

Are the Communications of African Flight Attendants a form of Slurred Speech?

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Abstract

Onboard international flights, you may have witnessed the pre-takeoff information/in-flight safety speech by the cabin crew. It is not out of place that they tend to be European in their mode of speaking. However, when on a local flight, the Europeanness of speech still comes out loud. We want to understand why such Europeanised intonation should be and the audience it is meant to serve. Our research leads us to the conclusion that this insensitivity of local airline operators stems from the desire to enjoy some patronage even if their actions inferiorise the community who are the major patrons of their services. We will also explain why the Europeanisation of speech could lead to safety hazards. This work is inspired by the personal experiences of the researchers and of a few others.

Keywords: Cabin crew, Communication, Honorary whiteness, Identity

Introduction

The inspiration for this theme arises from the experiences of the authors. Communication is key in conversation. Two individuals could engage in exchange of words and at the same time not be communicating. In the absence of communication, there is usually the transmission of distorted information. It is for this reason that in defining communication as a concept, it necessarily involves the communicator, the recipient and the idea that is being transmitted. Idea is a defining element in communication. Airline operators within most parts of the African continent do not seem to have taken conversation as key in communication. We make this claim because the pre-takeoff caution given by crew members, especially within Africa, seems not to prepare passengers adequately for hazards. Sometimes passengers can also be complicit by their actions/inactions in order not to give the public the impression that they do not understand the mumbling of some of the crew members. This work is therefore an analysis of this defect in communication, which may be a form of slurred speech. To this end, this work is divided into three main parts. In the first part, we are interested in a background that gives a guide to the possible reasons for defective communication. In doing this, we study the psychological foundations of victims and why they behave the way they do. In the second part, we make an

investigation into the discourse of slurred speech, how and why it is used by some crew members and why it serves the purpose of mere defective communication. The last part focuses on the dangers inherent in such defective communication and why we think that there is a connection between such behaviour and victims' normalisation of 'whiteness'. In so doing, we give some recommendations on what we must do about it.

The Psychological Foundation of the Colonised

Patterns of behaviour that are products of post-traumatic slave syndrome have their roots mainly in slavery/colonialism. It is not easy to fully determine or assess behaviours based on attitudes as they occur, since there could be some underlying circumstances that are usually ignored in such behavioural assessment. This is why we discuss possible and actual scenarios responsible for some forms of normalised whiteness among highly melanated people. This psychological basis serves as a root for some sort of convenience oppressed people face when they are racialised. In some instances, victims even strive to defend an oppressive system without having a proper judgement of the implications. To some extent, such defence of a system is to make the victims find security by being acknowledged in a way that is beneficial to them. The economic security of victims is, therefore, key to their loyalty to any system.

The space of whiteness has an overwhelming attraction. The era of slavery and colonialism makes the effects more pronounced. This is why it is necessary to respond to issues that make attractiveness to whiteness possible. We do not think that without privileges attached to an event, humans will intentionally align with such an event. Pain is not a natural course that people would want to pursue or identify with. If a better life through self-preservation is what people seek, it is normal to identify those relevant means to attaining it. Sometimes, in the final analysis, humans are unperturbed by means as long as they lead to desired ends. Again, it is not unlikely to apply cognitive dissonance to prove some proportional ends. By this, humans tend to perceive things from their perspective and shut their minds toward any relevant discourse that stands against their desired intents. When cognitive dissonance is at work, it can be used to also justify the need for a wrong that leads to what is perceived as a greater good. It is this intent to preserve the self that makes us investigate why racist socialisation is even possible/necessary. However, to do this we should also return to the era before civil democracy, especially in Africa.

