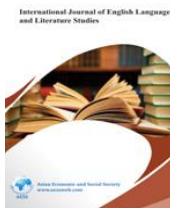




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THE EFFECT OF ENGLISHISATION ON LANGUAGE USE AMONG THE EWE OF SOUTHERN VOLTA IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

The contact of English language with other languages in the world has significant impacts on language use in different domains. The coexistence of English with Ghanaian indigenous languages in Ghana, for example, has resulted to different language varieties in the country. Thus, presently, Ghana has three different language varieties: Unmixed-English, Unmixed-Ghanaian Language(s), and Mixed-English. The use of any of these varieties, as observed by Owusu-Ansah (1997) is, however, largely constrained by multiple domains of language use in Ghana. This paper, accordingly, discusses the extent at which the contact of English with Ewe language affects language use in the informal domain among the Ewe of Southern Volta. It highlights the use, and the domains of use of these varieties in contact situations, but focuses more on the informal domains such as homes, streets, recreational centres, markets and shops. The data were collected from 120 participants from different age groups, gender and different educational groups through participant observation and interview. The study has shown that the informal domains: homes, streets, shops, markets and recreational centres among the Aɲlɔ-Ewe are highly dominated by the use of English and Mixed-Ewe English varieties. This suggests that the Aɲlɔ-Ewe do not restrict themselves to language specific domains in Ghana, but manipulate the choice available to them to fulfill their communicative purposes; they choose the variety they feel most comfortable with. This finding thus contradicts Owusu-Ansah (1997). It nevertheless, contributes to the on-going discussion on language situation in Ghana, and also helps the Aɲlɔ-Ewe to work towards maintaining the Unmixed-Ewe variety so as to avoid its death.

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Keywords: Englishisation, Domain, Aɲlɔ-Ewe, World englishes, Unmixed-english, Unmixed-Ghanaian language(s), Mixed-english.

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Contribution/ Originality

This study is one of the first detailed studies done on language variation in Ghana, and also contradicts the observation made by earlier researches on domain specialization of language use in Ghana. It thus contributes to the debate on language variations and their constraints on domain-specialisation in Ghana.

1. INTRODUCTION

The contact of English language with world languages has made a significant impact on language use in multilingual societies. It is a well-known fact that the spread of the English language across the globe has affected all the languages it has been in contact with, either close or remote. These contact situations have resulted to what many scholars referred to as 'Englishisation/nativisation' or 'localization/indigenization' (Owusu-Ansah, 1997; Simo-Bodba, 1997) or what Kachru (1994) refers to as 'the two genus-like faces' of language contact situations involving English. The fact that Englishisation has hardly left any language untouched is a truism today (Kachru, 1994). For instance, the Englishisation of languages world-wide has inspired a special issue of *World Englishes* 'on World Englishes in Contact and Convergence' (Kachru, 1994) quoted in Simo-Bodba (1997).

The effects are seen in two faces; one face is the case where the norms of the native variety become parts of the culture of a community that uses it as an additional language, while it still retains many features of the language as it is used by native speakers (Owusu-Ansah, 1997) the other face is where the indigenous languages influence the native variety-English language.

Englishisation of languages has been examined by different researchers. Kishe (1994) for example, looked at Englishisation of Tanzanian Kisiwahili; Englishised Korean by Shim (1994) and Englishisation of Japanese and 'acculturation' of English to Japanese culture by Iwasaki (1994) etc. All these studies have spelt out the mark left by English on the various indigenous languages it came into contact with. Thus, the term 'Franglais', for example, indicates a form of French which contains English borrowings. The phrase *une soirée cocooning* which means 'an evening at home' (Davidson, 1995) illustrates a typical Swiss French. Englishisation in Francophone Cameroon as observed by Simo-Bodba (1997) occurs mostly in lexical borrowing. The words *kènú* (canoe) and [botele] (bottle), for example, in Shu Pamum, a language of Francophone West Province, also have their origin from English (Njoya, 1988).

