



Decoding Corruption: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Language Practices in Southeast Nigerian Universities

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Abstract: This study dwells on the study of the language used to perpetuate corrupt and illegal practices in government managed universities in southeast Nigeria. The aim of this work is to unravel the linguistic expressions of corrupt practices in public offices; especially as they occur in public universities in the southeast of Nigeria by assessing their sociolinguistic features. The qualitative research paradigm is adopted for this research. The corpus for this study is elicited using participant observation method, and oral interviews of key informants. One hundred (100) informants are categorised into 10 different focused groups. Each group is made up of ten (10) members, from the ten (10) selected public universities in the southeast. The findings from this study show that the Igbo language, being the language of the immediate environment, is predominantly used as the cues. Other language patterns discovered are the use of codeswitching (admixture of Igbo and English languages/ Nigerian Pidgin), the use of the Nigerian Pidgin, English language, and other Nigerian languages. The findings further show that the cues are better understood when the expressions are studied with focus on the participants, settings, and domains of their usage, as they offer different meanings when analysed outside the context where they are used, and are adopted by the addressers. Drawing from the data analysis using Bernstein's theory of language code, the study concludes that the participants used more restricted language codes across the different settings as a necessary means of masking corruption.

Keywords: Corruption, Elaborate codes, Restricted codes, Sociolinguistics, Southeast, Universities

1. Introduction

The issue of corruption has generated substantial interests, particularly regarding its meaning, nature and dimensions. Yet, corruption remains a major challenge in the political economy of contemporary Nigeria (Bajpai, 2015). Corruption is an abstract phenomenon that is frequently evoked by journalists in news reporting and editorials with the assumption that the meaning is self-evident. The problem of defining corruption is complicated by the fact that there are related concepts whose meaning partially overlaps corruption; such as bribery, embezzlement, favoritism and nepotism. It is believed that these concepts have almost the same magnitude of abstraction and lack universal definition as a result of the nature of the overlap within a socio cultural context (Bratu and Kazoka 2018). Okunrinmeta & Olugbenga (2014) note that corruption occurs when the moral fabric is weakened and vices such as avarice, materialism, short cut to affluence, glorification and abrogation of ill got wealth are celebrated at the expense of honesty, hard work, patriotism, community service, commitment and selfless devotion, which ought to have been taken as symbols of national pride" (p.69).

Uwak & Udofia (2016) posit that "...corruption can be eradicated if strategic and stringent measures are adopted to combat it" (p.34). Abu & Staniewoski (2019) advocate for country-specific studies on corruption because it can aid in our understanding on why and how corruption affects the economy, and therefore, provide policy prescription to governments to remedy the situation. Ogunmuyiwa (2019) notes that there seems to be an obvious consensus on the concept of corruption, stating that it relates to the misuse of public office for private gain.

Studies in the social sciences, mainly political science, economics, sociology and law, have provided valuable insights into the subject, for example, its causes, manifestations and consequences. It is very important to note that



no social phenomenon exists in a vacuum and as such, Colbran (2014) explains that the key to understanding the phenomenon of crime does not lie only in studying real crime but in the study of the plethora of texts produced about crime, criminals and their punishment since this is where most people unwittingly acquire their knowledge about crime. In the light of the foregoing, this research is conceived, to explore and analyse the pragmatic, as well as the sociolinguistic features of linguistic cues of language used in the university domain in order to induce illegal compensation and gratification for services.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Report (2019), out of all the Nigerian citizens who had at least one contact with public official in the twelve (12) months prior to 2019 survey, 30.2 percent gave a bribe to, or were asked to give bribe by a public official. More worrisome is the fact that in their report, they show that the southeast recorded a significant increase in the prevalence of bribery from 2016-2019. In other fields of social sciences and humanistic studies, such as sociology and anthropology, many studies have been devoted to the alleviation of corruption, with just a few from the perspective of the linguist. In the light of this, Bodomo (2021) underscores the importance of understanding corruption that is expressed in indigenous African languages and setting, and calls for a linguistic contribution to corruption studies, based on academic research and writing. The aforementioned has formed the bane and crux for this present study; to unravel, by critically examining the codification of corruption, forming a linguistic perspective to the study of corruption in the society.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this article is to unravel, using sociolinguistic analysis, how corruption is coded in the language used in the university system in southeast Nigeria. Specifically, the researcher sets out to investigate the following:

- 1 Identify the different cues of corruption in the language use during conversations and interactions in public universities in southeast Nigeria;
- 2 Analyse the sociolinguistic features of the cues of corruption in various domains, as used by university students.

2. Research Methodology

The data for this study, being a qualitative research, are gathered primarily by using the key informant interview method. Secondly, participant observation and informal interaction methods are also employed by the researcher. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has delimited the selection of linguistic cues as manifested in the following south eastern universities: Abia State University (ABSU) and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture (MOUAAU); Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) and Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU); Ebonyi State University (EBSU) and Alex Ekwueme Federal University (AEFUNAI); Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) and University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN); Imo State University (IMSU) and Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO). The data got were verified by the researcher using Focused Group Discussions (FGD). Ten groups were created, each comprising of five students, two teaching staff and three non-teaching staff, sourced from the different the universities, making the total number of respondents 100 people. The members of the focused groups were selected based on their willingness to participate in the research, and their ability to identify and interpret the different cues of corruption used by both teaching staff, students, and non-teaching staff of the selected universities. The study adopts the use of simple percentages to quantitatively analyse data presented. The demographic features of the respondents such as age, educational qualification, religion, gender and occupation are documented. The age range of the respondents varied between 20 and 57 years. 50 respondents (50%) were undergraduates with SSCE as their highest qualification, 25 respondents (25%) were graduates with only first degrees, 15 respondents (15%) have masters degrees, and 10 respondents (10%) have Ph.Ds. 65 (65%) of the respondents were females, while 35 (35%) were males. In terms of occupation, 50 (50%) of the respondents were students, 20 (20%) were lecturers and 30 (30%) were administrative or non-teaching staff. The researcher also used introspection in some cases, himself, being a teaching staff of Abia State University, Uturu. The excerpts



presented in this study are drawn from the researcher's observation of participant's conversations recorded (unknown to the participants).

3. Conceptual Framework

3.1 Corruption: Meaning, Causes, Effects and Types

Corruption is a very broad concept and it is, therefore, not limited to one definition. Corruption means different things to different people and according to [Abu and Staniewski \(2019\)](#), note that the meaning of corruption differs from one place to the other, and what is considered as corruption in a particular society might be viewed as the norm in another. It has been viewed by scholars from different lenses, and this varied definitions according to [Ijewereme \(2015, p.2\)](#) "is necessitated by the different inclination and perception of the concept".

[Ijewereme \(2015, p.2\)](#) defines corruption from a political perspective, stating that "corruption or political corruption implies any action that violates electoral rules/the formal duties of any public role, rules, or norms with regard to public trust". [Bajpai \(2015\)](#) identifies three schools of thought on the conceptualisation of corruption. First is the moralist school, which argues that corruption must be viewed from a prism of good and bad. The second is the structural-functionalist school which submits that rather than view corruption as good or bad, it should be understood and engaged in terms of the role it plays in the functioning of the system- does it grease or sands the wheels of development in a society? The third is the radical school of thought which is based on the works of Karl Marx and postulates that corruption is simply as a feature of capitalism which in itself dictates competition that eventually breeds fraud, waste and abuse.

