

**'IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE':  
GLOBALISATION, LINGUISTIC  
PLURALISM AND THE ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA**

**AN INAUGURAL LECTURE,  
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GLOBALISATION, LINGUISTIC PLURALISM  
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NIGERIA**

*An inaugural lecture delivered  
at the University of Ibadan*

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*By*

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*The Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), The Registrar and other Principal Officers, Provost of the College of Medicine, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Dean of the Postgraduate School, Deans of other Faculties and of Students, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.*

### **Preamble**

Standing before this august audience to inaugurate my chair as a professor of English in the Department of English of this great University is to me a great privilege and honour. It presents to me an opportunity to give an account of my stewardship to the University of Ibadan, which has nurtured my scholarship as well as to the Nigerian public, which has equipped me with the materials with which I have developed my intellectual and research agenda over these many years. The most refreshing part of my story has often been the outcome of every research effort that culminated in my professorial elevation and resulted, to the glory of God, in today's encounter with history.

The very essence of an inaugural lecture is not to display dexterity in the rhetoric of a communicative medium; nor is it to lexicalise frivolities disguised as profundities. Guided by this principle, I join the league of inaugural lecture presenters in the Department of English, mine being the third from the language arm, and the ninth from the total presentations so far made in the Department.

The first ever inaugural lecture, in the annals of the University entitled "Bilingualism" was presented by Professor Paul Christopherson of the Department of English on November 17, 1948, the Foundation Day of the University of Ibadan. Professor Ayo Banjo made the second presentation in language with the title, "Grammars and Grammarians", in 1983. The others are situated in the literature arm of the Department. They include the ones by Professor Molly Mahood, 1954, on "The place of English Studies in an African University"; Professor M.J.C. Echeruo on "Poets,

Prophets and Professors” in 1976; Professor Dan Izevbaye’s on “In his own Image” in 1985; Professor Isidore Okpewho on “The Portrait of the Artist as a Scholar” in 1990; Professor Sam Asein on “Literature and the State: Thoughts on the Scholar-critic as mediator” in 1995; and Professor Aderemi Raji-Oyelade on “Fluent in(ter)ventions: Webs of the Literary discipline” in 2013.

My scholastic enterprise ‘in my father’s house’ has revolved round varieties of English as they acclimatise to the Nigerian environment. In point of fact, most explorations in a second language context like the Nigerian situation direct their search at variety differentiation which sieves the several domain-distinguished forms of English and shows their distribution in the Nigerian public and private spaces. Invariably, investigations into the language and discourse of medicine, journalism, banking, the scripture, homilies, advertising, literature, politics, cultures, computer-mediated communication and so on are ventures into forms of English in the texts and functions of the various varieties as style markers and comprehension aids. Varieties of English have emerged not only from aspects of the native English dialect, but also from local habitualisations and user-initiatives anchored to the context of use. Medical English in Nigeria, for example, has interestingly accommodated forms such as “333” or “XYZ” to refer to “HIV/AIDS”, “social disease” to describe “gonorrhoea” and “natural document” to describe a fat person, especially a woman, as devices of concealment to smooth consultative encounters (See Odebunmi 2011).

The first part of the title of this presentation, “in my father’s house”, is an inter-textual foray to the bible: “In my father’s house are many mansions...” (John 14: 1-2). I have adopted the phrase as an academic metaphor to track the scope of my research to salient discursal and linguistic events in Nigeria. I am not unaware of the adoption of this phrase by Kwame Anthony Appiah (1992) in his book entitled, *In My Father’s House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*. In it, he addresses how to think about African contemporary cultures in the context of African’s recent

cultural history and her endogenous cultural traditions. The second bit, “globalisation, linguistic pluralism and the English Language in Nigeria” describes the link with the context carved out in the first bit, and foregrounds the global impact of the context, courtesy of Internet technology, the ethno-linguistic situation in Nigeria, and the place of English in Nigeria.

As I shall be demonstrating shortly, my research and publications efforts have largely concentrated on the issues of globalisation, linguistic pluralism and the English language in Nigeria. I have examined the lexical, semantic, stylistic, discursal and pragmatic properties of Nigerian English and compared it with other Englishes of the world. Nigerians are creative users of English, although a good number of the items deployed may not necessarily be consistent with native English usage. Yet, in a pluralistic linguistic setting like Nigeria, a cross-nationally intelligible variety suffices for informal intra-national communication.

My research focus has informed the path my project supervision duties, especially at the doctoral level, have taken over the years. I have been able to reproduce myself and, thus, fully equipped my doctoral students with knowledge in the varieties of Nigerian English differentiated according to subject matter, geography and style. Their specific engagements with the discourses of religion, advertisement, administration, politics and sundry others have worked to demonstrate the viability and relevance of my research preference in providing practical pathways for the construction, processing and understanding of texts in professional and domestic life. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, having treated you to the background to my research career, I move to the main presentation without further delay.

### **Globalisation**

The twisty nature of the term “globalisation” has subjected it to varying perspectives and definitions by scholars. While it

is generally agreed that it describes human “living in a time of profound and rapid changes in the kinds of connections that exist between nations and peoples in different parts of the world” (Green 2011: 1), no consensus is available on the nature of these changes. This state of affairs accounts for the different definitions of the term. Most of these definitions have, in addition to capturing the capacity of globalisation to shrink geographies and experiential ranges, identified the process, interactive networks, structures, discourse and consequences of the phenomenon (cf Giddens 1990; Armstrong 1998; Rothenberg 2003). For Robertson (1992), thinking along the line of globalisation as enshrined in the Macluhan’s concept of ‘global village’, globalisation captures the reduction of the world space and raising of global consciousness.

In the social sciences, ‘globalisation’ is used with reference to three sub-processes of continuum, namely, information technology revolution, the restructuring emanating from the economic crises of capitalism and statism, and the emergence of social movements, including human rights and feminism (cf. Aghedo 2012:10). From a strictly economic perspective, globalisation refers to the process by which deterritorialised separate economies are replaced by ‘a single integrated and basic political function’ (Aghedo 2012:12).

