CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The words which make up a language constitute its vocabulary, (Chitravelu et.al., 2005). No one knows for sure how language originated because there was no direct evidence or artifacts relating to speech. However, Yule (2006) says that, linguists believe some types of spoken language developed between 100,000 and 50,000 years ago. The possession of language might be the only attribute distinguishing humans from animals. We must understand the nature of the language that makes us human in order to understand our humanity. According to the philosophy expressed in the myths and religions of many people, language is the source of human life and power (Fromkin et al., 2003). For example, in Africa, to some people a new born child is referred to as a *kintu,* a õthingö. Only by learning a language does the child become a human being called a *muntu* which means a person.

Language is merely a system of conventions developed by various groups as a tool to communicate among themselves (Brown, 2000) and for them to express themselves. To communicate with one another, words are used often to convey our thoughts. The communication or expression of thoughts or emotion (feelings) in spoken words is referred to as speech (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011). All humans do not talk or act in exactly the same way because their utterance differs. Speakers of a language may speak one way with friends but

another with their parents and so on (Fromkin et al., 2003) because of their identity issues. It is believed that each individual has his or her own way of saying, doing, expressing or performing something and this is referred to as style (The Free Dictionary Farlex, 2011). In linguistics, the choice of words and the use of words may also be defined as style (Reinard, 1998). DeVito (1967) defines style as the selection and arrangement of linguistic features that are open to choice. He specifically says that style is the element of speech pertaining to grammar, length of sentence, diversity and complexity of sentences and other such aspects. This means that style is a part of our speech which is related to different speech aspects such as grammar, length of utterance and others.

In tertiary education, the ministry of higher learning institution expects learners to attend some basic English lessons in order that they acquire some fluency which aids their learning in various programmes. There are many different programmes in this kind of colleges which allow learners to become well versed in a discipline of their choice. In such colleges where this kind of study has been carried out, there are five levels of English for learners to become qualified before they are allowed to progress to doing degree programmes. Foreign learners who set foot on Malaysian soils to obtain their higher degrees are also expected to attend all the five levels with the lower levels being a pre-requisite for each proceeding level. Learners have to pass the lower level (e.g. Proficiency Skills in English) before they are allowed to proceed to a higher level (e.g. Academic English). All the Nigerian and Chinese learners who participated in this study also

went through the four levels of English before they reached the current level of study: their fifth level which is Public Speaking in English. These students are from different programmes; I.T, music, business, computer programming and many others. While the college they are in requires that they undergo all these five levels prior to graduating, the communication problems faced by these learners among people in college and in their daily lives cannot be ignored. In fact, because the learners choose to ignore the communication problems they face, this situation has formed multiple miscommunications among people in the same college.

Apart from the many studies conducted by linguists on the speech styles or patterns of different learners, no research has been done to distinguish the mainland Chinese learners and Nigerian learnersø and their speech styles. The growing need to determine whether there is a difference in their speech styles which could be associated with the difficulties faced by them when communicating with others has led to this research. This is because the researcher has witnessed the difficulties faced by these students when communicating with local learners, staff and also among foreign learners from other countries. Sometimes it is difficult for people to understand foreign learners because of the way they say certain things which include their pronunciation, accents, vocabulary and many others. These areas of research are further recommended to others who are interested in speaking and communication strategies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Miller (2003) says that, more than forty percent of our daily communication is spent on listening, thirty-five percent is spent on speaking, about sixteen percent on reading, and only about nine percent on writing. Even though we spend much of our time listening and speaking, the biggest problem many people face whether in the rural or sub-urban areas is the difficulty in understanding people who are not from the same linguistic, cultural or ethnic background.

In recent years, we have seen that many foreigners come to Malaysia for different purposes whether for tourism purposes, education, and business or even for work. It appears that in the education industry, local Malaysians are finding it difficult to understand the speech of many of the foreign people. Many reasons can cause such a difficulty in understanding but in particular, it is hypothesized that the speech styles of these foreigners create a gap between the speaker and listener in understanding meanings in communication.

A speaker's estimation of word probability is not independent of the communicative context; it is conditioned on the signal independent information available to the listener. A word's probability depends on signal-independent factors such as the frequency of the word and if the word is used earlier in the discourse. If the probability of a word is low, the speaker must put more information in that word's signal to communicate it effectively. Similarly, a person's speech style is influenced by his/her knowledge of his/her listener and the listening conditions which surrounds them. If the listener is not a native

speaker of the language, he/she brings less signal-independent knowledge to the conversation, so more information must be put into the signal itself. If a listener finds it hard to hear, the speaker will know that the signal being interpreted will be degraded, so to compensate for this, he/she must speak more clearly (Baker & Bradlow, 2009). And even though English is part of the course curriculum in this college, many foreign learners still lack the ability to communicate successfully with other learners and staff within the campus.

There are many instances of foreign leaners getting frustrated when speaking to local Malaysian staff because the message which they wanted to get across was not understood. Foreign learners tend to move around in a group and very rarely do they mix with Malaysian learners. Therefore, it can be said that local learners and staff are used to the standard Malaysian accent or used to their teacherøs accent and are simply not able to comprehend foreign accents whose stress are totally different. Also, other local learners and staff find it difficult to understand the foreign speakers (Fan, 1993). When local learners listen to the accented speech of these foreign learners, they do not actually hear the exact words being said. This makes it difficult for them to decipher meaningful words with them (Read, 2000). By not being able to understand foreign learnersø speech, staff and local learners may not correctly decipher the meaning behind the spoken utterances (Kavaliauskien , 2002). Therefore, miscommunication (e.g wrongly fill in forms, unable to give answers related to the question asked) occurs when the intended message has not been properly conveyed or understood. Many

studies have looked at speech styles of different communities with different background; however, researchers have not compared the Chinese and Nigerian learners who are studying EFL in Malaysia.

As sociolinguistic theories have proposed, a person's style of speaking may change due to many factors such as a change of environment, the people surrounding the speaker, the context he or she is facing and others. All these factors or a mixture of factors could consciously or unconsciously change the person's style of speaking. Speaking styles change very often in a conversation because the speaker wishes to convey different messages to respective listeners or he/she may want to project a different image for him/herself due to the pressure or departure of another person. In other words, a person's style of speaking may change simply because the speaker wishes to accommodate or distance him/herself from the group. Another reason for a change in speech style could be that there are many distractions such as background noise, weather, the changing image of the listener and others (Eskenazi, 1993).

Nowadays, learners from different parts of the world are coming to Malaysia to pursue higher education which they have interest in. However, with the growing number of these foreign learners, local students and staff are beginning to be overwhelmed by the various accents in speech styles and speech differences which vary in accents, intonation, vocabulary and so on. As a result, local students and staff are having difficulties in understanding when communicating in English with them. Because of the different style of speech,

local Malaysians, students and staff of any tertiary institution are finding it extremely difficult to communicate (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Ryan, 1983) and understand each other. Consequently, misunderstandings occur whether in classrooms or outside classrooms or whether between teachers and learners or between administration staff and the foreign learners, between local learners and the foreign learners, as well as among the foreign learners themselves. The foreign learners find it difficult to ask a simple question (e.g. Where is my class?) and administrative staff serving them do not understand what they want because of the way the foreign learners say things. It is even harder for the foreign learners to explain certain things further because they do not know how to alter their sentences to make the administrative staff understand what they say. Most of the time, on college grounds, teachers and administrative staff result to hand gestures to communicate or they would just guess what the learner just said by using contextual clues (the chunks of words produced by the foreign learner). Consequently, both foreign learners as well as local administrative and academic staff suffer frustration and they end up not communicating or socializing with one another. In that regard, it can be visualized why it is necessary to look at speech styles since it is relevant to language learning and language teaching.

1.3 Aim of Study

The aim of this study is to identify the difference in speech styles between two nationalities: Nigerians and Chinese English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners

who are studying in Malaysia. Specifically, this study hopes to identify the specific speech style difference between Nigerian EFL learners and Chinese EFL learners in terms of 1) affirmatives 2) fillers 3) intensifiers and 4) the rate of speaking. These particular linguistic features will be looked at because the researcher has observed that these Nigerian and Chinese students use a lot of these features in their conversation among friends. As for the speaking rate, the researcher has also experienced instances where the Nigerians speak fast when using their mother tongue as well as English but the Chinese speak fast when using Mandarin but not in English.

While there are quite a few studies researched on speech styles between males and females (Michael, et al., 2010, Baaleen, 2001, Nemati & Bayer, 2007 and others), it is still difficult to make a valid assessment of the differences and similarities between them as results of some of the said studies (Freed & Greenwood, 1996 and Adler & Proctor II, 2011) concluded that there were only minor differences between male and female speech styles.

This study compares the two nationalities, Nigerians and the mainland Chinese males who are studying in a local college. It has been observed that the learners from mainland China faced difficulties such as asking questions, responding to questions, forming sentences and many others when communicating with other nationalities such as Malaysians, Nigerians and Middle Easterners.

The selection of these two nationalities was made based on the misunderstandings (e.g. providing answers not related to questions asked) or miscommunications (e.g. giving wrong information to friends) which had occurred within the class the researcher was conducting as she is an English language lecturer. Apart from that, in this college, the two largest amounts of foreign learners come from Nigeria and China and the researcher also noticed that these two nationalities rarely speak to each other. This research is thus restricted to looking at selected linguistic features which are based on Lakofføs (1973; 1975) work.

1.4 Research Questions

From the aim provided above, the research questions formulated for this study are as follows:

1) What are the speech styles of Nigerian students?

2) What are the speech styles of Chinese students?

3) How are the speech styles of the Nigerian EFL learners different from the EFL learners of China in terms of a) fillers b) intensifiers c) affirmatives and d) speaking rate?

1.5 Significance of Study

The research needs to be carried out because it will indicate at least four specific speech differences of EFL learnersø from Nigeria and China. The outcome will

help the foreign learners to understand their peculiar speech styles which are difficult for local teachers and classmates and local Malaysian people to understand them and so be more tolerant when communicating. This can minimize misunderstandings (e.g. providing answers not related to questions asked) and miscommunications (e.g. giving wrong information to friends) thus creating harmony and cooperation in learning as the local learners, other foreign learners and teacher will be able to understand each other.

Ultimately, the findings of this research will be useful to teachers and local staff in Malaysian colleges who want to develop positive communications with these learners. In particular, teachers working in private colleges can also develop various communication strategies as a course to be taught to foreign learners of this nationality. For example, teachers who are teaching mainland Chinese learners can develop a course for basic phonetic pronunciation to help learners pronounce certain words clearly. However, teachers teaching Nigerian learners may develop a communication strategy course to help tone down the learners speed in talking so that it matches the speech rate of the target audience. These courses could then prevent further misunderstanding or miscommunication among Malaysians and foreign learners as well as among foreign learners themselves. Based on this argument, Malaysia's institutions of higher learning will then be better equipped to provide a better learning experience for foreign learners; especially those from these two countries.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

This research is confined to ten male Nigerian learners and ten male learners from China studying in a private institution of higher learning in an urban part of Selangor. The 20 participants are generated by the purposive sampling process and therefore cannot be generalized to all Chinese and Nigerians. The learners were chosen as they have undergone four levels of English subjects in their previous semesters (Appendix A). The four levels of English subjects that they have gone through are Proficiency Skills in English, Academic English, English for Research Foundation and English for Integrated Skills. Therefore, it could be said that they should be familiar and can be considered proficient in the language. For example, in the proficiency skills class they would have studied the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Appendix A1). Academic English classes are also where learners learn basic note-making skills (Appendix A2). They would also have done a mini research where summarizing and paraphrasing comes into play for the Research Foundation subject (Appendix A3). Apart from that, the forth level which is integrated skills, enables the learners to have some experience in writing a resume, memo and also how to prepare themselves for an interview. They were also graded in mock interview sessions (Appendix A4). In other words, the two groups of participants have been exposed to talking, asking questions, making comments and also basic grammar (Appendix A1- A4).

Since this study focuses on only three linguistic features such as fillers, intensifiers and affirmatives, they would be analyzed based on Lakoff's (1973,

1975) work. The idea is to differentiate the speech styles of both learners from Nigeria and China. Further, the amount of words spoken per minute by the two groups of learners is also accounted for as it will show the teacher if the learners are able to give a speech by using a flexibility of speech rate. Hence, the comparison is only applicable to this context and may not be applicable in other contexts. In addition, a further limitation is that this research will not focus on nonverbal as the participants did not let the researcher video tape them. Therefore, their body gestures, facial expressions and others cannot be looked at. Apart from that, because the researcher is looking at speech styles from a linguistic perspective generally, she is not focusing on the psychological and sociological perspectives.

1.7 Definition of Terms

This research will be using specific terms and for the benefit of readers, they will be defined accordingly here.

1.7.1 Speech

According to J.A Small (2007), the production of language for the purpose of communicating a message to other people via the vocal tract is speech. Tannen (2005) defines speech as the use of language in its syntactic, phonological, lexical, prosodic and rhythmic variety which is one element of range of

behavioral characteristics that make up a personal style. For this research, the word õspeechö is referred to as the words that we use to help us to communicate.

1.7.2 Speech Style

Small (2007) also states that speech style is a profile of speech characteristics that shows systematic differences from other profiles. The dimensions in which speech styles vary include pronunciation and prosody, choice of vocabulary, and grammatical and discourse features. Pronunciation and prosody here means how a certain word is pronounced: the rhythmic and intonation of the word (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2012).

Speech styles can be associated with particular social groups (e.g., younger vs. older adults, males vs. females), yet the same individual may draw from a repertoire of speech styles, with the use of each dependent on personal characteristics of the interlocutors (e.g., age, appearance, gender, familiarity, social status, ethnic identity) and contextual variables (e.g., topic, purpose of the interaction, formal vs. informal setting). Hymes (1974) says that, speech styles are simply õways of speakingö. However, when we talk about gender patterns in talking, we need to know that people always view the way they talk as a natural behaviour and therefore it is automatic (Tannen, 1990). They are simply saying what they mean without realizing that othersø styles are different resulting in being frustrated in conversation. Therefore, in this research, speech styles refer to

the words speakers choose to use which help them to communicate. It is hereby acknowledged that one's personal style is also one's speech style.

1.7.3 Speaking Rate

According to the Speech-therapy-on-video.com (Retrieved January 29, 2012), speaking rate is a speech term used to show how fast or how slowly you speak. Speech rate is looked at because as said earlier the researcher has observed that learners from China take a long time to say what they want to convey. In this research the rate of speaking would be divided into three categories:

Slow - 80 to 100 words per minute (wpm),

Average - 120 wpm, and

Fast - 140 to 160 wpm

as stated in The Official 10,000+ Speech Topics Library website. (Accessed date: January 2012)

Talking fast or slow does not mean that it is a bad thing (as stated in http://williamstowntm.org/2011/10/fast-talkers/, 2011). However, when you are giving a speech, there is a need to apply 'flexibility' to mix and match speech rate with the content to enable the audience to comprehend what is being said (Dugdale, 2006 as cited in http://www.write-out-loud.com/speech-rate.html).

The speaking rate of learners can help teachers to identify the communicative difficulties experienced by the learners and so teachers can

develop certain courses or strategies to help them overcome these difficulties. Teachers will be able to identify these difficulties when the audience or conversation partner does not understand or finds it difficult to comprehend the foreign learnerøs speech or simply gives an answer not related to the question asked by the foreign learner.

1.7.4 Fillers

Juan (2006) says that fillers help make the conversation run smooth. In her article she points out that the words õum", "er", and õahö contain "neutral vowel sounds" making them among the easiest sounds to make. She also says that, we use fillers because they can be said without even thinking about it and without even realizing that we are doing it. Apart from that when people hear the filler, they continue listening instead of talking. Normally, we use fillers to buy us some time to think of what to say next (Juan, 2006). However, not everyone hesitates when they speak. This means that, not everyone uses fillers in their speech. Lakoff (1973; 1975) further elaborates by saying that fillers like õyou knowö, õlikeö and õummö makes a person seem less confident.

1.7.5 Intensifiers

Intensifiers are adverbs that enhance adjectives and adverbs and they come before the words they modify ESLgold.com (2005). Other sources say that intensifiers heightens or lowers the intensity of meaning of an item Crystal (1980) and Brown

and Levinson (1987) term intensifiers as ÷strengthenersø which are markers used to intensify adjectives in an utterance. For example: very, so, quite, really, just, indeed and others. Lakoff (1973; 1975) claims that intensifiers are words such as õsoö, õveryö, õsuchö and others. In this study, intensifiers are an adverb that enhance adjectives and adverbs and comes before the words they modify.