We use Na'im Akbar's (1996) work as the primary basis for our analysis in this section. The era of slavery is foundational in the journey of the mind. If we fail to see the link between the past and current trends, it is very likely to remain trapped in that past. There were two kinds of slaves: house slaves and field slaves. For some of these slaves, the demarcations were made even before they were forcefully taken away from their place of indigeneity. The slave museum in Badagry, Lagos, bears testimony and carries some pictures of such separation of slaves. The house slaves were more privileged than the field slaves as they were in a position of closeness with the master. This nearness of house slaves to the master is hinged on the fact that the little privileges given to the slaves make it possible for them to serve as spies for the master against the field slaves. Consequently, the

house slaves had the privilege of dressing like the master, having same meal with and direct access to the master, etc. The house slave was, therefore, the envy of all slaves. Those in the field could only admire and fantasise about such a lifestyle. This was also coupled with the fact that the master played a supervisory role in extractive economics and together with the house slaves, were not engaged in hard manual labour. As such, the slaves came to equate hard work with suffering and idleness, which guarantees opulence, was identified with success. This position of privilege was not something the house slave was ready to forfeit. As a result of the urge to maintain the privileged lifestyle, s/he fed the master with any relevant information to check any deviant field slave. This is not a peculiar characteristic of highly melanated humans. Under the same condition of threat to existence/livelihood, people of other races will be forced to make choices that promote their wellbeing even if to the detriment of others.

There is some sort of willingness on the part of victims to support a system of oppression. This kind of patronage has a long history rooted in slavery where the oppressor stays on the privileged side of human existence and the slaves as savages. The former presented himself as the saviour of the latter and created institutions to normalise servitude and dependence. The internalisation of inferiority arises from the justification of a system of dependence. This is based on the claim that people would want to stay close to what is considered their most secure source of livelihood. People can choose the certainty of living wretchedly over the uncertainty of a better living in the future (JOST 2020, 6).

The gradation of being predates slavery/colonialism. Race is crucial in the determination of class. The quest for privilege led to the inferior-superior dichotomy along racial lines. Even in the midst of whiteness, there are hierarchies. Very fundamental to classification based on race is the fact that the one in charge of the classification is also among those to be classified. During this process of ranking, the one who classifies puts himself at the top of the ladder, while every other individual is below. Since rationality is what makes *humanitas* distinct from the *anthropos* and serves as the foundation for determining superiority in all facets of human life, highly melanated humans were (and in some cases are still) perceived to be intellectually inferior. The presumption of inferior intellect is a rationale for slavery/colonialism with the hope that the *anthropos* would share a bit in the superiority of the low melanated. This would come strictly through tutelage of the highly melanated. However, having witnessed power, the oppressor has ensured that the task of teacher-student relationship will continue to exist between the low and highly melanated people respectively.

This background is important because, as humans, we could become even more susceptible to the past if we do not understand its connection to the present. It is this very past that has mutated into a more dangerous form of slavery that leaves the wrists and ankles unchained but destroys the mind at the same time. Some rights and privileges are associated with being low melanated. These rights/privileges are usually bestowed on some naturally or by association. We are concerned with those who acquire these rights by association. This is usually done to preserve their position in the establishment of whiteness, even if betrayal is the means to achieving that right/privilege. Why then are such acts perpetuated by highly melanated people? One reason for this is the quest for approval that is a

product of emptiness. It demands the rating of the ‘naturally privileged other’ to properly function in the society. The naturally privileged understands and knows that s/he enjoys such privilege over highly melanated people. As such, it behaves the highly melanated (victim) to rehearse the methods that guarantee that by association. The end in view is that the highly melanated expects that like the low melanated, s/he may also have a share in white privilege. This is the crux of our use of the idea of honorary whiteness. Like an individual who is bestowed with an honorary doctorate but cannot utilise it if s/he wishes to lecture in a university, the same applies to an individual who chases whiteness in order to gain some form of acceptance and enjoy some privileges. However, the privilege of whiteness is primarily located in economics, which is most times difficult to acquire by mere association.

