

LANGUAGE IN INDIA
Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow
Volume 11 : 10 October 2011
ISSN 1930-2940

Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.
Editors: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.
Sam Mohanlal, Ph.D.
B. A. Sharada, Ph.D.
A. R. Fatihi, Ph.D.
Lakhan Gusain, Ph.D.
Jennifer Marie Bayer, Ph.D.
S. M. Ravichandran, Ph.D.
G. Baskaran, Ph.D.
L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.

**Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in
Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast,
Ghana**

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

=====

Abstract

The present work is based on an academic investigation conducted in the university community of Cape Coast, Ghana. The research target population comprised: students, lecturers and the non-academic staff. The study focused on the effect of inter-personal relationship on code choice. It also looked at the nature of the linguistic situation and the kinds of code choice in the university. A sociolinguistic approach was employed in the research and the investigation was conducted within the framework of ethnography of speaking and sociology of language. The study also adopted the ethnographic research design and the instruments used for data collection were: observation, questionnaire and interview. The results of the research revealed that the inter-personal relationship between interlocutors defined by age, sex, rank, status, religious affiliation, marital status, level of education and ethnicity affected code choice in discourse situations.

Key words: Interpersonal relationship, participant relationship code choice, sociolinguistics, communication

Introduction

Language is a social phenomenon. It is a medium of meaningful interaction among individuals in a social context (Gregory, 1978). In addition to being a means of communicating information, language is also an important means of establishing and

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case
of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

maintaining relationship with other people (Trudgill, 1983). Although the role of language differs from society to society, it often includes the identification or marking of social categories, the maintenance and manipulation of individual social relationships (Saville-Troike, 1982). Communication in a social context, therefore, patterns according to particular roles and groups within a society defined by sex, age, social status, occupation, level of education, rural or urban residence and other features of social organisation.

A group of people living and working together in close proximity enforced by an institution like the university have to get on with one other. To do this, they need to use language frequently to make what Thorton (1974) calls “social talk”. The linguistic situation in the university community of Cape Coast is multilingual. Students and workers are drawn from the heterogeneous ethnic regions of Ghana. Due to the multilingual nature of the community, the subjects are normally faced with the problem of code choice. This paper is a report on a research the writer conducted on the effect of inter-personal relationship on the choice of language of members of the university community in discourse situations.

Participant Relationship

In certain speech events turns to speak are regulated by the relationship between particular participants. We can describe speech in terms of two participants: a speaker who transmits a message or information and a listener who receives it (Coulthard, 1977). There are at least four participant roles: addresser, speaker, addressee and hearer or audience. A Conversation, for instance, may require only an addresser and an addressee but other speech acts may require different configurations.

Bell (1976) identifies primary and secondary relationships. The former is characterized by informality among participants. Primary relationship involves a small number of people. The individuals in this type of relationship tend to feel free and able to express themselves spontaneously. On the other hand, secondary relationship is formal. It involves a large number of participants. The individuals express power rather than solidarity. There is a feeling of inhibition brought about by the operation of formal controls on the behaviour of participants.

Relationships are also defined in terms of social distance. The term “social distance” is used to describe the relationship between participants in discourse (Brown and Gilman, 1960). Generally two types of social distance are recognized, namely, vertical and horizontal (Owusu-Ansah, 1992). Vertical social distance is hierarchical and it recognizes three kinds of relationship between individuals. “Superior to”, “equal to” and “inferior to” relationships. On the other hand, horizontal social distance is non-hierarchical. It has to do with the degree of acquaintance between participants and is often expressed in terms such as “get-close-to”, “keep at arms length” and approachable” (Owusu-Ansah, 1996). The relationship between a superior and a subordinate and that between interlocutors who are not familiar with each other illustrate the phenomenon of vertical and horizontal social distance respectively.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

