

AMBIGUITY IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED NIGERIAN LANGUAGES (IGBO AND YORUBA)

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Abstract

In recognition of the fact that people from different backgrounds tend to think or comprehend things according to their cultural context, the problem of ambiguity has been a significant barrier to cross-cultural communication. The listener could misinterpret the information if he is unfamiliar with the culture that was employed to encode it. Igbo and Yoruba are used as case studies in this study to show how ambiguity affects communication with various cultures. It focuses on the different perspectives held by Igbo and Yoruba tribe members regarding a particular issue and their effective communication strategies. In order to better comprehend cultural interactions, particularly in cross-cultural acquisitions where ambiguity and uncertainty can readily arise due to communication challenges, this study utilizes Martin & Meyerson's third perspective, which is utilized to examine corporate culture. Data for this study were gathered in-person as well as online from respondents. Introspection was also used as a data collection technique. It has been noted that there are considerable cultural and communicative distinctions between the Igbo and Yoruba communities. In Igbo culture, what is regarded as essential is not essential in Yoruba culture, and vice versa. Additionally, it was noted that several words, while written similarly in Igbo and Yoruba, have tonal differences and different meanings. In conclusion, ambiguity can be avoided in cross-cultural communication if those involved have the eagerness to recognize and value their cultural differences. It is crucial to be aware of these distinctions and to modify your communication style when speaking with someone from a different culture.

Keywords: Ambiguity, Cross-cultural, Language, Communication

Introduction

It is often observed that natural languages are ambiguous, namely that linguistic utterances can potentially be assigned more than one interpretation and that recipients of linguistic utterances must use additional information (i.e., communication context) to select one of the available interpretations. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "ambiguous" can mean uncertainty or doubt on one hand and a sign with multiple meanings on the other. Ambiguity is important and it is worth considering what this phenomenon is and how it manifests itself in language and communication. Communication is the process of exchanging information between two or more people. The sender encrypts a message and transmits it to the receiver who decrypts the message and sends a response. The communication is complete when the receiver receives and understands the message. Communication barriers can arise at any stage of the process. The sender may encode the message incorrectly, the receiver may decode the message incorrectly, or there may be interference during transmission. Obstacles can also arise if there is a lack of similarity between sender and receiver, for example when they speak

different languages or have different cultural backgrounds. Communication is more likely to be effective when there is a common understanding between the sender and the receiver. These differences can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. However, many challenges come with effective communication between cultures. Sometimes our stereotypes about which cultures are 'good' or 'better' can be a barrier to us from achieving good cross-cultural communication. We must be open and willing to learn if we want to communicate successfully with people from other cultures.

The problem of ambiguity has posed as a major issue in communicating across cultures as people from different cultural backgrounds have a tendency to think or understand things according to their cultural context, which is a major problem in cross-cultural communication. If a listener is unfamiliar with the culture being used to encode the information, he may incorrectly interpret it. This study provides examples of cross-cultural ambiguity in language and communication, as well as information on its causes and how it reflects in language and communication. Igbo and Yoruba are used as a case study to illustrate the ambiguity in communication, specifically the effective communication styles and divergent viewpoints of members of the Igbo and Yoruba tribes regarding a given concept. Igbo language and Yoruba language are spoken in Eastern and Western part of Nigeria respectively.

Ambiguity in cross-cultural communication provides insight into the effective communication styles of people from different cultures and provides a clearer understanding of how people with Igbo and Yoruba cultural backgrounds perceive communication. As cross-cultural communication studies the comparison between two or more cultures, this study demonstrates the differences in their cultural backgrounds and communication styles through the languages it has chosen. This study focuses on comparing Igbo and Yoruba communication techniques. When the sender and the recipient do not understand one other's cultures for example, people from the Igbo and Yoruba tribes misunderstand each other, or decode information incorrectly when they don't understand each other's culture.

Defining Ambiguity and Cross-Cultural Communication

According to Mayfield (2002), ambiguity is "a word or claim that is open to more than one interpretation; the property of bearing more than one meaning". Lexically, ambiguity denotes "the likelihood of being understood in more than one way." (Oxford Word Power, 2006). In linguistics, ambiguity is defined as a phrase or sentence that reflects more than one meaning (Crystal, 2011). A statement that is ambiguous is one that has connections to two or more "semantic" representations. The aforementioned descriptions help us to realize that an expression may only contain two distinct expressions before it is deemed to be ambiguous. It is claimed to be the several interpretations that come with a given statement. Ambiguity can bridge effective communication.