Dissecting the Complexity of Slurred Speech Among Cabin Crew

In order to better understand this section, we identify some key issues in communication. Here, we use the word communication in a sense that is different from Chimakonam’s usage through his critique of language in coloniality, because we do believe that the function of language as communication and understanding in coloniality that Chimakonam presents is inadequate. Chimakonam’s critique gives the impression of communication as a unidirectional act that comes from only the communicator (coloniser) and the act of understanding as the sole function of the recipient (colonised). Chimakonam went further to define communication as involvement of three signs, which are the signifier (spoken word), signifiants (conversationalists) and the signified (ideas communicated) (CHIMAKONAM 2021, 10). Clearly, both meanings of communication in coloniality and decoloniality (here we use decoloniality to qualify Chimakonam’s idea of communication) are different with the latter providing the basis for conversational thinking. We think that language in coloniality serves the purpose of information and not communication as Chimakonam states. It is only within the context of information that the colonialist becomes a teacher, while the recipient is student. Communication involves mutual participation where both the sender and recipient are communicators. Language as used in this research to interrogate flight attendants’ speech should serve one purpose, that is, communication. We believe that there is need for understanding before we can be said to be in communication. It is on this ground we question whether it is possible to “communicate to”, instead of “communicate with”, but we can pass “information to” because within the context of information, there is no feedback necessarily. During communication, there is usually a switching of roles by both ‘A’ (giver) and ‘B’ (recipient). When ‘A’ conveys a message to ‘B’, there is a requirement of feedbacks from ‘B’ (receiver) to ‘A’ (giver). At this point, when ‘A’ gets a response from ‘B’, there is a change in status with ‘A’ (receiver) and ‘B’ (giver). This is why information is not necessarily communication.

In recent times, philosophers of language, particularly Ernie Lepore, Luvell Anderson, Elisabeth Camp and Renée J. Bolinger among others, are becoming increasingly interested in the phenomenon of slurs and slurring speech, which for long has remained a less explored linguistic category. The notion of slurred speech conjures a medical disorder most commonly associated with

dysarthria – poor pronunciation of words or a change in the speed or rhythm of one’s speech. A major cause of dysarthria (slurred, slowed or rapid speech) is a traumatic brain or mental injury; it develops either slowly over time or as a consequence of a single medical occurrence. Thus, depending on the underlying cause, slurred speech may be a temporary or permanent disorder.

Closely associated with slurring speech as a medical or mental condition is the use of slurring words. According to Luvell Anderson and Ernie Lepore (2013, 25), slurs are a lexical category that target groups on the basis of race (‘nigger’), nationality (‘kraut’), religion (‘kike’), gender (‘bitch’), sexual orientation (‘fag’), immigrant status (‘wetback’) as well as other sundry demographics. For them, slurring words have the potential to offend and their use signals a psychological disposition towards a given group. Words like primitive, uncivilised, negro, etc. were slurs used by colonial regimes in the socio-racial construction of the African as sub-human. As Anderson and Lepore (2013, 25) argue, and as our analysis in this article ratifies, racial and ethnic slurs have become particularly important not only for the sake of adequately theorising about their linguistic distribution but also for the implications their usage has on other well-worn areas of interest.

In this article, we explore slurred speech as a mental and psychological disorder in post-colonial African humanism, specifically among cabin crew on local flights within the continent. Flight attendants on board a given flight collectively form a cabin crew, as distinguished from the flight crew, which consists of pilots and engineers in the cockpit. Historically, airliners travelled without cabin crew. Cabin boys, whose tasks were mainly to load luggage and calm or reassure nervous passengers, were introduced in the 1920s by airliners like the Imperial Airways in the United Kingdom. In the USA, Stout Airways was the first employer of cabin boys or stewards in 1926, while Western Airlines (1928) and Pan American World Airways (1929) were the first US airliners to use them to serve food (ELLIS and LANSFORD 2014, 2).

