

**SOCIO-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF CODE SWITCHING IN NGURU  
IGBO- ENGLISH BILINGUALS LIVING IN ABUJA**

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**NOVEMBER, 2022.**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS  
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AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A) DEGREE IN LINGUISTICS  
STUDIES**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

I, **CHRISTOPHER CHUKWUKA OKEY-ATTAH**, with Matriculation Number **ART1708652** certifies that this work was carried out by me and fulfilled all requirements for course work and research for the Bachelor of Arts Degree of the University of Benin. The course work embodied in this project is original and has not been submitted in part or whole for any degree or diploma of this or any other university or institution.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to my parents and my great family who have supported me all the way since the beginning of my studies. Also, this project is dedicated to my beloved friends who have been a great source of motivation and inspiration.

Finally, this project is dedicated to all those who believe in the richness of learning.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to Jesus the almighty for aiding me in completing this part of my life. Everything felt like a loop but kept writing.

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Finally, to my friends thank you.

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## ABSTRACT

*The concept of code-switching is a common language contact phenomenon among bilinguals in the whole world, especially in situations where all the participants in a speech act are from the same bilingual background. Also, code-switching is used to achieve a variety of goals in communication because it is grammatically rule-governed. Again, what is peculiar about code-switching in the Nigerian situation and particularly among Nguru Igbo-English bilinguals living in Abuja is the direction and dimension it takes. In the negative light, and very unfortunate too, the code-switching behaviour among Igbo-English bilinguals have assumed an alarming position, especially in recent times. This could be seen in the recent statements and comments made by Igbo linguists, who assume that in the nearest future, their mother tongue may be endangered. In the positive light, generally, code switching facilitates communication. This study, therefore, examines the socio-pragmatic analysis of code-switching and its effects in communication among Igbo-English bilinguals.*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

This is a socio-pragmatic study of code-switching among Igbo-English bilinguals from Nguru. Nguru is an old town in the local government area council of Nsukka in Enugu. The population of Nguru is over 16,000 natives with 70% bilingual speakers. There is more than one dominant language in this community. Igbo is the native tongue also known as L1 while the second language is English which the L2 of a bilingual is and a minority of the population are monolingual. Bilingualism increased in this community with the arrival of Christian missionaries in south-eastern Nigeria (1846) and English language continued as a means of communication side by side with Igbo first as a means of worship and during the colonial era of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through trade, industrialization and education. The use of more than one language in a society has grown and it helps in the development of the members of the society and their region. Nsukka became a community under Onitsha province in (1945) with 8 native authorities (town leaders). It is a very social environment with agricultural trade centre for crops like yam, cassava, palm oil and palm kernel produced by the indigenes of this region; with this traffic of people and businesses, the development within the community increased with the foundation of the first federal university in the east was erected on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1960. This local government area had a population of 309,633 from 2006 census (Amy Mckenna). Igbo language is under Niger-Congo Nuclear Igboid language family with 30 million speakers and above along multiple geographical areas. When two languages come into contact in a community, the resulting outcome is either the

death of one language because one language became over shadowed and not in use by the natives or the second outcome which is the co-existence of both languages. When two languages co-exist in any community, its members are often always bilingual speakers; they can alternate between languages during an utterance or conversation. This is known as code switching and it is very common among bilinguals. The ability for a person or group of people to use more than one language in a conversation has increased in today's society where members come from different language background and homes and still stay in contact with each other (Holmes, 2001). In a multilingual society like Nigeria, Holmes stated that there is a tendency for people to accommodate a situation by switching language and particularly when a new member arrives in a group. Code switching occurs in many different speech communities and it is influenced by domains of language use. Holmes mentions five possible domains which can be identified in many communities. They are family, friendship, religion, education and employment (2001: 21). Moreover, the discussion about relationship between domains and code switching focuses on the real fields where two speakers or more are involved in a direct conversation orally. This study is centred on code switching and its functions in socio-pragmatics context. Socio-pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies meaning and a language in use in a society. It draws insight from sociology, pragmatics, semantics as well as other areas of language studies. Socio-pragmatics is described as the interaction between language in use and culture. Jane Lomas stated that "socio-pragmatics refers to the social use of language and how individuals interact with others. This includes what we say, how we say it, our body language, taking turns in conversation, showing interest in another person's comments and ideas and even knowing when not to talk." These descriptions of the 'social use' of language can also be referred to as a 'conversational norm' of language. This field studies the use of a linguistic identity in context. Different studies exploring

language contact phenomenon reveals that when speakers of non-similar languages come into contact, the interaction of both languages involved can lead to several linguistic outcomes which include the use of more than one language in a sentence or a conversation, this outcome is referred to as code switching. Other studies on socio-pragmatics and code switching demonstrate its function as a means of self-identification in a multilingual environment. While some scholars such as Adendorff 1996, Huerta and Quintero 1992 have a separate view of the concept of code switching they view it as a strategy to compensate for weak language proficiency, stating “people code switch because they do not know either language completely”. This is to say that a bilingual does not the conversational norm governing neither language nor the syntactic structures of the language which they switch from. Some scholars have given definitions for the bilingual concept, Edwards (2004; 7) states any person who knows at least a few words in a language other than the material variety is a bilingual. This description supports the claims of (Adendorff 1996, et al) which attaches a bilingualism and code switching to a form of language incompetence. While for Haugen (1953; 6) a bilingual is someone who produces “complete and meaningful utterances in other languages” this means code switching does not come from a place of incompetence to the speech of act of an interlocutor. This is supported by Bloomfield (1933; 56) he defines the concept of bilingualism as “native-like control of two languages”.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Code switching is a language contact phenomenon, it is a speech act used by bilinguals. A lot of researchers have given pivotal definition and descriptions to the meaning of this concept in bilingualism but not all researchers use the same terms in the same way and they do not agree on the territory covered by the terms used such as code-borrowing, code-alternation, code-mixing and code-switching. Thus has created terminological issues in the definition between the terms of

