

**A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE VARIATION  
AMONG THE ACADEMIC AND NON ACADEMIC STAFF OF AHMADU  
BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA**

**BY**

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## CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled “A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Language Variation among the Academic and Non Academic Staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria” meets the requirements governing the award of the degree of Master of Arts in English Language of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. It is approved for its contribution to literary presentation and scientific knowledge.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to the Almighty Allah, without whom this dissertation and my completion of a successful stay in this department wouldn't have been possible.

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study “ASociolinguistic Analysis of Language Variation among the Academic and Non Academic Staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria”is preoccupied with the intrinsic relationship between language variation, sociolinguistics, social context and culture of individual as well as diverse groups in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. It established language variation as an inseparable part of human society, human civilization and cultural integration. The study sourced its data from questionnaires and random sampling method, with face to face direct procedure applied in the data elicitation process. A brief pilot survey was undertaken to test the instruments. The study adopts the community of practice theory in order to overcome the limitations presented by earlier linguistic theories such as the speech community model and social network theory. The theory was also adopted in this study because it permits us to draw on the linguistic and social information necessary to understand variation amongst staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Our findings shows that language variation cuts across both the academic staff and the non academic staff including the university professor as staff tends to switch from formal to informal according to the situation they find themselves. Also, that the predominant native language (Hausa) and Pidgin English have a great impact on the language use of individuals who serve as staffers of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The findings also implied that the length of time an individual spends in a given location could have a significant impression on his or her competence in the language of that environment. Also, that there are both inter-speaker variation, that is variation between individual speakers, and intra-speaker variation, that is variation within individual speaker. Establishment of the fact that language is a vehicle for socialization and cultural integration is made possible by analyzing individuals of diverse culture. The tendency to show solidarity and identity with ones interlocutors is a major drive that gives birth to language variation.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

When we look closely at any language, we will discover time and time again that there is considerable internal variation and that speakers make constant use of the many different possibilities offered to them.[Wardhaugh 2006:5].The concept of language variation implies the existence of two or more ways of saying the same thing. It takes into account such factors as the social background of both the speaker and the addressee, the context and manner of the interaction. [Radford, Atkinson, Britain, Clahsen, Spencer 2009:14]. Language variation explores social reasons for the variation, change and attitudes to different varieties of the same language, and also in the way language is used to express or construct particular social identities in particular social context.

Hymes (1967:8) has this to say about language variation:“*No normal person and no normal community is limited in repertoire to a single variety or code to an unchanging monotony which would preclude the possibility of indicating respect, insolence, mock seriousness, role distance and so on. And this could be achieved by switching from one variety to another.*”In 1961, William Labov conducted a study on Martha’s Vineyard, an island off the coast of Massachusetts. There, he found out that there is both inter-speaker variation, that is variation between individual speakers and intra- speaker variation that is variation within individual speaker. Labov’s variationist theory has been constructed upon

the notion that understanding variation in language and its participation in language change entail the simultaneous study of language and society, as well as the values attached to competing language forms. As Labov (1972:3) in Meyerhoff (2006) writes: “*Social pressures are continually operating upon language, not from some remote point in the past, but as imminent social force acting in the living present.*” [Meyerhoff 2006:5] This goes to show that language variation does not set out only to produce, but also reproduces and transforms social meanings and ideologies. It entails the option of choosing one common way of saying something from among all available possibilities. Speakers do not simply use and reproduce sociolinguistic patterns and conventions of meaning, they ultimately also have the potential to transform those patterns and meanings to the extent that a particular way of saying something may spread throughout a given speech community across time. Eckert (2008:472) states that changes unfold in the course of day- to- day exchange and that exchange involves constant local reinterpretation and repositioning. Ultimately, it is in this action that we can get at the meaning-making that gives life to variation. She went further to state that the life of variation resides in the everyday life experience of people, and how their ideologies and conventions of meaning are enacted in the day-to-day activities of language users.

Hudson(1996:4) in (Wardhaugh 2006) is of the opinion that no one speaks the same way all the time and that people constantly exploit the nuances of the language they speak for a wide variety of purposes. Sociolinguistic research in multilingual communities encompasses bilingual or diglossic communities, where languages are used for distinct

functions, code-switching including the reasons and grammatical constraints on switching.

### **1.1.1 History and Staff Organization of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria**

Ahmadu Bello University Zaria was founded on October 4<sup>th</sup> 1962 as the University of Northern Nigeria by the then Northern Region Government and was taken over as a Federal Institution in 1975. The Premier of Northern Nigeria and first Chancellor, Sir Ahmadu Bello, have this vision for the university: “The cardinal principle upon which our university is founded is to impart knowledge and learning to men and women of all races, religion and political belief.” He stresses further that only through freedom of enquiry and research can a university be drawn into the full ferment of thought from which new knowledge comes. And for it to achieve this, staff and students must be drawn from all parts of the world, the mixture of international minds working together in an atmosphere of academic freedom can produce a university true to its ideal and meaning. This shows that the staff of Ahmadu Bello University are drawn from various parts of the country and have come together to interact.

The staff organization of Ahmadu Bello University include the academic staff who operate under the umbrella of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), the Non-Academic and Associate Staff Union of Universities (NASUU), the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT), and staff who are on part time basis.

### **1.1.2 The Demographic Situation of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria**

Currently, the university covers a land area of 7,000 hectares and encompasses twelve academic faculties, a postgraduate school and 82 academic departments. It also has five institutes, six specialized centres, a Division of Agricultural Colleges, a Demonstration Secondary School, a primary school and extension and Consultancy units, which provide a variety of services to the university and the wider society. The total students' enrolment in the university's degree and sub-degree programmes is about 35,000, drawn from every state of the federation, Africa and the rest of the world. There are about 1,400 academic and research staff and 5,000 support staff serving the University. (NUC, Ahmadu Bello University retrieved 2015).

### **1.2 Statement of Research Problem**

As a multilingual and multiethnic country, Nigeria has many languages, some of which have no standard orthography that can be used to perform national linguistic functions. Therefore, English has an edge over all the indigenous languages in Nigeria. However, sociolinguist attention emphasizes that in so many parts of the world, not only is there very many languages within given national boundaries but also there exist several varieties of these languages, in which Nigeria is not an exception.

In a language in contact situation such as, Nigeria, it is to be expected that there will be an interaction between the vernaculars and English. Language variation is so important and crucial to life. Like air; people do not often recognize its nearness, its

presence and its importance. Many educated people not only in the university, but Nigerian society tend to be watchful when they speak. They are conscious of the class, age, gender and also the social situation they find themselves. Some even go to the extent of denying that they do not speak an alternative language (for example pidgin English), even though many researchers for example Gani –Ikilama (1992) and Gana (2010) have shown the contribution of Nigeria Pidgin in the country. Many educated Nigerians still don't want to associate themselves with it.

Also research on language variation has been concerned only with some aspects of language variation such as the use of pidgin among a selected society, the use of dialect by a group of speech communities and the like. Gana (2010) study on the use of pidgin among senior cadres of university lecturers using Ahmadu Bello University Zaria as a case study was limited to only the attitude of the senior academic staff of the university. The attitude of the junior academic and non-academic staff was not clearly revealed, it's that to say that their language is void of variation. In addition, the study conducted was only on the use of pidgin neglecting the use of other local dialect such as Hausa, Yoruba etc. This shows gross paucity of data on the other cadres of the university. This gap in data representation therefore afford the need for us to analyze the use of language variation particularly in the speech conversation of both academic and non-academic staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in order to determine the extent, limit and also the factors that are responsible for these variations.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

In order to carry out the analysis of speech variation among academic and non-academic staff of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, the study will be guided by the following questions:

1. How serious is language variation among the staff of the university?
2. What are the factors accounting for language variation among the staff of the university?
3. What are the situations that compel the staff of the university to change the way they speak?
4. What aspect of language is affected with variation?

### **1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The basic aim of this study is to investigate the use of variation, particularly in the conversation of both formal and informal academic and non-academic staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The history of research in language variation has undergone various periods that have shown how complex the phenomenon is. Based on this aim, the study intends to achieve the following objectives: to

1. Identify the seriousness of language variation among the staff of the university
2. Investigate the factors that account for language variation among the university
3. Identify the situations that compel staff of the university to change the way they speak; and

4. Determine the aspect of language that is more pronounced with variation, i.e. formal or informal.

### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

Though previous works have extensively discussed language variation, majority concentrated only on a particular ethnic group, not much has been researched on an environment such as Ahmadu Bello University, where people of diverse culture and background interact. Variation in language arises from more frequent ways of using language. This goes without saying that the more frequent a language is used, the more variant that language would be among its users and also its uses. This is so, since variation has not only social sources but also spatial ones. When speakers disseminate into new locations, the language they take with them changes with time. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria is not void of this conviction as the staff is drawn from various parts of the country. It is the belief of this researcher that the findings of this research which investigate language variation with particular reference to the formal and informal aspect of variations among the academic and nonacademic staff will go a long way in answering questions that relates to language and variation in the university.

## **1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

Sociolinguistics is a very wide area of Linguistics, due to the fact that it offers a unique opportunity to bring together theories, descriptions and applications in the study of language. Therefore, attention is given mostly to language variation particularly the speech aspect and also the effects it has on its users. This research is limited to the academic and non academic staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The choice of the university as a case study is hinged on the assumption that it is around such setting, with its divergent linguistic background that language variation would be more pronounced. The work will clarify which cadre of the university uses language variation and also the situations that compel them to use it. In this study, the concept of Sociolinguistics, language variation, types of language variation and factors responsible for language variation among the academic and nonacademic staff of the university such as age, sex, social class, ethnicity and so on would be extensively discussed.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Preamble**

This chapter introduces a review of the relevant literature and framework of the study organized into the following aspect; conceptual review, empirical review and theoretical framework. Within the conceptual review is the definition of terms and concepts i.e. the concept of code switching, code mixing and borrowing, speech community, language and identity, speech community, register and dialect, language change etc. the chapter also looks at the theoretical framework for the study.

#### **2.2 Sociolinguistics and Language Variation**

Sociolinguistics according to Radford et.al (2009:14), is the study of the relationship between language use and the structure of society. It takes into account such factors as the social backgrounds of both the speaker and the addressee (that is their age, sex, social class, ethnic background, degree of integration into their neighbourhood and so on), the relationship between speaker and addressee (good friends, employer-employee, teacher-pupil and so on) and the context and manner of the interaction, maintaining that they are crucial to an understanding of both the structure and function of the language used.

Hudson (1996:4) as cited in [Wardhaugh 2006] also shares the same conviction that Sociolinguistics entails the relationship between language and society. Like Redford et.

al, (2009) Hudson states that ‘Sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society, in other words, in Sociolinguistics, we study language and society in order to find out as much as we can about what kind of thing language is.’ Sociolinguistic research in multilingual communities encompasses bilingual or diglossic communities, where languages are used for distinct functions, code-switching, including the reasons and grammatical constraints on switches.