Similarly, Englishisation of indigenous languages in Ghana has brought about three language situations or varieties (Owusu-Ansah, 1997). That is, Ghana presently has two unmixed varieties of language and mixed variety (ies). The unmixed varieties are English only variety and a Ghanaian Language only (e.g. Ga or Ewe only) variety. The mixed variety (ies) (Mixed English-Ghanaian Language (s))-is the situation where a Ghanaian language is mixed with English language or vice versa. According to him each of these varieties is highly restricted by specific domains of language use. The two unmixed varieties, as he noted, are used in highly formal situations such as durbars,

board meetings or a chief addressing his subjects. The mixed variety (ies) is, however, used in informal situations such as homes, shops, conversations between acquaintances etc.

The finding of Owusu-Ansah suggests that the widespread multilingualism in Ghana is mediated via the principle of domain specialization. To him, it is a deviation from the norm for a traditional ruler to address his subjects in an English only variety, or a mixed English-Ghanaian language (mixed English-Akan) variety, or a mother instructing her children in an English only variety. So the Asantehene (the chief of the Asante) addressing the state in an English only or a mixed English-Akan variety will incur a displeasure of on-lookers. Although Owusu-Ansah acknowledges code switching in formal contexts, he still argues that it is a deviation from the norms as it is done mostly under compulsion.

Code switching is a well-known phenomenon in multilingual societies, a situation where speakers flout domain specific norms and make a choice available to them to fulfill their communicative purposes. This attitude of speakers towards a particular code or a variety could influence the choice of one code or a variety against the other. In this case, the attitude of speakers towards Englishisation will determine the extent at which English is used in different language domains in non-native environments. French, on the other hand, expressed their negative attitude towards this phenomenon in the words *dejection*, *defense* and *fight* considering it as *cancerous*, *invasion*, *dangerous*; *defender*, *établir un barrage* etc. (Simo-Bodba, 1997). This paper therefore seeks to make a detailed empirical study on English in contact with Ewe, and its effects on language use in the informal domains among the Ewe of Southern Volta. It first of all gives an overview of the status of English in Ghana, a brief description of the concept of language domain, and the language varieties in Ghana. This is followed by the methodology, data analysis, discussion, and then conclusion.

1.1. English Language in Ghana

The history of English dates the introduction of English into the Gold coast, now Ghana, as far back as 15th centuries. According to Boadi (1971) English was introduced into the Gold Coast as a result of the contact of the British with the indigenous people for the purpose of trade. The English language, however, became the official language in Ghana due to its roles in the public sectors. For example, English was the medium of instruction in all academic institutions. Thus every subject, except Ghanaian languages, was taught in English and it has therefore been used as the medium of instruction from class three to the university level. This has been and still stands as the language policy in the country. Nevertheless, some schools are not able to implement this policy as some school catchment areas are made up of people with different linguistic backgrounds. Besides, many parents in Ghana perceive English as a means of socio-economic growth for their children; hence, this compelled some school authorities to use English as a medium of instruction as early as possible. Consequently, many literate parents speak only English to their children. Coupled with the above, all examinations, except Ghanaian languages are taken in English. All Government records such as minutes, parliamentary proceedings, court records and proceedings (except

proceedings in the traditional arbitration courts) are all in English. Also, most advertisements are written and made in English. This means that a Ghanaian child can only have an access to the scientific and cultural knowledge of the world through English.

1.2. Language Domain

Domain, as a sociolinguistic concept, was formalised by [Joshua \(1972\)](#). In his view, different settings will demand the use of different languages in multilingual societies, or varieties of the same language in a monolingual society. So, for example, language use in formal contexts such as boardrooms will differ from the language of bedrooms, dining-rooms, changing-rooms etc. Similarly, interactions with one's superiors, subordinates or peers or interactions with one's spouse, children or guests will constitute different discourses, and so will call for the use of specific language types.

