

# **A Sociolinguistic Study of Colour, Kinship and Honorific Terms in the Linguistic Repertoire of Yoruba/English Bilinguals**

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## **Abstract**

An aim of English usage by bilinguals is to express the indigenous culture in English. This study therefore investigates the kinship, colour and honorific terms usage in the language use of Yoruba/English bilinguals among selected Junior Secondary School students. The implications of the indigenous language on their use of the English language at the lexical and semantic levels are also considered. This study adopts a descriptive research design. The total number of the selected schools were ten. Five from public schools and five from private schools. The sample size was thirty typed sentences on honorific, colour and kinship terms. Samples drawn were sixty participants from ten schools: five public and five private schools. Ten test elements were given to the students in their indigenous language, which they interpreted into the English language. The theoretical framework used is William Labov's Theory of Language Change and Variation. The study found that students have difficulty in giving literal equivalence of many kinship terms. Direct translations, semantic transfers, extensions and lexical replacement were also found. The study concludes that students' indigenous language (Yoruba) affect their use of English on the three terms. The study recommends that teachers should teach the correct forms of English usage on the terms. Government should employ competent teachers to teach indigenous and English languages. Learners of English as a second language should understand the culture of their indigenous and second languages.

**Keywords:** kinship, colour, honorific terms, lexico-semantic, bilinguals.

## **1. Introduction**

Every human society has a language, which is physically manifested in the vocal system and it is used to communicate about the universe and no human person is born speaking a language, implying that language is not inherited (Anyanwu, 2002; Obioha & Obioha, 2014). Language is used to ask for and to give people information. Language is also used in order to express admiration, respect, and even indignation. "Nigeria is the most linguistically varied country in Africa, and it is one of the world's 22 most linguistically diverse countries" (Dada, 2007; Dada, Owuoye, Ojo (2015). It is a multilingual society with an estimated number of indigenous languages ranging from 400 to 500, with Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba being the most widely spoken, with approximately 180 million people speaking them (Adegbite, 2003; Adetuyi, 2017).

Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society. Sociolinguistics is concerned with how language use interacts with, or is affected by social factors such as: gender, ethnicity, age, or social class. Coulmas (2013), is of the opinion that Sociolinguistics is to uncover, describe and interpret the socially motivated choices an individual makes. Sociolinguists are interested in how we speak differently in varying social

contexts and how we may also use specific functions of language to convey social meaning or aspects of our identity. It is the descriptive study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations and context on the way language is used and how society affects the language.

Kinship is regarded as the fundamental feature and basis of human societies. Kinship can thoroughly be understood in relation to culture. Thus, it refers to culturally defined relationship between individuals who are commonly thought of as having family ties (Bisilki, 2017). Honorific terms refer to the terms of respect. They usually signify social ties between participants. Depending on the context, they could be used to create social variance or social endearment. In social a situation, it is expected of participants to conform to politeness principles that anchor conversation within the cultural milieu. Consequently, participants' cognitions are shaped by socio-cultural factors that exist within the sphere of discourse.

Colour terms are found to exist in all languages and they contribute vitally in stressing ideas or conveying meaning in a subtle but significant manner (Suntharesan, 2016). Apart from their indications to concrete visual signification, they possess certain connotative meanings. These connotative meanings are predicted on and/or apparently correlated with the culture of the respective language. It is worthy to note that the characteristics of the association of colour terms with language expressions reflect the culture of the society. Apart from the discreet nature of colour in the environment, its meanings and representations in different languages are dependents on sociological contexts and applications.

Nigerian society has become irreversibly diverse. Students from a wide range of ethnolinguistic, cultural, and economic backgrounds are exposed to a variety of languages, including their mother tongues and English, from an early age. This problem, together with a lack of appropriately adapted resources, is impacting the teaching of the English language in Nigeria. As a result, a youngster growing up in this type of setting has a good possibility of becoming bilingual, if not multilingual. "However, in recent years, it has become normal practice among Nigerian parents to guarantee that their children are taught to speak English entirely at home in order to become skilled in the language and perform well academically at school, as English is the medium of instruction" (Adebileje, 2013). Adebileje (2009) portrays a vivid image of the status of the English language in Nigerian households, arguing that because the English language is the language of the elites in Nigeria, children are compelled to converse in their mother tongues at home with their parents and relatives when necessary.

Many families, on the other hand, "encourage their children to speak both English and their native language at home, while some other families only allow their children to speak English at school. Secondary schools in Nigeria commonly employ the English language as the language of instruction while speaking in mother tongues is discouraged, particularly in most Private Schools. Many parents accept this practice because they believe it will help their children to perform better in school. The use of English exclusively has the consequence that some learners in a diverse class of linguistic situations will most likely be at a disadvantage" (Adebileje, 2013, pp.14).