The process of conveying information from one person to another, from the sender to the receiver, is referred to as communication. It is also important to emphasize that all communication occurs inside the framework of culture, making cultural diversity the main barrier to cross-cultural communication. Non verbal human communication goes beyond merely exchanging words; rather, it is more of an interpersonal means of expressing oneself, in which people communicate their acceptance or rejection, respect or rudeness, or likeness or dislike (Adetunji, 2012).

Menaka, (2018) defines cross-cultural communication as a branch of study that examines how individuals from various cultural backgrounds interact with one another in both similar and dissimilar ways, as well as how they attempt to interact with individuals from other cultures. The main goal is to identify and comprehend the communication styles of individuals from other cultures. Cross-cultural communication is the process by which individuals from various cultures exchange information. Every culture has its own set of values, beliefs, and norms, which can affect how information is interpreted. It is important to keep this in mind. The hand motion that Americans use to say "okay" is exceedingly offensive in Germany, denotes "not okay" in South America, and implies "money" in Japan (Hidayatullah, 2019). In a team setting, incidents like this could lead to conflict and confusion. Making eye contact is a typical sign of a cross-cultural clash. Looking someone in the eyes when speaking with them is considered a sign of respect, openness, honesty, attentiveness, and interest in American society when speaking with someone in a higher position. People from cultures that value hierarchy, such as Hispanic, Asian, and Middle Eastern cultures, on the other hand, frequently look down when speaking to superiors since, to them, doing so is a gesture of deference and submission.

Currently, due to the development of new technologies and the limitations that come with them, intercultural communication has become a more complex process. Transnational institutions have an even more difficult task when trying to get their message across to a large and diverse audience. The concept of "strategic ambiguity" was introduced by Eisenberg (1984) in an article. Ambiguity is a Strategy in Organizational Communication because transparency is not a property of messages, but a relational variable that is affected by a number of factors such as the source, the message, and the recipient of the message. For clarity, the entities consider the possible interpretive contexts of the addressee and the possibility to narrow the range of possible interpretations (Eisenberg, 2007). In some contexts, however, it is more practical to omit certain contextual aspects and leave room for diverse interpretations by the public. In discussing how strategic ambiguity is used in organizations, Eisenberg believes that it covers many viewpoints and that its use in missions, areas, or organizational charts is common. The use of strategic ambiguity is seen as a political necessity to allow different compositional groups to interpret the symbols used differently. This type of discourse can also be used for group documents and thus promote homogeneous diversity. Even if the group members' perspectives may differ slightly, the group can speak with one voice (Eisenberg, 2007).

According to Eisenberg (2007), strategic ambiguity can help develop interpersonal relationships in organizations and create personal bonds between people who perceive messages in the same way. In support of this claim, Eisenberg gives an example of the use of slang and nicknames. To people outside the organization, a discourse using these elements may seem ambiguous and bizarre, but to those within the organization who understand the true meaning of the message, it is an acknowledgment of belonging to the same group. Another aspect to consider when discussing strategic ambiguity is ethics. Eisenberg believes that ambiguity may or may not be ethical depending on the extent to which it is used: using less or more ambiguity is not in itself good or bad, effective or ineffective; whether a strategy is ethical depends on the goals for which it is used, and whether it is effective depends on the goals of the individual communicator (Eisenberg, 2007:18). However, in some cases the unethical use of strategic ambiguity is evident and more attention should be paid to the boundary between ambiguity and fraud (Sim, Fernando, 2010: 19).

As with cultural awareness, the people involved in the communication process are more aware when the communication crosses the boundaries of a particular discursive system. In order to

improve professional communication, different discursive systems can consider carefully examining the people with whom we interact, whether this research takes into account culture, gender, age and individual characteristics, and accepts that the differences are common understanding is a constant in intercultural and interdiscursive communication that has to be accepted. McDowell (1997) states that a field of study is not just a set of relevant issues, but a collection of fundamental problems, concepts, theories and methods, and an ongoing discussion between practitioners. Several principles or criteria guide researchers in the study of interculturality and intercultural communication.

Kulich (2007) recommends nine multilevel analyzes of the culture model for future cross-cultural research which involve culture as propagated mythical ideals, as dominant promotions or mass trends, as exemplary civil norms, as mechanisms of expected behavior, as embedded grids, as mediated metaphors, as thoughtless personal responses to intimacy, as custom array options and as custom meaning. Gudykunst & Lee (1977) offer five approaches to integrating culture into communication theory. Culture can be viewed as part of the communication process in theories or as a cultural creation.