All these definitions, irrespective of their discipline-bases, point to the functional compression of world territories, which has led to an unprecedented broadening of communicative facilities in all spheres of life. Following this line of enquiry, I have had occasion to argue that globalisation is “the most noticeable of the several socio-cultural, political and economic phenomena currently changing the face of the world” (Oyeleye 2005: 1). Given that these changes are agentially connected with world powers, globalisation has been associated with Western imperialism (see, Block and Cameron 2002), and has consequently been claimed to have heralded the supremacy of capitalism (Oyeleye 2005). It came furtively, albeit decisively, to

impinge on the material and semiotic basis of world culture, 'bringing new markets, new and cheap resources for production, as well as a new moral basis for interpersonal relations' (Hasan 2003). A new world trade order (WTO) was born whose underlying principle is to introduce and propagate 'free trade' at a high speed. The germ of propagation and expansion appears to be inherent in the system itself, as Collini (2000) says: "Capitalism requires global expansion; anything less is just a pause for breath." The economic principle of globalisation therefore implies lower costs of production, international expansion of companies and appropriate take-overs – global trade, global media, global fashion, global pollution, global language etc. (see Hasan 2003; Oyeleye 2005). It is therefore apposite to paraphrase globalisation as "the worldwide promulgation of principles and practices governed by an ideology of capitalism" (Hasan 2003), an interpretation that seems to encapsulate its particular essence today.

In point of fact, however, irrespective of how globalisation has been viewed, one outstanding denominator stands: globalisation "creates a world without boundaries in which people of this world can communicate with each other, interact and share cultures, economies and generally their lives via developments in the fields of information technologies, communication and transportations" (Alfehaid 2014: 104).

Six key components of globalisation have been identified in the literature:

- the emergence of an interdependent world;
- A shift from a global bipolar to a unipolar structure, amounting to the emergence of a new world order;
- the emergence of a new division of labour at the international level, contextualised in the compressed economic space;
- the emergence of new ways in which public ideas and funds flow;



- the emergence of new cross-national capacities in international markets with respect to the spread of Information Technology (IT);
- the higher rating of the intervention of knowledge and information in production, culture and the economy. (cf. Aina 2002).

These components presume that there are different levels or manifestations of globalisation. The levels have been identified by Andrew (2006) as follows: economic globalisation, political globalisation, environmental globalisation, socio-economic globalisation and linguistic globalisation. Lawal (2005) identifies three influences of globalisation, namely,

- penetration from stronger to weaker nations,
- mutual penetrations among equally influential nations, and
- counter penetrations from weak nations to strong

Taking a critical look at these influences, Emeagwali (2003) had earlier noted that globalisation is a mere resurfacing of an old world experience, which, to him, could be traced back to the last 400 years. Thus, in his view, the current global experience has only increased its awareness and consolidation, especially with the emergence of Information Communication Technology. This perspective has also been expressed by Friedman (2005), who contends that globalisation is only being witnessed on a larger scale than the world had experienced it in history. Thus, Aghedo (2012:17) reports on three historically-informed eras of globalisation:

- Globalisation 1.0 (1492-1800): Christopher Columbus' shrinking the world from a large size to a medium size by linking the New World and the Old World.
- Globalisation 2.0 (1800-2000): National companies making the world shrink from a medium size to a small size.
- Globalisation 3.0 (2000 to present): the current experience of globalisation.

Globalisation in the current dispensation has been described as a phenomenon that flattens the world (Friedman 2005; Adedimeji 2009). In his own contribution, Adedimeji (2009:1) identifies ten factors that account for this 'global flattening':

- The fall of the Berlin Wall
- Netscape, digitisation revolution, and public web browsing (Internet)
- Work flow software
- Open-sourcing
- Out-sourcing
- Off-shoring
- Supply-chaining
- In-sourcing
- In-forming
- The steroids.

Whatever the perspective from which one looks at globalisation, it is connected with imperialism as indicated in the foregoing discussion and as widely attested to in the expansive literature on the subject. Thus, the imperialistic nature of globalisation has been linked up with the wide and expanded promotion of English. Phillipson (1992) describes the strong political and economic motivations of this promotion as "English linguistic imperialism". In his words, "The dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (Phillipson *ibid*: 47). Pennycook (2001) notes that the promotion of English is achieved through systematised material and institutional structures (for example, its dominant status as the language of the Internet). These roles of English in a globalised world, of necessity, call for significant linguistic alterations of the language, a situation that has led to the semantic extension of many English words

to accommodate the cross-cultural and cross-geographical platforms of globalisation.

I have examined some of these linguistic alterations in the variety of English which I called 'Globalised English in Nigeria' (Oyeleye 2005). This variety of English is that used by the chieftains of globalised industry and trade. It is the variety that offers new concepts that are agreeable to the ideology of capitalism. In this variety, lexical items like *democracy*, *equality*, *freedom*, *liberalisation*, *non-discrimination*, *appropriate pricing* and so on are given meanings which turn the semantics of common quotidian English upside down. The speakers of this variety are, in fact, 'on top of the world', according to Hasan (2003). The variety goes beyond mere relexification either by phonological reversal or by the introduction of borrowings. Hasan (ibid) calls the variety 'glibspeak', a re-semanticisation process in which "the meanings of long established linguistic patterns are being hijacked in order to disarm objections by those to whom the locution is addressed." Glibspeakers usually invoke the familiar so as to create the impression of normality, while at the same time playing on wordings and meanings in a way that gives room for manipulation and profit-making.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, I like, in this lecture, to illustrate the above concept of 'glib-speak' with the two forms, *democracy* and *appropriate pricing*, words that have been so much bastardised by Nigerian politicians, the glibspeakers *par excellence*. On hearing this word, *democracy*, one is quickly reminded of the famous definition of the term given by the erstwhile American President, Abraham Lincoln: "government of the people, by the people, for the people." *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, gives the following as its definition of the word:

**Democracy** (n) government by the *people*; a form of *government* in which the supreme power is vested in *the people* and exercised by them or by their *elected* agents under a free *electoral* system, (2) a state having such a form of government, (3)

a state in which the supreme power is vested in *the people* and exercised directly by them rather than by *elected* representatives, (4) the common people with respect to their political power; **democratic** (adj): pertaining to or characterised by *social equality* (emphasis mine).

In the above extract, some words are emphasised either as lexical items or as synonyms – people, government, elected, electoral, social equality etc. The interpretation of the extract is that ‘government’, which is the supreme power, belongs to the ‘people’ and that they always have the right to ‘elect’ or ‘choose’ in a ‘democracy’. Therefore, elections and voting are orderly processes of effecting a change; and our experience of democratic government is of one that has been elected by the people. *Social equality* implies the right to elect a representative governing body; to participate in decision-making, to have equal rights to justice, education, health care; freedom of belief, freedom from coercion; right to personal dignity; right to property etc. Mr. Vice-Chancellor and distinguished audience, Nigeria is glibly referred to as a ‘democracy’, but how many of these rights do we enjoy as citizens of this country? Which of our ‘democracies’ has not been characterised by subversions and distortions? Which of our elections has ever been free of rigging, ballot snatching, ballot box stuffing, violence, specious legalisms and other forms of irregularities? In the hands of the powerful, the chieftains of globalised industry and trade, democracy through glibspeak, changes its semantic colour like a chameleon in Nigeria!