Corruption exists in different forms, as [Omotola \(2007\)](#) considers the case of intellectual corruption, which connotes the perversion of intellectual responsibilities, be it deliberately or not, for personal gains at the expense of the system. Corruption can happen anywhere - in business, government, the courts, the media, and in civil society, as well as across all sectors from health and education to infrastructure, religion and sports. [Omotola \(2007\)](#) also submits that corruption can involve anyone: politicians, government officials, public servants, business people or members of the public. Corruption happens in the shadows, often with the help of professional enablers such as bankers, lawyers, accountants and real estate agents, opaque financial systems and anonymous shell companies that allow corruption schemes to flourish and the corrupt to launder and hide their illicit wealth. Corruption adapts to different contexts and changing circumstances. It can evolve in response to changes in rules, legislation and even technology.

It is evident from the above standpoints that every sector of human endeavour is bedevilled by the plagues of corruption and corrupt practices, and this is no different from what is obtainable in the field of education. [Uche \(2014\)](#) notes that corruption has escalated in Nigeria and its practices extend to the university system. Therefore, in this study, we hinge our view of corruption within the field of education, especially as it manifests in higher education/universities. [Osipian \(2009\)](#) sees corruption in education as a system of all informal relations aimed at regulating unsanctioned access to material and nonmaterial assets. Also, corruption in higher education refers to a "lack of academic integrity", ([Denisova-Schmidt, 2017, p.1](#)).

In this study, we shall adopt the definition of corruption by [Adebisi, Adebisi & Arogundade \(2012\)](#) cited in [Ojo, Ayandele and Egbeleye \(2020\)](#) as our operational definition. They succinctly describe corruption in the academia as:

all wrong doings and dishonest acts perpetrated within colleges and higher institutions of learning by institutional administrators, lecturers or teachers, students, and other stakeholders in the academic sector that have negative consequence on the standard of education and the academic goals of the institutions, (p.72)

The above definition gives a lucid description of not just the meaning of corruption in higher institutions, but also points to the different individuals (stakeholders) who play different roles in the ugly menace of corruption in public universities in Nigeria. These stakeholders include the administrative staff, laboratory attendants, cleaners, drivers etc. that also engage in corruption in the university.

The causes of corruption, again, take varied angles, depending on the perspective it is viewed from. Some see it as the consequence of bad governance, while others place emphasis on the ethical and morality standpoints.



According to [Ajodo-Adebanjoko & Okorie \(2014\)](#), the causes of corruption in Nigeria include; greed, the social environment, ostentatious living, societal and family pressure, get-rich-quick syndrome, poor reward system, inadequate motivation and clumsy handling of corruption cases among others. For [Osimen, Adenegan, & Balogun \(2013, p. 94\)](#) "the causes of corruption include; lack of transparency, poor salaries, laxity of ethical standard, moral laxity, lack of economic opportunity, attitude of officials/discipline, ineffective political process, poverty and unemployment, poor salaries, culture and acceptance of corruption". The reason for giving a bribe to any kind of public official may include to accelerate a procedure and to avoid the payment of a fine, enabling the finalization of a procedure (for example, the issuance of a travel document, a case either brought to court or withdrawn, a building permit given), to avoid the cancelation of a public utility service, receiving preferential treatment or as a sign of appreciation for service provided (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

The causes for corruption in public universities are slightly different from what is obtainable as discussed above. [Melé \(2014\)](#) highlights ten possible reasons or causes of corruption and believes that the causes may be applicable to different cultural and geographical environments on a greater or lesser scale. They are personal greed, decline of personal ethical sensitivity, absence of sense of service in public or private institutions, lack of courage to denounce corrupt behavior, cultural environments that condone corruption, lack of transparency, especially at institutional level, regulations and inefficient controls, slow and sometimes unreliable judicial processes, lack of moral criteria in promotions, and downplaying or reacting mildly to corruption charges.

Corruption in public universities manifest in different ways. These shades are determined primarily by the parties involved and the subject for which the corrupt practice has ensued. From observation, the university setting has two publics- the academic public and the non-academic public. The academic public is defined as individuals whose reason for being around the university is primarily academic. They include the teaching staff, non-teaching staff and students. While the non-academic public is made up of individuals who are primarily around the university for other purposes such as business and so on. It is also very important to note that corruption within the university setting is trans-generational. This means that the newer students learn the acts and practices of corruption from the older students who have had experiences of these practices.

The impact of corruption in higher education is enormous. [Chapman and Lindner \(2016\)](#) opine that academic corruption is a threat to the integrity of certificates obtained from the educational sector; this unethical practice is harmful and capable of destroying the very purpose of education. Corruption has made students and products of the tertiary institutions suffer from loss of self-confidence, hopelessness, and loss of confidence in handwork and societal value. It has lowered the image of academic and non-academic members, as well as governing councils of most public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Corruption denies access to basic education and health services, fuels political violence, generates popular anger that threatens to further destabilize societies, and exacerbates violent conflict ([Transparency International, 2012](#)).

3.2 Language of Corruption

Language is a medium of communication used by humans to exchange information, feelings, concepts, ideas, views etc. Language simultaneously reflects social and cultural patterns, and can also be used to express the same. Communication can be verbal or non-verbal, which manifests through spoken or written language, gestures, signs, symbols, facial expressions, and other socially acceptable practices. It is evident from the foregoing that language is necessary for human existence, interaction and development as corroborated by [Alobo \(2006\)](#) who points out five major functions of human language in the society to include: communication, documentation, socialisation, development, and cooperation. The aforementioned functions of language show that language is not only a tool for communication, but also a powerful, unifying, creative instrument. Depending on contexts and situations, language can also be a dividing or destructive force. The corruption-related cues that are examined in this work are instances of the negative use of language.

The study of language from a social perspective suggests that the study of words, utterances, and even whole chunks of discourse in isolation is inadequate for understanding them. Determining the meaning of utterances should not be done in isolation, but in context ([Halliday and Hasan 1985](#)). Context is defined as the situation in which a linguistic interaction takes place. It is very fundamental to meaning-making in language. To Halliday, the notion of



'con-text' is the notion of what is 'with the text' and it goes beyond what is said or written, 'it includes non-verbal goings on – the total environment in which a text unfolds' (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p.6).

Language-related activities that take place in social contexts should not only be seen as just reflections or expressions of social processes and practices; but they also shape those processes and practices (Fairclough, 1995). In other words, all discursive activities about corruption can be subsumed under social practices which also indicate that all the representations of corruption are enhanced by the relationship between discourse and the society. They are influenced by the social situation of the country including people's beliefs, culture and value systems, and vice versa. Thus, corruption discourse retroactively produced corruption as a measurable empirical entity by identifying it with the negative impact that this discourse had already articulated as a central characteristic of corruption (Kajsiu 2014).