1.7.6 Affirmatives

Affirmatives are ÷yesø statements. Affirmative cue words are words such as õalright, mm-hm, okay, right, and uh-huh,ö said Gravano, Hirschberg & Benus, (2011). They are frequently found in spontaneous conversation and may function as a form of agreement with what the speaker has said, to display interest and continued attention, and also as a cue to start a new topic (Gravano, Hirschberg & Benus, 2011). Lakoff (1975) however uses the term minimal responses which shows that people speak less frequently and that they are listening.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has touched on all aspects of a research. The researcher has stated the statement of the problem, aim of the study, the research questions, the significance of study, limitations of the study and the definition of terms used in this research. This is to ensure that the research flows smoothly and it is hoped that certain examples in this chapter will be useful.

This thesis will begin, in Chapter 2, with an overview of the existing body of literature which not only provides background information for, and possible methods to adopt in, the current study but also to highlight the gap which the study aims to fill.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This section focuses on research done by earlier researchers. The chapter begins by looking at communication followed by how style, speech and speech style are defined by other linguists. There will also be a section on impromptu speech, speaking rate and stylistic features. The background of Nigeria and China is also finely explained. Apart from that, past studies which have highlighted various findings related to this study are also provided.

2.2 Verbal Communication

Tannen (1990) says that the way we speak shows that gender differences do exist. She also says that we need to be able to identify and understand these differences to avoid misunderstandings because of the different ways we speak (Tannen, p.17).

Generally, communication can be divided into two types: verbal and non-verbal communication (Morris, 2009). Verbal communication involves the use of spoken words while non-verbal communication encompasses facial expressions and gestures used (Kuang, Wong & David, 2011).

Reiman (2006) says that communication is when information and ideas travel from one source to another. People use communication in their daily lives

to express many things such as emotions, feelings, opinions and others. Problems in communication happen when the intended message is not conveyed or if the intended message is misunderstood. She also believes that gaps in communications are due to the different communication styles among humans.

In communication, a sender has a message to convey that becomes ciphered. The receiver receives the encoded message via a medium whether spoken or written. The message is then decoded. For communication to be a success, both parties should be familiar or have knowledge of the said codes. They must be able to understand and communicate the language with one another (Reiman, 2006). In this case, the learners are quite familiar with the English language as they have undergone four levels of English lessons before reaching the current level.

Hannah and Murachver (2007) mention that women communicate differently compared to men (Gilligan, 1982). Women are said to use speech that has women's characteristics in them such as question tags, colour terms, adjectives and others (Holmes, 1984; Lakoff, 1975). Gray (1992) says that, because the gender differences are so great, it can be said that women and men must come from different planets. Maltz & Borker, (1982); Tannen, (1986, 1990) says that men and women do not belong to the same culture. Tannen says that in a person's life they go through many different kinds of conversations and by understanding and using language we absorb and pass on different skewed assumptions about men and women. A problem faced however is the assumption

that males are the norm and women are told to change to appear more similar to the males. She also said that even if women were to change, it will not work.

Ahmad Al-Issa, (2003) says that, when people from different cultural backgrounds interact, they often bring culturally inherited sets of constraints to monitor and evaluate their own speech as well as the speech of others. These sets of constraints consist of values, preferred communication styles, expectations and interpretations which affects communication. For example, when two people from very different backgrounds talk to each other, certain things such as their opinion on a certain issue can cause them to feel uneasy with each other if they do not have the same opinion on the said issue. Since language cannot be separated from the culture of the person, or be distanced from their native cultural norms of speaking, second language (L2) learners who are speaking in a target language (L2) send messages in this way. Their L2 has been influenced by their native language (L1) background and therefore they find that using their L2 becomes a great challenge (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; Eisenstein & Badman, 1986; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983).

By looking at the above statements, communication therefore can be affected by many factors including situation, culture, gender and many others. Communication skills could be partially genetic but they also could be shaped by other factors such as society, culture and education (Reiman, 2006).

2.3 Style, Speech and Speech Style

Coupland (2007) suggests that a way of doing something is style and speech styles consist of a group of related items such as phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexical items. According to his framework (2007), styles carry social meanings when they are used. Often, they are applied as strategy to signal social differences, thereby enabling speakers to construct identity of the speakers so that they become accepted by the target community. Social identity that is expressed through the use of specific stylistic features enables a speaker to portray a particular self-image. Hence, speech style is said to be a design-oriented process rather than a finished product (Coupland, 2007). This means that speech style has an agentive power; i.e. speakers actually take the initiative to shape their identities in a specific context. For example, in schools, students may choose to talk like their friends in order to be accepted by the group of friends.

Individuals change the way they communicate according to the needs and desires of a speaking partner as well as with their own needs and desire to identify with the communication partner and his or her own social group identity (Small, 2007). The reason for English language learners to accommodate depends on the degree to which they want to be accepted into the society of the said country. Wide (2010) says that, if an individual moves to a new place where the surrounding is unfamiliar, he or she would likely have a high need for social approval; thus, speaking style would be important. Likewise, a speaker's speech style sometimes converges and sometimes diverges if they want to distance

themselves from a particular speech group. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that how a person from a specific country speaks is due to the role model of the L2 they hear in their own country. This helps to explain why there are varieties of English spoken in the world.

Labov (1964 & 1972) states that, style changes as the speaker pays attention to his or her discourse. This means that when a speaker pays more attention to his or her speech, he or she will articulate words better and in a more formal style. He also says that the change happens because of the social level at which the discussion was taking place. Labov (1964 & 1972) says that there are many styles that could be found in a conversation which are casual speech, spontaneous speech, careful speech and others. He says that the reason styles change is due to the different elements in speech: in pitch, change in tempo, in intensity breathing or presence of laughter.

Although men and women belong to the same speech community, when they speak, they tend to use different linguistic forms (Nemati & Bayer, 2007). They also say that the linguistic forms used by men and women differ to some extent in all speech communities. They gave Holmes (1993) example of Amazon Indiansø language where the language used by a mother is different from the language used by the father and different tribes are distinguished by the use of the different languages. Hence, even in our community, females and males speak different languages.

DeVito (2006) says that, when we speak we also make choices of which words to use. Therefore, the words we select to form sentences will have an influence to the meaning you wish to convey. If the words you use are able to convey your message clearly, it means that it was successful speech. However, speech is also determined by one's mood, anxiety, age and experience.

Giles (1973) says that people tend to change their speech characteristics (accent, pauses, speech rate) during interactions in order to achieve a certain goals. Speech shift are changes made by a person in his/her speech that can have different circumstances depending on the context of interaction (Giles et. al, 1987). He also says that there are factors which can influence speech choices and they include the place where the conversation occurs, (classroom as opposed to canteen), the topic of the conversation itself (academic as opposed to shopping) and also the kind of interlocutors (teacher vs. student as opposed to friend vs. friend) (Giles & Smith, 1979). Giles and Street (1985) also presented a few socio-demographic factors which they say could affect the change in speech of individuals. These factors are sex, age, socioeconomic class, status and power, race and culture and physical handicaps. As an example, many a time's people will intentionally diverge their speech from someone of another culture to highlight their identity. This means that when two people from different culture come together, the way talk will not be like the other person but they will maintain their own style of speaking at the same time maintaining their own identity.

Climate (1997) mentions that females generally, tend to use speech to develop and maintain a relationship. In short, they use language to achieve intimacy as they are emotional beings. Tannen (1990) also states that women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy whereas men speak and hear a language of status and independence and this communication resembles cross-cultural communication where the style of communication is different.

Tannen defines the different speech styles as õrapport-talkö and õreport-talkö respectively. Since women use language for intimacy, Tannen terms it as õrapport-talkö. Tannen says that õGirls are socialized as children to believe that õby talking, it holds the relationships togetherö (Tannen, p.25), so that as adults conversations for women are õnegotiations for closeness in which people try to seek, confirm and support something, and to reach an agreement by allö (Tannen, p.25). She then further says that a woman is an individual in a network of connections.

For men, their conversations today are for information purposes; therefore, Tannen terms it as õreport-talkö. Men negotiate to be in control in conversations and to protect themselves from perceived attempts to put them down. Boys learn to maintain relationships through activities. Therefore when they are men, conversation becomes a contest: he is either an individual õone above the rest or one below the restö (Tannen, p.24) in a hierarchical social order.

Therefore, it is clear that women are emotional creatures which use language based on their feelings and men use language to protect themselves instinctively and to õwinö a conversation.

Speech styles can also be evaluated through speech rate (Giles and Street, 1985). They say that the speaker should adjust his or her rate of speech to the rate of the listener as this would õenhance communicative effectiveness and it may create a very favourable impressionö (Giles & Street, 1985, p.222). This means that a speaker has to be aware of their speech rate in order to project a clear message across. Apart from that, it may form a good impression of the speaker.

Speech styles also may be evaluated through pauses and language intensity (Giles and Street, 1985). Street & Hopper (1982) says that the extent to which the quality of the speakerøs language toward a subject which deviates from neutrality is language intensity. Street & Giles (1982) continue to say that, when a person talking becomes more emotional about the subject he/she is talking about, the language used becomes more intense. For example, when a learner is talking about a topic which he/she really likes, he/she tends to speak more passionately and aggressively about the topic compared to a topic which he/she dislikes. Therefore, the language used will be more intense and emotional compared to when talking about a topic which they do not fancy. They also mentioned that people tend to converge more on vocal intensity when they are aware that they have similar attitudes (Street & Giles, 1982). These similarities then tend to draw

speakers together and indirectly, it promotes harmony and tolerance with one another.

2.4 Powerful and Powerless Speech Style

Erickson, Lind, Johnson and O¢Barr (1978) argue that speech style is linked to social power and status. They say that low-status people generally use powerless speech style with the use of intensifiers, hedges, hesitations, hypercorrect grammar, questioning forms, polite forms and gestures. However, (Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Hosman, 1989; Hosman & Siltanen, 1994) suggest that intensifiers may not be perceived as powerless and may even have powerful connotations in certain contexts as they may indicate certainty or control (Hosman & Siltanen, 1994; McMullen & Pasloski, 1992). Carli (1990) suggests that different norms may have been established for men and women which affect their speech style perceptions. Bradac et al., (1995) says that when components of powerful and powerless speech styles are examined, intensifiers were found to have occurred more frequently than hedges or hesitations, with intensifiers being used more by women and hedges by men. Therefore hedges and intensifiers should not be regarded as õwomen¢s languageö or õpowerless languageö.

According to Smith et al. (1998), a powerless or low power style is characterized by the presence of language features such as hedges (÷sort of¢, ÷kind of¢), hesitations (÷um, er¢), intensifiers (÷surely¢, ÷certainly¢), polite forms (÷yes sir¢, ÷please¢), tag questions (÷pass me that, won¢t you¢), and deictic phrases (ones

indicating location or direction, such as ÷over thereø) whereas a high power style does not have any of these features. They continue to say that a low power style which contains hedges may suggest that the speaker is uncertain about the position he or she is advocating which causes the listener to scrutinize message arguments more carefully (Smith et. al, 1998). Therefore, messages that are presented in an uncertain way may affect the message processing differently than an argument with the same strength but presented in a speaker certainty way (Smith et. al, 1998). A speaker using powerless speech style indicates a lack of confidence or certainty in him/herself (Parton, Siltanen, Hosman & Langenderfer, 2002). Erickson et al., (1978) said that powerless speech may be too costly for listeners as it makes them work harder to understand what the speaker is saying. Other studies (Adkins & Brashers, 1995; Bradac, Hemphill, & Tardy, 1981; Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Haleta, 1996; Mulac & Bradac, 1984) find that a speaker using a powerless style is evaluated more negatively. They are looked at as less competent, intelligent, attractive, and trustworthy compared to those who use the powerful style.

2.5 Gender and Speech

The language used by men and women is seen as being very different from each other. Tannen (1990) says that the male use of language is an assumption that it is the norm and womenøs language is seen as deviant from the norm thus, being

regarded as being inferior to men. And because of this belief, it has been claimed that there is a typical form of female language (Baalen, 2001).

According to Lakoff (1975), women and men speak English differently. In conversations where both sexes are involved, men could switch topics while women would take turns to speak, support other people's opinion, compliment them and try to avoid interrupting others. However, when the conversation is among the same sex, women prefer to talk about personal topics while men prefer public issues and would avoid private topics. The choices of topics could be related to the nature of both sexes where women were seen to use more emotional language pertaining to their feelings and thoughts (Example: discussion of sensitive topics may arouse strong emotions (Coates, 1997)). In contrast, men were more into seeking information and they speak in a more straightforward way by using authoritative language. Tannen (1990) claims that men establish their status by exhibiting knowledge and skill and by holding centre stage through verbal performance such as story-telling, joking or imparting information.

Lakoff (1975) also says that female speech style is marked by the use of certain linguistic features such as lexical hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, rising intonation on declaratives, empty adjectives and others. She continues to say that these markers weaken the force of the said utterance as they are considered a powerless speech style. According to her, in a male-dominated society women are pressured to show the feminine qualities of weakness and subordinance toward men. Thus, õit is entirely predictable, and given the pressure towards social

conformity, it is rational that women should demonstrate these qualities in their speech as well as in other aspects of their behavior.ö (Cameron, McAlinden and OøLeary 1989:76).

Lakoff (1973) observed that men use stronger expletives such as ÷shitø and ÷damnø compared to women who use weaker or softer words such as ÷oh dearø, ÷goodnessø or ÷fudgeø Other researchers such as Frab (1974) says that ÷dear meø and ÷graciousø are part of female lexicon and Ritti (1973) stated that many teachers in the sixth grade are aware that girls use much more ÷expressivesø such as ÷ohø and ÷wowø than boys in class. Therefore, both (Key, 1975; Lakoff, 1975) suggest that the forms of expressives used are sex associated. An explanation to this difference in the usage of expressive is that it is possible that the word serves a different function for men and women. Males use them when they are angry or exasperated while womenøs exclamations are likely to convey enthusiasm (Kramer, 1974, p.83).

Carli (1990) found that men and women have different communication styles but that the use of linguistic forms may be a function of status. Carli (1990) also says that because people expect men and women to speak in a normal way (as normal men and women will), this will affect speech style perception. When components of powerful and powerless speech styles were analysed, (Bradac et al., 1995) found that women tend to use more intensifiers but men use more hedges. Therefore, hedges and intensifiers were labeled as ÷womenøs languageø or ÷powerless languageø Bradac et al., (1995) and Mulac & Bradac, (1995) also say

that if men and women's social status do differ, their language use certainly do not indicate any differences. This means that even if a male and a female comes from a different social class or have different social status, the way they use language does not show that they are any different. A study conducted by Nemati and Bayer (2007) on the use of linguistic forms in speech of men and women in English and Persian scenarios in films, showed that there were no significant difference between male and female usage of hedges, intensifiers and tag questions which indicates that language is not a factor which differentiates the two genders. Interestingly, Holmes (1986) also found no difference between the two genders concerning the use of "you know". Similarly, the results of Nemati and Bayer's (2007) study did not support Lakoff's ideas that females use more intensifiers in their speech. No significant difference was found between the two genders.

In an experimental study by Winn and Rubin (2001) on self-description in and responses to personal ads, they found that women used more nonessentials and markers that show how excited they are, compared to men. This shows that women tend to get emotionally attached to the topic of conversation. Interestingly, Winn and Rubin (2001) also says that some participants used divergent strategies; rather than accommodating by converging to the writing style of a partner, they emphasize differences by adopting particular gendered communication strategies. This shows that on some occasion's women tend to

respond to male interlocutors by emphasizing feminine speech styles rather than accommodating to male speech styles (Hogg, 1985).

When the speech of 90 white adult men and women were examined by Gleser, Gottschalk and Watkins (1959), on õanything interesting or dramatic life experiences you have hadö, this investigation revealed that women used more words implying feelings, emotion, or motivation. Apart from that, they also used more self-reference, auxiliary words and negations. Male subjects made more reference to time, space, quantity and destruction action.

