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ORIGINAL

A sociolinguistic discourse analysis of assimilated English words: a usage-based model of language acquisition

Un análisis sociolingüístico del discurso de palabras inglesas asimiladas: un modelo de adquisición lingüística basado en el uso

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ABSTRACT

This study will explore how some words from a different language get assimilated into the dialogues of a community or group which speaks a totally different language or dialect. The Angami Nagas community of Nagaland is adopted as the case in point for this study, for they use a number of English words in their regular speaking irrespective of being English educated or not. The study is qualitative based research and the methodology includes the research methods of interviews and document analyses. The study reveals that the understanding of an external language through the use of assimilated words by a community or group with diverse associations with the source language, can lead to a usage-based model of language acquisition. The study discloses that diversity in the articulation of assimilated words cannot be strictly ruled out even in the presence of precision in usage and meaning. It is also found that, overtime, some assimilated words, in its original essence, get attached and identified with a group of things by the user community. The study concludes on the success of using assimilated words within a community or group with accuracy or near accuracy and assigns it as a usage-based model of basic language assimilation which can get remodeled in future studies of more formal language learning. It infers that assimilated words from an external language, used in the correct context, can lead to successful conversation or speech in varying contexts as the words become part of the communication to convey concepts and thoughts. The numerous works on the Angami Nagas, by and large, deal with their socio-cultural, economic and political status as an ethnic community and particularly with mostly their contribution and standing during the British times. In a diverging trend, this study is a pioneering exploration of the sociolinguistic pattern among the Angami Nagas in employing assimilated English words and phrases in their everyday usage.

Key Words: Language; Assimilation; Borrowed Community Words; Usage based model; Socio-linguistic pattern; Angami Nagas.

RESUMEN

Este estudio explorará cómo algunas palabras de un idioma diferente se asimilan en los diálogos de una comunidad o grupo que habla un idioma o dialecto totalmente distinto. La comunidad Angami Nagas de Nagaland es el caso en cuestión para este estudio, ya que utilizan una serie de palabras inglesas en su habla habitual, independientemente de que tengan o no educación inglesa. El estudio es una investigación de base cualitativa y la metodología incluye los métodos de investigación de entrevistas y análisis de documentos. El estudio revela que la comprensión de una lengua externa a través del uso de palabras asimiladas por una comunidad o grupo con diversas asociaciones con la lengua de origen, puede conducir a un modelo de adquisición de la lengua basado en el uso. El estudio revela que la diversidad en la articulación de palabras asimiladas no puede descartarse estrictamente incluso en presencia de precisión en el uso y el significado. También se constata que, con el tiempo, algunas palabras asimiladas, en su esencia original, quedan unidas e identificadas con un grupo de cosas por la comunidad de usuarios. El estudio concluye sobre el éxito del uso de palabras asimiladas dentro de una comunidad o grupo con precisión o casi precisión y lo asigna como un modelo basado en el uso de la asimilación lingüística básica que puede remodelarse en futuros estudios de aprendizaje de lenguas más formales. Infiere que las palabras asimiladas de una lengua externa, utilizadas en el contexto correcto, pueden conducir a una conversación o discurso exitoso en contextos variados, ya que las palabras se convierten en parte de la comunicación para transmitir conceptos y pensamientos. Los numerosos trabajos sobre los nagas angami tratan, en general, de su estatus sociocultural, económico y político como comunidad étnica y, sobre todo, de su contribución y posición durante la época británica. En una tendencia divergente, este estudio es una exploración pionera del patrón sociolingüístico entre los Angami Nagas en el empleo de palabras y frases asimiladas del inglés en su uso cotidiano.

Palabras clave: Lengua; Asimilación; Palabras Comunitarias Prestadas; Modelo Basado en el Uso; Patrón Sociolingüístico; Angami Nagas.

INTRODUCTION

Words assimilation is a part of language assimilation that takes place when a group of people makes use of some words or parts of another language while speaking their own language or dialect. Fauconnier, Gilles. (1994) Language assimilation usually takes place in the level of words, or within a word or even between words and also in phrases, in formal or informal speeches, especially when the assimilated word/s/phrases seemed more appropriate in a given context. Usually when a particular external language is considered or preferred as having a better reputation, it expands in different ways and at different levels. The usage of this type of languages is usually regarded as a matter of social reputation and pride by both the educated and uneducated alike. Tomasello, Michael(2000). Speech communities or groups that develop respect and preference for an external language would eagerly and freely use words and phrases from that language. From the speeches and talks of educated people, the TV, Radio, newspapers, advertisements, etc, even the semi educated and uneducated population steadily assimilates certain profusely used words and phrases from external languages. This leads to a situation where specific words and phrases get assimilated into the local dialogues and communication with the correct usage and meaning, within a community or group. This process becomes a case of usage-based model of language which is a major part of language acquisition.