this study. The term used for this research is code switching which covers the alternation of code between two languages within the same conversation. Under the umbrella of language contact, code switching and socio-pragmatics, there are published books and articles to help in the field of linguistic investigations but there is no work carried out to understand and analyze code switching phenomena between Igbo-English bilinguals from Nguru using a socio-pragmatic approach of analysis.

### **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study aims at exploring and analyzing code switched conversations between Igbo-English bilinguals from socio-pragmatic views of language in use, social context and its meaning. This research covers bilingualism from Niger-Congo Igbioid language family and English as a second language.

### **1.4 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

Bilinguals use code switching as a means of communication in daily activities involving speaking and talking to people. This study examines the functions of code switching in relation to meaning and an Igbo bilingual community. Code switching is a universal phenomenon and it can be used with different linguistic variety. The research is focused to find out how code switching is used by Nguru Igbo-English bilinguals living in Abuja, the capital if Nigeria which is a multilingual environment.

The research objectives include:

- i) Identify the reasons for code switching in an Igbo bilingual community.
- ii) Examine how code switching is used.

- iii) Analyze the context when code switching occurs.

## **1.5 RESEACH QUESTIONS**

From the specific objectives above, some questions are drawn to further understand code switching in an Igbo bilingual community.

1. What is the context for code switching?
2. What is the motive behind code switching?
3. What are the functions of code switching to the community?

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

For the reader, this research gives more insight on the problems of terminology and code switching. This research will help with its contribution in relation to pragmatics of code switching in a particular society. This is important because it observes language in use and examine with empirical data the context when code switching is used, the reasons why it is used in today's society. This research shows how socio-pragmatics is applied when using more than one language within turns of utterances. Code switching lacks data on Igbo bilinguals, researchers have compiled copious data on the alternation of language within turns of utterances under different social context such as classroom environment and code switching at home or a different country. The researcher shows there is a lack of data for native Nguru Igbo-English bilinguals; this research provides more insight with conversations and data from this community. Members of this community are not sole benefactors to this study, this work will benefit other readers to gain new perspectives on socio-pragmatic, conversational analysis and the relationship between code switching and its meaning in social contexts. The benefactors of this research are other researchers who need data to improve their studies in linguistics. This research goal is to

identify the functions, reasons and meaning behind code switching in an Igbo bilingual community.

### **1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study is used to uncover the functions of code switching to Nguru Igbo-English bilinguals. This study is very broad with data from specific regions to evaluate code switching. The researcher covers the Igbo bilingual community with the help of native speakers, questionnaires and recorder as a web of resources to target and achieve specific goals. This goal is to understand the language contact phenomenon of using two systematically different languages in a bilingual free flow conversation. This study examines the domains where code switching is frequently used and why.

This study covers the following areas:

- i. The significance of code switching in Igbo bilingual community.
- ii. The reason behind code switching in this community.
- iii. Contextual analysis of code switching.

### **1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study is focused on the natives from Nguru living in Abuja. There is no evidence to show prior research on this community of bilinguals, this creates a gap in previous data for this thesis.

This study is centered on Igbo conversational norms.

### **1.9 METHODOLOGY**

The section of the research is focused on the process of investigation and analysis used in this study. This includes the area of research, the population of the study, sampling techniques,

instrument of data collection and methods of data collection. The participants for this research are three (3) families who are natives from Nguru and living in Abuja. After spending time with these families, the researcher observes the tenet of code switching among bilinguals is as natural as breathing and it occurs with and without a conscious effort. The total participants from the selected families for this study are 4 females and 4 males from different age grades. These participants were chosen because they have high proficiency in Igbo and English language and they are active members of the community. This study is examined with descriptive methods of data analysis.

### **1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The design used for this study on the analysis of language in use is a quantitative method which the researcher utilized to keep record of the frequency at which a code (language) is alternated within utterances. Another method of analysis used is the qualitative approach which the researcher used for this study as well to understand the speaker's point of view on the purpose and expected outcome of code switching, ample data was gathered from interlocutors through question samples, interviews and an audio recording. The researcher is not an active participant on this research in order to observe more effectively with minimal interference to the behavior of the participants. In the area where this research takes place, there are 18 members from this community. 8 participants under 60 and over 20 years old are the proficient native speakers who provided data for this work. 4 audio interviews were recorded of free-flow conversations are used as a rich source of data collected in different social context.

All participants have a native like control of English as a second language; this was an essential criterion in the selection of participants because it is generally observed that code switching

occurs between skilled bilinguals (winford 2003) all participants are fluent in both languages and competent when communicating with native speakers of both languages they have. All participants live in Abuja; they stay in touch with each other and occasionally meet up at family gatherings each month. Code switching occurs when interlocutors know each other and are not constrained by the overt norms that govern conversations (Gardner-Chloros, 1991).