Theories developed in one culture can be generalized to other culture or can be generated to explain communication between people of different cultures or to explain how communication varies from culture to culture. They believe that, in addition to standard social science methods such as logical coherence, power, and frugality, the construction and analysis of cross-cultural theories should also include: consideration of more than one dimension of cultural variability, directly correlating dimensions of cultural norms of variability, and rules governing the explanation of influence communicative behaviors and avoid oversimplification or inappropriate combination of how cultural variables influence cultural norms and rules, or vice versa.

Middle-aged men living closer to the Mediterranean Sea and already firmly entrenched in their own national culture behaviors would employ far more exaggerated and bolder gestures than would those middle-aged men living in the northern European or Scandinavian countries, according to Morris' (1979) study of middle-aged male usage of nonverbal gesture cues in twenty-five European cultures, as described in his book *Gestures*. Additionally, it was largely supported that the former group exhibited a higher proportion of gestures with explicit sexual connotations than either northern European or Scandinavian cultures. More cross-cultural nonverbal studies were later thoroughly investigated in a much wider geographical range in his 1994 book *Bodytalk: A World Guide to Gestures*. It was assumed that American participants would be more process-oriented and Japanese participants would be more task-oriented at the bicultural research conference held in Japan in 1974. It was discovered that younger Japanese and American participants were more process-oriented, whereas older Japanese and Americans were more task-oriented. This may not come as a surprise to anyone.

Dutch sociologist Geert Hofstede's (1980) examination of 116,000 responses to an earlier IBM questionnaire, which was first published in his 1980 book *Culture's Consequences* and later revised in a second edition in 2001, is one of the most significant cross-cultural studies of national attitudes and values. Based on this research, Hofstede (1980) initially suggested the development of four national cultural dimensions, including masculinity versus femininity, individualism versus collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance.

Bond (1987) added a fifth dimension which he called Confucian dynamism, and later short-term versus long-term orientation. In contrast to the degree to which less powerful members of organizations and institutions tolerate unequal power distributions, uncertainty avoidance refers to the degree to which individuals of a national culture avoid or accept ambiguity. The contrast between masculinity and femininity, more lately known as aggressiveness and nurturing, highlights how a national culture addresses gender issue.

The concept of individualism versus collectivism was first put forth by cross-cultural psychologist, Triandis (1995), and it focuses on whether people in a certain country culture are more inclined toward individualistic, communal, or communal values. Hofstede's western bias, +according to a 1987 argument made by The Chinese Culture Connection, has to be reinforced by a Chinese methodological bias based on Confucianism. Status relationships, blending or harmony with others, and moral discipline make up this facet of cultural variety.

Awogbade (2004) identifies two major cultural patterns: the ideal and the real culture. The ideal pattern depicts the behavioral pattern that a culture creates and expects of the people. It is how a culture expects individuals to react in given situations. However, ideal patterns may not always be what is acted out in the society, hence the place of the real pattern. Although the person is aware of the appropriate behavior in that situation, they fail to follow it. The real culture is that which is manifested; the ideal culture may exist only in the mind. People are adaptable and can adjust to various settings, thus their responses to problems are not necessarily consistent with long-standing societal norms. According to Merkin (2009), globalization and other factors have enhanced cross-cultural interaction. However, as people from different cultures interact, their communication will still have an impact on their own cultures.

According to Giri (2003), communication and culture have a significant impact on one another. A person's culture undoubtedly affects how he communicates because of the significant influence that culture has on behavior. He concurs with Novinger (2008) that a society's culture imparts knowledge to its members about how to act and interpret behavior in various circumstances. His argument that communication patterns alter as culture develops is pertinent. People speak volumes through the behavior that their culture has drilled into them, according to Novinger (2008), who claims that communicators must draw from such factors as their prior experience, cultural affiliations, and the current communication environment in order to transfer meaning. Culture determines when individuals may speak and how they may speak. From culture, individuals know when they are allowed to speak. As people from different cultures try to coexist, there are many different types of communication conflict that result from this mixing of people and cultures.

