English in Ghana: Growth, Tensions, and Trends

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Abstract

This paper provides snapshots of the growth of English in Ghana by reviewing the debates that have characterised its usage, recapitulating the distinctive features of Ghanaian English (GhaE), and examining current directions of its growth. From its first implantation in Ghana, then the Gold Coast, in the early part of the 16th century to date, English in Ghana, like in other West African countries has shown formidable resilience as the language of formal education, and a medium for cross-ethnic communication in a predominantly multilingual environment. The tensions attendant upon which language to use as a medium of instruction at the lower levels of education appear to be yielding to the logic of complementarities and bilingualism within the local language ecology. English in Ghana, as an outer circle phenomenon, has been travelling the delicate expansionist path of innovation, adaptation, and maintenance of standards over the years. The distinctive Ghanaian linguistic and cultural colouration continues to permeate the English language on all levels, including vocabulary, idiomatic usage, and pronunciation.

Keywords: Varieties of English, Ghanaian English, medium of instruction, nativisation, bilingualism

1. Introduction

With a population of about 24.7 million (2010 Census), the West African state of Ghana has about 50 languages (Dakubu, 1996), the major ones being Akan, Nzema, Ewe, Ga, Dagaare, and Dagbani, with English as the official language. From the time of its implantation in Ghana then the Gold Coast in the early part of the 16th century to date, English in Ghana has been expanding against the backdrop of an intensely multilingual environment. The fifty or so non-mutually intelligible indigenous languages especially Akan, Ewe, and Ga are gaining in importance as second languages to speakers of other Ghanaian languages. Indeed, Akan (especially the Twi dialect) is spoken by people across Ghana as a second language and used as a medium for cross-ethnic communication. Nzema, Dagaare, Dagbani, and a few others also possess considerably large numbers of speakers. There are other non-Ghanaian African languages like Hausa, which is spoken as a lingua franca among migrant populations and in northern Ghana, and Arabic, which is learnt in Islamic schools across Ghana but mainly used for religious purposes, (Yankah, 2006). Contrary to conservative thinking, rural areas in Ghana are becoming progressively more heterogeneous with some indigenous languages emerging as lingua franca, with the attendant language policy and planning implications (Dakubu, 1996; Dorvlo, 2011).

On literacy levels (defined as the ability to read or write a simple letter in English or in a local Ghanaian language) in Ghana, the Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS) (2008) report indicates that about 51 percent of adults in Ghana can read and write in English or a local language, with about 37 percent of adults being literate in both English and Ghanaian languages while only small proportions are literate either in English only (14%) or in a Ghanaian language only (3%). Almost 70 percent of adults in urban areas are literate while about 40 percent of adults in rural areas are literate.

It is in this context that the English language has rapidly grown to become a formidable force in social and community interaction, cross-ethnic communication, and in the dialogues relating to democratic practice and governance, as well as a source of debate among academics, policy makers, and politicians in its usage as the medium of instruction in early primary school. Discussions have also focused on the features that make English in Ghana uniquely Ghanaian, and in the context of the nativisation argument, the strategies by which the standardization processes can be forged. This paper provides snapshots of the growth of English in Ghana by reviewing the debates that have characterised its usage, recapitulating the distinctive features of Ghanaian English (GhaE), and examining current directions of its growth.

2. Historical sketch of English in Ghana

Accounts of the history of English in Ghana, especially, the initial contact between the British and the people of the Gold Coast (as Ghana was called then) in the 16th century and the story of how English emerged as the language of trade, education, governance, and as a cross-ethnic lingua franca abound (Sey, 1973; Boadi, 1994; Sackey, 1997; Adjaye, 2005). Significant elements of the history relate to the colonial and missionary language policy, the roles of specific individuals during the colonial period, and the institutional and governmental postures in the post-colonial period. When the British first arrived in the early part of the 16th century, like the Europeans who had arrived before them, they trained some of the inhabitants as interpreters. It is, indeed, from this perspective that Boadi (1994: 53) describes the English used in Ghana in the early years as "Mercantile English" with the limited possibility of being "the precursor of the educated English varieties used in West Africa today."