### **1.11 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

The research data is both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative aspect of this research consists of sociolinguistic interviews while the quantitative data was used to investigate language variation and patterns of code switching. With question samples and interviews, the researcher gathered spontaneous and free-flow speech data in natural environments as the living room, kitchen, Morning Prayer sessions and random conversations with other bilinguals. The question samples were distributed to Igbo-English bilinguals outside Nguru natives to gain more insights of Igbo bilingual community. Poplack (1980) claims that code switching tend to occurs more frequently in highly social and informal settings. The equipment used for data collection was a set of questions given to the participants and audio recording software from a mobile phone (OPPO). This instrument was placed closest to the participants as they had casual discuss and after a while, the presence on the instrument was forgotten which provided more views of participant behavior.

### **1.12 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS.**

The data collected from sociolinguistic interviews is analyzed in two ways because of the different interviews used to acquire data. The research recorded more than 1 hour of discusses and different social context with a minimum of 500 sentences showing variations of language

use. 4 recordings from 8 participants were collected for this research from conversation lasting 20minutes and over 1 minute. All utterances with alternations from Igbo-English or English to Igbo were extracted from the interview and coded to find results of code switching under different social factors.

### **1.13 THEORETICAL FRAMEWROK**

This research adopts the theoretical frameworks of variationist sociolinguistics and speech act theory to guide my investigation of how code switching is used for identity construction and its function in society. These theoretical were proposed from Labov (1972), Searle (1969) and Austin (1962).

### **1.14 SPEECH ACT THEORY**

Speech act theory is an action performed because of an utterance or writing. This theory breaks down the functions of an utterance to the listener. Austin originally (1960: 52) used the term 'speech act' to refer to an utterance and the 'total situation in which the utterance is issued' it is also referred to as performative utterance. This theory is widely studied by linguists a speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication. We perform speech acts when we offer an apology, greeting, request, complaint, invitation, compliment, or refusal. This theory, proposed by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969) has had a huge influence on functional aspect of pragmatics. Speech acts include real-life interactions and require not only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given culture. Austin (1962) under his performative hypothesis claimed that “people use language not just to say things but to do things”.

Here are some examples of speech acts we use or hear daily:

**Greeting:** nne ututu, kedu ka i mere? (Good morning mom, how are you?)

**Request:** ị nwere ike ibinye m ego? (Can you lend me some money?)

**Complaint:** ụgbọ ala dara ụnyahụ (The car broke down yesterday)

**Invitation:** nwanne m nwanyi choro gi na agbamakwụkwọ ya. (My sister wants you at her wedding.)

**Compliment:** ị mara mma (You look beautiful)

**Refusal:** enweghị m ike ịbịa maka agbamakwụkwọ ahụ. (I cannot come for the wedding.)

**APPOLOGY:** ọ dị m nwute (i am sorry).

J.L. Austin (1962) developed three concepts so speech acts can be analyzed on multiple levels.

1. A locutionary act is the performance of an utterance “what is said” this is the process of converting thoughts into words or writing, it is the literal meaning of a message. E.g. give me the phone.

2. An illocutionary act is the active result for meaning presented by an utterance “what is meant”, this act refers what the speaker tries to convey with words. It is also often emphasized that “Austin introduced the illocutionary act by means of a contrast with other aspects of "doing" by "speaking." The illocutionary act, he says, is an act performed when something is said” as contrasted with a locutionary act, the act *of* saying something.

3. Perlocutionary act: the actual effect of the locutionary and illocutionary acts, such as persuading, convincing, scaring, enlightening, or otherwise getting someone to do or realize something, whether intended or not. This level of speech act is centered on the listener. The

effect a speech act has on a listener, could affect the listener's thoughts, emotions or even their physical actions from the effects of the locutionary act.

Searle (1975) distinguishes between locutionary content (the literal meaning of speech) and illocutionary act (what the speaker actually mean from his/her utterance) in doing this Searle improved Austin's theory of performative utterance and created the classification of illocutionary act speech act theory: declarative, assertive, directives, commissive and expressive.

### **1.15 VARIATIONIST THEORY.**

Labov has advocated a stronger empirical grounding for linguistics, questioning the validity of analysis based on the intuitions of a native speaker and stressing the value of observing naturally produced speech. His approach is distinguished from others within sociolinguistics by its reliance on quantitative methods of data analysis. Variationist sociolinguistics is a statistical structure and analytical approach to understanding the relationship between language and its context of use. This is the identification of language and the domain where it is used more frequently. We call it sociolinguistics because describes both social and linguistic (e.g., grammatical, structural, articulatory) factors as equally important. Sociolinguistics, unlike many formal approaches to language, does not focus on an idealized grammar (sometimes called 'competence') but rather analyzes language in use (sometimes called 'performance'). This approach is concerned with the variable nature of language in use. This is used to analyze the shift of lexical content during a conversation. Labov's research demonstrates that linguistic variation is pervasive and highly structured, revealing regular patterns of co-occurrence between language forms, such as the pronunciation of a particular words, and social categories, such as

socio classes. Such insights derive from studying language from a socially realistic perspective that takes into account how a diverse range of speakers uses the language in everyday situations.

The speech act theory is used to understand the effects of an utterance from a speaker to the listener. Since it deals with utterance and speaking mechanism, this theory is relevant to understand bilingual speech actions. variationist theory is used for multivariate analysis of code switching in social context. These theoretical frameworks help to understand communication, structure, and language in use for every language.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the researcher will provide necessary background for some concepts discussed in this study. This chapter is divided into two sections, the first discusses previous research and the second discusses concepts of this research. These sections review code switching and its relation to identity, bilingualism and the functions of code switching to culture. The researcher also reviews the definition of code switching and socio-pragmatics.