What we observe from Redford et. al’s (2009) assertion is that language does not exist in a vacuum; this is so since language is a social phenomenon, it is natural to assume that the structure of a society has some impact on the language of the speakers of that society. Sociolinguistic research has demonstrated that the speech of most people is, at least in some respects variable, for example combining both standard and non-standard sounds, words or grammatical structures. In the light of this, Hymes (1964:469) has a different opinion that linguistic variation correlates with the social status of the speaker: this may be termed a variety of sociolinguistic variation. An instance which has recently received considerable attention is that involving ‘U’ (Upper-class) and “non-u” (Middle class) speech of England; it is claimed that the difference in speech has now become virtually the only overt mark of difference between these two classes [Ross, 1954: 20-23]. That is to say speakers identify themselves to a particular class based on their class differentiation. It should be noted that some cases of linguistic variation correlate simultaneously with the identity of the person spoken to, and the identity of the person speaking. Opler and Hoider (1940) explain that a type of variation which is familiar in

most societies is correlated with the difference between formal and informal situations. “Formality” and “informality” being defined, of course in terms of each particular society. The foregoing explanations show that speakers of a language sometimes change the way they speak to identify themselves to a particular society. An instance which will be given recognition in this study is Pidgin English and any other indigenous language that may interfere in the speech of staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. A speaker may for example, speak differently while discussing with colleagues at work, and change the way he talks when with a senior colleague or in official meeting. One of the aspects of contact between speakers of different varieties of a language is accommodation. This means that one of the speakers attempts, in face to face interaction, to approximate his speech to that of his partner in conversation for a variety of reasons, to make him feel at ease, in order to be accepted, etc.

Emeneau (1950:206-209), while explaining linguistic variation observes that “in sociolinguistic area, linguistic variation often reflects the relationship between the status of the speaker and the status of the person addressed, rather than the absolute status of either.” Labov (1972:188) asserts that it is common for a language to have many alternate ways of saying “the same thing”. He explained that some words like ‘*car*’ and ‘*automobile*’ seems to have the same referents; others have two pronunciation, like ‘*working*’ and ‘*workin*’ there are also syntactic options such as ‘*who is he talking to?*’ And ‘*to whom is he talking?*’ or ‘*It’s easy for him to talk*’ and ‘*for him to talk is easy*’. In

each of these cases, we have the problem of deciding the place of this variation in linguistic structure. He analyzed this in two ways:

1. The variations are said to belong to different systems and the alternation is an example of “direct mixture” or code –switching.
2. The variants are said to be in “free variation” within the same system, and the selection lies below the level of linguistic structures.

Redford et. al (2009:15) looked at language variation as the search for consistent patterns in variable linguistic behaviour. According to them, language change, they reasoned with Labov (1972) that the speech of young people within a particular social group is different from that of old people in the same group, that it is very likely that language change is taking place.

### **Kinds of Variations**

Trudgill’s book *The Dialects of England* (1999), closes its chapter on the grammar of English dialects as follows: Variation among the modern dialects at the grammatical level is certainly still rich and considerable, and happily this diversity seems likely to remain with us as a source of interest, colour and enjoyment for the foreseeable future, in spite of the efforts of those in the media and the educational system who would like to see an increase in conformity and uniformity. [Trudgill 1999:108]. Trudgill’s statement confirms the fact that different kinds of variations exist. Notable amongst these are:

### **i. Syntactic Variation**

Aarts and McMahon (2006) state that one major reason why at the turn of the twenty-first century, the study of syntactic variation has turned into a budding field is a broadening of the perspective taken in recent generative syntactic theory, and still much less pronounced, in functional approaches to syntax, especially functional typology. This is due to the fact that apart from cross-linguistic variation, variation within individual language also matters. In generative linguistics, that is a school of thought within linguistics that makes use of the concept of generative grammar, variation became a force of contention with the advent of the principles and parameters approach in the 1980's.

### **ii. Stylistic Variation**

According to Redford et.al, (2009), “linguistic variability that is dependent on the social context we find ourselves in or the topic of the conversation we are engaged in is usually termed “stylistic variation”. We tend to be conscious and speak differently to a teacher than to our friends over a coffee. We could for example, speak using a more standard dialect with the teacher, and use more non-standard or informal language when having a chat.

### **iii. Phonological Variation**

Aarts and McMahon (2006) opines that “one of the earliest pronouncements on phonological variation in English comes from John of Trevisa (ca1385)”, who describes an antipathy to Northern British accents thus:

All the language of the Northumbrians and especially at York, is so sharp, piercing and grinding, and unformed, that we southern men can that language hardly understand.[Freeborn, French, and Langford 1993:23]

According to Redford et.al, (2009) language varies across both time and space. For example, if we compare the English spoken in the cities of Perth, Pittsburgh, Port Elizabeth and Plymouth, we can point not only to differences between these cities, but also to historical differences which distinguish these varieties today from those spoken in these locations 150years ago. They define phonological variation as the“Existence within the speech of a single community of more than one possible realization (or variant) of a particular sound.”

They explained further by giving example of the variable loss of the glottal fricative [h] in the northern English city of Bradford, with words like hammer being pronounced [hama] or [ama].

They represent this example in a table thus:

<b>The Omission of Social Class</b>	<b>Percentage of the Number of Occurrences of [h] that were Omitted, that is <math>\Theta</math></b>
Lower working class	93
Middle working class	89
Upper working class	67
Low middle class	28
Middle middle class	12

Our analysis of this table is that there is differences in the use of [h], that is the higher the social class of individuals, the more likely they are to use [h]. Furthermore, the ethnic group to which a speaker belongs has also been found to have an effect on the language use of that individual. Several issues could be raised from the foregoing explanations depending on the view-points of the respective linguists. It is possible to make certain assumptions about variation from the table above. The basic assumption of Sociolinguistics that the variation we can observe in language is non-random i.e. variation in language is socially significant is not refuted; language variation is largely determined by social class and status. Variation furthermore correlates with the relative security of a group's position in society with a general tendency of lower status groups to imitate higher –status group as long as this imitation has a chance of leading to an improvement of social status as with the lower middle classes. In addition, there is often a discrepancy between what speakers say of their language and what they practice. For instance, in Trudgil's study of English in Norwich it was shown that the working classes have a low opinion of their own variety of language but continue to use it. This allows us to assume that varieties can have covert prestige for their speakers.

Holmes (1992) in her research on the “maori” or “pakeha” (that is the White European) discovered that identity of New Zealanders is seen to be relevant to the use of a range of different phonological variables.

## **Linguistically Determined Variation**

It would be wrong to claim that it is only social factors that determine the structure of variation within a speech community. According to Redford et.al (2009:55) linguistic factors also play a considerable role in determining the relative use of different variants of a variable. They gave an example of a variable which appears to behave in a similar way across the English speaking world that is ‘consonant cluster deletion’. This involves the variable deletion of word –final [t] or[d] when it follows another consonant. The examples they gave are:

*Best friends – [bEstfrend] - [bEsfrEnd]*

*Cold weather – [kouldwEða] – [koulwEða]*

In explaining the data above, the second example in each phonetically transcribed pair, the second [t] or[d] is deleted. This is because in each set of data, the word final [t] and [d] are in different linguistic context, and it is this context that determine the deletion.

## **Lexical and Morphological Variation**

According to Redford et.al (2009:233) English verbs have few inflections, and one which is found is that which mark present tense and agreement with the third person singular subject. Although, this is not the case in all dialects of English, yet in some dialects, this suffix has been lost. According to them, speakers of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in the United States and the English of East Anglian in the UK produce example such as:

*He spend a lot*

*She dance well*

This contrast with the situation in South West England, where some people would say

*He spends a lot*

*I dances every night*

In the second example, the *-s* suffix does not mark present tense and agreement (with third person singular subjects) but only present tense.

Of special significance to our discussion of language variation in this study is the concept of bilingualism. This is so because, in Nigeria's multilingual setting where English and Nigerian languages are in contact, and where most Nigerian learners of English are expected to have possessed the knowledge of their respective MTs (mother tongues) before being exposed to English language which is usually learnt at school later in life (Adegbite, 2009:75), it is expected that certain aspects of the Nigerian languages will interfere with corresponding aspects of the English that is learnt and used by Nigerians ( Bamgbose, 1971:41; Adekunle, 1979; Banjo, 2004 and Okunrinmeta, 2011). This is not to say, however, that English does not have any influence on the Nigerian languages. As Weinreich (1963), Greenberg (1971) and Spencer (1971) observed, when languages are in contact, they naturally influence each other. Thus, English and the Nigerian languages including Pidgin English are expected to mutually influence each other since they exist side by side in the lives and on the tongue of the Nigerians who use them. (Bamgbose, 1971; Adetugbo, 1979 and Essien, 1995).

## 2.3 Code-Switching, Code-Mixing and Borrowing

What is a code? In communications, a code is a rule for converting a piece of information into another form or representation, not necessarily of the same sort. The term code is a relatively neutral conceptualization of a linguistic variety be it a language or a dialect. Romaine (1995) mentions that: "I will use the term 'code' here in a general sense to refer not only to different language, but also to varieties of the same language as well as styles within a language."

To this end, several scholars have attempted to define code-switching and code-mixing. Bakomba (1989) defines code-switching thus: *Code-switching is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event.*" Wardhaugh (2009) states that 'when we open our mouth to speak, we must choose a particular language, dialect, style, register or even variety that is a particular code.' He went further to say that you can and will shift, as the need arises, from one code to another. Within each code, there will also be the possibility of choices not all of which will have the same import as some will be marked (more significant) than others, and these various choices will have different social meanings. Hymes (1992:41) explains that 'people sometimes switch code within a domain or social situation, where there is some obvious change in the situation, such as the arrival of a new person. She went further to say that a speaker may switch to another language as a signal of group membership and shared ethnicity with an addressee. Often, these switches are used to signal the speaker's ethnic identity and solidarity with the

addressee. Switches motivated by the identity and relationship between participants often express a move along in the solidarity and social distance.

There are many kinds of code switching; code switching can be inter-sentential, intra-sentential or tag-switching. Inter-sentential code switching normally occurs at the phrase or sentence level between sentences. Polpack (2000) states that “*sometimes, I will start a sentence in Spanish and finish in Spanish.*” While in intra-sentential code-switching, the language switch is done at sentence boundaries. Polpack (1980) states that in intra-sentential code switching, the shift is done in the middle of a sentence, with no interruptions, hesitations or pauses indicating a shift. Also, the intra-sentential code-switching is characterized by fluent intra-sentential shift, transferring focus from one language to another. It is motivated by situational and stylistic factors, and the conscious nature of the switch between two languages is emphasized Lipski (1985:12). The third type of code-switching is tag-switching. This involves the insertion of a tag in one language into an utterance that is otherwise entirely not present in the other language. There are different types of code-switching, they include:

**i. Metaphorical Code-Switching**

Holmes (1992:49) describes metaphorical code-switching as ‘rhetorical reasons’ that is drawing on the associations of both codes. Each of the codes represent a set of social meanings, and the speaker draws on the associations of each just as people use metaphors to represent complex meanings. She quotes: “Skillful code-switching operates like metaphor to enrich the communication.” Gumperz (1982) went further by citing examples

of metaphorical code-switching from three sets of languages (Hindi and English, Slovenian and German, and Spanish and English) to show how speakers employ a particular language to convey information that goes beyond their actual words especially to define social situations.