Later, the British elbowed their European competitors out of business and acquired their forts and castles. These buildings were subsequently used to house schools for the teaching of English to the inhabitants on a more structured basis (Sackey 1997). Sackey also points out that some of these English schools, especially the ones in Cape Coast survived into colonial times because of the extraordinary effort of Philip Quarcoe who gave his students lessons in reading, writing, and the study of the Bible. The colonial and missionary language policy also contributed to the consolidation of English in the country. Of significance is the role of one Reverend Denny who became school master of the Cape Coast Castle School in 1824. He advocated the exclusive use of English in the school, violations of which attracted a penalty. At the same time, the missionaries also saw the use of English as vital

in their missionary work; therefore, English was used in several Wesleyan mission schools. Two educational ordinances were passed in 1822 and 1887 respectively, and these introduced into the English educational system financial support in the form of grants and a system for schools established by the missions and private persons.

Accounts indicate that schools which used the indigenous languages as mediums of instruction could not qualify for financial support. Leadership in the Colonial Office in Britain felt that instruction in the native language could be left to the stimulus of self interest and government subsidies were not needed to encourage them. In contrast, the Phelps-Stokes report (c.1920) advocated the use of indigenous languages in lower elementary stages of all schools, except in areas of linguistic heterogeneity where a common language of African origin could be used, (Sackey, 1997: 130). Opposed to this, according to Sackey, was the Jeffrey 1951 study group commissioned by the Colonial Office which argued that the absence of empirical evidence to support the view that the literacy levels of children would be enhanced if they were first taught to read and write in the vernacular made such positions untenable.

Parallels can be drawn between the colonial language policy and that of successive post-independence government policies. Governments have not been able to commit the resources needed for promoting the indigenous languages as mediums of instruction despite the various arguments that have been put forward to support it. The fate of the indigenous languages appear to have been left in the hands of the forces of language contact and the 'stimuli' of the interests of linguists and academics to ensure their survival as vectors of education, literacy, and culture. Therefore, the debate then (colonial times) and now is no different.

3. English as a medium of instruction in primary schools

The debate on the formulation and implementation of a language policy for primary level education in Ghana spans three centuries: the educational ordinances passed in 1822 and 1887; the Phelps-Stokes report of the 1920s; the erratic policies characterising post-independence (1957) attempts, and the eventual promulgation of an English-medium slanted policy in 2002. Early Ghanaian nationalist intellectuals of the late 19th and early 20th centuries such as Reverend J. B. Anaman, Reverend G. R. Acquah, and Lawyer W. E.G. Kobina Sekyi were strong advocates of the use of Ghanaian languages at the basic levels of education, (Saah and Baku, 2011). From 1925 to 1951 (following the Phelps-Stokes report), a Ghanaian language was used as medium of instruction for the first three years. However, in the period 1951 to 1956, a Ghanaian language was used only for the first year. Ironically, from 1957 (which marked Ghana's independence and an era of pan-Africanism evident in the foreign policies and rhetoric of Ghana's first president Dr. Kwame Nkrumah) to 1966 a Ghanaian language was not used at all, from 1967 to 1969 it was used only for the first year, and from 1970 to 2002 a Ghanaian language was used for the first three years, (Owu-Ewie, 2006). The reason for these inconsistencies are not very clear, but the suggestion that successive governments may have adopted an

implementation avoidance strategy is plausible, (Yankah, 2006). The disconnection between the policy and its implementation is reiterated by Andoh-Kumi (1999) who claims that the Ministry of Education hardly monitors the implementation of its own policy. Therefore, it creates a situation where many schools do not bother to implement the policy, with the majority of primary school teachers unwilling to teach in the Ghanaian language, combined with grossly inadequate teaching and learning materials.

The current language policy of Ghana which was promulgated in August 2002 specifies that English be used as the language of instruction from primary one through university; and that the indigenous languages are to be used as the mediums of instruction where the composition of the classes were linguistically homogenous. The government argued that the new policy was to enable pupils to gain a high level of proficiency in English because all terminal examinations are conducted in that language; to avoid delay in introducing English to children; to enable pupils to participate in and benefit from the global economy using a global language; and to bridge the gap between the academic performance of pupils in private and public schools. Other reasons the government provided for changing the policy were as follows: that many teachers were not properly implementing the old policy since they never spoke a word of English to their pupils; in many urban classrooms the linguistic composition of the classes was heavily heterogeneous; the scarcity of teaching materials in the local languages; insufficient Ghanaian language teachers among others.

Many voices (educationists, linguists, English Associations, and many other stakeholders) found serious lapses in the government's arguments, and argued that rather than accelerate literacy the new policy was a setback to the development of education in Ghana (Anyidoho, 2004; Duthie, 2004; Saah and Baku, 2011). Anyidoho (2004), thus far, represents the most comprehensive response to the policy. She challenged the rationale for the new policy, and argued vigorously for a reversal of the policy by suggesting what she felt were simple practical solutions to the problem. She contends that the old policy did not delay the teaching of English but rather required teachers to assist pupils to use English right from primary one; and since the use of the indigenous language as medium of instruction was restricted to primaries one to three, beyond which English was taught as a subject and used as the language of instruction in all subjects, the pupils would have had ample opportunities to develop their proficiency to internationally acceptable standards. Poor performance in English she attributes to other factors such as teacher training, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of relevant textbooks.