The term 'language domain' can be a physical setting such as the home, the street, the classroom, the shop, the academic and or religious institutions, the media, and the sports which involve the use of language, or it could be general activities or events associated with the setting ([Mesthrie and Bhatt, 2008](#)). Thus, the domain 'church' for example, stands for a range of activities which demand the use of formal sermonistic and archaic variety of language. The domains such as homes, streets, sports and recreational centres also have distinct linguistic correlates; just as topic, medium, participants etc. vary within different domains. Associating a particular language or a language variety with specific domain is a normal phenomenon in human societies. In a multilingual society such as Ghana, a particular domain will determine the choice between different languages and not only the choice of a variety or register within one language. The high prestige given to English in Ghana therefore means that not all languages are equally used in all domains. English is therefore the accepted language which is deemed appropriate for all government or official activities such as business and administration, law, education, media etc. while Ghanaian languages are preferred for local activities such as durbars, funerals, festivals and informal interactions between families and friends. Presently, English is a means of advancement for any Ghanaian who has an access to education. It is thus the gateway to government or commercial office job, professions, social and geographical mobility.

Domain specialization, accordingly, suggests that language users obey domain specific norms; it is a socially inappropriate behaviour for anyone to contravene these norms. However research has shown that speakers do not abide by these norms. For example, an influential leader may avoid an over-formal or ornate style in favour of language closer to more informal domains. As a goal of this paper, it investigates language use in the informal domains among the Ewe of the southern Volta, specifically homes, markets, shops and recreational centres or leisure activities and draws on the three language varieties in Ghana: Unmixed-English (English only), Unmixed-Ghanaian language (Ghanaian Language only) and Mixed-English as proposed by [Owusu-Ansah \(1997\)](#).

2. METHODOLOGY

The study is a quantitative descriptive survey which used both structured interview and participant observation to collect data for the study. The data were collected from informants with different levels of education, different age groups and of both sexes across a large geographical area of Anlo Traditional area between January and February 2014. A total of 120 informants were selected through various personal contacts. The contact details of the informants were first of all randomly selected from the telephone directories. They were then contacted and subsequently interviewed; the informants were not personally known to the interviewer. The interview was typically a friendly discussion about the informants' everyday work and social life. In addition, each informant was asked to fill a questionnaire which requires information on their background. Informants whose proficiency in English was relatively low were assisted by the researcher to fill the questionnaire. In all, a total of 120 questionnaires were distributed among the informants. A participant observation was also carried out in the streets, homes, recreational centres, shops and markets to observe how language is used in these social cultural settings.

2.1. The Informants

There were 120 informants; 62 males and 58 females from 10 different communities in the Anlo traditional area. Most of the informants were literates; they either had some form of formal education, or are in school, and were also relatively proficient in Ewe. Out of this figure, 73.3% (88) have a relatively high level of proficiency in English, and 26.7% (32) have only a basic knowledge in English. 10% (12) speak Adamgbe in addition to Ewe and English, while 7.5% (9) speak French in addition to English and Ewe. The age of the respondents ranges from 2 to 73 years. That is, the sample was divided into three age groups: group 1 = 2-25, group 2 = 26-49, group 3 = 50-73). Forty (40) of the informants reported to belong to a family where English only was acquired as the first language by children, forty-five (45) belonged to a family where Ewe only was acquired as the first language by children. Ewe only was thus spoken in the home while English was acquired through formal education in school. The rest thirty-five (35) reported to belong to a family where both English and Ewe were acquired as the first language by children and was thus used interchangeably at home.

