

SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF GREETINGS IN IGBO, YORUBA AND NIGERIAN ENGLISH

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Greetings are essential in introducing and maintaining contacts and interactions in Igbo, Yoruba and the Nigerian English. Yet, greetings in the three languages have not attracted much research attention from a comparative point of view. This study then explains the sociolinguistic variables accounting for greetings in the three languages by deploying the interactional sociolinguistic theory. The paper comparatively explores interpersonal/casual, occupational, departure/arrival, seasonal, festival, felicitating and condoling greetings in the three languages. It is observed that age (respect), time, number of persons being greeted, occasions and contexts determine the choice, nature and functions of greetings in varying degrees in the languages. Though greetings in Igbo and Yoruba are largely similar, greetings in Nigerian English differ by being short, informal and devoid of intimacy or warm affections. It also came to the limelight that some greeting terms and customs in Igbo and Yoruba are transferred to the greetings in Nigerian English and vice versa. The paper concludes that greeting is a sociolinguistic feature employed by Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English speakers to entrench interpersonal and group relationships by expressing best wishes and enquiring about the welfare of one another.

Key Words: Greetings, Igbo, Yoruba, Nigerian English, Interactional sociolinguistics

Introduction

A boy who wakes up in the morning among the Yoruba, without saying a word of greetings to his parents may walk himself into a spank. Likewise, an adult that comes home from the farm or anywhere and fails to greet the people he meets at home also stands

the risk of losing welcome greetings. In Igbo land, greetings are similarly important, especially during special events and celebrations. Greeting is a universal phenomenon that characterises certain frontiers of politeness and best wishes in the day-to-day events of human interactions. Across cultures, greetings containing good wishes for somebody's health, happiness, recovery or sustenance, including other encounters, are pivotal to the culture of the people of similar or different age, sex, occupation, gender, and so on.

Among the Igbo and Yoruba, like among any other ethnic groups, greetings on many occasions, events and celebrations form part and parcel of daily communication. For instance, greetings are accomplished while going to sleep, waking up, standing up, sitting down, working, and so on. Though English culture manifests some greetings, they are not of much importance as found among the Igbo and Yoruba. According to Olufunmilayo (1998: 8), "an English man takes greetings with little concern; he greets whenever he feels like doing so, and may even decline when greeted". Olufunmilayo believes that the English are not as warm in nature as the Yoruba, and this could be the reason why there are more greeting terms in Igbo and Yoruba than in English.

Though culture-constrained, there are several types of greetings among the Igbo and Yoruba, and by extension, Nigerian speakers of English. Greetings, as an expressive speech act, are performed to suit events and situations such as interpersonal contacts, travelling, festive and funeral occasions including climatic conditions among many others. Both the old and young engage in greetings, and children acquire greetings as early as they get exposed to them, and in language teaching and learning, greetings form an early part of acculturation. Hence, they constitute part and parcel of pedagogical schemes in pre-basic and basic schools. Language teachers and authors incorporate greetings as essential aspects of teaching topics for learners in schools and adult literacy classes. However, materials on greetings are mainly

available in elementary books or 'teach-yourself' works produced, not as a result of intensive research, but as mere texts. Greetings in Igbo and Yoruba are viewed as so elementary and common that they have eluded serious comparative research attention. It is wrongly believed that greetings in these languages are simple issues for the kids and beginners which can be picked up and taught by any interested literate individual. Yet, greetings are not just lubricants that oil the wheels of interpersonal relations, they are used to launch or open formal and informal speech events. The essence of greetings is better appreciated in the fallout of hostility or enmity characterising a strained relationship. Individuals who are not on speaking terms can have their scores settled once greetings are allowed to exchange between them without any arbitration.

However, it is not as if greetings as cultural behaviour in Africa have not received attention from some researchers. For instance, Akindele (2007) conducted a socio-pragmatic analysis of Sesotho greetings where he discovered some similarities between the types and structuring of Sesotho greetings and those of the Yoruba, Setswana, Shona and Arabic. Similarly, Ekanjume-Ilongo (2013) explored greetings in Akóóse (Bakossi people of the South West Province of Cameroun) and observed that greeting was a sociolinguistic custom used by the Bakossi people to establish interpersonal relationship. To the knowledge of the researchers, little or nothing has been done to compare greetings in Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English. We believe that the phenomena of greetings in Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English as vital parts of the people's culture deserve research attention. More so, Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English are prominent languages in Nigeria through which greetings function productively. Igbo and Yoruba languages belong to the Kwa language family, while Nigerian English language constitutes the second language of literate speakers of Igbo and Yoruba. Exploring greetings in the three languages at the sociolinguistic level will then address the following questions:

- (i) What are the events, occasions and contexts requiring greetings among the Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English speakers?
- (ii) What are the cultural norms or expectations attached to greetings in these languages?
- (iii) In what ways do these greetings enhance interactions in these languages?

Sociolinguistics and Greetings in Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English

Sociolinguistics is defined as the study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations and contexts on the way language is used. In other words, sociolinguistics is a tool for the analysis of how language is used to affect certain societal roles and functions, as well as the effect of those roles and functions on language (Hymes, 1974; Hudson, 1999).