In a similar vein, ‘appropriate pricing’ of petroleum products ‘in my Father’s house’ has meant a regular, sustained and unjustifiable increase in the pump prices of petrol, kerosene and diesel. The only ‘appropriate thing’ here has been the continued pauperisation of the people.

In addition to the necessary semantic extension stated above, globalisation also exposes the English language to alterations that arise from interaction with other languages. Globalisation has, to its credit, the platform that promotes the

spread of different cultures (with their languages) and global access to different cultural heritages (Nwegbu, Eze and Asogwa 2011:3). This has led to the campaign, in certain linguistic quarters, to ensure the linguistic presence of their culture on the cyber-space. The growing awareness towards the promotion of multilingual presence on the cyber-space (cf. Aghedo and Eze 2012:10) can potentially subject English to linguistic alterations that result from such interaction with other languages.

I have also noted in the same work, Oyeleye (2005), that English plays a major role in the globalisation of cultures, trade and international relations. In addition, it makes a significant impact on certain crucial concepts (linguistic and socio-cultural) in the context of English as a second language, part of which is Nigerian English. Kachru (as cited in Crystal, D. 1997) describes English in a second language situation as 'Outer Circle English', being the dialect of the language spoken in the former colonies of native English countries, and being the major national code of communication in the often multilingual contexts in such countries. Kachru also identifies the 'Inner Circle' users of the language (speakers of English as Mother tongue) and 'Expanding Circle' users (speakers of English as a foreign language). In the Expanding Circle, English is spoken for international connectivity as such countries as Japan, China, Saudi Arabia, etc have their own national languages. It is interesting to note, however, that globalisation seems to have shrunk the functional scope of the dialects into two: Inner Circle and Outer Circle. Graddol (1997) contends that the way the use of English grows among citizens in the Expanding Circle has resulted in their inevitable joining of the countries in the Outer Circle group. This development means that, in the context of globalisation, the second language situation presents Englishes that contend both with the linguistic pluralism in which they primarily operate and the international norms of English, which, given the expanded radius of the functions of English, must accommodate the differentials from these Englishes largely at the interactive level.

## Linguistic Pluralism in Nigeria

Only before God and the Linguist are all languages equal... everyone knows that you can go further with some languages than you can with others.

(Bill MacKey 1978:7)

Mr Vice-Chancellor Sir, let me say right away that a complex Babel of languages is very characteristic of the multilingual context of 'my Father's house' (i.e. Nigeria). Thus, I have noted in my earlier research that the Nigerian language situation is considered multilingual in the theoretical sense, but is described as bilingual in pragmatic terms. That is, it is English versus all the languages in the country whenever one is faced with the issue of language choice (Afolayan 1977; Oyeleye 1985, 1994). The Nigerian languages belong to three out of the four main languages groups in Africa, and these are:

- The Niger-Kordofanian phylum (about 70%);
- The Afro-Asiatic (about 29.5%);
- The Nilo-Saharan (0.5%).

(Adegbija 2004:46)

The Niger-Kordofanian languages are found in Southern Nigeria while all Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan languages are located in Northern Nigeria (Greenberg 1963; Voegelin et al. 1997; Ruhlen 1991).

The multilingual Nigerian scenario is certainly more complex and intricate than that in multilingual Europe where countries like Belgium, Switzerland, or Sweden have a handful of languages each. The more the number of diverse languages and cultures, the more complicated and tricky language planning decisions are likely to be. This becomes more glaring in a situation where there are "competing and powerful political and ethno-linguistic blocking within the country, each bent on bringing its political and linguistic agenda into focus" (Adegbija 2004:37). Attesting to the linguistic pluralism noted above, scholars have identified three main categories of languages based on the multilingual

map of Nigeria, namely, the indigenous, the exogenous and the indi-exogenous (Adegbija 2000). There are about 500 indigenous languages in Nigeria with Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo constitutionally recognised as majority languages (Taiwo 2009). The exogenous language is English, which is reorganized as the Nigerian official language, and which is used in political and business administration, commerce and education. Nigerian pidgin is the indi-exogenous language in Nigeria.

By this classification, and in consonance with the rather Orwellian qualification of equality already referred to in the epigraph, the Nigerian linguistic situation is probably best captured in Fishman's (1967) idea of 'bilingualism with diglossia' type of speech community. The indigenous languages are mainly used in very close interactions such as, for example, define father-son, brother-brother, friend-friend, husband-wife and such other close familial relations. They are used to cultivate intimacy or enhance an already existing one. Thus, for an authentic socio-cultural expression, the indigenous language is the preferred candidate. In contradistinction to this, the English language is the recognised medium in political, business, and diplomatic circles, and also in higher education. English has thus acquired the status analogous to Ferguson's category of High (H) as opposed to the Low (L) status of the indigenous languages (Ferguson 1959). Corroborating Mackey's view as expressed in the epigraph cited above, we have noted in an earlier effort of ours that even in face to face social and informal transaction, English serves more often than not as a marker of distance, especially between a boss and his subordinate, and in this instance, could indeed degenerate to being a marker of alienation (Oyeleye 1994, 2005). An example of how 'further we can go with some languages than we can with others' is thus seen in the differential distribution of prestige between English and Nigerian indigenous languages.

The exogenous language in Nigeria, i.e. the English language, reflects influences from the indigenous and indi-exogenous languages, and is, in turn, immersed in globalised

English, with a daily influx of foreign influences through, among other sources, cable television networks, Voice of America broadcasts, video tapes, foreign movies and music, magazines, books, computer software materials in AmE, tourism, exchange programmes and imitation of American fashion and culture (Crystal 1997; Igboanusi 2003). Through these means, American English lexical items such as “kiosk”, “custom-made”, “duplex”, “trash”, “sales girl”, “help train” have become popular in Nigerian English. In addition, sometimes through the same means and the internet, information technology terms such as “download”, “software”, “browser”, “text message” and “computer literates” have been noticed in Nigerian English.

The above linguistic picture has compelled both an extensive and intensive research into the varieties of outer circle English. Many research attempts are being currently undertaken to study the regional varieties: Nigerianisation of English, and lexico-semantic cum syntactic variation in Nigerian English are very good instances in this regard. Such research efforts have interrogated not only the globalisation of English but also the use of English for the globalisation of the world. It is therefore not surprising that Nigeria has become a major contributor to the development of English worldwide as an international language of globalisation, and also to the nativised varieties of English all over the world with their own distinct identities (Oyeleye 2005).