As far as the educational background of the informants is concerned, 22 of them either completed primary education or had some form of primary education. Majority of them (57) attended university or a similar tertiary institution as the highest level of education while 41 had secondary education.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Language Use in Informal Domains

3.1.1. Homes, Streets, Recreation Centres, Markets and Shops

Language use among the Anlo-Ewe appears to be dominated by family types. Family types in the Anlo traditional area can be described according to the kind of language variety used by both

children and parents at home. These include: (a) Type A family-where English is acquired as the first language by children and is the dominant language at home; (b) Type B family-where Ewe is acquired as the first language by the children and is the dominant language spoken at home and (c) Family Type C-includes the family type where both English and Ewe are acquired as the first languages of the children. That is, one parent speaks English and so both English and Ewe are used interchangeably at home. To be able to examine language use among these domains in the Anjo Traditional area, four communicative settings: (i) Talking with parents, (ii) Talking with grandparents, (iii) Talking with children and (iv) Talking with siblings, were investigated.

Table-1. Talking with parents and family type

Family Type	Language Variety %		
	English Only	Ewe Only	Mixed-Ewe English
A	65	0	35
B	0	55	45
C	40	25	35

Table 1 shows that a total of 65 percent of the informants from family type A speaks English only variety when communicating with their parents, 35% speaks Mixed-Ewe English, and none at all uses Ewe only variety in this communicative setting. 55% of those from family type B reports to speak Ewe only variety; while a total of 45% reports to use Mixed-Ewe English variety, but none of them speaks English only in this communicative setting. 40% of the participants from family type C reports to speak English only variety when communicating with their parents, 25% speaks Ewe only variety and 35 % uses Mixed-Ewe English variety in this same communicative setting.

Table-2. Talking with grandparents and family type

Family Type	Language Variety		
	English Only	Ewe Only	Mixed-Ewe English
A	55	15	30
B	0	55	45
C	20	35	45

Table 2 shows that 55 percent of the informants from family type A uses English only variety when speaking with their grandparents, 15% speaks Ewe only while 30% speaks Mixed-Ewe English. 55% of those from family type B speaks Ewe only variety, 45% reports to have used Mixed-Ewe English variety when talking with their grandparents. None of them however reports to have spoken English only variety in this communicative setting. 20% from family type C speaks English only variety in this communicative setting, 35% speaks Ewe Only variety while 45 % speaks Mixed-Ewe English variety.

Table 3 shows that 55% of the informants from family type A speaks English only variety when speaking with their children, 45% speaks Mixed-Ewe English and only 5% speaks Ewe with their children.

Table-3. Talking with children and family type

Family Type	Language Variety		
	English Only	Ewe Only	Mixed-Ewe English
A	55	5	40
B	0	55	45
C	10	30	60

55% of those from family type B speaks Ewe only variety and 45% speaks Mixed-Ewe English variety while none of them reports to have spoken English only variety of language with their children. 60% of those from family type C speaks Mixed-Ewe English, 30 percent speaks Ewe only, however only 10% reports to have used English only variety with their children.

Table-4. Talking with siblings and family type

Family Type	Language Variety		
	English Only	Ewe Only	Mixed-Ewe English
A	60	15	25
B	15	40	45
C	20	30	50

Table 4 shows that 60% of the informants from family type A speaks English only variety when speaking with their siblings, 15% speaks Ewe only while 25% speaks Mixed-Ewe English. 45% of those from family type B reports to have spoken Mixed-Ewe English variety with their siblings, 40% speaks Mixed-Ewe English, and only 15% speaks English only variety with their siblings. 50% from family type C speaks Mixed-Ewe English variety, 30% speaks Ewe only and 20% reports to have spoken English only with their siblings.

The tables above have shown that the informal domains such as homes, streets, recreational centres, markets and shops, which are normally characterized by the most informal types of language use, have been dominated by the use of all the three varieties of language. The informal domains-homes, streets, recreational centres, markets and shops have been dominated by the use of English only, Mixed-Ewe English and Ewe only varieties of language among the Ewe of Southern Volta. The choice of each of these varieties is, however, heavily influenced by family type in the Añlo Traditional area. For example, informants from family type A where English was acquired as the first language of the children recorded the highest percentage of English only, and Mixed-Ewe English varieties. This was followed by those from family type C where English and Ewe were acquired concurrently as the first language by children, and the least English element usage was found among the family type B where Ewe only was acquired as the first language of the children.