The Concept of Code

The concept of linguistic code was introduced by the English social scientist, Basil Bernstein. The concern of Bernstein is the different types of language social groups employ (Bernstein, 1971). He is of the view that there are two quite distinct varieties of language employed for communication in society. He refers to one variety as “elaborated code” and the other “restricted code”. According to Bernstein these codes have very different characteristics. Elaborated code “is a language use which points to the possibilities inherent in a complex conceptual hierarchy for the organizing of experience” Bernstein, (1961 P. 169). It makes use of complex grammatical order and syntax. In contrast, restricted code “is a language of implicit meaning” (Ibid., P. 169). It employs short, grammatically simple and often unfinished sentence structures. It is Bernstein’s opinion that every speaker makes use of this code in some situation. For instance, it is the language of intimacy between familiars. However, not all social groups have equal accessibility to the elaborate code, especially the low working class and their off-spring are likely to have little experience of it (Bernstein, 1972).

Wardhaugh (1986) defines “code” as a language or a variety of a language employed for communication in discourse situations. Crystal (1985) views the term code as any system of communication involving language. This means that when two or more individuals communicate with each other in speaking, for example, we can name the system of communication that they employ a code.

Bernstein is of the opinion that there are two different varieties of language. These varieties are what he refers to as codes. According to Wardhaugh and Crystal the concept of code does not refer to only a variety of language, whole languages are also codes. In the present study, the researcher concerned himself with whole languages that are spoken in the university of Cape Coast. The concept of code in the current work means a language.

The Linguistic Situation in Ghana

The linguistic repertoire of Ghana can be described as multilingual. There are numerous and diverse indigenous languages. The most widely spoken of them is the Akan Language which comprises variants of Twi and Fante (Forson, 1979). Akan is the dominant language in the Central, Western, Ashanti, Eastern, and Brong Ahafo Regions of Ghana. It is most widely distributed geographically. The Ewe Language is the next most important in terms of the number of native speakers. Some of the other indigenous languages are Ga, Efutu and Nzema in the south and Dagbani, Dagaare, konkonba and Frafra in the north. Speakers of these local languages employ them for communication in homes, offices, schools, markets, in the streets, at festivals, funerals, naming and marriage ceremonies, durbars, at the beaches, and so on.

English is the language of wider communication in Ghana and it is used side by side the indigenous languages. The English Language is sometimes code mixed with the local Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

language in informal spoken discourses. Where participants share no common Ghanaian language, they are forced to use English, if they are educated. English brings people from different linguistic backgrounds together. It is so closely associated with education that it is generally considered as the language of educated people. English is the official language of government, the judiciary and education. It is employed in formal situations like in Churches, Courts, Schools, Parliament, Offices, by the media, at meetings and for public speech delivery. Apart from Akan, no other Ghanaian language has more speakers than English (Ansre, 1971).

Pidgin owes its origin to the coming together of people of different linguistic backgrounds for the purpose of trade. Pidgin is part of the linguistic configuration of Ghana. It is mostly used by uneducated Ghanaians who have to communicate with others they did not share a common Ghanaian language. Pidgin is widely spoken in the armed forces, in the police service, at work places and in schools and colleges in Ghana. The use of pidgin signals informality and solidarity.

Code Choice in Ghana

There are three types of code choice in Ghana: unmixed Ghanaian language, mixed English and Ghanaian language and unmixed English (Owusu-Ansah, 1997). Ure and Ellis (1982) describe the framework of code choice in Ghana in terms of High, Middle and Low. “High” corresponds to English, “Middle” to mixed English and Ghanaian languages and “Low” to pure Ghanaian languages. The Unmixed languages are employed for communication in highly formal situations as in a Ghanaian chief’s address to the public in the Akan Language and news broadcasting or parliamentary proceedings in English. However, both the Ghanaian languages and English are also used in informal discourse situations. Mixed Code and Pidgin are used as the level of formality declines. In code mixing English items are introduced into the local languages.

The linguistic configuration of Ghana is quite complex. Some Ghanaians can be described as monolinguals. These people have not had formal education and for that matter cannot speak or write English. They have not learnt any other local language apart from their mother tongues. There are bilinguals who speak English and their mother tongues, for example, Dagbani-English bilinguals and so on. Some uneducated Ghanaians can speak just two indigenous languages. For instance in the capital city of Ghana, Accra, many Gas can speak Akan. There are therefore many Ga-Akan bilinguals in Accra. Most Ghanaians can speak three to five languages. Some can speak Ga, Akan, Ewe, Dagbani and English. Contact with different ethnic regions and inter-ethnic marriages may result in the acquisition of other local languages.