According to Bloom and Gumperz (1971), as cited in (Hudson1980), metaphorical code-switching occur in a situation where a variety normally used only in one kind of situation is now being used in a different kind because the topic is one which would normally arise in the first kind of situation.

They explained further:

In the course of a morning spent at the community administration office, we noticed that Clerks used both standard and dialect phrases, depending on whether they were talking about official affairs or not. Likewise, when residents step up to a Clerk's desk, greeting and enquires about family affairs tend to be exchanged in the dialect, while the business part of the transaction is carried out in the standard. [Bloom and Gumperz 1971:425].An example like this shows that speakers are able to manipulate the norms governing the use of varieties in just the same way as they can manipulate those governing the meanings of words by using them metaphorically. A speaker may even switch codes (varieties) within a single sentence, and this switch may occur so many times.

## ii. Conversational Code-Switching

Gumperz (1976) termed this type of code-switching 'diaglossia'. It is one in which each point of switching corresponds to a change in the situation. There is no such change in the situation in conversational code-switching, nor is there any change in the topic which might lead to metaphorical code-switching. Instead, the speaker gets the impression that the aim is simply to produce instances of the two varieties in some given equal proportion, and this is achieved by expressing one sentence in one variety and the next one in the other.

Gumperz (1982:61) is of the opinion that in conversational code-switching, "participants immersed in the interaction itself are often quite unaware which code is used at any one time," and throws the question: "how would you propose to investigate such a claim? Gumperz explains that this is also the case with metaphorical code-switching, his explanation runs thus: Code switching occurs in conditions of change, where group boundaries are diffuse, norms and standards of evaluation vary, and where speakers, ethnic identities and social backgrounds are not matters of common agreement. Yet, if it is true that code-switching style serve a functioning communicative systems, if members can agree on interpretations of switching in context and on categorizing others on the basis of their switching, there must be some regularities and shared perceptions on which these judgment can be based.

Conversely, in the words of Wardhaugh (2009:14) we can describe two kinds of code-switching; situational and metaphorical. Situational code-switching occurs when the

languages used change according to the situations in which the conversant finds himself; they speak one language in one situation and another in a different one, no topic change is involved. He explains further that when a change of topic requires a change in the language used, we have metaphorical code-switching.

## **2. Code –Mixing**

Code- mixing involves the use of two or more languages by inserting linguistic elements in one language into the other language consistently. In code mixing, dependency features are marked by the relationship between the language role and function. Bakamba (1989) defines code mixing as: The embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words clauses from a cooperative activity where the participants, in order to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with what they understand. Very often the expression code mixing is used synonymously with code switching and means basically intra-sentential code switching. However, recent research has given new meaning to this term. Maschler (1998:125) defines code mixing as: *Using two languages such that a third, new code emerges, in which elements from the two languages are incorporated into a structurally definable pattern.*

In other words, the code mixing hypothesis states that when two code switched languages constitute the appearance of a third code, it has structural characteristics special to that new code. Fasold (1984) also lent his voice that in code mixed sentences, pieces of one language are used while a speaker is basically using another language. In the light of this, Holmes (1992:50), states that code-switching suggests “that the speaker

is mixing up codes indiscriminately or perhaps because of incompetence”, whereas the switches are very well-motivated in relation to the symbolic or social meanings of the two codes. Kind of rapid is itself a specific sociolinguistic variety. It is a distinctive conversational style used among bilinguals and multilinguals. By switching between two or more codes, the speakers convey affective meaning as well as information.

Muysken (2000) went further to say that there are three distinct types of code mixing that can be found in different bilingual speech communities:

**i. Insertion:** the insertion of well defined chunks of language B into a sentence that otherwise belong to language A

**ii. Alternation:** the succession of fragment in language A and B in a sentence, which is overall not identifiable as belonging to either A or B. An example given by Gumperz and Hernandez(1971:118) is *Andelepues, and do come again:* interpreted as *that's all right then, and do come again.*

**iii. Congruent Lexicalization:** the use of elements from either language in a structure that is wholly or partly shared by languages A or B.

According to Holmes (1992:28-29), there are many factors that affect code choice. People may select a particular variety or code because it makes it easier to discuss a particular topic, regardless of where they are speaking.

### **i. The Social Distance**

This determines how well the interlocutors know each other. That is: what is the social distance between the participants, are they strangers, friends, brothers etc. These would determine the kind of code to use.

### **ii. The Status**

The relationship between people may be relevant in selecting the appropriate code. Social race is also important as it is the contributing factor to status differences between people. For example, the role relationships are teacher-pupil, doctor-patient, soldier-civilian, official-citizen and so on and these status often influence the kind of variety to use.

### **iii. The Function**

This could also be referred to as the goal of the interaction. That is what is the language being used for? Is the speaker asking a favour or giving orders to someone? The function in which the interlocutors find themselves could also determine the choice of code to use. The influence of code-switching and code-mixing on English, Pidgin and Nigerian languages is reflected in Kachru (1978:108) where he explains code-switching as the ability to switch from code A to code B depending on the function, the situation and participants, while code-mixing entails the transfer of linguistic units from one code into another thereby forming a new code of linguistic interaction. Bamiro (2006a:24) views code-switching from a literary perspective to include those instances where a

character in the text switches from a literary perspective to include those instances where there are lexical transfers from the author's native language into the mode of narration (English). Bamiro's description of code-mixing appears to be contrary to that of Ansre (1971:147) who describes it as a situation whereby speakers who are bilingual in English and a West African language insert varying chunks of English into their performance of the West African language. Following Ansre's observation, Banjo (1986) and Bamgbose (1995) describe code-mixing in the Nigerian setting as the retention of the Nigerian language syntax and the insertion into it of English words or phrases.

However, Okunrinmeta (2008:44) notes that the positions of Ansre (1971), Banjo (1986), Bamgbose (1995) and Bamiro (2006a) on the other hand, do not present the time picture of what happens in the Nigerian multilingual setting where Nigerians who are bilingual in English and a Nigerian language can, in the process of communication, insert words or phrases into the structure of a Nigerian language sentence or insert Nigerian language words or phrases into English sentences especially when they cannot, because of the constraints the English language puts on the second-language user, easily and immediately find an appropriate word or expression in English for what they intend to say.

### **3. Borrowing**

It is common for items to be assimilated in some degree to the items already in the borrowing variety with foreign sounds being replaced by native sounds. Bloomfield [1935:457] as cited in Hudson (1980:5) explains that borrowing may involve the levels of

Syntax and Semantics without involving pronunciation at all. For instance, a feature of Syntax can be borrowed from one language into neighbouring ones, via people who are bilingual in both. According to Bynon (1977:255) 'even the inflectional Morphology of a language may be borrowed.' For example a Tanzanian language called *mbugu* borrowed a Bantu inflectional system from one or more Bantu neighbours. Also, the word *fry* seems to have come into English through French, *restaurant* was also borrowed from French to English. To this end, borrowing is a phenomenon which may throw light on the internal organization of language and also the relationship of language to society.

Redford et. al (2009:224) states that throughout its history, English has been adding to its lexicon by acquiring new words from others, often unrelated languages. *Pizza* came from Italian, *Vodka* from Russia, *Coffee* and *Yoghurt* from Turkish and so on. These new words are known as borrowing. They went further to say that borrowing are words which originated in one language (or dialect), but which have come to be used in another, even by people who don't speak the 'lending language'. Furthermore, when a word is borrowed, it is often gradually changed so that it fits the phonological and morphological structure of the borrowing language or dialect. Also, when new concepts are introduced from other societies, the speakers of a particular language may use their own native linguistic resources to coin a new word, these are known as 'calques'.

Borrowing is one of the commonest ways through which the mutual influence that the Nigerian languages, Pidgin English and English language have on each other is manifested. This occurs when the vocabulary of each of the languages in this contact

situation witnesses an influx of items from the other. Though borrowing in the Nigerian situation is mutual since it is natural for each language to borrow from the other, Essien (1995:271) observes that the traffic flows more heavily in the direction of the Nigerian languages, probably because of the higher technology, industrialization, education and to mention a few, associated with English -speaking nations. Thus, there is large scale influx of English items into the vocabulary of the Nigerian and Pidgin languages. Such English words such as '*street*', '*bread*', '*table*', '*meeting*', '*dirty*', '*lawyer*', '*tailor*', '*technology*' are just a few of them of the numerous words in English that have found their ways into the vocabulary of the Nigerian languages.

However, to ensure that these borrowed items conform to the patterns of the Nigerian languages, they have been modified thus: '*titi*' (street); '*buredi*' (bread) '*tabili*' (table), '*mitini*'(meeting), '*doti*' (dirty) '*loya*' (lawyer), '*telo*' (tailor), '*tekinoloji*' (technology) (Bangbose, 1995:24 and Akere, 2004:278). This notwithstanding, Kujore, (1985), Jowitt; (1991), and Igbanusi, (2001) explains that there are some borrowings from the vocabulary of the Nigerian languages into the English of Nigerian speakers : '*kiakia*', '*tokunbo*', '*suya*', '*akamu*', '*oba*', '*juju*', '*egunje*', '*babalawo*', '*wahala*', '*talakawa*' just to mention a few. The above explanation will not be refuted as Ahmadu Bello University Zaria's setting is in Nigeria therefore the above explanation and some of its findings are expected to reflect in this study.

## 2.4 Speech Community

Society is structured from a sociolinguistic point of view, in terms of a multi-dimensional space. To notice this, one needs only think of the rather obvious ways in which people can be classified according to the dimensions of age, religion of origin, social class (or profession) and sex. The study of speech communities has been the interest of linguists for some time that is since Leonard Bloomfield in 1933 wrote a chapter on speech community in his book 'language'. According to Hudson (1980:25), the term "speech community" is widely used by sociolinguists to refer to a community based on language. To Lyons (1970:326), speech community refers to all the people who use a given language (or dialect). According to this definition, speech communities may overlap (where there are bilingual individuals) and need not have any social or cultural unity.

