

# Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Language of Palm Wine Drinkers' Club (Kegite)

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**Abstract**—This paper analyses the language of Palm Wine Drinkers' Club in Nigeria, known as *Kegite Club*. The paper's main objective is to examine the pattern and language use of the Kegite club and highlight how it departs from the linguistic pattern found within the general society where the club exists. By using Giles (1971) Communication Accommodation Theory, the paper demonstrates how Kegite members *converge* with their members by using the Kegite linguistic patterns and *diverge* from non-members, because non members do not understand the Kegite linguistic pattern, notwithstanding the fact that the English language forms the background of the Kegite language. The oral and documented data collected through interview and participant observation were quantitatively analyzed and categorized in groups based on the different features of the Kegite language observed. The findings of the study show that the formation, structure and language use of the Kegite club exhibit a kind of technical language attributes that are quite peculiar to it. Hence, this study classifies it as a specific type of slang.

**Index Terms**—Kegite, language variety, slang, convergence, divergence and Communication Accommodation Theory

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language use involves formal and informal ways of communication. Formal usage of language is characterised by standard expressions while informal usage comprises slang, pidginise forms, colloquial usages, etc. Language use, whether formal or informal, takes place in human society; hence, an interesting relationship exists between language and society in general; and language and situation(s) of use in particular. It is important to note here that the sense of 'language' as used in this paper is any symbol of sign that is agreed-upon as a means of conveying meaning from one person to another within a given group of people as observed by Ndimele (1999).

Many a time in communication, meaning is derived or determined by the situation in which language is used, and often, meaning is conventionally agreed upon by a speech community. In other words, meaning is complete when it is situated and whatever meaning arrived at is dependent on the agreement the speakers have, hence, the issue of acceptability is sine qua non in human communication, (communicative competence). This study looks at the language of the Kegite club (a palm wine drinking club in Nigerian Universities and beyond) and how they manifest their in-group-ness through language. According to Afolabi (2011), Kegite members communicate effectively in their language, hence the Kegite language is acceptable to members and also, it serves as the language of wider communication for all members within Nigeria and beyond. The problem of the study, therefore, is to ascertain how the language of the Palm Wine Drinkers' Club (Kegite) is strange to the general public even though it developed from the English language and the local language(s) of the immediate environment. The main objective of this study is to examine the pattern and usage of the Kegite language in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka which set it apart from the foundational language(s), which in turn make it difficult for the comprehension of non-members; thereby hampering communication between the group and the general public.

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE PALM WINE DRINKERS' CLUB

According to Gilbert (2013), the Kegite club is a palm-wine-drinking club "...that originated in 1962 at the Ibadan campus of the then University of Ife (now, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Nigeria" (p.1), by some traditionalist students. The students usually came together every evening to drink palm wine after the day's work. It was in one of such evenings that they thought it wise to form a socio-cultural club. This idea flourished and they appointed officers to oversee the affairs of the club. Gilbert further states that the students also agreed that the president of the club should be addressed as *chief* to depict a typical African traditional setting. Consequently, Prof. Olusegun Adeshina was the first chief to be coroneted by the club. They established the Kegite club in order to avail themselves of a recreation

opportunity. As it stands now, members are welcomed from any part of the society, though it is still situated in tertiary institutions. However, the members are mostly students. According to Gilbert (2013), the aim of the club is primarily to promote African culture. Therefore, the club is known for its music and dancing. It is a social club that has expanded so much that it can be referred to as a community with its own traditions and culture. Kegite club according to Afolabi (2011) is undoubtedly the most popular socio-cultural group in tertiary institutions in Nigeria with members not just in Nigeria but also in other Africa countries, Europe, Asia and the United States of America. Just as language performs the unification function generally, the Kegite language, as the researchers observe is characterised by peculiar expressions that are only used and understood among the members. These peculiar expressions have been adopted among the members of the club, and only members or close associates of the club can decode the language.

As was earlier stated, Kegite club exists in tertiary institutions; therefore, they exist in communities that already have language of general communication. In other words, the language of the Kegite exists alongside the language of the general public in the linguistic environment where it is found. The language of the Kegite Club is generally fed from the language of the general public within the environment of the club. Afolabi (2011), points out that the language of the Kegite club has its root in the English language. This can be attributed to the fact that English is the lingua franca of Nigeria. In addition to English, "other indigenous Nigerian languages (Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa), alongside the Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) and French are used to furnish the Kegite language," says (Afolabi, 2011, p.16).

### III. THEORETICAL STUDIES

According to Hudson (1996), language varies geographically because people living far from one another are likely to speak more differently than those living close to one another. On the other hand, those living close to one another have more contact with one another than those living far from one other. However, people living close to one another, sometimes, speak differently. Closeness and distance are, therefore, very essential in language variety. Furthermore, Hudson approaches the organisation of society from two angles viz: social network and social stratification. Social stratification has to do with hierarchical structure of a society resulting from inequalities of wealth and power while social network has to do with dimensions of solidarity between individual members of society in their everyday relations. However, in this paper, as shall be observed in subsequent sections, even though members of speech communities (in which Kegite groups exist) have very close contact with Kegite club members, they are very far apart when it comes to understanding and speaking the Kegite language.

Dittmar (1976) distinguishes between four forms of linguistic variety: standard, regional, social and functional.

a. The standard variety is that variety that is lawfully recognised and approved as an acceptable medium of communication in a society. It is the variety mostly used in official institutions and formal contexts. It is taught and learnt in schools and carried with it some amount of prestige.

b. Regional varieties are classified as dialects when they are developed in particular areas of settlement and are historically conveyed. Their major function is in oral communication as against the standard variety. This variety is not rigidly codified. Sometimes, dialects are raised to the level of standard variety and sometimes they disappear under the influence of urbanisation.

c. Social varieties or sociolect are speech conventions of groups that are frequently subjected to a large-scale prestige evaluation by other social groupings (e.g. socioeconomically or ideologically repressed classes) and can become the subject for conflict between them.

d. Functional varieties differ from the other varieties that have been mentioned in that their usage runs straight across the dimensions set by the standard variety, the sociolect or the dialect. They can be connected with specific interactions, with institutions or with conditions of the place of work, with formal or informal situations, with the speaker's idiosyncrasies, etc. Functional varieties are frequently technical languages, special languages, slang or commercial languages, (pp. 107-110).