Sociolinguistics has a wide range of scope touching on the use of language resulting from language contact, bilingualism, multilingualism, intra- and inter-language features, culture, contexts, speech acts, and so on (Hudson, 2000; Alabi, 2007 and Fakuade, 2010). Through language contact, intercultural communication becomes facilitated and sociolinguistics enhances our understanding of the way we interpret and share meanings with individuals of similar or different cultures.

As earlier emphasised, greetings entail communicating intra- and inter-culturally when members of the same or different races, ethnic groups, or other subgroups are involved. As already indicated, the focus of this work is to explore greetings among intra- and inter-cultural borders among the Igbo and Yoruba, but greetings between a literate Igbo and Yoruba, who are not mutual in the two languages, are carried out by the employment of the English language. Hence, salutations among these groups of people

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in English are operationally used and referred to, in this work, as Nigerian English speakers' greetings.

Igbo speakers constitute the bulk of the south Eastern Nigerians who have the Igbo language as L1 with English language as L2. Similarly, the Yoruba occupy the south-western Nigeria, who with the Yoruba as L1, also have English as L2. By implication, while the non-literates use the L1 to achieve greetings exclusively, the literate individuals use English in addition. The official status of English has then made it a midwife among the literate speakers of various ethnic groups in Nigeria.

It is cultural to greet as it is traditional to open up events, activities and celebrations with best wishes. As an aspect of interactional or interpersonal communication, it is then appropriate to approach a study on greetings through interactional sociolinguistics (IS) which was introduced by Gumperz in 1982. IS is a research framework that focuses on the context of interaction. Gordon (2011) sees it as a qualitative, interpretive approach to the analysis of social interaction that developed at the intersection of linguistics, anthropology and sociology. In short, IS sets out to devise a qualitative method for analysing and understanding linguistic and cultural diversity in everyday talk. With IS, we are adept with theories and methods of exploring how language works, as well as the social process through which individuals build and maintain relationships, exercise powers, project and negotiate identities and create communities (Gordon, 2011).

As earlier stressed, occasions, events, activities and contexts which give rise to greetings in the three languages are culture-provoked. The expression of best wishes may be casual, occupational and seasonal. Greetings can also be during festivals and special celebration, wedding, baby delivery, burial, climatic change, achievement, recovery, and so on. It should also be added that some genuflections accompany greetings in Yoruba and Igbo, and to some degree in the Nigerian English language usage. All these and other features will be essentially captured in order to

achieve our goals in this study. To this effect, IS approach is adapted as reflected in the following conceptual framework:

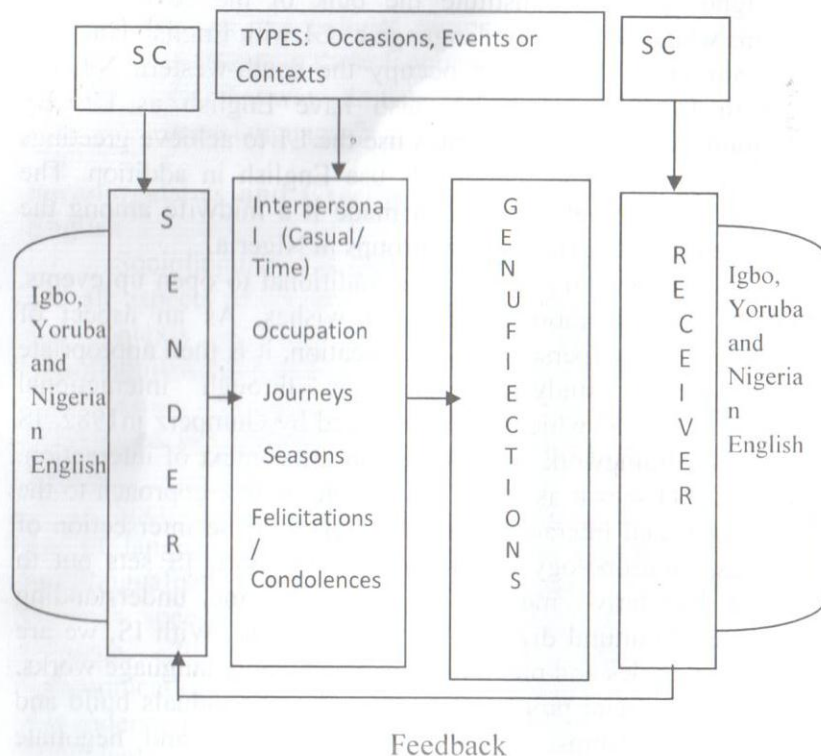


Fig 1: Sociolinguistics of Greetings in Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English.