It is pertinent, at this point, to distinguish between the concepts, 'language of corruption' and 'corruption of language'. While the former refers to the different linguistic manifestations of how language is used to perpetrate corruption, the latter describes the different distortions on the use of language by its users, which opens language up to un-linguistic features and analysis, leading to misunderstanding or total lack of understanding of the language used.

The foregoing establishes the facts that language is a means of human interaction which derives its effect from who uses it, and meaning from the sociocultural milieu, as well as the context in which it is used. Hence, considering the polyvalent and ubiquitous nature of corruption discourse, this study provides a case for identifying and understanding the occurrences of corruption in public university setting as it examines how language is creatively and cunningly used to conceal and convey corruption intentions.

4. Theoretical perspectives

4.1. Theory of language code

The language code theory, otherwise known as code theory or sociolinguistic code theory was developed by Basil Bernstein, a British sociologist and linguist. The bedrock of the theory is predicated on the relationship between language, social class, and educational achievement, to explain how language functions in different social contexts.

Littlejohn (2002, p.177) defines the term 'code' as "a set of organizing principles behind the language employed by members of a social group." This definition implies that Bernstein's (1971) theory demonstrates how language used in casual conversation both reflects and shapes the assumptions of a particular social group. Additionally, relationships that are formed within a social group influence the language and speech patterns that are used by that group. For Bernstein, language is essential because, in the broad idea of cultural transmission, it acts as an intermediary between social structure and individuals. In other words, people's ability to provide significance and meaning to the topics they discuss depends on how language is employed within a given social class. Littlejohn (2002) agrees and states thus "People learn their place in the world by virtue of the language codes they employ" (p. 178). The code that a person uses indeed symbolizes their social identity. Bernstein's (1971) sociolinguistic study on language codes suggests two main divisions to depict types of language codes: the restricted code and the developed code. This study discusses the function of language with respect to social situations.

The restricted code is suitable for insiders who share assumptions and understanding on the topic, whereas the elaborated code does not assume that the listener shares these assumptions or understandings, and thus, elaborated code is more explicit, more thorough, and does not require the listener to read between the lines. According to Atherton (2002), the essence of the distinction is in what the language is suited for. The restricted code works better than the elaborated code for situations in which there is a great deal of shared and taken-for-granted knowledge in the group of speakers. It is economical and rich, conveying a vast amount of meaning with a few words, each of which has a complex set of connotations and acts like an index, pointing the hearer to a lot more information which remains unsaid. Within the restricted code, speakers draw on background knowledge and shared understanding. This type of code creates a sense of inclusion, a feeling of belonging to a certain group. Restricted codes can be found among friends and families and other intimately knit groups. It is efficient for communication within the community but may be less effective in more diverse or formal situations.



Atherton (2002) notes that the elaborated codes spell everything out, not because it is better, but because it is necessary so that everyone can understand it. It has to be elaborate because the circumstances do not permit the speaker to condense. The elaborated code works well in situations where there is no prior or shared understanding and knowledge, where more thorough explanation is required. If one is saying something new to someone they've never met before, they would most certainly communicate in elaborated code and not restricted codes because they do not share any prior knowledge of the situations or event they are talking about.

Bernstein's (1971) theory suggests that the choice and use of language code play a significant role in shaping social interactions, educational achievement, and mobility. He argues that individuals from different social classes may be more or less proficient in both codes, and these differences can impact their success within educational systems.

Bernstein (1971) notes that there is a correlation between social class and the use of either elaborated or restricted code. He argues that in the working class you are likely to find the use of the restricted code, whereas in the middle class you find the use of both the restricted and elaborated codes. His research suggests that the working class individuals have access only to restricted codes, the ones they learned in the socialization process, where both the values and role systems reinforce restricted codes. However, the middle class, being more geographically, socially and culturally mobile has access to both the restricted codes and elaborated codes (Atherton, 2002). The restricted code is less formal with shorter phrases interjected into the middle or end of a thought to confirm understanding. For example, "you know", "you know what I mean", "right?" and "don't you think?" Elaborated codes have a longer, more complicated sentence structure that uses uncommon words and thoughts. In the elaborated code there is no padding or filler, only complete, well laid out thoughts that require no previous knowledge on the part of the listener, i.e., necessary details will be provided. The same is true for the middle class person with the exception that they were exposed to the elaborated code as well. Both groups use restricted code at some point, for as Atherton (2002) points out, "Everyone uses restricted code communication some of the time. It would be a very peculiar and cold family which did not have its own language."

There are two factors which contribute to the development of either an elaborated or restricted code within a system. They are: the nature of the socializing agencies (family, peer group, school, work) present in a system, as well as the values within the system. When the socializing agencies are well defined and structured, you find a restricted code. Conversely, where the agencies are malleable, an elaborated code is found. In a society which values individuality you find elaborated codes, and in a narrower society you find restricted codes (Littlejohn, 2002). According to Bernstein (1971), "The orientation towards these codes may be governed entirely by the form of the social relation, or more generally, by the quality of the social structure" (p. 135).

In differentiating between restricted and elaborated codes, it is noted that elaborated code can 'stand on its own', it is complete and full of detail, people overhearing a conversation would be able to understand it. However, restricted code is shorter, condensed and requires background information and prior knowledge. A person overhearing a conversation full of restricted code would be quite lost. It would be easily identifiable as an "insiders'" conversation. According to Bernstein (1971), "one code is not better than another; each possesses its own aesthetic, its own possibilities. Society, however, may place different values on the orders of experience elicited, maintained and progressively strengthened through the different coding systems (p. 135)."

As communication occurs in groups and either the elaborated or restricted code is used, there is a degree of openness that is noticed. There is both the closed-role system and the open-role system. In a closed-role system, roles are set and people are viewed in terms of these roles, as well as expected to act in accordance with their role. In an open-role system, roles are not set or simple, they are fluid and changeable (Littlejohn, 2002).

5. Review of Empirical Studies

Adegoju (2007) understudies the corruption of language and Nigeria's debased value system. In the study, the researcher discusses the use of language and the nuances of meaning that characterize the different social dimensions of the Nigeria society. The study also appraises the Nigerian value system which is constantly debased by these corrupt practices. The paper argues that the linguistic habits (language) deployed by Nigerians relative to



their unethical value system have the propensity to influence the way they think of, understand reality, and behave, with respect to the reality.

Another strong argument put forward by Adegaju (2007) is the chain effect that behaviour, language and social behaviour have. The study notes that subtle linguistic options and languages are used innovatively and mischievously within the Nigerian milieu, which further depletes the moral and social fabric that make the society, paving way for corruption and corrupt practices. The author concludes in the paper that until the enormous potentials of language and its instrumentality in building or depleting the nation's social fabric is appreciated, harnessed and/or utilized, it will be absolutely difficult to win any battle waged to sanitize the society.