Ethnic minorities in metropolitan societies learn the majority's language but retain their mother tongue as the primary linguistic medium at home and in private talks in order to preserve their ethnic identity and culture. "Children" are taught the instructional language in school and

if parents are adamant about preserving ethnic linguistic identity, they may devote a significant amount of time to teaching the children's native/indigenous language/tongue. Through learning the language of a community, an adult or a kid becomes a full member of that society; incidentally, the world has a wide variety of linguistic communities. In other words, individuals must understand the societal language and cultural norms in order to feel a sense of belonging (Siwoku-Awi, 2016).

A multilingual/multicultural environment also includes many indigenous languages and cultures and the additional language and its culture. In most cases, one of the aims of the usage of the English language is to express the indigenous culture of speakers in the English language. An example is the expression of Yoruba culture in the English language. Most of the times, problems are posed because in most cases, each language caters for its own culture. Any attempt to use another language to express a different culture, problems of interference, creativity and lot of others will definitely surface.

There is the introduction of culture-specific vocabulary items into the English language and this also affects the semantic aspects. This has led to creativity which manifests in coinage to reflect the Nigerian experience. Therefore, this paper is out to examine the kinship, colour and honorific terms in the language use of Yoruba/English bilinguals among selected Junior Secondary School students in two local government areas of Osun State, Nigeria.

## **2. Sociolinguistic Variables**

### **2.1 Kinship Terms**

Kinship is regarded as a fundamental feature and basis of human societies. Kinship is based on relationships. Kinship terms therefore are words used in a speech community to identify relationships between individuals in a family or a kinship unit. As explained by Bisilki (2017), kinship terms are a "set of linguistic expressions, function both as referential and address terms in communication. Kinship is most important social organizing principle along with gender and age. In large-scale industrial societies, the impact of kinship on daily life is lessened by factors such as: occupation, social class, ethnicity (nationality), education, political affiliation and religion."

According to Onwuchekwe (2024), the family and kinship system in Ideato is rooted in the ancestral land which constituted 'wealth' of the whole people – the living, the dead and generations yet unborn. Kinship can only be thoroughly understood in relation to culture. Thus, it refers to "culturally defined relationships between individuals who are commonly thought of as having family ties" (Bisilki, 2017). "Although usually thought of in terms of biology, much of kinship is actually culturally constructed in the following: consanguineal relatives which imply people on both sides of family related to you by blood; affinal relatives which imply people who are related to you through marriage; fictive kinship which is patterned on kin-like relations but not actually based upon blood or marriage" (Mattison 2010).

Onwukwe, Ofolu, Ma, Nwaeze (2021) in their research titled semantic properties of kinship terminology in Ibeme shows that kinship terms are salient features of linguistic communities and they exhibit variation across languages and even dialects of a language. Functionally, kinship can be categorized into two: vertical and horizontal functions. "On the one hand, the vertical function shows the binding together of successive generations, thereby

providing social continuity and passing on of property, political office and tradition. On the other hand, the horizontal function ties people together across a single generation through marriage practices". Read (2018) gives the forms of kinship relations as genealogical relations, address and reference terms. This implies that "kinship is a universal system organized around the universal processes of mating and reproduction. It plays a significant role in the socialization of societal members and upholding of group ideology and solidarity." Also, Onwukwe et al. are of the opinion that differences in kinship administration can be implied when examining the nature and complexities of the societies. For instance, in simple societies, kinship relations may be so extensive and significant that they constitute a larger part of the social relations which make up the social system. The *raison d'être* could be that simple societies do not have complex and organized societies and relatively autonomous institutions such as the state, industrial enterprises, the army, schools, religious organisations, sporting and recreational associations, political parties and trade unions.

Kinship relations in households can also be seen as performing the productive functions in households. Cultural designation of relationships and roles with respect to rights and obligations implies that kinship acts as a powerful but complex mechanism for coordination, cooperation, and conflict resolution among humans in the society. This is why within the Yoruba communal setting, kinship is excessively regarded and promoted for healthy living and mutual associations and relationships. Kinship relations also define and set the boundaries of relationships that exist amidst the people in the family and clan.

Kinship terms are analytically divided into terms of address, namely the terms used when addressing one's kin—as when a child says "Mommy, may I go outside and play?"—or terms of reference used to identify the kinship relation of the reference person to speaker—as in a statement like "He is my uncle"—for an English-speaker. Address terms are more variable in their linguistic form than reference terms because they express not only the kinship relation between speaker and listener but also emotional and other characteristics involved in the relationship. For English-speakers, each of the address terms "father," "dad," "daddy," "pop," and so on, has a different connotation regarding the relationship between speaker and the reference person who is the subject of the term of address. In contrast to address terms, a term of reference explicitly indicates the kinship relation connecting speaker to another person. Collectively, the reference terms constitute the kinship terminology for societal members and the terms in the kinship terminology linguistically define and express the kinship-term relations recognized in that society's kinship system. For English-speakers, the reference terms include father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, cousin, wife, husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law, and so on.