Source: Friday-Otun and Nwosu (2015)

In the figure above SC (Sociolinguistic Competence) of the sender enables him/her to use appropriate language for each type of greeting. The second vertical box, which houses the types of greeting, is established through the societal norms and customs. Here, the context of appropriateness justifies the use of a greeting

type by the sender through his/her sociolinguistic competence. The third vertical box "Genuflections" indicates paralinguistic mode of honour accompanying greetings. This phenomenon is not accorded importance in the same proportion among the speakers of the three languages. Genuflections are associated with the Yoruba than the Igbo, and by implication, the Yoruba speakers of English genuflect while the Igbo speakers of English slightly do. But in English, it is, in most cases, done as a sign of respect during worship in a church or in some formal occasions such as the law courts or parliaments. The fourth box, the "Receiver" responds to greetings and the trends of the exchange of wishes, pleasantries or banter are shared and maintained among participants through the feedback process. The three arrows which link together the four vertical boxes indicate the flow of greetings from the sender to the receiver.

Procedure

Participant and personal observations with eavesdropping methods were adopted for the collection of greetings on several occasions and in different contexts. In doing this effectively, interactional sociolinguistic or ethnographic approach, which enabled us to be adept with the methods of observing the interlocutors' linguistic, cultural and contextual cues in the course of exchanging greetings, serve as our guide for the collection. The Yoruba data used for the work were of the standard form, though greetings were collected from the major cities of the South-Western Nigeria. Similarly, the Igbo data analysed in the paper were mainly of Nnewi variety though greetings were collected from other major cities of South-Eastern Nigeria. The English greetings were collected as used by Igbo and Yoruba speakers of English resident in Kwara State, Nigeria.

The collection of greetings reflects casual, occupational and safe journey wishes. Other occasions, events or contexts of greetings are seasons, felicitations and condolences. As earlier said,

the analysis of data in this paper follows the interactional sociolinguistic method of explicating the events, situations, emotions, genuflections, social relations that impact upon the form of greetings used by the individuals. Succinctly put, the analysis covers the types and sequences of greetings, the sociolinguistic variables influencing the selection of the greetings, as well as their functions in the lives of the Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English speakers.

Analysis of Greetings in Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English

1. Interpersonal or Casual Greetings

Some greetings are done casually in Igbo and Yoruba as in other cultures. Age, gender, time, number, context and other constraints influence the types and nature of greetings. For ease of reference, all the greetings, either of the person greeting or respondents are serially numbered below, i.e., Greeting One-G01; Greeting Two-G02, and so on.

a. Igbo:

	Individual	Group
G01 X:	Kedu? how? "How are you?"	Kedu nu? how you? "How are you?"
G02 Y:	A di m mma sing. tense I fine "I am fine"	Anyi di mma plural pro tense fine "We are fine"
G03 X:	Ginwa kwanu? you too "And you?"	Unu kwanu? you too "And you?"
G04 Y:	A di m mma	Anyi di mma

sing tense I fine plural pro past fine
"I'm fine" "We are fine"

b. Yoruba:

G05 X:	Bawo ni? Or Bawo ni nkan? Bawo ni? Or Bawo ni nkan?	
	how is it how is thing how is it how is thing "How are you?" "How are you?"	
G06 Y:	Daadaa ni well or good is it "I am fine"	Daadaa ni well or good is it "We are fine"
G07 X:	So o' wa? "Are you o.k?"	Se e wa? "Are you o.k?"
G08 Y:	Mo wa, o se I o.k you thanks "I'm o.k. Thanks"	A wa, e se we o.k (plu) you thanks "We are o.k. Thanks"

c. English:

G09	Hello! Or, how are you? Or, how do you do?	Hello! Or, how are you? Or, how do you do?
G10	Hi! Or, Fine, thanks	Ditto for plural respondents.

Casual greetings in Igbo and Yoruba, as seen above, exhibit similar trends and forms. The sequence and occasions for such are alike. The greetings in English by Igbo or Yoruba speakers are not so much different because the interlocutors in most cases transfer the native system and mode into English usage. In greeting a mate in Igbo, Yoruba or English, there is no accompanying genuflections. But in a casual greeting of an elderly person, some

form of bowing goes along with it to show respect in Igbo and more of it is shown among the Yoruba. These greetings are often used to exchange pleasantries during visible or invisible contacts (as on the phone), between friends, mates, associates and colleagues. The phenomenon also occurs between two or more persons at home, while meeting on the road, at a shop, at association meetings, at the church, mosque, and drinking bar, and so on. The greetings are employed at the opening of a conversation or interaction among individuals and groups in all the settings mentioned above.

Time is another strong variable in the course and choice of greetings in Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English. These greetings follow some forms and sequences in the morning, afternoon, evening and at the other times as allowed by conventions as shown in the next below.

Morning Greetings

d. Igbo

G11 Nwa: Ụtụ ụ ọma nne
(child) morning, good mother
 "Good morning"

G12 Nne: Nwa ị ọọla chi?
(mother) child you woke up
 "My child, have you woken up?"

G13 Nwa Ee
(child) "Yes"

G14 Nne: N rahụkwara nke ọma?
(Mother) you slept very good
 "Did you sleep well?"