The roles and significance of cabin crew as a crucial component of the aviation industry have evolved over the decades, specifically in the 1960s, the 70s and 80s. Part of this evolution consists of English as a means of communication on board flights. This followed the Tenerife disaster involving the collision of two jets on the runway in 1977 as well as the crash of the United Airlines 173 flight in 1978. Investigation of the latter revealed the captain of the United Airlines’ failure to accept input from junior crew members and a lack of assertiveness by the flight engineer as causes of the crash. Consequently, aviation authorities around the world introduced requirements for standard phrases and a greater emphasis on English as a common working language (ELLIS and LANSFORD 2014, 3). As such, a proficient level of English communication skills is a standard requirement for employment as a cabin crew.

Our interactions with some cabin crew of local airlines and some other aviation workers revealed a rather grim scenario about the practice in the Nigerian aviation industry. It was revealed that most of the things said or announced aboard a flight are memorised and must be delivered in interesting or European intonation. The cruel catch is that crew members with Yoruba accent and, by extension, other intonations arising from ethnic affiliations or ‘bad’ accents are

scarcely allowed to fly or make announcements. To achieve this, cabin crew are forced to Europeanise their accent by constant practice in which they are required to record themselves. English is only a means of communication. Must it be rendered in a European tone to be acceptable? In what follows, we argue to the contrary, contending that the push to Europeanise accents and intonations hinge on attempts to gain an honorary white status and to escape the socio-racial and derogatory colonial construction of the African in a manner that reinforces white supremacy.

The urge to gain some advantages and privileges over other humans is at the heart of racism and forms of classification. The inferiorisation of the African exists to animate the logic of economics. Key components of this logic were provided by Hegel, who described Africa as a 'closed land' and highly melanated people as lacking intuitive objectivity about issues such as God or the law. For him, "He (the black person) is a human being in the rough" (quoted in MAGUBANE 2001, 3). The construction of Africa as a dark continent and the African as a 'human being in the rough' produced a cultural system of beliefs and images that inflict 'ontological wounds' on the colonised by attacking their intelligence, ability, beauty and humanity as a whole. This imagery has been sustained right from colonial times to the present age. During colonialism, Africans were cast as primitive and in need of civilisation. In the post-colonial period, Africans are conceived as underdeveloped. Today, they are described as chaotic, traditional, undemocratic, irrational and lacking in all those things the West presumes itself to be (MANJI 2001, 66). Hence, the condition of being African is a racial construct the European used to justify slavery, colonialism and exploitation (CHIMAKONAM & EGBAI 2021, 1-14). Contextually, therefore, to remain within this construct is to lack certain rights and privileges, to rise above it is to gain some.

In *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire*, Anne Norton presents the 'fantasy of the exception' as a means of rising above racial construct. This fantasy lures individuals to *repress* or *magnify* parts of their identities in exchange for access to political and socio-economic privileges (2004, 66-8). Here, identities can be repressed either by force or by choice and the socio-economic escape is realised by conforming to the psychology of the dominant white self, while rejecting the other, that is, the excluded masses. In colonial times, people that were not of low melanated European origin sought to attain a manufactured European identity and pass as 'honorary European' by parcelling the *self* into a paler, essentialised subject in the eyes of colonial powers. Such identities, even in the post-colonial era, can and are being pursued through a combination of magnifications including mastery of a European language, conversion to Christianity and adoption of European cultural norms, among others (YOUNG 2009, 180).

It is clear from the foregoing that the current practice of Europeanising accent among cabin crew is a repression and magnification of identities in line with the 'fantasy of the exception'. This fantasy is more properly gleaned from the practice whereby crew members have to repressively exterminate their native accent by constantly recording themselves for assessment. This is pivotal not only in maintaining the job but in securing it in the first place. As Young (2009, 183)

notes, you can get a \$300-a-month job with Citibank or Microsoft with a placeless accent and a confident walk. With a thick accent, however, you might peddle credit cards door to door for \$2 a day. Thus, this adoption of the western persona entails the self-commodification of identities. That is, rather than question the European hegemony, individuals who choose to compete, in order to survive, may commodify their identities through objectification so as to gain some privileges. In so doing, these individuals may secure “economic and social gain in exchange for detaching themselves from the moral and cultural frameworks of their native communities” (YOUNG 2009, 183).