## **The English Language**

### ***Historical Emergence of the English Language***

Several accounts in historical linguistics point to the fact that English as a language has witnessed transformations/transmutations through invasions, subjugation and colonialism (Barber 1999ed.; Oyeleye 2003; Adeyanju 2004). Present day England was originally occupied by the Celts whose language was called the Celtic language. By 43 AD, Julius Caesar led the Roman forces to invade and conquer England, thus making it a colonial territory of Rome. The



Roman soldiers occupied the territory for a fairly long time, providing security for the inhabitants and warding off constant and sustained threats to the island from the Picts and Scots (Barber 1999ed.).

The period 43-410 AD witnessed the Roman occupation during which time Latin was imposed as the official language and, by implication, the language of the elite and the ruling class. The Celtic language was however common among the masses, especially in villages and other rural areas. By 410AD the Roman legions withdrew from the island, giving way to the invasion of the Anglo-Saxon. It was the Anglo-Saxons that really exerted profound social, political and sociolinguistic influences on the hitherto apparently homogeneous Celtic-speaking people of England (Barber *ibid*).

As time went on, other external forces came to destabilise and overrun the Island. Three Germanic tribes were particularly noticeable in this destabilisation process: They were Jutes (449 AD), the Saxons (477 AD), and the Angles (547 AD). In 449 AD, the Celtic warlord, Vortigean, with military help from the Jutes was able to checkmate the continual attacks of the Picts and Scots. However, not long after the defeat of the Picts and the Scots, other Germanic tribes (the Angles and the Saxons) in conspiracy with the Jutes, invaded England and occupied the fertile land of the island. This large scale invasion transformed the linguistic landscape of Britain. Though belonging to different tribal groups, the invaders spoke dialects of the same language. They were therefore able to communicate intelligibly and freely among themselves. With time, the various dialects soon coalesced to become what was first referred to as *Englisc*. Later it became what is today known as *English* (Barber *ibid*).

The preceding account clearly demonstrates that the English language is not after all a monolithic language. It is in fact a potpourri of different languages. Each of the different groups that invaded and occupied Britain at one time or the other left their own linguistic marks on the English language.

Here are some samples of these linguistic marks from the invading groups:

- (1) Celtic influence on the English language is evident in the names of some English towns taken over from Celts – ‘London’ and ‘Leeds’ especially. And rivers – such as Thames, Avon, Ouse, Exe, Stout, Waye etc. The Celts who appeared to be on a higher cultural level than the British were also skilled in metallurgy and words like *iron* and *lead* were borrowed from them. Other Celtic towns include Kent, Cantion, Devon and Dumnonli (Barber *ibid*; Oyeleye 2003; Adeyanju 2004).
- (2) From the Roman overlords and their prestigious Latin were borrowed quite a number of words, many of them having to do with war, trade, building, horticulture, food and metallurgy – words like *building, wall, tile, chalk, mill, iron, lead* etc. Trading terms: *pound, mile, cheap, monger* and *mint*. Fruits: *apple, plum, cherry* and *pear*. Culinary terms: *kitchen, pepper, peas, cheese, butter, kettle* and *dish*.
- (3) Words peculiar to the Germanic tribes are words that have to do with ships and seafaring – ‘ship’, ‘sail’, ‘boat’, ‘keel’, ‘sheet’, ‘stay’, ‘float’, and ‘sea’ itself.
- (4) The French language that displaced English for about two centuries as the official language after Norman Conquest also left its obvious linguistic marks. Majority of the French loan words reflect their cultural and political dominance. Thus we have words to do with war, ecclesiastical matters, the law, hunting, heraldry, the arts and fashion:
  - (i) Words denoting titles of ranks – *baron, count, duke, marquess, peer, and sovereign*;
  - (ii) Words denoting administration – *chancellor, council, country, crown, government, nation, parliament, people, and state*.

- (iii) Words to do with the law courts – *accuse, attorney, court, crime, judge, justice, prison, punish, sentence, verdict etc.*
- (iv) Words reflecting French dominance of ecclesiastical life – *abbey, clergy, parish, prayer, relic, religion, saint, saviour, sermon, service, virgin etc.*
- (v) Words attesting to French dominance in the arts and fashion – *apparel, costume, dress, fashion, art, beauty, chant, colour, column, music, paint, poem, romance etc.*

Other French words borrowed into English denoting mental and moral qualities include *charity, courtesy, cruelty, mercy* and *obedience*.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, the thrust of the above historical account is to lend credence to our earlier claim that English is not a monolithic language; rather, it is a conglomeration of several languages. Therefore, considering the above socio-historical conjunctures that heralded the emergence of English, one would be correct to say that the language does not belong solely to a particular ethnic group, nor to a particular geo-political entity. Given the spread, status and role of English in many parts of the world today, the language has become a 'global language.' Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Yoruba is the language of Yoruba people of South-western Nigeria and Benin Republic, Igbo is the language of Igbo people of Nigeria, but Britain cannot claim the sole ownership of the English language and I agree with Adeyanju (2004:64) and other scholars in this regard. It is not surprising therefore, that English has multiplied into many varieties both in its mother tongue and second language environments. "It has travelled from its aboriginal home (England) to different parts of the world with which it hitherto had no contact" (Adeyanju *ibid*). Even in Nigeria today, we have those who claim that English is their 'first language'! However, in its new environments, English is being transformed, reshaped in

its meanings and meaning potentials; that is, it is being turned into “a new English still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new surroundings” (Achebe 1964).

### ***The Implantation of English in Nigeria***

What are the factors which have conspired to place English in the position of national language in many parts of Africa? Quite simply, the reason is that these nations were created in the first place by the intervention of the British which, I hasten to add, is not saying that the peoples comprising these nations were invented by the British.

(Achebe 1964)

Three crucial aspects of European contact that facilitated the implantation of English and its continued growth and development in Nigeria today include commercial activities (slave trade inclusive), missionary activities and colonialism. We may not know exactly when English came to Nigeria, but scholars like Adetugbo (1978), insist that the first use of the language might have predated its first known written use by Equiano in 1789. Adetugbo (*ibid*) also recorded that places like Warri, Brass, Calabar and so on were the first to experience contact with English. However, historical records indicate that Portuguese predated English in the coastal areas of Nigeria.