From the variety types enumerated above, the kind of language variety that Kegites club falls within is functional variety, i.e., language of specific interaction. This is also the class where technical language (that is, registers and jargons), slang and the likes belong to.

Halliday (1964) says that technical and professional occupations have given rise to registers that are often characterised by vocabularies that are beyond the range of the ordinary educated man and with unique sentence patterns that are often restricted. A profession's register is made up of peculiar vocabularies, expressions, often referred to as jargon, which according to Crystal (1994), is a collective term used to refer to technical vocabulary and expression used in communication among specialists, which are not intelligible to the general public.

On the other hand, the term slang has been defined by Mish (2003) as an "...informal nonstandard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrary changed words, and extravagant, forced, or facetious figures of speech," (p. 1170). Borrowing a leaf from Mish (2003), Ratna (2010) sees slang as informal and nonstandard words and phrases which originate in subcultures within a society. Ratna's definition is in line with Jorgen (2010)'s view of slang as an alternative linguistic form that forms part of daily interaction within a community with distinct and identifiable groups or subgroups. Mish (2003) and Ratna (2010) stress that when a speaker uses slang, it suggests that he is familiar with the hearer's group or subgroup and that it serves as a distinguishing factor of in-group identity. Slang, just like any other variety of language, must gain acceptance by the group members for it to become part of the group's vocabulary.

Therefore, for any linguistic expression to survive, it must be widely accepted by the group. Mish (2003) and Ratna (2010) conclude that individuals use slang because they desire to be unique. Furthermore, Jorgen (2010) observes that slang often stems from conflicts in fundamental socio-psychological values. When an individual applies language in a new and novel way to express opposition, ridicule, or contempt, often tinged with sharp wit and humour, he or she may be an unconscious creator of a slang item. If the speaker happens to belong to a group, then the expression will gain currency based upon the unanimity of attitude within the group.

Some of the types of slang identified in Ari (2011) include: “Cockney, public house, workmen, tradesmen, society and soldiers slang”, (pp. 10-19). These classes notwithstanding, Burdova (2009) in line with Maottiello’s (2008) view observes, “the nature of slang is characterised by extent and it is all-encompassing.” Therefore, “it allows for further sub-distinction between specific and general slang terminology,” (p. 25). She simply explains that specific slang is the slang

...used by members of a particular group to show their respect for that group and solidarity with other group members. It is also used in order to underline speakers’ identity, social status, age, education, special interests as well as their geographical background.

Specific slang is mostly used by speakers of similar age like teenagers (example: *chick* for ‘a girl’ and *cool* for ‘okay’), similar occupation like military (example: *ground nyash* ‘sit on the bare floor/ground), speakers who share similar lifestyle like the drunkards, homosexuals, drug addicts (example: *grass* for ‘marijuana’) or speakers who share the same living conditions like armed robbers and prostitutes.

Also, Burdova (2009) argues that general slang is the slang used by speakers to evade conventions and formality. “It is used instead of clichés and standard language to change the level of formality”, (p. 26). She equally notes that words or expressions may fall into both specific and general slang category depending on their contexts. She cites example from Mattiello (2008) with the word *grass* being a specific drug slang ‘marijuana’ whereas in general slang it stands for ‘green vegetables’.

According to (Spolsky, 1998, p.35), a language variety is considered slang when it possesses the following characteristics:

1. A set of expressions marked by its rejection of formal rules, its comparative freshness and its use to claim solidarity.
2. Slang regularly transgresses other social norms, making free use of taboo expression.
3. Slang arises as vocabulary which is used by a particular social group with specific purpose, for example, as a device for familiarising a conversation.
4. Slang comes in the form of new words with new meanings or old words with new meanings.

People use slang for a number of reasons. Partridge (1933) in (Jorgen, 2010, pp. 4-5) and Zazulak (2016) provide a number of reasons for which people use slang which are: to show that they are in high spirit, self display, to be different or novel, to avoid clichés (actuated by impatience with existing terms), to enrich the language, to lend an air of solidarity, to soften tragedy or to make serious life issues like death or madness sound less-serious, to reduce seriousness of conversation, to induce either friendliness or intimacy, to be ‘in the swim’ (to show that one belongs to a certain group or to establish contact), to be secret – not understood by those around, among others.

The Kegite language, as observed by the researchers maybe a form of an exclusive code used by the members of the club and understood by them alone. It may also be adjudged an argot. Argot is a word of French origin which means a secret slang language of a particular group used to exclude outsiders from understanding the group’s conversation. According to Valdman (2000), words and constructions that form the vocabulary of argot are however, drawn from ordinary common and dominant language. He opines that under the strictest sense, an argot is a ‘proper’ language which has its own grammar and style. However, he notes that it is rare to come by such completely secret language because the speakers of argot usually have some common public language, which serves as the basis for the argot. A common kind of argot is mainly a version of a public language(s), except that a part of the vocabulary is replaced by words which are quite strange to the larger public. So, going by Veldman’s ‘strict’ definition of argot, we would not say that the language of the Kegite is an argot, rather, we would like to identify this unique variety simply as a specific type of slang following Mattiello’s (2008) and Burdova (2009) definitions, classification and characterisation of slang. And what characteristically distinguishes slang from other forms of language is that it is fundamentally social and as such, it is often associated with a particular group of speakers. It is also necessary to point out that slang is one thing that cannot be adequately studied from a pure linguistic point of view. Therefore, we see slang in this paper as a social and aesthetic phenomenon, which can be perceived and appraised rather than as a purely linguistic concept.

On the other hand, language variation is a sociolinguistic phenomenon that has been studied from various perspectives. One of such perspective is the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). It is a theoretical approach to the study of language variety. CAT, initially known as Speech Accommodation Theory, is a socio-psychological theory propounded by Giles (1971) to specify conditions under which individuals would desire to reduce or stress the social distance between those they are interacting with (i.e. by either accommodating or not accommodating). CAT posits that individuals do not interact with every person in the same way but communication patterns are always adjusted to match conversational partners (be they close friends or despicable felons). According to Giles and Baker (2008), although CAT indicates different ways through which interlocutors can reduce or widen social

distances, *convergence* and *divergence* are the most prominent. Street and Giles (1982) observe that convergence is a movement towards a communicative partner because of a conscious or unconscious need for social integration, seeking or showing approval, identification or communication effectiveness with one another. On the other hand, Coupland and Giles (1988) assert that divergence is a movement away from communicative partner in order to maintain social distance.

