Communicative Features of the Nigerian University Undergraduates' English Expressions

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Abstract

Effective speaking exists in a group when the speakers' messages are so clear that the listeners respond as desired (Klopf, 1981, p. 76). In other words, the speakers' messages turn out to be exactly what they want and the listeners hear and understand exactly what the speakers said, and then act accordingly. This is in line with one of Confucius' popular quotes that "if the language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant; if what is said is not what is meant, then what ought to be done remains undone…" . The onus of this paper is therefore to examine the uniqueness and creativity in the use of language among selected Nigerian university undergraduates assuming a background of problems associated with meaning interpretation and effective communication among students. It brings to bear the appropriateness and inappropriateness of students' communication in English with broad focus on their distinctive communicative codes in relation to their use of pidgin, slang and Nigerian English expressions. This renders their communication unintelligible for any-one who is not acculturated in the use of such codes and in turn hampers effective communication in English. This paper demonstrates the need for language teachers to bring such students into consciousness of acceptable English language usages because "to speak and write correctly in English language without affected precision and without self-consciousness are not only forms of good manners but are also considered a wonderful asset to any Nigerian who acquires the skills" (Eyisi, 2004, p. xi).

Keywords: Communication; Communicative codes; Pidgin/slang expressions; Nigerian English; Nigerian university undergraduates.

Introduction

Language may be defined as a system of communication, a medium for emotional expression, a channel of thought, an indispensable foundation of socio-economic/political development and indeed a way of life. Several other authors like Emenanjo (2007), Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2007) and Finegan (2008) have documented definitions of language. Language plays an all important role in the life of a people. It serves not only as a medium of communication, but also as a symbol of group identity and solidarity. Language enables different groups of people to know who they are and to what ethnic and linguistic entities they belong (Dozie & Madu, 2012, p. 99). Overall, it is a

great asset to the society as every single need of man in and outside his society depends on language, and man's needs and aspirations find their expression in language (Sleigh, 2003, p. 13).

Communication represents very fundamental means of forging human interaction, thus performing an interpersonal role. According to Klopf (1981), "effective speaking exists in a group when the speakers' messages are so clear that the listeners will respond as desired" (p. 76). In other words, the speakers' messages turn out to be exactly what they want and the listeners hear and understand exactly what the speakers said, and then act accordingly. One of Confucius' popular quotes as cited by Eyisi (2004), that "if the language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant; if what is said is not what is meant, then what ought to be done remains undone…" (p. xi) emphasizes the importance of effective communication and correctness in the use of English. More so, an individual with good pragmatic skills will be able to communicate an appropriate message in an effective manner within a reasonable time frame in a real life situation. However, rarely does one achieve the degree of effectiveness just described.

Ordinarily, communication failures are common occurrences when several people meet to learn or solve problems together. The causes are numerous. Klopf (1981) has the opinion that "as speakers, we do not always communicate what we mean and since our intentions are private and known directly only to us, our listeners must make inferences about them" (p. 76). We know our intentions but the listeners must guess them.

Besides the fact that university students constitute a homogeneous group in terms of their obvious rationale in desiring to be members of the University – to learn, thus, assuming peripheral participation in academia, they are likely to be involved in a "joint negotiated enterprise and a shared repertoire of negotiable resources accumulated overtime" (Wenger, 1998, p. 76). That is, the students are likely to develop linguistic resources (here, a particular communication method) which will distinguish them from other members of the University community - academic and non academic staff. Eckert and Mc Connel-Ginet (1998), see this peculiar form of communication among individuals or group of persons as "community of practice". In their work, they contend that a community of practice is "an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in some common endeavor. Ways of doings, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations- in short, practices – emerge in the course of their joint activity around that endeavor" (p. 490).

However, the above notions allow one to see how university students in a communal setting like the university environment vary in their choice of language items in social interaction and the effect of their choices on communication in the different interactions they encounter. This paper examines how effective the communication among Nigerian university undergraduates is, which takes into cognizance the problems associated with meaning interpretation and effective communication among these undergraduates. It also pro-

vides information on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of students' distinctive communicative features.

According to Dozie and Madu (2012, p. 100), the use of slangs among university students world over has been studied by some authors. For instance, Finegan (2004, p. 336) reported slang expressions used by students of the University of North Carolina between 1972 and 1993 as inventoried by Eble, C. In Nigeria, the use of slang is common and differs from school to school as they focus particularly on their social life as it concerns eating, drinking, dressing, love habits and environment (Elezianya 2005; Jowitt 2005; Mbata & Ajileye 2009; Terna-Abah 2010). According to Mbata and Ajileye (2009, p. 6), some of the important factors that motivate the use of slang by students include: the establishment and maintenance of group identity, formation of a united whole and distinctiveness of members from members of other groups.

