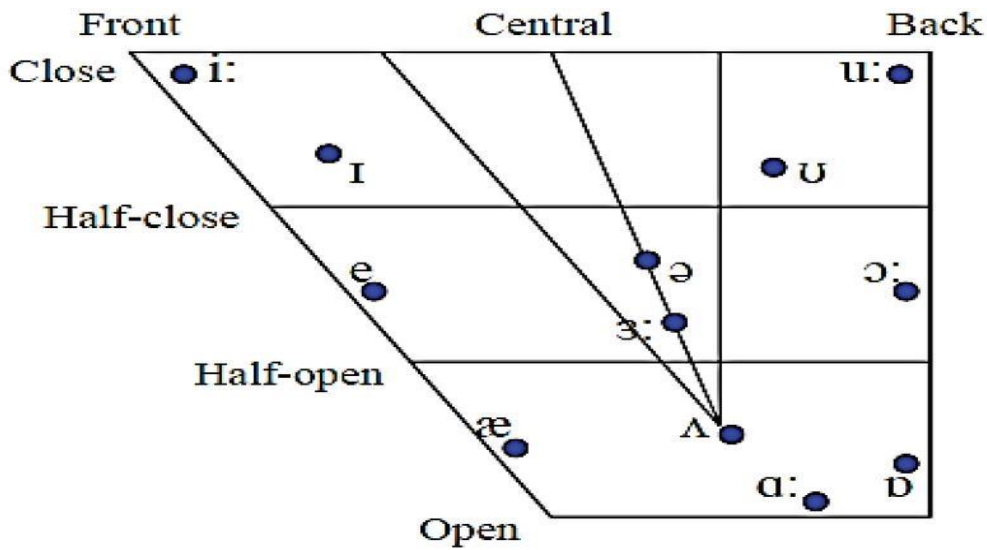


Phonology is also important because it helps in other professions like singing. Singing requires the incorporation of different sounds, in a language. Phonology is also associated with applied linguistics. Applied linguistics include language development and second language acquisition. It is due to phonetics that people from south America pronounce English words differently from people in America. It is also very possible to find people from the same country pronouncing words differently.

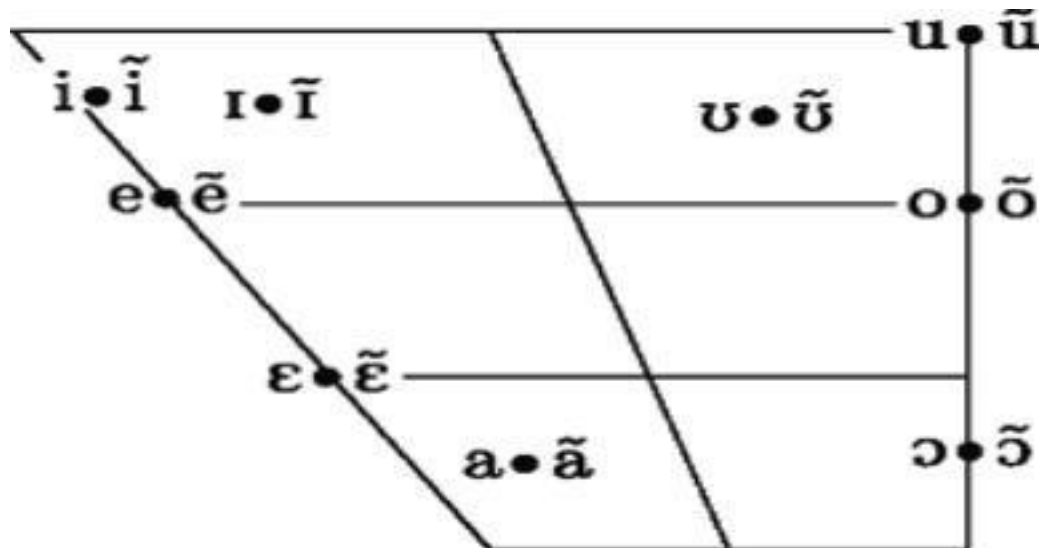
Language Interference: The word interference has various definitions and these definitions are based on different context in which the word is used. In this context, it refers to language interference. Language interference refers to the influence of one language (or variety) has on another language. In speech of bilinguals who use both languages. This interference can lead to both negative transfer or positive transfer. This interference can occur when a bilingual uses the features of mother tongue in the speaking of the target language. It is a common problem that manifest in the speaking of the second or target language.