Haas (1979) said that womenøs speech contains more euphemisms, politeness, apology, laughter, crying, and unfinished sentences. It is also stereotyped as nonassertive, tentative and supportive. Women are said to talk more than men (Haas, 1979). Men however, are reputed to use more slang, profanity and obscenity. According to Haas (1979), men are said to talk more about sports, money and business. They are reputed to make hostile judgments and they use language to lecture, argue, debate, assert and command. Haas (1979) also say that, sex is not the only variable influencing speech styles. Complex interaction of personal characteristics such as a personøs age, education background, ethnic, background, socioeconomic status and many others do influence a personøs speech style.

2.6 Foreign Accented Speech

The presence of foreign accent can lower the quality and intelligibility of speech. It therefore can be regarded as a type of interference in a speech communication system (Arslan & Hansen, 1997). They continue to say that foreign accent causes changes in intonation and lexical stress patterns. Foreign accent is detectable by native listeners and can arise from the differences in speech production such as phonemic, subphonemic or suprasegmental features in speech (Fledge, 1995). As foreign accent is easily detectable by native listeners, many non-native speakers of English in the U.S. wish to reduce the accentedness of their speech in order to be better understood. Clearly, non-native speaker differ in the degree of accentedness of their speech and that some accented speakers are more intelligible and others (Flege, 1988; Rogers, 1997).

A common characteristic of foreign-accented speech is reduced intelligibility for native listeners (Lane, 1963; Munro & Derwing, 1995a; Schmid & Yeni-Komshian, 1999;Weil, 2003;Wingstedt & Shulman, 1987). This means that most of the time, foreign accented speech deviates so much from the listenerøs norm that it cannot be readily understood by average native speakers of a certain language.

2.7 Spontaneous and Impromptu Speech

Most of the speech we produce every day is spontaneous speech. According to Ward (n.d), people use language differently when they speak and when they

write. He also says that spoken language contains many interjections, false starts and many others. Ward (n.d) continued to say that spontaneous speech contains phenomena such as filled pauses (‑ah, ‑um, ‑uh) restarts (repeating a word or phrase), interjections, unknown or mispronounced words and others.

Another speech similar to spontaneous speech is the impromptu speech. DeVito (2006) says that, in an impromptu speech we begin talking without any preparation on a certain topic. For example, in an interview, you may answer questions, or in classrooms where you stand up to give your evaluations on a certain topic. These are seen as giving impromptu speech even if it is a very short one. Therefore, when participants of this research are asked to talk about their family, it is perceived as giving an impromptu or spontaneous speech.

2.8 Speaking Rate

The speed at which one utters words is termed as the speaking rate (DeVito, 2006). However, one's vocal rate in speaking varies fast or slow. A speech that is too fast may create problems such as the time it takes for them to digest what a person is saying as the listeners will find it hard to understand what was said. If the speaking rate is too fast, listeners will not give the extra energy to understand what the speaker is trying to say. In contrast if the speech rate is too slow, listeners may find it intolerant and become impatient and bored. By speaking too slowly, listeners will tend to wander to matters unrelated to the speech. Therefore, speakers need to pace their speech very carefully. By pacing your speech well, it

will ensure that the listeners can follow what was said. Nonetheless, it should be reminded that different nationalities speak at different rate hence, it is not surprising if they apply their L1 speech rate in the L2.

Among the factors that influence processing time is the differences in speech rate. Foreign-accented speakers have differences in the way they talk especially in English. While some use a slower speaking rate, others use a faster speaking rate. However, most foreign-accented speakers use a slower speaking rate compared to native speakers (Guion, Flege, Liu, & Yeni-Komshian, (2000) & Lennon, 1990). Therefore, if listener processing time is measured from utterance completion, listeners may need less or more time to understand or process a nonnative speaker's intended message (Guion, Flege, Liu, & Yeni-Komshian, (2000) & Lennon, 1990). This is because, compared to faster speaking rates, the majority of processing slower speaking rates can be accomplished before the utterance has ended.

Speaking rate is also affected by the utterance length (length of sentence(s)) and the utterance position of words (where the word occurs in a sentence) (Yuan, Libarman & Cieri, 2006). It is said that there is an inverse relationship between the duration of an utterance and its utterance length, i.e., the longer the utterance, the shorter each segment of the sentence will be in duration on average (Nakatani, L. H., O'Connor, J. D., and Aston, C. H., 1981). In Yuan, Libarman & Cieri's (2006) study on factors that affect speaking rate in conversations which focused on speech in English and Chinese, they found that in

both English and Chinese there is an abrupt rise of speaking rate for segments containing one to seven words. However, the speaking rate stays level for the segments which have eight to about 30 words. And then it rises again but this time with a more gradual slope. They mention that word duration is highly dependent on segment position: the second word is shorter than the first; then the words have similar durations until the third to the last word; the second last word is longer than the previous ones and the last word is the longest. This shows that there is an inherent effect of word position in a segment on its duration.

Quene (2005) found that the speaking rate of a person depends mainly on the utterance length. In his study, when utterance length is taken into account as a factor, the statistical significance of other effects such as sex, and religion no longer exist. Situational factors such as topic, speaker relationship and others may also affect conversational speaking rate (Yuan, Libarman & Cieri, 2006). In the effects of speaker relationship, Yuan, Libarman & Cieri (2006) found that both in Chinese or English, people use longer sentences but the rate of speaking is slower when talking to strangers than when talking to family members or friends. It is a little unusual as generally, longer sentences have faster speaking rate. Conversation topics also affect speaking rate and segment length (Yuan, Libarman & Cieri, 2006). They gave an example of the average speaking rate in English ranges from 152 words per minute to nearly 170 words per minute and the average segment length ranges from 9 to 11 words per segment. Here they found that some conversations topics tend to have longer speaker turns but slower

speaking rates. They also said that there is a possibility that when people are talking about these topics, they tend to produce more õimportantö or õunexpectedö turns, and allow the listeners to have more time to process what they have said. Hence, when making conclusions, these are some of the factors to apply.

One study has assessed that it is possible for a person to be able to process most of the utterance before the utterance has ended. Munro and Derwing (1995b) observed a negative correlation between sentence duration, an index of speaking rate and response latency for both native and Mandarin-accented English speakers. It took longer to verify shorter duration sentences than longer duration sentences for both groups (Munro & Derwing, 1995b).

Yuan, Liberman & Cieri (2006) say that older people in general have a slower speaking rate. Also when male and female speaking rates were compared, males tend to have a faster speaking rate than females. They also said that the effect of L1 (native language) on L2 (second language) speaking rate is L1 dependent. Their findings suggests that, conversation topic does affect speaking rate maybe because when talking about the topics, people tend to produce more ‑importantø and ‑unexpectedø turns allowing more time for listeners to process their words. Also, when speaking in English, Chinese speakers have a slower speaking rate maybe because they make less durational contrast between lexically stressed and unstressed vowels than native English speakers as there is no durational contrast between pitch-accented and unaccented moras in Chinese (Ueyama, 1996). In Riggenbachøs (1991) study, she claimed that nonnative

speakers have a slower speaking rate. Hence, when making conclusions about speaking rate, these are some of the factors to take into consideration.

2.9 Stylistic Features

Stylistics, according to Crystal (1971), refers to the linguistic study of systematic, situationally-distinctive, intra-language variation. By ‒situationø he refers to the sub-set of non-linguistic variables which a native speaker can intuitively identify as linguistics features in an utterance. ‒Featureø however, refers to any amount of speech or writing which may be singled out from language and discussed (word, morpheme, sentence, structural relationship and others). They include features such as hesitations, tag questions, hedges, disclaimers, intensifiers and formal addresses.

Stylistic features influence how a speaker is evaluated both positively and negatively when speaking (Fragale, 2006). Speakers who do not use all these tentative speech markers are said to be more assertive and are more likely to be hired, promoted and supported by superiors (Gallois, Callan, & Palmer, 1992; Parton, Siltanen, Hosman, & Langenderfer, 2002; Wiley & Eskilson, 1985). They are also perceived to be able to influence others easily (Erickson, Lind, Johnson, & OøBarr, 1978) compared to those who used these speech characteristics.

Behavioral cues such as speech styles (e.g. Erickson et al., 1978; Parton et al., 2002; Wiley & Eskilson, 1985), speech rates (e.g., Brown, Strong, & Rencher, 1973), vocal tones (e.g., Ridgeway, 1987), patterns of eye contact (e.g., Washburn

& Hakel, 1973), and emotional expressions (Tiedens, 2001)ô have been shown to influence status positions because they influence perceptions of the personøs personality traits. It has been said that a person will tend to organize their perceptions of others around two fundamental trait dimensions (Asch, 1946; Bakan, 1966; Carson, 1969; Fiske et al., 2002; Kiesler, 1983; Leary, 1957; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Wiggins, 1979). Bakan (1966) referred to these dimensions as *agency*, or characteristics associated with self-assertion and mastery of oneøs environment, such as ambition, dominance, and independence, and *communality*, or characteristics associated with selflessness and nurturance, such as warmth, sincerity and tolerance.

Even though both traits are desirable to possess, it is only the agency dimension that is used when making conferral judgments. For example, when deciding whether to hire or promote someone, superiors will look for a personøs intelligence, ambition and dominance to make judgments. They do not look at a personøs warmth, sincerity or agreeableness (Tiedens, 2001). Which of the two dimensions most adequately accounts for individualsø status conferral judgments should affect the consequences of powerless speech.

2.9.1 Fillers

Fillers are words or sounds that fill up a gap in an utterance (Cappelli, 2008). They are also known as discourse particles (Froehlich, 2010). Filler sounds vary across different languages. In English, the most common filler sounds are *er, uh*

and *um.* Fillers can also occur at different positions in a sentence. Fillers come in two basic types: filled and unfilled (DeVito, 2006).

Filled pauses are hesitant sounds made to indicate uncertainty or simply to maintain control of the conversation by thinking of what to say next. Filled pauses do not add additional information to the conversation. They also do not alter the meaning of what is being said. Therefore, filled pauses can occur anywhere in the discourse.

Filled pauses can be seen in the stream of speech that we fill with vocalizations such as *err, um, ah* and many others. Expressions such as *well*, and *you know*, when used as fillers in sentences are also known as filled pauses. These pauses however, are seen as ineffective compared to a person's speech which does not use fillers, as it weakens the message. People who use fillers in their speech are perceived as being hesitant, unprepared and unsure of self (DeVito, 2006).

Unfilled pauses are silences incorporated into normal speech. It is purposely interjected into the speech for a number of reasons. For example, pausing for a little while can help your audience to think or ponder about what you have just said. This is good as it will actually give them some time to think about the significance of what you have just said.

In Llisterri's (1992) study on speaking styles, he found that pauses appear to be related to speaking style and the tone units between pauses seem to be longer in scripted speech rather than in unscripted speech. He also found that

there is an increase in the number of reduction phenomena in speaking rate and it also seems to vary in the course of spontaneous speech by the speaker. This shows that speaking rate varies between speakers in scripted and even unscripted speech.

When a speaker takes a longer time to produce an utterance, he/she might lose the listenerøs attention but if he/she rushes to produce an utterance that is defective, he/she risks being misunderstood (Clark & Brennan, 1991). So, the speaker may signal the delay of producing a word or phrase by using a filler such as *um, er* and *uh* (Clark, 1994; Smith & Clark, 1993) in the beginning of their utterance.

Shriberg (1996) says that filler rates were not correlated with sentence length. If it serves as a function of communication, it will help people in a conversation to coordinate their interaction better, to manage their turn-taking or to align their mental states (Brennan & Schober, 2001; Brennan & Williams, 1995; Clark, 1994; Clark & Wasow, 1998; Fox Tree, 1995; Fox Tree & Clark, 1997; Levelt, 1989; Shriberg, 1996; Smith & Clark, 1993).

There is evidence that fillers can perform a warning function to warn his or her communication partner about the delay in producing a word or phrase by uttering fillers; speakers answering general knowledge questions display accurate information about their mental search processes (Brennan & Williams, 1995; Smith & Clark, 1993); which are, they will pause longer and use more fillers before giving an answer which they lack confidence in (and is likely to be

incorrect) than before they give and answer that they have a strong feeling about (and that is more likely to be correct). They even pause longer and use more fillers before a non-answer (e.g, I don∅t know), when actually they do know the answer but are just unable to recall it at the moment of speaking. Listeners can use this metacognitive display to judge how likely it is for the speaker to know the correct answer (Brennan & William, 1995). Survey interviewers can also use this strategy to judge if respondents are likely to be misinterpreting a question (Bloom & Schober, 1999).

Fillers help listeners realize that a speaker has just made a mistake while speaking. In a series of studies, listeners were faster and more accurate in comprehending repair words such as *orange* in utterances like *Move the yel-uh, orange square* when the interrupted words was followed by *uh* than when it was not (Brennan & Schober, 2001). This disfluency advantage appears to be due to the additional time that elapses while the filler is being uttered. The speech was faster with the disfluency (e.g yel-uh) than when it was replaced with an unaccounted- for silent pauses of equal length. These cases show that disfluencies may serve as displays by speakers that warn listeners of or account for delays and problems in speaking (Brennan & Schober, 2001; see also Clark, 1994).

The thought that fillers may serve as a resource for interpersonal coordination is not incompatible with Schachter et al.∅s (1991) finding of higher rates in domains with more indeterminacy, which is, when people find it difficult to choose words, he/she will find a greater need to delay his or her speech. This

idea is also consistent with Kasl and Mahl's finding of 41% increase in fillers in audio-only conversations between people in different rooms, compared to conversations in the same room with visual contact (Kasl & Mahl, 1965).

According to Smith (2013), disfluency is a break or interruption in speech. Depending on the degree of disfluency involved, the disfluency may slip by without notice, or the disfluency will make it difficult for someone to understand. Disfluency may also be combined with stuttering, which can make it difficult for someone to understand what the person is trying to say, and it can also be very frustrating for the speaker (Smith, 2013). Almost everyone has made use of some type of disfluencies in their speech, for many reasons, and research of disfluencies has been of interest to many linguists. Some linguists believe that disfluencies are more likely to occur in the beginning of a speaker's turn or in the beginning of sentences, where the speakers are likely to plan what they would like to say. It is in the beginning of a speaker's turn and a sentence that Boomer (1965), found more fillers and silent pauses, and also where Shriberg (1996) found more disfluencies as well. Speakers tend to use more fillers when they need to choose from a larger range of expressive vocabulary (Schachter et al., 1991; Schachter, Rauscher, Christenfeld, & Crone, 1994). This means that if a speaker has a higher vocabulary level, he/she will use more fillers when he/she speaks. Shriberg, (1996) says that disfluencies are common at the beginning of an utterance as they might be used to coordinate interaction. This may be because the speakers are

trying to link their sentences as they speak in order to have a proper flow or connection between the sentences.

2.9.2 Intensifiers

Intensifiers are adverbs that enhance adjectives and adverbs and come before the words they modify. According to Lakoff's cited claim in Language and Woman's Place (1975), intensifiers occur much more frequently in women's speech than in men's. In Graddy's (2006) study, the amount of intensifiers used by both male and female was less when compared to the amount of qualifiers used. Only minor differences in the use of intensifiers were evident when the male and female usage was compared. Female students used slightly more intensifiers than males. The word ‒very‒was used more by men in Fahy's (2002) study. However, in Graddy's (2006) study women used more of this word. Women also used the intensifier ‒less‒more than men.

2.9.3 Affirmatives

According to Gravano, Hirschberg & Benus (2012), affirmative cue words shows agreement, interest or even signals the end or beginning of a topic. The most common words are *okay, alright yeah, right, mm-hm, uh-huh and alright.* In their study on 12 spontaneous task-oriented dialogues from 13 native speakers of Standard American English, they found that *alright* and *okay* were used in the similar position in sentences and showed similar distribution patterns (found most

frequently when there is a pause on either side of the word so that the word stands alone). The words *alright* and *okay* function to show agreement or as backchannels (showing that the listener was following). They also suggest that both words can be used interchangeably as both words have the same function.

Single-word utterances including affirmative cue words such as *mm-hm, okay, right, uh-huh* and *yes* have been examined by Kowtko (1996). She finds that there is a correlation between discourse function and intonational contour. Jurafsky et al. (1998) did a study on four particular discourse/pragmatic functions or dialog acts (Stolcke et al., 2000), which is closely related to affirmative cue words: continuer, incipient speakership, agreement and yes-answer. They examined many conversations from Switchboard database (Godfrey et al., 1992) and reported that a vast majority of these four dialog acts are realized by words like *yeah, okay* or *uh-huh*. However, in Gravano, Hirschberg & Benusøs (2011) study, the word *okay* is the most used affirmative cue word.