Palmer, Gary B. (1996) In the world of language teaching and learning, language acquisition is the ultimate purpose. All language theories are propounded for this very goal. For example, generative 'non-

usage based' and non-generative 'usage-based' theories of language all aim at language acquisition. While non usage-based theories stand for language-specific abilities within a universal structure and perception of theories and frameworks that establish the conformed formation of a given language, usage-based theories, on the other hand, considers that language generates a conventional supply of units like words or language rule patterns that a speaker has to put together for communication. Langacker (1987). This process is based on listening/hearing and using/applying the language in the form of words and phrases which get assimilated and established by use. The conventional entities of language, like words, become the basis of communication when the assimilated and absorbed words, concepts and even categories are used in the course of communication and language acquisition, which is after all, the embedding, structuring and expanding of words, phrases and thoughts by use and practice.

Whether educated or not, most Angami Nagas make use of many English words and phrases in their formal as well as informal speeches. The same meaning of assimilated English words and phrases is inferred by both the educated and uneducated in the application of the words and phrases and there is a general uniformity in the accuracy of usage of the English words. The words and phrases get picked up intentionally or unintentionally, though more users may not be fully aware of the actual name, spelling and pronunciation of the words used frequently.

An old uneducated Angami man was heard saying that English is a deceiving language. His point is that when the letter 't' says 'tuh', how can the word 'nation' be pronounced 'nashun'? It should be called 'natuion' according to him. As such, 'bus' is not 'buzz', but 'booz' because to him, 'u' says 'uu'. Still, the same old man knew the correct meaning of the English words federal, army, independence, camp, and many more, though he may not be aware of the correct spelling or pronunciation of the few English words that he knows. Such is the extent of the usage trend of assimilated words among the Angamis.

This paper studies the use of particular English words which got assimilated into common usage among the Angami Nagas of Nagaland, which is characterized by the regularity of the words and phrases being used with precision, comprehension and application, which are all vital and important features of usage-based models of language. Usage-based model takes place with or without a focus on learning or experiencing language acquisition.

Theoretical Framework

Literature Review

Adams (2003) Assimilating or adopting a language generally happens as a result of contact between two language communities. The association could be for one or more reasons, like educational, intellectual, cultural, enriching, civilizing, etc, purposes. Usually, an irregularity is present in these types of language contacts, that is, instead of the language assimilation taking place parallelly between the two languages in contact, one side takes more words from the other side. The main reason for this could be that the source language community holds some benefit of authority, control, status and affluence over the assimilating language community or group making the latter prefer the former's language, ideas and even material things. The Germanic tribes' adoption of many Latin words and many being bilingual, while very few Germanic words passed into Latin is a case in point.

Coulson, Seana, Todd Oakley (2000) The formal and actual process of assimilating or adopting a language is quite a complex one and it involves many usage events with instances of the use of new word/s and phrases. In a usage-based model, generally, some members of the assimilating or adopting community or group may know the source language in full or at least adequate part of it to use relevant words or phrases from it in their formal or informal communications. Geeraerts, Dirk. (1991) Knowingly or unknowingly, they may use words from the source language while speaking because the words may most accurately fit the thing or idea they wish to speak about or express, or sometimes they may even need multiple words in their own language to communicate something while the same task can be done in one word or an apt phrase in the source language. Fauconnier, Gilles. (1997) Moreover, there may be

words for things, socio-political, economic or cultural institutions and events or abstract concepts which may not be found in the culture of the language of the assimilating group or other languages but the source language. As such, the culture of using assimilated words expands and gets deeply entrenched in usage within the assimilating community. Al-Ahdal, A. A. M. H. (2020) Code mixing a prevalent feature in the pattern of speech has its distinctive nature as being helpful to communal and professional needs between English and any other language in a region.