In his investigation of the effects of culture on organizational communication, Thani (2011) addresses the disparity in communication approaches as the primary cause of misunderstanding in the workplace. Particularly between speakers from different cultural backgrounds, this occurs. He considers formal versus informal and direct versus indirect communication styles. The proverb "advise me in private but don't embarrass me in public" is typical of Oman and demonstrates their preference for indirect communication. As was already mentioned, some cultures cherish friendly ties and people. These characteristics are regarded as feminine characteristics; hence these civilizations belong under the category of feminine cultures, according to a previous study by Hofstede (2011). The aforementioned Oman remark also shows other feminine characteristics, such as a sensitivity to offense that leads to face-saving behavior and an intolerance for criticism from the public. He also emphasizes that

misunderstanding the communication preferences of a coworker from a different culture can lead to conflict.

Having reviewed definitions and works by different scholars, this study will focus on how ambiguity is manifested in Igbo and Yoruba culture and communication styles.

Methodology

Martin & Meyerson (1991) consider that three perspectives may be used to study corporate culture: the integration perspective, the differentiation perspective, and the ambiguity perspective. The first perspective is called integration because it emphasizes consistency among cultural manifestations, for example events and artifacts organization-wide consensus among cultural members, as discussed above. Using this view in acquisitions would mean that the members of the combining companies deny the differences between them.

However, it is more likely that it is the top management denying the differences, forcing the two companies to become one with a homogeneous culture. The top management does not want to face the ambiguities that may occur because of cultural differences, and therefore they deny them. The differentiation perspective has also been used in acquisition research. It stresses the inconsistency and lack of consensus in the corporate culture and views culture as either harmonious or conflicting. Much of the failure found in acquisitions has been explained by cultural clashes e.g. Buono & Bowditch (1989). Cultural clashes are explained as when the two merging companies refuse to find similarities in their corporate cultures. Instead they emphasize the differences. The differentiation perspective does not deny ambiguity as the integration perspective does. Martin & Meyerson (1991) emphasize subcultures and the differences between them, for example the difference between marketing culture and engineering culture, and does not even acknowledge sources of organization wide agreement. "Subcultural differentiation 'fences in' these clear differences in perspective. Each subculture becomes an island of localized lucidity; ambiguity lies only in the interstices among the subcultures. Martin & Meyerson (1991:112) state that the differentiation paradigm [perspective] channels ambiguity as swift currents create channels around islands". When it comes to acquisitions, the subcultures are represented by the two merging companies. Instead of denying that differences exist between their cultures, they focus on the differences. Within each company, they emphasize consensus, while the differences will occur in the interaction between the two companies. The third perspective, ambiguity, considers that cultural manifestation is not clearly consistent or clearly inconsistent with each other. The corporate culture is instead, viewed as fragmented, consisting of many subcultures with both different and shared values.

When the two corporate cultures meet, the ambiguity is acknowledged and sometimes even made the focus of attention. A culture viewed from an ambiguity perspective cannot be characterized as being either in harmony or conflict. Instead, individuals share some viewpoints, disagree about some, and are ignorant of or in different to others (Martin & Meyerson (1991). This can be a very fruitful view for understanding cultural encounters, particularly in cross-cultural acquisitions where ambiguity and uncertainty can easily occur because of difficulties in communication. People with different cultural backgrounds bring different meanings, values, and assumptions in to workplace related conversations. These are differences that often lead to misunderstanding and breakdowns in communication and can threaten a common orientation to organizational goals [Fine (1991); Limaye & Victor (1991); Schein (1993).

Elicitation is the technique used to gather facts. Data gathering is required for this. This entails gathering data from derived or compiled data, i.e., gathering existing data from various sources to produce new data. In order to combine the new and original data, introspection which is self-analysis was also used as a data collection technique. Data we elicited using the descriptive study design in order to demonstrate the ambiguity between Igbo and Yoruba communication styles and culture.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents areas in which communication is needed in a society and the ambiguities that occur in the course of communication

A. Language

Language is a set of common spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols that people use to communicate as members of a social group and members of that group's culture. Language serves a variety of purposes, including communication, identity expression, play, creative expression, and emotional release. The most striking distinction between one society and another in Nigeria is language. More than 250 native dialects are spoken here. The Yoruba ethnic group speaks Yoruba, while the Igbo ethnic group speaks Igbo. Both the speaker and the hearer must be bilingual or multilingual, that is, able to communicate in two or more languages, for communication between the two cultures to occur. Due to the fact that English is widely spoken in Nigeria, it facilitates conversation between people of various ethnic backgrounds. For a Yoruba and Igbo man to communicate, it's either there is a certain level of mutual intelligibility between the two or they resort to the use of English language.