2.10 Background of Nigeria

Although English is the official language in Nigeria, it is spoken as a pidgin form of English known as ÷broken Englishø (http://cultural.profiles.spirasi.ie/countries/nigeria.shtml). In Nigeria languages most widely spoken are Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo and Fulani. Voice tones are an integral part of communications for Nigerians (http://cultural.profiles.spirasi.ie/countries/nigeria.shtml). A high voice tone during arguments does not necessarily equate with anger as they may raise their

voice even more when they feel very passionate or emotionally excited to talk about a certain topic (Bubier, 2010).

As there are different languages in Nigeria, there are also different styles of speaking. The people from the Yoruba tribe (south west) employ proverbs, sayings and songs to enrich what they are saying in their native language (Bubier, 2010). Many of these characteristics have been carried into their English language usage (http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/nigeria.html). They also use humour in their message (http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/nigeria.html). They believe that the message will not be easily forgotten. Nigerian living in the south tends to speak more directly (http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/nigeria.html). Their tone is found to be louder compared to people from elsewhere. When they are passionate about a certain topic, their voices might be even louder as they are more emotionally excited (http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/nigeria.html). To them a harsh tone is unwelcoming and can even be considered hostile.

Apart from that, the way Nigerians communicate can also be indirect and may rely on non-verbal cues. They tend to use many gestures when communicating (http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/globaletiquette/nigeria.html). Many Nigerians employ indirect eye contact to show respect to the other person. Therefore, they might look at the forehead or shoulders of someone they are not familiar with. Direct eye contact may be seen as being intrusive unless

there is a personal relationship. Generally, Nigerians start with the general ideas before moving to the specific ideas.

Bubier (2010) says that because Nigerian English has fewer vowel sounds, final consonant and consonant clusters than English, thus, Nigerians are not able to differentiate many English vowels, mid and final consonants in English. They may sound distinct to the Nigerians. For example, Nigerians do not produce the ‑r‑ sound in words such as ‑door‑ or ‑art‑. Apart from that, Nigerian learners tend to have difficulties with spelling and pronunciation as well as stress and intonation. Bubier (2010) continues to say that because they face difficulties in pronunciation, Nigerian learners have difficulty spelling words like ‑tongue‑, ‑stomach‑ and ‑touch‑. As Nigerian languages are tonal (each word has a fixed tone regardless of the context), the intonation of Nigerians speaking English is limited to the rising tone in a question for a yes/no answer and a final fall for a statement.

2.11 Background of China

In Liu and Dai's (2011) study, they mention that Chinese students' style is general and vague which can be divided into four aspects: position, evidence, reasoning and employment of the language. Liu and Dai (2011) also say that Chinese students' tend to provide few details about position. The viewpoints these students' present are not adequately explained, defined or supported. Chinese students' very rarely elaborate and justify the point they are trying to make. This

means that they merely state the main point without giving further elaboration as well as examples to justify their stand. This is reflected by their habit of listing a lot of solutions for one problem without elaborating further. The items listed seem meaningless as they are not deeply explored and thoroughly explained. Because their speech is composed of generalizations, they do not answer the three questions listeners always ask; õWhat do you mean?ö, õWhy should I believe you?ö and õSo what?ö (Lucas, 2004).

Apart from that Liu and Dai (2011) also say that, students are unable to speak coherently, logically or critically as the Chinese studentsø tend to include too many quotations and analogies which lack logic. Lui and Dai (2011) also found that Chinese studentsø tend to use more comparison: quotation and analogy without further reasoning in their public speech. To these Chinese studentsø, through famous sentences and analogy, audience can get the hint from it, infer from comparison and reach the conclusion by themselves. They do not see that analogy is less effective if it is not deeply analysed. Chinese learnersøalso like to use big, abstract words to impress their audience Liu and Dai (2011). If they believe the word sounds impressive they will use the word in their speech. By using words that are abstract rather than concrete, Chinese studentsøare throwing their audience into a mass of complicated words that can only be found in a dictionary. To them, the bigger the words employed, the higher level of speech it is. To Liu and Dai (2011), it is believed that the Chinese history and culture has

deep influence on the Chinese studentsø cognitive thinking and therefore shapes their general style in English speech.

A research done by Kume, Tokui, Hasegawa & Kodama (2001) found that in a group, the Chinese seem to self-appoint a leader and the leader will be in control of the discussion and the rest of the members will often agree with the leader. The Chinese also rarely joked, laughed and seldom went off from the subject matter. They do not hesitate to express their disagreement. Generally, opinions were expressed very clearly and sometimes assertively. Kume, Tokui, Hasegawa & Kodama (2001) concluded that the conversation of Chinese is close to õpublic speechö.

2.12 Summary

All the literature review above discussed the relationship between speech styles and communication. This chapter covered research done by other researchers. The chapter looked at communication followed by opinions of other linguists on style, speech and speech style. Other things discussed were speaking rate and stylistic features. The background of Nigeria and China was also explained. Past studies which have highlighted various findings related to this study are also provided.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology is a systematic enquiry of how research is done scientifically. It provides a process which is reliable and valid in solving a research problem by logically adopting various steps. It also defines the way in which the data are collected in a research project and analyzed via relevant frameworks.

Researchers may find it impossible to carry out a systematic, scientific and effective research without using any instrument at all. This is because instruments are essential in acquiring information, analyzing data, and recording findings.

An instrument is any device, material or materials that the researcher uses to collect data through his/her research work. Among these instruments are questionnaires, interview sheets, rating scales, test scores, laboratory equipments, and also writing materials that the researcher uses in the performance of his/her research work from the very beginning to the very end of the project.

This chapter will discuss the theoretical framework used, the background of the participants, the tools used to generate data, how recording was done and how data were transcribed before analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This research is qualitative in nature. In that regard analysis and discussion will be descriptive. It attempts to identify the differences in the speech styles of EFL learnersø from Nigeria and China. For the purpose of this research, focus is given to selected linguistic features, which are: fillers, intensifiers and affirmatives in utterance-initial position in the learnersø speech as this will show the speech characteristics of the learners.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

This study looks at the sociolinguistic theory of Lakoff (1973, 1975) who talks about speech style and differences of speech. Lakoff also mentions gender differences in speech. Lakoff provides many different types of linguistic features. Below are some examples of the different linguistic features.

Table 3.1: Features and Examples

No	Types	Examples
1	Questions	a. tag questions e.g. They didnøt hit you did they? b. WH-questions e.g. Whatøs your name?
2	Fillers	umm, uh, ah, mm
3	Hedges	a. phrase type e.g. I think/assume/guess, I mean b. Adverbial e.g. maybe, probably, relatively, generally c. Adverbial used with the negative

		e.g. (not) really, (not) necessarily, (not) very
		d. generalized adjunct
		e.g. or something, or whatever, sort of, kind of
4	Intensifiers	Sub-modification: so, very, etc.
5	Affirmatives	Yeah, OK, All right, Oh, Well in utterance-initial position
6	Adjective Types	Wonderful, darling, lovely

Source: Lakoff (1973, 1975) as stated in Michael, A. S., Chone, L. S., Muthusamy, C., & Veeravagu, J. (2010).

From the examples above, only three types of linguistic features which are fillers, intensifiers and affirmatives will be looked at in this research as they are the most glaring feature most often used by foreign learners and they enable the researcher to identify the differences in speech characteristics of the learners.

The 1990 world champion public speaker David Brooks in 2009 says that the average speaking rate for men is 125 words per minute and 150 words per minute for women (http://williamstowntm.org/2011/10/fast-talkers). Dugdale (2006) says that slow speech is normally regarded as 110 words per minute or less. She also says that conversational speech falls around 120 words per minute in the slow range and 150-160 words per minute is categorized under the fast range.

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When giving a speech it is important that the audiences are able to comprehend what is being said. Therefore, speaking to quickly or too slowly may affect the listeners ability to comprehend what is being said. For the purpose of this research, the rate of speaking would be divided into these three categories:

Slow - 80 to 100 words per minute (wpm),

Average ó around 120 wpm, and

Fast - 140 to 160 wpm

as stated in The Official 10,000+ Speech Topics Library website.

(Accessed date: January 29, 2012)

3.4 Background of the Participants

This research is a qualitative research as data were extracted from the performance of the learners. Sampling was conducted out of purposive sampling which allows the researcher to compare the selected learnersø speech styles. To be more specific, learnersø here refers to 10 male Nigerians and 10 male Chinese learnersø from China who were sourced from a private tertiary education institution. The learnersø were in their last semester of the English programme offered by a public institution of higher education. They were students from the Faculty of Business and Finance and from the Faculty of Computer Science and Multimedia respectively. All learners have gone through four semesters of English courses (see Appendix A) offered. They were from two different classes.

The four levels of English courses that they have gone through are Proficiency Skills in English, Academic English, English for Research Foundation and English for Integrated Skills.

The average age of the learners is 23.2 years old for the learners form Nigeria. Majority of the learners, which is 70 percent, came from the northern part of Nigeria for example: Kano state, Adamawa state and Katsina state; eighty percent of the learnersø first language is the Hausa language and the remaining 20 percent is the Kanuri and Yoruba language. Information was retrieved from the questionnaire (see Appendix B) distributed to them. All except one learner from Nigeria have attended English speaking schools for a minimum of 12 years and this information was also retrieved from the questionnaire (see Appendix B).

As for the learners from China their average age is 21.8 years old; forty percent of them came from the center of mainland China which is the Sichuan province and another 10 percent came from the Henan province. Their first language is Mandarin and information was retrieved from the questionnaire (see Appendix B). Another 40 percent of the learners came from the East and South of China which is Hebei, Fujian and Shandong province. One learner did not mention which province he was from. Only 30 percent of the learners from China have attended English speaking schools and this refers to less than six years. Information was retrieved from the questionnaire (see Appendix B).

In this research all the respondents would be labeled according to their place of origin to assure anonymity. For example: C1 for sample one from China

and so on. N1 would also be used to label sample one from Nigeria. Table 3.2 illustrates.

Table 3.2: Demographic Factor of Nigerian and Chinese Learners

Nigerian	Background information	Chinese	Background information
N1	Age: 26 North Nigeria	C1	Age: 22 Herbei province
N2	Age: 24	C2	Age: 21 Henan province
N3	Age: 24 West Nigeria	C3	Age: 21 Sichuan province
N4	Age: 20 North Nigeria (Kano state)	C4	Age: 21 Hebei province
N5	Age: 23 North Nigeria	C5	Age: 22 Sichuan province
N6	Age: 22 North Nigeria	C6	Age: 21 Sichuan province
N7	Age: 23 North Nigeria (Adamawa state)	C7	Age: 22 Fujian province
N8	Age: 19 North Nigeria (Katsina state)	C8	Age: 23
N9	Age: 27	C9	Age: 23 Shandong province
N10	Age: 24 North Nigeria	C10	Age: 22 Sichuan province

Besides the background of the participants being provided, procedure for data collection will also be illustrated in Figure 3.1.

3.5 Task and Data Collection

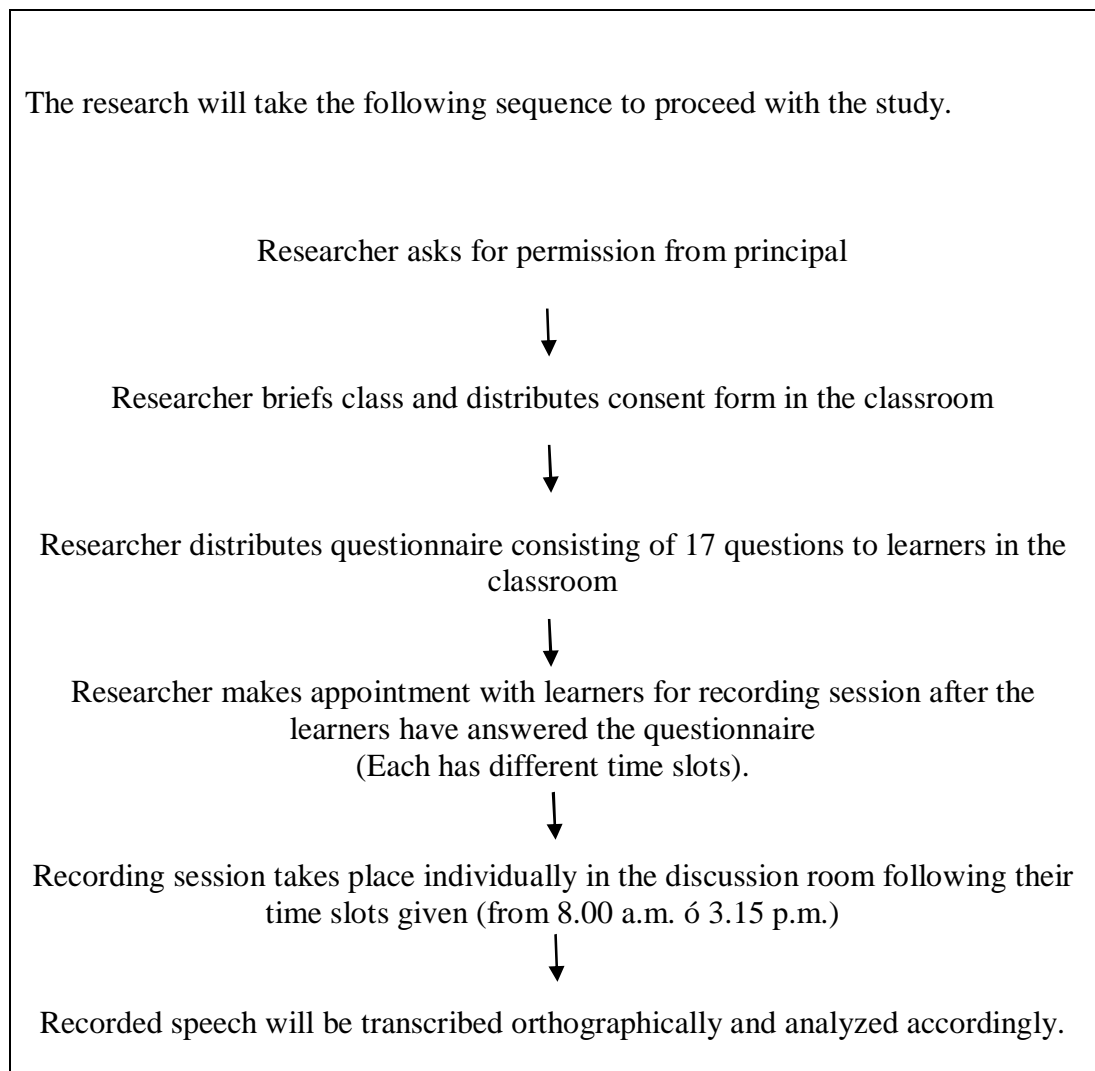In this section, the steps taken to acquire data are explained via a flow chart.

The research will take the following sequence to proceed with the study.

Researcher asks for permission from principal

↓

Researcher briefs class and distributes consent form in the classroom

↓

Researcher distributes questionnaire consisting of 17 questions to learners in the classroom

↓

Researcher makes appointment with learners for recording session after the learners have answered the questionnaire
(Each has different time slots).

↓

Recording session takes place individually in the discussion room following their time slots given (from 8.00 a.m. ó 3.15 p.m.)

↓

Recorded speech will be transcribed orthographically and analyzed accordingly.

Figure 3.1: Procedure of Research

3.5.1 Task

The research took the following sequence. First, all the materials and instruments needed in carrying out the research were prepared. The materials and instruments consist of A4 papers, pens, a hand phone to record learnersø speech and a questionnaire (Appendix B). By referring to Figure 3.1, when all the materials were ready, the researcher asked the principal of the Language Centre for permission to carry out the study on the students. After that, the researcher informed the subjects of her intention to carry out the study. Following that, consent forms (Appendix C) were distributed to the learnersø by the researcher. The researcher explains what they would be required to do and that findings will be shared with them. After that, they were given a chance to clarify the nature of study. The questionnaires were then distributed to the subjects/learners. The questionnaire consists of 17 questions (see Appendix B). The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out the profile of the learnersø background. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions if they do not understand or if they are not clear on certain things. All questionnaires were then collected on the spot and processed accordingly.

3.5.2 Data Collection

Prior to the collection of data, an appointment was set with the learners to meet up on any weekday (2011) to conduct the recording session of their speech. All the 20 learners had their own individual time slot (see Appendix D).