This high rate of failure has been generally traced to various factors, including poor teaching method, nonavailability of qualified teachers, inappropriate course books and examination-oriented curriculum (Afolayan, 1995; Amuseghan, 2007; Adegbite, 2009; Okunrinmeta, 2008, 2013a; Orji, 1987). However, one very important factor that has often been neglected is the sole use of foreign models, especially British English, for teaching and evaluation purposes in the Nigerian ESL classroom thereby neglecting the local Nigerian variations which, as it should be expected, reflect the linguistic and cultural contexts that English must, as a necessary condition, accommodate if it must function effectively in Nigeria's multilingual socio-cultural setting (Okunrinmeta, 2014, p. 318). As a former colony of Britain, Nigeria, just like many other countries in the Commonwealth, has adopted British English for all official purposes, including educational instruction and evaluation. This implies that all local Nigerian influences reflected in the English of Nigerians have to be treated as errors since they differ from what obtains in British English, which is widely considered as the "standard" that must be followed even in the Nigerian multilingual socio-cultural context where English is used as a second language (Okunrinmeta, 2013b, p. 31).

The problem of meaning interpretation among students

The problem of meaning explication has been the concern of linguists and scholars since the days of Plato. The elusive and controversial nature of meaning stimulated the interest for the search for meaning. This is because of the importance of communication in human relations. Even though the early and modern theorists have attempted to interpret meaning, they have also failed to provide satisfactory explanation to the problem of meaning interpretation. Klopf (1981) opines that "the communication breakdowns arising from the gap between what the speakers meant and what the listeners thought the speakers meant partially arise from improper word usage, awkward grammatical form, and lack of verbal skill" (p. 76).

The above source confirms that it therefore means that often, one is so preoccupied with what he/she wants to say that he/she fails to listen to what the others are saying. Sometimes, individuals are so sure they know what the others are going to say that they distort their statements to match their expectations. Too frequently, we listen in order to evaluate and make judgments about what was said and who is saying it. When this happens, the speakers in turn become defensive and guarded in what they say next.

Evidently, in the Nigerian situation, the undergraduates are no exception. This problem of meaning interpretation and effective communication among Nigerian undergraduates has led to:

- misunderstanding/conflict among the English language users;
- lack of communicative competence/ability;
- decline in the use of Standard English; and
- Code-mixing of Nigerian English, pidgin and slang.

It is for instance common among undergraduates to use such improper/impolite expressions in communication as "I want you to …" instead of "could you please…".

Effective communication according to Ogili (2005) "is usually the result of a careful selection of the appropriate medium or combination of media available" (p. 7). This is to ensure the transmission of message from the source to another by the use of form or illustration that seems desirable. It is referred to as the interaction of an individual or group with the environment through all the senses. Ogili (2005) also demonstrates that the practical justification is that effective communication is an instrument for accelerating the place of human transformation, to shake off inertia in a people, achieve mobilization and direct their productive forces in improving their living condition. The above source quoting Ezeanya (2001) concludes that effective communication is essentially messages sent and received and confirmation of their receipt and interpretation is (sic) returned from a sender, to ensure a two-way process. This process involved in effective communication in English as described by Ezeanya (2001) is the focus of this study. Moreover, successful communication for language learners requires that they check in with one another routinely about their shared knowledge by frequently utilizing comprehension checks and clarification requests. It is however not always practical or feasible to do that during every conversational interaction (FinnMiller, 2008).

Anderson (1987) observes that "a good understanding of communication, a dynamic process in which people strive to convey meaning to one another is fundamental in gaining understanding of events, objects, and other people" (Wikipedia.org). Similarly, Habermas (1979) suggests that "human competition, conflict, and strategic action are attempts to achieve understanding that have failed due to modal confusions" (p. 3). The implication is that coming to terms with how people understand or misunderstand one another could lead to a reduction of social conflict. For Habermas (1979), the goal of coming to an understanding is "intersubjective mutuality…, shared

knowledge, mutual trust and accord with one another" (p. 3). In other words, the underlying goal of coming to an understanding would help to foster enlightenment, consensus, and good will.