Another critic, Duthie (2004), demonstrates how the nature of the sound systems of English rather inhibits the acquisition of effective reading skills while if the child had been introduced to reading first in his or her indigenous language the skill could then have been transferred to English. In an apparent denunciation of the 2002 language policy, Saah and Baku (2011) lament that half a century after independence Ghana has been unable to institute a consistent language policy that will allow for accelerated development of the indigenous languages and their use in education. Their retrospective endorsement of Akrofi's unsuccessful call for 'linguistic nationalism'; namely, "the adoption of a national language as the only weapon against tribalism and

the fragmentation of the national effort," (Ibid: 93) is predictably impracticable since it ignores the dynamics of the multilingual situation of the country.

The situation related to the use of the indigenous languages as mediums of instruction at the primary level is quite complex. It must be mentioned that even when the old language policy existed, some teachers were teaching in English nonetheless. Also, in the rural areas the concept of homogeneity does not really exist, and the linguistic situation is not uncomplicated. As explained by Dakubu (1995), there are many rural areas where children must learn a second Ghanaian language at school. For example, a study by Dorvlo (2011) on the use of Ewe as the medium of instruction for minority language areas amply illustrates this challenge. The Logba child grows up in a multilingual community with both Logba and Ewe possessing high percentages of speakers. Ewe, however, is regarded as the lingua franca of the community and is thus utilised as the medium of instruction. Though the Logba child learns some Ewe before he or she goes to school, Dorvlo discovered that the school children's level of proficiency in Ewe was not high enough to enable them receive instruction in Ewe. Besides, it must be noted that over the years little attention seems to have been paid to problems of teaching Ghanaian languages as second languages to Ghanaian children, whether rural or urban, (Dakubu , 1995).

In reality, the situation of English is also not straightforward. There is still a serious shortage of English language teachers in Ghanaian schools to the extent that non-English language specialists are asked to teach English in some schools. In the year 2006, a request for 716 teachers for English by senior secondary schools could not be met because the country produced only 167 graduate teachers in that category during the period, (7 September 2007, *The Ghanaian Times* (p.3)). Indeed, the report indicated that about 3000 vacancies for English teachers in second cycle schools throughout the country needed to be filled. The question is which would be more effective, embark upon a massive development of Ghanaian language primers as suggested by Anyidoho (2004) or train more teachers in English, or do both?

The value of the indigenous languages as well as English in our lives is indisputable; therefore, both mediums of communication should be given the necessary attention across the educational system and in the overall developmental agenda of the nation (Boadi, 1994; Andoh-Kumi, 1999; Yankah, 2006). Boadi (1994: 57) even proposes the encouragement of the development of Pidgin English into an "institutionalised" variety that will serve as a regional lingua franca since "[i]t serves a function which none of the standard educated European languages or any of the indigenous languages does. It bridges the linguistic communication gap between the educated elite and the ordinary person." Both Boadi and Andoh-Kumi advocate a policy that would ensure that both English and the child's mother tongue or a Ghanaian L2 are properly taught at the basic level; and this should be backed by a "comprehensive data-based investigation and experiments to determine the educational advantages in using Ghanaian languages and/or English as medium of school instruction at the different levels of schooling." (Andoh-Kumi, 1999: 122).

The call by Dakubu (1995) and Yankah (2006) for an emphasis on bilingualism in both English and the mother tongue is legitimate. In my view, the current 2002 policy though bearing the marks of a retrogressive reversal to pre-independence exclusivist language policy of the colonial masters, represents the inevitable corollary

of the effects of the globalising influence of English and the failure of successive Ghanaian governments to comprehensively develop the local languages as mediums of instruction in schools through materials development and teacher training. It is indeed important to take into consideration the views of Dakubu (1995) where she argues that the root problem of the inadequate English of students entering the university or tertiary institutions lies in how English is first introduced at the primary level. She advocates an integrated language instruction at the primary level where the development of communication skills in English is promoted together with language skills in the child's home language, if this is possible, or another Ghanaian language frequently used in the environment, if it is not.

