

INTERNAL MIGRATION AND LANGUAGE ATTRITION AMONG MIGRANTS IN SELECTED NEW SETTLEMENTS IN WILBERFORCE ISLAND OF BAYELSA STATE

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ABSTRACT: *The article examined the impact of internal migration on the first language (L1) of immigrants in selected new settlements. The study adopted classic assimilation theory as the theoretical framework, while cross sectional research design was utilized for the study. The findings showed that there was first language (L1) loss among the immigrants in the new settlements as depicted by most immigrants significantly experiencing difficulties in writing and readability of their native languages (L1) when written in books among other diminishing effects of native language morphology. Finding also revealed that speaking of new dialects as language coping strategy ranging from pidginization and koineization by the immigrants in the new settlements due to diversity in the first languages (L1) were commonly used. The paper therefore concluded that internal migration results to first language loss especially in the area of first language lexicon and grammatical structure. In view of the findings, to cushion the effects of this socio-demographic phenomenon on native language, efforts to incorporate the study of local languages in basic education curriculum as well as facilitating programmes that will encourage the use of local languages among immigrants of the same streams should be advocated.*

KEYWORDS: Internal migration, First language attrition, New settlements

INTRODUCTION

The International Organization for Migration, IOM (2011) has defined internal migration as ‘a movement of people from one area of a country [especially one local government area] to another area of the same country for the purpose or with the effect of establishing a new residence’ either temporarily or permanently. Udo (1983) describing internal migration further defined it as the movement of population (people) across any political boundary with the intention of establishing a residence. As Udo (1983) rightly added to this definition, conceptualizing migration in general terms exclude trips and movements of people from place to place for temporary purposes as well as weekly and recreational journeys. This confirms IOM’s (2011) definition that it must be for the purpose of establishing a new residence either for temporary or permanent purposes.

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However, internal migration consists of four streams, namely; (1) rural-to-rural migration; (2) rural-to-urban migration; (3) urban-to-rural migration; and (4) urban-to-urban migration (Okereke, 2003). In Nigeria, NISER (1997) revealed that the most significant typology of internal migration is rural-urban migration, which is fast growing at 5.3% growth rate per annum (NEEDS, 2004). Again, Cassidy (2015) classified migration into two broad categories based on motives to move from one place or region to the other, namely: voluntary and involuntary migration. For voluntary migration, it is the movement of people from one place to the other as a result of their own desires and motivations. According to Cassidy (2015), this can also be referred to as “economic migration” or “unforced migration”.

Many scholars have described the ‘push and pull factors’ of migration as the driving force behind internal migration. Oyeniyi (2013) specifically stated that as in other African countries, internal migration in Nigeria is motivated by a number of factors which include economic recession and economic growth, education, marriage, civil service (in-service) transfer and national service (Oyeniyi, 2013). Similarly, Lee (1966) proposed that push-pull factors are found responsible for the movement of people from one place to the other which may be political, social, economic or technological factors. Harris and Todaro (1970) maintaining the same in their model of economic rationality of migration described the actual decision to migrate as a result of the expected benefits to be derived from the place of destination greater than that of the place of origin.

Oyeniyi (2013) commenting on internal migration out of curiosity observed that it is a complex and multidimensional process as the spatial mobility of people and merchandise from one location to another which is a common phenomenon in both developed and developing nations, have significant impact in all aspects of human endeavours. The consequences which are often discussed in most demographic literature are unemployment, issues related to remittances, high crime rates, urban congestions, overcrowding, etc. (see NISER, 1997; Adepoju, 2000). Yet, language change which Farrar and Jones (2002) described to be having internal (intra-systemic), external (contact-based) and extra-linguistic (socio-political and economic) motivations, is not always taken as essential aspect of its consequences in human endeavours. It is therefore, sensible to suppose that spatial mobility of people is a leading cause of contact-induced change linguistically. In other words, as Thomason and Kaufman (1988) noted, migration is a key extra-linguistic factor leading to externally-motivated change. According to the duo, in every case the movement of people from one place to the other, except where a homogeneous group of people moves to an isolated location, language or dialect contact ensues which may impact significantly on the native language of the migrant streams (Trudgill, 1986).