Communication therefore constitutes a vital aspect of university culture. It permeates all the activities in an institution and is "a thread that holds the various interdependent parts of the institution together" (Roger & Agarwala-Rogers, 1976, pp. 7-14). Effective communication among students is crucial because it enables them to produce the cooperation needed to reach institutional goals. As an important aspect of culture, communication among the students affects them in all they do whether positively or negatively as they organize and establish their goals for their study; interact with other members of university community – academic and non-academic staff, balance their diverse responsibilities, participate in institutional affairs and proceed through their careers. It therefore, seems to be the most fundamental factor in smoothing relationships among all component units within the university. Nonetheless, successful communication requires that both the sender and the receiver of the message be aware of the implicatures of the message.

The c situation of Nigerian university undergraduates

Many scholars have reviewed that Nigerian university undergraduates are found to be greatly involved in the use of pidgin/slang expressions. Non Standard Nigerian English are also commonly observable among the students' expressions in English. Their patterning of stress while communicating greatly deviates from that of the native speakers. This is a prevalent situation which hampers effective communication and understanding.

Pidgin, as it is used by Nigerians (including Nigerian university undergraduate), is according to Ihemere (2006) "estimated to be spoken by over 75 million people who use it as a second language, and the number of first language speakers is put roughly at between 3 and 5 million" (p. 297). These numbers are increasing all the time because the Nigerian pidgin is very popular with younger members of the polity, who constitute a greater number of the population of Nigeria, which is estimated to be about 140 million people as at the census in 2003. It is also further distinguished from Standard Nigerian English (SNE) due to the fact that it is spoken by members of every socio-economic group.

On the other hand, Burke (2000) in a study observed that American teens, in their never-ending mission to keep their teachers and parents guessing and confused, routinely use certain codes, "taking common definitions of everyday words and spinning them around 180 degrees. Therefore 'bad' is really good and 'the bomb' means 'great' and 'dope' is no longer a noun meaning 'fool' rather an adjective meaning 'wonderful'" (p. 68). Also, Ademola-Adeoye (2004, p. 340) quoting Matthews (1997) refers to slang as "a collection of vocabulary specific to e.g. a particular generation of younger speakers as well as in ordinary usage, specific to a group of professions (e.g. army

slang)". It is a colloquial departure from standard usage; it is often imaginative, vivid, and ingenious in its construction. It therefore attracts those who for reasons of personality or social identity, wish to be linguistically different – to be one of the gangs, whether the "gang" in question be soldiers, nurses, gays, pop singers, actors or students. In relation to Nigerian English, many scholars do not believe in its existence. For instance Vincent (1974) saw it as "bad English" while Salami (1968) contends that what has been identified as Nigerian English is in reality "errors of usage". However, the truth remains that Nigerian English is real as the succeeding tables demonstrate.

This investigative paper also takes cognizance of the fact that Nigerian university undergraduates' patterning of word stress is different from that of the native speakers. Eka (1993) in a study sees the stress pattern of spoken English of Nigerians as "inelastic timed" because of the tendency to have more prominent syllables than the native speakers while Udofot (2003) traces this pattern of stress in the spoken English of Nigerians to the influence of "syllable-timing rhythm of the speakers' mother tongues". Udofot (1997) also notes "the proliferation of prominent syllables in the speech of Nigerians of varied socio-economic and educational backgrounds and puts this situation down to a tendency to speak both long and short vowel with equal duration" (Udofot, 1997, cited in Udofot, 2003, pp. 201-220). However, this pattern of stress characterises the Nigerian accent of English. The tables below further demonstrate the students' communicative features.

The codes in Table 1 are distinctive of students' expressions in English. These codes include pidgin expressions, slang expressions and Nigerian English codes.

Table 1
Common pidgin/slangs/Nigerian English codes used by students

S/N	Students' codes/ expressions	Explanation	Examples	Source
1	As in	Expression used to ask for clarification. It can also be used as thought filler.	I have improved academically as in I discovered my mistakes.	SL
2	Uselessed	To waste someone or a thing.	He has uselessed himself.	NE
3	Yawah	To be in big trouble.	I don enter yawah.	SL
4	Spiro	To be too religious	That boy na real Spiro.	SL
5	Microchips/ Ekpo	Examination malpractice materials.	That girl came into the exam hall with Ekpo/microchips.	SL
6	Kezaiah	A girl that sleeps with	Eno na kezaiah.	SL