The advent of the Portuguese, probably around 1470, witnessed some revolutionary trading consequences in both the Delta region and some parts of the Igboland. The Portuguese bought *ivory*, *pepper*, and *slaves* from the West African coast. But the Portuguese economy was too fragile to absorb the large numbers of slaves available, and as such their purchases of this commodity were low. In no time, therefore, the Portuguese were displaced by the British whose superior economy and more vibrant trading activities played a significant role in the implantation of English in Nigeria. The trans-Atlantic slave trade, for example, facilitated the firm

establishment of the language in the area. According to scholars (Adetugbo *ibid*; Oyeleye 1995; Ogunsiji 2014), the slave traders used some form of the language to transact business with the local inhabitants, particularly the intermediaries. By the time the trade was abolished, some of the freed slaves were reported to have found their way back to places like Badagry, Ota, Lagos, Abeokuta and so on where, in their interactions with people, they helped to spread the knowledge of English which they had learned from the British.

If commercial activities (including slave trade) laid the foundation of English in Nigeria, Christian missionary activities followed to ensure the spread of the language in the country. Missionary activities in the Niger area were first inspired by their success in Freetown Community in 1871. Freetown was the centre of the educational and evangelical work of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). According to Ajayi (1965: 25-52), realising the educative role of the evangelical work of the C.M.S. in Freetown, some influential Igbo people in Sierra Leone petitioned the local committee of the C.M.S. to extend Christianity to the Niger area as it had done to the Yorubaland. Thus in 1853, Rev. Edward Jones, a West Indian, led a delegation of three Igbo men to visit the Niger. The expedition was not successful because it was impossible to navigate the Niger in their mail-boat. However, by 1854, a successful expedition went up the Niger under Dr. William Baikie (Ajayi *ibid*). As time went on, more expeditions followed and before long a mission station was opened at Onitsha and another at Igbede at the confluence opposite Lokoja. Schools and churches were soon established where 'establishment English' was the medium of instruction and evangelical work respectively. As missionary activities advanced hinterland, the spread and adoption of the English language followed suit.

It is not surprising, therefore, that whenever and wherever the missionaries succeeded in winning converts, they followed it up with the establishment of schools. The overall effect of the spread and use of English as a medium of

instruction in mission schools was that English soon became associated with the Christian religion and civilisation. However, as observed by Ogu (1992), with the growth in the number of mission schools, the native-speaker teachers became inadequate. Consequently, indigenes that were perceived to have acquired some tolerable level of proficiency in the language were engaged as instructors. Before long, some varieties of the English language developed from the encounter – the English of the school, of the sermon, of the Bible and of the hymn books.

The third major factor that aided the implantation of English in Nigeria was colonialism. In fact, the most important change with respect to the spread of English through education came under the Colonial rule. The rule ushered in a new awareness among the indigenous people – an awareness of the benefits of Western type of education. Thus the colonialists did not find it difficult to enact an education ordinance in 1882 which made English the language of instruction in schools, since, according to Omolewa (1975:104),

... the colonial government was interested in the promotion of the English language primarily because of its pre-occupation to train a core of clerks, accounting assistants, copyists, messengers, interpreters, and telegraph probationers to assist the colonial administration.

This formalisation of the promotion of English through the school system provided for examinations and award of certificates required for employment in government departments and the private sector. And since material benefits came with the possession of such certificates in English proficiency, the school system became attractive to Nigerians who felt that the only way to better their lot at that time was to possess a certificate that would earn them a place either in the government service or private sector. The teaching of

English in schools was therefore given a greater priority over the teaching of other subjects.

### ***Functions of English in Nigeria***

A lot has been recorded and said about the functions of the English language in Nigeria (see Sybil-James 1979; Adekunle 1985; Oyeleye 2005; Ogunsiji 2014). As rightly observed by Barber, C. (1999: 26-27), language is used fundamentally to strengthen the bonds of cohesion between the members of a society. According to him;

...language, it seems, is a multi-purpose instrument. One function, however, is basic: language enables us to influence one another's behaviour, and to influence it in great detail, and thereby makes human cooperation possible. Other animals cooperate, for example many primates, and social insects like bees and ants, and use communication systems in the process. But human cooperation is more detailed and more diversified than that found elsewhere in the animal kingdom, and no non-human animal society has a division of labour or a system of production at all comparable to those of human societies.

This function of language has been considered very crucial to the extent that all other functions are looked upon as by-products. This function is inevitable if peaceful co-existence of members of the society is to thrive. Human cooperation and societal goals are achieved through the instrumentality of language. Language is important for communication dissemination, information sharing, education, socialisation and creativity. Human feelings, thoughts and wishes are expressed through the use of language, and in fact language is used to exercise the authority vested in an individual. English, as official language, performs these roles for us in a linguistically pluralistic Nigeria.

In the realm of education, English is an indispensable tool for the dissemination of knowledge. Even in adult literacy classes, English is the medium of instruction. Government agencies are able to execute their programmes and policies with English serving as a linguistic facilitator between them and the people. It is often said that ability to speak English in Nigeria gives one socio-economic advantages in that one will be able to enjoy limitless job mobility. Without this measure of job mobility, the national economy will be almost stagnant.

In the area of creativity it is noted that tonnes of Nigerian literature of English expression have been produced by writers like Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Gabriel Okara, J.P. Clark, Christopher Okigbo, Zainab Alkali, Niyi Osundare and so on. All these writers exploit the instrumentality of English as a global language for the success of their works.

As the language of administration, very crucial affairs of governance are conducted in English at the three tiers of Federal, State and Local Governments in the country. The Nigerian constitution is first available in English, even though efforts are now being made to translate the document into the major indigenous languages. It is just impossible for anybody to aspire to play any meaningful official roles in the present day political dispensation in Nigeria without a fairly tolerable level of proficiency in English.

English is the most significant linguistic instrument employed by Nigerians for commercial activities at both the local and international levels. There is no doubt that the indigenous languages are used successfully for business transactions in the country, but sophisticated high-level business matters are conducted on the international platform through the use of English. Up till today, English is the major medium through which people of diverse ethnic backgrounds in the country come together for trade. Allied to international trade is diplomacy. Diplomatic relations with other countries in the world are conducted through the use of English – the language that is globally considered as the ‘language of diplomacy’. Also on the international scene, and with the latest advancement in the technology of modern communication, it is now possible for Nigerian physicists to take part



in a conversation over the internet between academic colleagues in Sweden, Italy, and India through the use of English, the recognised language of the internet.

The use of English as a medium of religious and moral propagation dates back to the missionary era with the establishment of Freetown in 1787. From its initial use as a medium of trade and commercial activities, English has assumed the new role as the language of religious and moral propagation. This same function is still being performed today as more churches and gospel missions which depend on the English language to reach out to people of different languages and backgrounds spring up in the country.