#### **2.1 LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY ALTERNATION**

The use of more than one language depending on the social setting or conversational setting is a speech activity that is very common and mostly used in social groups to project a particular identity. The word Identity originated from a Latin orthography “idem” which means sameness. Edwards 2009 stated an identity can “refer to an individual’s own subjective sense of self, to personal classification markers that delineate group membership(s)”. An identity can be formed through various ways such as the language we use in communicating, writing or a dress code from a particular culture, these acts can be used to identify a person. The central concept of identity from a psychosocial perspective is the fact that an identity is not something you have, but something you do (sovet, dimillo & Samson 2016, vertuyken, 2018). Everyone who has a means of communication has linguistic identity and it is not restricted to one language. It is common for people who live in multilingual societies to use a language and switch to others within an utterance or sentence (Kim, 2006).

## 2.2 BILINGUALISM

A bilingual is someone who speaks two languages, while a person who speaks more than two languages is multilingual. At a young age before puberty, children can acquire two languages at the same time or by learning a second language sometime further after acquiring the first language. The most common way to become a bilingual is being born into a bilingual family, although. Other reasons are attached to it like personal, social and cultural reasons why individuals become bilinguals. Most bilinguals of today started as monolinguals and others acquired two languages simultaneously as young children. According to Weinreich (1968: 1) “the practice of alternately using two languages will be called bilingualism and the person involved, bilingual.” Bloomfield’s interpretation of bilingualism is found in one of the early books on modern linguistics language which was first published in 1933 is a definition which was also often quoted by other linguists (cf. Hoffmann 1991: 15) from a cognitive view “bilingualism is normally used for individuals and communities in which two languages are present, whereas the term multilingualism refers to societies where more than two languages are found.” When language is acquired at a monolingual stage to bilingualism, researchers speak of the first language L1, the language acquired first as a child and the second language L2 which is learnt later, either as a child or adult (cf. Mayers-Scottos 2006: 2). The age at which a language is acquired is also critical; all children easily acquire any language to which they are exposed up until the age of puberty after that, it becomes more difficult and tasking. There are a few disagreements in this hypothesis, researchers however do agree that “late learners are much successful in language learning than young children” (Mayers-Scottos 2006: 350). The two languages may have been learned either in a fused context or in separate context, for instance. At home it has to be differentiated between both parents by using the one-parent-one-language

principle. This distinction can also be made between the two languages spoken in the same locality or one language is learnt in one community and the other in a different one (cf, Hoffmann 1991: 18). Diebold (1964) uses the term 'incipient bilingualism' for the initial stages of contact between two different languages. He mentions that a person may be bilingual to some degree, but he or she cannot make complete meaningful utterances. Linguists generally refer to this as 'passive' and 'receptive' bilingualism, when a person cannot speak a language properly but can comprehend it. From a sociolinguist perspective, bilingualism is seen as a socially constructed phenomenon and the bilingual person a social actor. Bilingualism is an international language phenomenon today due to the increased access to information and technologies. It is very easy to make contact with people from different languages and cultures. In opposition to multilingualism which is seen as a societal phenomenon, bilingualism is regarded as an individual practice. The use of attitude is one way in describing bilingualism. Hoffmann (1991: 26.) states two features of attitude. Self-identification, this is when a bilingual person feels himself or herself as totally identified with his or her language and the second feature of attitude is identification, which is when a bilingual is accepted by others as belonging to both linguistic community.

### **2.3 LANGUAGE CONTACT AND CODE SWITCHING**

One common term in linguistics which refers to the way of alternation in language use is code switching. Many scholars have researched on this concept of language contact; code switching is a direct result from the interaction of people in bilingual communities (cf. Wardaugh, 1986 in Cakrawarti, 2011). The use of both languages to communicate fluently in a sentence is achieved through the consistent use of each language in oral activities and social domain. There is still a debatable issue of distinction between code switching and other terms in sociolinguistics, code

mixing. Some researchers distinguish code switching and code mixing based on the place where the changing occurs. For instance, (Bhatia and Ritchie 2004 in Kim, 2006: 45) define code mixing as the combination of different linguistic units (morphemes, words, modifiers, phrases, clauses and sentences) particularly from two grammatical systems within a sentence. Haugen (1978) was one of the first to offer a definition of code switching referring to it as “a process of code preservation in which two languages are not superimposed but follow one another” this description was mainly supposed to point out the difference between code switching and borrowing, which includes an overlapping and mixture of the codes involved. While other researchers maintain that code switching appears only at or above clause level, (Romaine 1995 in CárdenasClaros and Isharyanti, 2009: 68) views code switching as a phenomenon that takes place in a continuum where both inter-sentential and intra-sentential code alternation take place. Switching between languages may occur between the turns of different speakers in the same conversation, sometimes between utterances within a single turn and sometimes in a single utterance further explanation was given by other researchers as Esen (2019) describes code switching as when a speaker alternates between two or more languages (or dialects or varieties of language) in one conversation for the purpose of compensating deficiency, expressing solidarity and excluding person(s) from conversation or discourse. Gumperz (1982) defined code switching as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystem.” This is to say code switching always has to occur or manifest within a syntactic structure, (sentence, clause or phrase.) the important aspect of this definition is that the switches of a bilingual speaker are not coincidental but an intentional act with a social meaning. Gumperz (1982) referred to code switching not as a phenomenon resulting from a speaker’s language deficiency in one language or languages, but as an additional

resource through which a range of social and rhetorical meanings are expressed. He noted that the alternation of languages has an expressive function and pragmatic purpose. He also noted that non-linguistic aspect of speech situation could affect code choices, such as the social relationships of speakers, their social role, and conversation type, and type of international exchange, audience design, occasion and topic. Since Gumperz (1972) analysis of code switching, it was reported that; this phenomenon occurred with high frequency. Code switching has been studied extensively and as a result important theoretical considerations emerged as to whether or not this rule governs specific to language or follows discourse principles. From this, code switching has been analysed from three different perspectives: Grammatical, Sociolinguistic and Interactional.