G15 Nwa: Ee, nne, arahụrụ m nke ọma
(child) yes mother slept I very good
 "Yes, mother, I slept well"

e. Yoruba

G16 Ọmọ: Ẹ ká' àárô, mômô
(Child) you (respect) well morning mother
 "Good morning, mama"

G17 Mọmọ: O o, ọmọ mi, ká'aarọ. Sé daadaa lojì?
(Mother) Yes, child my well morning did well/good wake
 "Yes, my child good morning. Did you wake well?"

G18 Ọmọ: O o
(Child) "Yes"

G19 Mọmọ (with appellations): Ọmọ ají siàn, ọmọ ap'ẹkùn,
 p'èrè,
(Mother) child waking good child killer hyena killer snake
 "A child whose waking up is beautiful, a child of a killer of
 hyena and snake"

f. English

G20 Child: Good morning, Sir/Ma

G21 Mother/Father: Good morning, my child

Morning greetings as revealed above among the Igbo and Yoruba are largely similar. The difference lies in the point that while an Igbo child bows, in most cases, to greet, a male Yoruba child prostrates fully, while a female child kneels fully. The Yoruba Ẹ ká' àárô "Good morning" becomes Ẹ kú àárô "Good morning" at the basic or deep structure level. At the surface

level, a regressive assimilation has rendered *ku àárô:as ká' àárô*. However, an Igbo or Yoruba child greeting his/her parents in English hardly genuflect. Furthermore, the response of a Yoruba mother, in most cases, goes with the rendition of ancestral or family pedigree. The renditions go into ancestral history to reflect heroic achievements of the family or compound. But, the father hardly does this in their responses to their sons' or daughters' greetings.

Afternoon Greetings

g. Igbo

G22 Nwa: Ehihie ọma
(Child) afternoon good
"Good afternoon"

G23 Nne/Nna: O o ehihie ọma
(Mother/Father) yes afternoon good
"Good afternoon"

h. Yoruba

G24 Ọmọ: Ẹ ká'àsán
(Child) you well afternoon
"Good afternoon"

G25 Momo/Baba: Ká'àsán o, omo mi
(Mother/Father) well afternoon yes child my
"Good afternoon, my child"

i. English

G26 Child: Good afternoon, Sir/Ma

G27 Father/Mother: Good afternoon

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The greetings above are similar in the three languages, but the child greeting in Yoruba uses "Ẹ" to precede the greetings as a marker of honour or respect. If the greetings are between mates or colleagues, the "Ẹ" will not be used except when the respondents are two or more.

Good Night Wishes

j. Igbo

G28 Nwa: Ka chi fo
(Child) let day break/go
"Good Night"

G29 Nne/Nna: O o, ka ọ bọọ
(Mother/Father): yes let it break
"Yes, good night"

k. Yoruba

G30 Omo: Ó d'aarọ
(Child) impers. pro until morning
"Good Night"

G31 Momo/Baba: Ó daarọ o. k'á
sun're, ká jì'ire
(Mother/Father) impers. pro until morning let's sleep
well let's wake well
"Good night. May we sleep well and wake up well"

G32 Omo: Amin
(Child) "Amen"

l. English

G33 Child: Good night

G34 Mother/Father: Good night

Except for the greetings in Yoruba that are accompanied with prayers by the parents, the greetings in the three languages are similar in other respects. It needs be stressed that parents may also be the first to greet, but in most cases, it is part of training in the culture for children to greet parents first. Also, the first to greet may depend on who sees others first, especially in the afternoon or evening.

As part of interpersonal greetings, the Igbo display a peculiar trend in exchange of pleasantries between a grandfather (GF) or grandmother (GM) and grandchild (GC), especially if they are just seeing themselves after some long time. Let us see an example below:

G35 GC: (Kneeling down or bowing or bending):

Nna m ochie or Nne m ochie
father I greet mother I greet
"My grand father" or "My grand mother"

G36 GF/GM: (Drawing the child closer and rubbing the back, as well as saying some

prayers):

O O, nwa m, kedu ka i mere?
yes child I how particle you are/ do
"Yes, my grandchild. How are you?"

G37 GC: A di m mma
pro+ sing past I fine
"I'm fine"

G38 GF/GM: Ezigbo nwa m, i ga-adi
good child I you will live (long)
"My good child, you will live long"

G39 GC: Amin or Isee
"Amen"

G40 GF/GM: N ga- aka ogbo gi
you will big more than mate you
"You will be greater than your mates"

G41 GC: Amin or Isee
"Amen"

G42 GF/GM: N ga-aka nka
you will grow old
"You will grow old"

G43 GC: Amin or Isee
"Amen"

G44 GF/GM: Ihe o bu la i tinyere aka ga-aga
nke oma
what part ever you put hand will go very well
"Whatever you lay your hands upon shall be successful"

G45 GC: Amin or Isee. Nna/Nne m ochie, daalu. I meela,
o ga-adikwara gi mma.
amen amen father/mother I greet thanks you did well
it shall be too good
"Amen. My grandfather/mother thank you, it shall
be well with you too"

G46 GGF/GM: Amin or Isee.
"Amen"

The foregoing greetings function in different contexts. While morning greetings serve as means of opening up the conversations or activities of the day, night greetings bring to a close the day's activities. Participants converse every time except

during sleep. Greetings show the readiness of participants for interaction or discussion. It is difficult to embark on the making of requests, asking of questions or passing of a piece of information without first of all, doing some greetings. When individuals meet for the first time in the day, interpersonal greetings are exchanged to show solidarity, intimacy and rapport, even if there are no further interactions. Except for those not on speaking terms, appropriate greetings transpire among individuals who come in contact.