Phonology Interference: Phonological interference occurs in the spoken form of the target language. This can clearly be seen at the phonological level, in the articulation or pronunciation of certain sounds of the target language. Learners of English as a second language often face challenges of the mother tongue or first language interference. According to Ugwu (2013), language transference occurs when two languages comes in contact. The mother tongue (L1) interferes positively or negatively with the target language (L2). This shows that the first language (L1) already acquired by students makes it difficult for them to perfectly acquire or learn the target language. Students who are well grounded in the first language can speak the language beyond the family level; therefore learning of the target language will become a difficult task. Sometimes there might be high level of interference that goes beyond the student's control. Ndime (2008) is of the view that such high level of interference gives rise to "Engligbo" which occurs when a student uses both English and Igbo languages but claims to speak one. The difference in varieties of Nigerian English lie in the spoken English. Today some Nigerians will say that they can easily identify an Igbo person, based on the peculiarities in their speech. The sound system of Igbo language also influences the pronunciation of English. These non-standard pronunciations are also noticed in the speech of highly educated English language speakers of Igbo origin.

To help fully understand the phenomenon of phonological interference, the phonemes of the two languages. two languages. English vowel chart is presented in the diagram below;



Igbo vowel chart is presented in the chart below



Broch	Bruch
Dosta	Duster



The above charts show that Igbo language lacks long vowel and also the Igbo language lacks diphthongs which English has. Absence of these English vowels in Igbo language creates pronunciation problems for the Igbo speaker. The Igbo speaker adopts ways of realizing them using corresponding vowels as shown below.

1. /i:/- in Igbo/i/ is released as /i/ which corresponds to both English /i:/ and /i/ the result is that the Igbo user may pronounce the word sit the same way as seat and see.
2. /a/- Igbo has /a/ but lacks /ae/ and /a:/ the pair cat and cart, mat and mart may not be distinguished.
3. /v/- this vowel is absent in Igbo. The alternative is usually for Igbo speakers to use neighboring vowels such as /D:/ with the result that pairs such as mother and mosque may not be distinguished.

// and / / 4.the central vowel, do not occur in Igbo.

Banjo (1979) identifies ethnic languages interference while asserting that numerous indigenous languages still continue to superimpose their phonology, lexis and structure on the various ethnic varieties of English.

Another type of phonological interference according to Igboanusi (2002) is the acceptance of English consonants cluster in place of the insertion of Igbo epenthetic vowels. Examples

IGBO	ENGLISH
Sweta	Sweater
Kotu	Coat
Rove	Love

Phonological interference is widely seen in the speech of English and Igbo language speakers. Since there are some consonants that do not occur in Igbo language, there is a tendency for these speakers to substitute one consonant for another. For example, /t/ and /d/. These speakers pronounce /t/ for /O/ and /d/ for /d/.

Example

Sentence1

Igbo speakers: She came /wit/ the food-wrong

She came /wiO/ the food- right

Sentence2

Igbo speaker:/d/ young man is going to church-wrong

/d/ young man is going to church-right

Sentence3

*This is the theme of the poem



Igbo speaker: This is the /ti:m/ of the poem-wrong
This is the /Oi:m/ of the poem-right

The wrong pronunciations are as a result of allophonic differences in the two languages. There is absence of some consonants which exist in English but do not exist in Igbo. Therefore, phonological interferences of Igbo bilinguals in Caritas University Amorji-Nike will be investigated in this study.