### ***Nigerian English and Varieties Differentiation***

Controversies over the existence of Nigerian English have since subsided giving way to a vigorous consideration of its standardisation and codification. So much of the research work along this line has been done by scholars whose opinions vary considerably as to whether the English being used in Nigeria could be reliably regarded as a 'distinct variety of the English language such that we would have Nigerian English (NE), just as we have British English (BE), American English (Am.E.), Canadian English (Can.E.), Indian English (Ind.E.)' etc. Thus, in his own contribution to the debate, Adekunle (1974: 28) has this to say:

The standard Nigerian English is a dialect of English. It is a dialect which should enjoy the same status as other dialects of English in other parts of the world.

And in the same paper, he concludes emphatically that,

The standard Nigerian English has arrived. The question is whether efforts will be made to preserve it as a dialect of English or allow it to develop into a new language with the colonial British English as its parent.

Adekunle (*ibid*): 36

Corroborating the above view, Odumuh (1987) notes, "The variety of conference/seminar papers and scholarly studies produced so far are testimonies to the viability of Nigerian English (NE)."

However, Jowith (1991:37) slightly differs, and he says: "The attempt to identify varieties of English used by Nigerians is perhaps an ambitious task when NE as a whole has not been adequately described..." But Akindele and Adegbite (1992) are of the opinion that:

The phenomenon known as Nigerian English is that variety of English that has developed in the Nigerian non-native English situation. This is a result of colonial imposition of the language as well as the native English culture on the country. The variety thus developed is not wholly native English type and not totally Nigerian. It is a blend of the two situations.

Banjo (1995:207) agrees with the latter view by stating that:

the English language in Nigeria has been localised or nativised by adopting some language features of its own, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words, expressions... it also developed some different rules for using language in communication.

The consensus in all the literature reviewed above seems to confirm that Nigerian English as a distinct variety does exist. Given this scenario, it is also true and safe to conclude that varieties of Nigerian English exist. After all, Nigeria is a country that is ethnically and culturally pluralistic, as earlier noted. These ethnic and cultural groups had their different languages and cultural practices before the amalgamation of the groups into the geographical entity called Nigeria. English thus came to be adopted as the official language, the language of commerce and industry, inter-ethnic communication, administration and medium of instruction in the schools. It is

not possible for English to play all these roles without adapting to the new local socio-linguistic and cultural milieu. Apart from this, Nigerians engage in different language-related activities on a daily basis; levels of educational attainment also vary considerably among them. The result of all these, therefore, is that proficiency in the use of English in the country will be of different degrees.

These varieties of Nigerian English have emerged from the interaction of the English language with the indigenous local languages and from the different ways Nigerian users of the second language have been trying to approximate the sounds of the language. Apart from this, there are varieties that relate to what we have called some domain-distinguished forms of English and their distribution in the country – discourse of medicine, journalism, banking, the scripture, homilies, advertising, literature, politics, popular culture, computer-mediated communication and so on. All these domains of English language use develop characteristics of their own which mark them out as different varieties of Nigerian English. Varieties of NE have thus been identified and described in different ways by scholars (Brosnaham 1958; Banjo 1971; Adesanoye 1973; Obiechina 1974; Ubahakwe 1979; Adekunle 1979; Jibril 1982; Odumuh 1984; Afolayan 1987; Bamgbose et al. 1995; Akindele and Adegbite 1999; Udofot 2003).

Brosnaham's (1958) work was about the first to identify varieties of Nigerian English based on levels of educational attainment. According to him, there are:

- (i) Pidgin which is used by people with no formal education.
- (ii) The variety used by those with only primary education.
- (iii) The variety used by those with only secondary education.
- (iv) The variety used by those with University education completed.

Other scholars have described the varieties from the geographical perspective, especially in regional terms as Northern English, Southern English; or in ethnic terms as Yoruba English, Hausa English, Igbo English, Edo English and so on. From the social perspective, we have descriptions such as sophisticated/educated v. non-standard; local/interference variety; lectal; acrolectal; mesolectal and basilectal (Afolayan 1987; Jowitt 1991; Bamgbose et al. 1995).

- From the psychological and sociolinguistic perspectives we have such descriptions as English as a Second language (ESL), as against English as Mother Tongue (EMT) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL).
- From the perspective of registers, we have varieties such as technical/scientific, non-scientific/literary, interactional, formal, v. informal, official v. personal, spoken v. written.

Apart from these general descriptions, Nigerian English scholars have examined NE at various levels of usage: phonological, lexico-semantic, syntactic and pragma-sociolinguistic—especially as they mark different varieties of English, spoken and written in Nigeria (see Adegbite 2010:13).

### **My Research Contributions**

My academic research and publications have been consistent with my intellectual interest in English studies generally, and more specifically, English within the context of a second language situation. Thus, my research and publications canvas has been fairly wide, though carefully coordinated, embracing the three broad areas of stylistic and discourse studies; English language in Nigeria (including its varieties); and English language teaching and research.

My attraction to stylistics and discourse analysis stems from an abiding interest in the role that language plays as the principal medium of any imaginative and intellectual

discourse. The main preoccupation in all my stylistic/discourse contributions, therefore, has been a thorough interrogation of the vital relationship between language and style as manifested from writer to writer, text to text and from situation to situation, especially in African socio-cultural settings where English is used as a second language. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, it is in this regard that I consider my earliest research on "The Language of Achebe's Early Novels (In the Context of Nigerian English): A Study in Literary Stylistics" (1985 Ph.D. thesis), as my most seminal work so far in stylistics. The position taken in the work, and which has become a reference point in the discipline, is that any African literature in English is by and large a piece of translation. It is opined that writers differ considerably in their translation techniques and competence(s) depending on their respective points on the scale of bilingualism. I have been able to show through this theoretical postulation that Achebe is a proficient English writer/user whose point is located at the upper zone of the scale of bilingualism where translation is least apparent.

My other research publications in this category (Oyeleye 1987, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1997, 1997b, 1998) have been written with a view to highlighting further stylistic and discourse strategies employed by African writers generally in communicating with their readers. Some of the vital contributions of my research to scholarship in this area include the consistent explication of style and literary discourse in the context of English as a second language, the domestication of English by the African writer, the peculiar idioms, proverbs, aphorisms, wise-cracks, figures of speech and other nuances of usage of the nativised English in the African socio-cultural settings. Another exciting area of my research work is the focus on the debate regarding the desirability or otherwise of the continued pre-eminence of English among all the languages in use in Nigeria (Oyeleye 1990, 1990b, 1994, 1995, 2003, 2004, 2005). In Oyeleye (1990a) I drew attention to the issue of the nativisation of English in Nigeria against the background of the multilingual

and multi-cultural situations in the country. While in Oyeleye (1990b) I provided a detailed examination of the common core features of Nigerian English as instantiated at the different levels of language analysis – phonological, syntactic and lexico-semantic. All the variations identified at the different levels have resulted in a distinctive and viable variety of English, descriptively termed ‘New English,’ now being referred to as Nigerian English.