Kinship makes it possible to compute kinship relationship between two people by referring to the third person whose kinship relations to the other two is already known. For instance, if an English speaker refers to someone as "aunt" and refers to another as "child", then, the speaker knows to refer to the latter person as "my cousin". This could be different entirely in Yoruba context where accurate descriptions exist within the cultural milieu. Such descriptions are "*egbon iyawo mama mi*", "*aburo baba iyawo mi*", etc. No matter how long the expressions are, Yoruba speakers are interested in the clarity of the descriptions to avoid vagueness in reference.

## 2.2 Honorific Terms

The word honorific was derived from Latin, 'honorificus' meaning 'showing honour'. According to Mastanova Nazirakhou shukrullo Qizi (2023), honorific can be used to bridge the (vertical) gap between two people by a person of higher position and a person of lower status. Also, that it can be used in several ways, before, after, with or without the name of the addressee. He further made the assertion that honorific elaboration is frequently sparked by pronouns particularly the plural "they" and 'we' when they are employed to refer to a single addressee or a third person object in order to show respect. Honorifics refer to the terms of respect.

They usually signify social ties between participants. Depending on the context, they could be used to create social variance or social endearment. In social situations, it is expected of participants to conform to politeness principles that anchor conversations within the cultural milieu. Consequently, participants' cognitions are shaped by socio-cultural factors that exist within the sphere of discourse. Such factors are usually intrinsically, contextually and culturally motivated. The way people address each other plays a big role in fostering human communication. The importance of addressing people appropriately is reflected in the different resources available in different communities and cultures. One of these resources is honorifics.

In a study of honorifics, Zipporah (2014) examined "how the use of honorifics among Gikuyu speakers of Kenya are affected by social variables such as age, education, and social context influence." "The data for the study was purposefully collected from twenty-four (24) Kasarani constituency native of Nairobi. The data was obtained from participant observation, interview, and tape recording of spontaneous speech, and were categorised into three; borrowed honorifics, the use of honorifics, and the functions of borrowed honorifics in different contexts." Zipporah further classifies borrowed honorifics into seven: "the kin terms used as social honorifics, the religious, academic, military, political honorifics, affectionate and social titles." The functions of borrowed honorifics in Gikuyu include; "persuasion, attention getting device, sarcastically, use of honorifics with intention of showing love, closeness, intimacy to the addressee and to convey respect to dignify the addressee."

In Yoruba contextual milieu, honorifics can be achieved through the use of names, special titles, social deixis and pronominal forms. Salami (2004), in his study, observed that the Yoruba, women do not often address or refer to their husbands by their first names (FN) but rather by some other forms of address. He gave an illustration about how Yoruba wives deploy pet names and endearment as forms of honorifics:

...that these forms may include the use of a term of endearment or pet name (PN) such as 'eleyingoolu' (gold-toothed) or the use of a teknonym (TKM) by prefixing the kin term 'baba' (father) to the name of a child as in 'Baba Tomi' (Tomi's father). Their use of these address forms implicates a social structure that is interpretable both as relations of inequality and social distance. As wives, Yoruba women are expected, by their socialisation, to defer to their husbands who are considered their social superiors. For the Yoruba woman, the husband is the 'boss' or head of house-hold and, therefore, has a higher rank. Since age is

also a measure of status among the Yoruba, a wife who is younger than her husband must also defer to the husband (Salami, 2004, p. 67-68).

A cover linguistic label which encodes honorifics in all social contexts is rare, and different socio-cultural contexts have different honorific forms and strategies which are determined by the operative culture in the society in question. "In some societies/cultures, honorific terms and strategies are linguistic, in some others, they are both linguistic and non-linguistic. In Yoruba society, honorific terms and strategies are both linguistic and non-linguistic (gestural). Ibibio marks honorifics mainly linguistically, sometimes embedded in greetings" (Udosen, 2005, p.339), sub-classified into vocal but non-verbal greetings and non-verbal and non-verbal greetings (ibid). Jibir-Daura (2008) identifies various dimensions of honorifics in Hausa as "deference, apologizing, indirectness and formality. These dimensions according to the source, are encoded in address terms."

"Precisely, the use of honorifics in all societies is constrained by the social status of individuals to whom deference is paid but is also sensitive to interactional variables" (Agha, 1998). Several scholarly studies have shown that different macro-sociological measures of social status can be ranked relative to each other in determining levels of deference.

### 2.3 Colour Terms

"Colour terms are found to exist in all languages and they contribute vitally in stressing ideas or conveying meanings in a subtle but significant manner" (Suntharesan, 2016). Apart from their indications to concrete visual significations, they possess certain connotative meanings. These connotative meanings are predicated on and/or apparently correlated with the culture of the respective language. It is worthy to note that the characteristic of the association of colour terms with language expressions that reflect the culture of the society. Apart from the discreet nature of colour in the environment, its meanings and representations in different languages are dependent on sociological contexts and applications.