EMPIRICAL REVIEWS

A research on the phenomenal Enligbo and other implications for Igbo learner of English as conducted. Enligbo is a hybrid of English and Igbo. In this study, it was put to account that about 25 million people speaks Igbo language. In this research study, the phenomenal Enligbo and other implications for Igbo learners of English was discussed. The basic points noted down from this research study is;

1. Language transfer occurs when two languages are in contact.
2. The mother tongue (which is in this study Igbo) interfere positively or negatively with the target language.
3. Positive transfer occurs when the two languages have similar features, the mother tongue or first language L1 will then help the learner acquire the second language in a positive manner.
4. Negative transfer occurs when the mother tongue of first language as result of the differences in the features of the two languages, makes the learner transfer the first language L1 or mother tongue habits to the second language L2 or target language.
5. In this research study it was noted that the introduction of English in Igbo lands has led to mutual interferences or negative transfer between the two language.

Another research study titled; “Language in Contact and its Influence on Igbo Speakers of English Language” was conducted by Ahmed .M and Daniels (2019). In this research paper, the findings shows that there is phonological interference the sound of one language in the position of another, which is labeled first (L1) and second language (L2). This interference usually happens when learners substitute second language (L2) sounds which do not exist in the first language (L1) or the misplacement of sounds for example, the misplacement of the letter (l) for (r). Instead of the word “road” “lorry” etc. you would hear the learner pronouncing “load” and “rolly”. In other words, phonological interference occurs when the speech sounds pattern of the first language hinder the effective pronunciation of the second language. Example, some Igbo speakers have problems with the pronunciation of the English sounds like /i/ /r/ /o/ and final vowel sounds hence instead of saying /lu:k/ they say /ru:k/. instead of “ball” they say “Barru”. Some Igbo speakers of Nsukka dialects have greater difficulty in pronouncing some English words such as love /rau/ and /aw/ /raw/ which they



pronounce as noun and naw respectively. Another research study titled “Phonological Interference among Igbo Bilingual Speakers of English” was carried out by Favour Ogemdi. In this research study, the natural phonology theory was used and it states that in language acquisition and learning, genetically inhibited set of phonetically natural process in a specific language is required. In this study it is concluded that natural phonology makes two assumptions. They are that Phonemes are mental images of the sound of a language and Phonological processes represent subconscious mental substitution of one sound or class of sounds for another that are natural response to the relative difficulties of sound production. This research study concluded that phonological interference is predominantly caused by allophonic difference in the two languages and the absence of some consonants which exist in English but not in Igbo. In the case of lexical interferences, it is a common practice among the English Igbo bilinguals to translate Igbo idioms into English after the thought and the pattern

PHONOLOGICAL THEORIES

These are some phonological theories that forms the theoretical framework of the study such as”

Natural Phonological Theory:

Natural phonology, a functional theory, is often used to model and explain first and second language acquisition phenomena and speech therapy issues. This theory will show how the nature of natural phonology can be useful in research related to predicting acquisition patterns in second language phonology. The choice of natural phonology hypothesis related to L2 speech research is associated with the assumption that phonetic details play a crucial role in phonology in L2 acquisition. The suitability of natural phonology for L2 acquisition research is seen in its views on the phonetics. (L2

The natural phonological hypothesis related to L2 phonology acquisition incorporates reasoning of both phonetic and phonological types, as these two domains of speech are seen as interconnected. Phonetics deals with regularities in speech acoustics typical for a given language, meanwhile phonology has a twofold task. On the one hand, phonology looks for phonemically meaningful regularities and determines why they occur in a given language. In other words, phonology is about the priorities the speech system of a given language has. Phonological reasoning begins as perception in the hearer, with acoustic and physiological conditioning of what is possible in speech. Phonological reasoning then goes up towards higher levels of abstraction. Where phonology chooses from what phonetics has to offer on more arbitrary bases. These more arbitrary bases can refer to natural phonological system adequacy whereby the phonology of a language organizes and changes its categories and processes within a system that serves speech production and speech perception. The task of a phonologist is then seen as a search for phonetic details that are crucial in a given language. The word “crucial” refers to phonemic differences and phonetic details responsible for the characteristics of a given language or its accents.