According to Forson (1979) another type of code choice in Ghana is code switching and this is the product of bilingualism or multilingualism. People who can speak two or more languages sometimes switch from one code to another in discourse situations. Code switching may occur as a result of a change in the topic of discourse or the presence of another person in conversation. For instance, in most work places in Ghana, a subordinate is likely to initiate an informal discourse with a superior in English. In this Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

situation, the latter can and does often respond in a Ghanaian language common to them. The discourse may finally shift to that language. Code switching is an indication of multilingualism in Ghana. It portrays a sense of belonging between people of a particular ethnic group or linguistic background.

A diglossic situation exists in a society when it has two distinct codes, which are kept quite apart in their functions. One code is employed in one set of circumstance and the other in an entirely different set (Wardhaugh, 1986). A similar situation exists in Ghana, in which local varieties of English may be employed for conversation among friends, but a different variety of English that conforms more to native variety may be used to perform formal tasks such as teaching in a classroom setting. This is diglossia from the perspective of Ferguson (1959). In the original proposal of the concept, two varieties of Arabic are used in different social situations. For instance, classical Arabic is the appropriate code in the mosque situation but spoken Arabic is used in informal discourse situations. Fishman (1967) also proposed another version of diglossia which also exists in Ghana. According to him, in diglossic situations, two whole languages are employed differently. One is used in formal situations and the other in informal circumstances. In certain social situations in Ghana, the local languages are used in informal situations while English is employed in formal ones. For example, in Ghana, English is the medium of instruction in the education service but the Ghanaian languages are used outside the teaching and learning environment.

The Research Design

The current research adopted the ethnographic research design. This type of design emanates from anthropological fieldwork technique employed by Franz Boas and his followers (Hymes, 1964). The ethnographic research design enables investigators to deal with social phenomena or human interaction. This research design is based on the anthropological research technique of participant observation. Fasold (1984) considers data collected by means of interview and questionnaire as supplementary; the core of data is through observation. The present researcher interacted closely with the informants in order to gather first-hand information.

Population

The target population for the research was the university community of Cape Coast. The community is made up of students pursuing various academic courses, academic and non-academic staff and other people who provide supporting services. The University of Cape Coast is a multilingual entity. It consists of people from the diverse ethnic groups in Ghana. As a result many different languages are spoken by the students and workers. The investigator had a large corpus of linguistic diversity to deal with.

Sampling

The present study employed the cluster and stratification sampling designs. The reason was that the researcher needed various categories, which he could not leave to chance. A Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

random sampling method, for instance, would have limited the research to only students of the university and would have also introduced foreign nationals into the data.

The total sample frame for the research was two hundred and thirty (230). Two hundred responded to questionnaire and thirty were interviewed. Out of the total number of two hundred respondents to questionnaire, one hundred and twenty five were students and seventy-five were workers. These classifications in the sampling were influenced by the available statistics of the university, which show that student population is more than the workers. The thirty informants in the 230-sampling frames who were interviewed included ten students ten lecturers and ten non-academic staff.

The Research Instruments

The instruments used for data collection were observation questionnaire and interview. Observation is an ethnographic research technique that has been employed in many anthropological works; some of which are Blom and Gumperz, 1972; Gillian Sankoff, 1980; and Rubin, 1968. Observation was the main research instrument used in the present study. It provided an empirical basis for capturing language used in its social context. The methods of observation used were participant and non-participant. The investigator interacted with the research target population and observed closely the use of language in various contexts of situation. The researcher sometimes got directly involved in discourse situations in order to find out about informants choice of code. He interacted with students, lecturers and the non-academic staff. The researcher in certain situations stayed at the background and observed informants choice of language

The questionnaire instrument was designed and administered to the research target population. The questionnaire helped the investigator solicit information for both demographic and sociolinguistic data of the research. In all, about two hundred and thirty (230) questionnaire handouts were administered directly to the informants. The researcher had a checklist in place to ensure that respondents provided accurate information. A number of follow-ups were also done in order to retrieve all the questionnaire handouts administered.