Gumperz (1962) defines linguistic community as:

A social group which may be either monolingual or multilingual held together by frequency of social interaction patterns and set off from the surrounding areas by weaknesses in the lines of communication. This indicates that some interactions are done by means of one language, while others by means of another. Bolinger (1975:333) in [Hudson1980] asserts that There is no limit to the ways in which human beings league themselves together for self-identification, security, gain, amusement, worship, or any of the other purposes that are held in common; consequently there is no limit to the number and variety of speech communities that are to be found in society. According to

this view, any population (whether of a city, a village or whole state) may be expected to contain a very large number of speech communities. Indeed, with overlapping memberships and overlapping language system. This shows that we can identify different speech communities in the same population.

To this end, we will share Labov's belief that 'the linguistic behaviour of individuals cannot be understood without knowledge of the communities that they belong to. Hudson (1980:12-13) is of the opinion that no two speakers have the same language, because no two speakers have the same experience of language. He went further to say that the differences between speakers may vary from very slight and trivial to total difference within whatever limits are set by universal characteristics of language. The uniqueness of each person's sociolinguistic past is not the only source of differences between speakers, however, we can imagine a person constructing a model of the community in which he lives, in which the people around him are arranged in a multi-dimensional space, that is showing different dimensions or parameters. Some of these dimensions involve linguistic differences, such as how some particular model which he builds up consequently covers linguistic parameters as well as variables of other types. The particular model which he constructs will reflect his own personal experience; this goes to show that people with different sociolinguistic backgrounds will be led to construct correspondently different models relevant to language and society.

Also, Hymes(1964:385) states that speech community is a fundamental concept for the relation between language, speech and social structure. As long as one operates in

terms of languages and cultures conceived as isolates, internally homogeneous and externally discrete, it is common to speak of “the” language and “the” culture of a people. He went further to say that the term speech community is then little more than a stylistic alternative for referring to such a unit, implicitly interchangeable in its referent with the others. Conversely, the study of speech communities empirically defined in terms of populations and structures of communication, would seem to underlie almost every aspect of anthropological interest in the relations between language, personality, society, and culture. In the description of social structure in relation to speech community, there are according to Hymes (194:388) two leading themes:

1. Boundaries; external with regards to speech communities and internal with regard to speech situations.
2. Co-variation among linguistic features, as in the delineation of speech varieties, and between linguistic features and social features. Studies of sociolinguistic variation are the primary avenue, beside that of semantic description along with the principle of structural description is being extended outward from the linguistic code itself into the analysis of social function.

According to Wardhaugh(2010:118) the term speech community was derived from the German ‘*Sprachgemeinschaft*’. According to him, language is both an individual possession and a social possession. Therefore, it is to be expected that certain individuals would behave linguistically like other individuals; they might be said to speak the same

language or the same dialect or even the same variety, when this happens, they are said to be members of the same speech community.

## **2.5 Language and Identity**

The study of language and identity has been carried out among varying groups, in classrooms, communities, populations. This includes individuals and other contexts of identification. Harrison (1998:248) as cited in White and Omoniyi (2006) are of the opinion that language and identity are inseparable. They went further to say that “identity is generated through culture, especially language and it can invest itself as a woman, Briton, a black, a Muslim and the like. Herein lies the facility of identity politics: it is dynamic, contested and complex”.

Furthermore, Tabouret-Killer (1997:315), explains that “language acts are acts of identity”. He identified four key areas of identity research: self identity, collective identity, institutional identity and global identity. It is also established that people and organizations possess multiple identities on the basis of the multiple roles they are capable of fulfilling or representing in the socio-cultural relationships in which they participate. Furthermore, differences between the lived experience of people accounts for variation between the versions of identity constructed, particularly their constructions or representations of ‘self’.

## **Race, Ethnicity and Identity:**

Much of the early works on ethnicity in language research was carried out within paradigms in anthropological enquiry. They identified communities of people by describing their language and cultural practices [Gumperz and Hymes 1972]. The very nature of identity, what Joseph (2004:1) called ‘identity of identity’, is contentious. One of the purposes served by identity as a concept is that of constituting a frame of reference within which our recognition of an entity takes place.

## **Social Classes**

Early sociolinguistic research as evidenced in the works of Labov (1966) and Trudgill (1974) has established a social perspective on identity research that differentiated between the language behaviours of members of different social groups. Social identities are defined on the basis of membership of social classes and statuses. More evidently, Bucholtz (2003:400) anchors her ‘authentication of identity’ theory to a distinction she makes between essentialism and strategic essentialism. She argues that essentialism actually serves a positive end in the way that it enables researchers to identify a previously described group and offer a preliminary description. According to Bucholtz, essentialism, for group members, promotes a shared identity. Conversely, the situating of identity within social action reaffirms the significance of the relational factor. Language choice presupposes the existence of alternatives. As Lepage and Tabouret-Killer (1985) state “language is an acceptable identity marker.”

## 2.6 Language Context and Social Class

Language like other forms of social activity has to be appropriate to the speaker using it. This is why in many communities, men and women's speech is different. [Trudgill 1974:103]. Language in other words, varies not only according to the social characteristics of the speaker such as social class, ethnic group, age and even sex, but also according to the social context in which he finds himself. The same speaker uses different linguistic varieties in different situations and for different purposes. Trudgill term the total number of linguistic varieties used by a community of speakers as that linguistic community's "verbal repertoire".

He went further to state that there are many social factors which are responsible for controlling the variety from this verbal repertoire that would be used for a particular occasion. If a speaker for instance is talking to the people he works with about their work, his language is likely to be different from that used at home with his family. The dominant factor which comes to play here is 'register'. Registers are a particular kind of language being produced by the social situation. Similarly, the kind of subject matter that is under discussion will have an effect, in addition to that of register, on the person spoken to, the role relationships and relative statuses of the participants under discussion, could be an important feature of social context. Forexample, speech between individuals of an equal rank is likely to be less relaxed and more formal than that between equals.

Trudgill (1974:105) gave an example of the connotations of English address forms such as *Sir, Mr. Smith, Smith, Frederick, Fred, Mate* and the like as an example of

social context. Each are all different and have stylistic implications, and the rules of their usage are quite complex, that is the rules vary from class to class, age-group to age-group and also place to place. Conversely, many aspects of the social situation, contribute to deciding which linguistic variety is to be employed on a particular occasion.

Holmes (1992:148) describes a social class as ‘a situation where differences between people are associated with differences in social prestige, wealth and education.’ She went further to say that class divisions are based on status differences. Social dialect research has revealed a consistent relationship between social class and language patterns. People from different social class speak differently. The way you speak is usually a good indicator of your social background. And there are many speech features which can be used as clues. Sociolinguists have found that almost any linguistic features in a community which shows variation will differ in frequency from one social group to another. Hymes (1964:215) states that “whatever the angle of vision, all study of language and speech as part of social life is basically one rooted in the interdependence within social life itself”. The linguistic aspects of adaptation to environment and circumstance, formation and expression of personality, social structure and interaction, cultural values and beliefs, are all facets of an on-going whole. According to Hymes, the degree at which speech is used varies among groups and individuals. This is so since not only are there cross-cultural differences, but there are also significant class differences within a single society.

## 2.7 Language Variation and Change

Sociolinguistic research has demonstrated that the speech of most people is least in some respects, variable. The study of language variation involves the search for consistent patterns in such variable linguistic behaviour. According to Redford, Atkinson, Britain, Clahsen and Spencer (2009) variation in language is multi-dimensional and also an indication of language change in progress. It is the concern of historical linguists to investigate how languages change over time, and until recently, historical linguists have studied language change by relying exclusively on diachronic methods. These involve analyzing the structure of language from a succession of dates in the past and highlighting those structural features (phonological, morphological or syntactic), this appears to have changed over that period of time. They went further to say that as an alternative to diachronic technique, Labov (1972) has pioneered a synchronic approach to studying language change. Whereas, diachronic techniques demand language data from different periods in time, Labov's synchronic, also called 'apparent -time', approach requires data to be collected at only one point in time.

Labov (1972:32), while investigating the way that many people on Martha's vine yard pronounced the /ai/ and /au/ sounds in words like '*right*' and '*mouth*' respectively, discovered that many people pronounced these words with rather traditional centralized vowels that one would expect from more standardized accents of North American English

Cameron (1997:62) claims that “Sociolinguistics deals with such matters as the production and reproduction of linguistic norms by institutions and socializing practices, how these norms are apprehended, accepted, resisted and subverted by individual and what their relation is to the construction of identity.” Milroy (2001:554-5) makes a somewhat similar claim in discussing the processes of standardization and change. “social patterns are adduced only in so far as they may elucidate patterns of language by exhibiting co-variation with linguistic variables... and so long as internal analysis are quite strongly biased in favour of linguistic, rather than social phenomena, the quantitative paradigm will be to that extent impeded in its attempts to explain the social ‘life’ of language and the social origins of language change.

Hymes (1964:449) also lends voice to the study of change that the first step in the study of change is to identify it, and the problem of discovery of historical connections between languages and linguistic elements as product of change. Consequently, bilingualism is a mechanism fundamental to many aspects of the social role of language and linguistic change. This is so since the differential impact of bilingualism in the same imposed language on two indigenous form of speech, would reveal that the nature of the contact situations, rather than the characteristics of the language themselves, determined the extensive assimilation of the language.

## 2.8 Varieties, Register, and Dialects

According to Wardhaugh (2010:23) all languages exhibit internal variation. That is each language exists in a number of varieties and it is one sense the sum of those varieties. Ferguson (1972:30) defines a variety as:

*Any body of human speech patterns which is sufficiently homogeneous to be analyzed by available techniques of synchronic distribution and which has a sufficiently large repertory of elements and their arrangements or processes with broad enough semantic scope to function in all formal contexts of communication.*

There is always some variation when we consider a language as a whole, a dialect of that language, the speech of a group within that dialect or each individual in that group. Hudson (1996:22) offers another definition of variety of language as: “*A set of linguistic items with similar distribution*”

This definition allows us to say that the following are varieties: Canadian English, London English, the English of football commentaries and so on. According to Hudson, this definition also allows us to treat all the languages of multilingual speaker or community, as a single variety, since all the linguistic items concerned have a similar social distribution. This goes to show that a variety is therefore, something greater than a single language as well as something less than something traditionally referred to as a dialect.

Consequently, Ferguson (1994:20) has this to say about register:

*People participating in recurrent communication situations tend to develop similar vocabularies, similar features of intonation, and characteristic bits of syntax and phonology that they used in these situations, this kind of variety is a register. [Ferguson 1994:20]*

Ferguson added that there is no mistaking the strong tendency for individuals and co-communicators to develop register variation along many dimensions, one person may control a variety of registers; you can be a stock broker, an archaeologist, a mountain climber or an economist. Each register helps you to express your identity at a specific time or place that is, how you seek to present yourself to others.

We can interpret register differences in terms of the model of acts of identity in much the same way as for dialect differences. This is so, since each time a person speaks or writes, he not only locates himself with reference to the rest of society, but also relates his act of communication to a complex classificatory scheme of communicative behaviour. Redford et. al (2009:225) defines a register as: “*A register is the specialized vocabulary common to a particular trade, occupation, topic or activity.*”

They explained further that often, people consider that the registers of doctors and lawyers (and even linguists) hinder communication and understanding. The term ‘jargon’ is sometimes used to refer to the confusing registers of particular occupations. Registers are ‘in-group varieties’ which lead to accurate and speedy communication of information among those who know and use them.