Both in L1 and L2, hearers/speakers rely on phonemic representation to understand their intentions. Natural phonological phonemes are both real and mental. This means that they are perceived fully specified sounds not just lists of abstract features. L1 phonemes form the basis for L2 phoneme formation. Phonological analysis of L2 acquisition has to concentrate on phonetic details differentiating phonemes in L1 and L2, and phonetic details involved in lenition and fortuitous.

A second language teaching method may include pronunciation training and the development of metalinguistic competence in the area of pronunciation. Usually, general language courses stress the similarity between the phonemic categories in L1 and L2 overlooking the differences in category specification, phonotactic distribution and the application contextsensitive processes. Only those aiming to become language professionals-teacher, interpreters and linguists are offered more detailed pronunciation training. Those who study English for other purposes have to cope with pronunciation problems either by sub-conscious acquisition or by various compensatory methods. Compensatory methods like repetition, avoidance description or the reliance on the interlocutor to decipher the underlying intention often hinder communication.

Natural phonology is a theory which sees the acoustic signal, phonetic detail and phonemic categories as belonging to a systematic speech processing continuum. In that phonetic detail based on what acoustic offers and phonemic categories are based on what phonetics has to offer. Phonological process applies already to underlying representations and shapes the sound until it reaches its ultimate phonetic form. Such ultimate phonetic form is fully specified and it involves all phonetic details responsible for variations native accents and difference between L1 and L2 speech, etc. thus natural phonology poses no artificial restrictions on L2 acquisition modeling by limiting its apparatus only to the phonemic inventory and helps incorporate external evidence into phonological explanation.

Generative Grammar Theory:

Generative grammar theory is a theory of grammar, first developed by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s, that is based on the idea that all humans have an innate language capacity. Linguists who study generative grammar are not interested in prescriptive rules, rather they are interested in uncovering the foundational principles that guide all language production. A generative grammar is a theory of competence, a model of the psychological system of unconscious knowledge that underlines a speaker's ability to produce and interpret utterances in a language. A good way of trying to understand Chomsky's point is to think of generative grammar as essentially a definition of competence. Generative grammar theory is distinct from other grammars such as descriptive grammar. Descriptive grammar attempts to establish standard in language rules that deem certain usage "right" or "wrong". It attempts to describe language as it is actually used (including the study of pidgin and other dialects). Instead generative grammar attempts to get something deeper. The foundational principles that make language possible cut across all of humanity. A linguist studying generative grammar, however



is more likely to be interested in issues such as how nouns are distinguished from verbs across multiple languages.

The main principle of generative grammar theory is that all human being are born with innate capacity for language and this capacity shapes the rules for what should be considered “correct” grammar in a language. The idea of an innate language capacity or a “universal grammar” is not accepted by all linguists. Some believe to the contrary, that all languages are learnt and therefore based on certain constraints. As generative grammar is a theory of competence, one way to test its validity is with what is called a grammaticality judgment task. This involves presenting a native speaker with series of sentences and having them decide whether the sentence is grammatical (acceptance) or ungrammatical (unacceptable). For example; 1. The man is happy.

2. Happy man is the.

A native speaker would judge the first sentence to be acceptable and the second to be unacceptable. From this, we can make certain assumptions about the rules governing how parts of speech should be ordered in English sentences. So generative grammar theory is a kind of unconscious knowledge that allows a person, no matter what language they speak, to form “correct” sentences.

Optimality Theory:

Optimality theory was introduced in the 1990s by the linguists Alan Prince and Paul Smolinsky. (Optimality theory constraint interaction in generative grammar 1993/2004). Though originally developed from generative phonology, the principles of optimality theory have also been applied in studies of syntax, morphology, pragmatics, language change and other areas. Optimality theory lies the idea that language and in fact every grammar is a system of conflicting forces. These ‘forces’ are embodied by constraints each of which makes a requirement about some aspect of grammatical output forms. Constraints are typically conflicting; in the sense that to satisfy one constraint implies the violation of another. Optimality theory holds that all languages have a set of constraints which produce the basic phonological and grammatical patterns of that particular language. In many cases, an actual utterance violates one or more of these constraints so a sense of well formedness applies to that utterance which violates the least number or least important constraints. Constraints can be classified in two types; faithfulness and markedness. The faithfulness principle constrains a word to match the underlying morphological form (such as plural) but words like buses or dogs do not follow this constraint. (the first falls foul of the constraint that prevents the pronunciation of two consecutive /s/ sounds and the second places a /z/ instead of a /s/). These two examples, follow markedness constraints, and in these cases the particular markedness scores higher than the faithfulness constraint, so the alternate forms are allowed. The optimality theory does not allow for constraints on the inputs of phonological evaluation. Output constraints are the only mechanisms for expressing phono tactic patterns.