B. Greeting

Both cultures concurred that greeting shows respect for the individual being greeted and facilitates further conversation. Both societies disregard contact as a form of greeting. While the Yoruba culture recognizes bowing, curtsying, and prostrating, the Igbo culture recognizes a slight bow or at least some bodily movement that helps to indicate respect for the person being greeted and also a handshake in honor of the person being greeted. Both cultures strongly require the use of honorific expressions when referring to an older person, and defaulters are usually scolded.

C. Marital Rites

An Igbo wedding's main ceremonial performance is the wine-carrying rite, where the bride must locate her hidden groom among the guests. She locates him, falls to her knees, and offers him a cup of wine to sip. After finishing his drink, he helps her stand up by placing money in the cup. This ritual is not performed by Yoruba people. In contrast to Yoruba grooms, Igbo grooms frequently bow. In the Yoruba traditional wedding, prostrating is frequently done to honor and venerate elder family members, usually the bride's family. In different Nigerian marriage customs, the dressing makes a significant difference. The Igbo grooms usually wear a red cap and a fabric called Isiagu. Igbo culture is represented by the hue of the lion head and hat and the wife a beautifully sown dress with head tie and beads. Yoruba women dress in aso-afi and lace. An Agbada is what a typical Yoruba groom will don.

D. Honorifics – Use of 'e' to show respect when speaking

When communicating in Yoruba land, the affix "e" is used as a show of respect. For younger people and peers, the affix "e" is not used with words, but this is not the case in Igbo culture. In Yoruba land, adding the affix "e" to a word is a show of respect for the elderly in both greetings and communication. For examples:

- (i) Ejoó 'please' (Elder ones)
Joó 'please' (Younger ones)
- (ii) E wájeun 'come and eat' (Elder ones)

- Wáájeun 'come and eat' (Younger ones)
- (iii) Eseun 'thank you' (Elder ones)
Oseun 'thank you' (Younger ones)
- (iv) Ekúísé 'well done'(Elder ones)
Kúísé 'well done' (Younger ones)
- (v) E dàmílohùn 'answer me' (Elder ones)
Dàmílohùn 'answer me' (Younger ones)
- (vi) E káàrò 'good morning'(Elder ones)
Káàrò 'good morning' (Younger ones)
- (vii) E káásán 'good afternoon'(Elder ones)
Káásán 'good afternoon' (Younger ones)
- (viii) E káalé 'good evening/good night'(Elder ones)
Káalé 'good evening/ good night '(Younger ones)

E. Significance of Kola nut

It was stated that the fruit, known as "oji," is considered to be sacred in Igboland. The first thing a host in Igboland offers a visitor as a show of welcome is a kola nut because it still represents hospitality. There is always kola presentation and breaking at Igbo events, but not in Yoruba society.

F. Personality traits

A taboo in the Igbo culture might not be a taboo in the Yoruba culture, and vice versa. This is because behavioral norms differ between cultures. A woman picking kola when it falls from the tree is an example of an act that is taboo in Igbo society. The act of Yoruba women picking kolanuts from trees is not frowned upon in their society. In Yorubaland, it is abominable for a baby to tumble from its mother's back. It is thought that if a male child falls off of his mother's back, he will always lose his wife when he is an adult, while if a female child does the same, she will always have a lover die on top of her. The mother is expected to perform certain rituals to guard against evil happening to the infant as it grows if a baby does fall from the mother's back. In Igbo society, this behavior is not frowned upon. Consuming meat from animals such as dogs, pigs, and cats are usually regarded as impure. The Ondo people consider African rabbit (Okete) to be abhorrent but will happily eat dog flesh with relish, in contrast to many Yorubas who will never try dog meat. Igbo society does not view this as taboo either.

G. Yoruba words or phrases with alternate Igbo meanings

The following words found in Igbo and Yoruba are spelt the same but have tonal differences and these differences bring about change in meaning. Despite possible differences in pronunciation and meaning, the following terms can be found in both Igbo and Yoruba:

- (a). Ile – Any Yoruba person will tell you that this word means “house” that is ilé. In the Igbo language, this word ílé means “tongue” a dialectal variety of ire..
- (b). Enu – In Igbo, énú means up while in Yoruba, it refers to the mouth.
- (c). Oku – In Yoruba, òkú means dead person but in Igbo ókú means fire. Òkù means call as in answer somebody's call.
- (d). Ede – Edé is the Yoruba word for crayfish. It is also the Igbo word for cocoyam as in édè. Èdé in Igbo means writing.
- (e). Olaniyi – In Igbo Ọláníyì means someone that has no value, a waste! In Yoruba, it is a name per excellence which means “Wealth Has Value “. But imagine what the meaning was in Igbo language, someone can't bear Ọláníyì in Igbo tribe.
- (f). Aja – In Igbo, ájā means sand while ajá means dog in Yoruba.
- (g). Jide – In Igbo jídé means to hold whereas it is a name of a person in Yoruba as in Jídé. It could also mean the name of a person in Igbo as in Jideọfọ.