2. Occupational Greetings

Occupational greetings are employed to bid professionals good wishes at work. In Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English, weavers, carvers, tailors, bricklayers, carpenters, farmers, and so on, are greeted while working. While Igbo and Yoruba speakers of English will use the term "Well-done"(wrongly in native English perception) to generally great a person or a group of people at work, an English may not bother to greet and when he/she greets, may just wish that the worker keeps up his/her work. Let us consider the greetings of weavers, carvers, tailors and commercial drivers in Igbo and Yoruba. There is no peculiar way of greeting these professionals in English.

Greetings of Weavers

a. Igbo

- G47 Greeting: A na-eke?
aux go weave or tie?
"Hope the weaving (of the hand) is going?"
- G48 Weaver: E e, daalu
yes thanks
"Yes, thank you"
Or

- G49 Greeting: Ndi na-eke isi ndewonu oo
weavers aux+go hair well done (plural) particle
"Hair weavers, well done"
- G50 Weaver: O o daalukwa
yes thanks too
"Yes, thank you for the greetings"

b. Yoruba

- G51 Greeting: O/E ku ẹwa
you/you (plu or respect) well or good beauty
"Greetings to you on the beautification exercise"
Or
- G52 S'owọ n yá?
is hand pres fast?
"Hope the work is going on as expected or unhindered?"
- G53 Weaver: O o, o/ẹ se o
yes, you thanks particle
"Yes, thank you."

The Yoruba greeting above is in deference to age. If the person greeting is younger than the weaver, *Ç ku ẹwa* (Greetings to you on the beautification exercise) with the respective pronoun *Ç* (You) is used (as the subject) to greet the weaver. But in case an age mate or someone older is greeting the weaver, *O* (You) is used. The same goes for the choice of pronoun used by the weaver in responding. The same situation holds for the nature and form of Yoruba greetings for all professionals. This kind of respect is not marked in Igbo. But as said above, Igbo and Yoruba speakers of English simply say "Well-done" in greeting this group of people if English language is mutually intelligible to both. Such is the case in

greeting the carvers, tailors and commercial drivers described as follows:

Greetings of Carvers

c. Igbo:

G54 Greeting: A na-atu?
aux go carve
"Hope the carving is going on well"

G55 Carver: E e, daalu
yes thanks
"Yes, thank you"
Or

G56 E e, ọ bụ nwayo-nwayo
yes it is gradual gradual
"Yes, it is going on gradually"
Or

G57 E e, ọ ọ kama nku esika
yes, it is that wood hard/strong
"Yes, though the wood is hard"

d. Yoruba

G58 Greeting: O/Ẹ ku ọna o
you well carve particle
"Greetings to you on the carving"
Or

G59 S'ọwọ n yá?
is hand pres fast?
"Hope the work is going on unhindered?"

G60 Carver: O o, Ẹ sé o
yes you thank particle
"Yes, thank you"

Igbo carvers have about three optional responses. However, only an option is employed per time. The choice depends on the carver and the situation of the wood with which the carving is being done. But in Yoruba, there are two greeting options with only one form of response. As a matter of fact, "Sọwọ n ya?" (Hope the hand is Fast?) seems to be a greeting, general to all professions because "Öwö" (hand) is a symbol of labour.

Greetings of Tailors

e. Igbo:

G61 Greeting: A na-akwakwo?
aux go sew
"How is the sewing going?"

G61 Tailor: E e, a na-akwa
yes, aux go sew
"Yes, the sewing is going"
Or

G62 E e, a na-agbali
yes, aux go try
"Yes, an effort is being made."

f. Yoruba

G63 Greeting: Ẹ ku ise oo
you well work particle
"Greetings to you on the work"
Or

G64 Sọwọ n ya?
Is the hand fast?
"Is the work going on unhindered"

G65 Tailor: Ẹ se oo, mo dupe
you thanks, I grateful
"Thanks, I'm grateful"

As observed in the Yoruba greetings of weavers and carvers, greetings of the tailors are opened to more than an option. The response of the tailor above has "Mo dupé" ('I'm grateful) added to "È se o" ('Thanks). This trend is also applicable to other greetings. All depend on the choice of the respondents. Two options are open to the Igbo tailor respondents, with only an option for the greeting initiator.