Ekpenyong and Bassey (2014) study the language of corruption and anti-corruption in Nigeria. Their study analyses the vocabulary of corruption in Nigeria, and the ethos that guide the usage of such language. The authors used the lexico-semantic descriptive model in examining and explaining how Nigerians refer to corruption and anti-corruption, drawing from popular creative literatures. Their study reveals a pool of gradable synonyms, collocates, metaphors, idioms, clichés and coinages as linguistic tools used by Nigerians to x-ray corruption and engage in anti-corruption functions. The study points out that corruption is a serious discourse in Nigeria, which concludes that because Nigerians take corruption as a serious matter, they are able to device lexical and phrasal patterns to describe them in order to justify their awareness of the concepts and to condemn corrupt practices at all levels of the Nigerian society. Ekpenyong & Bassey (2014) focused on how the media, using printed materials are able to address the corruption menace, by using anti-corruption language to fight the prevalence of corrupt lexicon. This approach is different from our present study. This current study devotes attention to examining the use of language to mask corruption and perpetrate corrupt practices.

Okunrinmeta and Olugbenga (2014) in their study entitled 'A cultural conceptual analysis of some metaphors of corruption in Nigerian literature', explore the metaphors of corruption used in Soyinka's *Samarkand*, Osundare's *Waiting laughters* and Olafioye's *The parliament of idiots*. Their study majorly examines how corruption is conceptualized within the Nigerian cultural setting. They highlight the attributes that corrupt public officials in Nigeria share in common so as to portray how destructive they are to the Nigeria economy. They reveal that the metaphors of lion, dog, hyena, vulture, cobra, locust, leech, tortoise and virus, among others, are used as source domains for the officials in Nigerian cultural perspective. Their analysis shows that the referent of these animals is destructive since they share the attributes of brutality, recklessness, pretentiousness, greed, selfishness, wastefulness, callousness, among others. They claim that the society associates the corrupt public officials to these animals since these officials have unleashed havoc on Nigeria as a nation. While this study analyses the metaphors used in the portrayal of corrupt characters in some indigenous Nigerian literature, the current study delves into real-time, in-human usage of words by members of the university community to mask their corrupt practices.

Ishowua, Shammah and Abubakar (2017) in their study "The role of the language teacher in the fight against corruption in Nigeria" examine the importance of using language to fight corruption. The research identifies and examines the functions of language in fighting corruption. Their study emphasizes the role of the language teacher in moulding the students, through language use and delivery. The work also examines corruption with special focus on the Nigerian experience. Using the corruption theories of game and change put forward by Greer and Simpson, their research practically x-rays what type of language can be used by a language teacher to mould the children or students morally, psychologically and academically, thereby contributing to the task of building sound members of the Nigerian society that will be worthy, both in character and in learning. The use of language suggested in their study includes teaching appropriate songs and poems that can instil good morals in the children as these are more apt at the levels of nursery/primary and secondary education. They however, did not place emphasis on the language used to conceal corrupt practices, for which the current study provides ample explanations.

Brickman (2019) investigates linguistic cues, differentiating prepared lies and spontaneous lies compared to truthful responses in a realistic situation. In the study, collection of data and experimentation are carried out in two phases. Experiment one (1) collects data from eighty (80) participants, all between the ages of eighteen (18) and twenty-two (22), and data from forty-seven (47) participants are collected in Experiment two (2). Both experiments recruit participants through the Intro Psych Subject Pool at the University of Michigan. The researcher disguises himself as a senior personnel in the nursing school and conducts examinations of each participant.



Based on which condition they are in, participants are given different instructions on how to answer the study questions. Experiment two (2) is a perception study where participants are played excerpts from the examinations and are then asked to identify if the responses are truths or lies. From the data analysis, the researcher reveals two linguistic cues that are found to differentiate the truth from the lies in a realistic personally high-stake situation: response time latency and speech rate. The study suggests that people who lie have a slower response time, shorter length of utterance, and slower speech rate. These findings further show a significant difference between truths and lies, which lead to two possible explanations for the different types of lies. Brickman (2019) study relies more on non-verbal linguistic cues as data in determining lies or truths. However, this is different from the perspective taken in this current study, which uses verbal linguistic cues as data in determining how corruption intentions are communicated by the addresser to the addressee.

6. Data Presentation and Analysis

The approach adopted in analysing the data in this study is predicated on identifying the contexts in which the cues are employed during conversations. This is borne out of the view that context is germane in analysing utterances, and the message passed by a speaker, using the same utterance, may differ depending on the context of usage.

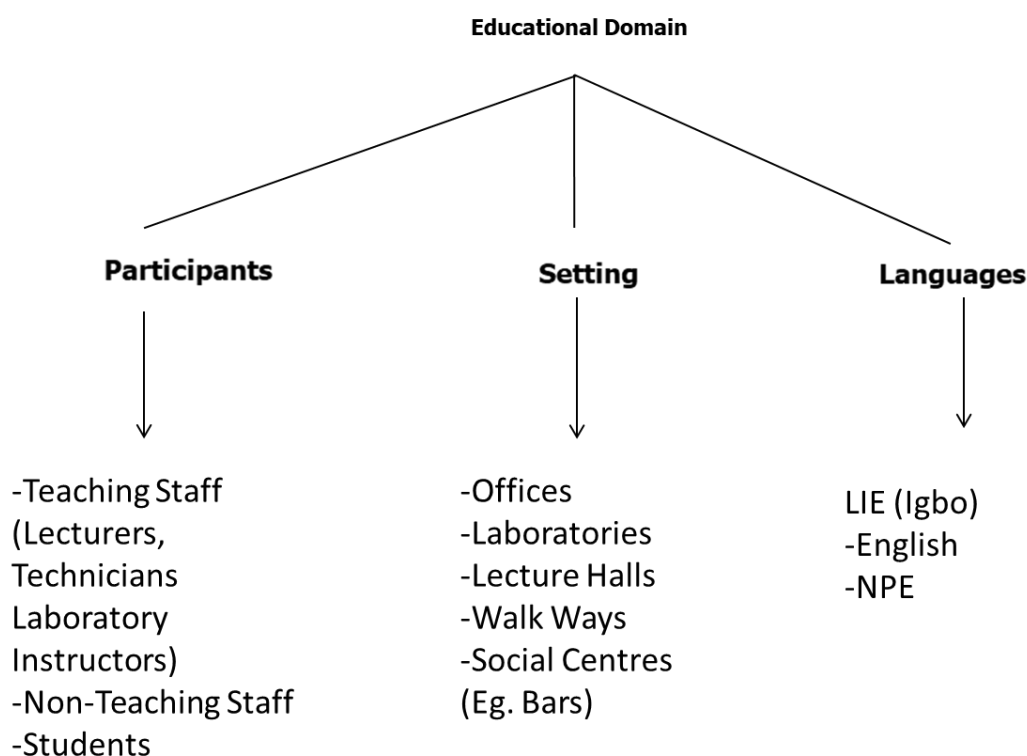


Figure 1. Educational domain of language use in the southeast (Researcher's classification)

6.1. Domains and Contexts of Use of Linguistic Cues of Corruption

The domain of language use encompasses the diverse contexts and purposes for which language is employed in human communication. It encompasses a wide range of situations and functions, each of which has its unique characteristics and conventions. The domain of language use is incredibly diverse, reflecting the complexity of human communication and its adaptability to various contexts and purposes. Understanding and navigating these diverse domains are essential for effective communication in different situations.

Ndimele (2019) notes as follows;

Every language is characterized by social dimensions. There are social circumstances forming the background of the use of language in a society. Different languages are used based on the participants, domains and settings.