The grammatical perspective means the acquisition of phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic rules and orthography. This is the knowledge of the sounds, the words, their meaning and how to make sentences with the orally and in text. From the grammatical perspective, poplack (1980) proposed 3 types of code switching.

- i. Extra-sentential
- ii. Inter-sentential
- iii. Intra-sentential.

Extra-sentential switching is inserting tag elements from one language into an otherwise monolingual discourse in another language. Simply put, it is the insertion of tag in one language into sentences or utterance in another language. The tag can be inserted anywhere which do not have too many syntactic limits (Romaine 1989: 122). Inter-sentential switching is characterized by a shift from one language variety to another outside the sentence or clause level. The last type

of code switching proposed under Poplack (1980) grammatical perspective is the Intra-sentential switching, this is an alternation in codes at a level within sentence boundary and it may also include mixing within word boundaries Romaine (1989). This type of switch is a movement from one language to another within a sentence. Hamers and Blanc (1989) finds this constraint harder to maintain when the two languages are typologically different from each other. According to Yule, the grammatical view will not provide the language learner with the ability to interpret or produce words appropriately.

The Sociolinguistic perspective on the other hand, refers to the understanding of the pragmatic aspect of the various speech acts, namely, the cultural values, norms and other socio-cultural conventions in the social contexts. This refers to the awareness of the non-linguistic factors that govern code switching, the context, topic of discourse and the participant's identity to the group.

The Interactional perspective is the ability to use verbal and non-verbal strategies to communicate effectively with knowledge of the rules regarding the grammatical structures and appropriate combination of communicative functions of various types of discourse. This is an understanding of the rules of discourse, and knows that it will be rude to call your employer 'baby, honey,' or other bedroom names at the office.

## **2.4 CONVERSATION AND CONTEXT**

A conversation is an "informal talk between two or more people". It is a usual occurrence when two or more people want to share information on a topic. The Cambridge dictionary defines a conversation "an informal, usually private, talk in which two or more people exchange thoughts, feelings, or ideas or in which news or information is given or discussed". It is more basic than

other speech events and the most basic type of language use in the world. A conversation is among the first thing a language learner studies and it is how we use language. To study a conversation, the research needs to give close attention to the context.

Context is “the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning”. Context creates meaning without saying it; it is always present in a message.

‘Meaning’ is contextually bound to utterances. Context refers to five key components, which are:

- I. Physical environment: these are the things that are present in the actual speech situation that influence how we talk at a certain time and place.
- II. Participant: they make a difference in language because of the characteristics of individual language use.
- III. Social setting: this is the relationship shared between participants in a group or community. I.e. father-son, boss-employer, buyer-seller etc.
- IV. Prior discourse: this is the linguistic context (conversations), knowledge shared by participants about a previous topic.
- V. Cultural norms and expectations: is the way an utterance affects people in different communities. E.g. in a some families brothers don’t say ‘Thank you’ when they collect items from each other because they feel it is not necessary but it would be seen as rude if ‘Thank you’ is not said to a stranger who gave you his pen.

Now, if “Context creates meaning without saying it” how does a listener create meaning from what was not said and get an accurate understanding of what an interlocutor means from context.

This goal is achieved through inference. Inference is the identification of unsaid meaning without saying it. It unfolds the conveyed message which is not identical with what is literally said by the

interlocutor. Inference is the process of reaching a conclusion from known facts or evidence. Thus, "inferences are logical conclusions based on observations and prior knowledge. They are indirectly triggered by an explicit language structure" (Levinson 1983: 182). Inference is the norm of a language.

## **2.5 CODE SWITCHING FUNCTIONS IN IGBO COMMUNITY**

Due to migration from different parts of the country, people cannot avoid the occurrence of language contact and one effect of this contact with other languages is the influence created in speech behaviour of the people which leads to bilingualism. This is no different for the citizens of Ngora. These groups of people speak the Nsukka dialect of Niger-Congo Igbo language family. Enugu is a large business and trade centre in Nigeria, the use of English is not uncommon. Most of the senior residents of this community are agricultural traders who can go about their daily life with zero to a minimal use of English sentences. Linguists have carried out research with empirical data on the functions of code switching in bilingual speech. Trudgill (2000) states, speakers switch to manipulate or influence or define the situation as they wish, and to convey nuances of meaning and personal intentions. Inuwa et al (2014) propose that code switching is a conversational strategy normally used by bilinguals to effectively share social meanings and communicate effectively. The use of English along with the native tongue is accepted among the youths and elites of this multilingual community. English is a compulsory course studied in nursery, primary and secondary levels of education, it is the language used in teaching other subjects and giving general instructions within the school environment up to the tertiary institute which makes English a dominant language in Nsukka alongside Igbo which is the first choice of this community in a domain of discourse. Gumperz (1982) states that code switching occurs in quotations of direct or repeated speech, it is governed by addressee

specification- a different code for different addressee, it functions as a mark of interjection or sentence filler. Many people who grow up from south eastern Nigeria speak two languages by acquiring it before puberty, going through academic institutes, socializing with bilingual peers and family members or traveling. The presence of two dominant languages in a community makes it uncommon for someone to use the language simultaneously in a conversation. Woodward (1997), quoted in Blomquist (2009), asserts that social identity is created when an individual categorizes her surroundings and places herself in a group with which she shares common characteristics, meanwhile distancing herself from other social groups. In a multilingual society, social groups distinguish themselves from others based on linguistic, cultural and ethnic characteristics.