Lewis (1982) opined that migration has far-reaching consequences for the social fabric of the migration streams in three dimensions, namely; the place of origin, the place of destination, and the immigrants themselves. This follows that spatial mobility of migrants themselves may have profound sociolinguistic consequences, as the demographic balance of the sending and receiving populations is altered since younger populations of immigrants are typically vulnerable to this socio-demographic phenomenon, and as the young migrants are deracinated from familiar social and sociolinguistic background, forming an ethno-linguistic minority in new settlements, relating with the host community or other immigrants in new settlements becomes inevitable. Therefore, the ‘host speech community’ will inescapably transformed certain elements of the social fabrics of the immigrants in a new settlement (Kerswill 1994) where socio-linguistics of the immigrants is inclusive.

Nevertheless, internal migration as a demographic phenomenon in any nation is a complex issue that is all-encompassing and impact significantly to changes in human societies. For instance, Thomason and Kaufman (1988) earlier study has revealed that migration is a key extra-linguistic factor leading to externally-motivated change. Empirical analysis and facts are yet to buttress their assertion on language attrition among immigrants in new settlements especially in Bayelsa State. As such, the major thrust of this paper is to examine the impact of internal migration on sociolinguistics (native language or dialect) of the migrants in selected new settlements in Sothern-Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State Nigeria

Statement of the Problem

Obviously, a first language (L1) can intermittently come into abandonment or undergo attrition during childhood of human development processes. For example, Ventureyra, Pallier & Yoo (2004) documented studies on language attrition in children over several weeks or months where the process of language attrition was reported. Nicoladis and Grabois (2002) study in a young Chinese girl adopted by an English speaking family in Canada at 17 months of age showed that there was simultaneous loss of Cantonese and acquisition of English in the child due to a new settlement the child was exposed to. In fact, the interactions with native Cantonese speakers over the 3 months following the child's arrival in Canada, revealed a rapid loss in both production and comprehension of this language by the child. Kaufman and Aronoff (1991) painstakingly studied a native Hebrew-speaking child having immigrated to the United States with her family at two and a half years of age; despite a new dimension of exposure to both native language at home and the lingua franca in vogue in the school environment, attrition of lexical and morphological aspect of her native language was also observed after a few months in the country of immigration (Kaufman and Aronoff, 1991).

In another study, Turain and Altenberg (1991) studied Russian and English bilingualism in a child whose age was three and a half years old and exposed to Russian (first language), with exceptional observation of the child's first language conversational skills; before the end of the first year, there were elements of language attrition observed in the child first language. Interestingly in these studies, despite the fact that much insights have been offered in children undergoing language attrition in past studies, very little attention have been made to focus on or to know about the relics of lost' language in adulthood in spite the first language attrition (FLA) studies in adults migrants which tend to focus on migrants immersed in a second language environment fairly late in life (Köpke, 2001).

Indeed, several other studies including Ammerlaan (1996) and Hulsen (2000) studies on adults language attrition have found some evidence for attrition such as lexical retrieval difficulties, errors in syntax and even in productive phonology (Major, 1992), though compared with the widespread language attrition palpable in children such evidence is minimal at adults. The incongruity in nature and extent between child and adult first language (L1) loss may be indicative of several factors responsible for such attrition according to age of onset. Although language attrition has long been acknowledged in several studies such as the studies of Hulsen (2000); Köpke (2001); Nicoladis and Grabois (2002); Ammerlaan (1996); Kaufman and Aronoff (1991); and Turain and Altenberg (1991) among other scholars on sociolinguistics and language attrition, the much attention it deserves from migration researchers have not been given in demographic literature. This is a gap in migration knowledge which this paper makes attempt to fill by examining the impact of internal migration on language attrition among migrants in selected new settlements in Wilberforce Island of Bayelsa State.

Analytical Framework: Classic Assimilation Theory

Sociologists have made attempt to provide theoretical explanations on the immigrant group mobility in a new settlement. The prominent one is the classic assimilation theory which is credited to the Chicago School in the 1920s (Brown and Bean, 2006). Indeed, the works of the 20th and 21st century sociologists succinctly showcase and refined the application of the theory when Milton Gordon (1964) published his work on "*Assimilation in American Life: the role of race, religion, and national origins*"; including the work of Alba Richard and Victor Nee (2003) published on "*Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and the New Immigration*", in the United States.

However, classic assimilation theory sees immigrant groups and 'native-born' people or majority groups following a "straight-line" convergence, now becoming more similar over time and space in norms, values, behaviors, and characteristics. The theory is also of the view that those immigrants groups residing the longest in the host society (community), as well as the members of future generations to come will show greater similarities with the majority (native-born) group than immigrants who have spent less time in the host community (Brown and Bean, 2006; Waters and Jiménez, 2005).