Greetings of Commercial Drivers

- g. Igbo**
 G66 Greeting: Ò nya ùgbò, daalù o
 pro drive motor well particle
 "Driver, well done"
 O o daalù
 "Yes, thank you"
h. Yoruba
 G68 Greeting: Awayè o
 driving safe particle
 "Safe drive"
 O o, o/é seun
 Yes you thanks
 Yes, thank you"
 G69 Driver: O o, o/é seun
 Yes you thanks
 Yes, thank you"

The Igbo and Yoruba speakers of English, like in the analysis of previous occupational greetings, simply say, "Well done" while greeting commercial drivers in English. Greetings are often done by commuters. The Yoruba generally say "È ku ise" (Well done) to anybody on any work. The Yoruba greeting of a commercial driver indicated above is ancient and not common in use in today's way of greeting. It is rare for the youth or even a cosmopolitan Yoruba to say "Awayè" (Safe drive). However, the greetings in the languages above function as means of appreciating

the professionals and their works, as well as to open up rapport for politeness and interaction in service delivery and consumption.

3(i) Greetings during Departures

A departing father, mother, son, daughter, friend or relation in Igbo, Yoruba or English, or the party from whom someone is departing usually marks such departure by some form of greetings. The same thing occurs during arrivals. Departures occur for different reasons or purposes. They can be as a result of embarking on a journey, leaving someone after some visitation or departing by going away from people at home, office, school, place of events, and so on. Let us consider these greetings:

- a. Igbo**
 G70 Greeting: Ije oma
 journey good
 "Safe journey"
 Or
 Gaa nke oma
 go very well
 "Go in peace"
 Or
 N ga-aga nke oma ma lóta n'udo
 You aux go very well and return peace
 "You will go well and return in peace"
 G73 Response: O o i meela
 Yes you thanks
 "Yes, thank you"
b. Yoruba
 G74 Greeting: O d'abo
 imp pro until returning particle
 "Good bye, or Until you return"
 Or
 G72 Greeting: N ga-aga nke oma ma lóta n'udo
 You aux go very well and return peace
 "You will go well and return in peace"

G75 L'ayo o
at joy particle
In joy o"

Or

G76 Ipade wa bi oyin
coming together our like honey
"Our meeting again like honey"

Or

G77 E o lo l'ayo, e o bo l'ayo o
you will go at joy you will return at joy particle
"You will go in joy and return in joy"

G78 Response: O o, e se oo
yes, you thanks particle
"Yes, thank you"

Or

G79 Amin
Amen"

c. English

G80 Greeting: Safe journey

G81 Response: Thanks or Thank you

(ii) Greetings during Arrivals

Greetings also function to mark arrivals. Who greets first between the person arriving or person met on arrival depends on culture and context. In some cultures, the person coming should greet first while in some it does not matter. In Yoruba culture, for example, an adage says "He/She who on arrival does not greet people met at home loses the opportunity of being welcomed". However, this does not apply at all times. Someone who has left home on a journey for a long time would be welcomed with a jubilation shout and pomp when sighted afar, with a rush to hold and hug. This, to some extent, obtains among the Igbo. Person gone away for a long time is often received and greeted in joy at first

sight. But this may not apply to someone who, as usual, goes out or arrives casually. He/she might need to even greet first, especially when meeting the elderly ones at home.

a. Igbo

G82 Greeting: Nnọọ
"Welcome"

G83 Response: O o daalu
"Yes, thank you"
Or

G84 Greeting: Nlọtala?
you returned?
"Have you returned?"

G85 Response: E e, alọtala m
Yes have returned I
"Yes, I have returned"

G86 Greeting: Ije o gakwa nke oma?
journey it went very well
"Was the journey successful?"

G87 Response: E e, ekene diri Chukwu
yes greetings to Great God
"Yes, thanks be to God"

b. Yoruba

G88 Greeting: E/O k'á àbọ
you well return
"Welcome"

G89 Response: E/O seun or Seun
you thanks thanks
"Thank you"

G90 Greeting: Se daadaa le/lo de?
do well/good you come/arrive
"Hope you arrived well"

G91 Response: A dupe

we grateful

"Thanks to God"

G92 Greeting: E ku'urin

you well journey

"Greetings to you on the journey"

G93 Response: E/O se

you thanks

"Thanks or thank you"

G94 Greeting: E ku ewu oko

you well danger vehicle

"Greetings to you for overcoming vehicle hazard"

G95 Response: O o, e se o

yes you thanks particle

"Yes, thank you"

c English

G96 Greeting: Welcome

Or

G97 How was the journey?

G98 Response: Thanks

Or

G99 Fine, Thank you, How are you too?

The greetings in Igbo and Yoruba above are similar in nature and function, except for the consideration of age in Yoruba, and the English greetings of Igbo and Yoruba speakers are similar as reflected in 3 (ii) c. But in Yoruba, the "káàbò" (Welcome) will be preceded by E (Respect marker) if the respondent is an elderly person. Likewise, the greetings in 3 (ii) b, "Se daadaa le/lo dé?" (Hope you arrived well?) has the options "le" (you: respect marking) or "lo" (you: an age mate or a younger respondent). In other words, age distinction is marked here in Yoruba greetings.