Generally, the setting can be official or unofficial, and this helps the participant to determine the appropriate language to use. There could be functional overlap whereby a language would be functionally used in all or most of the settings. Each speaker is expected to acquire communicative competence- knowledge of when to speak or be silent, how to speak on each occasion, how to communicate and interpret the meaning of respect, seriousness, humour, politeness or intimacy (p. 22).

The use of language in every domain carries a very important aspect of the language used. In this study, our concern is the educational domain. The diagram below captures the educational domain description of universities in southeast Nigeria.

During this study, the researcher finds from the respondents that the cues of corruption mostly used in the universities are outside the lecture halls. They state that is a private discussion and as such, requires very informal settings such as walkways, social centres (bars, eateries, café, etc) or enclosed spaces (offices or homes of the lecturers). However, lecturers sometimes adopt phrases or expressions during lectures, which denote threats to students to pay some sum of monies to ensure they pass.

6.2. Languages Used As Linguistic Cues

With respect to the different languages used to code corruption in public universities in the southeastern part of Nigeria, the researcher observes the use of four major languages as means of expression. They are; Igbo, Nigerian Pidgin English, admixture of Igbo and other languages (English or Nigerian pidgin), and English Language.

6.2.1. Igbo

The Igbo language is the language of the immediate environment, being the predominant language spoken by natives in the southeastern region of Nigeria. Also, the major population of students and staff of the universities located in the Southeast are from the Igbo speaking areas. The use of the Igbo language makes the interaction between the interlocutors as informal as possible because it creates a mutual foreground between the interlocutors. The following linguistic cues expressed in the Igbo language presented below are collated during interactions with respondents and by personal observation.

Taking a look at the setting within the educational domain, the Igbo language is used outside the classroom. This is because the Igbo language is used informally to show a relationship of mutuality between the interlocutors, as Ndid (personal communication, 2021) recounts, "Igbo is used by some lecturers or administrative staff to obtain undue favours from their students outside the classroom because not everyone in the class is expected to be an Igbo person. Also, speaking Igbo shows that the student the lecturer is talking to is also an Igbo person". Also, the use of the Igbo language in coding corruption explains the linguistic dominance the language of the immediate environment has over other indigenous languages. In the collation of corpus for this study, only few lexical items are borrowed from other indigenous languages, such as; *jagaban*, *otedola*, *dangote*, *kpata kpata* etc. Okoro (personal communication, 2022), corroborating the submission states that "it is hard and almost impossible to find interlocutors discuss or code corruption in this environment using another Nigerian language because this is not their area, and you may not be making sense at all to your hearers."

6.2.2. Nigerian Pidgin English

The Nigerian Pidgin English is a contact language borne out of the communication need of people from different linguistic backgrounds. Some scholars believe that the Nigerian pidgin English is beginning to creolise in areas such as Warri, Asaba, Port Harcourt, Benin in Edo state, which led to the adoption of the term, Naija during the July 2009 Conference on Nigerian Pidgin at the University of Ibadan. According to Ofulue (2017), the resolution at the conference states that the language previously known as Nigerian Pidgin is no longer a pidgin, as it has become creolized in certain regions of the country, and has outgrown its original purpose, and that the term "pidgin" has contributed to the negative connotations attached to it. However, it still exists as pidgin in the Igbo speaking areas, as it does not have recognised native speakers.



Table 1. Linguistic cues (Igbo language) use within the educational domain in South-eastern Nigeria

Language	Setting	Participants	Linguistic cues	Gloss
Igbo	Offices	Teaching Staff	-Megharja ahụ	-Shake body
	Walkways	Non-Teaching Staff	-Ị ma ihe i kwesiri ime	-You know what you should do
	Social Centres	Students	-Ana m añukwa ihe juru oyi	-I drink cold substance (drinks)
			-Ọ bụ na onweghi ihe i ga-enye m?	-Don't you have something to give to me?
			-Anaghi agba aka ahụ nwata eze	-Nothing goes for nothing.
			-Weta ihe e ji anụ mmanya	-Bring something that one can use in drinking
			-Obodo kporo akpo / obodo kposiri ike	-Society/ country (living condition) is hard
			-Aka nri kwọ aka ekpe, aka ekpe akwọ aka nri	-One good turn deserves another
			-E menyere nwa ogwugwu, e menyere nwanosike	-Act in equity and fairness
			- Dimkpa	-A strong/noble man
			-Onye isi	-leader
			-Ogbu opi na-ezi imi	-The whistle blower clears his nose
			-Odogwu na dollar/ odogwu	-Rich man in dollars/ rich man.
			- Onye kwe, chi ya ekwe	-Life/success responds to one's determination

The use of Nigerian pidgin is gradually but consistently gaining grounds and enjoying more usage among university undergraduates over the English language, which should be the linguistic model in institutions of higher learning. Undergraduates prefer the use of pidgin because it is easier to speak, and also makes the conversation interesting and enduring (Ozoemena, Emodi, and Ugwuagbo, 2021). The aforementioned assertion is true for this study, as another language variant collated as corpus from the field during the course of this study is the Nigerian pidgin. Being a tertiary institution, people from different linguistic backgrounds also gain admission to undertake study in these universities. In cases where the speaker and the listener are from different linguistic background, the Nigeria pidgin English becomes most suitable for communication. The data presented below are linguistic cues of corruption expressed in the Nigerian pidgin English.

The last three items (*jagaban*, *oga kpata kpata*, and *dangote/otedola*) given in below Table, are neologisms that have gained their way into the Nigerian pidgin lexicon by the reason of their usage. They are borrowed from Hausa and Yoruba languages. Their meanings are also borrowed, however, metaphorically, to code corruption intention by the users.

Table 2. Linguistic cues (Nigerian Pidgin English) use within the educational domain in southeastern Nigeria

Language	Setting	Participants	Linguistic cues	Gloss
Nigerian pidgin english	-Offices	-Teaching Staff	-Show me love	-Show me love



	-Walkways	-Non-Teaching Staff	-Troway salute	-Give salute
	-Social Centres	-Students	-Na umbrella dey prevent rain	-It is the umbrella that prevents rain
			-Egg shell don crack	-Egg shell has cracked
			-Na fuel my moto carry come here	-I fuelled my car to come here
			-Wit speshal cordination, satan go fit see god o	-With special arrangement, satan can seegod.
			-If you on faya, you go see smoke	-If you ignite fire, you will seesmoke
			-Kip somtin for cold wota o	-Keep something for cold water o
			- My biro dey use ink	-My pen uses ink
			-Garri wey rise, na wota wey dem add cos am	-Garri rises because of the water added
			-Shake ya bodi	-Shake your body
			-Money for hand, back for ground.	-Money in hand, back to the ground
			-No be to tok, na to do	-Less talk more action
			-You tink say na fritown you dey?/ notin dey free for freetown	-Do you think you are in freetown? / nothing is free even in freetown
			-After reggae, we play blues	-After payment, you'll be attended to
			-Jagaban	-Influential leader
			-Oga kpata kpata	-Highest ranking leader
			-Dangote/otedola	-A very wealthy person

6.2.3. Admixture of Igbo and other indigenous languages

Table 5. Linguistic cues (mixed languages) used within the educational domain southeastern nigeria

Language	Setting	Participants	Linguistic cues	Gloss
Admixture of the following languages: Nigerian pidgin English, Igbo, English	-Offices	-Teaching staff	-Tinyere Father ihe na boot	-Put something into Father's boot
	-Walkways	-Non-teaching staff	-I huna Father?	-Have you seen Father?