Although in 1964, Gordon proposed various stages that follow the acquisition of culture and language. According to Gordon (1964), the first stage sets in structural assimilation, that is, close social relations with the host society, followed by numerous intermarriage; ethnic identification with the host society; and the ending of prejudice, discrimination, and value conflict. But Waters and Jiménez (2005) in their own views see immigrants' assimilation involving a complex process because it will not only involve immigrants to integrate themselves fully into a new settlement, but tends to lead to losing some aspects, perhaps all of their cultural heritage. Conversely, Waters and Jiménez (2005) further noted that there are four primary benchmarks to assess immigrants assimilation in any given new settlement(s), namely; geographic distribution, socio-economic status, second language (L2) attainment as well as intermarriage. This implies that immigrants assimilation in such new settlement is a way of understanding the 'social dynamics' of the entire migrants' streams as well as the processes that occurs spontaneously and often latently in the course of interaction between majority and minority groups of migrants (Clark, 2003) relative to language and other elements of their cultural heritage.

Classic assimilation theory however, explains the gradual or spontaneous change that may occur in the cultural heritage of the immigrants in their new settlements over time and space due to the interactions they must have had with other groups, perhaps the 'native-born' people (Waters and Jiménez, 2005), especially in the lexicon, language morphology and grammatical structure of their first languages (L1) due to the influence of persistent interactions with the use of Pidginized language or second language (L2) learned from the host community which will in turn lead to a loss in their native language (L1).

Conceptualizing Language Attrition and its Effects

Language attrition has been described as the loss of a first (L1) or second (L2) language or a portion of that language (Schmid, 2011). Schmid and Köpke (2007) argue that there is likely tendency for speakers who routinely speak more than one language to use their languages in ways slightly different from a monolingual or single language speaker because the knowledge of one language may result to interference with the correct production or understanding of

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another especially for new migrants in new settlement over time and space. However, interference of language can work in two ways. For example, a person who acquires a second language (L2) after the first language (L1) may be restrained in the acquisition of the second language by the first language. Also, interference can occur when the second language interfere with the correct use of the first language (L1).

As Schmid & Köpke (2008) noted relative to migrants in new settlement, studies have started to examine linguistic traffic containing second language (L2) interferences as well as contact phenomena evident in the first language (L1) such that the phenomena are possibly experienced to some extent by all bilinguals. According to Schmid & Köpke (2008) these are most evident among speakers for whom a language other than the first language (L1) plays a crucial, if not major, role in everyday interactions. Schmid & Köpke (2008) further argue that this use to be the case for migrants who move to a place or region where a language is spoken which for the immigrants is a second language (L2). This means that the first language (L1) will change while the second language (L2) interference that can be observed in such situations would be termed language attrition.

Schmid & Köpke (2007) explaining language attrition further, define the term 'First Language Attrition' (FLA) as the gradual decline in native language proficiency among migrants. As migrants use second language (L2) at their respective destinations recurrently and becomes proficient even as the major dominant language, some aspects of the first language (L1) can be subjected to a decline or become subject to second language (L2) influence. Therefore, first language (L1) attrition is a process which is governed by two factors, namely; the presence and development of the second language (L2) system and the diminished exposure to and use of the first language (Schmid & Köpke, 2007). To Schmid & Köpke (2008) this implies that it is a process that is characteristically witnessed among migrants who use the later-learned environmental language (L2) in their daily life. Explaining this further, Schmid (2009) stated that first language attrition may manifest itself first and most prominent in the vocabulary knowledge of younger migrants who are yet to reach the stage of puberty in their lexical access and their mental lexicon, but appear to be more stable in the grammatical and phonological representations among migrants for whom emigration took place after puberty (Schmid, 2009).

Schmid & Köpke (2008) describing the manifestations of first language attrition pointed out that attrition usually first manifests itself in its lexicon before such representations is influenced by the semantic potential of corresponding items in the second language (L2). Pavlenko (2004) gave the instances of such inter-language effects when she concluded that first language (L1) of Russian speakers' terms appear to have gained a different meaning by semantic extension from their second language (L2) – English Language. Subscribing to the lexical effects of the first language of the migrants at the destination, Montrul (2008) added that lexical access of attritors can become impaired, consequent upon poorer performance on picture naming tasks which Schmid (2002) confirmed to have and reduced lexical diversity in free speech of the migrants.