4 Greetings during Seasons and Festivals

Greetings are also realised to mark seasons, festivals and celebrations in Igbo and Yoruba. For instance, new year celebration is popular among the Igbo and Yoruba Christians. Even among non-Christians, the season is acknowledged. Other festivals such as the marking of the emergence of new yams and new moon, as well as celebrations in honour of some events and deities attract some types of greetings. Let us consider some of these greetings in Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English.

a. Igbo

G100 Greeting: Mmemme afọ ohuru
ceremony season/year new
"Happy new year"

G101 Response: O o, mmemme afọ oma o
yes, ceremony season/year good particle
"Yes, happy new year"

G102 Greeting: Q na-agakwa?
is it going?
"How is the celebration going?"

Or
G103 A na-atụ ndụ mmanụ?
is life being oiled or lubricated?
"Hope you are enjoying self."

G104 Response: Ozigbonu!
Exactly"

b. Yoruba

G105 Greeting: E ku odun o o
you well season particle
"Greetings to you on this celebration"

G106 Response: E se o
you thanks particle
"Thanks"

G107 Greeting: Ȯdun ȁ yȁbo o o
season will become female particle
"The season will bring peace"

G108 Response: Amin

"Amen"

G109 Greeting: Aseyi-sȁmȱdun oo
celebrating this-next season particle
"We celebrate this, and will celebrate next season in return"

G110 Response: Amin o, ȱmi ȁ sȱȱȱ e
amen particle life will celebrate many it
"Amen, our life will celebrate many of it"

c. English

G111 Greeting: Happy new year or Happy celebrations

G112 Response: Thanks.

The greetings as reflected above bear with them some variables. Among the Igbo and Yoruba, the adults or elders greet themselves with some conformity to the above structure. The youth may not, in most cases, mind such long greetings. However, they greet themselves somehow to reflect the season or festivals. The Igbo and Yoruba greetings in English are simple, short and less formal. They greet themselves to mark special days, especially when a holiday is marked. For instance, greetings such as "Happy Christmas", "Happy new year", "Happy Easter", "Happy Eid-Maloud", "Happy Sallah", "Happy Workers' Day", "Happy Democracy Day", and so on, are common in the English usage.

5. Greetings to Felicitate or Condole Someone

The saying goes universally that life is a mixture of good and bad. As good things happen to mankind, bad things take their turn also. Greetings, therefore, function to express joy with those rejoicing and to express heaviness of heart with those undergoing

sorrowful moments. In Igbo and Yoruba languages, greetings abound for these moments. Felicitations occur in the contexts of naming a new baby, wedding, house warming, birthdays, anniversary, appointment into traditional, political and religious offices, conferment of chieftaincy titles, promotion, bagging a degree, and so on. Similarly, contexts of condolences occur in cases of loss of lives and property, road, rail or air mishaps, fire disaster, attacks, failure, tragedy, armed robbery, and so on. Surviving any of these situations calls for commiseration by sympathisers. Let us see some felicitations before condolences.

(i) Achievement or Promotion or Great Feat

a. Igbo

G113 Greeting: Ȯdogwu nwoke!
strong/warrior man!
"Congrats, great achiever (Male)"

Or

G114 Ȯdogwu nwaaanyi!
strong/warrior woman
"Congrats, great achiever (female)"

Or

G115 Ȯtu onye ȁ na-asi nnoȱnȱ! (male or female)
one person that is said welcome you all!
"You are one in a million"

Or

G116 Ekele diri Chukwu maka mbuli elu gi
(male or female)

Greeting to great God because of promotion you
"Thank God for your achievement, or for your promotion"

Or

G117 I gbaliala!
(You tried) youȱ best
"You deserve the achievement"

G118 Response: Daalu nwanne m
thanks brother/sister me
"Thanks, my sister or brother"

Or

G119 I meala ezigbo m
you did well best me
"Thank you my dear"

Or

G120 Daalu, or I meela or Ya diwara giotu ahụ
thanks you did well let it be for you like that
"Thanks or Thank you and may it be so to you"

Or

G121 I meela onye nke m.
You did well person dear my
"Thank you my dear"

d. Yoruba

G122 Greeting: E ku ori re
you well head/luck fortune
"Congrats"

G123 Response: E se. Ire a ka' ri
you thanks goodness will go round
"Thanks. The goodness will go round"

G124 Response by the person greeting: Amin
"Amen"

New Baby Delivery

G125 Greeting: E ku ewu omọ. Oluwa á kà á kun wa
you well danger child. Lord will count it part us
"Congrats on the new baby delivery. May God make
him/her part and parcel of us"

G126 Response: E se o. Amin
you thanks particle
"Thanks". "Amen"

Bagging a Chieftaincy Title

G127 Greeting: Oye á m' òrì o
chieftaincy title will stick to head particle
"May the chieftaincy title remain permanent?"

G128 Response: Amin
"Amen".

House Warming

G129 Greeting: Ile á tu'ra
house will refresh body
"The house will be refreshing or be peaceful"

G130 Response: Amin
"Amen"

e. English

G131 Greeting: Congrats

G132 Response: Thanks.