Steps taken during data collection:

1. They would enter the discussion room and have a seat.

2. They were also given some time (around one or two minutes) to prepare themselves (to get familiar with the surroundings and to get ready to begin their speech).

3. When they are ready they would begin their speech on õMy familyö and their speech would be record by using a smartphone. The title õMy Familyö was chosen as it was something familiar to the learners.

4. All speeches recorded were transcribed (see appendix E) according to the utterances.

3.5.3 Procedure of Transcription

Valdes & Figueroa (1994) say that,

> A sentence is not as complex as an utterance where it has both linguistic and non-linguistic properties and functions. Therefore, a sentence is not an utterance and a sentence as a syntactic unit is insufficient for the study of discourse; context, language use, or the use of language beyond sentence level (p.163).

At the same time, an opposing view said that an utterance is often less than a sentence Kendall (2009). However, an utterance in this study means the start of the sentence till the end of the sentence. The researcher listened to the recordings many times in order to transcribe utterances in detail. After transcribing the data, the researcher checked the transcript while listening to the audio recording. Any stretches of speech which the researcher found not clear and cannot be understood

(Lane, 1963; Munro & Derwing, 1995a; Schmid & Yeni-Komshian, 1999; Weil, 2003; Wingstedt & Shulman, 1987) were because of the foreign-accented speech and therefore were reaudited by discussing with the learner until agreement was reached that the recordings were transcribed to an appropriate level of accuracy (the learner listen to his own speech and tells the researcher what he said). The recordings were also heard by a second party, a lecturer from the same college, to ensure that the transcribed data were accurate. No part of the utterance will be left out in the analysis. The transcribed data would then be statistically analyzed according to the purpose of the research (see Table 3.3).

3.5.4 Analysis

The analysis of this study relies on the recorded speech of the learners which totals 37 minutes and 37 seconds. Reference of analysis is made to Lakofføs (1973, 1975) framework as shown in Table 3.3. As mentioned, only Lakofføs framework of the three categories which are fillers, intensifiers and affirmatives will be applied in this study.

No	Types	Examples
1	Fillers	Um, ah, errr, mm
2	Intensifiers	So, very, etc
3	Affirmatives	*Ya, OK, Oh* in utterance-initial position

Lakoff's (1973, 1975) framework was initially developed for comparing the speech styles of men and women which show differences in power. The framework also showed the differences in socialization between genders. In this study, focus is also given to the speaking rate per minute. The rate stated on the web page of http://www.speech-topics-help.com/speed-of-speech.html is used to define speech rate.

It can be said that all speeches were more than a minute except for the speeches of two Chinese learners. In cases like these the researcher counted the total number of words said by adding on the total number of words said for the lost time. For example, if the learners' speech was 50 seconds long, the researcher would take the first 10 seconds of his speech as the lost time and count the number of words being said in the first 10 seconds. The researcher then adds up the total number of words said. (Total number of words in 50 seconds = 70 words + total number of words in the first 10 seconds = 12 words. Researcher adds up 70+12 = 82 words per minute). In cases where the words were not clear to the researcher, the researcher asks the learners to listen to their speech to identify the words being said. All transcribed data were analyzed into the findings.

3.6 Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix B) created for this research was based on the need to know. The questionnaire was designed for the purpose of extracting information which could help to profile the learners. The questionnaire was

verified by the supervisor in terms of the information needed, language and design. It consists of 17 questions (see Appendix B) aimed at gaining information of the learnersø background since the two groups come from totally different cultures. The questions ranged from their parentsø education background to the number of years of exposure they have with the English language (see Appendix B). It also seeks additional information on which language they would use most when communicating with family members, friends and relatives (see Appendix B). It also seeks to detect which language is used in their daily lives (see Appendix B). They were also asked if they think the English language ought to be taught in their country within schools (see Appendix B).

3.7 Data Analysis

Analysis of data aims to follow the following table which shows the different linguistic features which will be focused on. They were extracted from samples of the data.

Table 3.3: Features and Examples Extracted from Data

No	Types	Examples
1	Fillers	Um, ah, errr, mm
2	Intensifiers	So, very, etc
3	Affirmatives	*Ya, OK, Oh* in utterance-initial position

These three linguistic features are given emphasis because they play different roles in the speech characteristics of the learners. Fillers will also be looked at although in this study as they are seen to be hesitant sounds made to indicate uncertainty or to maintain control of the conversation by using time to think of what to say next. These linguistic features will help the researcher to determine if the learners are confident when giving their speech. The researcher will also like to see if the learners are fluent when giving their speech. The researcher thinks that if the learners are confident and fluent when giving their speech, less fillers will be used.

Intensifiers are also looked at as this feature can enable the researcher to determine how emotional learners are when speaking. For example, if the learner wants to show a high degree of something words like 'very' or 'so' can be used. This would show that the speaker has the sense of emotions when giving his speech. Only intensifiers which are adverbs enhancing adjectives and adverbs are given the focus as they help to identify the learners' emotions when speaking.

Affirmatives will also be looked at as they can help the researcher to determine if agreement is shown to signal that the end or beginning of a topic (Gravano, Hirschberg & Benus, 2012). Words such as 'okay', 'alright' and others show agreement. Affirmatives are frequently found in spontaneous conversation (Gravano, Hirschberg & Benus, 2011) hence, it became a focus of this study.

Speech rates of the learners' are also given focus to gauge the communicative effectiveness of their speech as an effective speech allows the

listener to comprehend what is being said. As DeVito (2006) says, a speech that is too fast may create problems for listeners who will find it hard to understand what was said and if the speech rate is too slow, listeners may find it intolerant and become impatient and bored. The words per minute were counted only after the data were collected and counted during the transcribing process as Table 3.4 illustrates. As the data were recorded using a mobile phone, the researcher could identify the one minute mark (will be indicated on the mobile phone) in all the learners speech. Subsequently, the number of words used was counted manually.

The study does not focus on volume, pitch and non-verbal cues because of the constraints of time, space and also because the researcher did not video tape the learners during data collection as the learners did not let her video tape them. This study is also constrained by the number of Nigerian and Chinese learners the researcher had access to. Hence, the researcher approached learners who are readily available to her.

Table 3.4: Words Per Minute and Ratings

Words per minute	Rating
140-160	Fast
101-139	Average
80-100	Slow
99 and below	Very slow

Taken from: http://www.speech-topics-help.com/speed-of-speech.html (Accessed date: November 2011)

3.8 Summary

This chapter consists of the scope of the research and the background of the learners. The researcher has also touched on the task and data collection in detail. Figure 1 has been prepared to make it easier for the readers to follow the flow of the research. Section 3.4.3 on the procedure of transcription is also provided for reference. Apart from that, some information on the way the data would be analysed is also presented. Examples on the types of questions asked in the questionnaire have also been included here (Section 3.6). It is hoped that the findings of this research can be helpful to anyone who is looking for any related answers to speech styles.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Sulaiman (2006), defines data as the information obtained by the researchers to provide valid and reliable findings for their research. Norazman et. al (2010), say that data processing means to convert raw data into meaningful statements that could help answer research questions posed. It is in this chapter that raw data would be systematically organized and thoroughly examined so that the meanings, structure, relationships, origins, etc. can be understood.

This chapter describes the study based upon the methodology discussed in Chapter three. The findings of this study are presented in this chapter. The data presented here were collected to answer three research questions. The research questions explored were:

i. What are the speech styles of Nigerian learners?

ii. What are the speech styles of Chinese learners?

iii. How are the speech styles of the Nigerian EFL learners different from the EFL learners of China in terms of: a) fillers

b) intensifiers

c) affirmatives and

d) rate of speaking

4.2 Speech Style of Nigerian EFL Learners

Coupland (2007) says that speech styles are often applied as a strategy to signal social differences which enable the speaker to construct his/her own identity so that they become accepted by the target community. However, the section below only focuses on the speech styles of learnersø from Nigeria.

4.2.1 Fillers

As stated earlier, fillers enable conversations to run smooth whenever speakers are trying to retrieve information for some reason. However, not all speakers use fillers (Juan, 2006). Studies by Clark (1994) and Smith & Clark (1993) have validated that fillers help to buy time to think, of what is going to be said next. Examples are words such as ÷umø, ÷ahø, ÷mmø, ÷erø and so on.
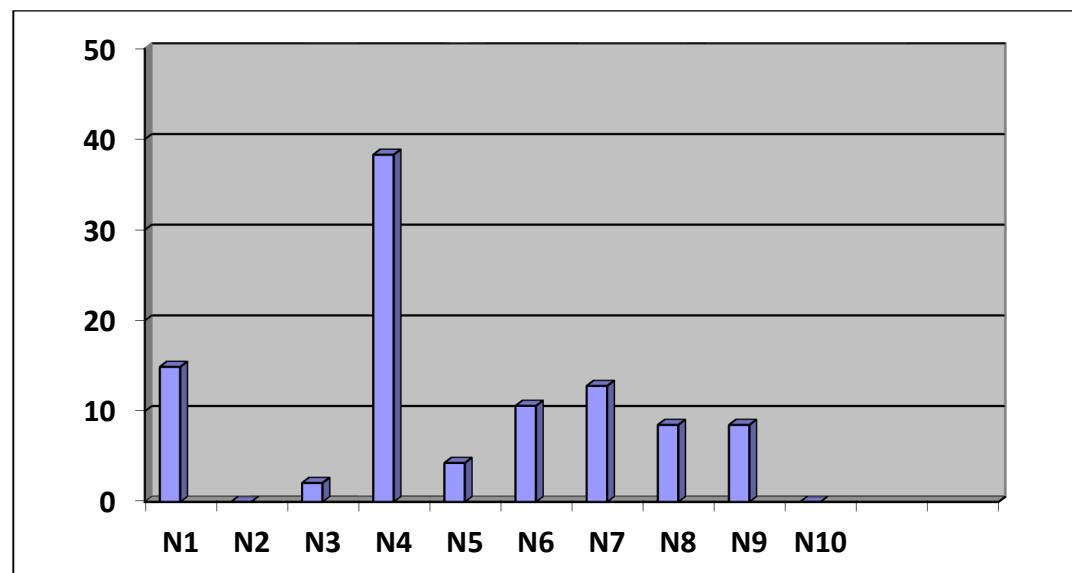
Figure 4.1 – Percentage of Fillers Used by Nigerian Learners

This study found that fillers were employed by the learners from Nigeria and China. Figure 2 shows the amount of fillers used by the Nigerian learners in their speech on õMy Familyö. It is found that 80 percent of the learners had used fillers in their speech. The total amount of fillers used was 47.

Further analysis of data showed that the highest amount of fillers was used by N4 which is 38.3 percent followed by N1 which used 14.9 percent of fillers. N7 used 12.8 percent and N6 10.6 percent. N8 and 9 used four fillers each which is 8.5 percent. N5 used 4.3 percent of fillers. Learners N2 and N10 did not use any filler in their entire speech. This indicates that the extent of fillers used can vary between speeches and that it is not a ÷rigidø characteristic of Nigerian speakers as shown in this study. To further illustrate, examples are provided in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Example of Fillers Used by Nigerian Learners

N1	: My name is *err*..Musaí (Utterance 2) : I *er*..student from Nigeria (Utterance 3) : I , Iøm *erm* belong to the Hausa tribeí ..(Utterance 4)
N3	: So, ermí my dadøs name isí í (Utterance 5)
N4	: *Er* Assalamualaikum my name is *er* Hussainií (Utterance 1) : I come from *er* I come from Africa, Africa, Nigeria Nigeria from Kano state (Utterance 2) : *Er* my tribe is Hausa and *er* I come from a family of nine (utterance 3)

N5	: Then my siblings, among *er..* my *er..* our family Iøm the only person that went out abroad to study (Utterance 13)
N6	: And *er..* that time my father got married at the age of 25 years and met my mother when he was 24í (Utterance 4) : So *er..* the my father, my motherøs brother is the district head office rural area so the well known and very popular person (Utterance 6) : My father went to school and he attended this *er..* degree programme (Utterance 20)
N7	: *Er..*Iøm a Nigerian from the Northern part of Nigeriaí (Utterance 2) : *Er..* my mom is currently in Nigeria workingí (Utterance 3) : *Arr..* I live in a family of six which Iøm the first family thatí (Utterance 4)
N8	: Thatøs *erm..* Katsina state (Utterance 4) : *Erm..*Iøm a Christian (Utterance 6) : *Erm..erm..* I have my dadøs name is Thomas (Utterance 10)
N9	: Good afternoon my lecturer and *er..* my name isí (Utterance 1) : *Er..* I come to Malaysia to *er..* study B.I.T. (Utterance 2) : *Er..* Iøm here almost three years in Malaysia (Utterance 3)

Table 4.1 shows that most of the time, the ÷erø filler is being used by Nigerian learners in the beginning of a sentence. However, there are also instances when the use of fillers (er, erm) are found in the middle of a sentence. This finding supports what Froehlich (2010) says that is; in English, the most common filler sounds or words are *er, uh* and *um.* He also says that fillers can occur at different positions in a discourse which supports some examples given. By looking at the data transcribed (Appendix E) , it can be said that the reason for the use of most

fillers are because the learners pause before saying an important idea which helps signal that whatever said next is significant (DeVito, 2006). For example, N1 :My name is *err*..Musaí (Utterance 2), I *er*..student from Nigeria (Utterance 3). This shows that after introducing himself it is appropriate to talk about where he is from. Another reason why Nigerian learnersø use fillers is because they would like to pause at transition points to signal that they are moving from one part of the speech to another which would help the listeners separate the main issues discussed (DeVito, 2006). For example, N7: ***Er..*** my mom is currently in Nigeria workingí (Utterance 3), ***Arr..*** I live in a family of six which Iøm the first family thatí (Utterance 4). This shows that the speaker is going to move from talking about his mom to talking about his siblings.

4.2.2 Intensifiers

As discussed earlier, intensifiers are adverbs that enhance adjectives and adverbs and they come before the words they modify. In this case focus is given to words that heighten the intensity of other words such as ÷veryø, ÷soø, ÷mostø and others.
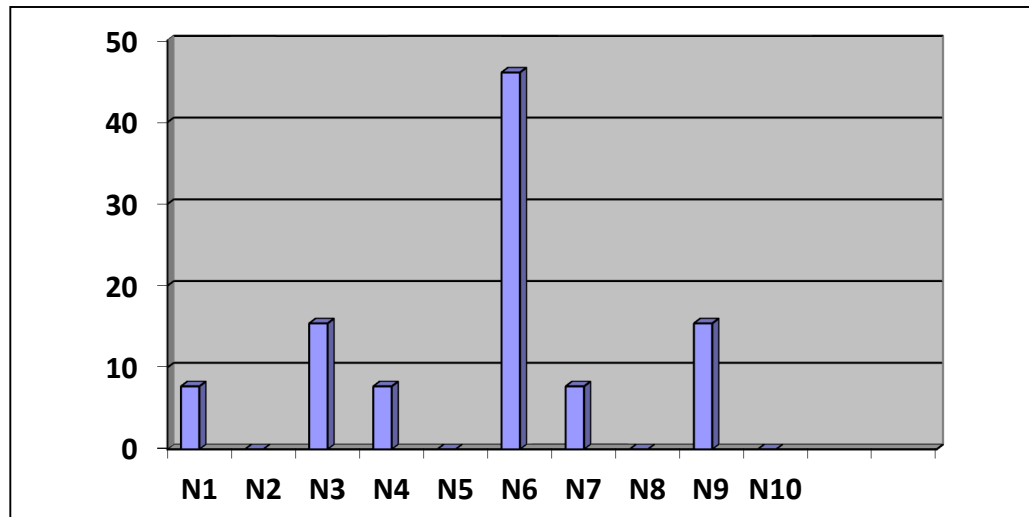
Figure 4.2 – Percentage of Intensifiers Used by Nigerian Learners

This study found that the use of intensifiers is not a common feature of the 10 Nigerian learners. Statistics are provided in Figure 4.2.