4. How Ghanaian is Ghanaian English?

4.1 Deviant usage versus nativised forms

Several decades have passed since the publication of Sey's seminal work on Ghanaian English in 1973, and with the passage of time has come with it 'giant' changes in the history and sociology of Ghana as well as the global environment. At the time Sey conducted his research and published his book Ghana's population was in the region of 8.5million (1970 census, US Library of Congress, Countrystudies.us/ Ghana/33.html) compared to the current levels of almost 24.7million (2010 census). There is definitely a distinctive Ghanaian variety, the point of which has been incontestably conveyed by Quarcoo (1994). Beyond morphology and syntax (which are the oft-cited areas of deviant usage), the pragmatic uses of English (for example, modes of making requests) represent strong directions in which non-native varieties can hold sway, (Keleve, 1995; Dzameshie, 2001; and Anderson, 2006).

But how do we separate such unique forms from deviant usage and eventually create a comprehensive corpus for descriptive purposes? In effect, notwithstanding the great strides made in the description of non-native Englishes, doubts would continue to be expressed as to whether the innovations associated with their emergence are truly innovations or deviations from a standard native norm until these non-native varieties of English have been firmly established through adequate codification, (Bamgbose, 1997). Owusu-Ansah's (1997) 'tolerability scale' may perhaps be the answer. A tolerability scale would entail modelling non-native varieties towards a standard by arranging deviations on a scale showing the level of tolerability of deviations from the perspective of speakers. Only forms with high tolerability will form part of the standard, whereas low tolerability forms will be regarded as sub-standard. Such a tolerability scale may possibly help, for example, to guide the process of nativisation along the path of a national standard that is both internationally and locally acceptable.

English in Ghana, as an outer circle phenomenon, has been travelling the delicate expansionist path of innovation, adaptation, and maintenance of standards over the years. The distinctive Ghanaian linguistic and cultural colouration continues to permeate the English language on all levels, including vocabulary, idiomatic usage, and pronunciation.

4.2 Vocabulary

The works of Sey (1973) and Dako (2003) undoubtedly constitute the two major contributions to the documentation of Ghanaianisms – defined as vocabulary items peculiar to English in Ghana and used by educated English-speaking Ghanaians. The difference between the two studies lie in the fact that the first has tremendous historical significance being the seminal work on English in Ghana with probably the highest citation index, while the much more current second draws its strength from the sheer number of entries constituting the glossary. Actually, whereas Sey discusses about 350-400 entries, Dako's entries total about 3000, almost ten times the number of entries in Sey's early 1970's publication.

These Ghanaianisms have emerged mainly through coinages, and semantic processes involving semantic extension or restriction, or a combination of both, semantic transfer and semantic shift. Coinages refer to word compounds and derived words which are not Target English (T.E.) in meaning but are constructed in line with T.E. productive patterns or as Quarcoo (1994) renders it, they are new expressions formed to convey local ideas or experiences. For example "small room" (toilet) has the structure "adjective + noun". Some of the examples of coinages cited by Sey are: "booker", "bush meat", "chewing sponge", "chop bar", "chop box", "gate fee", "letter writer", "outdooring", "enstool/destool". These are coinages which occur in Dako's glossary, and are still used in GhaE. However, a few of the coinages listed by Sey do not occur in Dako's data, reflecting the fact that these phenomena are no longer part of contemporary Ghanaian socio-cultural experience. For example: action troopers; blue train, joe singlet, one o'clock fever, prison graduate. Many Ghanaians below the ages of 45 and have lived all their lives in cities may not understand these lexical items.

Semantic extension is in reference to words that retain their T.E. meaning but acquire additional ones in GhaE, unknown in Target English although in most cases it is possible to discover the connection between these extended meanings and the Target English meanings; for example, "artificial" acquiring the additional meaning of "women's wig". Examples listed by both Sey and Dako: "balance", "colonial"/"colo", "harvest", "linguist", "master"/"massa". Semantic restriction refers to cases where the meaning of a word is restricted to only a limited area within its Target English semantic field. For example: "fitter" is restricted to a motor mechanic, or any person who does odd jobs on motor vehicles. While Sey includes words such as "depot" and "tribunal" Dako omits them. Both studies list "guy" and "smock". In contemporary Ghana, 'depot' has somewhat lost the meaning "any place where books are sold", but the other context in which it is used, as indicated by Sey, namely "a police depot" (= a college where policemen are trained) is still in use interchangeably with "police training school".