## **2.6 SOCIO-PRAGMATICS DEVELOPMENT**

The beginning of Pragmatic Studies brought a controversy as regards its overlap with such areas as Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Pragma-linguistics and others. Pragmatics, therefore, cannot be easily distinguished from societal factors. It goes hand in hand with Sociolinguistics. The field of language contact evaluates how human language is utilized in social interactions as well as the relationship between the interpreter and the speaker. J.L Austin and H.P Grice were interested in pragmatic development and creating a clear distinction between what is said, the output of the field of semantics (meaning) and what is conveyed or accomplished in particular linguistic and social context in or by saying something. Socio-pragmatics becomes, therefore, the common label for the study of sociolinguistics and pragmatics which is aimed at helping the learner of a language to understand how language use is realized in the social life of a speech community and presents learners with what a variety of language is and how usage differences are realized in different contexts. Leech describes this as the competence of using appropriate

terms by following the social rules. As mentioned earlier, Social pragmatics refers to the social use of language and how individuals interact with others. This includes what we say, how we say it, our body language, taking turns in conversation, showing interest in another person's comments and ideas, and even knowing when not to talk. Language can be acquired anywhere that communication exist and more efficient through an academic system, at an age between 2-10 a child can already understand one language and at this same age most children can speak and use at will more than one language in an utterance. This is as a result of their social environments and the language planning of that community. This is a speech act performed by bilinguals and known as bilingualism, when an individual can acquire and learn two languages simultaneously or one after another, it makes the person a bilingual speaker. They can break through language barriers and also cultural obstacles using code switching as a means to alternate languages. Language is power, and when we equip ourselves and way of life with the ability to engage and interact appropriately with others.

## **2.7 CONCERN OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

While there are numerous studies that have looked into code switching in different countries and languages, no known study have given attention to Igbo-English bilinguals living in Abuja. My study will attempt to fill this gap.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DATA PRESENTATION

#### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the analysis of Igbo-English discourse using J.L Austin speech act theory. This chapter will reveal why code switching is used in a bilingual conversation and its relevance to Igbo community In Abuja. This chapter consist of a comprehensive overview of the use of code switching plus an investigation of its use in the interviews carried out in different social domains and relation of social factors as the speaker's age, gender, discuss topic and discuss function. Multivariate analysis is used to categorise the codes used in sentences and the type of code switching found in different communities. This chapter briefly shows the systematic structures that are used to calculate the influence of variants of code switching. Over 500 utterances were analysed and there were mixtures of language in 70% of the codes analysed.

#### 3.1 Code Variants

##### 3.1.1 All in Igbo (AI):

E.g.1

- a) Speaker A: IK, enwere òkù n ebe í bi?

(IK, is there light in the side you live?)

- b) Speaker B: mba.

(No)

### 3.1.2 All in English (AE):

E.g.2

- a) Speaker A: I will finish now now. I am cooking ukpa.
- b) Speaker A: Will you eat?
- c) Speaker B: yes ma.
- d) Speaker A: I will finish it just now.
- e) Speaker B: ok, thank you ma.

### 3.1.3 English with Igbo word Insertion (II):

E.g.3

- a) Speaker A: I was looking in the bag, enweghi m ike **í**ch**o**ta ya.  
I was looking in the bag, (I can't find it).
- b) Speaker B: It's in the wardrobe, check n'ime wardrobe.  
It's in the wardrobe, check (inside) wardrobe.

### 3.1.4 Igbo with English word Insertion (EI):

E.g.4

- a) Speaker A: amagh **í** m ihe mere pole any**í**, enwere **o**k**u** everywhere else.  
(I do not know what happened to our pole, there is light everywhere else.)
- b) Speaker B: pole dara n'azu.

(A pole fell at the back.)

c) Speaker A: ebee ka pole siri daa? Ehh!

(Where did a pole fall? Ehh!)

### 3.1.5 Starting with Igbo and Ending with English (SIE):

E.g.5

a) Speaker A: kedu ebe *í* na-ga? Mommy, I am following you oh.

(Where are you going to? Mommy, I am following you oh.)

b) Speaker B: *o* gbasara *gí*? Following me to where?

(Does it concern you? Following me to where?)

### 3.1.6 Starting with English and Ending with Igbo (SEI):

E.g.6

a) Speaker A: eh ehm, that reminds me, a na m ere isi mmanu

(Eh ehm, that reminds me, i sell oil perfum)

b) Speaker B: I don't use oil perfume.

c) Speaker A: you know it's for any day *í* na-adí mma ma *ì*choro *ì*dí ka obasanjo.

(You know it's for any day you are looking good and you want to feel like obasanjo.)

## 3.2 CODE SWITCHING FACTORS

The data from this research was coded and categorised into sections to understand the functions assigned to a code and a change in code. These sections include discourse function, discourse topic, social factors.