While the Igbo see all good happenings as achievements and deploy congratulatory messages generally, the Yoruba are specific by employing different greetings to different achievements. The choice of the greetings in Igbo and Yoruba depends on the individuals. A person may decide to follow the sequence of the greetings in the full length as indicated above or even longer with additional statements of banter and exchange of pleasantries. At the same time, greeting parties may choose one or two sequences and end the exchange there. The social relations among participants go a long way to determine the choice and length of greetings. In an intimate relationship of peers, the exchange can be long with paralinguistic manifestations of smiles, laughter and even hugging

or shaking hands. However, the greetings in English are usually devoid of lengthy exchange.

(ii) Greetings on Condolences

Condolences are always devoid of pomp and pageantry because of the heaviness of the heart encountered during such occasions. Let us see some condoling exchanges in Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English.

a. Igbo

G133 Greeting: Ndo
"Sorry"
G134 Response: O o, I meela
yes you thank
"Yes, thank you"
G135 Greeting: Nwee ndidi
have patient
"Be patient"
Or
G136 Obi gi jürü
heart/ mind you rest
"Let your heart be calm"

G137 Response: O o, aga m emenü gini?
yes what again I can do what?
"Yes, what else can I do?"
Or
G138 O o, I meela
yes you thank
"Yes, thank you"

In the case of death or bereavement, the greetings can include the following:

G139 Greeting: Chukwu wepuru anyi ọnwụ ike
Great God take away death sudden

"May God take away sudden death"

G140 Response: Amin/Isee
"Amen"

b. Yoruba

G141 Greetings: E pèlé o o
you sorry particle
"It's a pity" or "What a pity"
G142 Response: E se o o
you thanks particle
"Thanks"

G143 Greetings: A à ní rí iru è mó o
we will not see such it again particle
"We would not witness such again"

or

G144 Greetings: Olorun á dá'wõ ibi dúró o
God will stay hand evil stop particle
"God will stop the evil"

G145 Response: Amin
"Amen"

In case of death or bereavement in Yoruba, greetings can be:

G146 Greeting Ojò á jìnnà sí'ra oo
day will far to each other particle
"Day (of death) will be far to each other"

G147 Response: Amin, ẹ se oo
"Amen, thank you"

c. English

G148 Greeting: Sorry
Or

G149 May God prevent recurrence?

G150 Response: Thanks

However, Western civilisation through education has reduced compliance to these norms in the Yoruba culture to a reasonable extent. This shows that it is not enough to just greet an elder, particularly in the Yoruba culture; it must be accompanied with expected genuflections. In Igbo where little emphasis is laid on genuflections, a little show of bowing must accompany the greetings of the older by the children and young ones. Even, in the use of the Nigerian English by the Igbo and Yoruba literate speakers, genuflections are observed, though to a little extent. This implies that the level of respect and honour shown to the older ones through greetings among the Yoruba are high than among the Igbo. But regardless of age, full prostrating or kneeling is required when greeting chieftaincy title holders in the Yoruba community, while Igbo requires only bowing.

The paper has further revealed that greetings are sociolinguistic norms in the society used by the Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English speakers to develop and maintain interactions, warmth, cordiality, and the show of care for one another. Corroborating this, Ekanjumen-Ilongo (2013) corroborate by claiming that among the Bakossi people of the South West Province of Cameroon, greeting is a sociolinguistic system employed by the people to establish interpersonal relationship by showing how they care about the person being greeted, his family, relations and loved ones. Just as further revealed in the study of Bakossi greetings, it is observed in this work that greetings among the Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English speakers are by implication a "moral code". This is against the backdrop that greetings in the three languages under study seem to be a duty or responsibility. Greetings are generally expected in any contact, and at times, failure to greet generates bad blood among close friends, relations, well wishers and loved ones. As said at the beginning of this paper, a boy or girl may walk himself/herself into a spank upon failure to greet his or her parents appropriately or as expected. In

fact, children are groomed on how to greet appropriately early enough so that he/she can grow with the habit.

It is germane to note that the sociolinguistic model designed as a tool for the analysis of data in this work has further demonstrated the efficacy of the adapted theory of interactional sociolinguistics (IS) in analysing the various dimensions of greetings in Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English. Through the model, the frontiers of sociolinguistic theory, has been extended to the exploration of greetings on a comparative platform. This is a leap ahead most of the earlier studies since the work has strongly stood on the tripod of three functional languages for the exploration of greetings.

In conclusion, greeting is a sociolinguistic phenomenon employed by Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English speakers to entrench interpersonal relationship by expressing best wishes and enquiring about the welfare of one another. Greetings are important as they depict the means through which humans express the way they share in the joy, grief, anguish and problems of others, as compared to non-humans. In other words, the functions of greetings in enhancing human interactions are greatly underscored through the expression of wishes, whether casually or officially in the morning, afternoon, evening or at all desirable times. Significantly, the goodwill that is expressed in all situations reflect the functions that these greetings perform by being used to mark the opening up or closing down of events and occasions in the course of any interaction.

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