The combination of semantic restriction and extension refers to cases where a restricted GhaE meaning of a word has an additional meaning unknown in Target English; for example, the lexical item "herbalist" is restricted to "one who cures by the use of medicinal herbs" (which is one of the Target English meanings of the word), has the additional GhaE sense : "supposed to have supernatural powers which help him in the diagnosis of diseases and other human afflictions and the

prescription of the appropriate remedies and sacrifices," (Sey 1973: 71 – 72). Some of the examples like "soup" and "stew" cited by Sey are absent from Dako's list.

Semantic Transfer refers to cases where a word is used almost completely outside its normal Target English semantic field. For example: "vulcanizer" refers to a mender of "tyres", and it is a word that has survived to date. Semantic shift is "defined as the rearrangement of the characteristic patterns within the semantic field of a word so that, for example, its central contexts become marginal and vice-versa; or archaic and technical words come to replace commoner everyday ones, in ordinary everyday discourse" (Sey, 1973: 72). The example Sey provides here is a "park" which has the central meaning, "a football field". The more central Target English meaning 'amusement grounds', is only marginal in GhaE. usage. With the development of the Kakum National Park in Cape Coast in the Central region of Ghana, "park" has also come to mean an ecologically safe exotic forest where people can go for recreation.

Across all six classification types, many of the entries are indeed recurrent in the English written and spoken by educated users of the language; however, some of them may be described as rare in contemporary usage. These now rare lexical items came into the language during a specific period of Ghana's social, political and economic history, and disappeared from the everyday national linguistic repertoire with the changing face of the country. For example, lexical items like "action troopers", "blue train", "one o'clock fever", and "prison graduate" which were in vogue in the 1960s and 1970s have lost their prevalence, and today perhaps only people in their 50s upwards would remember the meaning of such words plus their connotations.

Currently, a notable GhaE usage is "orphaned constituency". This phrase is used to refer to a constituency where a political party has lost its seat in parliament. The examples below capture the context of use:

 "orphaned constituency / constituencies":

(a) **27 women to contest NDC orphaned constituency**(Newspaper Headline)

Out of the 297 people vying for the 144 slots of **non National Democratic Congress parliamentary seats,** only 27 are women. (In this extract, "orphaned constituency" is synonymous with "non National Democratic Congress parliamentary seats"; in other words, your constituency is orphaned when your political party does not hold the incumbency.)

(b) N.D.C. has ended its voting processes to elect parliamentary Candidates in the **orphaned constituency** within five regions in the country at the weekend. [*Daily Graphic* News items on myjoyonline.com accessed 4 July 2012.]

Another lexical item which has come into the language by semantic extension is "flash". It is used in reference to a call intended to ring once or briefly in order to register on the recipient's handset as a missed call. The expression often heard is "I'll flash you" or "Flash me, and then I'll call you back". Of course, this usage derives from one of the core meanings of "flash" which is to shine brightly or suddenly or to show something for a short time. It would be catastrophic though for a Ghanaian lady visiting the United Kingdom or any of the inner circle territories to tell a gentleman to "flash me"! A further lexical item is "my brother" which is

often used in reference to a fellow discussant or panellist; additionally, on panel discussions, one hears "I'm not cutting you" (meaning, I'm not interrupting you", when indeed that is exactly what the person is doing); and the phrase "let me land (meaning allow me to make my point). There is also the phrase "serial caller" used in reference to people, typically unofficial agents of some political parties who persistently call on radio or television phone-in programmes to air their views.

4.3 Idiomatic Usage: Request forms in English in Ghana

An area which has often been neglected in descriptions of Ghanaian English and its distinctiveness is the language of request forms. The few studies in this area; namely, Keleve (1995), Dzameshie (2001), and Anderson (2006) indicate that the syntactic forms combined with the lexical choices that characterise the semantic and syntactic structure of requests made by Ghanaians point to a uniqueness of use (cf. Bamgbose 1997) that distinguishes these forms from the stylistic preferences of inner circle users. Broadly, GhaE requests forms are characterised by direct request strategies involving the use of imperatives, need/want statements, hedged performatives, and mild hints among others. Also, unlike native speakers Ghanaian users of English do not frequently use modals when they make requests in naturally occurring situations instead they prefer to use imperatives and want statements because there are no modals in any of the indigenous Ghanaian languages (Anderson, 2006). She points out though this is not the case in written communication. General examples cited from Keleve (1995), Dzameshie (2001), and Anderson (2006): (1) *Imperatives*: Bring me the file of Mr. Ocran, please.; Secretary, bring me Ocran's file.; Give me some rice please.; (2) *Hedged performatives*: Please, I would be most grateful if you sign these letters for me.; I would like it if you gave me a pay-in slip.; Please I would like you to sign my faculty form.; (3) *Want statements*: Please I want a pay-in slip.; Please I need a pay-in slip.; Madam, I want you to sign my faculty form please.; (4) *Query preparatory forms*: Please, can I have a pay-in slip?; Could you please sign my form for me?; (Sir), could you please give me a pay-in slip?; (5) *Mild hints*: Please sir, tomorrow is the deadline for registration.; Please, I am here to register.; Please, I came to register with the department.