Kemmer (2007) The more the members are educated or bilingual in the source language within the assimilating community, the better the chances of pronouncing the assimilated words in the exact or similar way as they are pronounced in the source language. Haspelmath, (2002) For instance, when English speakers adopted some words from French (almost 29% of English being made up of French words) like *garage*, the initial articulation might have been much closer to the French pronunciation than is now usually heard. Perhaps, the very first speakers who used the word in English knew at least some French or heard the word used by French speakers, in a French-speaking context. Geeraerts, Dirk. (1997) Assimilated words may therefore sound the same, similar or very different from the normal pronunciation in isolation, according to the given situation and time. Sometimes they can even be deliberately spoken to differ from the correct pronunciation by the assimilating community, as observed in the case of the Angami Nagas where some educated participants knowingly shy away from the accurate pronunciation of English words when they speak among themselves.

Lyons (1981) In the process of word assimilation in language, the new words or phrases might be first used by a few members of the assimilating community either with speakers of the source language or with other members of the same community who are bilingual. In due course, they habitually employ the words in their dialogues, even with those for whom the words may be new and unknown. In such cases, when the word which is heard is not known, and if the word is from another language, the word can be called a foreign word. Langacker, Ronald W. (1991) Words from the source language may hence be thought of as foreign or strange words for a period till such time when the meaning and usage of the words spread and the words get assimilated into regular use with accuracy, both by those who know the source language as well as those who don't, as the usage becomes a general practice among the assimilating community.

The above-mentioned process could take place because, overtime, more members of the assimilating community became familiar with new words and phrases from the source language.

Kemmer (2007) The community or the group of users of such words can grow to the point where even people who know little or nothing of the source language can understand and also use the words themselves. The new words become a usual part of the dialogues within the assimilating community. This is called conventionalization in language systems, whereby a word or some words leak/leaks into a speech community and become/becomes a part of their linguistic repertoire. Eguchi, M., & Eguchi, K. (2006) The language used by the local community in their habitat outlooks the range of categorized face-to-face communication with others when they meet their family and friends during gatherings, discussions, shopping and at their work place.

Inglis, Douglas. (2003) As more members of the assimilating community become more familiar with certain words from a source language, the words steadily adopt the sound, utterance and other characteristics of the assimilating community's language. This happens as more members, some who do not know the source language at all, begin to accommodate the external/foreign words in their own way. The words progressively and comfortably get entrenched into usual conversations as well as in formal situations. In general, if a word has been assimilated into a language for a long time, and if it is frequently used, the higher are the chances of the exact or similar utterance with accurate meaning and usage as the source language.

Significance of the study

The primary aim of this paper is to comprehend how a source language words gets adopted by the speakers of another language or dialect. In this article, the term 'assimilated words and phrases' is used to mean the English words and phrases that got entrenched into the Angami speeches and communication among the educated as well as uneducated ones. A similar focus could be directed towards speakers of other languages or dialects or groups of students of a particular age group and area.

This article will be one of the first sociolinguistic discourse analysis research papers on assimilated and borrowed English words and phrases and their usage trend among the Angami Nagas of Nagaland. Altogether, it will also be a pioneering paper in usage-based model of language on the trend of using English words and phrases by the Angami Nagas.

Research Questions

1. Have the Angami Nagas assimilated English words and phrases into their language?
2. Is the same meaning of the assimilated English words and phrases inferred by both the educated and uneducated in the application?
3. Whether the users are fully aware of the actual name, spelling and pronunciation of the assimilated words?
4. Is there a variation with regard to generic and specific significance of the assimilated English words?

Research Objective

1. To explore how some words from a different language get assimilated into the dialogues of a community or group that speaks a totally different language or dialect
2. To study how a different language (the source language) words get adopted by the speakers of another language or dialect.
3. How a totally different speech community, assimilated and entrenched a large number of English words and phrases and use them extensively in both their formal and informal speeches.
4. To study how English words, names and phrases are extensively used to identify and describe things within the Angami community irrespective of whether the user is English educated or not.

Relevance of this study in the international context

1. Accuracy in the usage of assimilated words from a different language within a community or group can be successful as a usage based model of basic language assimilation.
2. This study shows that the use of certain words from an outside language source can grow into a usage trend with the correct sense, meaning and purpose among a speech community or people.
3. The use of assimilated words from an external language, used in the correct context, can lead to successful conversation or speech in varying contexts.
4. Accurate and specific usage can take place when some words get entrenched in usage by a community or group with a touch of their own local expressions and pronunciations.
5. The usage of assimilated words in the long run can develop and grow in the speaking of a community or group, thereby becoming a usage trend model of language acquisition at the grass root level.
6. This model can be designed with various activities and be adopted at both the school and college levels with set target ages and groups assigned with specific key words and phrases that are vital for their learning at the stipulated time.
7. This can contribute to an undemanding method of learning words and meanings and thereby improve learners' vocabulary and language altogether.