	-Social centres	-Students	-Ego fuel kwanu?	-Where is the money for fuel?
			-Weta ego pure water	-Bring money for sachet water
			-Bja confession	-Come for confession
			-Eribe m nri since morning	-I have not eaten since morning

Nigeria is a multilingual nation, and one major characteristic of every multilingual society is the obvious occurrence of codeswitching and codemixing. In code switching or code mixing, the interlocutors use more than a single available language within the speech community to express themselves. As earlier stated, the publics of the university are made up of people from different speech communities and backgrounds. The need therefore, to codemix and/or codeswitch in a multilingual society becomes inevitable, and serves as a tool to further entrench the intended meaning being purveyed by the cue.

Code switching and code mixing are sociolinguistic phenomena. These are aspects of language in interaction, as well as the results of multilingualism and bilingualism. Speakers use these stylistic techniques in an effort to communicate effectively. Therefore, language use in Nigerian public universities and, broadly, the Nigerian society involves code switching and code mixing. [Ibhawaegbele and Edokpayi \(2012\)](#) state that code switching and code mixing typically occur in non-formal settings. Additionally, code-mixing is ad hoc and most prevalent in domains like academia, the workforce, politics, the business etc., according to [Essien \(1995\)](#).

Some scholars ([Kachru, 1978](#); [Ndimele, 2008](#)) have differentiated the concept of code mixing from code switching stating that code mixing takes place more rapidly, frequently and almost unconsciously within a single speech event within a text, and within a sentence. Specifically, [Ndimele \(2008. p.57\)](#) notes that while code switching may imply some degree of competence in two languages, code mixing may involve a lesser degree of competence in one of the languages as monolinguals sometimes codemix especially when the first language (L1) lacks some lexical items and resorts to borrowing from another language.

[Agbedo \(2011 p.53\)](#) notes that there are different good linguistic and psychological reasons why people codeswitch in a multilingual setting, which include convenience, brevity, secrecy, linguistic inadequacy, oratorical excellence etc. In this study, we adopt the term admixture of codes to cover for both code mixing and code switching. Below are expressions that are mixed from codes of different languages. Again, for the data elicited from the field, we find that the only indigenous language used to code mix is the Igbo language, which is representative of the uniqueness of the domain and speech community of the study population.

6.2.4. The English language

The data presented in Table (7) above are given by the informants. Most of these are given by non-indigenous students, that is, students who are not native speakers of the Igbo language.

For them, the reason they are approached using the English language is because they "...cannot understand the Igbo language and also, the pidgin English..." ([Zainab, personal communication, 2022](#)). The inability of the some of the students to understand the language of the immediate environment necessitated the use of a more universal language, which is expected to be understood by any university undergraduate.

However, it is not often the case, that the solicitor of the bribe will speak in any language of his/her choice, and expect the listener to ask around for the meaning.

Sometimes, when they want to collect money from us and we don't understand the language, and we ask what it means, they simply ask us to go and find the meaning, and that when we are done finding the meaning, we can come back. Most times, we ask around only to find out that they were asking us for *compensation* before attending to us ([Oche, personal communication, 2022](#)).



The languages used to code corruption are unique and are sometimes expressed in peculiar ways, using peculiar language forms to be able to get the intended meaning across to the audience. In our study, two language elements and/or styles stand out and are explained below.

Table 6. Linguistic cues (English language) used within the educational domain

Language	Setting	Participants	Linguistic cues	Gloss
Nigerian pidgin English	-Classrooms	-Teaching Staff	-Minimum Wage	-Least Acceptable Amount -Extra Charge For Service
	-Offices	-Non-Teaching Staff	-Vat	-General Amount For Service
	-Walkways	-Students	-Minimum Allowance	-Amount To Be Paid For Special Attention
	-Social Centres		-Customer Care	-One Who Paid Specially For Services
			-Fastlane Candidate	-Financial Help
			-Support System	-To Give Something In Secrecy.
			-Under The Table	- Money Required To Allowed Entrance Into Restricted Areas
			-Green Card	-Where Is Your Money?
			-Where Is Your Razor Blade?	-Same As In Above
			-Where Is Your Tithe/Offering?	-Be Part Of Those Who Have Paid
			-Join The Moving Ship	-Document For Recording Activities
			-Book Of Life	-After Payment
			-Ultimate Principality	-Giver And Receiver
			-Importer And Exporter -Import/Export	-To Collect/To Give
			-Contraband	-Non-Acceptable Amount/Item

6.2.5. Use of proverbs

Proverbs constitute the most complex folk wisdoms, applying a sensible form of imagery. They are used to describe a situation, to advice the youngster and to give a flavour to the speech (Devi, 2020). A proverb is the wisdom of a society, which contains elements of advice, reflects cultural values, and provides lessons and instructions to individuals on how to live and act (Wołóńcziej, 2018).

Proverbs are also one of the cultural products that play an important role in creating meaning for the understanding, insight, feelings and behavior of individuals in a community (Disassa & Into, 2020). Proverbs can also be a window to better understand what drives people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Owu-Ewie, 2019).

Our study shows that the Igbo proverb stands out in the data gotten from the field. The reason for this is not far-fetched. The language and culture of the immediate environment influences greatly, the prevalent language used, and the culture portrayed within the domain. The proper translation of the proverbs used and the context in which they are used give a clue of the speaker's intention (what the speaker expects from the person spoken to).



Consider the excerpt below from a conversation held between an administrative staff and a final year student of one of the institutions studied;

Excerpt 1. *Dialogue between a non-teaching staff and a student*

Student: Sir, I want to get my clearance form signed

Staff: Come back tomorrow. I have closed for today.

Student: Ahh! Sir, that will be too late. I need to get this done today!

Staff: If it must be today, I ma na anaghi a gba aka ahụ nwata eze. (You know that nothing goes for nothing)

Student: I know sir.

Proverb 1. *Anaghi a gba aka ahụ nwata eze*

In Excerpt 1 above, we find that the administrative staff, upon noticing the desperation of the student requesting for his/her form to be endorsed, adopts the Igbo proverb which is be translated as 'nothing goes for nothing'. The proverb used has its root from the fact that in the Igbo culture, it is believed that one is not allowed to see the milk tooth/teeth of a teething child, empty-handed. The visitor is expected to give the child a token having seen the tooth/teeth, or before seeing the tooth/teeth. Here, the staff uses the same proverb to request for a token from the student before granting the student the request. Contextually, *eze* is used to refer to the needed service by the student, for which the student cannot see with an empty hand (*i gba aka*). The same goes for other proverbs adopted gotten from the field, given below. The proverbs are translated from the source language (Igbo) to the target language (English), bearing in mind the cultural nuances of the source language, and how it is applied to the context of our study, which is, coding corruption.