		any man that comes her way.		
7	Cripple	Someone that behaves foolishly.	Oh boy u be Cripple.	SL
8	Aristo/Runs man/Night walker/ Customer	An elderly man that goes after young girls.	That Aristo is a regular visitor.	SL
9	Chop beans	To become pregnant.	Eka don chop beans	PDG
10	Dash	To give someone something (gift) without collecting money.	I dash you that bucket.	NE
11	To chance somebody	To cheat someone	Please don't chance me, I came before you.	SL
12	Sha	Any way	I don't know Sha.	NE
13	Shey/Abi	Isn't it?	Tomorrow is your birthday shey/abi?	NE
14	Whether or Whethant	Whether you like it or not.	I must be there whether or wethant	SL
15	Kolo	To lose one's mind or to become crazy.	That man don kolo	SL
16	Arrangee	To be involved and also arrange young girls for prostitution.	Glory don become arrangee babe	SL
17	Chyke	To woo someone of the opposite sex	Make I go chyke that girl.	SL
18	Chikala	Term used to describe a young or pretty girl.	Paul, meet my Chikala.	SL
19	Effizie	Showing off	Udeme too dey do Effizie.	SL
20	Fashie	Forget or ignore somebody or something.	Please fashie that girl.	SL
21	Jack	Study seriously	Andrew too dey jack.	SL
22	Jambite	Freshman in the Universities.	U dey behave like a Jambite	SL
23	Janded babe	A girl who has just come back from overseas or a girl who behaves like someone who travels abroad.	Sifon na real Janded babe.	SL
24	Lekpa shandi	Thin/slender person	Nse don become Lekpa shandi over-	SL

			night.	
25	To do Ma-gomago	To unnecessarily exhibit power or wealth	That boy too dey do magomago.	NE
26	Talkative	Someone who talks too much.	Joy is a talkative	NE
27	Long throat	Someone who is glut-tonous.	Mary! Your long throat too much.	NE
28	Fast fast	Immediately	Give me the food fast fast.	NE
29	TDB	Till Day Break	I go read TDB to-night.	SL
30	Quanta	Trouble, problem	Me and you go soon get quanta	SL
31	Rake	Empty boasting, venting	So why u dey rake when you no fit do anything.	SL
32	Browse	To look for a girl to woo.	John! I still dey browse, I never see.	SL
33	Tanda	Stand	How you see people dey run, u still tanda?	SL
34	Arsenal & Manchester	Big Buttocks and big Bust	Sylvia na Arsenal and Manchester	SL
35	Sidy	Any female who is oc-cupying a bunk next to another female student in the female hostel.	Ruth na my sidy	SL
36	Bunky	Female students in a double bunk call them-selves bunky.	My bunky is a very good girl.	SL
37	Asu Rock	The male students' hall of residence where the SUG president resides.	In Asu Rock we lack nothing.	SL
38	Mgbonchi/ Mgbonday	Used by Uniport stu-dents to describe any female student who sleeps outside the hostel and usually in a man's house.	Uche has gone for Mgbonchi/ Mgbon-day.	SL
39	Customer	As in; "Aristo". 'Cus-tomer' is also used to describe a female stu-dent in Unical with bulky body	Jullie na Customer, so she no fit carry her body.	SL

40	Buka	Canteen where students go to eat.	The food they cook for Buka today no sweet.	SL
41	Tutumkpo	A word used to describe the act of a female student sleeping over outside the hostel especially in a man's house.	Eno has gone for Tutumkpo.	SL
42	Bedy	Female students who share the same bed/bunk call themselves-'bedy'.	Kate is my bedy.	SL
43	Orobo	Used to describe a very fat student.	Oh girl! You don become Orobo.	SL
44	Parker	Used to describe the dustpan.	Please I need your parker.	NE
45	Pregnanted	To impregnate	John just pregnanted that small girl	NE

Table 1 shows that in Nigerian university community, students are commonly involved in the use of pidgin/slang/Nigerian English expressions. They are more at home with the use of the above linguistic items than the use of Standard British English while communicating in English. This stems from the fact that they absolutely lack what it takes to communicate effectively in English. They therefore resort to the use of pidgin/slang expressions to compensate for their inadequacies in the use of Standard English language.

The present study shows that Nigerian university students use slangy and pidgin expressions and terms as means of communication among themselves and within groups of students. Therefore, slang/pidgin usage is very widespread and fashionable amongst students in higher institutions in Nigeria. This investigative paper supports the views earlier reported by Mbata and Ajilieye (2009, p. 13) that these slang expressions could emanate from an individual student or a small group of students, and often spread in use and scope with time.