Also of particular significance is my work (Oyeleye 1994), where I gave a synopsis of the major problems which Nigerian users of English have with variety differentiation in the language and after which I proffered suitable solutions to those problems. I have gone ahead in another work (Oyeleye 2005) to identify what I called ‘Globalised English in Nigeria’ as a variety of NE and of World Standard English (WSE). This is the variety used by the chieftains of globalised industry and trade, as earlier indicated in this lecture. Thus on a daily basis, one notices the injection of many lexical items from this domain into NE usage:

browse (vb.)  
browsers (n.)  
computer literate (Adj.) etc.  
download (vb.)  
e-banking (n.)  
e-economics (n.)  
e-mail (n. & vb.)  
hardware (n.)  
microsoft (n.)  
on-line (n.)  
software (n.)  
text message (n.)

After the assessment of the impact of globalisation on NE, I concluded by affirming that globalised variety of English has come to stay in Nigeria because (a) Nigerian users of English are aware of, and have accepted, the influence of globalisation on NE; (b) Many Nigerians have positive

attitudes towards a global English in spite of the detrimental effects of economic globalisation; (c) Many users of English in Nigeria readily identify with the gains of globalisation and therefore adopt some of the words and expressions which the process of globalisation brings to NE.

The collaborative research work by Oyeleye, A.L. Ogunsiji, O.A., Alo, M.A. and Odebunmi, A. (2011) on the discourse of Internet fraud in Nigeria, supported with the 2006 University of Ibadan Senate Research Grant, explored a pragmatically-induced variety of English utilised by fraudsters to commit cyber crimes and consequently plunge Nigeria into a web of image smearing. This attempt at variety investigation identified the distinctive discourse features of Internet fraud messages, explored the communicative intentions of the fraudsters, assessed the potential and actual effects of the messages on the target audience and tracked the socio-cultural and environment factors influencing the phenomenon of Internet fraud. This research stands out as an endeavour to actualise the marriage of the town and the gown. Its location in forensic scholarship apparently foregrounds its relevance as a complementary tool for anti-graft strategies and tactics in Nigeria. Other collaborative research investigations into the language and discourse of journalism, politics, medicine, electioneering campaigns, advertising, literature and culture that have spawned different varieties of NE have also been published (Oyeleye & Olutayo 2012; Oyeleye & Ayodele 2012; Oyeleye & Sunday 2013; Oyeleye & Hunjo 2013; Oyeleye & Osisanwo 2013; Oyeleye & Osisanwo 2013b; Oyeleye & Adeyinka 2014).

I consider my research efforts and academic contributions in the area of English language teaching and books development very substantial and worthy of mention. In 1988, the Nigerian Federal Universities, under the aegis of the National Universities Commission (NUC), and United Kingdom Overseas Development Agency (ODA) jointly sponsored a research project named 'Communication Skills Project (COMSKIP)' for the Nigerian Federal Universities.

University of Ibadan was the regional coordination centre for the Western zone. I was made the Project Officer for the zone by the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Professor Ayo Banjo. The broad aim of the project was to improve the communication skills in English of Nigerian Federal University students in order to increase the effectiveness of manpower development and technology transfer through undergraduate education. Over the period of 1988/89 to 1990/91, it was intended that the following specific aims be met:

- (i) To develop the academic and administrative competence of those responsible for communication skills programme;
- (ii) To maintain and improve the effectiveness of such programmes within the general framework of English studies in Faculties of Arts, Education and Schools of General Studies;
- (iii) To increase the relevance of such programmes to the proven needs of students in key areas of development, particularly in science and technology;
- (iv) To improve contacts between Nigerian and British specialists in this field;
- (v) To strengthen collaboration between Nigerian institutions pursuing related programmes; and
- (vi) Through selected centres, to improve access to teaching and learning resources developed in Britain.

As a Project Officer, I underwent the short-time specialist pre-project teaching course at the University of Reading, Britain, in 1988. Professor S.O. Ayodele of the Institute of Education of this University was at Reading with me on this short course. When we came back, we organised the first training workshop in Ibadan for the Western zone universities between 1<sup>st</sup> of May and 12<sup>th</sup> of May 1989. Copies of the report of the workshop were forwarded to the NUC, the British Council and all the participating universities in the zone.



To make the specific aims of the project realisable, we set up a materials development committee charged with the responsibility of writing relevant materials for the teaching of the use of English in the universities. As a member of this committee, I teamed up with Professor S.O. Ayodele and others to write a book titled *General English: A Course for the Tertiary Levels* in 1990, published by Agbo Areo Publishers, Ibadan. The book has since been revised and enlarged and republished in 1996 by Bounty Press Ltd., Ibadan. In the same spirit of writing materials for the teaching of the Use of English in the Universities, even after the project had long ended in 1994, another book, *Use of English: A Tertiary Coursebook*, under my editorship, was published in 2009 by Agbo Areo Publishers, Ibadan. There are other areas of research, both personal and collaborative, which I have engaged in and that are equally worthy of being mentioned. But I am not going to bore you with further details in this presentation since there will still be time for post-inaugural intellectual skirmishes before I finally bow out of the university system.

However, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, distinguished academics, ladies and gentlemen, let me briefly give an account of my involvement in the supervision and mentoring of postgraduate students and scholars in the field of English language studies. I have successfully supervised eighteen (18) Ph.D. theses and two (2) M.Phil. dissertations (three of the Ph.D. theses were co-supervised) and over one hundred M.A. projects in different areas of English Linguistics-stylistics, Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, Syntax, Semantic, Phonology/Phonetics etc. Two doctoral students have submitted the first drafts of their theses which I am currently going through. They will hopefully do the *viva voce* before the year runs out. Four M.A. Students are presently making progress in their research work also under my supervision. Some of my past doctoral students are now professors and associate professors in English language in Nigerian universities and abroad today. Professor Anthony 'Lekan Dairo, my first Ph.D.

student, is here seated today. He is from Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State. Professor Ayo Ogunsiji, another former Ph.D. student of mine, is in the same Department with me at U.I. I also acknowledge the presence of Associate Professors A.S. Dare, Nike Akinjobi and M.T. Lamidi.