This paper, therefore, adopts the communication accommodation theory as put forward by Giles (1971). CAT stresses the role of accommodation in communication. It asserts that interlocutors communicate to signify mutual attitude toward one another. Consequently, communication can serve as a barometer, which could be used to measure social distance that exists between individuals. According to Giles and Ogay (2007), language in communication moves individuals closer and away from one another. This either directional movement (that is, movement of individuals closer to or away from one another) is achieved by varying communication behaviour. It is this characteristic flexibility in language behaviour that is known as accommodation. CAT according to Giles, Coupland and Coupland (1991), assumes that language functions as an indication of both individual's and group's need to interact socially with others and also as an indication of the aspiration to gain social approval. The concept of social identification through communication is of paramount importance to CAT. Hence, CAT posits that interlocutors, through language use, accommodate to become similar to their communicative partners. This is called *convergence*. In the words of Giles and Coupland (1991), convergence indicates "a speaker's or a group's need (often non-conscious) for social integration or identification with one another", (p. 72). Therefore, Giles and Ogay (2007) say that the desire to belong to a group and shift towards a particular linguistic style in order to identify with that group is achieved through efficient communication. Giles and Coupland (1991) observe that interlocutors are psychologically brought closer and communication is also enhanced through accommodation. On the other hand, Giles and Ogay (2007) note that accommodation helps speakers to differentiate themselves from others and to communicate that they belong to a particular group which others do not. This is called *divergence*. Giles, et al (1991) opine that the balance between convergence and divergence is very important in communicative activities and this makes interlocutors to assume the communicative pattern that is typical of their group so as to "maintain a sense of community or fellowship". Wilson (2007) and Zotevska (2013) also assert that apart from maintaining a sense of fellowship, group members also emphasise their style of speech and recognise the difference between them and relevant out-groups. Therefore, the function of communication is to ascertain identity and/or confirm or sustain group membership through accommodation. For this reason, each group fashions out a unique linguistic pattern, which characterises them and is also cherished among the members.

Every communicative event has a goal to achieve. Hence, 'communication is goal directed' as noted in (Wilson, 2007, p.79). This implies that communication is not an erratic event but one with specific goal(s) to achieve. Wilson's definition of communicative goals as that future states, which a speaker desires to attain or maintain, suggests that various goals that a speaker sets out to achieve through social interactions are accomplished by the use of language. Through the application of accommodation (either by convergence or divergence), the anticipated goal of speakers are made known.

From the above theoretical overview, it could be observed that language, being highly heterogeneous, can vary based on certain factors. Language varies from one place to another, from one social group to another and from one situation to another. The present study, by using CAT studies language use among the Kegite club members to show how, by communicating the way they do, members achieve in-group allegiance (convergence) and mark themselves off from other members of the society (divergence), who share general linguistic background with them.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

This study is a survey research work designed to be in conformity with the standard procedures obtainable in the study of observed language behaviour. The article sets out to examine language use among the Kegites within the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to ascertain how members of the club use the language to establish group identity and also to create a social distance between the group and the general public. Although the Kegite club can be found in many tertiary institutions in Nigeria and outside Nigeria, this study, by adopting purposive sampling procedure, studies the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) branch (*Ilya du Nkasu*). The UNN branch is the oldest *ilya* – 'branch' in the Eastern zone (*Enuanaebo hemisphere*) as well as the zone's headquarters. The Kegite branch in the UNN has about one hundred and fifty student members, who are used for this study. By adopting the qualitative method of data collection, data were elicited from Kegite members in the nine faculties in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The respondents were made up of mainly youths and few older persons who are in different academic levels in the University. The bulk of the corpora used for the study was directly elicited from the respondents through mass observation, where the group was observed (because they perform openly in evenings and in some social gatherings) and in their in-house interactions recorded through a field assistant, who is a member, since it is difficult for the researchers to do so themselves. The researchers also elicited data from the Kegite handbook, *book of bookosis* and the club's social network pages. The data collected both orally and from the Kegite members were analyzed quantitatively, categorised accordingly based on different features of the language as presented in section five.

## V. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Before now, as a former chief of the Kegite club in its world headquarters, Uppermost Shrine, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, Oladokun (1982) discusses the Kegite club and provides the background information on the club. His work presents the history, vision or aim of the club. He explains some of the traditions and customs of the Kegite club as well as provides a few slogans used in the club among which include: *Okpekerization* - *woo a woman*, *karabilty* - *destiny*; *One finger salute* - *a greeting pattern*, *chief* - *president*, among few others.

Afolabi (2011) in his brief analysis examines the language of the Kegite. His work provides some expressions used by members of the club and analyses them to show how the group has, over the time, evolved a complete language of their own. Afolabi (2011) concludes by asserting that he has discovered that “the syntactic or grammatic [sic] analysis of the Kegite language are featured, the place of subject, predicator, complement and adjunct are also consciously presented as seen in some certain Kegites expressions”, (p. 4). He, therefore, demonstrates how the group has successfully evolved a language of their own. Afolabi (2011) is related to this work in the sense that it studies Kegite language but differs from it because the present study looks at how Kegite members manipulate the linguistic elements (which they share with other members of the general society) at their disposal to create expressions which they in turn use to create social distance between the group and out-group members of the society.

In this section, Kegite expressions are presented and qualitatively analysed using CAT to demonstrate the principles of convergence and divergence. Here, we present and discuss the Kegite expressions by grouping them based on their linguistic features and the analysis done using CAT.