English was not just a language of the coloniser, but a major vehicle of colonialism. European languages (English, French, Portuguese and Spanish) are the mainstay means of communication in independent Africa. Given the initial reactions and sensitivities of African leaders towards neo-colonialism, one would have thought something definite would have been done to elevate an indigenous language as a national means of communication, no matter how difficult it may seem. Such a move is indispensable because, according to John Povey (1976, 13), nothing explicitly captures the specific indication of neo-colonialism better than the linguistic imperialism of the residual language of the oppressor. For, as the Roman adage goes, ‘the language of the conqueror is the language of a slave.’ In Africa, we are faced with the paradox in which the official languages of communication or national unity are colonially motivated. Rarely any African nation boasts of a single indigenous language within its borders and any attempt to elevate a single language for national unity is often viewed with suspicion. While the continent grapples with this socio-political quagmire, it is our position that nothing stops Africa and Africans from nationalising English and applying it in ways that do not necessarily conform to standards set by native European speakers.

Once the dialect of only South Britons, English today has become a global or world language. If English is now the language of the world, it then follows that it is no longer the exclusive possession of the British and a speaker ought not to be subject to English assumptions of correctness. Responding to a native-speaking teacher’s criticism for a non-standard form, an African student once said: “it is our language now and we can do what we like with it” (POVEY 1976, 16). There are several variations of English today, even Pidgin as normalised in Congo Brazzaville. We have seen instances of football matches on the continent where the commentaries are run in Pidgin English. Aside this extreme variation, a good example of nationalising English has been demonstrated by the Americans as there is an obvious distinction between American and British English today.

According to Povey (1976, 16), there are two forms of English in Africa, local English and superior English nearly matching native speaking accuracy. Undoubtedly, the local one is predominantly in use in socio-political and national gatherings on the continent, the same cannot be said of its usage on local flights on the continent. It is our position that the so-called superior English when deployed on local flights, where the majority of clients are locals, is aimed at securing certain privileges to the detriment of the majority consumers of local flights. These privileges are merely in identification with identitarian alliances with whiteness.

The repression of local accent for the magnification of an assumed European accent is a mental surrender to the racially constructed imagery of colonialism that everything African is primitive and uncivilised and that only the European is good. Such a psychological capitulation reinforces the erroneous white supremacist claims and puts the victims in an identity dilemma where they are neither fully native nor European. In the Scandinavian countries, for instance, local languages are used on flights with translations. That is, there is always an announcement in some Scandinavian languages (Swedish, Norwegian or Danish) and then a translation in English, and vice versa. This is significant because there may be a native individual who may not understand or might get confused by highly Europeanised English. Also, the use of such local languages can entrench a sense of self-worth among the locals and forestall safety issues that may arise from misunderstanding safety information rendered in a magnified European accent. Not all local air travellers in Africa understand well-toned European English and that this is not being taken into account by airline operators is problematic and can constitute safety issues on local flights. The implication of such negligence is that it compels everyone to conform to the said Europeanised version even when the majority of passengers of local airlines are within the regions of African territories. The language game works like a neocolonial mental intoxication that forces the oppressed to accept the lifestyle and norms of the oppressor even in the land of the oppressed. As a psychological game, an individual with all structures of oppression in his/her favour can dominate an entire village. In the next section, we highlight the consequences of the mental torture of slurred speech for the society.