Colour terms are viewed from both human complexions and object colours. In English language, there seems to be a clear dichotomy between human complexions and object colours while there is a merger of both visual descriptions in Yoruba language. When considering human complexions, a fair person is described as *pupa*, less fair as *mora die* while a dark person is tagged *dudu*. Colour meaning is mostly interpreted with citations from language, in the form of recognized phrases such as 'red with anger', 'green with envy'. Such phrases are evidences of their authority and appropriateness as examples of figurative or symbolic meanings. There is a strong connection between the figurative and symbolic meanings ascribed to colours, and the use of colour words in the language. In fact, the use of colour words adds to a great extent, to the effectiveness of the notions expressed by language because every language is ultimately influenced by the prevailing culture of the people.

Golda Pawel, Jodziniak Angnieszka, Mezyk Judyta, Ryszka Joana and Uchman Teresa (2023). Are of the opinion that colour terms co-create the linguistic image of the world, which allows us to interpret reality and profile our statements and beliefs. Unequivocally, colour lexemes are found to vary from language to language. English has eleven basic colour lexemes: white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange and gray. In contrast, Yoruba

language has initially three basic colours which are black, white and red before other extensions which are metaphorically and analogically derived from ecological observation or semblance such as “*awo eweko*” (green), “*awo olomi osan*” (wine); “*awo eeru*” (ash) and so on.

### 3. Literature Review

“Language is one of the most important ways of identifying a group of people, a nation, or a country. Language, according to some linguists, is the system of speech and written communication used by the inhabitants of a specific country” (Adetuyi et al., 2017, pp 1-12). Adetuyi explains that “the word language comes from the Latin word “lingua,” which means “tongue,” emphasizing the importance of speech in language. Man is often referred to as a “social being,” and one of the most important factors that enables man to act as a “social being” is ability to communicate using language. Language is a crucial instrument for social interaction that allows people/individuals to express, inform, and exchange various ideas, thoughts, messages, feelings, and points of view (Adetuyi et al., 2017).

Sociolinguistics can be defined as the study of the relationship between language and civilization. “Sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to social factors, including differences of regional, class and occupational dialect, gender differences, and bilingualism. It studies the relationship between language and the society.” (Buba et al., 2016, pp 232-237).

“The shortcomings of Nigeria's national languages have been exploited by the English language. It has ascended to such heights, gained attraction and, therefore, has become the language of prestige, coveted by all. In fact, one's admittance in Nigerian culture is determined by how well and fluently one speaks English. One cannot help but wonder what the fate of individuals who are unable to communicate in the language. All of this implies that the country's indigenous languages have been marginalized and those who speak them are considered as people who cannot fully integrate into the society. Despite the fact that numerous bodies and the government have taken steps to raise the value and usefulness of indigenous languages, little or no progress has been accomplished because some of the policies put in place have gone unaddressed” (Owolola, 2018).

“Gender and age are two major factors that influence linguistic diversity of Nigeria, the Bete language in Obudu Local Government, Cross River State, has been identified to contain separate gendered variations. As a result of the introduction of computer and information and communication technology (ICT) in Nigeria, new varieties of English are emerging” (Iwuchukwu & Iwuchukwu, 2018).

Ghani, Atamanand Egele (2012) focused on barriers confronting learners of the English Language in a multilingual setting specifically, a secondary school in Nigeria. The theoretical framework was the Proficiency in English and it is used as a yardstick to measure the competency of students in Nigerian schools. Otemuyiwa (2013) in her study on word formation problems in some senior secondary schools III (SSS3) students’ essays in the three local government areas of Osun State, Nigeria, it was discovered that the students have poor quality of writing skills from the Primary school level.

Amenorvi (2015) examined interference as a mutual phenomenon between the languages of the bilingual. The framework employed was a popular view in Contact Linguistics which is that only first languages have the capacity other phonologically, and syntactically to

interfere with the second languages of the bilingual. The methodology used was descriptive survey research design. Three hundred (300) Yoruba-English bilingual respondents were randomly selected from three tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. They wrote essays in English which were analyzed for the occurrence of pronominal errors using the Binding Principles. The result of this study reveals English, the second language of the bilinguals in question, has a tremendous influence on *Ewe*, their first language, disproving the popular view that only first languages can interfere with the second languages of the bilingual.

Edokpayi (2020), examined and explicated the lexico-semantic parameters, which Joseph Edoki deploys to convey his themes in *The Upward Path*, his second novel. Edoki is a contemporary Nigerian novelist who is preoccupied with the socio-political problems in Africa with the hope of a bright future. The study is significant because as a linguistic study, it serves as a springboard to future researches in the language of African literature.

Otemuyiwa (2021) in the study on effects of code-switching on the acquisition of the English language by English/Yoruba language bilinguals opinionated that students should be encouraged to speak in English very often so as to increase their level of proficiency in it since it is widely used language across the globe.