TABLE 1:  
EXPRESSIONS SHOWCASING CREATIVITY, PRODUCTIVITY AND ARBITRARY NATURE OF LANGUAGE

S/N	Kegite expressions	Gloss/Meaning
1	AB Chief/Chiefo	The incumbent president
2	X Chief	The immediate past president
3	XYZ Chief	The chief that handed over to the XY president
4	Archival Chiefesis	Former presidents for over five (5) years
5	Martial	Provost
6	Parrot	Public relation officer/Information officer
7	World bank/CBN	Treasurer
8	Philosofa	Teacher of those who are to be <i>liberated</i> (admitted into the club)
9	Spider	Designer of Kegites regalia and other Kegites's materials
10	Feda	Secretary of the club (when writing was done using feather and ink)
11	Cricket/Sungito	Song leader
12	Drummito	Drummer
13	HOD (Head of Drummissis)	The member in charge of drums
14	Zoo Commandant	Member in charge of the place where new members are groomed
15	B ECOWAS	Chorus (calling for members to 're-echo')
16	Emblem	Local calabash
17	Receipt	A leaf one brings after urinating and it must be a green leaf with apex and stalk still intact
18	Imbibe	Drink (palm wine)
19	Destroy	Drink (any other drink outside palm wine)
20	Titration	Urination/defecation
21	Gyration	Making of music and the dancing that typically accompanies it
22	Mutation	Meeting of the Kegite club
23	Vibrate	Talk/speak
24	Ketekete	Vehicle
25	Karability	Destiny
26	Karid	Member/(you) belong
27	Comrado/Kongosis/komrad	Student members

A look at Table (1) shows creativity as well as arbitrary nature of language. For instance, the use of *AB* for ‘current’, ‘present’ or ‘incumbent’; *XY* for ‘immediate past’ and *XYZ* for ‘former, before the ‘*XY*’, *archival* for ‘one-time’, (observe examples 1-4 in Table I). This shows how words can be created and re-created by language users based on the arrangement of letters, that is, letters that come first and the ones that come last. Examples (5-14) in Table I show how the members of the club have creatively used names of items or concepts to name executive posts in the club. A look at these names shows that the names used, somehow depict the functions performed by the office holders. For instance, *martial* for ‘provost’, one whose job is to see that there is order during gatherings; *parrot* for ‘information officer’, who is saddled with the responsibility of passing across information to members through speech; *world bank/CBN*(Central Bank of Nigeria) for ‘treasurer’, who keeps money for the club, among others. It could be observed that these words are metaphorically used. Again, the use of *feda* (truncated form for feather) for ‘secretary’ reminds one of when writing was basically done with refillable inks, using plumes. Also, examples (15-27) continue to demonstrate how language is creative. We can also observe that some of these words are words from the general society, with special meanings attached to them. Examples of such words are *receipt* and *destroy*, which are English words and *ketekete*, a Yoruba word for ‘Donkey’. The new meanings are usually based upon fanciful and creative metaphors and metonymies. However, some of the expressions like *karid* (from ‘carried’), *akarability* (from ‘akara aka’ in Igbo, which means

‘destiny’), *kongosis*, *drummito* (from ‘drum’) and *sungito* (from song’) are entirely new coinages. These coinages are in line with Mish’s (2003) submission that slangs are composed of coinages and arbitrarily changed words.

In addition, one of the major properties of language is arbitrariness. By language being arbitrary, it means that both word-forms and their meanings are randomly assigned. What this implies is that the speech sounds of a language are conventionally combined to form a meaningful word in a language only because (i) the users of the language agreed that the pattern of combination is right and acceptable (for instance, c-a-t ‘cat’ is right and a-t-c ‘atc’ is wrong in English) and (ii) the result of the combination should refer to or mean a particular thing/concept/idea in the language. The language of the Kegites exhibits the quality of arbitrariness in no small measure. For example, *AB*, *XY*, *spider* (Table 1, examples 1, 2 and 8) and indeed, all the Kegite expressions presented in this paper are meaningful within the contexts where they are used, mainly because they have gained acceptance within these contexts. Observe the contextual uses of some of the words in Table 1. Note that in the sentences below, the words in question are in bold italics

1a. ...acting within those powersis, all those comradic powersis, all those ***Kongosis*** powersis... powersis to keg and dekeg...

b. ...acting within the powers, every power pertaining to the affairs of the Kegite club...the powers to officially approve of ***student membership*** and the powers to suspend a member...

2a. Muanawelus, the royal palm wine Majesty, ***AB Chiefo*** Nnanna Kenneth ... the 36th of Nkassu do hereby...bless all...

b. *Me(I)*, his royal majesty of palm wine, ***Incumbent President*** Nnanna Kenneth... the 36th president of Kegite club, University of Nigeria, Nsukka branch do hereby... bless all...

3a. Muanawelus... do hereby do with no duress by mountain dew or morning dew bless all am ***karid***...

b. *Me (I)*...do hereby, without any duress, bless ***every/all club members***...

4a. I doff terribly for ***Archiiival***, ***XY***, ***XYZ*** and ***AB Chiefesis*** of ilyas.

b. *I absolutely salute* ***former presidents*** and ***incumbent presidents*** of various branches.

5a. Mina awela awala du mina ...I remain my very self... ***XYZ Songito*** to power 16...vibrating with a very high frequency via...

b. *Me (I)*...I remain my very self...a ***former chorus leader*** for the past 16 years...speaking with confidence from...

6a. Let your ***akarability*** so shine that komradus will oyoyo the good work of God.

b. Let your ***destiny*** shine forth so that members will appreciate the good work of God.

A look at examples (1-6) shows some of the words in use. From their English equivalents, the possibility of non members grabbing the meanings of the words and expressions is very slim, if not impossible. It is also observed from the examples (1-6) above that the word *comrado/kowrado* (noun) can assume various morphological shapes like *comradic* (adjective) and *komradus* (still a noun). Based on the strange meanings attached to the words and expressions by Kegite members, they converge among themselves and diverge from non members. Hence, they are used to establish group identity which in turn differentiates the Kegite club from any other social group. Therefore, through linguistic forms they employ the use of these expressions to converge towards members and diverge from the general public.