4.4 Pronunciation

Evidently, there is a Ghanaian English accent with its own history. Comprehensive studies on Ghanaian English pronunciation include Sey (1973), Adjaye (2005), Simo Bobda (2000), and Ngula (2011). Akpanglo-Nartey's (2012) work on the effects of gender on vowel quality with particular emphasis on the educated Ghanaian variety of English deserves mention. Thus far, Adjaye's work which describes Ghanaian Spoken English by examining its segmental, contextual, and suprasegmental features represents the most comprehensive study of Ghanaian English pronunciation. To varying degrees, the different studies on GhaE pronunciation conclude that factors that contribute in shaping Ghanaian English accent are L1 characteristics, spelling, analogy and the influence of native Englishes.

The examples from Sey's (1973) data show what he describes as deviant usage in the pronunciation of RP vowels. The said vowels together with their example words

and followed by the Ghanaian pronunciation are: /æ/ "cat", /ɑ: / "palm", /ə/ in the second syllable of "letter", all three vowels are pronounced as /a/; /ʌ/ "bus", /ɒ/ "hot", both vowels are pronounced as /ɔ/; /u:/ "food", /u/ "put", both vowels are pronounced as /u:/; /ə:/ "first" pronounced /ɜ:/; /i:/ "meet" /i/ "six", pronounced /i:/. Concerning the pronunciation of consonants, Sey identifies the reduction of final consonant clusters; for example, /fɜ:s / for "first"; and the devoicing of final consonants; for example, /si:f/ for "sieve" as characterising educated Ghanaian English. Simo Bobda (2000) largely confirms Sey's observations with a few differentiations. The data from Bobda shows a correspondence between R.P. central vowels and front vowels in GhaE; where R.P. central vowels /ɜ:, ə, ʌ / are expected, GhaE pronunciation realizes the front vowels /ɛ, a/ respectively. Bobda's perception of the pronunciation of the words "relative" and "callous" as asterisked below in GhaE is at variance with what is generally heard in the country. The words are pronounced "relative" [rɛleitiv] and "callous" [kalɔs].

Word	GhaE	RP
Money	[mani]	[mʌni]
Learn	[lɛŋ]	[lɜ:n]
Third	[tɛd]	[Ɵɜ:d]
Person	[pɛsin]	[pɜ:sən]
Relative	[rilativ]	[rɛlətiv]*
Visitor	[visita]	[vizitə]
Murmur	[mɛma]	[mɜmə]
Callous	[kalas]	[kæləs]*
Hidden	[hidin]	[hid(ə)n]

Over the years, some changes have happened to GhaE pronunciation. For instance, some features of pronunciation associated with particular ethnic groups are yielding to other more general forms of pronunciation Adjaye (2005: 283-284). For example: (a) Palatalization of labials before non-low front vowels like [pʲɛŋ] for 'pen' associated with Fante speakers; (b)The hypercorrect [ɛ] used by the Fante for [ʌ] as in [bɛs] for 'bus' [bʌs]; and [ʤɛʤ] for 'judge' [ʤʌʤ]. It must be pointed out that the use of the pronunciation [ʤɛʤ] is still quite prevalent among some very well educated people; (c)The [ɔ] and [ɛ] in words like 'labour' (associated with Ewe speakers) and 'letter' (associated with Ga speakers) are giving way to [ä]. The observation that many of these changes cut across ethnicities is pertinent (Adjaye 1987; Simo Bobda, 2006); examples are: 'zero' – change from z[i]ro to z[ɛ] ro; 'burial' – b[ɛ] rial to b[a] rial; 'Thursday' – the pronunciation th[a]sday is in competition with the older th[ɛ:]sday, with the underlying /ɜ: /. A consonant shift cutting across all ethnic groups is the substitution of [s] with [z] in 'assuming'. Although 'a[z] uming' used to be associated with the Ewe, it has been adopted by other groups in the country.