Olasheu (2022) examined the semantic manifestations of English words in the Nigerian contexts and the implications for teaching in Nigerian secondary and primary education. The theoretical framework employed was Nigerian English, Contextual usages, Lexical-semantics, Semantic shifts, Semantic extensions, Language of pedagogy. The theoretical framework employed is Paradis' (2012) cognitive approach to lexical semantic relation. The study compared Standard English (SE) and Nigerian English (NE) by accounting for semantic shifts, semantic extensions, and morphologically marked neologisms in Nigerian English. Nigerians rarely utilize NE words that represent complete semantic shifts from BrE meanings. Unlike the 'total shift' situation, there is a disparity in the general usage of words to portray NE extended meaning. The methodology used to get data for this study was obtained from Roger Blench's (2005) Dictionary of Nigerian English (DNE) and Corpus of Global Web-Based English. While lexical items were culled from the dictionary, the contextual usages of the words, which were drawn from the dictionary were gathered through the Corpus of Global Web-Based English. The result shows that Nigerian English should be recognised by examination agencies; it should be developed and adopted as the Language of pedagogy for primary and secondary education in Nigeria.

#### **4. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this research work is anchored on "Labov's Theory of Language Variation and Change." This theory is an approach to investigating the relationship between language and society and a field that has come to be known as "Variationist Sociolinguistics". A central doctrine of this theory holds that variation is inherent to linguistic structure. The way a language is spoken (and written) differs across individuals as well as across situation encountered by the same individual. This approach is distinguished from others within sociolinguistics by its reliance on quantitative methods. Labov's examined semantic (e.g quantifiers like *each* and *all*) and grammatical features (e.g, contraction and deletion of the copula). His

theory explores synchronic patterns of sociolinguistic variation and the question of language change.

Sociolinguistics often known as "language variation and change" (LVC) or "variationist sociolinguistics" (also known as "Labovian sociolinguistics" or "urban sociolinguistics"), "is a branch of linguistics that studies how languages change over time" (Matsumoto, 2019). Labov's pioneering work "The Social Motivation of a Sound Change" (1963) and *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (Labov 1966), both of which reassessed the linguistic system in fundamentally different ways than preceding models, ushered in this new paradigm in the 1960s.

Weinreich et al. developed this new methodology in a seminal paper titled "Empirical Foundations for a Theory of Language Change" (1968). This publication has become the most essential source of information for LVC research. Prior to the field's inception, linguistic variance was frequently dismissed as "noise," "free variation," or "part of performance" (Matsumoto, 2019). To put it another way, it was overlooked. LVC research, on the other hand, has shown that variety is a universal feature of human languages. It is essential for a language change theory. "Language variation is not random. It is highly regimented in both individual and community communication. It is also organized within the language. The concepts of "orderly heterogeneity" and "orderly differentiation" encapsulate this" (Weinreich et al., 1968). "This emphasizes that, though linguistic variety may look chaotic at first look, it is shown to be structured by speakers' social features in their complicated real communities, the qualities of their addressees and the structural qualities of the language they are speaking" (Matsumoto, 2019).

"Variation is both functional and socially important. In other words, there are valid causes for linguistic diversity. Speakers who want to express specific allegiances, identities, or societal meanings, for example, exploit variation consciously or unintentionally. This is so because variety is both functional and socially important, certain groups may utilize competing forms in the language change process to distinguish themselves from others" (Matsumoto, 2019). Hence, this theory is of immense benefit to this study because it helped to identify the language patterns (lexical and semantic) of Yoruba/English bilinguals and how their culture and indigenous languages are responsible for change and variation in their use of the English Language.

## **5. Methodology:**

This research adopted a descriptive design to identify and analyze the lexical and semantic forms of the English usage of Yoruba/English bilinguals among selected Junior Secondary School students in Oriade and Ilesa East Local Government Areas with special emphasis on kinship terms, honorific terms and colour terms. The research approach was both qualitative and quantitative.

The total population for the study was one thousand and three hundred, out of which thirty students were selected. Osun State has thirty Local Government Areas out of which two Local Government Areas were purposively selected. Ilesa East and Ori-Ade local government areas were the two selected LGAs. Ilesa East has eleven public secondary schools from which three schools were selected randomly. She has nine Private Schools and two schools were

selected out of them for this research. Oriade Local Government area which is the second local government area selected consists of twenty-two Public Schools, two schools were selected and thirty-two Private Schools where three were randomly selected. The total number of the selected schools were ten (10). Five (5) from public schools and five (5) from private schools.

The sample size was thirty typed sentences on honorific, colour and kinship terms. The respondents interpreted the given sentences and the lexico-semantic features on honorific, kinship and colour terms were identified by the thirty purposively selected Junior Secondary students in the two local government areas of Osun State. This is to have a wider view of the English language usage among Junior Secondary School students.