It therefore appears to be a strong positive correlation between family type and language usage in these informal domains among Añlo-Ewe of Ghana. The high percentage usage of English element variety among the people can possibly be traced back to the parents' awareness of the fact that a good command of English is important for their children. Most parents are aware of the fact that a good command of English is important for their children's education and later profession.

Hence, most of the parents interviewed reported to have talked with their children exclusively in English at an early stage of their development, and during their school years. Thus, children from these categories of family types used the most English elements in speech at a younger age. The following extracts underscore this position:

Extract A: *I spoke English only till I was 16 and gradually learnt Ewe automatically.*

This informant, although, could speak Ewe at the time of the interview reported that he could not speak Ewe fluently until he was age 16.

Extract B: *We speak English with our children when they are young so they can have a good foundation in English.*

Extract C: *I want to see my son speak English well.*

Extract D: *English is the language of prominent people, so I want my daughter to be prominent in future.*

Extract E. *I find it easier speaking English than speaking Ewe. I can't speak Ewe 'pure'.*

These extracts suggest that most Aŋlo-Ewe see English as a means of social and economic advancement, and as the gateway to government or commercial office jobs, professions, social and even geographical mobility. Thus, most conversations between parents and younger children and among young siblings are likely to be carried out in English element variety of language among the Aŋlo-Ewe of Ghana. The majority of the younger generations will prefer to use English only or Mixed-Ewe English variety of language to Ewe only variety.

3.1.2. Age and Language Use

The age of the speakers also has an influence on the use of language in these domains; a stratification of the informants according to age is illustrated in tables 5 to 8 below:

Table-5. Talking with parents and age group

Age Group	Language Variety		
	English Only	Ewe Only	Mixed-Ewe English
2-25	50	15	35
26-49	15	45	40
50-73	0	75	25

Table 5 shows that 50% of the informants between the ages of 2 and 25 speaks English only variety when speaking to their parents, 35% uses Mixed-Ewe English, and only 15% uses Ewe only variety in the same communicative setting. 15% of the informants between the ages of 26 and 49 uses English only, 45% uses Ewe only and 40% uses Mixed-Ewe English variety. No informant in the upper age group (49-73) as shown on the table uses English only variety in this communicative setting. But 75% uses Ewe only while 25% uses Mixed-Ewe variety.

Table 6 shows that 35% of the informants between the ages of 2 and 25 speaks English only variety when speaking to their grandparents,

Table-6. Talking with grandparents and age group

Age Group	Language Variety		
	English Only	Ewe Only	Mixed-Ewe English
1-25	35	25	40
26-50	5	55	40
51-75	0	75	25

40% uses Mixed-Ewe English and only 25% uses Ewe only variety in the same communicative setting. 40% of the informants between the ages of 26 and 49 reports to have used Mixed-Ewe English only, 40% uses Ewe only and 5% uses English only variety. No informant in the upper age group (49-73) uses English only variety in the same communicative setting. But 75% uses Ewe only while 25% uses Mixed-Ewe variety.

Table-7. Talking with children and age group

Age Group	Language Variety		
	English Only	Ewe Only	Mixed-Ewe English
2-25	5	65	30
26-49	55	10	35
50-73	5	70	25

Table 7 shows that only 5% of informants between the ages of 2 and 25 speaks English only variety when speaking to their children, but 65% uses Ewe only and 30% uses Mixed-Ewe only variety in this communicative setting. However, 55% of the informants between the ages of 26 and 49% reports to have used English only, 10% uses Ewe only and 35% uses Mixed-Ewe English variety. 5% of the informant in the upper age group (49-73) uses English only variety in this communicative setting, 70% uses Ewe only while 25% uses Mixed-Ewe variety.