The result of this study also shows that many of the communicative codes and terms used by students differ in each of the Nigerian universities. This is not surprising since the slang/pidgin terms used by students focus mainly on their social life as reflected by eating and drinking habits, dressing habits, love life and sex habits as well as their environment which is a major determinant of socio-cultural values, attitudes and behaviours of people. According to Mbata and Ajilieye (2009, p. 14), the effectiveness of slang depends entirely on the situation or circumstances of its use, thus giving rise to different slang expressions used in the hostels, refectory and other eating places, examination halls, lecture halls etc. Furthermore, the need for establishment and maintenance of group identity, formation of a united whole and distinctiveness of members

from members of other groups underscore the uniqueness of these distinctive communicative codes used by Nigerian students.

In addition, considering the morphology of some of the slangy/ pidgin expressions, this study discovered that that not all these expressions fit into the standard variety of sentences as some of them blended with an infusion of the pidgin variety while just a few are vernacular-oriented statements. Even though some of these communicative codes are popular among teenagers and college/university students, Finegan (2008, p. 320) noted that slang is also used by "specialized groups of all sorts, from physicians and computer hackers to police officers and stockbrokers". More so, these distinctive communicative codes encourage creativity among students. According to Dozie and Madu (2012, p. 101), in certain situations, it afforded the students among other things the opportunity to express themselves openly and be opinionated; the ability to communicate effectively; the right to full integration into an existing social system; freedom to see themselves as creative and enterprising; and chance to see themselves as creators or originators of the language in time and space.

Nigerian English has come to stay. Its usage is not only common among university undergraduates, but also, widely used among Nigerians both educated and uneducated ones. But where the use of Non-Standard Nigerian English like : "parker" (noun), "uselessed" (verb), "pregnanted" (verb), "talkative" (noun), "long throat" (noun), among others as listed in Table 1, remains the bane of the students, ineffective communication in English becomes inevitable. The table also reminds one of the rampant uses of pidgin/slang expressions among students. Even in very formal situations like during lectures, while talking with a lecturer and other very strictly formal occasion, these improper usages while communicating still remain prominent in the students' expressions. However, anyone who is not acculturated in the use of these codes will be at sea in the midst of these students when they communicate in English.

One of the reasons for the above communication problem is that students may have gaps in their knowledge of English language and because of various linguistic backgrounds of students, successful communication cannot be achieved. This is also because students study the target language against the background of their mother tongue in which they have attained a reasonable degree of competence. In Table 2, the grammatical features of students are illustrated.

Table 2
Grammatical features of students' English usage

Words	Students' English usage/Nigerian English	British Standard English
Furniture	The furnitures in my house are beautiful.	The pieces of furniture in my house are beautiful.
Good news	I have a good news for you.	I have good news for you.
Information	The lecturer gave us all the in-formations we need.	The lecturer gave us all the information we need.
Bedding	I will look for beautiful beddings in the market.	I will look for beautiful bedding in the market.
Quickly	I need my book fast fast.	I need my book quickly.
Sizeable	Give me big big aples	Give me sizeable aples
My father	My father, he is very tall.	My father is very tall.
Don't you?	You like that, isn't it?	You like that, don't you?
Water	Give me water.	Give me some water.
Have	You are having my book.	You have my book.
For some time	The electricians have been here since.	The electricians have been here for some time.
See	I'm seeing you.	I see you.
Understand	I'm not understanding you.	I don't understand you.
Hear	I'm not hearing you well.	I don't hear you well.
Put on/put off	She oned the light when she came in and offed it when she was going out.	She put on the light when she came in and put it off when she was going out.

Table 2 demonstrates the communicative/grammatical features of Nigerian university undergraduates. Interestingly, the table also demonstrates that these features are also peculiar to Nigerian English. The spoken English of these students and other Nigerian English users share common features. This can be observed in the use of nouns for instance. It is well known that some nouns in English are countable while others are uncountable. Any attempt to use one as the other leads to sentence error. Regrettably, students in particular and most Nigerian English users in general are found to be using uncountable nouns as countable nouns. For instance the items 1, 2, 3 and 4 which are "furniture", "good news", "information" and "bedding" respectively are uncountable nouns which are often used as countable nouns by these language users.