Proverb 2. *Aka nri kwọ aka ekpe, aka ekpe akwọ aka nri.*

Translation: One good turn deserves another

Similar to the use of the cliché "do for me, I do for you" in the Nigerian parlance, the addresser uses the proverb to subtly point to the fact that he/she requires inducement before he/she will be able to do for the addressee what the addressee is requesting for. The addresser is subtly demanding for a 'good turn', for which they will reciprocate.

Proverb 3. *E menyere nwa ogwugwu, e menyere nwanọsike*

Translation: Act in equity and fairness

Proverb 3 above is another proverb used by interlocutors to pass across corruption intention. The proverb can be transliterated to mean 'If you do for Nwa ogwugwu, also do for Nwanọsike'.

Although the proverb culturally advocates for fairness and equity, it is, however, used in this context to appeal to the addressee to fulfil an illegal requirement in exchange for the service he/she desires.

Proverb 4. *Onye kwe, chi ya ekwe*

Translation: If you say yes, your 'chi' will also say yes

In proverb (4), we find another use of proverb as a subtle language of communicating corruption intention. Roughly translated as "if one agrees, one's chi will agree", the addresser subtly tells the addressee that the success of his/her desire is predicated upon their agreement on the "terms and conditions" given to him/her. The conditions to which they are to agree is on his/her readiness in bribing his/her way for the needed services.

Proverb 5. *Ogbu opi na-ezi imi*

Translation: A labourer is deserves his wages

Unlike the users of proverbs 2, 3 and 4, the users of proverbs 1 and 5 employ a more direct approach in their demand for a bribe. In proverb (5), the addresser assumes the position of the labourer who deserves his wages. The use of the proverb explains to the addressee that he/she is left with no choice except to pay the bribe demanded,



seeing that it is payment for labour, and the labour cannot labour for nothing in return. In proverb (1), the addresser, without hesitation, tells the addressee that if nothing is done (if no bribe is given), nothing will be done with regards to the demand of the addressee. This means that if the addressee needs something to be done, he/she must 'do something'.

It is also important to note that the addressers adopt these proverbs in the negative sense, although the proverbs are originally intended to pass positive cultural values as can be seen from the translations provided. However, in the context of our study, it is deducible that the subtle motive for adopting the use of these proverbs is to pass across the corruption intention of the addressers.

6.2.5. Use of slang

Slang is a special vocabulary, usually informal to a special group, and most times, reserve for informal situations. When elitist or highly professional groups use (special vocabulary) to discuss technicalities of their profession, it is jargon, but when the group involved is not a respectable one, the special vocabulary they use is known as slang. Hornby (1993, p.119) observes, "slang is a use of informal words, phrases etc., commonly used in speech, especially between people from the same social group or who work together not considered suitable for formal contacts and often not in use for long"

From the above definition, one can deduce some interesting facts about slang, which include; the informality of slang, non-stability of slang, usage of slang mainly for social groups. Slang expressions can be coined from unique contexts obtainable in the speech community, created peculiarly to reflect the idiosyncratic lifestyle of the users, or they can be adapted from general slang obtainable in other speech communities but are now internalized and domesticated in the new speech community, to serve the purpose of identity creation and indexing the worldview of the users (Melefa & Ilo, 2020, p.31).

The use of slang expressions from our study takes place predominantly at the student-student level, rather than the student-staff level. The slang expressions used amongst students to code the perpetration of corruption and corrupt practices in universities are found to comprise of two basic divides- general slang and peculiar slang. Here, the researcher adopts the approach of Melefa and Ilo (2020) to dichotomise between slang expressions that are understood and used by students across the different universities studied, as well as slang expressions understood and used by students in their different universities.

The most common slang amongst students used to describe corruption in the universities studied is *sorting*. Sorting, according to Osunde (2012), as a nickname for academic corruption, has lately become endemic in our tertiary institutions. Offiah (2019, p. 19) defines sorting as "a process by which students pay in cash or kind to be awarded unmerited marks by lecturers after examination or test". Osunde (2012) avers that sorting is a system through which deficient students engage in gratification of their lecturers with items such as money, expensive gifts and even sex in the case of female students, in order to obtain good grades in examinations. Two other common slang used across the university speech communities studied to refer to corruption are 'runs' and 'blocking' (Chukwu, & Lato 2016, p.3).

In ABSU, the slang 'ransom' is used by interlocutors to connote 'cash' paid for illegal services. The conversation recorded below between a female 200 level student and her senior colleague in 300 level, exemplifies the use of 'ransom' to refer to code name for money paid to influence scores.

200 level student: senior co. I no want fail any course again oooo. My 100 level result no gud at all. (senior colleague, I don't want to fail any course again. My 100 level result is not good)

300 level student: no be to dey do acada ooooo. If you no fit do mgbo for exam, beta arrange your ransom o. University no be for ndi spiricoco for church. (it is not about being studious oooo. If you cannot engage in examination malpractice, you better keep money (for influencing your scores). University is not for the devout Christian).

The word 'ransom', which literally means 'money paid or demanded for the release of someone or something from captivity', is not a new word. However, the usage of the word in this context deviates from the lexical denotation to another meaning that is derived from the context in which it is used. The students of the university, having had



serial encounters with kidnappers around the Okigwe-Uturu road, have adopted the word as a code for 'illegally demanded or paid money', for the sake of academic gains.

In some expressions recorded and interviews conducted, the students are found talking about money paid as bribe using some slang terms such as *rubbers*, *pepper*, *mula*, *allowee*, and *bars*. Their reason for this is captured in the response of Ihechukwu (personal communication, 2022), who submits that they "use these terms to refer to money, especially when it is requested for by a staff as payment for illegal purposes". He adds that "we use these slangs, especially when we are in public, where we have different people who are not students, for example, in buses, markets, and sometimes in church. If we use the word 'money', it will attract unnecessary attention from people to our conversation".

Substantiating this view, Ejinwa (2018) states that "slang usage is motivated by the need to establish and maintain group identity, and the need to be united and distinct from other members" (p.5).

The use of the aforementioned slang excludes the non-student participants from their communication because the shared understanding of the slang used is only open and available to the students who are active participants in the context for which the slang term is used. An example of the use of these slang expressions is seen in the conversation below, which was recorded in a bus by the researcher, among three students who were travelling back to school from Aba.

Student 1: Guy, na god go help us dis new semester ooo. Every tin jus tire me. (Guy, we need God's help this new semester. I am tired of everything).

Student 2: All man must survive. na only mula e go cost (Everybody will survive. It will only cost money)

Student 3: My bro, the only thing wey these people dey understand na rubbers. If you no carry beta bars return, na OYO be your own oooo (my brother, the only thing these people (referring to university staff) understand is money. If you do not come back with good/ sufficient cash, you're in trouble)

Student 2: I don jand myself. Oluwa go run the rest. (I have done my best. God will do the rest).

7. Cues of Corruption as Restricted and Elaborated Codes

Drawing from the expressions and words elicited from the field presented in this work, the codes used by the interlocutors in this study can be further classified into two major codes; elaborated codes and restricted codes, predicated upon the framework of language codes as postulated by Bernstein.