METHODS

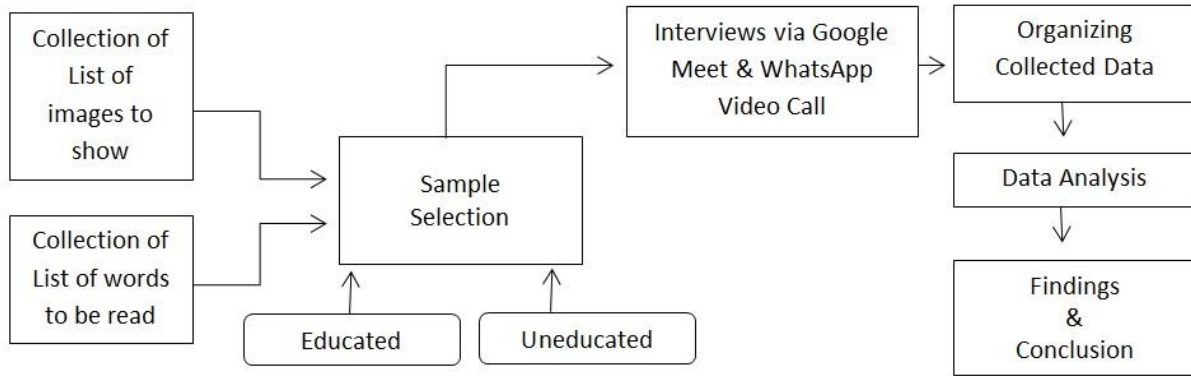


Figure 1. Research Design

Population

The speech community selected for this paper are the Angami Nagas of Nagaland who have assimilated and entrenched a large number of English words and phrases which are extensively used in both their formal and informal speeches. In due course of time, many English words and phrases have come into usage by both the educated and non-educated as well. English words, names and phrases are extensively used to identify and describe things within the Angami community irrespective of whether the user is English educated or not.

A group of about 75 Angami natives between the age ranges of 16 to 55 were interviewed telephonically via video call and conferencing. The participants are from different Angami villages. The group included a mixed number of educated, semi-educated and uneducated persons to give a balanced representation of the research focus.

Data and Analysis

Two lists of English words were framed for the study. The first list, with the pictures or photo images of the words as found in Table 1, was shown to the participants and they were asked to name the pictures as seen. For those who find difficulty in naming the picture, specific detail explanation of the word or name is provided without letting out the actual focus word/name, which they have to provide.

Table 1: List of words for which images are shown

S.No	English Word/Phrase	Angami Pronunciation	Response in English Style	Response in Angami Style	Aware of the correct name/word pronunciation but uses the assimilated name/word	Not aware of the correct name/word pronunciation but knows/uses the assimilated name/word
1.	Kettle	Kettle/keteli	33	42	35	40
2.	Machine	Machine/machinyü	40	35	35	40
3.	Cake	Cake/cat/cap	34	41	32	43
4.	Biscuit	Biscuit/biskut/bisku	27	48	29	46
5.	Slipper	Slipper/siliper	33	42	34	41
6.	Sweater	Sweater/shooter	29	46	27	48