In conclusion, the above phonological theories have given us a little bit of insight to how language is and how its speaker acquires it. Firstly, the natural phonology theory sees the acoustic signal, phonetic detail and phonemic categories as belonging to systematic speech processing. Natural phonology is the phonological process used to describe error patterns in the speech of speakers.

Generative grammar theory is a theory of competence. It believes that all humans are born with an innate capacity to acquire language and that this capacity shapes the rules for what is considered 'correct' grammar of Igbo man's ideology.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES:

In this section, the researcher looks at two basic language acquisition theory:

Behaviorist Theory: The chief proponent of this theory is B.F Skinner who says that language is behavior and just like any other behavior it is learned, this learning occurs through "reinforcement of successive approximations". (www.wikipedia July 7, 2014). According to Maduekwe (2007:12), the behaviorists, contend that language learning consists of forming new sets of habits through drilling, imitation and lots of practice. Learning is said to result when the response to a particular stimulus is reinforced in sufficient number of times so that it becomes a habit. Sociologist views language as a major cultural phenomenon in human societies and therefore an important regular of individual consciousness and social action. Maduekwe (2007,52) goes on to say that language is a fundamental part of human behavior. The behaviorists approach focuses on the immediately perceptible aspects of linguistic behavior, observable responses and the relationship between these responses and events in the world surrounding them.

A behaviorist orientation thus considers species to be a positive organism, reacting to external environment stimuli, that is, the production of correct responses to stimuli. The underlying principle of behaviorist is based on the theory that language learning consists of forming a set of habits through imitation and lots of practice and drills.

Nativist Theory:

The nativist theory deals with the biological belief that language is an innate feature of the infant. The linguist Noam Chomsky, the firm advocate of this theory came up with the idea of a language acquisition device (LAD). The nativist theory of language acquisition is innate and native to humans from birth. Maduekwe (2007:1) says that the nativists believe that humans possess an innate disposition to learn language. That means that they are pre-programmed for language learning. It is the belief of nativist that all humans are born with an in-built device of some kind that predisposes them to acquire language.

In this perspective, proponents such as Chomsky (1965), argues that language is a species or a specific behavior. The language acquisition device makes it possible for the child to decide the language that is heard. Figuring out its rules and using these to understand what is heard and



to produce linguistic utterance no matter the culture the child may find him or herself. The nativists are also of the view that the young ones can pick any language more easily than the adult for whom the task is rather difficult and complex. This theory helps us to understand the fact that people can learn or acquire as many languages as they may be exposed to. Therefore, more effort should be put into the grooming and nurturing of Igbo-English bilingual students to equip them with skill in spoken English.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the plan for a research. It is a lay out or blue print of the procedures a researcher should use for his or her hypotheses.

The phonological skills of Igbo bilingual students were tested in order to investigate the level of interference that occurs during their speech. Their English language speaking skills were carefully monitored and the various interferences they have were detected. The method that was used in collecting data for this study is survey research method. Data for this research study were obtained from the Igbo-English bilingual students of Caritas University,, AmorjiNike.

AREA OF STUDY:

The area for this study is Caritas University, Amorji-Nike Enugu state. First year IgboEnglish bilingual students were chosen from different departments and used for the research study.