The university setting is a *leveller environment*. By this, the researcher means that the students of the universities studied are from the high, middle and low social classes. From their different social backgrounds, the university exposes them to the same environment, conditions and social language. The university, as a community of its own exposes these students to the peculiarities that may not be found in their different homes and backgrounds. As a new domain, the students are therefore gradually acculturated to imbibe the norms of their new environment, including the language dynamics present in the new environment - the educational domain.

From the expressions and words presented as data in this study, the Tables (7) and (8) below capture the researcher's categorization of restricted and elaborate cues.

Table 7. Restricted Linguistic Cues Of Corruption Used In Public Universities In South-Eastern Nigeria.

Restricted linguistic cues
-Me Gharja Ahu
-I Ma Ihe I Kweşiri Ime
-Ana M Añukwa Ihe Juru Oyi
-Anaghi Agba Aka Ahu Nwata Eze
-Obodo Kporo Akpo / Obodo Kpori Ike
-E Menyere Nwaogwugwu, E Menyere Nwanosike



-Aka Dimkpa
- Onye Kwe, Chi Ya Ekwe
-Where Is Your Tithe/Offering
-Onye Isi
-Ogbu Opi Na-Ezi Imi
-Odogwu Na Dollar/ Odogwu
-Aka Nri Kwọ Aka Ekpe, Aka Ekpe Akwọ Aka Nri
-Show Me Love
- Troway Salute
- Na Umbrella Dey Prevent Rain
- Egg Shell Don Crack
- Na Fuel My Moto Carry Come Here
-Wit Speshal Arangi, Satan Go Fit See God Face To Face
- If You On Faya, You Go See Smoke
- Kip Somtin For Cold Wota O
- Na Ink My Biro Dey Use
- Garri Wey Rise, Na Water Wey Dem Add Cos Am
- Shake Ya Bodi
- No Be To Tok, Na To Do
- After Reggae, Play Blues
- You Tink Say Na Fritown You Dey?
- I Huna Father?
-Bija Confession
-Eribe M Nri Since Morning
-Jagaban
-Oga Kpata Kpata
-Dangote
-Otedola
-Minimum Wage
-Vat
-Minimum Allowance
-Customer Care
-Fastlane Candidate
-Support System
-Under The Table
-Green Card/Green Light
-My Birthday Is Tomorrow
-Where Is Your Razor Blade
-Join The Moving Ship



-Book Of Life
-After Service
-Worship Service
-Ultimate Principality
-Importer
-Exporter
-Import
-Export
-Contraband

Table 8. Elaborate linguistic cues of corruption used in public universities in South-eastern Nigeria.

Elaborate Linguistic Cues
-Obu Na Onweghi Ihe I Ga-Enyem?
-Weta Ihe Eji Anu Mmaya
-Tinyere Father Ihe Na Boot
- Ego Fuel Kwanu?
-Weta Ego Pure Water
-Go And Bring Money For Baby Food

In the restricted category, the addressee requires an 'insider' understanding of the cues used. Without the proper interpretation of the cues, which is a product of sharing the same schemata of understanding with the addresser, the cues present other ambiguous meanings which may not be the intention of the speaker. The use of restricted cues is found to be more than the use of elaborated cues. The addresser is compelled to use more restricted codes to avoid the request being made a topic for public conversation. The addressees, especially if they are new students, may sometimes not understand the cues presented. However, they get acculturated by their continuous interaction with other members of the university speech community, until they develop the same understanding of the cues used, and also, can use same.

In the elaborate cues above, the co-occurrence of the following word pairs in the constructions make the intention of the addresser explicit and clear to anyone, and as such, the addresser simply does not pad the information with ambiguity. For example, the occurrence of *ihe* and *nye m* in *O bu na onweghi ihe i ga-enye m?* (is there nothing you will give me?) clearly tells the addressee that the addresser requires a token from him/her. In *weta ihe e ji anu mmaya* (bring something for drink), the words *weta* and *ihe* portend unambiguously to the addressee that a request is being made. Ditto, *tinye* and *ihe*, *ego* and *kwanu*, *weta* and *ego*, and *bring* and *money* in *tinyere father ihe na boot* (put something in father's booth), *ego fuel kwanu* (where is money for fuel?), *weta ego pure water* (bring money for pure water) and *go and bring money for baby food* respectively.

So far, the researcher has focused on analysing the data got from the field through interviews and observations. The analysis in this chapter focuses on the sociolinguistic analysis of the cues of corruption. The chapter also discusses the stylistic use of slangs and proverbs by the addressers in corruption discourse.

With insights from Bernstein's theory of codes, the analysis focuses on interrogating the sociolinguistic choices that influence speeches and how these choices are geared towards coding corruption.

8. Summary of Findings

Corruption as earlier explained can manifest in different form such as embezzlement, kickbacks, gratification among others. Based on this, and from the linguistic perspective, the present study shows that the verbal cues are often used to ask for and receive bribes amongst students and staff in the university. The findings from our study



show that the cases considered here are cases of verbal coercion for undue gratification, which amounts to corruption. Our data show that the verbal influence from the addresser is unethical and against the code of conduct of their services in the university. They use coercive, manipulative and intimidating languages against their victims, to take from them what is illegal before rendering their statutory or non-statutory duties. In trying to achieve their goal, they adopt the use language codes that do not explicitly infer corruption, but when studied, are found to implicitly imply corruption.

Using Bernstein's (1971) theory of codes, our study shows that there are more restricted codes used as cues of corruption and few elaborate language codes as linguistic cues of corruption. This further explains that linguistic cues used to code corruption are so used to avoid making the practice a topic for public discourse, that is, to keep the conversation as dem as possible.

9. Recommendation

During processes of investigating, interrogating and charging corruption cases, law enforcement agents and legal practitioners should be aware of the possibility of pragmatic inferences of the cues used by corrupt people. Basing their judgement and analysis on just the semantic component of the languages used may offer a completely deviant information from what is true and factual. They must, as well, appraise the pragmatic property of the cues used, as that is where the speaker's intention is clearly seen.

Given the ubiquitous nature of corruption, ditto language, it is imperative that further linguistic analysis be carried out on the morphological, syntactic and semantic levels, to unravel the nature, use and role of language in corruption. It is not only the educational sector that suffers the negative impact of corruption in Nigeria. Therefore, the researcher suggests that other aspects of the society bedevilled by the menace of corruption should be studied from the linguistic perspective to proffer a more lasting solution to eradicating the manifestation of corruption in Nigeria.

10. Conclusion

The goal of this research work basically is to provide a linguistic perspective to the discourse of corruption by examining the language of coding corruption and corrupt practices in the southeastern part of Nigeria, with particular focus on participants in public universities. Based on the analysis of the corpus presented in our study, the researcher concludes that corruption is not explicitly expressed during communication in public universities in southeastern Nigeria. It is implicitly expressed. The language of expression of corruption is dependent on the participants present in the social setting. To convey corruption intention from an addresser (usually a staff) to an addressee (usually a student), the addresser makes use of a restricted language codes to the specific addressee. In cases where the addressee is new to the environment and does not share the same common ground knowledge as the addresser, the addresser uses clear and unambiguous codes, also known as elaborated codes, to the addressee.

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