## **2.9 The use of Language/Speech Variation within and outside the University**

### **Community**

Research has shown that language variation is a variable tool in active use in and outside the university community. A number of people have carried out research on sociolinguistics within and outside the university community. Idiagbon's (2010) study on "the sociolinguistics of Nigerian Pidgin English in selected university campuses in Nigeria", investigated varieties of the Nigerian pidgin with special focus on the variety being used on the Nigerian university campuses. His work discovered that even the Nigerian pidgin spoken by undergraduates varies and each variation is characterized by the mixture of slangy expressions and it is code-mixed with lexical items from the indigenous languages.

Idiabdon's work is in line with Gana' (2010) thesis on 'the use of pidgin among university lecturers'. Her research centered on whether the university lecturers speak pidgin, if they do, when and to whom. Gana's work revealed that the senior university lecturers use Nigerian pidgin not only in the market place, but also in the university environment, further revealing that, although, Nigerian pidgin is not an officially recognized language, it is used in official settings in the university environment. Though we cannot completely refute Idiagbon's and Gana's findings, however, their analysis centered only on pidgin, excluding other Nigerian languages which have also to a great extent influence the language of speakers of English not only in the university, but Nigeria as a whole. Okunrinmeta (2013) study on bilingualism in Nigeria shows that

Nigerians are creative in the use of language since they are able to tap their bilingual experiences to adapt the languages at their disposal to suit the numerous conveniences, experiences, nuances and sensibilities in the Nigerian environment.

The study also shows that this mutual influence, which has resulted in several peculiar Nigerian usages, has contributed immensely to the effective reflection and expression of the Nigerian experience and should, therefore, be seen as a good sign of healthy co-existence between English and the Nigerian languages in Nigeria's multilingual setting. His findings show that the indigenous languages also have a big role to play when conducting research on language varieties in a multilingual setting such as Nigeria, this Idiagbon (2010) and Gana (2010) have not been able to point out in their study. Thus it is possible for Nigerian as we shall see in this study to switch from English to Pidgin English or English to the Nigerian languages or vice-versa, or to insert varying chunks of English into their performance of a Nigerian language and vice-versa.

Egbah (2010) research on "language and social class: an analysis of language variation in the Nigerian Air Force Base, Kaduna", points out the significant relationship between the levels of linguistic variation and class structure in the Kaduna NAF Base. Egbah's study shows that selected variables, such as group membership, educational attainment and gender distinctions, could have an influence on the choice and distribution of linguistic variation in a given speech community.

Similarly, Agbedo (2006) research in Elugwu –Ezike speech community, southeast Nigeria examines the patterns of linguistic variation and potential change in

Ezikeoba Igbo, speech community of Elugwu-Ezike, anchored on the quantitative paradigm of Labovian sociolinguistics, it focuses specifically on the variable realization of certain linguistic items as observed in the speech behaviours of a sample of Ezikeoba Igbo speakers grouped primarily by their linguistic behavior and secondarily by their social characteristics. The central objective of Agedo's work is to explore the applicability of Labov's quantitative approach to the study of variation and change in a typical rural speech community of Africa and draw attention to some sociolinguistic peculiarities of typical rural speech communities, which western and urban-oriented variation studies have tended to gloss over. Labov's correlation method especially the application of the 'social class' concept in his 1966 New York city has so influenced subsequent studies that variationists have usually used such methods uncritically.

Also, a number of studies (Labov, 1966; Trudgill 1974) have illustrated the embedding of linguistic change in social class. Examples of this sociolinguistic phenomenon so far seem to be of two types, which are described by Labov as change from below and change from above, each illustrating a process in which social pressures and attitudes come to bear on linguistic structure. The foregoing presupposes the applicability of the social class concept in the study of speech communities of all kinds. In Agbedo's study, the concept of social variables (social class, gender, ethnicity etc) that have been proposed by Labov as correlating significantly with linguistic variation are truly universal. The picture, which emerges from Agbedo's data analysis, suggests that not all speech communities especially rural communities such as Elugwu-Ezike are easily

amenable to the social stratifications of the type that is obtain in urban speech communities studied by Labov and followers. Specifically, social class proposed by Labov as correlating with linguistic variation is not universal, rather the phenomena of linguistic variation and change is determined by the relative potency of social forces operating in a given linguistic environment.

His work tallies with that of Anderson and Ansah's (2000) research on language shift and Diglossia in West Africa. The paper discussed on diglossia and language shift by pointing out some mismatches between current sociolinguist models of language shift and the reality of language shift as it occurs in highly multilingual West Africa. According to them, the concept of Western-based sociolinguistic models, where language shift is often associated with diglossia, where domains are hierarchically ranked (Ferguson, 1959), does not happen in West Africa. What happens in West Africa may be closer to Fishman's (1967) extended diglossia where the (H) and (L) roles maybe played not by different varieties of the same language but by different languages, usually the colonial language and indigenous language respectively, or a minority indigenous language and an indigenous majority language. Even then, according to them is not applicable to all cases of bi/multilingualism in West Africa as the majority of the population are multilingual in languages that do not necessarily exists any particular hierarchical order.

In this regard, we would agree with them as certain social factors, the need for socio-economic or political favour, appear to influence language shift in individual

domains. Ewa and Rober (2012) research on General American English (GAE) and South American English (SAE) saddled on whether speech intelligibility in a multi-talker background can be affected by the language of both the talker and the interfering speech. Their study demonstrated that dialect variation can influence listeners' performance in a multi-talker environment. This is in line with Clopper and Bradlow (2008) who presented sentence stimuli produced by talkers representing four broad American English dialect regions. Their results showed that, in the most difficult listening conditions (-6dB), the intelligibility scores were significantly different among all four dialects. As the overall performance improved in the easiest +2dB condition, some of the significance differences disappeared, showing that only Mid-Atlantic talker were less intelligible than the talkers from the other three dialects.

Overall, their study shows that dialect differences among talkers have a differential effect on intelligibility of degraded speech and tend to be attenuated in more favourable listening conditions that provide listeners with greater redundancy of cues.

## 2.10 Theoretical Framework

This segment gives a brief account of studies on language variation conducted in the recent past in view of the present research. It also provides the theoretical framework that can be considered most appropriate for the present study being undertaken in the field of variation studies.

### The Community of Practice Theory

According to Eckert (2006) the notion of community practice was developed by Jean Lave and Ehnne Wenger (Lave1991 and Wenger 2000) as the basis of a social theory of learning. A community of practice is a collection of people who engage, on an ongoing basis, in some common endeavor. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992:464) define it as: *...an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor ways of doing things. Ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations, practices emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor.* It is difficult to compare directly this definition with one for speech community because of the contested nature of the latter.

Gumperz (1972:16) provides another definition thus:

*... Members of the same speech community need not all speak the same language nor use the same linguistic forms on similar occasions. All that is required is that there be at least one language in common and that rules governing basic communicated strategies be shared so that speakers can decode the social meanings carried by alternative model of communication [Gumperz 1972:16]*

The term 'community of practice' (C of P) has recently shouldered its way into the sociolinguistic lexicon. The purpose is to provide analysis of language variation, and

language use that illustrate the potential (and also the limit) of this concept as a theoretical basis for enquiry. The community of practice provides a useful alternative to the speech –community model. As an ethnographic activity based approach, the community of practice is of special value to researchers in language variation, because of its compatibility with current theories of variation. An extension of the community of practice allows variation to be explained as the result of positive and negative identity practices rather than as a fixed social categories as in the speech community model.

In this study, the theory of community of practice is built to develop its potential as an analytic tool for the sociolinguistic investigation of language variation. The framework is applied to identity and social pressures as it relates to the staff of the University. Also, these identities and social pressures are analyzed within the community of practice framework, because this concept permits us to draw on the linguistic and social information necessary to understand variation among the staff of the University.

The community of practice model was adopted as a result of the shortcoming of an earlier model, that is the speech community, which was designed to analyze sociolinguistic phenomena at the macro level, and it is often inappropriate and inadequate for the kinds of questions currently being asked in language and variation. Central among these, is the question of identity and social pressure: how do speakers use language to project their identities? And how is identity interwoven with other social parameters like social pressure?

It is on the basis of these shortcomings that this study draws on a theory of community of practice that avoids the problems associated with the speech community model. The community of practice framework emerges from “*Practice Theory*” an approach that has currency in such disciplines as Sociology, Anthropology and Education. The connection of the community of practice to recent developments in other fields allows sociolinguists to offer more fully, theorized social explanations than were possible with the earlier model. In addition, the community of practice overcomes many of the faults that sociolinguists have found with the speech community, and it therefore has wide applicability to the study’s central questions.

### **Strength of Community of Practice Theory**

The following are some of the advantages of community of practice theory:

1. The theory characterizes membership as being created and maintained through social practices (linguistic or otherwise) at a local level, rather than the global categories being imposed on individuals.
2. The model emphasizes the perception of variation by different members of the speech community.
3. Variationist studies which are based on the community of practice tend to concentrate on variation of those at the central and also the margins.
4. Finally, individual identities are seen as shifting, and potentially multiple. The concept resides in the importance of doing and more particularly doing things in a way which reinforces membership in that community of practice.

## **Weakness of Community of Practice**

The limitations of community of practice theory include the following:

1. Communities of practice emerge in terms of organizational hierarchy.
2. Time is another limiting factor that impacts communities of practice in different ways. Communities of practice need time to develop naturally as well as opportunities for consistent participation.

Milroy and Gordon (2003:114) points out that the concept of network and community of practice are closely related and the difference between them are chiefly method and focus. Network analysis typically deals with structural and content properties of the ties that constitute egocentric personal network, but cannot address the issue of how and where linguistic variants are employed to construct local social meanings. Thus, it ranked linguistic variant according to separate score, and it is descriptive in nature whereas language is arbitrary and systematic, the speech community model also treat language as central (that is the existence and systematicity of heterogeneity) rather than marginal.

As an improvement on these shortcomings, we would buy the idea of Giddens (1978:204) which states that “the idea that the social world is best viewed as a set of practices is not new”. And as a result this research would adopt Eckert and Mc Connell-Ginet (1992,1995) notion which states that rather than investing language with a special

analytic status, the community of practice framework considers language as one of many social practices in which participants engage in.

Also, by focusing on individual as well as groups within the university, the theory integrates structure with agency, since variations are known through identities , social pressures, social class and so on, and these are rooted in actions rather than categories, the community of practice model can capture the multiplicity of variation that is at work among some staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in specific speech situations more fully than is possible within the speech community and social network theories.