In another manifestation of first language attrition (FLA) on the grammatical structure which was examined by scholars, Sharwood Smith (1983) noted the possibility of element and structural changes to the actual grammar of a native language among migrants due to their contact with second language (L2) at the destination. It was revealed that there seem to be little evidence for an actual restructuring of the language system of the native language. Though the narrow syntax was found not to be affected, but variability in the originality of

the first language (L1) was observed in its cognitive demands due to the bilingual processing exposure of the migrants.

Effects of internal migration on first language (L1)

According to Haynes (2010), an issue of major importance to heritage language communities is language loss. This occurs either on familial level or personal basis which showcase among immigrant communities in the United States and the loss of the entire native language when it ceases to be spoken at all (Haynes, 2010). As Kerswill (2006) pointed out, apart from *pidginisation* and *creolisation* of language in a new settlement; the most striking purely linguistic effect of migration is the formation of new dialects by the process of *koineisation*. Kerswill further stated that through *koineisation*, new varieties of a language are produced as a result of contact between migrants of mutually intelligible varieties of that language. This was found a common characteristic of migrants' streams from different parts of a single language area in a new settlement. The examples of what Trudgill (1998) called *new dialects* or Kerswill (2002) referred to as *immigrant koines* include the Hindi/Bhojpuri varieties spoken in places like Fiji, Mauritius and South Africa, as well as New Zealand English. Also included is the speech of 'new towns' of Hoyanger, Odda and Tysseidal in Norway and Milton Keynes in England (Kerswill, 2002; Trudgill 1986).

Kerswill (1986) also described *Koineisation* as composed of the *mixing* of elements from different dialects, followed by *levelling*, which he referred to "a process whereby in a dialect mixture situation, certain elements of first language disappear either universally or in terms of the particular language undergoing the process of koineization" (Trudgill, 1986). This process leads to the diminution in the number of different realizations of the same lexicon and grammatical structure of the first language (L1).

Illustrating the socio-linguistics consequences of immigrants in new settlement (s) studies have shown that immigrants living in the United States, for example, are undergoing loss of first language which has resulted to simplified grammar and gaps in their vocabulary. In fact, paraphrasing their speech or borrow words and morphosyntactic structures from English Language was found to be in vogue due to grammatical incompetence in their first language (L1) speeches though depending on the strategies adopted in their speech, migrants were found to be slowed down considerably in their attempts to communicate in first language (L1), which may eventually lead to giving up entirely due to linguistic insecurity subsequently (Anderson, 1982). Again, in families where members of older generations have limited abilities in second language (L2) English Language, migrants loss of the first language (L1) non-English language results in communication gap between family members and this may be deleterious to cause a sense of cultural loss for the individual (Hinton, 1999).

Describing the cultural damage that can result from language attrition, Fishman (2001) stated that a traditionally associated language is more than just a tool of communication for its culture because it is usually viewed as a specific gift, marker of identity and specific responsibility in respect of generations to come. This means that the loss of native language (L1) is a consequent of repressive tendency (see Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), which Crawford (1995) buttressed by stating that language loss does not only happen in privileged or dominant communities but suggests that wherever first language (L1) attrition occurs, it is as a result of the dominant and oppressive nature second language (L2) of the destination must have posed to it though other external factors such as the influence of education, exposure to modern communication gadgets (such as TVs, radios and internet) may be found responsible.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study locations were situated around the new settlements along the road leading to Wilberforce Island in Southern Ijaw LGA, Bayelsa State. These communities include Agudama, Ogobiri, Egbedi, Ikob, and Ikibiri, where the sample population was drawn. They are the communities situated in between Yenagoa, the Bayelsa State Capital and Amassoma Community, where Niger Delta University is located. The study also employed *cross-sectional survey research design*. This design was motivated by the nature of the study which enabled the researcher (s) to study the phenomenon investigated just at a snapshot without necessarily studying the entire population of study over a long period of time before making a meaningful inference or conclusion on the subject of investigation [s]. The design also enabled the researcher (s) to be involved in a one-time interaction with group of people under which the social phenomenon was investigated.

One hundred and twenty ($n=120$) respondents participated in the quantitative study through purposive sampling techniques on the accounts that all the residents in those communities were migrants in the new settlements that following the construction of the road that links the newly established Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island in about a decade and half ago, and were deliberately selected for sampling in the study using questionnaire. The data collected for the study was analyzed frequency distribution and simple percentage in table-format. However, all principles in social research ethics were strictly applied in the study which includes informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity as well as the principle of confidentiality.