Also, Examples 5 and 6 in Table 2 where students and other Nigerian English users use "fast fast" which means "quickly" (BE) and "big big" which means "sizeable" (BE) respectively in their expressions show that they have the tendency to reduplicate for emphasis and rhetorical purposes. Item 7, is a typical example of 'subject copying' (Jowitt, 1991, p. 121). Example 8

demonstrates that while the negative question tag is often represented in Nigerian English by "isn't it", in British English, it is always determined by the verb. Example 9 shows that in English, the article "some" is used in both plural countable nouns (some bags) and uncountable nouns (some water), but the Nigerian English users generally omit the article "some", in their expressions. More so, Example 10 illustrates a case where the stative verb, "have", is used in the progressive form "… having …" while the verb refers to the state of affairs rather than action or event. The major problem is that most learners use these verbs in the progressive forms thereby making erroneous constructions. In Example 11, the use of "since" by these language users shows that Nigerian English structures have adverbial adjuncts while British English structures have prepositions followed by adjuncts. Moreover, the last example in Table 2, "oned/offed", illustrates the case of functional deviation or prepositional/collocational abuse.

　　　　The above illustrations prove that these common deviations that occur in the use of English language by Nigerian university undergraduates cannot be discussed without reference to their backgrounds and origins which are all tied to the Nigerian linguistic background. Curiously, the examples identified above are often heard by students even in very formal settings like, the classroom situation. Table 3 relates to the patterning of word stress in spoken English of students.

Table 3
Word stress in spoken English of Nigerian university undergraduates

S/No	English words	Parts of speech	Pattern of word stress by students
1	Adˌminiˈstration	Noun	ˈAdministration
2	ˌMagaˈzine	Noun	Magaˈzine
3	ˈMadam	Noun	Maˈdam
4	ˈBackˌground	Noun	Backˈground
5	ˈGraduate	Verb	Graˈduate
6	Aˈssociˌate	Verb	Associˈate
7	Deˈvelop	Verb	Deveˈlop
8	Coˈmmunicate	Verb	Communiˈcate
9	ˈChallenge	Noun	Chaˈllenge
10	ˌEpiˈleptic	Adjective	ˈEpileptic
11	Oˈriginate	Verb	ˈOriginate
12	Aˈppreciˌate	Verb	ˈAppreciate
13	Conˈgratulate	Verb	ˈCongratulate
14	ˈSupervise	Verb	Superˈvise

It is evident from Table 3 that the students tend to have more prominent syllables than the native speakers. This, Eka (1993, p. 1) terms "inelastic timed"

while Udofot (2003, p. 201) in a report traces this pattern of stress by the Nigerian English users to the influence of the "syllable-timing rhythm" of the speakers' mother tongues. It is also observed that since a syllable is said to be stressed when it is uttered with more energy and results in loudness for the hearer, stressing of unstressed syllables and not stressing the stressed syllables in English words which characterizes the Nigerian accent of English is also characteristics of students' spoken English. More so, this can also be attributed to the tonal nature of Nigerian languages.

In all, the spoken English of Nigerian university undergraduates and Nigerian English users in general recall the observation by Stevenson (1969) that:

> English spoken by Nigerians is often difficult for others to understand because each syllable is of nearly the same length and given the same stress. There is a tendency to stress the final syllable in a sentence, even if it is not a personal pronoun. The effect of this is not just that a Nigerian accent is different from any other, but that what the speaker wishes to convey is not carried efficiently by the medium. (p. 231)

The above observations by Stevenson as early as 1969 are all visible features of Nigerian English usage today. Worthy of note is that this study proves that the spoken English of Nigerian students today are not very different from the English used by Nigerians long ago. Nevertheless, these students should be pardoned and corrected when found to be involved in unacceptable usages because, their expressions in English are greatly influenced by their various linguistic backgrounds which do not frown at the use of such expressions. Their unintentional transfer of sense or meaning from their native languages into English during communication shows that they are ignorant of the effective use of English language.

Conclusion

This paper has revealed that communication among Nigerian university undergraduates is ineffective. Sometimes, conflicts and quarrels ensue because people disagree with others when they do not really listen to them, and distort what they hear because they assume they know what they are going to say. Listening is an art that must be actively pursued. A lot of quarrels and misunderstandings can be avoided if only one learns to listen (Klopf, 1981, p. 76). However, given the emergence of the distinctive communicative features of Nigerian university undergraduates which have contributed to the ineffectiveness of their communication in English, it may be pertinent to point out that this problem of effective communication in English is not only the bane of Nigerian students or Nigerian English users in general, but also that of other L2 users of English the world over. Therefore, communicative incompetence, pe-

culiar patterning of word stress and the use of pidgin/slang and Nigerian English expressions during communication by Nigerian university undergraduates are all peculiar features which validate Achebe's (1965) assertion that "the price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use" (p. 27).

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