7.	Bottle	Bottle/botolo/bottol	28	47	25	50
8.	Heel(shoes)	Heel (phiku)	33	42	34	41
9.	Lipstick	Lipstick /lipistick	34	41	35	40
10.	Tiffin	Tiffin/ Tiffinü/tiffinbou	33	42	33	42
11.	Almirah (Indian English)	Almirah/ alamira/ alamari	32	43	32	43
12.	Gas (cooking)	Gas/ Gasü	35	40	34	41
13.	Stove	Stove/sütov	36	39	33	42
14.	Newspaper	Newspaper/newspaperü	37	38	35	40
15.	Pen	Pen/penü	43	32	40	35
16.	Pencil	'Si' (wooden) pencil/pencir	39	36	34	41
17.	Rubber	Rubber/lobbor/robbor	37	38	39	36
18.	Ticket	Ticket/Tüket	35	40	39	36
19.	TV/televisio n	TV/TB/telebizün	39	36	35	40
20.	Radio	Radio/rodio	36	39	40	35
21.	Pressure Cooker	Pressure Cooker/brezure cooker/presür cooker	34	41	39	36
22.	Pipe	Pipe/ 'dzü' pipe/pipe 'pu'/pi	39	36	35	40
23.	Plastic	Plastic/pilastic	40	35	37	38
24.	Steel	Steel/süteel	40	35	33	42
25.	Wire	Wire/wire 'ro'	45	30	42	33
26.	Computer	Computer/compooter	43	32	34	41
27.	Brake (vehicle)	Brake/brek	39	36	40	35
28.	Town	Town/taan	45	30	43	32
29.	Rug Sack	Rug Sack/ rocksai/rosai	32	43	34	41
30.	Ball	Ball/ballo	41	34	43	32
31.	Chewing gum	Chewing gum/chin gon/ chink gong	33	42	44	31
32.	Vitamin	Vitamin/ bitamin	41	34	43	32
33.	Darling	Darling/darlin	39	36	41	34
34.	Curtain	Curtain/ carten	35	40	34	41
35.	Candle	Candle/candela/cander	40	35	41	34
36.	Towel	Towel/towelü/tower	39	36	31	44
37.	Photo	Photo/pheto	40	30	39	36
38.	Loaf	Loaf/loafü	37	48	34	41
39.	Light post	Light post/li pos	43	32	32	43
40.	Flask	Flask/fülas	38	37	33	42
41.	Muffler	Muffler/moffolor/mufolor	31	44	36	39
42.	Light bulb	Light bulb/li ball	34	41	39	36
43.	Doll	Doll/dollnuo	40	35	38	37
44.	Bus	Bus/busü	43	32	39	36
45.	Father	Father/faanther	41	34	37	38
46.	Sister	Sister/siter	44	31	39	36
47.	Cemetery	Cemetery/cemetri	40	35	36	39
48.	Secretariat	Secretariat/sekreteret/sekreteri ar	39	36	41	34
49.	Doctor	Doctor/dotor/daitor	38	37	42	33
50.	Office	Office/offisü	36	39	43	32
51.	Apple	Apple/apper	42	33	34	41

52.	Torch light	Torch light/tos light/tosli	40	35	32	43
53.	College	College/colles/collesü	38	37	37	38
54.	Prize	Prize/prasü/pras	40	35	34	41
55.	Result	Result/resol/resul	39	36	38	37

Figure 2 shows that the number of responses of the assimilated words in Angami style is higher than the English way. Few words had an almost balanced number of responses. Figure 3 represents an elevated use of assimilated English words and names irrespective of the awareness of the correct name or meaning of the specific English words selected for this study.