TABLE 2:  
BRANCH NAMES

	<b>Kegite Branch</b>	<b>Location</b>
1	Ilya du Queen	East London University, London.
2	Ilya du Afonja	Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Kwara State
3	Ilya du Coconut	Nwafor Orizu College of Edu., Nsugbe, Anambra State
4	Ilya du Erosion/Ashina	Federal Polytechnic, Oko, Anambra State
5	Ilya du Oil	Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State
6	Ilya du Rock	University of Jos, Plateau State
7	Ilya du Pyramid	Federal College of Education (Technical), Bauchi, Kano State
8	Ilya du Olumo	Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta, Ogun State
9	Ilya du Arewa	Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna, Kaduna Sate
10	Ilya du Lagoon	University of Lagos, Lagos State
11	Ilya du Solar	Federal Polytechnic, Bida, Niger State
12	Ilya du Calculator	Institute of Accountancy and Basic Studies, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State
13	Ilya du Chalk	College of Education, Ileha, Osun State
14	Ilya du Kokoroko	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State
15	Ilya du Komputa	Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State
16	Ilya du Engine	Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu State
17	Ilya du Ancestor	Ancestral Science University, Florida, USA
18	Ilya du Green Revolution	Samara College of Agriculture, Zaria, Kaduna State
19	Ilya du Metal	Metallurgical Training Institute of Onitsha, Anambra State
20	Ilya du Timber	Federal College of Forestry, Ibadan, Oyo Sate
21	Ilya du Shark	Nigerian Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research Victoria Island, Lagos State
22	Ilya du Pen	Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Ogba Ikeja, Lagos State
23	Ilya du Tractor	Federal College of Agriculture, Akure, Ondo State

In Table 2, another fascinating feature of the Kegite language can also be seen in the way names are chosen for individual branches of the club. Firstly, it will be observed that *Ilya*, a seemingly French expression for ‘there is’ (‘il y a’) is used to mean ‘Kegite branch’. Table 2, examples (1-23) show that the branch names are selected based on feature(s) that characterise(s) the geographical area, where the tertiary institutions are located (observe examples 1–11 in Table 2) and also by using a particular item to represent the academic discipline being studied in these institutions (observe examples 12–23 in Table 2). Based on the first criterion, the capital of England, ruled by the Queen is London. It is based on this that *Ilya du Queen* is selected (example 1) and in (example 2) *Ilya du Afonja* is given in memory of the legendary Afonja of Kwara land. Nsugbe is a community known for coconut (this informs the general saying in Igbo about *akū oyibo Nsugbe* - ‘Nsugbe coconut’) and this forms the basis of the name *Ilya du Coconut* (example 3). This applies to examples: (4), where *Erosion* is used to refer to the land of Oko that is being ravaged by erosion; (5), where Omoku, an oil rich land is named after *Oil*; (6), where Jos, a land that has many mountains and rocks is named *Rock*; (7 and 8), where Kano is named *Pyramid*, after the famous groundnut pyramid of Kano and Abeokuta *Olumo* after the Olumo Rock located in Abeokuta; (9), where Kaduna being a heartland of the Hausa nation is named *Arewa*; (10), where Lagos, known for many water bodies is named *Lagoon* and (11), where Bida is named *Solar* after the popular solar energy supply provided by former Nigerian President, Gen. Babangida throughout his villa. However, for one to appreciate the beauty of these names, one must have background information of these locations to be able to interpret the names accordingly. On the other hand, concepts that characterise academic disciplines being pursued in tertiary institutions are also used to coin names for club branches. Hence *calculator* is used for an institute of accountancy, *chalk* for a college of education and *kokoroko* (a typical onomatopoeic name for a cock) for a university of agriculture in examples (12-14) respectively. This is also the case in examples (15-23). Uniquely, these names are used to establish group identity, such that instead of using ‘branch’ or ‘chapter’, *ilya du* is used. And instead of using the formal names of the campuses, unique names are coined for each campus, thereby rebuffing adherence to names used by the general public. In addition, depending on the context of use, *ilya* can also mean relax/feel at home (see example 9 below). Observe examples (7-12) below.

7a. It is written in da book of bookosis, chapter nkwu verse ngwo dat when two or more entities are in Gaddaffi, an *ilya* is formed.

b. *It is written in the Kegite book of books that when two or three people(Kegite members) come together, a Kegite branch is formed.*

8a. May the gods bless all am karid...via *ilya du Kokoroko* bembestically.

b. *May the gods bless all the (Kegite )members...from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike abundantly.*

9a. ...I too hoties by the wizard of capitisosis is to make all homies feel at *ilya*.

b. *...I am also, through the wisdom represented by the cap (I am wearing) entrusted with the responsibility of making everybody to feel at home.*

10a. ...I remain my very self...XYZ Songito to power 16 via *ilya du Pyramid*...

b. *...I remain my very self...a former chorus leader for the past 16 years in Federal College of Education (Technical), Bauchi...*

11a. By da eldersis council *ilya du ashina* I kuet, happy monica two all adim karid. May you walk bembestically and never stumble.

b. *As a member of the council of elders, Federal Polytecnic, Oko, I say(speak), happy Monday to all members of the Kegite club. May you walk majestically and never stumble (may no evil befall you).*

12a. *...minawela awolu doss on ma 2 leggesis to prayamus ana juru pepe to all adikwa m karid in dis abuna ilya.*

b. *I am on my two knees praying and interceding for all Kegite members of our branch.*

The different contexts of use of *ilya* make for the lucidity of the word and present its various manifestations and senses in different contexts. Based on CAT, group solidarity among members is once again achieved through convergence and non members are kept at an arm’s length through divergence based on the arbitrary senses in the linguistic forms of the expressions which are not comprehensible to the general public. It is also important to note here that Kegite expressions appear in two physical forms - familiar and strange forms. Familiar expressions are those expressions that contain content words, whose possible interpretations mean something to non-members. Let us consider example (7), when a non-member hears that “...when two or more entities are in Gaddafi, an *ilya* is formed”. S/he is likely going to interpret it to mean “...when two or more people who behave like Muammar Gaddafi of Libya come together, a revolutionary group is formed”. But that is not the case. So, such expressions are familiar but their meanings are strange. In other words, what a familiar expression in the Kegite language appears to mean is always entirely different from what it actually means. On the other hand, strange expressions refer to those expressions that are completely strange to non-members because they do not have familiar lexical items common with expressions of the general public. Let us consider example (12). Expressions like (12) above appear completely strange to non-member and leave them with no clue of what the meanings could be.