Table-8. Talking with siblings and age group

Age Group	Language Variety		
	English Only	Ewe Only	Mixed-Ewe English
2-25	55	5	40
26-49	5	40	55
50-73	0	75	25

In Table 8, it is noticed that a total of 55% of the informants between the ages of 2 and 25 speaks English only with their siblings, and 40% uses Mixed-Ewe English. Only 5% however speaks Ewe only with their siblings. Again, 55% of those between the ages of 26 and 49 reports to have used Mixed-Ewe English variety, 40 percent uses Ewe only, and 5% uses English variety in the same communicative setting. No informant in the upper age group (50-73) reports to have used English only. However, 75% reports to use Ewe and 25% uses Mixed-Ewe English variety in this communicative setting.

The results therefore mean that informants belonging to the lower and middle age category use the most English elements in these informal domains while those in the upper age group uses the

most Ewe element. That is, majority of the younger generations (50 years and below) prefer English only or Mixed-Ewe English variety to Ewe only variety. The use of English only and Mixed-Ewe English varieties is therefore seen as a marker for the speech of the young, not obeying the norms of society and using too many prestige variety of language-English only. This phenomenon is strongly believed to be a dangerous development for the Ewe language in the Aŋlo Traditional area. Since the youth are the innovators of language change, the possibility of the Ewe only variety dying out is high.

4. CONCLUSION

English in contact with Ewe; just like all other languages English has been in contact with, has significantly affected language use in the informal domains in the Aŋlo Traditional area. Ewe is the only language spoken by the Aŋlo of the Southern Volta before the coming of the Europeans into the Gold Coast, Ghana. However, this study has shown that the contact of English language with the Ewe language (Englishisation) has highly affected language use in the informal domains such as the homes, the streets, the recreational centres, the markets and the shops in the Aŋlo Traditional area. Thus, Englishisation has generated three different language varieties: Mixed-Ewe English, English only and Ewe only varieties of language in the Aŋlo Traditional area. The use of any of these varieties as observed depends largely on the social variables such as family type, education, age of the speakers, and the type of communicative settings. This means that although all the three language varieties appear to be dominant in these informal domains, informants from the younger group, and those belonging to the family type where English only, or English and Ewe are acquired concurrently as the first language by children tend to use most English elements in all the four communicative settings. However, those from the upper age group and those belonging to the family type where Ewe only is acquired as the first language by children tend to use the least English elements in all the four communicative settings. One significant observation made was that conversations by younger generations among their siblings, and conversations with parents, those with children, tend to gear towards English element varieties. That is, the highest proportion of English elements can be found with conversations with younger children and among siblings. Meaning, the participants that are involved in the conversation (communicative setting) have some influence on the choice of language variety in these domains. It might be interesting to note that some of the participants reported to have had dreams in English only variety, a domain which cannot be influenced consciously. For example, ten informants from family type A and C belonging to the lower age group reported that they dreamed exclusively in English. This goes to support the extent at which English is used among the people of the Aŋlo Traditional area. These speakers do use English language even in their subconscious communicative situations. The study therefore implies that conversations in informal domains such as homes, streets, recreational centres, markets and shops by parents, children and among siblings, and by people from the family where English only, and English and Ewe are acquired concurrently as the first language by children are very likely to be carried out in English only, and Mixed-Ewe English variety. Ewe only variety on the other hand is likely to be preferred in these domains only by oldest people, and conversations among those from the family where Ewe only is acquired as the first language of children. The high percentage usage of English elements among younger people therefore confirms the general impression that most parents in Ghana

prefer to see their children speak English rather than their indigenous languages. That is, although Ewe only variety is expected to dominate these domains, it is the least recorded elements; meaning that the Aŋlo-Ewe find it easier communicating in Mixed-Ewe English than in Ewe only. Thus, though Ewe only is also used in these domains, there appears to be a high proportion of Mixed-English-Ewe variety. This phenomenon is, therefore, strongly believed to be a dangerous development for the Ewe language in these Aŋlo Traditional area. The use of English only and Mixed-Ewe English varieties are seen as a marker for the speech of the young, not obeying the norms of society and using too much prestige variety (English).

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