POPULATION OF STUDY

This research study will be conducted on the first year Igbo-English bilingual students of Caritas University, Amorji-Nike, Enugu state. Over 150 questionnaires were distributed to the students. Five departments were selected and 30 students from each department were used,

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Systematic random sampling was used to select five departments, one from each of the faculties. The sample consisted of 150 students from the five departments were used.

INSTRUMENT AND METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

This research study on the 'Phonological interference of Igbo-English bilingual student of Caritas University,, Amorji-Nike, Enugu state' were conducted through survey method. This means that interviews are printed out and given to the candidates for this research. The researcher also used a quantitative design. This involves the use of questionnaire and observation-tape recording of student's pronunciation exercise.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS:

Questionnaires: the researcher distributed 50 copies of questionnaire individually to the two hundred and three hundred level students of English department, selected for the purpose of



this research. 150 copies of the questionnaire distributed were collected back. Simple percentage was used to analyze the data. Some observation of tape recording of some bilingual students conversational was made and was changed into text. Text analysis was used to translate student's pronunciation.

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION 1

Are you an Igbo-English bilingual child?

QUESTION 1	DEPARTMENT	YES	NO	TOTAL NUM OF YES	TOTAL NUM OF NO
	English	30	0	30	0
	URP	30	0	30	0
	Accountancy	30	0	30	0
	Comp. Sc.	30	0	30	0
	Elect/Electronics	30	0	30	0
	TATOL	150	0	150	0

From the table above, 100% of the students in Caritas University, Enugu who were administered for the questionnaire agreed to be Igbo-English bilinguals.

QUESTION 2

What Igbo state are you from?

QUESTION 2	DEPARTMENT	ABIA	ENUGU	ANANBARA	IMO	EBOYI
	English	5	9	5	6	5
	Accountancy	8	7	6	7	6
	URP	5	6	8	4	8
	Comp. Sc.	6	4	7	8	5
	Elect/Electronics	6	4	4	5	6
		30	30	30	30	30



From the table above you will see the number of Igbo-English bilingual students that belong to each Igbo state.

QUESTION 3

Are you conversant with the English language sound system?

QUESTION 3	DEPARTMENT	YES	NO	TOTAL NUM OF YES	TOTAL NUM OF NO
	English	27	3		
	Accountancy	28	2		
	URP	25	5		
	Comp. Sc.	25	5		
	Elect/Electronics	26	4		
	TOTAL	130	20		

From the above table, 86% agreed and 14% disagree

QUESTION 4

Are you conversant with the Igbo language sound system?

QUESTION 4	DEPARTMENT	YES	NO	TOTAL NUM OF YES	TOTAL NUM OF NO
	English	26	4		
	Accountancy	25	5		
	URP	27	3		
	Comp. Sc.	26	4		
	Elect/Electronics	28	2		
	TOTAL	132	18		

From the above table 88% of the candidate chosen for this research agreed that they are conversant with Igbo language sound system, while 18% disagreed.

**QUESTION 5**

Are the sounds in the two languages similar?

QUESTION 5	DEPARTMENT	YES	NO	TOTAL NUM OF YES	TOTAL NUM OF NO
	English	13	17		
	Accountancy	16	14		
TOTAL	URP	19	11		
	Comp. Sc.	08	22		
	Elect/Electronics	10	20		
	TOTAL	66	84		

From the table above 44% of the candidates chosen for this research agreed that the two languages are similar while 66% disagreed.

QUESTION 6

As an Igbo-English bilingual child, do you have any problem in spoken English?

QUESTION 6	DEPARTMENT	SOMETIMES	TOTAL NUM OF YES	TOTAL NUM OF NO	TOTAL NUM OF SOMETIMES
	English		8	12	10
	Accountancy		13	11	6
TOTAL	URP		15	7	8
	Comp. Sc.		14	6	10
	Elect/Electronics		10	9	11
	TOATAL		60	45	45

From the above table 40% agreed to have difficulty in spoken English, 30% disagreed and 30% said they have problems sometimes.

QUESTION 7

Do you find it difficult to pronounce some words in English language?