Looking at the graph in Figure 4.2, it can be seen that 40 percent of the Nigerian learners do not use intensifiers in their speech. In this scenario, N6 used the most intensifiers in his speech. He used six intensifiers which is 46.1 percent of the total. He uses it to enhance the following words in his speech (Example: **very** popular person). The next common statistic came from N3 and N9 who both used equal amount of intensifiers which is 15.4 percent each followed by N1, N4 and N7 with 7.7 percent. Data indicate that speakers N2, N5, N8 and N10 did not use any intensifier at all. Examples are displayed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Example of Intensifiers Used by Nigerian Learners

N1	: So er actually Malaysia is *very* nice country to me but some people still some people are complain about Malaysia (Utterance 11)
N3	: í í but now its kinda *very* expensive 2.8, 2.9 (Utterance 16) : But itøs ok Iøm *almost* done so nothing much to worry about (Utterance 17)
N4	: And this er.. biotech Iøm *not* practicing anything but er.. my mother force me to just do it because she ar.. she accompany me here. (Utterance 11)
N6	: So er.. the my father, my motherøs brother is the district head office rural area so the well known and *very* popular person (Utterance 6) : In that way you can have much connection and much bonding in your relationship coz that make you familiar and make the relationship *very* strong to keep on going for the rest of your life (Utterance 19) : His major was commerce and then he went on and attended his masters and he worked at the bank for *almost* 20 yearsí (Utterance 21) : So and erm I came to Malaysia in 2008 and the reason is because Nigeria education is *quite* good but the problem is they represent a lot of strike (Utterance 23) : Er so thatøs *pretty* much about me (Utterance 29) : Thank you *very* muchí (Utterance 30)
N7	: So and my country Nigeria is *very* famous country in Africa which is we call it the heart of Africa (Utterance 12)
N9	: So Iøm *just* eager to go back and meet my children because they are missing me (laughs) (Utterance 7) : Thank you *very* much. (Utterance 11)

The table above shows that, the intensifier ‑very‑ is being used frequently by Nigerians in their sentence. The findings here support those findings by Fahy (2002) who says that the word ‑very‑ is used more by men. However, this statement cannot be generalized as this study only looks at the speech styles of Nigerian males. In this study, no comparison can be mentioned for women Nigerian speeches. There are also instances of other intensifiers being used and they include ‑almost‑, ‑pretty‑ and ‑quite‑. Most of the intensifiers used by the Nigerian learners‑ were used before an adjective rather than before an adverb. For example, N1: õ**very** nice countryö, N3: õ**very** expensiveö, N6: õ**very** popular personö and N7: õ**very** famous countryö. By using intensifiers in their speech, it seems that the Nigerian learners are experiencing a passionate description about the topic spoken (Street & Hopper, 1982).

4.2.3 Affirmatives

As said earlier, the affirmatives are also given focus in this study here and they encompass those which mark a new segment of a discourse or a new topic. This study focuses on affirmatives found in the utterance-initial position only. Statistics are presented in Figure 4.3.
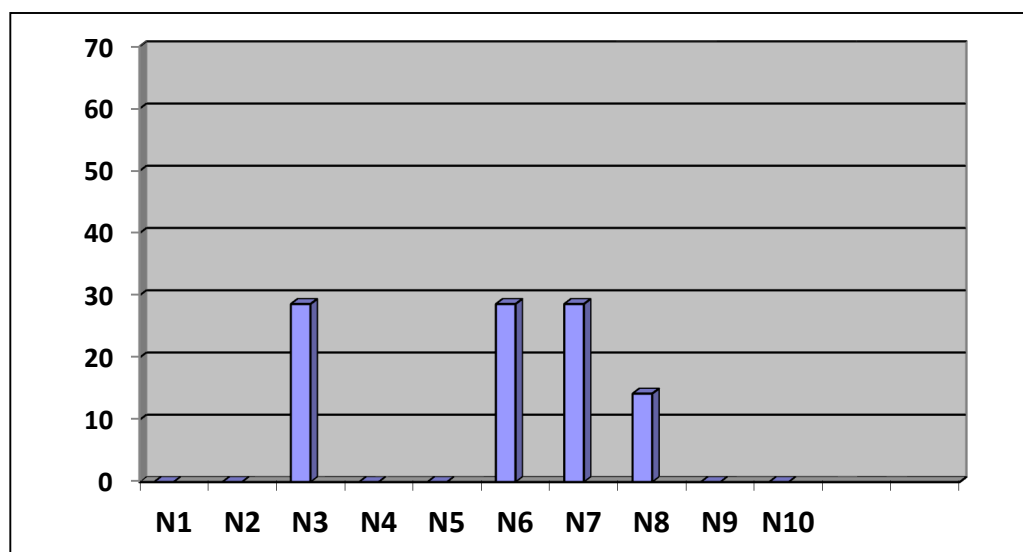
Figure 4.3 - Percentage of Affirmatives Used by Nigerian Learners

By looking at the bar chart above, it can be seen that only 40 percent of Nigerian learners use affirmatives in their speech. N3, N6 and N7 used two affirmative words which represent 28.6 percent of the usage to begin their sentence or idea (Appendix E). N8 only used one word (14.2 percent) to show the beginning of a new topic. This implies that it is not a common speech change or feature of Nigerian learners in this context. Examples are traced to Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Example of Affirmatives Used by Nigerian Learners

N3	: *Ya* my name isí í (Utterance 2) : *Ya* Iǿm from Nigeria.(Utterance 3)
N6	: *Ya* my mother too went to high schoolí (Utterance 22) : *Ya* and my brother my immediate brother he studies in Egyptí (Utterance 28)

N7	: *Ya* which one Iøm going.. (Utterance 11) : *Ya* this is one thing famous thing which my country my state is famous for. (Utterance 18)
N8	: And *ya*í (Utterance 17)

Looking at Table 4.3, it can be summarized that Nigerian learnersø use fewer affirmatives as compared to the Chinese in their speech. However, it is interesting that the affirmative word used by the Nigerians is -yaø They use the word -yaø in the utterance initial position to show that they are moving on to another topic (Gravano, Hirschberg & Benus, 2012). For example, N6: *Ya* my mother too went to high schoolí   (Utterance 22), *Ya* and my brother my immediate brother he studies in Egyptí (Utterance 28) . First the learner was talking about his mother then the learner changed his topic of talk to his brother.

4.2.4 Rate of Speaking

Speech-therapy-on-video.com (2006) suggests that the term speaking rate is a speech term used to show how fast or how slowly one speaks. As speakers one needs to be very careful of the rate he/she speaks. Speakers should speak at a rate comfortable enough for our audience to reflect upon what we have said without boring them (DeVito, 2006). This is because if speakers speak too fast or too slow, listeners will find it difficult to process what is being said (DeVito, 2006).

Table 4.4: Total Length of Speech by Nigerian Learners.

Learner	Length of Speech
N1	1 minute 22 seconds
N2	1 minute 06 seconds
N3	1 minute 27 seconds
N4	1 minute 53 seconds
N5	2 minutes 02 seconds
N6	3 minutes 48 seconds
N7	2 minutes 56 seconds
N8	1 minute 09 seconds
N9	1 minute 16 seconds
N10	1 minute 17 seconds
Total amount of time:	**18 minutes 16 seconds**

From table 4.4 it can be seen that, the total amount of time taken by ten of the Nigerian learnersø in their speech is 18 minutes and 16 seconds. The longest speech was made by N6 which lasted for 3 minutes and 48 seconds. The shortest speech is by N2 which only lasted 1 minute and 06 seconds. The average time per learner thus is 109.6 seconds. There was no time limit for the learnersø which means that they can go on talking until they are satisfied. The speech rate of each learner is presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Number of Words Spoken Per Minute by Nigerian Learners

Learner	Words per minute	Rating
N1	94	Slow
N2	92	Slow
N3	137	Average
N4	77	Slow
N5	95	Slow
N6	119	Average
N7	110	Average
N8	92	Slow
N9	81	Slow
N10	117	Average

As can be seen in Table 4.5, only four out of ten (40 percent) of the Nigerian learners fall under the rating of Average speed when it comes to speaking. It is not clear what contributed to this but it is possible that they slowed down because it was a task and not a casual affair where they just talk to each other using informal language. The other 60 percent of the learnersø speech showed a rating of Slow. Some of them were a little nervous or unsure in the beginning which explains the use of fillers in the beginning of some of their speeches (DeVito, 2006). Further research may be required to verify why this happened.

4.3 Speech Styles of Chinese EFL Learners

As said before, this section will begin by focusing on the Chinese EFL learnersø

usage of fillers. Having discussed the Nigerian learnersø speech style, the section

below focuses on the learnersø from China.

4.3.1 Fillers

Fillers fill up a gap in an utterance (Cappelli, 2008) and may occur at different
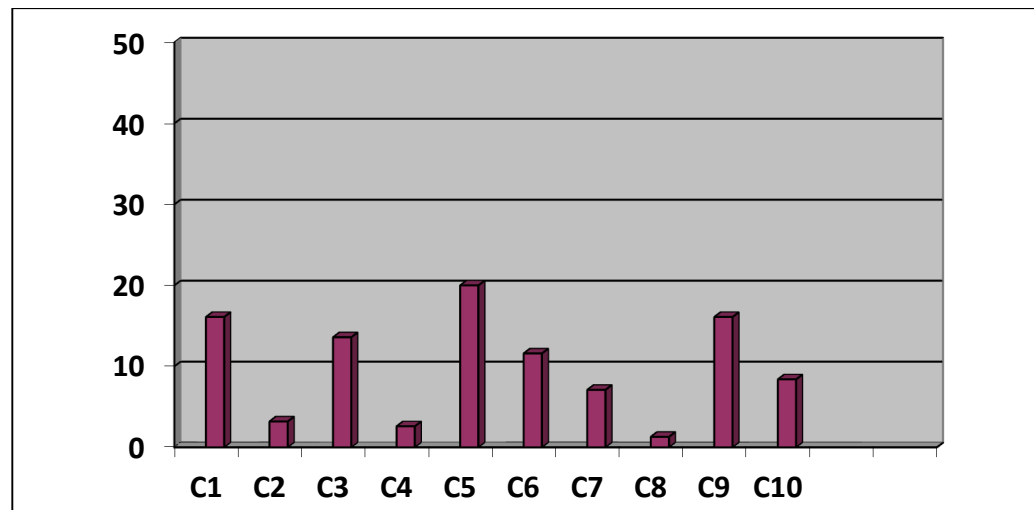
places in a discourse (DeVito, 2006).

Figure 4.4 – Percentage of Fillers Used by Chinese Learners

Statistics are presented in Figure 4.4 and analysis shows that not all the Chinese

learners used fillers in their speech. The total amount of fillers used was 155

which was more than the Nigerians (47 fillers). This shows that the Chinese are

seen as unprepared and or nervous compared to the Nigerians as DeVito (2006)

says that people who use fillers are seen as being hesitant, unprepared and unsure of themselves.

Figure 4.4 indicates that, the highest amount of fillers used was by C5 which is 20 percent, followed by C1 and C9 respectively with 16.1 percent each. Next is C3 with the use of 21 fillers which is 13.6 percent. C6 used 11.6 percent of fillers in his speech. C10 used 13 fillers which results to 8.4 percent. C7 used 7.1 percent of fillers followed by C2 which is 3.2 percent and C4, 2.6 percent. The lowest amount of fillers used was by C8 which is only 2 fillers with the amount of 1.3 percent. The amount of fillers used may be due to the fact that Chinese learnersø find it difficult to choose the right word (see Appendix B) hence, they find a need to delay their speech (Schachter et al., 1991). The section below illustrates some of the examples detected in their speech.

Table 4.6 Example of Fillers Used by Chinese Learners

C1	: ***Er..***hello teacher (Utterance 1) : ***Er..***I come from China, Herbei provinceí (Utterance 3) : ***Er..***itøs a small city my hometown(Utterance 4)
C2	: ***Er..*** I come from China (Utterance 2) : ***Er..***I was born in Henan province (Utterance 2) : ***Erm..***my mother, father, my brother and myself (Utterance 7)
C3	: ***Erm*** my name Li Bo (Utterance 1) : ***Er*** I live in Sichuan province Chengdu city (Utterance 4) : ***Er..***my family my family my family ***er..*** has a my father, my mother and I (Utterance 5)

C4	: *Er* Iøm now study Malaysia (Utterance 4) : *Er..*my sister is a nurse (Utterance 9) : *Er.. er….(*Utterance 10)
C5	: *Erm* my name is YangYang. (Utterance 2) : *Mm..*there are three people in my family my father, my mother and I (Utterance 4) : *Er* my *er* I come to here I come to here in Malaysia study for business finance because of is I no want to go here but in China some people say that at at at this college is good so good *er* have anything but anything have so I with my friend join join join *er* university such as í ..(Utterance 5)
C6	: *Er mm* my name is Xu Ji Hong (Utterance 1) : *Er* Iøm from Tze Chuan province China (Utterance 4) : So I have four person in my family *er* my father, mother, brother and I (Utterance 7) : *Er..* (mumbling).. (Utterance 8)
C7	: Ya take *er* music and performing (Utterance 7) : I *er* now I want to talk about my family (Utterance 10) : They *er* in college at China (Utterance 13)
C8	: *Er..*my mother also (Utterance 5) : *Mm..*so I only one child (Utterance 6)
C9	: *Er* now I am 23 years old (Utterance 2) : *Er* my hometown name is erí ..(Utterance 4) : *Er* there are 11 000 people in my hometown *er* but *er* there *ar* are 8 *er* 8000 people have *er* same family name (Utterance 5)
C10	: *Er* the Sichuan province in west in the China and this is beautiful city called Chengdu because the city *er* people call the city *er* abandoned city (Utterance 3) : So it *er* have a *er* food have a special place and the people is very hot and *er* kind (Utterance 4) : So my family *er* three people my mom and dad (Utterance 6)

The examples above show that the filler that is most used by the Chinese EFL learners is the ‟er‟ filler and this finding supports what DeVito (2006) says about the common English fillers being ‟er‟, ‟uh‟ and ‟um‟ respectively. As can be seen, the fillers used by the Chinese learners‟ not only occur at the beginning of the utterance but also at different positions in the utterance such as in the middle of the utterance (DeVito, 2006). The position where most of the fillers occur is at the beginning of the sentence and this finding has been verified by Boomer (1965) and Shriberg (1996) who both say that fillers are more likely to occur in this position as this is where speakers are planning of what to say.

4.3.2 Intensifiers

The focus of this study also looks at words that heighten the intensity of other words such as ‟very‟, ‟so‟, ‟most‟ and others. Therefore, intensifiers which are adverbs that enhance adjectives and adverbs that come before the word they modify will be discussed further.
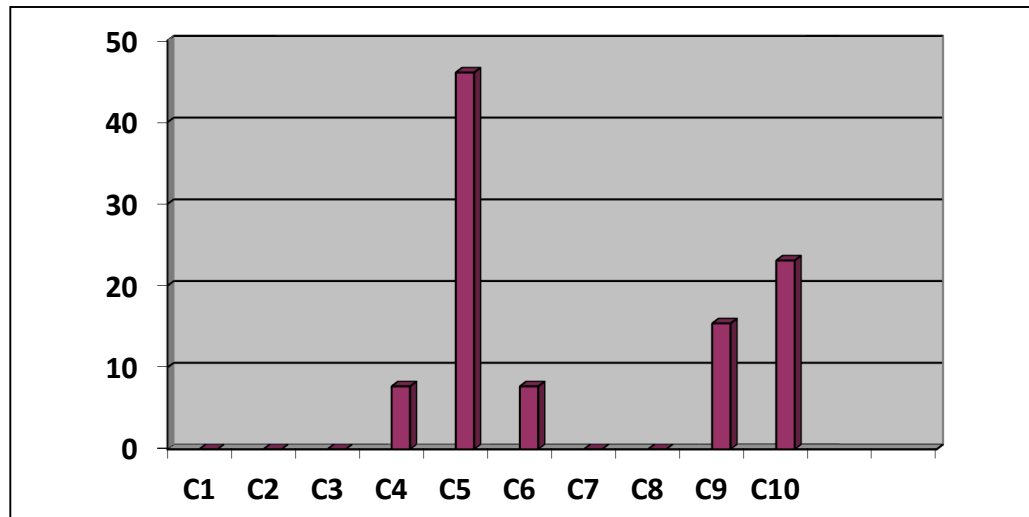
Figure 4.5 – Percentage of Intensifiers Used by Chinese Learners

Figure 4.5, indicates the amount of intensifiers used by each Chinese learner in their speech. The learner who used the most number of intensifiers in his speech is C5. He used six intensifiers in his speech which amounts to 46.1 percent. C10 used 23.1 percent of intensifiers and C9 15.4 percent. C4 and C6 used only one intensifier each. Five learners, which are C1, C2, C3, C7 and C8 did not use any intensifier in their speech. Even though 50 percent of learners did not use intensifiers in their speech, it cannot be generalized that there is no significant difference between men and women in terms of the usage of intensifiers in their speech (Nemati & Bayer, 2007). Further studies should be carried out to find out if some men use intensifiers because of certain things they wish to portray or if certain men just do not use any intensifiers at all regardless of what they wish to portray. Examples of the intensifiers used are illustrated in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Example of Intensifiers Used by Chinese Learners

C4	: Malayí why I come come to Malaysia is Malaysia is Malaysia is *very* beautiful (Utterance 5)
C5	: But my but my housemate he is *very* good (Utterance 8) : So Iɑm *more* confident in this college (Utterance 14) : First one is football, second one is snooker er because of here is *so* boring so I I cannot talk about this with my friends er not like people in China (Utterance 17) : You are *so* good (Utterance 24) : We are *very* happy and er so we always make aarrr game (Utterance 26) : So it is interesting and you are the *most* beautiful teacher er in my life. (Utterance 27)
C6	: Er er he is *very* busy and er sometimes he cannot sleep even for three hours one day when he is in a busy day. (Utterance 15)
C9	: Erm erm I I I study in Malaysia because erm Malaysia is *very* near er to my hometown er and I can I can learn er..more *very* little money (Utterance 11)
C10	: So it er have a er food have a special place and the people is *very* hot and er kind (Utterance 4) : So we live together and erm they are *very* good (Utterance 8) : Er so why I am studying music coz I think er the world have a many different languages *so* much but music is the one language for the world.(Utterance 10)

By looking at Table 4.7, it can be concluded that males do use the intensifier

÷veryø most of the time (Fahy, 2002) and both Nigerian and Chinese EFL

learnersøuse the word ÷veryø frequently. It can also be seen that the word which

the intensifiers modify are adjectives. Examples can be seen in C4øs speech: õ**very** beautifulö, C5: õ**very** happyö, C6: õ**very** busyö, C 10: õ**very** hotö and others. The Chinese learnersø use a variety of other intensifiers in their speech compared to the Nigerians. The Chinese use words such as more, so, and most. Examples are: C5: õ**more** confidentö, õ**most** beautifulö and C10: õ**so** muchö.