Another distinctive feature of GhaE pronunciation is spelling pronunciation; substantial work of which has been done by Ngula (2011). He argues rightly that spelling pronunciation is pervasive in the English spoken by educated Ghanaians and this is largely influenced by two inseparable factors: the inconsistent relationship between English orthography and sound, and the converse situation in the L1 languages which the majority of Ghanaians first acquire. He suggests, therefore that

spelling pronunciation qualifies as one of the innovative features of pronunciation that are giving Ghanaian English a character that is different from standard native Englishes. Examples from Ngula's study (pages 30-31) include: [k**aun**tri] for [kʌ**n**tri**]** "country" (this is speculated to have been conventionalised by a past President of Ghana); [di**g**it] for [dɪdʒɪt] "digit"; and [k**ast**il] for [kɑːsl] "castle".

An emerging pronunciation phenomenon is what has come to be called LAFA, meaning a locally acquired foreign accent. LAFA was coined by Audrey Gadzekpo (then Acting Director of the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana) in the mid-1990s at a time in Ghana's history when private radio stations had begun to flourish, (Bruku, 2010). LAFA possibly constitutes a point of intersection of the un-coded Ghanaian English variety and the coded American English variety, in respect of pronunciation, (Ibid). Although Bruku's work can be characterised as exploratory in nature, it constitutes a major first attempt at providing some form of empirical evidence for LAFA. This variety of pronunciation is characterised by the use of the rhotic and slight modification of vowel sounds in imitation of American English. For example "language" / ˈlæŋgwidʒ / is pronounced / ˈlaːngwedʒ/, which is a slight deviation from GhaE vowel at word final (compare with AmE /ˈlangwedʒ/); "hard" pronounced / ˈhaːʳd /with a rhotic as in AmE / ˈhaːʳd / (compare with GhaE / ˈhaːd /; "overnight" pronounced / ovaʳ ˈŋai* / , showing some deviation from GhaE / ova ˈŋait / and approximating AmE / ouvəʳ ˈŋait /. Evidently, educated Ghanaians have an ambivalent attitude towards LAFA: some perceive it as negative, others positive. In my view, it is a tendency that is going to persist and even thrive considering the domains in which it is used – broadcasting (especially on private radio stations) and sermonising (that is among the growing charismatic churches).

5. Ghanaian Pidgin English

Of relevance in an account on English in Ghana is the status of Ghanaian Pidgin English (GhaPE) and its future (on the divergent views about its status, see Sey (1973). Quite a number of unpublished Masters and PhD theses in various Ghanaian universities have focused on this variety. However, the works of Magnus Huber, especially his book *Ghanaian Pidgin English in its West African Context* published by John Benjamins (1999) can be regarded as the most comprehensive on GhaPE to date (cf. Dako, 1999-2001). Pidgin is not officially r ecognised a s a language of Ghana and there is no standardised orthography. There are two main GhaPE varieties; namely, basilectal GhaPE which is associated with the less educated people, and mesolectal / acrolectal GhaPE associated with students.

Examples of GhaPE:
1.	dat ples no mɔskito-s.
	DEM place, NEG moskito-PL [English –s marks the plural form]
	"There are no moskitos. [sic. mosquito] in that place."
2.	dè gɛt strɔŋ pas wi.
	3PL get strong pass 1SG
	"They became stronger than us." [comparative of superiority marked by 'pas']

3.   sɔmbɔdi dè kam. [use of the tense marker 'dè' and the progressive 'kam']
     Somebody PROG come
     "Somebody is coming."
     (All three examples are from Huber, 1995)

Pidgin became a feature of the language of Ghanaian secondary school and university students around the mid-1960s. Currently, it is used in a variety of social domains, and competes favourably with the indigenous Ghanaian languages. GhaPE is sometimes blamed for the falling standard of English language usage among Ghanaian students. Indeed, a senior minister of state, Mr. J.H. Mensah is reported to have attributed the poor academic performance in some second cycle educational institutions to the way some teachers and students communicate in Pidgin English. His argument was simply that since students consider the habit of their teachers as the best, when the students hear them use Pidgin English to converse, the students emulate them and the practice then becomes part of their lives. The minister of state advised teachers to speak the Queen's English at all times to inspire their students to learn to do the same, (21 February 2005, *Daily Graphic*). Such posturing as captured in the views of the minister is rebuffed by Quarcoo (1994).