The interview was conducted with the aid of a schedule. The researcher established rapport with the interviewees. Appointments were booked with some of the informants while others agreed to be interviewed immediately. The interview was carried out on one - on - one basis. It was conducted at a time and place convenient for the informants. The interview proceeded smoothly without personal contributions from the interviewer.

The Research Findings

In this research, the investigator concerned himself with the effect of inter-personal relationship on the choice of code in the university community of Cape Coast. The variables that were employed in determining the relationship between participants in discourse situations were: ethnicity, sex, age, rank, status, academic qualification and degree of familiarity.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

Ethnic Differences and Code Choice

The University of Cape Coast is a multilingual community. The subjects are from different ethnic backgrounds. As a result, several languages co-exist and individuals speak more than one language. Some of the languages spoken which the research revealed were: Akan, Ga, Ewe, Nzema, Ahanta, Guan, Efutu, Dangme, Dagbani, Frafra, Dagaare, Wala, Hausa, French, English and Pidgin. Normally a Ga and an Ewe could not communicate in view of the fact that the two languages were mutually unintelligible. The English Language, however, cuts across ethnic barriers; it functions as lingua franca. English facilitated communication between interlocutors of different ethnic backgrounds.

The data of the research revealed that about sixty five point five percent (65.5%) of the target population was Akan. Among the Ghanaian languages, Akan had the highest number of speakers. In fact, virtually everybody in the university community can speak some form of Akan. Speakers of other Ghanaian languages can speak it in addition to their mother tongues. The position of Akan vis-a-vis the other Ghanaian languages makes the former a potential national language.

In the university community, there are bilinguals as well as multilinguals. Almost all the informants spoke English and their mother tongues. There were therefore Akan-English, Ewe-English, Dagbani-English, Dagaare-English bilinguals and so on. There were also individuals who could speak two or three Ghanaian languages in addition to the English Language. There were Akan-Ga-English, Ga-Ewe-English, Akan-Dagaare-English, Akan-Ga-Ewe-English, Dagbani-Frafra-Dagaare-English multilinguals and so on.

Mixing the Ghanaian languages with English was very common in the university. Many Akan speakers, especially Fantes, claimed they could not speak Fante without mixing. The introduction of English items into the Fante was observed as the manner of speaking of most educated Fantes. Some of the Fantes claimed colonisation had something to do with this linguistic behaviour. Other Ghanaian Language speakers also explained that mixing the local language with English occurred because certain registers in English did not exist in the Ghanaian language and this made Code-mixing somehow unavoidable. Furthermore, many respondents were not very proficient in the local languages and this also brought about mixing. It is worth noting that in mixing, it was the Ghanaian language that was mixed with English words, phrases and expressions but not the other way round. The result of the research showed that people actually mixed, whether or not they were conscious of it. Code-mixing occurred in informal discourse situations. In mixing the quantity of English items in the Ghanaian language depended on interlocutors' repertoire of English.

Switching from English to the Ghanaian languages or vice-versa occurred in most discourse situations in the university. For instance, the presence of a third person in a dialogue in English triggered-off a situation of code-switching when this new person who joined the conversation switched to a Ghanaian language common to one of them. The conversation went on between the two in the Ghanaian language for a brief time. After

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

the departure of the third party, the conversants switched back to the English language because they did not have a common Ghanaian language. Code-switching also occurred. When two students were discussing a topical social issue in Akan, they had to switch to English as the discourse became academic. The interactants used English and Akan inter-changeably as the discourse progressed. In the same discourse situation, a third student joined the discussion but had to switch to the Ga language with one when a private issue came up. A sense of oneness and loyalty to one's ethnic origin were manifested when there was a switch from English to the Ghanaian language.