Slurred Speech, Honorary Whiteness and Implications for Society

In the preceding section, we construed slurred speech as a defeatist psychological disorder that reinforces white supremacy. The lure of the fantasy of exception with its accruable gains requires individuals to repress some of their native and biological features while magnifying others deemed capable of conferring white status and privileges. Although the concept of *honorary whiteness* is associated with the lexicon used by the South African apartheid regime to confer certain rights and privileges of whites to non-whites, particularly the Japanese; its origin is firmly rooted in slavery, colonialism and what it means characteristically to be white. According to Cheryl Harris (1993, 1720 and 1745), whiteness or being white carries the value of property. During the period of slavery, whiteness was a property that 'shielded against being enslaved', while its absence or opposite fostered the objectification of human beings as property. Accordingly, whiteness was the predicate for attaining various societal privileges both in public and private spheres after the abolition of slavery and colonialism. To this end, whiteness is the characteristic of the enslaver/coloniser self in relation to the enslaved/colonised other. As Young (2009, 179) puts it, "[h]onorary whiteness' builds on the colonial reification of white superiority, extending the opportunities and rights traditionally reserved for 'whites' to 'non-whites' who achieve positions of economic and social power." Such acquired status is conditional as people that gain 'honorary whiteness' must constantly defend their status by actively excluding others and repressing parts of themselves.

Following trade pacts with Japan after World War II, the apartheid regime in South Africa began to treat the Japanese as whites under the Group Areas Act in 1961, the year South Africa seceded from the commonwealth (SUGISHITA 2017, 95). This designation accorded the Japanese the right to use municipal swimming pools and almost all other rights and privileges of whites, save the right to vote. With time, other Asian nationalities such as Koreans, Taiwanese and Chinese, among others were granted similar honorary white status and its accruing benefits. Honorary whiteness is an orchestrated scheme for the subsistence of dominance of low melanated people, which is maintained via socio-economic, psychological and institutional practices. Such dominance and the willingness to grant honorary white status, argues Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2006, 33-4), as cited by Kevin Consideine (2010, 291), is altering the white/nonwhite dichotomy into white, honorary white and collective black, especially in the US. For him, this tri-racial stratification system has whites at the top, honorary whites at the middle and 'nonwhite' or collective black at the bottom.

This racial and hegemonic stratification is aimed at the continuous exploitation and dominance of highly melanated people and others considered as nonwhites. Any approach geared towards acquiring honorary whiteness to climb out of the bottom rung of the emerging classification is despairing. Such a move is a psychological acquiescence and maintenance of the status quo. As Philip Lee (2021, 1498) argues, honorary whiteness is not an honourable status because it "is based on a falsehood – the legitimising myth of the model minority that serves to increase inequality both within and between racial groups." The notion of a legitimating myth consists of values, attitudes, beliefs and ideologies providing moral and intellectual justification for social practices that either increase, maintain or decrease social inequality among people. A combined assessment of recent media reportage in various news outlets arising from the Ukrainian crisis shows how mediated narratives reinforce white privileges. In order to grant access to some persons to the exclusion of others, there has been a classification of people based on colour, education, mode of dressing, accent, intonations, and so on. The implication for the highly melanated is that it is not enough to associate with whiteness to have access to privileges. We make this submission because out of about 76000 foreign students in Ukraine, about 19000 of them are Africans (ALI 2022). Not minding the large number of Africans in different professional courses, being educated and civilised, which are seen as attributes of whiteness, were not enough to guarantee access to some rights. This is the danger when identification with whiteness by highly melanated people is misconstrued to be automatic access to privilege. In our case – the pursuit of honorary whiteness through language – the myth sustains or even amplifies white supremacy with the implication of an identity crisis because the victim is neither fully white nor black (EARLY 2006).