4.3.3 Affirmatives

Affirmative cue words show agreement, interest or even signals the end or beginning of a topic. According to some studies (Gravano, Hirschberg & Benus, 2012), the most common words are *okay, alright yeah, right, mm-hm, uh-huh and alright.* These words appear to be more verbalized as they were affirmatives commonly used by native English speakers.
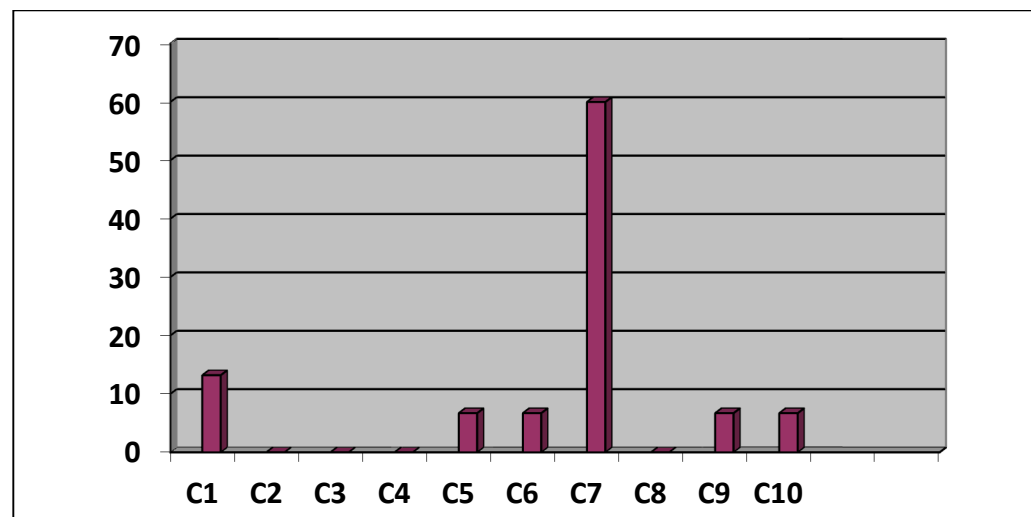

Figure 4.6 – Percentage of Affirmatives Used by Chinese Learners

After analyzing the speech of all the ten Chinese EFL learners, it can be seen that not all the learners used affirmatives in their speech. Figure 4.6 shows that the affirmative word most used were by C7 which represents 60 percent of the total. C1 had used two affirmative words (13.2 percent) and C5, C6 and C9 used only one affirmative respectively. This shows that affirmatives are not a common speech feature of Chinese EFL learners. The section below illustrates some of the examples of affirmatives detected in their speech.

Table 4.8 Example of Affirmatives Used by Chinese Learners

C1	: *Okay*, I haven¢t introduced my mother eh my father. (Utterance 13) : Er em *Okay* that¢s allí (Utterance 20)
C5	: *Okay..* (Utterance 29)
C6	: *Okay* so you can call me Loter. (Utterance 3)
C7	: *Ya* I¢m in Twintech college (Utterance 6) : *Ya* take er.. music and performing (Utterance 7) : *Ya* and I why I take music because I want to beí .(Utterance 8) : *Ya* they all young than me (Utterance 12) : *Ya* so ar my father and my mother they are business (Utterance 14) : *Ya* they open a company then they sell ar a lot of thingsí (Utterance 15) : *Ya* so I like my family and I like Malaysia (Utterance 16) : *Ya* I have many friend..other country friendí .(Utterance 18) : *Ya* that¢s all (Utterance 23)

C9	: *Okay* thatøs all (Utterance 13)
C10	: *Okay* my name is Huang Jun Jie (Utterance 1)

Compared to the Nigerians, the Chinese EFL learnersøtend to use the word ÷okayø to show the beginning or end of a topic (Gravano, Hirschberg & Benus, 2012). For example, C1: õ**okay**, I havenøt introduced my mother eh my fatherö. This example shows that the learner is going to talk about his father next. However, an example such as ÷**Okay**, thatøs allø can also show that the speaker is ending the topic. The data provided also illustrate that only one learner used the word ÷yaø in a similar way to the Nigerians. This occurrence may be due to the fact that the said learner (C7) had mixed around with learners from other countries. Information was mentioned in the questionnaire. Therefore, the using of the affirmative word õyaö by C7 could be a matter of influence.

4.3.4 Rate of Speaking

Nonnative speakers of English have a slower speaking rate (Riggenbach, 1991). However, the length of speech for each Chinese EFL learner ranging from 3 minutes 56 seconds to 30 seconds is presented in Table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9 Total Length of Speech by Chinese Learners.

Learner	Length of Speech
C1	3 minutes 31 seconds
C2	1 minute 30 seconds
C3	1 minute 28 seconds
C4	0 minute 50 seconds
C5	3 minutes 56 seconds
C6	2 minutes 16 seconds
C7	1 minute 46 seconds
C8	0 minute 30 seconds
C9	1 minute 37 seconds
C10	1 minute 54 seconds
Total amount of time:	19 minutes 18 seconds

The table shows that the total time of the ten Chinese learnersø speech is 19 minutes and 18 seconds. The longest speech was by C5 whose speech lasted for 3 minutes and 56 seconds. The shortest speech is by C8 whose speech lasted only for 30 seconds. The average time per learner is 115.8 seconds. The average time per learner for the Nigerians is 109.6 seconds which is not much shorter than the Chinese. By looking at the table above, it can be seen that the length of speech for the Chinese learnersø varies greatly for the longest and shortest speech. This shows that some learners simply lack the idea of things to say (see Appendix B)

or they simply do not explain or support their viewpoints presented (Liu & Dai, 2011).

Table 4.10 Number of Words Spoken Per Minute by Chinese learners

Learner	Words per minute	Rating
C1	77	Very Slow
C2	40	Very Slow
C3	71	Very Slow
C4	70	Very Slow
C5	108	Average
C6	68	Very Slow
C7	118	Average
C8	50	Very Slow
C9	78	Very Slow
C10	83	Slow

However, as can be seen in Table 4.10, only two out of ten Chinese learners fall under the rating of Average speed when it comes to speaking rate. These two out of ten learners (20 percent) are considered to be quite proficient in the language as they have been exposed to the English language for eight and nine years respectively. Ten percent of the Chinese EFL learners are considered to be Slow when speaking and the other 70 percent are considered to be Very Slow. They usually speak in the same manner with or without a recorder as this is observed by

the researcher who is also their teacher. As Guion, Flege, Liu, & Yeni-Komshian (2000) & Lennon (1990) pointed out, foreign-accented speakers use a slower speaking rate compared to native speakers. The learners from China tend to be thinking or translating in their minds while they are talking which makes them a little slow (see Appendix B). They would have the content in their minds but they would have problem when it needs to be uttered. This might be due to the effect of L1 on L2 as the speaking rate is L1 dependent (Yuan, Liberman & Cieri, 2006). Ueyama (1996) says that Chinese speakers have a slower speaking rate because they pronounce lexically stressed and unstressed vowels differently compared to native speakers. This means Chinese people pronounce the stressed and unstressed vowels differently in duration wise because in Chinese there is no durational contrast between pitch-accented and unaccented moras.

4.4 Differences in Speech Style of Nigerian and Chinese EFL learners

This section states some information which can help to state the differences of the two groups of learners.

4.4.1 Fillers

In terms of fillers found it was clear that the Chinese learnersø use it more frequently as compared to the Nigerians. A further description will be given below.
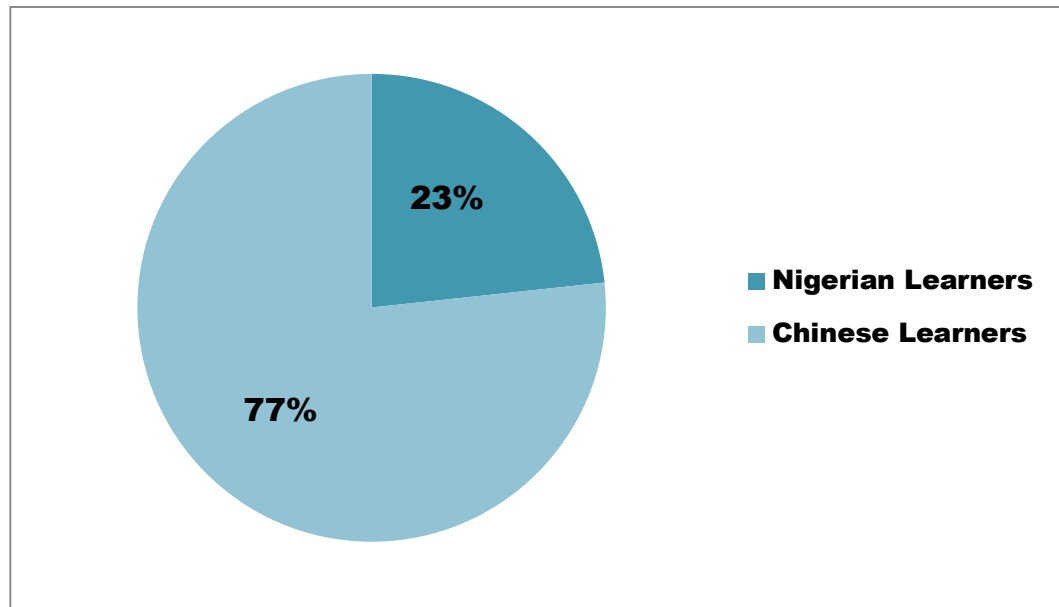
Figure 4.7 – Percentage of Fillers Used by Nigerian & Chinese Learners

As stated in the pie chart above, Chinese learners use fillers at a much higher frequency in their speech which is 77 percent as compared to Nigerian learners which is only 23 percent.

Filled pauses are hesitant sounds made to indicate uncertainty or simply to maintain control of the conversation by thinking of what to say next (Cappelli, 2008). Since the Nigerian learners used less fillers in their speech, it shows that the Nigerian learners are more effective and proficient in the language as they do not hesitate when speaking. They do not need to buy some time thinking of what to say before they start speaking. As they used less fillers, it also shows that Nigerian learners are more comfortable as compared to Chinese in using the English language.

As DeVito, (2006) says, pauses are seen as ineffective as it weakens your message. If used, the speaker would be perceived as hesitant, unprepared and unsure of yourself. Nigerians tend to appear more confident compared to the Chinese probably because apart from their own mother tongue they tend to use English as a language for them to communicate daily with college friends and also to help them buy food especially in Malaysia, as the questionnaire information has shown. All 10 of them agreed that they use the English language to complete assignments, to facebook, to write letters and emails (see Appendix B). Other than that, they also agreed that English is used when travelling and also to make friends (see Appendix B).

Apart from that they also have more experience using the language as many of them have been to English medium schools for at least 12 years (see Appendix B). In that regard, they could be considered to be proficient in the language. As the Chinese learners use the powerless speech style, they are seen as less confident and unsure of themselves. This supports what Parton, Siltanen, Hosman & Langenderfer (2002) say. What is interesting is that even though the Nigerian learners are considered to be proficient, some of them faced some difficulties when speaking in English. Two found it difficult to construct sentences whereas one of them found it difficult to pronounce certain words and another sometimes find it difficult to find the right words when he speaks (see Appendix B).

The difficulties faced by the learners support what Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, (1990), Eisenstein & Badman, (1986), Olshtain & Cohen, (1983) have said about L2 learners. That is, learnersø may also find it hard to send and receive messages using their L2 regardless of their proficiency level, depending on context, speakers and topic of conversation (Yuan, Liberman & Cieri, 2006). In this regard their fluency was possibly affected by the task because they were asked to give a speech which was recorded and they were also the only one present in the room apart from the researcher.

As for the Chinese learners, they are found to be less confident which means that they appeared not prepared and they hesitate a lot before speaking probably because they used their own mother tongue most of the time in their daily lives as information in the questionnaire indicate. This finding supports previous research of Brennan & Williams, (1995); Smith & Clark, (1993) where they say that people tend to pause longer and used more fillers before giving an answer, suggesting a lack of confidence (Brennan & Williams, 1995; Smith & Clark, 1993).

Speakers who used their first language frequently to communicate with others such as their parents, relatives, friends and many more tend to fall under this category where they are seen as less confident. It is clear that the Chinese learnersø used English as a final choice, i.e. when it is really necessary, for example, to complete assignments and write reports related to studies (see Appendix B). Apart from that information from the questionnaire also illustrates

that they have less experience using the language since many of them have only been to English medium schools for 6 years as compared to the Nigerians (see Appendix B). From the questionnaire, all ten learners also indicated that they have difficulties when speaking in English (see Appendix B).

This information explains why the learners face difficulty in the pronunciation of words (see Appendix B). This may be due to the lack of practice and exposure to the language (see Appendix B). They also do not have adequate vocabulary for conversing which makes it difficult for them to deliberate using the language.

Nevertheless, the information gained does not support what Schachter et al., (1991); Schachter, Rauscher, Christenfeld, & Crone, (1994) which say that speakers who use more fillers in their speech tend to have a large range of vocabulary to choose from. This study had shown that Chinese EFL learners may know what they would like to convey but they were hampered by the lack of vocabulary to say what they want and need to say. This gap leaves them struggling during a conversation to convey the message. Ultimately, Chinese learnersøwould use any word they know just to convey enough information as the study illustrates. This information supports what DeVito (2006) says: that if the words you use are able to convey your message it means that it was a successful speech. The Chinese learners used more fillers to expand on their speech. Fillers helped them to think of what they would like to say as well as how to construct the sentence before actually saying it (Cappelli, 2008) but in this study, the

Chinese EFL learners were eventually defeated by their lack of practice in using the English language.

All in all, it can be said that learners tend to use fillers when they find it difficult to get the right words and when this occurs, there was a greater need to delay their speech (Schachter et al., 1991) and ultimately they filled up their utterances with pauses with fillers.