6. Facebook English

Currently, there are 1,243,840 Facebook users in Ghana which makes it 74th in the ranking of Facebook statistics by country, and from January to June 2012, Facebook penetration grew by more than 97,180 (social media statistics/Ghana. html). In terms of user age, the largest age group is currently 18-24 with a total of 509,974 users (Ibid), and the predominant language of interaction is English. Many radio TV stations as well as presenters are on Facebook and frequently post information on their walls and invite the public to comment, and all this is done in English. The extracts below categorised under "vocabulary" and "spelling" broadly reflect the peculiarity of language use in electronic-based social interactive platforms; namely, truncated words, and from the Ghanaian linguistic perspective, ideophones, and words or phrases from either GhaPE or the indigenous languages (for example, "papa" (so much), "koraa" (not at all), chaley/chale (appellation to a friend), etc.). Spelling is characterised by the omission of vowels in words (of course a standard way of abbreviating words), combined with the elision or dropping of final consonant or consonant cluster; these features are not uniquely Ghanaian. Certainly, the strategies reflect the typical style employed by practically users of English worldwide for 'texting' by phone and writing on social interactive websites, (Crystal, 2008).

Language Extracts from Facebook

Vocabulary:

Examples: (1) Miss u sooooo much sis! Wd call u ova da weekend so we **gist**! (2) Guess we are **gisting** already, thanx to whatsapp! (3) Miss you papa. (4) Lovie (5) Wats up? (7) I just mix mix everything. (8) U gonna do it better. (9) X – call me small. (10) No comment koraa. (11) Chaley / chale (12) Eiii/eeeii (13) Lol (14) Abi (15) I'm serious oo. (16) People have time waa. (17) The only **dude**. (18) Pidgin (19) I dey oo. (20) i no be easy. (21) i no get som watch way every bro dey talk about. (22) African Brutha who runs it.

Spelling:

Dis (this), tym (time), gr8(great), nyc (nice), 4 (for), gud (good), n (and), u (you), bn (been), lyk (like), becos/cos (because), da/de (the), ryt (right), wid/wif (with), neva (never), tuf (tough), ders (there's), ova (over), y'al (you all), tins (things), brutha (brother), tho (though), kno (know).

Under vocabulary, evidently, there are vocabulary items from the inner circle that have undergone semantic extension, and lexical items that reflect the growing influence of American English (as in the use of the word "dude" and the form "y'll" [you all]). For example, the word "gist" means "the substance or general meaning of a speech or text" or "The real point of an action". Etymologically, it is said to have come into English around the 18th century from Old French and drawn from the expression – "C'est action gist." meaning, "This action lies" denoting that there were sufficient g round t o p roceed. H owever, i n t he d emotic c ontext o f u se o n Facebook, it signifies "to have a long conversation or chat or to gossip", and this usage is uniquely Ghanaian.

7. Conclusion

Sey's point that one way to discourage Ghanaians from using "Ghanaian English" is to tell them they are doing just that may simply apply to the formal grammatical features of the language, especially forms that Owusu-Ansah may characterise as low on the tolerability scale or simply sub-standard. But the reality in contemporary Ghana is that people are unafraid to 'bend' the English language in a socio-culturally relevant way to facilitate communication. It is in this regard that a language databank project along the lines of the International Corpus of English (ICE) project which has seen some level of implementation in Nigeria (Akere, 1997) could be undertaken in Ghana and researchers encouraged to analyse the corpus using perhaps Owusu-Ansah's tolerability scale. Evidently, the promotion of both English and the indigenous languages is the preferred direction (Boadi, Dakubu, Andoh-Kumi, and Yankah). English should not be perceived as displacing the local languages, but rather complementing the Ghanaian languages and constituting an inherent "part of the local language ecology" (Norrish, 1997: 9); and in this regard, Akrofi et al. (2004) assert that the universe of English and the ecology of language are neither mutually exclusive nor do they necessarily 'create tensions'. Currently,

although several indigenous languages are used for broadcast purposes, English is still used alongside the various indigenous languages. It must also be noted that the numerous private radio FM stations have allowed or promoted the use of phone-in programmes in the local languages. Indeed, some callers elect to speak in the local/indigenous languages. Therefore, there is substantially significant ways in which the indigenous languages are being used alongside English thus valorising them. The second decade of this century is witnessing unprecedented advances in communications technology with the intensification of internet-based interaction in every corner of the globe, and Ghana is not immune to this trend. The participation of Ghanaians in social networking websites such as Facebook is substantial with the language of communication being English and in other situations Akan since that is available on Google. Within the country, people may be "texting" on their mobile phones mainly in English, with the possibility that alongside this there is code mixing with the local languages depending on the individual. The new technologies would only increase the spread of English and with it the concomitant but gradual nativisation processes.

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