- (h). Oja – When someone says the word “ojà” in Yoruba, they mean market. In Igbo, ojà is the name given to the flute.
- (i). Ise – Isé in Yoruba means work while ìsé in Igbo means amen.
- (j). Obi – Òbí means parents in Yoruba and in Igbo, óbì means heart. Òbí in Igbo means house.
- (k). Ala – In Yoruba, àlá means dream while in Igbo, àlà means land.
- (l). Ara – In Yoruba ara means body, in Igbo árá means madness or breast.
- (m). Oba – Oba means king in Yoruba while óbā means barn in Igbo.
- (n). Obatala – Obatálà is a deity in Yoruba but in Igbo, it means he/she is back.
- (o). Ayoola – Àyọọlá means has begged in Igbo whereas in Yoruba, ayòólá means joy of wealth.
- (p). Ife – Ìfè means light in Igbo and in Yoruba, ìfé means love.
- (q). Olanike – Oláníkè is a name in Yoruba land, in Igbo òlàníkè means gone so soon probably someone who died prematurely.
- (r). Ódō – Òdo is zero in Yoruba while in Igbo, ódō means mortar.
- (s). Ike – Ike is plastic in Yoruba while in Igbo, íké is power or strength.
- (t). Oke – Òkè is boundary or share in Igbo while in Yoruba òkè is up.
- (u). Maamura – Máamúra in Yoruba means to start preparing or dressing up whereas in Igbo, màá m urā means slap me.
- (v). Asiri – Àsírí is secret in Yoruba while in Igbo, àsirì is gossip.
- (w). Anu – Ánú is meat in Igbo while in Yoruba, ànú means mercy. Ànú in Igbo also mean to hear.
- (x). Bata – Bàtá in Igbo means come in while in Yoruba, bàtà means shoe.

According to the information provided above, Yoruba and Igbo conversation are both ambiguous. People from the Igbo and Yoruba tribes often make assumptions about one another without realizing that their communication styles and societal values differ. When there is a communication breakdown, ambiguity results because the speaker and listener from the two different language background don't completely understand the context of their own culture and that of the other culture.

Due to the fact that cross-cultural communication entails talking to people from various cultural backgrounds, misunderstandings frequently occur, particularly when people of different ethnic backgrounds fail to consider the value systems of the other cultures involved. Ambiguity hinders cross-cultural conversation because it leads to miscommunication and builds a barrier between speakers of various ethnic backgrounds that are monolinguals.

If people of various ethnicities are aware of each other's communication preferences and respect each other's cultures, ambiguity in cross-cultural situations can be avoided. Cross-cultural communication will be successful and effective if both Igbo and Yoruba speakers are eager to accept other cultures, able to concur with them, and conscientious in a cross-cultural environment.

Summary and Conclusion

This research has been able to present how ambiguity is reflected in cross-cultural communication. From our study so far, we've been able to give examples on how ambiguity manifests itself in cultural communication. It was observed that the Igbo and Yoruba culture have some differences in their communication styles and culture. What is considered vital in Yoruba culture is not really vital in Igbo culture and vice versa. Also, it was observed that there are some words written the same in Igbo and Yoruba but have tonal differentiation and

meaning. The theoretical framework adopted for the research is that of Martin & Meyerson's third perspective used to study corporate culture. A culture viewed from an ambiguity perspective cannot be characterized as being either in harmony or conflict. Instead, individuals share some viewpoints, disagree about some, and are ignorant of or in different to others communication.

People with different cultural backgrounds bring different meanings, values, and assumptions into communication. These are differences that often lead to misunderstanding and breakdowns in communication. Through the empirical reviews, different works by scholars relating to the research work was acknowledged. The research methodology which explains the design for the research is the descriptive design, source of data was obtained through oral and online interview with the respondents. In conclusion, ambiguity is a barrier in cross cultural communication. It can be avoided if the speakers from different language backgrounds are eager to accept and value their cultural differences. Understanding of ambiguity in cross cultural communication can help minimize misunderstanding in communication between two or more cultures.

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