4.4.2 Intensifiers

Street & Hopper (1982) say that language intensity can be another way of evaluating speech styles. The language used will get more intense as the speaker gets more emotional when he/she is speaking.
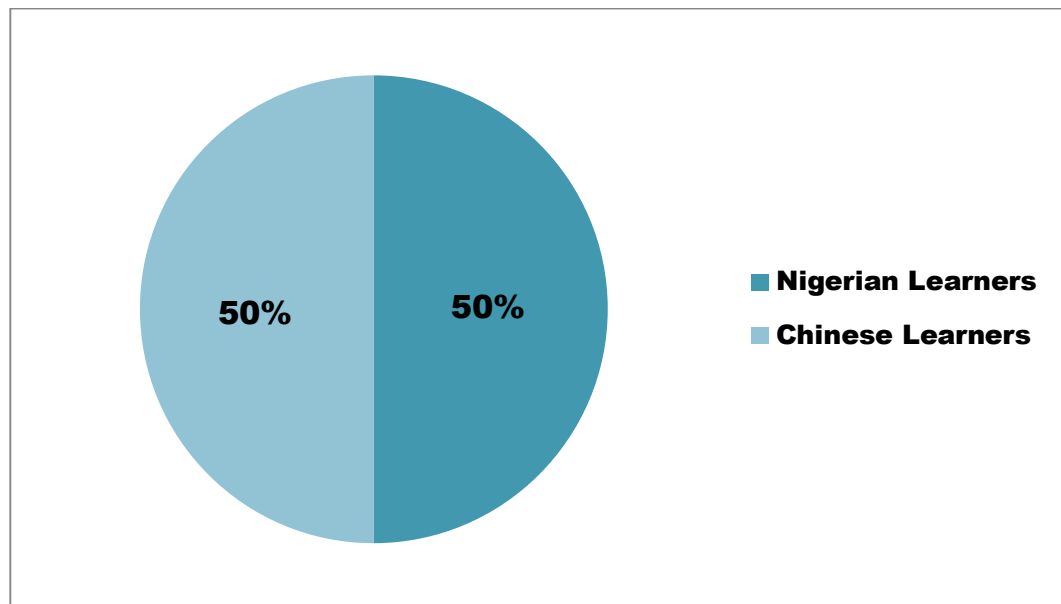

Figure 4.8 – Percentage of Intensifiers Used by Nigerian & Chinese Learners

Figure 4.8 demonstrates that the Nigerian learners used the same amount of intensifiers as the Chinese learners.

No deduction could be made of this finding since four learners from Nigeria and five learners from China did not use any intensifier. Even though many linguists mention that men tend not to add decorations to their speech the way women do (Murphy, 2006), there are instances in this study which differed. For instance, many intensifiers were used in these EFL learnersø speeches. Learners tend to use intensifiers to make something sound more or less exciting and these adverbs can portray the listener's feelings about the concept (Robert, 2011). It also seems that learners from both Nigeria and China use intensifiers most frequently in front of adjectives rather than adverbs. Only a few instances of intensifiers were used in front of adverbs. For example, **N9** where he said õThank you very muchö, **C9** õí very little moneyö and **C10** õí .so much but musicí ö

The results of the four Nigerian and five Chinese learners (N2, N5, N8, N10, C1, C2, C3, C7 and C8) who did not use intensifiers support the findings or opinion of Larner, (2009) which states that intensifiers are characteristic of feminine language and men tend to make use of fewer intensifiers because men detract from the primary content of a statement and make it less persuasive or realistic by exaggerating and adding emotional content to it. The researcher found that **N6** used a rather strong expressive in his speech when he said õí .this kind of **mentality** you have back iní ...ö It sounded like the speaker was very angry or upset about it. This supports what Kramer (1974) says that males use stronger

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expressive when they are angry or exasperated. Another study by Kuha (2005) states that there is no clear pattern which says that women use more intensifiers in their speech. She suggests that both men and women use intensifiers at roughly similar frequency and this need to be further verified for Nigerian and Chinese learners who are females.

4.4.3 Affirmatives

Affirmatives show agreement, interest or signal the end or beginning of a new topic (Gravano, Hirshberg & Benus, 2012).
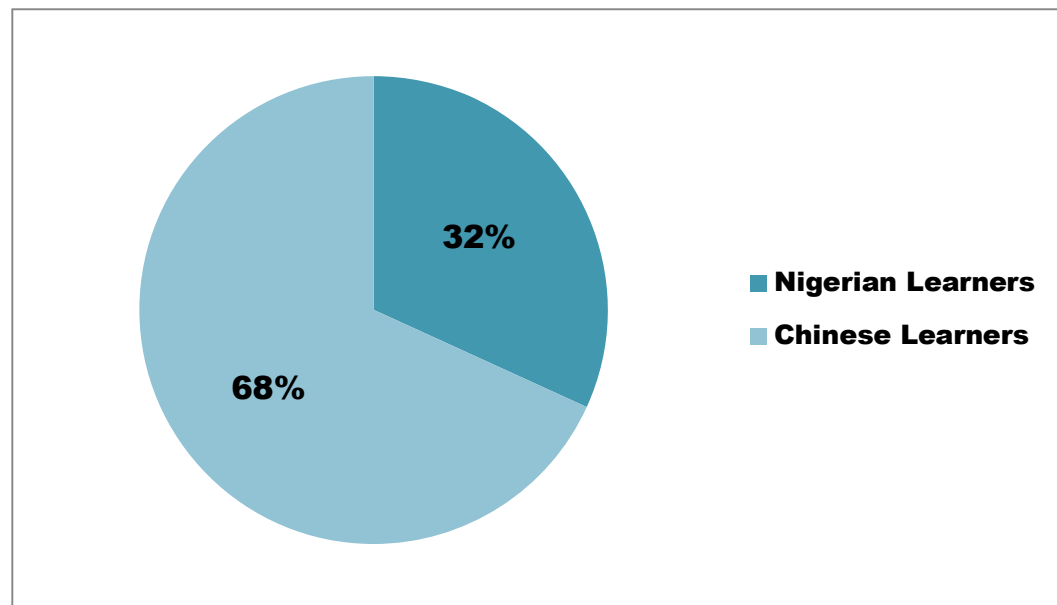

Figure 4.9 – Percentage of Affirmatives Used by Nigerian & Chinese Learners

What is interesting in these findings is illustrated in Figure 4.9 which highlights that the Chinese learners used more affirmative words in their speech as compared to the Nigerian learners. The Nigerians used 32 percent as compared to the Chinese learners which is 15 out of 22 affirmative words (68 percent). Liu and Dai (2011) says that the Chinese do not explain their viewpoints adequately before moving on to the next topic and they also do not speak coherently in their speech. This information can be supported by the example from C1: õ*Okay*, I havenøt introduced my mother eh my fatherö (Utterance 13) which shows that he suddenly remembered that he has not spoken about his father in the speech.

There seems to be a pattern with the usage of affirmative words among the Nigerian learner and the affirmative word which is õYaö. With the Chinese learners, they tend to prefer the word õOkayö. Only one instance of a Chinese learner using the affirmative word õYaö just like the Nigerian learners was found. This could be because this learner tends to socialize with many different learners in the college as he has stated in the questionnaire (see Appendix B) that he has friends from a variety of background (see Appendix B). This may be an influential factor. The findings of the affirmative words used in this research are consistent with those of (Godfrey et al., 1992) who found that in conversations the majority of affirmative words used are ‑yeahø, ‑okayøor ‑uh-huhø The findings of this research also confirms the findings of a study by Gravano, Hirscherg & Benus (2012) which found that ‑okayøwas the most used affirmative cue word.

Based on the number of learners who used affirmative words, it was found that only 45 percent used them in their speech while 55 percent did not. This finding shows that what Gravano, Hirshberg & Benus, (2012) say about the use of affirmative words are true as many learners from Nigeria and China used affirmatives to signal the end or beginning of a topic in their speech.

4.4.4 Rate of Speaking

Foreign learners have different ways of talking especially when they speak in English (Guion, Flege, Liu, & Yeni-Komshian, 2000). Some speakers tend to have a slower peaking rate compared to others. The ideal speaking rate is one where the speaker is able to mix and match the speech rate to ensure that the audiences are able to comprehend what is being said (Dugdale, 2006).

Table 4.11: Rate of Speech of both Nigerian and Chinese EFL Learners

Learner	Age	Rating	Learner	Age	Rating
N1	26	Slow	C1	22	Very Slow
N2	24	Slow	C2	21	Very Slow
N3	24	Average	C3	21	Very Slow
N4	20	Slow	C4	21	Very Slow
N5	23	Slow	C5	22	Average
N6	22	Average	C6	21	Very Slow
N7	23	Average	C7	22	Average

N8	19	Slow	C8	23	Very Slow
N9	27	Slow	C9	23	Very Slow
N10	24	Average	C10	22	Slow

The present findings of speaking rates did not support the finding discovered by Yuan, Liberman & Cieri (2006) which says that older people have slower speaking rates. In this study, the average age of the learners from Nigeria is 23.2 years and 21.8 years for learners from China which implies that they are young adults. In this study it was also found that, the speaking rates of learners from Nigeria appear faster than those from China. This finding supports Ueyama's (1996) findings which showed that Chinese speakers tend to have a slower speaking rate when speaking in English.

Apart from that, it can also be seen that most of the learners from Nigeria and China fall under the rating of 'slow' and 'very slow' which supports Riggenbach's (1991) claim that nonnative speakers have a slower speaking rate. It therefore can be deduced that the effect of L1 on the speaking rate of the L2 is dependent on the L1 (Yuan, Liberman & Cieri, 2006). However, as Giles (1973) says the rate of speech also depends on what a person wants to achieve in their speech and their speech styles (Giles & Street, 1985). Factors such as topic, speaker relationship and others may affect speaking rate as well (Yuan, Liberman & Cieri, 2006) as the learners' were in the discussion room alone together with the researcher when giving their speech on 'My Family' In this regard it could be

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attributed to the nature of the task which required them to give a speech which may be an intimidating task to fulfill.

4.5 Similarities in Speech Style of Nigerian and Chinese EFL learners

Even though this research does not focus on the similarities in speech style of Nigerian and Chinese learners, it can be seen that there are some similarities in the content of their speech. For example, N7 talked about his father's business which exports goods. C1 talked about his mother's business which sells electrical goods. Similarly, C7 talked about his parents business of selling cars and other things. C8 also talked about his father's business which sells dogs.

Apart from that, N7 touched on the sport or activity which happens in his country. He says that there is a fishing festival in his state which is very famous. N8 says that he loves to play football and table tennis whereas N10 says that he likes polo. Similarly, C1 says that he likes basketball and football. C3 also likes sport such as swimming, playing football and basketball. N5 says that he likes to play football and snooker.

Both the learners also talks about money. For example, N3 he talked about the exchange rate between Nigeria and Malaysia. N7 mentioned that after selling the fishes that the fishermen catch, they will earn a lot of money. N10 says that the college fee in Malaysia is cheap. However, only C9 talked about being able to learn more with very little money.

By looking at these three things; business, sports and money, they strongly support what Haas (1979) says which is men are said to talk a lot about these three topics.

4.6 Summary

Chapter four presented the analysis of the transcribed speech of both Nigerian and Chinese learners in terms of fillers, intensifiers, affirmatives and the speaking rate produced by both learners in just one minute. The findings showed that the Chinese learners are not comfortable and are unsure of themselves when using English as they used more fillers in their speech compared to the Nigerian learners. The amount of intensifiers used was the same from both learners. The Nigerian learners seem to favour the word õyaö compared to the Chinese learners who used the word õokay.ö As for the speaking rate, most of the learners speaking rate fall under the category of slow for the Nigerian learners and very slow for the Chinese learners. The comparison between the Nigerian and Chinese learnersø speech styles was also touched on. This chapter also analyzed the total minutes of speech by both the Nigerian and Chinese learnersø which were 18 minutes and 16 seconds for the Nigerian learners and 19 minutes and 18 seconds for the Chinese learners.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and main recommendations flowing from the analysis of comparing the speech styles of EFL learners from Nigeria and China. It will begin with the summary of the main findings of the research followed by the recommendations which the researcher deems appropriate to address the issues arising out of the findings.

5.2 Summary of the Main Findings

Chinese learners use more fillers in their speech as they are unsure about what to say (Smith et. al, 1998). It also shows that they hesitate a lot before saying something (DeVito, 2006). This is because the learners use very minimum English in their daily lives (Appendix B). The Nigerian learners are more confident compared to the Chinese learners. They do not hesitate a lot before they speak. This is because they are quite comfortable when using the English language as they often communicate with friends in English (Appendix B).

As for the use of intensifiers, both the Nigerian and Chinese learnersø use the same amount of intensifiers in their speech. It cannot be said that all males use intensifiers in their speech as 40 percent of the Nigerian learnersø and 50 percent of the Chinese learnersødid not use intensifiers in their speech.

The Nigerian learnersø tend to use the affirmative word ÷yaø frequently in their speech. The Chinese learnersø on the other hand tend to use the word ÷okayø most of the time (Gravano, Hirschberg & Benus, 2011) except for one learner where he actually used the word ÷yaø repeatedly similar to the Nigerians.

5.3 Conclusion of Findings

<u>**Question 1: What are the speech styles of Nigerian learners?**</u>

The Nigerian learners use less fillers and affirmative words in their speech. However, they do use intensifiers in their speech. They use less fillers as they are more proficient in the language. They do not hesitate much when speaking. They use intensifiers as they want to show the degree of intensity of a certain word. None of the learners fall under the category of speaking fast which is 140 to 160 words per minute. Four out of ten Nigerian learners fall under the rating of ÷Averageø speed and the remaining six under the rating of ÷Slowø which is not the case if your talk to them face to face.

<u>**Question 2: What are the speech styles of Chinese learners?**</u>

Chinese learners tend to use more fillers and affirmative words compared to the Nigerian learners. They have less experience using the language

therefore, it can be said that because of that, they use more fillers to buy them some time to think of what to say before they actually say it. Because they do not use the language often, they do not have sufficient vocabulary to appear confident when giving their speech. However, they do use intensifiers in their speech. Two learners fall under the rating of ÷Averageø speed, one under the rating Slow and the rest are simply considered to be ÷Very Slowø which means that they only managed to say fewer than 80 words per minute. This might be the result of being L1 dependent when speaking an L2 language.

Question 3: How are the speech styles of the Nigerian ESL learners different from the ESL learners of China in terms of: a) fillers b) intensifiers c) affirmatives and d) rate of speaking

Nigerian learners use less fillers compared to Chinese learners. This is due to the fact that the Nigerian learners are exposed to the language way earlier in their life compared to the Chinese (Appendix B). The Nigerians tend to use English in their daily lives (Appendix B). As for the Chinese they only use the language when they are required to. As for intensifiers, the Nigerians and Chinese learners used the same amount of it. The Chinese however, use more affirmative words in their speech. The word

which they most often use is the word õokayö except or one learner where he used the word õyaö just like the Nigerians. For those Nigerians who use the affirmative, they tend to use the affirmative õyaö in their speech.

5.4 Recommendations

From these conclusions a number of possible courses of action may be identified. The following recommendations are offered as guidelines for consideration and possible application by future researchers who would like to carry out a similar research of speech styles.

5.4.1 Instrument to record speech

It could be seen that some of the learners were uncomfortable as there was a mobile phone in sight which is recording their speech. May be the device should be hidden so that the learners will actually feel like it is their normal environment.

5.4.2 Environment

When the learners were called into the discussion room one by one to give their speech there was rather a lot of pressure on them. This might have an effect on their performance. The researcher should just record their speech during their class presentation in front of their friends where they might feel more secure as there is support from their peers.

5.4.3 Length of Speech

Before the recording session takes place the researcher should give the learners a minimum time frame for their speech. This is to make sure that the length of speech is rather standardized.

5.5 Summary

This chapter presented the summary of the main findings, conclusion of the findings which answered all the research questions which are: 1) What are the speech styles of Nigerian learners? 2) What are the speech styles of Chinese learners? and 3) How are the speech styles of the Nigerian EFL learners different from the EFL learners of China in terms of: a) fillers b) intensifiers c) affirmatives and d) rate of speaking. The recommendations were also touched by the researcher. For those who would like to do a similar research, please be prepared to face the same problems. It is hoped that several examples in this chapter will be useful.

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Appendix A

List of Subjects

Appendix A1

Proficiency Skills in English

Appendix A2
Academic English

Appendix A3

English for Research Foundations

Appendix A4

English Language Integrated Skills

Appendix A5

Public Speaking in English

Appendix B
Questionnaires

Appendix C
Consent Forms

Appendix D
Time Slots

Appendix E
Transcribed Recordings