### 3.2.1 Discourse Function

Speech act is used in participant conversations to switch codes for a particular discourse function such as:

- i. **Assertion:** is a speech act that commits a speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. This refers to statements that are true or false.

E.g. I bought my phone for 63 thousand naira last year, afọ a ọ̀nụ ahịa bụ double.

(I bought my phone for 63 thousand naira last year, this year the price is double.)

- ii. **Directive:** This indicates the hearer to take a particular course of action, e.g. requests, commands and orders.

E.g. ebee ka paracetamol di (where is the paracetamol)

- iii. **Commitment:** speech acts that commit a speaker to some future action, e.g. promises and oaths.

E.g. "I will be with you in sickness and in health, till death do us part".

E.g. a ga m egbu toki maka Christmas

(i will kill the turkey for christmas)

- iv. **Expression:** speech acts indicates the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards a proposition, e.g. congratulations, excuses and apologies.

E.g. *Ọ dī m nwute maka ịbịa n'oge*, it will not happen again.

(I am sorry for coming late, it will not happen again.)

- v. **Declaration:** This speech acts can change the reality in accord with the proposition of words from specific people. E.g. baptisms, pronouncing someone guilty, firing, blessing, marriage.

E.g. I pronounce you husband and wife.

E.g. *Ọ bụrụ na ị weghachighị ego m n'echi*, I will call the police to arrest you.

(If you don't return my money by tomorrow, I will call the police to arrest you.)

### 3.2.2 Discourse Topic

The discourse topic is the linguistic context which influences the language choice of the participant. This conversational context includes activities of our daily life such as greetings, food, complaints, jokes, and others.

#### **Greetings:**

**Speaker A:** *ụtụtụ ọma*

(Good morning)

**Speaker B:** kedu ka ị na-eme a

(How are you doing and you family?)

**Jokes:**

Speaker A: The Nigerian touch light asked obasanjo gini bu oru ya, o si na ya bu onye oru ugbo.

(The Nigerian touch light asked obasanjo what is his job and he said he is a farmer.)

Speaker B: ma ọ bụ the president.

(But he was the president)

Speaker A: onye ọ bụla bụ onye ọrụ ugbo ugbo a.

(Everybody is a farmer now.)

**Complaints:**

a) Speaker A: IK, enwere ọ̀kụ́ n side ị́ bi ?

(IK, is there light in the side you live?)

b) Speaker B: mba.

(No)

c) Speaker A: amagh ị́ m ihe mere pole anyị́, enwere ọ̀kụ́ everywhere else.

(I do not know what happened to our pole, there is light everywhere else.)

d) Speaker B: pole dara n'azu. At the back.

(A pole fell at the back. at the back.)

e) Speaker A: ebee ka pole siri daa? Ehh!

(Where did a pole fall? Ehh!)

f) Speaker B: ọ̀ búrú na I na-eso ńzọ̀ a.

(If you follow this road) pointing at the back of the house.

g) Speaker A: site na fence?

(By our fence?)

h) Speaker B: yes

i) Speaker B: ọ̀ dara na the junction, like two days ago.

(It fell at the junction, like two days ago.)

j) Speaker A: ma ha ceased ọ̀ku-ayi since. And there is light everywhere.

(And they have ceased our light since, and there is light everywhere.)

k) Speaker A: mgbe m si ńlọ̀ awkwọ̀ lọ̀ta, ń maara na ọ̀kú dí.

(When i was coming back from school, did you know there was  
light?)

### Food:

a) Speaker A: why are you late?

b) Speaker C: my car had issues.

c) Speaker C: kedu ihe ń ga-eri?

(What will you eat?)

d) Speaker A: i will eat fish.

e) Speaker C: uche, ń ga-eri azu?

(uche, will you eat fish?)

f) Speaker B: mba, a choro m iri ofa isis ewu.

(No, I want to eat goat head pepper soup.)

g) Speaker C: ok, let me call to order them.

### **3.2.3 Social Factor**

The last section under the factors of code switching is the social factor which was the examination of codes used by both genders and age grade to know when they switch codes.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis of Igbo-English discourse using multivariate analysis to reveal systematic correlation in variables of language shift in the previous chapter. The information gathered from the interviews with participants is used here to find repetitive tendencies in the way code switching is performed in the observed community. Over 600 utterances were analysed and there were combinations of language in 469 of them which are coded and have been analysed. The speech act theory was used earlier to determine how code switching motivates actions performed in a conversation and its solidarity in constructing speaker identity. In this chapter, the researcher gives more detailed description of each set of findings and explains them.

#### 4.1 Variant in All in Igbo (AI):

Total number 469:

Social factor:		%	N0.
Age:	Old	75%	365
	Young	26%	125
Gender:	Male	52%	246
	Female	66%	312

Discourse function:	%	N0.
Declarative	42%	198
Assertive	39%	187
Directives	42%	201
Commissive	37%	177
Expressive	54%	255
Discourse topic:	%	N0.
Greetings	55%	262
Food	37%	171
Jokes	39%	189
Complaints	52%	244

Table 1 show that All Igbo (AI) in the social factor, the young members of this community uses less of Igbo than the old members on the Igbo community. Aside that, there isn't much significant difference in the frequency of usage by both genders; Igbo is a cultural language and it is polite and appropriate to greet in your native tongue especially when addressing some that is older. For this variant, the data shows that speakers are using it to perform an expressive function. As stated in olumuyiwa (2016:294) copi (1953:35) posited that language is used either to evince the speaker's feelings or evoke certain feelings (positive or negative) and of course it may do both.