Result

Analyzing the quantitative data, statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 was utilized to code and analyze the results. Thus, the result of the study was based on 120 respondents that participated in the study. The questionnaire scheduled for collecting information from respondents was designed in two categories. Section A comprised the social demographic information of the respondents, while Section B comprised categories of questions related to first language loss among immigrants in new settlements. Also the questionnaires were structured in a mixture of close-ended and open-ended format.

Socio-demographic information of respondents

Table 1 showed the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The table revealed that the mean age of the respondents was 30 years old following the various categories of age brackets indicated on the table. This validates the migrants to which the effects of their spatial mobility on first language (L1) were examined. Also from the table, it was revealed that there were more females (59.2%) than male respondents (40.8%) which do not impact significantly on the subject matter.

Table1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage (%)
Age	Mean age = 30	
15-24	39	32.5
25-34	35	29.2
35-44	9	7.5
45 and above	37	30.8
Sex		
Female	71	59.2
Male	49	40.8
Occupation		
Farming	36	30.0
Business	17	14.2
Students	29	24.2
Civil servants	18	15.0
Other occupations	20	16.7
Average Income per month in Naira		
	45	37.5
<10, 000	62	51.7
10, 000 – 20, 000	13	10.8
20, 000>		

Field Survey (2014)

In terms of the occupation of the respondents, the table showed that a large number of the respondents engaged in farming (30.0%) as major occupation compared to other categories of occupation. This suggests that majority of the migrants in the selected new settlements were into farming as at the time of the survey compared to other categories of occupations. Also on the average income of the respondents per month, it was revealed that majority of the respondents (51.7%) earned between ₦10, 000 and ₦20, 000 per month on the average compare to those who earned ₦20, 000 and above. This also suggests that most of the migrants in the new settlements were not of higher income earning group of the society.

Reasons for migration to the new settlements

Table 2 revealed various reasons for migrants' movement to the new settlements. It was therefore revealed that a large number of migrants (44.2%) were motivated to move to the new settlements due to the road construction as well as the establishment of the Niger Delta University situated at Wilberforce Island of the Local Government. This however, supports Lee's (1966) push-pull theory that migrants are lured to new destination due to factors that may include political, environmental, social and technological factors. This also implies that the construction of the road that links the University from Yenagoa, the state capital including the establishment of the school in about one and a half decades ago were the most common pull factors motivating the decisions of the migrants to have moved to the new settlements. Also, as the new settlement patterns depicted, *linear pattern*, clearly supports the most commonly found reasons for their movements since most of their houses are built around the road that leads to Wilberforce Island where the school is located.

Table 2: Motivations for migrants' movement to the new settlements

Reasons for movement	Frequency (N = 120)	Percentage (%)
Road construction	53	44.2
Communication network	11	9.2
Establishment of NDU	40	33.3
Electricity supply	06	5.0
Business/employment opportunity	10	8.3

Source: Field survey (2014) *NB: NDU is Niger Delta University

Extent of language attrition

Table 3 showed the results of how language attrition has occurred in the new settlements. The study first ascertained migrants' native language (L1), it was revealed that 28.3% of the migrants speak Ijaw as their first language, 22.5% of them speak Isoko as their first language, 15.5% speak Uhrobo as their first language, while 33.3% of them speak Igbo as their first language. As indicated on the table, it means Igbo migrants dominate the migrants' stream in the new settlements under which the phenomenon of language attrition was investigated. In addition to this, respondents were asked whether they still understand their first language; though the table revealed that 63.3% of the respondents indicated yes that they understand their first languages (L1) in the new settlements, yet 36.7% of them still showed that they could not understand their first language despite majority of the migrants were adults.