TABLE 3:  
DISTORTED FORMS

S/N	Kegite expression	Gloss/Meaning
1	Dia (3+1)	Therefore
2	Rot8	Rotate
3	Bookosis/booko6	Plural form for book (books)
4	Chiefesisi/chiefe6	Plural form for chief (chiefs)
5	Songito	Singer
6	Drummito	Drummer
7	Opendensial	Open
8	Munwaness	Myself
9	Guaness	You (in particular)
10	Yanwaness	Himself/herself
11	Okpekesis/opeke6	Plural form for okpeke 'female'
12	Okpakasis	Plural form for okpaka 'male'

Table 3 above shows how linguistic forms are manipulated in the Kegite language. We see how forms could be truncated for shorter renditions, especially in writing *-dia(1+3)* for 'therefore' and *rot8* for 'rotate' (see examples 1 & 2 in Table 3). Examples (3-7) may be called 'English' in some sense but we cannot out rightly say that these varieties represent the English language. Instead of adding an -s to 'chief' and 'book' to derive the plural forms, *-osis* and *-esis* are added to form plurals respectively in examples (3 & 4). Same goes for examples (11 & 12). Again, English grammatical rule of using -er to derive agentive nouns from verbs is also ignored in examples (5 & 6) giving rise to a 'corrupt' form of 'singer' (*sungito*) and 'drummer' (*drummito*) respectively. Kegite agentive nouns from the data presented in Table 3 are formed using its own morpheme *-ito*. In addition, instead of simply saying 'open', *opendensial* is used in example (7). Likewise, the words in examples (8-10) possess partly Igbo (*munwa* 'me', *gunwa* 'you' and *yanwa* 'him/her') words and English suffixes, *-ness* and (11 & 12) are Edo words pluralised using the Kegite plural morpheme, *-sis*. However, despite the high arbitrary nature of the Kegite language, it is remarkable how members understand one another. Hence, they communicate perfectly well among themselves, at the same time, they keep the general public in the dark. To further show the manifestation of convergence among Kegite members and divergence from non members, observe their use of these words in the following sentences (12-16) below.

- 13a. **Okpekesis/okpeke6** are meant for chiefesisi/chiefe6 consumption.
- b. **Women** are meant for presidents' enjoyment.
- 14a. **Munwaness** ...sound a note of warning.
- b. **Me (I)**...sound a note of warning.
- 15a. Okpekesis letter 'O' remaindath theory a wogged **opendensial** keske of surunyu.....
- b. A woman's virgina is always **open** for sex...
- 16a. Even on dat matrimonica day D in D holy **bookosis** of Felo Jesus...He tinaturned water to emuogor.
- b. Even on the wedding day as recorded in Jesus' **holy book (Bible)**...He turned water into wine.
- 17a. ...you have fired to my timpamic membrane, may it be so for **giwaness/guaness**.
- b. ...you have really thrilled me, may it be so for **you**.

The peculiar way the words are used in (13-17) is also an indication of Kegite linguistic forms displaying some distinctive characteristics that set it apart from the language of the general public. As an out-group, when one hears them speak, making use of these expressions, one eventually gets confused even as one tries to isolate common/familiar words that appear in the expressions and attempts to use the meanings of those common words to arrive at the meanings of the expressions. Let us take the expression in example (15) as an instance. An attempt to isolate the meanings of common words like *O* and *theory*, and use them to arrive at the meaning of the entire expression, gets an out-group listener confused because these common meanings do not contribute to the actual meaning of the expression.



TABLE 4:  
TERMS RELATED TO THE ACTIVITIES/WORLD VIEW OF THE CLUB

S/N	Kegite expressions	Gloss/Meaning
1	Chief	President of the club
2	Comrades/Kongosis	Student members
3	Intercontinental lalala	Anthem
4	Regaliate 4/4	Being fully dressed
5	Karid	Member/(you)belong
6	Animal	Non-Kegite member
7	Shrine	A warehouse where all club materials are kept and a relaxation place for comrades and their visitors
8	Migration	Movement of the Kegites group outside their locality
9	Coronation	Induction of a new chief
10	Liberation	Inauguration of new members
11	Agogorization	Announcement
12	G-Lord/Grand Lords	Executive members
13	Baby ilya	An uncommissioned branch of Kegite club which has no coroneted chief yet and a <i>keg of office</i>
14	Omoba	A selected but yet to be coroneted <i>chief</i>
15	Keg of Office	A Keg/calabash that symbolises authority of a commissioned Branch
16	Swahili	The approved language of Kegite club
17	Zoo	A place where new members are groomed and lectured about the club.
18	Ozoemena	(Igbo name meaning 'It should not re-occur') Death
19	Holy water/H <sub>2</sub> O	Palm wine
20	Poison	Any other drink outside palm wine
21	Junior foreign poison	Soft drink
22	Senior foreign poison/higher killer	Hot drink

Items in Table 4 above give insight into the worldview of the Kegite. For instance, they see the president of their club as *chief* and his induction as *coronation*, while a yet to be inducted chief is an *Omoba* (a Yoruba name for 'prince'), just as in a typical African setting, reflecting cultural influence; the club is regarded as a unit, this informs the use of *comrade* (and its various variants) for members of the club and anybody who is *karid* belongs to Kegite (see examples 1, 9, 14, 2 & 5). An anthem is usually a unifying factor, hence; anthem is referred to as something *intercontinental*, such that irrespective of where the branch is located, the values of the club must be upheld (example 3). Their worldview is also portrayed in how they refer to places, activities, their official language, non members and events like death as we can see in examples (5-18) of Table 4. Again, a look at examples (19 – 22) shows the rating between palm wine and any other drink in the society. We can rightly say that just like every other kind of slang, the language of the Kegite is quite casual and metaphorical. This could be seen through some of their expressions like *poison* which means 'drinks other than palm wine', a crude metaphor for non native drinks. These expressions show solidarity and intimacy of the Kegite members and by extension, the expressions also perform the function of inclusion of members and exclusion of non-members during interaction. Observe some of the expressions in higher constructions as in (17-21).

18a. Komrados to *regaliate 4/4* to komradic activities.

b. (Kegite club) members are to *dress fully* to club activities.