For the collection of data, ethical consideration is key, so letter of consent was submitted to the principals of the selected schools. The researcher was directed to the English Language teachers in the selected secondary schools. The researcher discussed the purpose for the collection of data, which is research. After the consent of the subject teacher, the structured sentences were given to purposively selected students which they interpreted naturally from their indigenous language (Yoruba) to English Language. The researcher structured the sentences that are typically used by secondary school students in their day-to-day conversations and this enables the respondents to do natural interpretation from Yoruba to English. The research instrument for this work was test-based given to students in form of sentences to be interpreted from Yoruba to English language. These sentences were typed and comprised ten (10) sentences each for honorific, kinship and colour terms.

### Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The instrument used for this study was appropriate because the test (sentences) written in indigenous language Yoruba were given to experts in Yoruba to check for their fitness and appropriateness. The instrument was tested on a small group of students (pilot study) to ensure consistency and reliability before it was administered on the larger group.

## 6. Analysis and Discussion

**Table 1: Yoruba Honorific Terms Rendered in English**

S/N	Yoruba Expression	English Translation	Yoruba Lexical Items	English Translations
1.	Èyin ni mo fẹ ba sọrọ.	It is you that I want to speak to.	Èyin	You (subject)
2.	Ọgá àgbà ilé ìwé nkó? Wọn ò wá s'ì ilé-ìwé lónìí.	Where is the principal? He did not come to school today.	Wón	He/she
3.	E fún wa lówó.	Give us money.	E	Nil (imperative)
4.	Aya Aládémòmí nkó? Wọn wà nílẹ.	Where is Mrs Alademomi? She is at home.	Wón (aya)	She
5.	Mo fún yín ní owó nàà lánàá.	I gave you the money yesterday.	Yín	You (object)
6.	Tádé je oúnjẹ yín.	Tade ate your food.	Yín	Your (possessive)
7.	Mo tí jísẹ fún wọn.	I have delivered the message to him/her.	Wón	Him/her
8.	Morí wọn lánàá.	I saw him/her yesterday.	Wón	Him/her

9.	È dákun ẹ má tító.	Please, don't go yet.	E	Nil (imperative)
10.	Şégún rí yín bodá, şe ló fójú pamó.	Segun saw your brother, he hid his face.	Yín	You (object)

**Table 2: Yoruba Colour Terms Rendered in English**

S/N	YORUBA EXPRESSION	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	SAMPLE REALIZATION (PRIVATE)	SAMPLE REALIZATION (PUBLIC)	LEXICO SEMANTIC FEATURES
1.	<u>Pupa</u> (sent. 1)	<u>Fair complexion</u>	i. Fair (7) ii. Light (3)	i. Fair (4) ii. Light (2) iii. Oil girl (2) iv. White (1) v. Yellow (1)	i. Lexical replacement ii. Lexical replacement iii. Lexical replacement iv. Lexical replacement v. Expected
2.	<u>Móra</u> <u>dfè</u> . (sent. 13)	<u>Fair complexion.</u>	i. Fair (8) ii. Make up (1) iii. Light (1)	i. Fair (4) ii. Light (1) iii. Dress well (2)	i. Expected ii. Lexical replacements iii. Misinterpretation
3.	<u>dúdú</u> (sent. 2)	<u>dark in complexion.</u>	i. Dark (3) ii. Black (7)	i. Dark (4) ii. Black (6)	i. Expected ii. Lexical replacements
4.	<u>Elérin</u> <u>dòdò</u> <u>olómi</u> <u>osàn</u> (sent. 3)	<u>wine or juice.</u>	i. Orange drink (9) ii. Light (1)	i. Light (2) ii. Gentle (1) iii. Orange (7)	iii. Misinterpretation iv. Misinterpretation v. Misinterpretation
5.	<u>Aláwò</u> <u>ewé</u> (sent. 4)	<u>green.</u>	i. Green (10)	i. Green (10)	i. Expected
6.	<u>Àwò</u> <u>eérú</u> (sent. 7)	<u>ash colour.</u>	i. Ash, ashy (9) ii. Dark (1)	i. Ash/ ashy, ashes (7) ii. dark (1) iii. white (2)	i. Lexical replacements ii. Lexical replacements iii. Expected
7.	<u>aláwò tinú eyin.</u> (sent. 8)	<u>yellow.</u>	i. Butter (2) ii. Yellow (8)	i. White (3) ii. Butter (2) Yellow (5)	i. Misinterpretation ii. Lexical replacements iii. Expected
8.	<u>aláwò</u> <u>ìyeyè.</u> (sent. 12)	<u>yellow</u>	i. Orange (1) ii. Yellow (9)	i. Orange (3) ii. White (2) iii. Yellow (5)	i. Expected ii. Misinterpretation iii. Expected
9.	<u>fàdákà</u> (sent. 10)	<u>silver.</u>	i. Silver (3) ii. Sliver (5) iii. Myre (1) iv. Fadaka (1)	i. Silver (5) ii. Sliver (1) iii. Gold (2) iv. Fadaka (2)	i. Expected ii. Phonological interference iii. Misinterpretation iv. Code-mixing
10.	<u>Àwo ojú òrun</u> (sent. 14)	<u>sky blue.</u>	i. Sky blue (3) ii. Sky (2) iii. Sky colour (5)	i. Sky blue (5) ii. Sky (4) iii. unrelated (1)	i. Expected ii. Direct translation iii. Misinterpretation