## 2.11 Chapter two Summary

The chapter is classified into three aspects; conceptual review, which reviews the definition of terms and concepts such as the concept of sociolinguistics, language variation, code-switching and mixing, borrowing, speech community and the like. The empirical review, reviewed related work such as Idiagbon's (2010) and Gana's (2010) posit on pidgin in the university environment. What the study discovered while reviewing their work, is that though pidgin, particularly Nigerian Pidgin is a language that should be given recognition, Okunrinmeta's (2013) research on bilingualism in Nigeria seems to be different from their work. His work showed the contribution of the indigenous languages in a multilingual setting like Nigeria. This Idiagbon (2010) and Gana (2010) research have not been able to point out.

Also, the view of Kachru (1978), Bamiro (2006a) Ansre (1971), Banjo (1986), Bamgbose (1995) and Okunrinmeta (2008) on code-switching and code-mixing were reviewed, the study noted that Okunrinmeta (2008) seems to have a different opinion on code-switching and mixing than the other studies reviewed. According to him, the previous studies have not been able to present the true picture of what happens in the Nigerian multilingual setting where Nigerians who are bilingual in English and a Nigerian language can, in the process of communication, insert English words or phrases into the structure of a Nigerian language sentence or vice versa.

The study adopts the concept of community of practice theory in order to overcome the limitations and problems associated with other theories such as the speech community and social network theories.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This segment deals with techniques employed for the collection, presentation, analysis and interpretation of data adopted in this study.

#### **3.1 Sampling population**

A total of four hundred (400) persons were used for this research, out of the estimated number of about nine thousand one hundred and seventy eight (9178) staff of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. The choice of using two hundred staff becomes inevitable because it is impossible to investigate the entire staff due to the large population of 9,178 which conservatively speaking is enormous.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

A cross sectional descriptive survey was used for this study. The study design is appropriate for this study because data was obtained at once without manipulating the study environment.

#### **3.3 Description of the Subjects**

The following parameters were used in the determination of the subjects to be sampled in this study:

**3.3.1 Educational Attainment:** This includes levels, ranging from academic staff to non-academic staff. This choice was made in order to avoid the question of isolating a particular cadre in the institution.

**3.3.2 Gender, Age and Social Class Classification:** The gender classification in this study covers both male and female staff; the age and social class could be subsumed within the range of 18 – 70 years. This age range is selected because it covers the period from which an individual could officially be referred to as matured and seventy years being the age of retirement for professors in the institution.

### **3.4 Sampling Procedure**

The sampling procedure is a process for collecting data on a sample observation which are selected from the population of interest using a probability-based sample design. In this study, the random sampling method was adopted with face to face direct procedure applied in the data elicitation process. This approach has several merits; first it permits a closer control of the informants and localities. Also, it allows for a deeper penetration in the language use of the subjects. A total of four hundred (400) persons were used for this research, this is because, we accept the view of Sankoff (1974) as in Labaran (1991:128) which states that “sample size for linguistic research needs not include a large number of individual such as would be required in other kinds of behavioural survey, large sample tends to be redundant bringing increasing data handling problems with diminishing analytical returns.” We felt the information elicited from the

different cadre of the university should represent the ideas of the whole staff of the university.

### **3.5 Instruments of Data Collection**

The data to be used in this research were elicited via the following media:

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. In this study, a questionnaire was designed to elicit responses from a random selection of four hundred (400) participants. The questionnaire was administered to staff of universities in different faculties as follows: fifty (50) questionnaires were distributed randomly by convenience to staff in each faculty, to give a total of 400 questionnaires. Consent and approval was obtained from each participant of the study by explaining purpose of study and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. In addition, open and closed ended questions were used for this study. The questionnaire is subdivided into two sections:

Section A: Socio demographic data of respondents

Section B: language variation and staff of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. And their response was carefully evaluated.

### **3.5.2 Participant Observation**

Observation is to investigate the interaction among speakers were made with the view of identifying variations in their speech. The method of observations used are the participant and obtrusive non-participant observation. In the participant observation method, the researcher was directly involved in the data elicitation process, by having conversation with academic and non- academic staff. Whereas, in the obtrusive non-participant method, the researcher is present during discussions but does not participate. The researcher only listens as the participants speak and later write it out.

### **3.4.3 Audio-Tape Recording (ATR)**

In this method, the researcher explains to the interlocutors in conversation the reasons behind the ATR, and with their cooperation, the researcher was able to gather the casual speech of interlocutors. This would be used to validate the findings from the questionnaire.

### **3.5 Administration of Instruments**

The interviews were conducted by the researcher within the selected sites, which are offices of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) the Non-Academic and Associate Staff Union of Universities (NASUU), the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT). The researcher also personally administered and retrieved the questionnaire responses from the informants.

### 3.6 Pilot survey

A Pilot Survey means a mini-trial test of the research instruments to determine the adequacy or otherwise of such instruments. In this study, a pilot survey was conducted in order to gain some insights into the way variations exist amongst some staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The purpose of pilot survey was to decide what sort of linguistic items are worthy of detailed investigation in view of the goals of this research. Also investigation was conducted to ascertain the reliability and validity of the instruments to be used in the study.

Eight (8) individuals were randomly selected from the different cadre of the university namely: Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT) and Non-Academic and Associate Staff Union of Universities (NASUU) Also, these persons were equally distributed along five categories:

- i. Occupational Status: Three individuals were selected from the Academic cadre, three individuals were also selected each from the non-academic cadre that is the senior and junior staff making it a total of six individuals. Two individuals from the technologist cadre were also selected.
- ii. Age: the age range of the participants selected was between 25-50 years.
- iii. Gender: eight persons were selected from the male and female class.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This segment presents the data collected and their respective analysis in view of the goal of this research. The section also suggests possible implications that could be drawn from the relationship between language used, dialect/identities and social pressure in any community. The results are presented and analyzed along the following analytic profiles.

Category A: the examination of data collected from multiple response and checklist.

Category B: the examination of questionnaire responses

#### **4.1 The Examination of Questionnaire Responses**

The presentation and analysis of data collected from the questionnaire would be divided into three minor sectors. The first sector handles the profile of the respondents, the second aspect analyses the respondents' multiple response in the questionnaire and checklist, the third aspect presents and analyzed the respondents' answer in relation to some issues raised in chapter one.

##### **4.1.2 Profile Details of the Questionnaire Respondents**

This sector provides a broad statistical background into the linguistic and pedagogic variables of the respondents.

## I. Geopolitical Distribution of the Respondents

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of the respondents along their geopolitical settings. The grouping was done along the six major geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

**Table 4.1 Geopolitical Background of the Respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
NC	138	36.1
NE	26	76.8
NW	128	33.4
SE	22	5.7
SS	21	5.5
SW	48	12.5
Total	383	100.0

The table reveals that the staff from the North regions; North Central, North East and North West respectively have the highest response rate, but in the same vein, there is a sizeable amount of response rate in the South East, South South and South West. This confirms our claim in chapter one, that the staff of Ahmadu Bello University are drawn from all the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

## II Age-rangeofthe Respondents

The age distribution of any population has many implications such as various occupations, level of education as well as the working population. Table 4.2 shows a tabular presentation of the age-range of the respondents

**TABLE 4.2 Percentage Distributionsof the Respondents by their Ages**

Age (years)	Frequency	Percent (%)
18-30	195	50.9
31-50	126	32.9
51-70	62	16.2
Total	383	100.0

The table reveals that individuals within the age group of 18-30 years account for the highest number of respondents (50.9%) this confirms the idea that youth respond more to data elicitation process than senior citizens. As a result, these persons therefore, received maximum representation in the survey.

## III Educational Levelof the Respondents

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria has vigorous educational policy that encourages staff to be enrolled into various academic and vocational institutions within and outside the institution. Academic tuition fees within the university are taken care of by the management of the university. In the same vein, where there is need for staff to further

their studies outside the institution, the university management provides funds to help such staff cater for tuition and other essential fees. This further precipitates the motivation of staff within the university into advanced studies within and outside the university. Table 4.3 gives a tabular presentation of educational attainment of respondents.

**TABLE 4.3: Percentage Distribution of the Respondents by their Educational Attainment**

Educational attainment	Frequency	Percent
Degree	162	42.3.
Diploma	38	9.9
HND	18	4.7
M.Sc/PhD	108	28.2
NCE	27	7.1
SSCE	30	7.8
Total	383	100.0

As the findings in table 4.3 illustrates, the staff with degree scored the highest percentage of 42.3% followed closely by the staff with higher degree (M.Sc /M.A and PhD). The staff with SSCE (School leaving certificate) has a score of 7.8%. These scores stem from the fact Ahmadu Bello University is a degree awarding institution, and staff strives to

attain the tertiary level of education. The table above therefore, is a link between language performance and the level of educational achievement.

### 4.3. Professional Associationsof Respondents

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria being a Federal institution has professional bodies/associations which its staff are affiliated to. The following are professional bodies that exist in the institution; Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the nonacademic and Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), the Non-academic and Associate Staff Union of Universities (NASUU), the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT).

Table 4.1 below shows the percentage response of staff under their different associations.

**TABLE 4.4 Professional Associationsof Respondents**

Professional Association	Frequency	Percent (%) percentage
ASUU	56	31.1%
SSANU	101	56.1%
NAAT	16	8.9%
NASU	7	3.9%
Total	180	100.0

The table above illustrates that the highest response rate is the (SSANU) with 53.8% followed closely by ASSU with 30.5%. This is no surprise as the data collected in chapter three reveals that there are about 7,271 non-teaching staff and 2,425 academic staff.

**Category B: The examination of data collected from multiple response, Participant Observation and Audio tape Recorder**

**IV Gender Distribution of Respondents**

From childhood, males and females are different in many ways, physiologically and psychologically. Eisenmen (1997) claims that women in comparison to men have better memory, men are quite accurate in maintaining a sense of direction but women are not. We agree with Eisenmen (1997) because according to Braun (2004:16) there are differences in frequency of usage between the genders. Women tend to use more intensifying adverbs such as 'very' or 'really'. In terms of sentence structure, women adhere more closely to the norms of the standard language. Men on the other hand, are seen to talk more colloquially and make greater use of dialect. Two anthropologists Malts and Boker studied the interactions between children when playing together. They found that girls learn to create and maintain relationship of closeness and equality while boys learn to assert their position of dominance to attract and maintain an audience and to assert themselves.

Linguists agree that the way we speak is gendered, and that women and men talk differently.

Table 4.5 shows the gender distribution of respondents.

**TABLE 4.5 Percentage Distribution of the Respondent by their Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	288	75.2
Female	95	24.8
Total	383	100.0

The table illustrates that the male staff respond more to the questionnaire with (75.2%) while the female staff has (24.8%) response, this is in line with Tannen (1990) who believes that females generally speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy, while men speak and hear a language of status and independence.