QUESTION 7	LEVEL	TOTAL NUM OF YES	TOTAL NUM OF NO	TOTAL NUM OF SOMETIMES
	English	6	20	4
	Accountancy	7	21	2
	URP	8	18	4
	Comp. Sc.	5	19	6
	Elect/Electronics	6	16	8
	TOTAL	32	94	24

From the above table 21% of the population chosen agreed that they find some English words difficult to pronounce, 63% and 36% said that sometimes find it difficult sometimes.

QUESTION 8

Do you find it difficult to speak fluent English?

QUESTION 8	DEPARTMENT	YES	NO	TOTAL NUM OF YES
	English	28	2	28
	Accountancy	26	4	26
	URP	25	5	25
	Comp.Sc	25	5	25
	Elect/ Electronics	27	3	27
TOTAL		130	20	130

From the above table 65% of the population chosen agreed that they find it difficult to speak fluent English, while 35% disagreed.

QUESTION 9

Do you have an English laboratory in your university situated in the Department English for language practical ?



QUESTION 9	DEPARTMENT	YES	NO
	English	30	0
	Accountancy	30	0
	URP	30	0
	Comp. Sc.	30	0
	Elect./Electronics	30	0
	TOTAL	150	0

From the table above 100% of the population chosen agreed that they have an English laboratory in their university in the Department of English.

QUESTION 10

Do your lecturers correct your mistake in spoken English?

QUESTION 10	DEPARTMENT	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
	English	30	0	
	Accountancy	14	16	
	URP	10	20	
	Comp. Sc.	8	22	
	Elect./Electronics	6	24	
	TOTAL	68	82	

From the table above 46% of the population chosen agreed that their lecturers correct their mistake, while 56% disagreed.

QUESTION 11

As an Igbo-English bilingual child, do you notice other student's wrong pronunciation of English words?

QUESTION 11	DEPARTMENT	YES	NO
	English	30	0
	Accountancy	10	20



	URP	8	22
	Comp. Sc.	9	21
	Elect./Electronics	10	20
	TOTAL	67	83

From the table above 47% of the population chosen agreed that they notice others wrong pronunciations of English words. 55% disagreed.

DATA PRESENTATION

TEXT 1: Presentation and pronunciation of words with /L/ and /R/ that are normally misplaced for one another. This took place among the 200 level Igbo-English bilingual students of English department.

WORDS	WRONG PRONUNCIATION	NUM OF STUDENTS WITH RIGHT PRONUNCIATION	NUM OF STUDENTS WITH WRONG PRONUNCIATION
<u>L</u> ove /l^v/	<u>R</u> ove /r^v/	60	90
<u>L</u> ook /luk/	<u>R</u> ook/ruk/	50	100
<u>L</u> eave /lea:v/	<u>R</u> eave /rea:v/	45	105
<u>L</u> orry /l ri/	<u>R</u> olly /r li/	60	90
<u>R</u> oad /reud/	<u>L</u> oad /leud/	100	50
<u>R</u> ain /reIn/	<u>L</u> ain /leIn/	85	65
<u>R</u> ing /rin/	<u>L</u> ing /rin/	88	72
<u>B</u> read /bred/	<u>L</u> ead /bled/	80	70
% TOTAL		568= 47%	642=53%

From the table above 53 % of the candidate got their pronunciations wrong, while 47% got theirs right.

TEXT 2: Presentation and pronunciation of words with /L/and /R/ that are normally misplaced for one another. This pronunciation took place among the 300 level Igbo-English bilingual students of English Department.

WORDS	WRONG PRONUNCIATION	NUM OF STUDENTS WITH RIGHT PRONUNCIATION	NUM OF STUDENTS WITH WRONG PRONUNCIATION
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Love /l^v/	Rove /r^v/	40	110
Look /luk/	Rook /ruk/	70	80
Leave /lea:v/	Reave /rea:v/	90	60
Lorry /l ri/	Rolly /r li/	55	95
Road /roud/	Load /loud/	75	75
Rain /reIn/	Lain /leIn/	56	94
Ring /rib/	Ling /Lin/	66	84
Bread /brEd/	Blead /blEd/	49	101
% TOTAL		501=42%	699=58%

From the table above 58% of their pronunciation wrong, while 42% got their pronunciation right.