**Table 3: Yoruba Kinship Terms Rendered in English**

S/N	YORUBA EXPRESSION	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	SAMPLE REALIZATION (PRIVATE SCHOOL)	SAMPLE REALIZATION (PUBLIC SCHOOL)	LEXICO-SEMANTIC FEATURES
1.	<u>Ègbón</u> <u>iyá</u> <u>mí</u> <u>obirin</u> lo si Eko. (sent. 3)	My <u>aunt</u> travelled to Lagos.	i. Aunt (2 ) ii. Senior mother (2 ) iii. Mothers elder sister (1 ) iv. Mother sister( ) v. Junior of my mother (1 ) vi. Unrelated lexeme (3 )	i. Aunt (1 ) ii. Elder sister of my mother (2 ) iii. Mother sister (2 ) iv. Unrelated lexeme (5 )	i. Expected ii. Direct translation iii. Direct translation
2.	Tolu loje <u>omo</u> <u>aburo</u> Baba <u>mí</u> . (sent. 1)	i. Tolu is my <u>Cousin</u> .	i. Cousin (2) ii. Child of my father's brother (1) iii. Junior sister of my father (1) iv. Junior of my father (1) v. My father's junior brother (1) vi. Dad's brother (3) vii. My father my sister (1)	i. Cousin (2) ii. Child of my father's brother (3) iii. Child of my younger father (1) iv. Junior sister of my father (3) v. My father's junior brother (1)	i. Expected ii. Direct translation iii. Direct translation iv. Misinterpretation v. Misinterpretation vi. Misinterpretation vii. <b>Misinterpre</b> tation viii. Misinterpretation
3.	Omoladun ati Ige kii se <u>Ibatan</u> . (sent. 5)	Omoladun and Ige are not <u>relatives</u> .	i. Relatives (3) i. Family (3) ii. Ibatan (3) iii. Unrelated lexeme (1)	i. Relatives (3) ii. Family (3) iii. Ibatan (3) iv. Unrelated lexeme (1)	i. Expected ii. Semantic extension iii. Code-mixing
4.	<u>Omo</u> <u>agbole</u> <u>kan</u> <u>naa</u> ni Iyabo ati Taye. (sent. 10)	Iyabo and Taye are from the same <u>clan</u> .	i. Relative (1) ii. Same stream (1) iii. Children of one house (1) iv. Same street/ compound/ house/home (7)	i. Relative (2) ii. Same stream (2) iii. Same street/ compound/ house/home (3) iv. Children of one house (3)	i. Misinterpretation ii. Phonological interference iii. Lexical interference

5.	<u>Ore minu ni</u> Idowu ati Abayomi. (sent. 15)	i. Idowu and Abayomi are <u>intimate friends</u> .	i. Intimate Friends (1) ii. Tight friend (2) iii. Friend (4) iv. Unrelated Lexeme (3)	i. Intimate Friends (2) ii. Friend (3) iii. Unrelated lexeme (5)	i. Expected ii. Expected lexical equivalence iii. Expected lexical equivalence iv. Misinterpretation v. Code-mixing vi. Misinterpretatio
6.	<u>Alabagbe</u> egbon mi ni iya wura. (sent. 16)	Wura's mother is my eldest sister's <u>neighbour</u> :	i. Neighbour (3) ii. Living in rent house (1) iii. Unrelated lexeme (6)	i. Neighbour (3) ii. Living in rent house (2) iii. Unrelated lexeme (5 respondents)	i. Expected ii. Direct translation iii. Misinterpretation
7.	<u>Awon omo iya</u> ni Bisi, Kehinde ati Idowu. (sent. 12)	Bisi, Kehinde and Idowu are <u>siblings</u> .	i. Siblings (2) ii. Children of the same mother (3) iii. Unrelated lexemes (5)	i. Siblings (1) ii. Children of the same mother (4) iii. Unrelated lexemes (5)	i. Expected ii. Direct translation iii. Misinterpretation iv. Code-mixing
8.	<u>Omo agbole kan naa</u> ni Iyabo ati Taye. (sent. 10)	Iyabo and Taye are from the same <u>clan</u> .	i. Relative (1) ii. Same stream (1) iii. Children of one house (1) iv. Same street/compound/ house/home (7)	i. Relative (2) ii. Same stream (2) iii. Same street/compound/ house/home (3) iv. Children of one house (3)	i. Misinterpretation ii. Phonological interference iii. Lexical interference
9.	<u>Ore minu ni</u> Idowu ati Abayomi. (sent. 15)	ii. Idowu and Abayomi are <u>intimate friends</u> .	i. Intimate Friends (1) ii. Tight friend (2) iii. Friend (4) iv. Unrelated Lexeme (3)	i. Intimate Friends (2) ii. Friend (3) iii. Unrelated lexeme (5)	i. Expected ii. Expected lexical equivalence iii. Expected lexical equivalence iv. Misinterpretation v. Code-mixing vi. Misinterpretation
10.	<u>Alabagbe</u> egbon mi ni iya wura. (sent. 16)	Wura mother is my eldest sister's <u>neighbour</u> :	i. Neighbour (3) ii. Living in rent house (1) iii. Unrelated lexeme (6)	i. Neighbour (3) ii. Living in rent house (2) iii. Unrelated lexeme (5 respondents)	i. Expected ii. Direct translation iii. Misinterpretation