To this end, the table reveals that men tend to do better than women on visual-spatial test, this is consistent with the claim that men do better in writing while women are good in speech. To ascertain more claims on this, the following research question was raised in the questionnaire as to whether “there is a difference in the way male and female staff speak?” The response is represented in the table below:

**TABLE 4.5.1. The Percentage Response to the Differences in the Way Male and Female Staff Speak.**

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	213	58.3
No	108	27.2
No answer	62	14.4
Total	383	100.0

As the finding in table 4.5 illustrates, the respondents with ‘Yes’ scored the highest with 55.6% while the respondents with no scored 28.2%. The respondents with no answer scored 16.2%. These figures indicate that there is indeed difference between the speech of female and male staff.

Women tend to use the standard language frequently than their male counterpart. This could be seen in the following conversation involving a male and a female staff:-

### **Conversation One**

**[Held at the FSLT (faculty of science lecture theatre premises at 4:30pm between a male and a female academic staff)]**

Female staff: which number did you use to call me?

Male staff: oh! Na your MTN I called

Female staff: let me give you another one... it's the Glo I am using now

Male staff: Thank you.

Female staff: (turning to the male staff son) so you will play sport like your dad?

Male staff: e go run oo! Athletics

Female staff: Alright, bye bye

Male staff: ok, greet oga for me.

The above conversation was recorded in order to ascertain the extent to which the male and female staff speech varies. And from the conversation, despite the fact that the male staff tried to switch from the standard to the use of pidgin, the female staff maintained the standard variety. No wonder (Uchida, 1992) in his 'difference theory' claims that men and women, even those within the same group live in different or separate cultural world and as a result, they promote different ways of speaking. The response to question number eight(8) in the questionnaire(if yes can you identify three key differences?) was analyzed and the following features of male and female languages were deduced:

### **Features of language that is Common amongst the Female Staff**

1. Direct speech example 'she said to me'
2. Tag questions example, 'she is very nice isn't she?'
3. The use of empty adjectives example 'charming', 'cute'

4. Super polite forms that is, the use of indirect request and euphemism example ‘would you please close the door,’ ‘I’d really appreciate it if you can return the book on time.’
5. Intensifiers are frequent example ‘really’, ‘so’, ‘well’.
6. There is lack of sense of humour, joke telling is not common.

### **Features of Language that is Common amongst the Male Staff**

1. The vernacular and pidgin is often used when in social gathering.
2. Topics of conversation are mainly concerned with politics, economics, money and sometimes sport.
3. There is humour, joke telling is common.

Summarily, although the male and female staff live and work in the same environment, they establish different relations with society as if each belonged to a different environment and culture, the result of which is consequently reflected in the language of both genders as in other aspects of their lives. Both genders have differing social orientations, their linguistic repertoires draws upon a variety of social and linguistic symbols as resources to mirror, construct and reinforce their social identities.

### **4.4 Presentation and Analysis of Responses to some issues raised in the Questionnaire**

This sub-section focuses on the responses of the subjects to some thematic issues raised in this research, with the questions highlighted along its appropriate tabulated data.

In the examination of values involving the testing of the hypothesis stated in chapter one, a more in-depth analysis would be provided using the single factor ANOVA model. This statistical tool would perform analysis of variance on the data received for the purpose of judging if there is any significant relationship in the research findings at 0.05 Alpha levels. Thus, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) would be accepted when the computed frequency ( $F^*$ ) is less than or equal to the expected frequency ( $F$  critical). This would be statistically presented as:  $H_0$  is accepted when the  $F^* \leq F$  crit.

**TABLE 4.6 Anova table Showing Responses to the Question of Social Pressure and Language Variation**

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between Groups	4.140	5	828	2.338	.044
Within Groups	61.610	174	354		
Total	65.750	179			

Table 4.5 reveals that the F critical value is 2.338 at Alpha levels of .044. From this analysis, the Null hypothesis is upheld since the  $F^* \leq F$  crit, thus the fact would now be accepted that the levels of linguistic variation and social pressure amongst the staff of the University are directly proportional. As soon as staff leaves the corners of the class

rooms and official meetings, they usually revert to the Vernacular or in some areas pidgin. This is no surprise as Bamgbose (1971) explains that in a language contact situation such as exists in Nigeria, it is to be expected that there will be an interaction between the vernaculars and English. This is also evident in the language of some staff, which can be seen below: *wayo* (Hausa origin), *Yanga* (Hausa origin), *Oga* (Yoruba origin) *wahala* (Hausa origin) *Baba* (Hausa origin). The following are loan words mostly from Hausa, this is so since Ahmadu Bello University is situated in the North western part of the country. In view of the dominating position which the native language (Hausa) has on the staff of the University Zaria, we would buy Mefani's idea, that the terms for humour, local objects, and some food will be borrowed from the dominant language spoken in that given area.

The following conversation between two staff could be used to ascertain more claim on this.

### **Conversation two**

**(At the faculty of Arts Block, close to the boardroom around 10:30am)**

The conversation below is between two male non-teaching staff. And it is done in order to ascertain the level of influence the native language has on the language use of the staff of the university.

First staff: *Sannu, Yane?*

Second staff: *Lafia Yaazumi?*

First staff: *lafia, yaaiki?*

Second staff: *kai a kwaibayani?*

The conversation went on between them, both participants conversing in the indigenous language, Hausa. The conversation above shows that Nigerian speakers of English when in informal situation, refer back to their native dialect especially when in casual situations this is because this is the language that shows their identity. Bamgbose (1971) sheds more light on this, when he said “almost every Nigerian speaker of English has a vernacular language as his mother tongue”. Therefore, an interesting discovery in the conversation above is the use of English in relation to a vernacular by those who know both. There are two kinds of situations in which the participants share a common vernacular. Thus, if the participants wish to be formal, they generally speak in English, if they wish to be informal they speak in the vernacular as can be seen in the above conversation.

## **VI. Code Switching and Language Variation**

It appears that people are influenced linguistically, as might be expected, much more by close friends, family members, work mates and the like. Ahmadu Bello University Zaria like most other institutions is a society-structured group. In a multilingual setting like this, the ability to shift from one language to another is accepted as normal. This gave rise to questions like ‘what happens when people who are multilingual meet, what language do they use? Also, what brings a speaker to switch

from one variety to another? The response to question 7 raised in the questionnaire (Do you sometimes use a different form of language when in certain situation within the university? Example switching from one language or variety to another was applied to analyze it. Table 4.7 shows the percentage distribution of response received.

**TABLE 4.7 Do you Sometimes use a Different form of Language when in Certain Situation within the University?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	127	70.6%
No	43	23.9%
No answer	10	5.6%
Total	180	100.0

The table reveals that the respondents with ‘Yes’ receives the highest score of 70.6% while respondents with ‘No’ receives 23.9%, the respondents with ‘No answer’ have 5.6%. The common form of switch that occurs among some staff of the University Zaria is usually the switch from Standard English to Pidgin or in some cases indigenous language. Some factors that bring this to light include; solidarity, accommodation to listeners, choice of topic and the like. The conversation below is a typical example:

**Conversation Three**

**(At the car park beside Ahmadu Bello University Zaria’s Senate building at about 11:am)**

Two staff, both non-academic staff, were having casual conversation about their over time allowance.

First speaker: Good morning, Ma

Second speaker: Good morning, Sir

First speaker: How we dey?

Second speaker: Fine oo!

First speaker: so your people have refused to pay our over time allowance Abi? (turning to a third person) sorry oh! Na your sister I de talk to....

The conversation above is an example of metaphorical code switching. The conversation started with the exchange of greetings, and then the first speaker deliberately changed the topic to ask the second speaker a question, using pidgin. This deliberate switch of language is applied to make the conversation as informal as possible. Also, the conversation has a blend of intra-sentential, inter-sentential and also tags code switching. The interlocutors started the conversation in English but later switched to pidgin, there is also the transfer of focus from English to pidgin and this is done in the middle of the sentence, which is an example of intra-sentential code switching. The question 'Abi' is a pidgin language and also a tag question inserted alongside the Standard English, this is an example of a tag code-switching. This tallies with Wardhaugh (2006) claim that two speakers who are bilingual, that is, who have access to two codes, and who for one reason or another shift back and forth between the two

languages as they converse by code-switching are actually using a third code, one which draws on the two languages.

#### **4.5 When do you switch from Standard English to your Dialect?**

The above question is a follow up of the previous question and it is meant for those staff that uses a different form of language when in certain situation within the university. 23.9% of the respondents gave negative response to this question because they prefer to use the official language at all times. However, 70.6% of the respondent gave positive response to indicate that other languages are preferred to the Standard English when in certain situation within the university. The following were some of the responses given:

Closer relationship and increased cordiality

It is convenient

It aids understanding

Secret purpose

Social factor

Mixing with friend

Level of education of the person I'm communicating with

Message being passed across

To convey simple message(s) to friends

To make possible resolution

Joke telling/playing

In an informal situations  
Involving only friends  
When stressing a very important issue  
For easy communication  
Nature of communication  
The environment I find myself

From the above responses, it is clear that those who chose to speak a different form of language when in certain situation in the university do it for many reasons mainly because the native dialect is the language people identifies themselves with. It is the language used to show solidarity and identity with one's interlocutor as the above responses has shown. Other reasons that are very useful for this work are: aids understanding, it is effective for joke telling/playing, ideal for social settings and so many other reasons.

## **4.6 General Discussion**

The discussion of findings would be reviewed along their respective themes for the purpose of clarity.

### **4.6.1 Social Pressure and Language Variation**

The research has shown that the desire to show solidarity and identity with ones interlocutor is a social force that give birth to different variant form that exist in a given society. Wardhaugh (2009) confirms this by stating that we can and will shift as the need

arises from one code to another. Within each code there will also be the possibility of choices not all of which will have the same import as some will be marked than others and these various choices will have different social meanings. Bearing the foregoing in mind, it is worthy to consider Opler and Hoider (1940) projections on the subject of language variation. They assert that the type of variation which is familiar in most societies is correlated with the difference between formal and informal situations. 'Formality' and 'informality' being defined of course in terms of each particular society and settings.

#### **4.6.2 Educational Attainment and Language Variation**

The research highlights the impact of language variation and the effect it has on one's level of educational attainment. The study indicated that one's level of educational attainment is not an impending factor on his linguistic variation. To this end, language variation amongst staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria is a common occurrence not only amongst the secondary school holders but also the university professors; staff tends to switch from one language to another as the need arises. The major form of switch in this case is the transfer of focus from standard English to pidgin and in some cases indigenous language mostly the predominant language of the area.

#### **4.6.3 Gender and Language Variation**

The findings of the research have proved that the language use among staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria is gender-sensitive. The influence of sex differences on

the data variables in the study showed that the female staff uses the standard variety more often than the male staff. The male staff regardless of their level of education, more often than not, especially in unofficial settings tend to use the informal variety which in most cases is the switch from standard English to Pidgin or indigenous language. This is because the vernacular and pidgin in most cases is the language of social setting.