### **Conclusion**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, in my Father's house are many language-related issues and events; if it were not so, I would not be standing here today to tell this narrative. Globalisation, by its main-streaming and integrative tendencies, appears to be inherently anti-pluralistic and has contra-group identity. To get out of this problem, Nigeria needs a very effective language policy which is all-inclusive since it must not cater only for a minority of the citizenry (see Oyeleye 2005). Thus, in language policy formulation and planning, Nigeria must avoid most of the undesirable effects associated with one language being superior to the others. With reference to the so-called supremacy of English, what this means is that a language policy, based on a scenario of multilingualism with polyglossia, is to be preferred to a monolingual one. A meaningful and functional bilingual/multilingual policy in education will definitely ensure that those with minimal education can absorb and transmit information either in their mother tongues (MTs) or in a combination of English and their MT. When allowance is made for the growth and development of our indigenous languages, then majority of our compatriots will be able to participate and contribute fully to the holistic development of the nation.

Finally, in consonance with Halliday's (2003) position, it is my view that those who speak and write the several varieties of English should not be constrained to be only consumers of the meaning of others; they should be creators of meanings, contributors to global English which is also at the same time international. And recalling Halliday's (*ibid*: 417) position on the same issue,

Rather than trying to fight off global English, which at present seems to be a quixotic venture, those who seek to resist its baleful impact might do better to concentrate on transforming it, reshaping its meanings, and its meaning potentials.

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## BIODATA OF PROFESSOR ALBERT 'LEKAN OYELEYE

Professor Albert Lekan Oyeleye was born to the family of Pa Samuel Akintounde and Princess Alice Oyalola Oyeleye on the 11th of April, 1950, in Ile Olounnu, Gbongan, Osun State. He started his primary school training at Saint Paul's Primary School, in 1955 which he successfully completed in 1960. Between 1964 and 1968, he attended Gbongan/Odeomu Anglican Grammar School where he passed the West African School Certificate Examinations in grade one. He then proceeded to Muslim College, Ijebu Ode, for his Higher School Certificate course in 1969 and completed it in flying colours in 1970. That same year, young Lekan Oyeleye won the John F. Kennedy Essay Competition for HSC students in the first position at the college. He received handsome prizes in cash and in books as an exceptional student, a surefire foundation for his enviable achievements as an academic.

In 1971, he was given admission at the then University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) to study English. He graduated with honours in 1975 and then took up an appointment as an Assistant Secretary in the Old Oyo State Civil Service. After a year and a few months, young Oyeleye returned to the University to start his M.A. programme in 1977, which he completed in 1979. In 1981, he went to the University College, London for further studies and once more returned to his alma mater, the University of Ife, where he obtained his Ph.D in 1985. In 1988, he travelled to the University of Reading, Reading, UK and obtained a certificate in the Teaching of English for Academic Purposes.

Professor Lekan Oyeleye began his academic career as a lecturer at Osun State College of Education, Ilesa in 1983. Four years later, he joined the Department of English, University of Ibadan on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 1987. Focused and enterprising, he rose through the ranks to become a Senior Lecturer in 1991. Five years after, he became an Associate Professor in 1996. He was twice a visiting professor of

Languages and Communication at Babcock University, Illishan Remo, Ogun State from 1999 to 2000 and from 2002 to 2003. His promotion to the grade of a Professor at the University of Ibadan was announced in April 2004 but backdated to 1999.

Professor Lekan Oyeleye is a prolific scholar and a sound academic. He has close to 50 publications to his name, an author and co-author of nine (9) books, with several journal articles and chapters in books. He has successfully supervised 18 Ph.D. candidates and 2 M.Phil. dissertations. He has also supervised more than 100 M.A. students. Professor Lekan Oyeleye can be counted among unique professors who have successfully mentored men and women that have become Professors and Readers today. Among those who benefitted from his wealth of professional experience as his Ph.D. candidates are Professor Ayo Ogunsiji, Dr. Adenike Akinjobi, Dr. M.T. Lamidi, all who, in their own rights, are outstanding and productive lecturers in the Department of English, University of Ibadan. Professor Oyeleye is presently an External Examiner to the Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State University, Bowen University, Iwo, Redeemer's University, Redemption Camp, Lagos, University of Lagos, Yaba and so on. He had been an External Examiner at the University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana (from 2009 – 2012).

The Osun State-born professor is a man of distinction and has played key roles in the growth, development and stability of the Department of English and the Faculty of Arts in general. In fact, in some quarters, he is popularly referred to as the "Father of the Department" due to his timely and significant advisory roles. In addition to this, he is presently the longest serving professor in the Department. Professor Lekan Oyeleye is also an experienced and seasoned administrator. Between 1992 and 1993, he served as the Supervisor, the General English Studies (Use of English). He was Zonal Coordinator, Planning Committee of International Corpus of English Project (ICE – Nigeria Corpus Project),

which was headed by Professor (Emeritus) Ayo Banjo, a former Vice-Chancellor of this great institution. Professor Oyeleye served as Acting Head of Department from 1997 to 1999. He became the Head of Department and served in that capacity from 2004 to 2007. He was elected the Dean of the Faculty of Arts in 2007 and later became the Head of Department, Department of Mass Communication, Bowen University, Iwo from 2010 to 2011. He was also the Hall Master, Abdusalami Abubakar Hall, University of Ibadan between 2010 and 2013. For his outstanding achievements, Professor Oyeleye was decorated with the Osun State Government Award for academic excellence on August 27, 2008.

He is married to his beautiful wife, Mrs. Gladys Modupeore Oyeleye, and their marriage is blessed with five children. Ladies and gentlemen, join me in applauding today's university celebrant as I present to you, Professor Albert Lekan Oyeleye.

## NATIONAL ANTHEM

Arise, O compatriots  
Nigeria's call obey  
To serve our fatherland  
With love and strength and faith  
The labour of our heroes' past  
Shall never be in vain  
To serve with heart and might  
One nation bound in freedom  
Peace and unity

O God of creation  
Direct our noble cause  
Guide thou our leaders right  
Help our youths the truth to know  
In love and honesty to grow  
And living just and true  
Great lofty heights attain  
To build a nation where peace  
And justice shall reign

## UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN ANTHEM

Unibadan, Fountainhead  
Of true learning, deep and sound  
Soothing spring for all who thirst  
Bounds of knowledge to advance  
Pledge to serve our cherished goals!  
Self-reliance, unity  
That our nation may with pride  
Help to build a world that is truly free

Unibadan, first and best  
Raise true minds for a noble cause  
Social justice, equal chance  
Greatness won with honest toil  
Guide our people this to know  
Wisdom's best to service turned  
Help enshrine the right to learn  
For a mind that knows is a mind that's free