## 7. Discussion of Findings

The study found that direct translation and misinterpretation take prominence in the expressions of the respondents from their indigenous language (Yoruba) to English Language as seen in

tables above. Most times, the children can only explain Yoruba expressions that can be easily translated English literally. Many Yoruba lexical items have sentential equivalent in English.

The study discovered semantic extension or shift and semantic transfer in interpreting some Yoruba lexical items to English expressions as seen in table one. The words take up new meanings in English based on logical relations so as to make the translation more natural, native and smooth. Lexical replacement is another prominent feature found in this work especially on colour items because Yoruba lack adequate lexical equivalent for many colour terms in English. Many of the respondents resorted to lexical replacement through analogy-based descriptions using colour relating to plants, fruits, trees and other natural elements. The lexeme 'fair' is replaced with 'light', 'yellow' for human complexion; 'dark' was replaced with 'black' by 65% of the respondents.

The study also found out that phonological and lexical interference characterized some items used by the respondents. It well known that language contacts have a strong influence of the mother tongue on the speaker's speech in the process of learning a second language. It is possible to study the causes of grammatical or phonetic interference and bring it to an imperceptible level, lexical-semantic interference is almost inevitable. Interference is a deviation from the norm in bilingual speech that does not know two languages perfectly.

The findings in this study corroborate Adegbija (1989) in the areas of semantic extension or shift, transfer from mother tongue to second language and analogy. The lexico-semantic features identified by Bamiro (1991) have some similarities in terms of translation equivalent and analogical creation. It also corroborates the result of Wuyi Gao (2023) who in his study reveals that there is the transfer and influence of Mother Tongue in second language Acquisition. However, the findings in the study are unique in terms of direct translation, misinterpretation and lexical replacement done by many of the respondents.

## **8. Summary of the Findings**

The study identified the lexico-semantic features of the English usage of Yoruba/English bilinguals among Junior Secondary School students; described English Language usage in terms of kinship, colour and honorific terms in the selected data and discussed the impacts of indigenous language (Yoruba) on their uses of English at the lexical and semantic levels. This finding is in line with Xiaojing Ning (2024) findings in his study titled 'A review of research on MT transfer during English as a second language acquisition' that MT transfer affects grammatical, morphological changes, word order, virtual word functions and syntactic component correspondence

The study discovered that the respondents used direct translations and semantic transfers more often. The implication is that the respondents can only interpret any English expression with a literal interpretation in the Yoruba context. Expressions such as idioms and other connotative expressions will be difficult to interpret because they do not have literal equivalence in the second language. For instance, in representing colour terms in English, the respondents failed to correctly interpret some colours in English due to lack of familiarity with the Yoruba terms. In Yao liu (2023), the study reveals that weak students who have a weak foundation in English are good at using their Mother Tongue to form sentences. He then

suggested identification of similarities and differences between the MT and the second language by students as solution to promote positive M.T transfer.

Furthermore, findings reveal that the respondents are not familiar with the context of use of some expressions in English because they are either abstract or they do not have concrete relational objects in their environments. Since the respondents have English as their second language, it becomes difficult to describe expressions in the second language using their pure expressions. Consequently, the outcome is that the respondents invented many English expressions to represent their indigenous perception of the expressions. On the other hand, some respondents gave wrong interpretations to show a level of incipience in the language.

The study concludes that both educational levels and socio-cultural identities contribute immensely to bilinguals' linguistic behaviour and levels of proficiencies. Then again, the lexical and semantic choices of the respondents play unique roles in showcasing the impact of the source language on the target language.

### Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

- i. Parents should teach their children the standard form of indigenous language and the English language so that one will not affect the other negatively.
- ii. Students/learners should learn the specific rules guiding each language they speak or learn since each language comes with its own culture.
- iii. Government should employ competent teachers in the teaching of Yoruba and English languages in order to enhance students' proficiency in the two languages. In addition, in-service training or workshop should also be organized for language teachers periodically.

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