19a. Songito, de *intercontinental lalala*.

b. Chorus leader, (lead us in) the Kegite *anthem*.

20a. *Animals* are highly present in dis area we.

b. *Non Kegite members* are many in our area (environment).

21a. ...da attempt attempted by gunwaness to vibrate outside *Swahili*...

b. ...the offense committed by you to speak without using the *official language* of the club...

22a. Da shrine all over the galagala attempt with opendensial mind the majestic *holy water*...never destroy *poison* plus da senior or junior, local or *foreign poison*. Da *poison*, komradus shall not attempt there.

b. The club's secretariat/warehouse all over the world generously accommodates *palm wine*...do not drink any other drink other than palm wine, even the *soft or hot drink*, locally or foreign made. Members shall not drink or keep *any other drink* except palm wine there (in the secretariat).

23a. Let the *G-Lords* (Grand Lords) shine their 99.99% for the upliftment of komradum.

b. Let the *executive members* do their best for the welfare of (Kegite) members.

Examples (18-23) present an interesting picture of the Kegite linguistic forms performing an exclusive function for non members. For instance, the structure of example (20) appears like the English language structure but the rearrangement of linguistic items in the construction does not conform to the standard syntactic arrangement of lexical items in English. This syntactic rearrangement adds a Kegite flavour to the expression. However, even when a non-member tries to figure out the sense in the expression (despite the rearrangement of linguistic items) the meaning of "animal" in the expression makes it difficult or impossible to comprehend. Again, listening to Kegite members interact keeps a non-member listener busy shuttling between two or more languages – English, French, NPE and indigenous Nigerian languages, to sieve out the possible meanings in the expressions, which eventually fails to offer the correct meaning(s) intended or expressed. For instance, the last word in example (20) – *we* sounds like the French 'oui' – 'yes'.

Hence a non-member may take the expression to mean “There are many (domestic) animals (running around) in this area, yes.” The use of ‘yes’ suggests to the hearer that the expression, maybe, agrees with an already stated fact. Therefore, as the listener tries to make sense of these expressions, s/he gets even more confused and consequently, s/he is completely left behind in the conversation. In addition, the repetition of linguistic items to show a unique sense as in (21) is another feature of the Kegite language.

TABLE 5:  
COMPLEX EXPRESSIONS FOR SIMPLE EXPRESSIONS

S/N	Kegite expression	Gloss/Meaning
1	Washington DC OR Interact with the frequency of mammy water	Bath
2	Benue state/answer Bendel	Bend down
3	Da dee minus one (That day minus one)	Yesterday
4	Opundensial	Open
5	Opundensial in a revise gear/..in a rivers state	Close
6	Enyemaka ngwaa	Help
7	Agbataekulu nwa/permanent selotaping	Marriage
8	Trade by barter	Market
9	Operation feed the nation	Farming
10	Nawali/Nasarawa	Now
11	Eligwe chamber/NEPA	Sunshine
12	Obey the law of gravity	Sit down/fall
13	Disobey the law of gravity	Stand up/get up
14	National assignment precise	Office
15	Agrippa, Iweka road	Angry
16	Junior foreign poison	Soft drink
17	Senior foreign poison/higher killer	Hot drink
18	Eligwe chamber titration	Rainfall
19	Behind time	Late
20	Minawela awolu	Me
21	Mina wela atete awela awolus	Me

- 24a. Entities to bendalise, entities to answer **bendel republic**, chiefesis to connect...
- b. *Members are requested/expected to bend down/bow their heads, chiefs(presidents) are expected to (spiritually) connect (with the gods)...*
- 25a. **Mina awela awala du mina** ... I remain my very self... XYZ Songito to power 16...
- b. **Me (I)**... *I remain my very self...a former chorus leader for the past 16 years...*
- 26a. Since **da dee minus one** till da dee go moronto...
- b. *Since yesterday till today and even tomorrow...*
- 27a. ...I remaindath dat same coconut that tried tawinjirization with **mammy water** via River Niger.....
- b. ...I remain that same person who has ever taken his **bath** in the depth of the river Niger.../ (...I am that same brave man who has done the impossible...)
- 28a. My karability is made wogged via da **enyemaka ngwaa** of my XYZ Chief...
- b. *My destiny was sharpened/I was inducted by/through the help of my former president...*
- 29a. Am made in Lagoon **nawali**. Okpeke interact.
- b. *I am in Lagos now/currently. Any babe/girl within the vicinity can contact me.*

Table 5 shows long expressions that stand for simple concepts in the general world. As observed by Achebe (1958), a typical African man does not speak in plain language not garnished with adages. This art of knowing how to manipulate words to pass across information in figurative language is highly cherished in African societies. It is a mark of wisdom and oratory competence. This could be seen in the expressions presented in Table 5, where a single word like ‘me’ could be said using an expression as long as *Minawela atete awela awolus* as in example (21). Though the long expressions sampled in Table 5 portray African orientation, they are not expressions used by the general public. Therefore, only Kegite members make use of and understand them and as such, non members are at a loss as to what they mean.

Furthermore, some of the senses are metaphorical in nature. Observe items 7, 11, 12, and 13 in Table 5. In item 7, *permanent selotaping* stands for marriage, where the couple will forever remain one (glued together) through their marital vows before the priest(s) and the congregation. In the same vein, item 11 *elugwe chambers* (sky) or *NEPA* (National Electricity Power Authority), the ministry that was once in charge of Electricity generation in Nigeria, means sunshine. Also, *obeying and disobeying the law of gravity* as in items 12 and 13 are unique ways of expressing the senses of sitting and standing. Expressions in Table 5 as well as the structures where they occur as in examples (24-29) are used by members to identify with the group as well as to ensure that non members are excluded from their conversation. In other words, they fulfil CAT’s convergence/divergence principle. Hence, instead of going straight to the point and saying what they want to say out rightly, Kegite members love playing around with words. Let us consider a fuller version of (25a) as we have it in (25c) below:

- 25c. *Mina awela awala du mina*, where Amina has decided to go in skirt and blouse, that is to say, I remain my very self...