Climate (1997) shades more light on these, where he said females generally use speech to develop and maintain relationship, they use language to achieve intimacy. Tannen (1990) also share the same conviction where he stated that women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy, while men speak and hear a language of status and independence. From the foregoing, if there is no limit to the ways in which individuals can classify themselves and speakers must constantly create and recreate social identities for themselves, then it may be almost impossible to predict which group or community an individual will consider himself or herself to belong to at a particular moment. The group an individual identifies with will change according to situations: at one moment religion maybe important; at another, regional origin; and at still another, perhaps membership in a particular profession or social class. An individual may also attempt to bond with others because they all possess a set of characteristics, or even just a single characteristic for example, be of the same gender and the like.

To this end, language bonding may be in one case a command of a particular dialect or it may provide a sense of identity or solidarity with others. It is therefore important that people are able to identify themselves on one occasion as members of one

group and on another as members of another group. One of the consequences of the intersecting identifications, is language variation: people do not speak alike, nor does any individual speak in the same way on every occasion. The variation we see in language must partly reflect a need that individuals identifies themselves to a speech community on some occasion and different from them on other occasions.

An individual also has a speech repertoire; that is he or she controls a number of varieties of a language or two or more languages. Quite often, such individual will in most cases switch from one language to another depending on his or her interlocutor.

We would at this point agree with Wardhaugh (2006), Idiagbon (2010), and Olunrinmeta (2013) that no two individuals are exactly alike in their linguistic capabilities, just like no two social situations are exactly alike. Also, that there is an interplay between the English language, indigenous language and Nigerian pidgin by those who know them. As Hill (2005) also points out “uniform populations rarely reside within categories that lumps people together based on demographic variables, and broad categories may mask the diverse experience of the people in that group.”

We have found this assertion to be true among staff of the University, despite objectively sharing many traits like race, gender, occupation, regional background, age and the like, they still show considerable differentiation in their linguistic behaviour by conventionally switching from one language to another in relation to the context they find themselves. People are separated from one another by fine gradations of social class, regional origin, and occupation, by factors such as religion, gender, nationality and ethnicity. By

particular kinds of linguistic skills like verballity or literacy and by personality characteristics. These are but some of the obvious reasons that gave rise to variation in the speech of staff of the university.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This segment would be divided into three parts. The first segment of the chapter gives a summary of the major findings of this study in relation to the objectives outlined in section 1.4 of chapter one. The second segment highlights the contributions of the research to some specific disciplines such as Sociolinguistics, Dialectology, and Research methodology. The limitations of the study in terms of methodology are summarized in the third section, while the concluding section offers suggestions for further research.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Findings**

The study sets out to investigate speech variation among academic and non-academic staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and provide solutions to the problems discovered. The overall findings from the data collected in the questionnaire and personal observations were used to answer the research questions. The major results of the findings are enumerated as follows:

1. That staff of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria are drawn from the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria; therefore language variation among some staff varies from the ethnic group which the staff hails from.

2. That the use of variation is a common occurrence not only amongst the non academic staff but also the academic staff including the university professors.
3. That enrolment into selected educational and vocational institutions in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria could be the motivation that precipitates staff to acquire advanced studies and therefore serve as a link between language performance and level of educational achievement.
4. That the predominant native language (Hausa) and other indigenous native languages, including the Nigerian Pidgin have a great impact on the language use of staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
5. The length of time an individual spends in a given location could have a significant impression on his or her competence in the language of that environment.
6. The findings revealed that there is significant difference in the way male and female staff speaks in the institution, this accounts for the relationship between language variation and genderdistinctions within Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
7. The findings implied that the motivation that gives rise to language variation amongst the staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria include; social pressure, context and settings. This explains the existence of variations within the institution.
8. There are both inter-speaker variation, that is variation between individual speakers and intra-speaker variation that is variation within individual speaker.  
and;

9. that there is interplay of both code –switching and code mixing in the language of some staff of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.

## **5.2 Implications of the Study**

The following areas cited highlight the contribution of this research to some specific disciplines.

### **5.2.1 Sociolinguistics**

The study is relevant to sociolinguists because the findings depict language as a vehicle for socialization and cultural integration. The research showed how enthusiastic an individual can be in showing solidarity and socialization with members of his/her speech community. In addition, the study has revealed that several sociological realities such as cultural background of speakers, gender, occupation, religious background as well as context of situation could bring about variations that exist in a language.

A major contribution of this study to sociolinguistics is the analysis and description of language variation among staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is a pioneering attempt in the consideration of language variation with particular reference to the predominant native language and other native languages, depicting speech as a diverse culture

### **5.2.2 Research Methodology**

This study is beneficial to researchers who are confronted with the task of developing and analyzing language variation in any given community. The consideration of the community of practice theory in the examination of the relationship between language variation, social pressure (i.e. element of surrounding linguistic context) and situational context, has yielded several results in this research. The research also highlights the value of questionnaires and interview techniques of data collection. These methods were applied in the present study because they possess the capability to supplement and corroborate each another.

### **5.2.3 Dialectology**

The study helps to highlight the influence of one's cultural background and dialect on language use in a particular community. The study revealed that the dominant language in a given area can have a lot of influence on the language spoken in that area. For instance the predominant language (Hausa) has a lot of influence on the speech of staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Aside this dominant language (Hausa), other indigenous languages have also been noted to have a role in the language of staff.

### **5.2.4 Conclusion**

The research has made modest attempt to reveal that social pressure that is elements of surrounding linguistic context and environment is closely related to language variation in any given speech community. It also unveiled the fact that the tendency to

show solidarity and identity with one's interlocutor is a major drive that gave birth to language variation. One of the most fruitful areas for the application of language variation analysis is language change, though all changes seem to involve variation, this does not mean that all variation necessarily implies change, some variation may be stable.

Moreover, there is need for the recognition of the use of pidgin (Gana 2010; Idiagbon 2010) and a new recognition of the indigenous languages particularly the predominant native language (Hausa) as a vital aspect of the language of individuals who serve as staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Such recognition is imperative since staff tend to switch from standard to non standard variety especially in informal situations as the study has revealed.

Finally, the study has demonstrated that no speaker of a language could benefit from a situation where only a single language or a single way of speaking exists in a given community.

### **5.3 Suggestions for Further Study**

- i. There are several unexploited possibilities for linguistic studies especially language variation amongst staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. More studies should therefore be conducted on the linguistic structure of staff of the university.
- ii. Sociologists, dialectologists, and other scholars in related fields should embark on an interdisciplinary study and bring out the relationship between language variation and Sociolinguistics.



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## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Abdulwahab Suberu, an M.A student in the department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.

I am undertaking a research on the topic “*A sociolinguistics analysis of language variation among the academic and nonacademic staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.*” The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information that would assist the researcher determine the statistical value of this study. Please do find time to fill out this questionnaire with all sincerity to assist in the research. All your responses would be confidential and would be used solely for the purpose of this study.

Thanks for your cooperation.

(please indicate your choice by ticking the boxes or statement where necessary)

Age range = 18-30  31-50  51-70

State of origin \_\_\_\_\_ sex \_\_\_\_\_ level of  
education \_\_\_\_\_ profession \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you sometimes use a different form of English language when in certain situation within the university (example switching from a higher variety to a lower one?)

a. Yes  b. No  c. No answer

2. If yes can you identify three key factors responsible for the switch in the form of English?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. What accent would you say you have, and do you like it?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you think older and younger staff talks the same way within the university? (i.e. pronounce things the same way and use the same words)

a. Yes  b. No  c. can't say

5. If yes can you explain briefly what constitute the major differences in the way they talk? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you ever been in a situation where you have deliberately changed the way you talk? a. yes  b. No  c. No answer

7. If yes why?

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8. Do you think there's a difference in the way male staff and female staff speak? a. Yes  b. No  c. No answer

9. If yes can you identify three key differences

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

10. Around which setting would you say staff around you began to use a different variety from that which you understood?

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11. Do you sometimes switch from Standard English to your dialect?

a. Yes  b. No  c. can't say

12. If yes, what are the reasons for the switch of form?

i. \_\_\_\_\_

ii. \_\_\_\_\_

13. Does social pressure influence / affects the way you speak within the university environment?

a. Yes  b. No  c. Can't say

14. Do you sometimes use pidgin to communicate with colleagues at work?

a. Yes  b. No  can't say

15. If yes, how has it help to improve your relationship with colleagues and other staff within the university?

i. \_\_\_\_\_

ii. \_\_\_\_\_

iii. \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

### CONVERSATION FROM THE ATR (AUDIO TAPE RECORDER)

Conversation held at the faculty of science lecture theatre at four thirty (4:30) p.m.

**Male staff:** Madam, are you still here? I thought you would have gone by now.

**Female staff:** hmm! Do I have a choice? These days, the time just runs very fast ooo! I'm yet to finish my work.

**Male staff:** so how we dey this evening? How oga?

**Female:** he is fine; he went to Kaduna to see his brother.

**Male staff:**ok. I wish him save trip.

**Female staff:** thanks

**Male staff:** I tried calling your number three days ago, but it wasn't connecting.

**Female staff:** which number did you called?

**Male staff:** Oh! Na your MTN I called.

**Female staff:** let me give you another one, MTN network is kind of bad in my house, so it's the GLO I am using now.

**Male staff:** thank you.

**Female staff:** (turning to the male staff's son) so you will play sport like your dad?

**Male staff:** e go run ooo! Athletics

**Female staff:** alright, bye bye.

**Male staff:** ok, greet oga for me when he returns.

**Female staff:** I will do that.

**Conversation held at the faculty of Arts block, close to the boardroom at 10:30a.m on Friday**

**First speaker:** sannu, Yene?

**Second speaker:** lafia Yaazumi?

**First speaker:** Lafia, yaaiki?

**Second speaker:** kai akewi bayani?

**First speaker:** ka beri kwai

**Second speaker:** ah! Ah! Fada mun mana? Na gani wei prof na Magana de kai. Ba matselako?

**First speaker:** ah!ah! y ache ngama de aiki na de souri. Ama he has forgotten that akwei azumi.

**Second speaker:** (laughs) tau! Zani salla.

**First speaker:** zan same ka a wurin.

**Conversation held at the car park besides Ahmadu Bello University's Senate building at 11:00 a.m.**

**First speaker:** Madam! Wow! It's been a long time. Good morning ma.

**Second speaker:** honestly it has been a long time. Good morning sir.

**First speaker:** so how we dey?

**Second speaker:** fine ooo!

**First speaker:** so you people have refused to pay our overtime allowance abi! (turning to a third person) sorry oh! Na your sister I de talk to, you no say she and you come from the same place.

**Third speaker:** yes. But she no de behave like my people. (laughs)

**Second speaker:** how does your peole behave?

**Third speaker:** you know now (laughs)

**Second speaker:** (turning to the first speaker) they said it will be paid soon.

**First speaker:** I prayoo! ( got into his car and drove off).