Sex and Code Choice

The research target population among other categorisation was stratified into males and females. Variation according to the sex of participants in discourse has been the subject of many recent researches. The general inference from dialect surveys is that female speakers tend to use more prestigious forms than male speakers with the same general social background (Yule, 1996).

The present study revealed that most males especially students spoke pidgin to their male counterparts in informal discourse situations. The majority of the male students did not speak pidgin to female students. It is worth noting that eighteen (18) females out of the research female population of ninety (90) spoke pidgin. Female pidgin speakers spoke it with males but not females. The bulk of the latter did not employ pidgin in their speeches because they had attached some stigma to it. The females regarded pidgin as an inferior language that was associated with rogues and illiterates.

They were therefore not enthusiastic about the use of pidgin. Most of the males were aware of the female perception of pidgin so the former did not speak it with the latter. The males also thought the females were not proficient in pidgin so they did not interact with them in it.

A research on language choice in the university of Cape Coast (Agbali, 1998) showed that the language employed by the sexes in student courtships was English irrespective of the differences or similarities in the ethnicity of the sexes. Agbali's study revealed that students in courtship were not conversant with registers in the local languages regarding courtship. These students in question, therefore, preferred English as the language of courtship. According to Agbali's findings, two students of the opposite sex who initiated a conversation in the Ghanaian language spontaneously switched to English when the discourse assumed an intimate dimension.

It was discovered that some male students always spoke English to females irrespective of the degree of familiarity and the previous knowledge of their common ethnic backgrounds. This category of male students always wanted to impress the opposite sex in discourse. The males in question had attached some prestige to the English Language. They regarded English as the language of enlightened people and wanted the females to recognize them as such. Another category of male students spoke the indigenous language to females and in the process always mixed the Ghanaian language with English Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

and this was to bring the females' attention to the high proficiency level of the males' English.

Research has shown that sex affects language choice in discourse situations. In some parts of the world, it has been reported that the different sexes used different codes. One of such reports is by Yule: "When Europeans first encountered the different vocabularies of male and female speech among the Carib Indians, they reported that the different sexes used different languages" (Yule, 1996, p. 242).

Age and Code Choice

The student sample frame within the age range nineteen to thirty years spoke pidgin. The lecturers who spoke pidgin were six in number and they were in the age range thirty to thirty-five years. Only four non-academic workers spoke pidgin and they were in the range twenty to twenty-nine years.

Student pidgin speakers did not speak it with mature students or with lecturers. Student pidgin-speakers employed pidgin in discourses involving those of their age group. Students who spoke pidgin perceived mature students as elderly people who would not be enthused to speak pidgin. Students would not speak pidgin with lecturers, since the former regarded the latter as elderly and with higher academic qualifications and status. The relationship between students and lecturers could be described as formal.

Most lecturers on their part did not speak pidgin to students because according to them, pidgin is a sub-standard language and it did not befit their status. The few lecturers who spoke pidgin said they were not too proficient in it and they spoke it to some labourers but not to other lecturers or to students.

Mature students spoke either English or Ghanaian Language (but not pidgin) to their colleagues in the same age group. Students who were within the age range nineteen to thirty years chose English or the Ghanaian language when communicating with older students or lecturers. However, if a mature student initiates a dialogue in pidgin in a conversation with a younger student, the discourse can continue in pidgin. This exceptional instance depends on the degree of familiarity or intimacy in relationship between the interlocutors.

The choice of pidgin among the non-academic workers of the university could be linked to their ages. The young workers in the age twenty to twenty-nine years who spoke pidgin did so to people in their age group and to illiterate workers. The non-academic workers who were in the age range thirty to fifty years did not speak pidgin to younger employees. However, English or the Ghanaian language were employed for communication between the younger and the elderly in discourse situations.

Academic Qualification, Status, Rank and Code Choice

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

The status and rank of respondents were determined by their levels of education. The status and rank of informants showed their positions on the social hierarchy of the university. Academic qualification, status and rank brought about social differentiation and this established distinction in relationships.