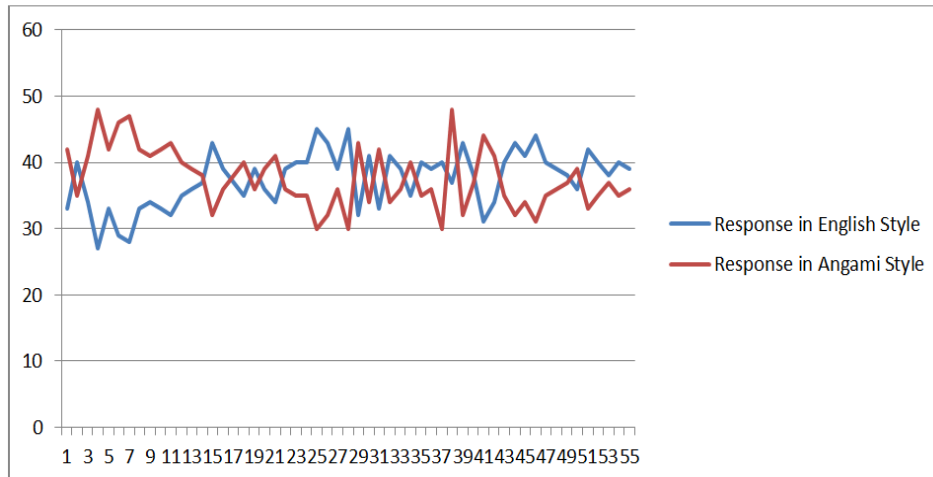


Figure 2. Comparison of responses based on style

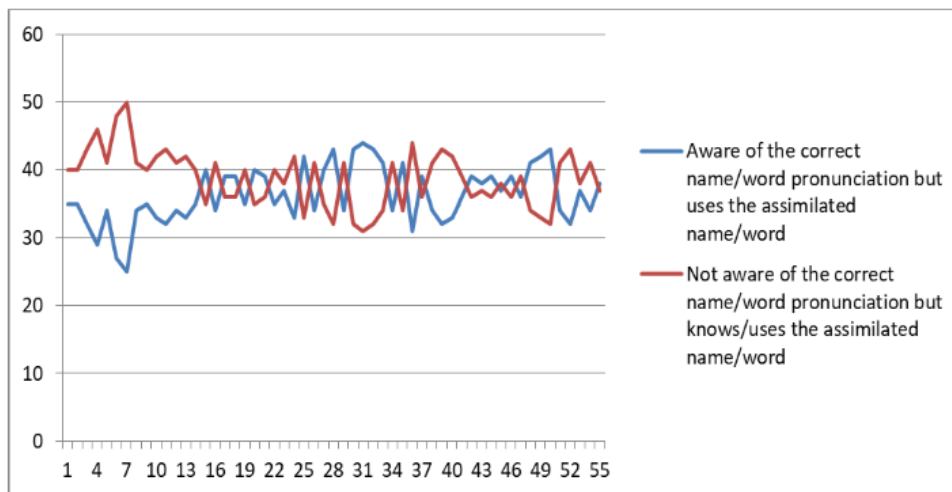


Figure 3. Comparison of assimilated words usage

The second list as in Table 2 has the selected list of English words without pictures or photos but words which are used to mean or identify with collective things among the Angami Nagas across different age groups. The following list is a small sampling of the assimilated words/ names of items that became entrenched into Angami speeches from English which is used in the same context as in English by both those who know the English language and those who don't too. These words were read aloud with clarity to the participants. After they listen they have to share what is understood of the words/names read out.

Table 2. List of words that were read aloud

S.N	English Word/Phrase	Angami Pronunciation	Usage in Angami Speech	Response in usage as per the English word/name	Response as per the Angami usage	Aware of the correct name/word usage but uses the assimilated name	Not aware of the correct name/word usage but knows/uses the assimilated usage
1.	Colgate	Colgate/cologate	Any toothpaste	36	39	34	41
2.	Surf	Surf/süruf/surfü	Any washing detergent powder	38	37	35	40
3.	Lifebuoy	Lifebuoy/liboy/lifüboy	Any bathing soap bar	39	36	38	37
4.	RCC (Reinforced Cement Concrete)	RCC/R SHI SHI	Any concrete buildings	39	36	36	39
5.	Sofa set	Sofa set/Sopha	Any sponged seat	41	34	35	40
6.	Bomb	Bomb/bomü	Any crackers or explosives	39	36	37	38
7.	Calendar	Calendar/carenda r	Any chart that show the days, weeks, and months of a particular year& any book where absence and fee payment records are stored	38	37	36	38
8.	Machine 'lo'	Machine/machinü 'lo'	Any small thread	34	41	38	37
9.	America	Americamia	Any white foreigner	38	37	29	46
10.	Drum	Drum/drumü	Any cylindrical container that can hold liquid	37	38	36	39
11.	Tin	Tinü/tinübu/tina	Any flat metal sheet or airtight container	35	40	36	39
12.	Filter	Filter/füliter	Any drinking water apparatus/unit	39	36	34	41
13.	Brush	Brush/brusü, buurus	Any sort of scrubber with bristles, hair, or wire, used for cleaning things	42	33	37	38
14.	Copy	Copy/copy da	Any notebook	34	41	33	42
15.	Ground	Ground/groun/ graan	Any big open space specially for playing	35	40	31	44
16.	Light	Light/ligh/ mi li	Anything electrical or visible	39	36	34	41
17.	Maggi	Maggi/maagi	Any noodles/chow	45	30	34	41
18.	Mattress	Mattress/maatres ü	Any fabric case filled with soft	33	42	36	39

			material, used for covering or sleeping on.				
19.	Flask	Flask/flaasü	Any container for hot liquids	36	39	34	41
20.	Rucksack	Rock side/rocksai	Any bag with shoulder straps carried on the back	31	44	32	43
21.	Money bag	Money bag/monyi bag	Any ladies' bag carried on the shoulder or held in hand	33	42	35	40
22.	Jerrycan	Jerrycan/jargin/j argan/jarkin	Any large flat-sided container for storing or transporting liquids	30	45	37	38

Figure 4 demonstrates the extent of assimilated English words used to mean or identify with collective things among the Angami Nagas. The high number of responses both in English parlance as well as in the Angami style shows the popularity of the said words/names which got entrenched into the Angami conversations. Here, the high response in usage as per the English way shows the popularity of the words because the longer a word is used the more perfect the utterance will become.