Visiting Israel for a conference of medical practitioners, a medical doctor told his story of having a mouth condition that irritated other participants that sat close to him. Since it was a new condition, he asked some specialists (supposedly Israelis) what the problem was. He was told he had gingivitis. As intimidating as the name sounds, some practitioners told him the treatment, but he left there more confused since he never knew the cause(s). But gingivitis is merely inflammation

of the gum. Coming from another region, if he had been told in simple words what gingivitis was, his reaction and approach to treatment would have been different. Like gingivitis was to a stranger who actually knew what inflammation of the gum is, slurred speech serves the same purpose; both are responsible for problems that could have been prevented if the peculiarities of each person, culture and society were taken into account. 'Gingivitis' (we now use the word metaphorically) is partly the reason for the decolonial turn since it takes away people's freedom to participate in the world from their unique vantage point and lack of knowledge of one's particular conditions leads gradually to loss of identity or, rather, a confused identity. The problem extends to the fact that the onus is on the patient-recipient-passenger to understand and not on the service delivery agent to communicate. This is not new because the purpose of language during the colonial era was for speaking (coloniser) and reception (colonised). Instead of asking if someone understands, the better approach is to ask if you even communicated at all. What then is the problem with the meaning of communication between flight attendants and their clients? We found the discrepancy in the fact that conversation between flight attendants and passengers occurs in space, while understanding is expected to happen in place. This is precisely the gap that conversational thinking fills by switching the narratives that admit peculiarities thereby ensuring that conversation occurs in place, while understanding happens in space (CHIMAKONAM 2021, 11). Even on international flights, we have heard of flight crew members (travelling to African countries) who speak in Yorùbá, Pidgin and so on, to the amazement and happiness of passengers. Their happiness stems basically from the fact that such flexibility is abnormal and rarely occurs. At the same time, there is a sense of respect and identity recognition such gesture conveys to clients.

Breaking free from the dehumanised construction of the African as sub-human, which fosters the fantasy of honorary whiteness, requires what Amílcar Cabral (1973, 45) describes as "a reconversion of minds and mental set". Such reconversion – Africanising English, in our case – opposes the institutions of white supremacy by reclaiming or reinventing certain aspects of the repressed African identity. Manji better captures this process thus:

Those who have, for centuries, experienced dehumanization inevitably and constantly struggle to reclaim their humanity, to assert that they are human beings. The process of reclamation is not, however, a harking back to some supposed glorious past when everyone was human, but rather a present and continuing process of constant invention, constant re-invention, and redefinition of what it means to be human (2001, 69).

Such persistent invention and reinvention render the nationalisation of English in Africa, especially on local flights, an inevitability. This can be achieved, according to Povey (1976, 16), through modification often produced by first language intrusion uninhibited by the presence of adequate native speaking models. The elimination of external standards of accuracy entails that the implication of tutelage can be denied or that the speaker is not subject to the English assumption of correctness. These permissible variations of English in Africa indicate that

“there is a vigorous new English which serves for national communication and urban interaction; colourful, lively, exotically aberrant, always distinctive. Ideally, it should be permitted a free growth restrained only by the demonstrable advantage of its retaining other than local efficacy” (POVEY 1976, 21). In relation to cabin crew, the onus for this permissibility is on the airline operators as a policy issue. If football commentaries can be done in Pidgin and the BBC runs a radio news channel in Pidgin, what stops airline operators from allowing Pidgin and other non-Europeanised English or language on local flights?

Conclusion

This work focused on slurred speech and how it is a normalised mental attitude within the context of whiteness and perpetrated by victims themselves in order to guarantee access to privileges. Careful study also shows that those who are involved in the search of privileges associated with low melanated people always defend the system by their actions. Europeanised version of speaking is not bad in itself, however, the context of its usage could create a conflict of identity and, in the case of cabin crew and passengers’ relationship, hazards arising from the inability to understand each other. One thing that is clear in race identification is that it is more of a social and or ethical question with each scenario taken contextually. Like in the Scandinavian countries where local languages are used on flights and then translated, airline operators in Africa should have flexible policy statements that attend to the peculiarities of their environment. While customers will have a sense of belonging/respect, airline operators will have a sense of acceptance in a particular environment and such mutual regard, on its own, bridges security gaps.

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