The ranking system of the workers of the university is hierarchical. It comprises senior members, senior staff and junior staff. The senior members comprise lecturers and the non-academic staff who have higher degrees like Masters, Doctorates and other qualifications from Professional bodies. The senior staff members have first degrees or their equivalents as their basic qualification. This group may have additional qualifications in their various fields of specializations. The minimum academic qualification of the junior staff is the General certificate of Education Ordinary or Advanced Level or the Senior Secondary School Certificate. It is worth noting that the illiterate labourers who do menial jobs have no rank because they do not possess any academic qualification.

The student sample frame of the research was pursuing various programmes in the university. Those studying for Bachelors' Degree had undergraduate rank. Postgraduates were students with either first or second degrees pursuing Masters or Doctorate Programmes. Academic qualification brought a distinction between undergraduates and postgraduates and this affected their choice of code. This difference in rank, for instance, did not make the undergraduates speak pidgin or the Ghanaian language with postgraduates. However familiarity and the previous knowledge of the ethnic background of interlocutors determined the choice of code.

The relationship between lecturers and students was also determined by academic qualification. Students perceived lecturers as persons with either Masters or Doctorate Degrees and this knowledge generated deference and formality in the relationship between them, which went a long way to affect their choice of language in discourse situations. Students know that high-ranking officers like the registrar, deputy registrar, assistant registrars and so on have high degrees and credentials. They respected senior members of the university and regarded their relationship with them as formal.

Normally, lectures, tutorials and other academic meetings involving lecturers and students were conducted in English. However, students who became familiar with lecturers could speak the indigenous languages if there was a common Ghanaian language between them. In many instances, it was the lecturers who initiated the discourses in the local language. Many student informants preferred to communicate with their lecturers in English.

Lecturers employed either Ghanaian language or English in most informal discourses like conversations and discussions. In discourse situations in which the local language was chosen, a lot of code-mixing occurred. The Ghanaian languages were mixed with English elements. In many instances, if the subject of the discourse was academic lecturers spoke English in the communication process. However, a change in the discourse subject to a social issue brought about a switch to the Ghanaian language. The Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

cordial relationship between lecturers shrouded the existing distinctions between them. Depending on the formality or setting of the discourse, lecturers employed either English or the Ghanaian language for communication.

Among the non-academic workers of the university, English was the official language used for communication. The Ghanaian languages were chosen for communication during informal interactions. One would expect that an assistant registrar would speak English when discussing an issue with the deputy registrar or the registrar but in the informal discourses the Ghanaian languages were employed except in a formal discourse like a meeting that English was strictly used. In the offices of the various departments of the university administration, the Ghanaian languages, especially Akan was spoken. Mixing the Ghanaian languages with English was characteristic of many a respondent. A switch from the local language to English or vice versa was also realized. In situations where there was no common Ghanaian language, English was chosen. Workers at the subordinate level like messengers or labourers were not proficient in English. It was observed that they always spoke Akan to their superiors. The senior members and senior staff used the indigenous languages in communicating with the junior staff when they share similar ethnic background or when a superior is on familiar terms with the subordinates.

The research showed that most students were not familiar with the non-academic staff. It was not easy for the two groups in question to know of the Ghanaian language that was common between them. As a result, English was employed in communication. Some of the junior staff were not proficient in English but they tried to speak it with the students. Very few students spoke the local languages with the non-academic staff. The majority of the students said they knew of the ethnic background of the vice-chancellor of the university but could not speak the Ghanaian language with him because they considered the relationship formal.

Conclusion

The findings of this research showed that the inter-personal relationship between participants determined in terms of ethnicity, familiarity, age, sex, status, rank and academic qualification, affected code choice in discourse situations in the community of the university of Cape Coast. An elderly lecturer might not speak pidgin with a young student and this could be because of the age difference between them. In certain circumstances these variables of inter- personal relationship did not affect code choice in isolation. For instance, a young worker with a junior rank might speak English to the registrar and this could be in view of the difference in age, status, rank and academic qualification. In other words, sometimes, a combination of the variables might affect code choice.