Figure 5 represents the profuse use of English words and names among the Angami people in their daily lives. Many of the participants admitted of not being aware of the correct name or meaning, but interestingly enough, their usage of the words is accurate.

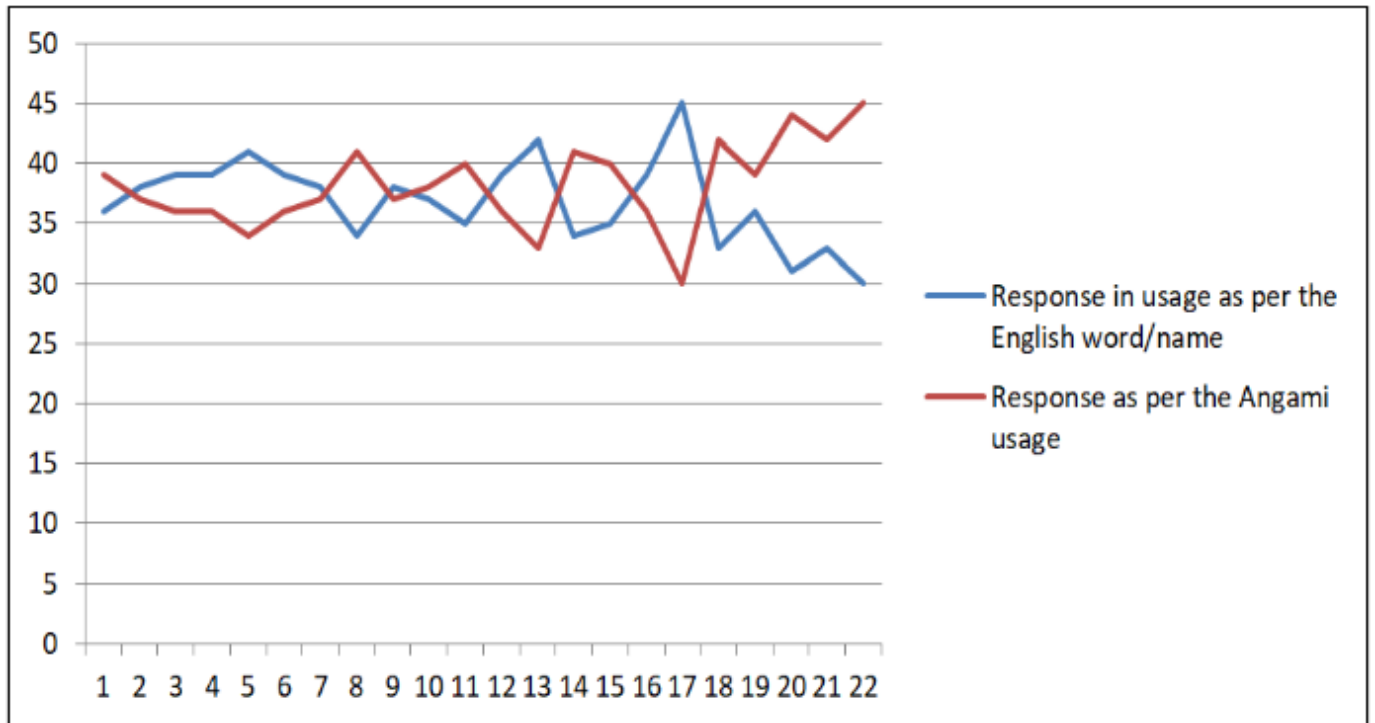


Figure 4. Comparison based on the usage

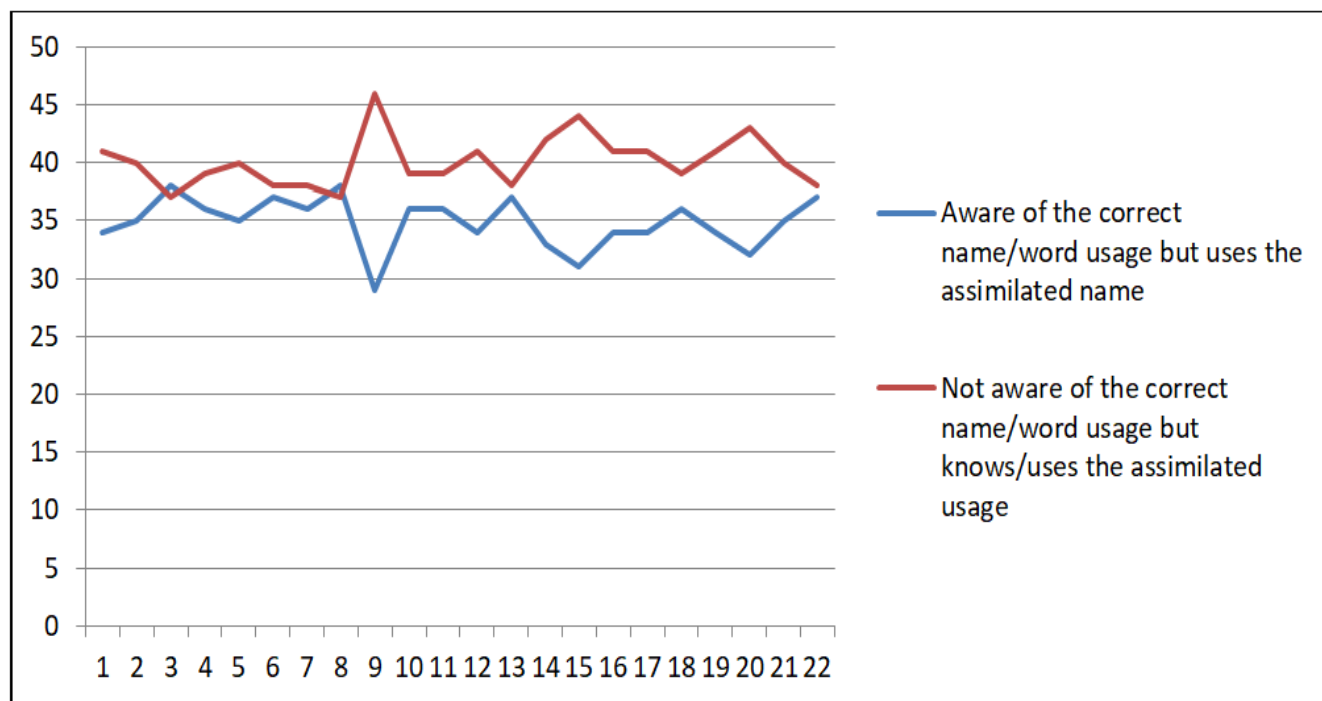


Figure 5. Comparison based on the correct use of words

RESULTS

The study revealed that whether educated or not, assimilated words are used with a distinct similar pronunciation by the users in the community or group. Over time, assimilated words get entrenched in the speeches of the local community with accurate usage. At the same time, certain assimilated names and words get to be identified with collective items or things. In the case of the Angami Nagas, the use of a selection of such assimilated words shows distinct accuracy in usage.

DISCUSSION

When it comes to usage of assimilated words in the speeches of a community or group, the intonation and pronunciation change dramatically as per the local utterances. This could be for reasons of acceptance, ownership and commonality or simply out of sheer habit. Irrespective of whether one is well educated or not, when using assimilated words in the speeches of a community, there is a tendency to say the words in a tone that can be easily understood by the same community members, and hence the specific pronunciation.

CONCLUSION

Accuracy in the usage of assimilated words within a community or group which may be English educated or not shows the success of usage based model of basic language assimilation. This study shows that the use of several words from an outside language source can grow into a usage trend with the correct sense, meaning and purpose among a speech community or people. This can take place even when the people using the assimilated words/phrases have little or no knowledge of the language from which the words came from. The use of assimilated words from an external language, used in the correct context, can lead to successful conversation or speech in varying contexts. Without even knowing the correct spelling or pronunciation of the words being used, accurate and specific usage can take place when these words get entrenched in usage by a community or group. With a touch of their own local expressions and pronunciations, the usage of assimilated words in the long run can develop and grow in

the speaking of a community or group, thereby becoming a usage trend model of language acquisition at the grass root level. This model can be designed with various activities and be adopted at both the school and college levels with set target ages and groups assigned with specific key words and phrases that are vital for their learning at the stipulated time. This can contribute to an undemanding method of learning words and meanings and thereby improve learners' vocabulary and language altogether.

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