From table 1 and 2, the performances of students in the pronunciation of English words that normally prove difficult to Igbo-English bilinguals were recorded. The findings shows that most Igbo-English bilinguals have difficulty in pronouncing words that have /l/ and /r/ sounds.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS:

These results were obtained through the use of questionnaire and observation.

After presenting the phonemic inventories of English and Igbo and analyzing the responses from the questionnaire and observation of tape recording of student's pronunciations, the researcher came up with the following findings.

1. The phonological problems characterize the spoken English of Igbo-English bilingual students of level two and three of Caritas University.
2. That students in higher institutions like that of Caritas University, with their level of acquisition of English, have difficulty in speaking. This is because they transfer features of their mother (Igbo) L₁ into the target language (English) L₂.
3. The researcher was able to discover the reason for mother tongue interference in their use of English as a second language L₂. This is due to the differences in the phoneme inventories and prosodic features of both languages.
4. The researcher discovers that the environment where the students learn English as L₂ affects their proficiency in spoken English. For instance, if an Igbo bilingual learns English in a school or environment where the lecturers or people there have good command of English, the learner will develop a fluent or good command of English.



5. Most two hundred level and three hundred level Igbo-bilingual child is unable to master the two sounds systems (Igbo and English). And to identify the similarities or differences in the languages.
6. Majority of the students do not even know that their speeches are filled with phonological errors.
7. Most of our secondary schools do not have English language laboratory.
8. Most of the candidate misplace Igbo sound for English sounds

CONCLUSION:

For Nigeria's dream to come true in her bid for acquisition of expertise in science and technology, communication with the outside world and mass literacy. The need for English language cannot be over-emphasized since English is the medium for teaching all subjects. Without proficiency in English language, success in other areas will be slow. A situation where spoken English is endangered by numerous problems does not argue well for intellectual growth. Poor performance of first year Igbo-English bilingual child in spoken English will definitely not help Igbo communities or Nigeria in general.

This research work has given attainable hints of realizing the educational goals of our country Nigeria and Igbo speech Igbo speech community in particular. It was obvious that spoken English is faced with numerous problems. This is not because English is very difficult but because of some prominent factors militating against effective teaching and learning of English as a course. It was observed that lack of English language laboratories, negative attitude of students, insufficient qualified teachers and in-availabilities of the needed text books to mention but a few constituted major problems.

Since spoken English is used in every activities and also a compulsory subject in school, the learners are urged to pay absolute attention in learning English language to avoid unnecessary mistakes in the usage. It should therefore, be learnt with patience and perseverance.

Finally, it is hoped that if these recommendations are carried out successfully, the dignity of spoken English will be restored in our dear nation (Nigeria).

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the above points mentioned as the possible causes of problems in the acquisition of phonological proficiency skills in English by the two hundred and three hundred level of the Department of English, Caritas University. In learning English as a second language, the researcher came up with these recommendations:



1. Educationist of English ranging from primary schools to higher institution should undergo proper training and at least be adequately prepared in the area of oral English class.
2. To improve proficiency in spoken English in Nigeria, government should support the students in learning English by awarding scholarship to students who made outstanding performances in various certificate exams like WEAC.
3. It was discovered that most schools do not have English laboratory. The government and language planners should equip primary and secondary schools with well finished English laboratory to help student acquire speech skills; how English before coming into the universities.
4. The teaching of English language should be carefully broken down into parts to enable students learn the language very well and to help them have fluent flow in speaking the language.
5. English language teachers and lecturers should be well motivated by paying them their salaries and allowance as at when due. This will motivate them to be more dedicated to their jobs.
6. Lecturers should take their time to correct student's mistakes in spoken English.

PROSPECTS

Further research should be carried out in some other languages in other ethnic speech communities in Nigeria like Efik, Yoruba and Ibibio etc. To know if they also have the same problem as that of Igbo's. This will help in consciously formulating an international and nationally spoken version of Nigeria English.

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