This sociolinguistic investigation also revealed the kinds of code choice that existed in the university community. One of them is unmixed code, which comprises pure English or the local languages employed in both formal and informal discourses. Others are

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

code-mixing that is a blend of Ghanaian language and English and code-switching which is a switch from English to the Ghanaian language or vice versa.

References

- Agbali, D.D. (1998). *The preferential use of the English Language during courtship in our society: A case study of the University of Cape Coast*. Unpublished B. A dissertation, the University of Cape Coast.
- Bell, R. T. (1976). *Sociolinguistics : Goals, approaches and problems*. London: B. T. Batsford Ltd.
- Bernstein, B. (1961). Social structure, language and learning. *Educational Research* 3:163-76.
- Bernstein, B. (1971). *Class, code and control*. London : Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Bernstein, B. (1972) Social Class, language and socialisation. In Giglioli (1972).
- Blom, J.P. and Gumperz, J.J. (1972). Social meaning in linguistic structures: code switching in Norway. In Gumperz and Hymes 1972: 407-34.
- Coulthard. M. (1977). *An introduction to discourse analysis*. London: Longman.
- Coulthard, M. (1969). A discussion of restricted and elaborated codes. *Educational Review* 22 (1):
- Crystal, D. (1985). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. U.K.: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Ellis, J. and Ure, J.N. (1982). Register range and change. *International Journal of Sociology of Language*, 35. The Hague: Mouton.
- Fasold, R. (1984). *The sociolinguistics of society*. England: Blackwell.
- Ferguson, C.A. (1959). Diglossia. word, 15: 325 -40. In Giglioli (1972) and Hymes (1964).
- Fishman, J.A. (1965). Who speaks what language to whom and when? *Linguistics*, 2:67-8.
- Language in India www.languageinindia.com
11 : 10 October 2011
- Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.
Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

- Fishman, J.A. (1968). Sociolinguistic perspective on the study of bilingualism. *Linguistics*, 39: 21 – 49.
- Fishman, J. A. (ed.), (1968). *Readings in the sociology of language*. Netherlands. Mouton and Co. N. V. Publishers. The Hague.
- Fishman J. A. (ed). (1971). *Advances in the sociology of language*.
- Forson, B. (1968). *Description of language situations classified in a corpus representing a bilingual register range (Akan varieties and English)*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Legon.
- Forson, B. (1979). *Code switching in Akan – English bilingualism*. Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Gregory, M. and Carroll, S. (1978). *Language and situation: Language varieties and their social contexts*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Hudson, R.A. (1980). *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Hymes, D. (1971). ‘Sociolinguistics and the ethnography of speaking.’ In Ardener, E. (ed.), *Social anthropology and linguistics* 45 – 93.
- Hymes, D.H. (1974). *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*. Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Hymes, D. (1964). *Language in culture and society: A reader in linguistics and anthropology*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Owusu – Ansah, L. (1992). *Variation according to context in a second language: A study into the effect of formality on the English used by Ghanaian university students*. Unpublished PhD thesis, the University of Edinburgh.
- Owusu – Ansah, L. (1996). Field work technique in ethnographic Research: In Bofo, Y.S. et al. (eds.), *Drumspeak: The International Journal of Research in the Humanities*, 1.
- Rubin, J. (1968). National bilingualism in Paraguay. The Hague: Mouton. Excerpted in Pride and Holmes (1972).
- Saville – Troike. M. (1983) *The ethnography of communication: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Thornton, G. (1974). *Language, experience and school*. London: Edward Arnold Ltd.
- Trudgill, P. (1974). *Sociolinguistics: An introduction to language and society*.
- Language in India www.languageinindia.com
11 : 10 October 2011
- Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.
Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana

England: Penguin Books Ltd.

Wardhaugh, R. (1986) *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. U.K: Blackwell Publishers.

Yule, G. (1996). *The study of language*. Great Britain: Cambridge University Press.

=====

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Department of Communication Studies,

University of Cape Coast

Ghana

rchrdtorto@yahoo.co.uk

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 10 October 2011

Richard T. Torto, B. A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., M.Phil.

Effects of Inter-Personal Relationship on Code Choice in Communication – A Case of the University Community of Cape Coast, Ghana