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FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CHOICE OF LANGUAGE AND PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF TWO MULTILINGUAL COMMUNITIES OF AWKA AND ONITSHA (OF ANAMBRA STATE)

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ABSTRACT

The use of language in our daily life and activities is a sine qua non for effective communication and interaction. As a result, which code/language to use and how to use it becomes of paramount importance, particularly in heterogenous communities. What this portends therefore, is that before an individual embarks on the activity of speaking he is first faced with the problem of determining which language to use in order to achieve his purpose. He equally battles with how to use the language in order to achieve the expected result. This is because, different individuals and situations call for specific code and manner of usage. It is as a result of this that performance in a code at every given context and with every given individual is equally an important issue. For instance, the language or variety of it used at an informal situation like the classroom, and the style of usage, cannot, and should not be expected to be the same with the language or variety of it used at a beer parlour, or while gossipping. However, to use one language or a variety of it in favour of another and in a given manner of speech is governed by some factors which could be linguistic, psychological, social or even economic. This research therefore sets out to investigate some of those factors that
influence language choice and performance in the multilingual communities of Awka and Onitsha (of Anambra State).

The review of relevant literatures and analysis of data from life speakers interacting within these areas show some linguistic, social and psychological factors which are responsible for choice of language and performance there. These are hoped would aid the understanding of the linguistic situation in the cities and also assist anybody who may find himself in these areas.