Table 3: A table showing how Language Attrition has occurred in the new settlements

Variables	Frequency (N = 120)	Percentage (%)
Migrants' first language (L1)		
Ijaw	34	28.3
Isoko	27	22.5
Uhrobo	19	15.8
Igbo	40	33.3
Ability to understand first language (L1)		
Yes	76	63.3
No	44	36.7
Ability to speak first language (L1) fluently		
Yes	38	31.7
No	82	68.3
Ability to read native language (L1) effectively		
Yes	27	22.5
No	93	77.5
Ability to write native language (L1) effectively		
Yes	16	13.3
No	104	86.7
Possibility of translating second language (L2) to native language (L1)		
Yes	23	19.2
No	97	80.8
The language spoken at the present location		
Pidgin	73	60.8
English Language	21	17.5
Mixed dialects (Koines)	23	19.2
First language (L1)	03	2.5

Field survey (2014)

Similar to this, respondents were asked whether they had the ability to speak their first language (L1) fluently at their destination, the result showed that more than half of the respondents (68.3%) signified that they could not speak their L1 fluently compared to only 31.7% of the respondents who indicated that they could speak it fluently. This suggests that there is a decline in the mastery of L1 speaking at the new settlements. Also, ability to read native language (L1) effectively was ascertained. It was revealed that a large number of respondents (77.5%) indicated that they could not read their native language when written in books compare to only 22.5% of the migrants who could read their native language when written in books. This also implies the native language attrition in terms readability among immigrants in new settlement.

In addition to this, the ability of the respondents to write native language (L1) among the immigrants was ascertained, a large population of the immigrants (86.7%) signified that they could not write it effectively compared to just few of the migrants (13.3%) that indicated that they could write. This means that there is a language loss. Moreover, the possibility of translating second language (L2) to first language (L1) was asked from the respondents, 80.8% of them indicated 'no', while only 19.2% of them said 'yes'. This is an indication of language loss. Finally, the present language spoken at their present location was ascertained, it was shown that 60.8% of the respondents spoke pidgin, 17.5% of the respondents indicated English language, 19.2% said mixed dialects (*Koines*), while only 2.5% of them signified that they spoke their first language (L1). This implies that there is a serious language attrition among the immigrants in the new settlements

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Obviously, it is evident in the study that immigrants in the new settlements voluntarily migrated to the new settlements following the construction of the road that links the state capital and the young state university (NDU) established by the Bayelsa State Government were the motivating factors pulling immigrants to the new settlements which were not in existence prior to the establishment of the university as well as the construction of the road linking the university from Yenagoa, the state capital. This confirms Lee's (1966) push-pull theory that migrants are pushed out of their places of origins to their place of destination due to social, political, economic, technological and demographic factors. In fact, as depicted by the linear pattern of settlement of the immigrants; the road construction motivated their movements to the new settlements.

On the other hand, as revealed in the study; the spatial mobility of people from one geographical location to the other impact significantly on the language heritage of the immigrants as depicted by the decline experienced by migrants in the understanding, writing, and readability of their native languages especially when written in books, as well as difficulties encountered in the translation of second language (L2) learned to their native languages (L1). Indeed, none of the variables recorded 100% responses as to the perfect use of their first languages (L1) in the new settlements. This is however, found in tandem with Montrul (2008) study that lexical access of attritors can become impaired at the place of destination which Schmid's (2002) earlier research has confirmed to have and reduced lexical diversity in free speech of the migrants in new settlements. Also with this, Thomason and Kaufman (1988) earlier study that migration (internal migration) is a key extra-linguistic

factor leading to externally-motivated change is still found relevant in this contemporary era in the area of first language attrition (FLA) among migrants.

Significantly in the study and due to diverse place of origins of the immigrants in the new settlements with different language of their nativity, a difficulty was experienced in speaking first language in the course of interaction effectively. This however resulted to majority of the immigrants resolving to speaking pidgin, English Language, mixed dialects (*koines*) other than their first or native languages (L1) as means of social interactions and language coping strategies. This finding however, corroborates Kerswill (2006) assertion that apart from *pidginisation* and *creolisation* of language in a new settlement; the most striking purely linguistic effect of migration is the formation of new dialects by the process of *koineisation*. Of course, the realization of the same lexicon and grammatical structure of the first language (L1) would be faced with difficulty over time and space.

In this however, it should be noteworthy that internal migration especially when the length of stay is becoming longer in a new settlement has the tendency for to bring about first language loss among immigrants. This further explains classic assimilation theory that sees immigrant groups and 'native-born' people or majority groups following a "straight-line" convergence, becoming more similar over time in norms, values, behaviors, and characteristics including language where the first language attrition (FLA) can occur. In the view of the findings of this study, it is therefore suggested that incorporating local languages in the curriculum of basic education as well as encouraging programmes that will facilitate the use of local languages especially among immigrants of the same streams so as to avoid first language loss should be advocated.

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