A look at (25c) may suggest to a non-member listener that the speaker is probably talking about an ‘Amina’ (a person) who has decided to put on skirt and blouse without knowing that everything said from ‘Mina...’ to ‘...blouse’ in the construction is a way of saying ‘I’. The long expression does nothing more than adds beauty to the expression (in this case, ‘I’).

TABLE 6:  
KEGITE SAYINGS

S/No	Kegite Expression	Meaning/Equivalence in the General Society
1	A house that is divided against itself shall stand – unity in diversity	A house divided against itself shall fall.
2	Few are called but many are chosen	Many are called but few are chosen.
3	By their fingers you shall know them	By their fruits you shall know them
4	Okpaka wey dey titrate must stand at ease	A male who is urinating must stand straight
5	The evils that okpekesis do live with them for nine months	The evils that men do live after them –(this is related to females and unwanted pregnancy)
6	One day is for the okpakasis, nine months is for the okpekesis	Every day is for the thief but one day is for the owner.
7	A comrade is never late, he may only come behind the time	Showing Kegite members as superior to non-members
8	A comrade does not eat, he feeds	Showing Kegite members as superior to non-members
9	A comrade does not drink, he evaporates	Showing Kegite members as superior to non-members
10	A comrade never forgets although he may fail to remember	Showing Kegite members as superior to non-members
11	A comrade never falls, he may only obey the law of gravity	Showing Kegite members as superior to non-members
12	Turu pepe turu pepe, the head of agbalagba is not meant for a child’s play	Serious things should not be played with.

Table 6 above shows ‘liberal’ language used by the Kegite club to rebuff conformity, compliance and allegiance to the mainstream society and the existing order of things. It portrays a refusal to accept what is generally accepted to be the norm. For example, the status quo is ‘Many are called but few are chosen’ but a *Few are called but many are chosen* shows an attitude of rebellion against the norm. Examples (5 & 6) refer to women and unwanted pregnancy, which are not generally implied as the English equivalents. This is an encouragement to break off from what is considered ‘standard’, a stylistic variety occupying an extreme on the spectrum of linguistic convention and formality. This kind of language emphasises group intimacy and solidarity, thereby performing the social function of both inclusion and exclusion (inclusion of members and exclusion of non members) as proposed in CAT.

## VI. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The language of the Kegite club is somewhat complex and exhibits variety in form and in function. Some of the words used in the Kegite language like every other human language, found their ways into the lexicon through the creative nature of individual members. With frequent usage, these words are integrated into the language and they spread through the various *ilyas* (branches); for instance, the use of *AB* for ‘current’, ‘present’ or ‘incumbent’ and *XY* for ‘immediate past’. The way these coinages are used within the club is one of the major factors that strengthen the Kegite club.

The language of the Kegite club comprises of linguistic items that could be seen in the general linguistic environment. Since the Kegite club exists within a larger society, it is in contact with other language(s) of the larger society through the speakers. Therefore, words are lifted from language(s) used in the society. For instance, the word ‘keg’ is an English word for a container (example: keg/gourd of palm wine). The suffix ‘-ite’ is added to ‘keg’ to derive *Kegite*, which now refers to the members of the Palm Wine Drinkers Club. Furthermore, *Ilya du*, which sounds French (like the French word ‘il y a’ meaning ‘there is’ and ‘de’ or ‘du’ meaning ‘of’) are used to mean ‘place of’ in the Kegite language. It finds its way into the vocabulary of the Kegites’ language to mean ‘setting’, that is, a geographical location or campus or branch of the club. We can also see some Kegite expressions that we can trace their roots to some indigenous Nigerian languages. For instance, the words for man and woman, ‘okpaka’ and ‘okpeke’ respectively, obviously are traced to ‘okpaka’ of Edo of Delta region of the south southern Nigeria meaning ‘men’ and ‘okpeke’ which stands for ‘women’. These words are sometimes clipped and blended in a unique way to make them appear different from what they are in the source languages. We can, therefore, say that the Kegite language is furnished from English, French and indigenous Nigerian languages.

Despite the sources of the linguistic items used in the Kegite language, the items have their specific forms (which are sometimes truncated or distorted from their original forms) and meanings (which are metaphorical) within the context of the club. Generally, the formation, structure, as well as language use of the Kegite exhibit certain pidgin or pidgin-like attributes that is however, quite different from the Nigerian Pidgin. Nevertheless, the features of the Kegite language from our observation based on our data analysis make it a specific type of slang and not pidgin. All these in turn, make the language a tool with which Kegite members align with the group and group identity as well as move away from non-members of the club as postulated in CAT.

Finally, we can say that Kegite expressions appear in two forms – simple familiar or complex strange expressions. The familiar expressions at first appear familiar and understandable because they contain obvious familiar words used by the general public but they are actually not what the non-members take them to mean. The complex strange expressions on the other hand do not contain familiar words that could suggest their meanings to non-members. Therefore, they appear strange from the onset and leave no clue(s) about their meanings. Both kinds of expression leave

non-members in the dark and socially far away from Kegite members. The Kegite language, therefore, is a tool with which the club members converge with each other and at the same time diverge with non-members. As such, members of the club do not necessarily need non-members to leave their presence when they do not want them to be part of what they are discussing. They only have to communicate in their language and a non-member is automatically excluded.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Just like any other functional language variety, the Kegite language contains quite a number of expressions, which are intelligible to only the members of the club. These expressions are strange to non-member of the club, but they are as common as every other day-to-day expression in the common/general language of the speech community to the Kegite members. English can be said to be the root of the Kegite language since it is the dominant language found in the expressions. This is because English is the lingua franca in Nigeria and the language commonly spoken in the country's tertiary institutions. However, one cannot say that the Kegite language is a typical variety of Nigerian English. So, it can be rightly said that the Kegites have developed a specific type of slang from the various languages at its disposal. The slang so developed is not simply an anomaly or an aberration created by some crude and deviant characters; it is rather an essential part of a dynamic sociolinguistic structure, reflecting the social and aesthetic needs and desires of man. Moreover, the Kegite club applies these expressions as tools with which they identify with members of the club. They function as unifying factors that unify the group, thereby converging towards club members. The slang also serves as a tool that draws them apart from the general public/non-members. In this respect, they diverge away from those who are not members of the club.

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