#### 4.2 Variant in All in English (AE):

Social factor:		%	N0.
Age:	Old	66%	309
	Young	70%	342
Gender:	Male	65%	306
	Female	60%	290
Discourse function:		%	N0.
	Declarative	39%	189
	Assertive	54%	255
	Directives	42%	201
	Commissive	37%	177
	Expressive	39%	187
Discourse topic:		%	N0.
	Greetings	57%	273
	Food	37%	173
	Jokes	33%	157
	Complaints	39%	190

Table 2 shows that social factors, discourse function and topic of discussion are significant to this type of code switching. The males in this community use more English than the females and the younger persons use more of English to communicate. According to Fishman (1972), code switching by topic seems to lie between situational and conversational shift in language.

#### 4.3 Variant in English with Igbo word Insertion (II):

Discourse function:	%	N0.
Declarative	35%	140
Assertive	39%	187
Directives	42%	198
Commissive	37%	177
Expressive	30%	125
Discourse topic:	%	N0.
Greetings	29%	120
Food	24%	102
Jokes	27%	117
Complaints	18%	90

Table 3 show the result of Igbo insertion in English utterances. Discourse function and topic of discussion plays a key role here, more than social factors. The insertion of Igbo in all English

utterances is a specific subset of bilingual behaviour. It is used while maintaining English but making emphasis and contributions with bound morphemes or phrases in Igbo language.

#### **4.4 Variant in Igbo with English word Insertion (EI):**

Discourse function:	%	N0.
Declarative	37%	178
Assertive	39%	187
Directives	42%	201
Commissive	29%	101
Expressive	34%	155

Table 4 shows results for all Igbo with English insertion (EI). It only focuses on discourse functions with directives at the highest and assertive as the second highest speech act used. The English discourse functions are often used to make statements and interrogation. Just as there are Igbo insertions for exclamations, joy or fear, there are also English insertions.

#### **4.5 Variant in Starting with Igbo and Ending with English (SIE):**

Social factor:		%	N0.
Age:	Old	75%	365
	Young	26%	125
Gender:	Male	52%	246

	Female	66%	312
Discourse function:		%	N0.
	Declarative	42%	198
	Assertive	39%	187
	Directives	42%	201
	Commissive	37%	177
	Expressive	54%	255
Discourse topic:		%	N0.
	Greetings	55%	262
	Food	37%	171
	Jokes	39%	189
	Complaints	52%	244

Table 5 represents the results for code switching that starts with Igbo and ends with English. This table shows that social factors, topics of discussion and discourse function are significant and it is usually initiated by older people than the younger ones. Topics of discussion also play a vital role as it is the conversational setting that determines the language choice that will be used. Igbo people tend to be open-minded and have nomadic attributes, they switch to English when they want to be formal or identify with a group.

#### 4.6 Variant in Starting with English and Ending with Igbo (SEI):

Social factor:		%	N0.
Age:	Old	75%	365
	Young	26%	125
Gender:	Male	52%	246
	Female	66%	312
Discourse function:		%	N0.
	Declarative	42%	198
	Assertive	39%	187
	Directives	42%	201
	Commissive	37%	177
	Expressive	54%	255
Discourse topic:		%	N0.
	Greetings	55%	262
	Food	37%	171
	Jokes	39%	189
	Complaints	52%	244

Table 6 shows that age, gender, discourse functions and topics of discussion play significant roles in this variant of code switching. This type of switching applies to almost all aspects on speech act that can be used in this community. From a general sociolinguistic perspective, bilinguals use this variant to index solidarity and power (Van herk 2012, Eberhardt 2014).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

Code switching is a universal phenomenon and it can be used with different language variety. The works of researchers show that code switching is a topic in linguistic that has been studied and given significant field work, this created some problems of terminology as in finding the appropriate term to classifying the bilingual action of shifting from one language to another within in an utterance. For the research, the term settled for is code switching because it covers the areas of discuss in this study of Nguru Igbo-English bilingual community in Abuja. Bilingualism is a compound from language contact phenomenon, it has different definitions from the oxford dictionary to linguistic works from scholars e.g. Bloomfield (1933). Chapter 2 was used to identify the meanings of all the concepts used. The previous chapter (4) highlighted on the various forms of language contact phenomenon, code switching. The tables of data presented showed that code switching is manifested through phrase, clause and sentences to express an identity in a specific context which is understood by interlocutors of this community. Code switching among these bilinguals is a very common activity, it is not random or a deficiency of language as (Adendorff 1996, et al) stated but it is a conscious performative language use. An observation by researchers show that code switching is somewhat a formal domain such as workplace or classroom, especially when there is more than one Igbo speaker to communicate with. The quantitative data used for this study shows with empirical results that code switching is a social act with cultural meaning attached. 8 participants helped in providing data for the study, the data was collected through

audio recording with a phone, there are different social context recorded and it sums up to 2 hours' worth of audio data. Also questionnaires were given to other Igbo natives, who are not part of the community to understand a more general purpose of code switching in the Nguru Igbo-English bilingual community. Switching from one language to English is also based on associations that speakers have built between languages and domain (Fishman 1972). Igbo is a dominant language in Nigeria but it becomes a minority language in some parts of the country. This is why bilinguals come together to create a community, they are still fond of switching to the dominant language of the environment in which they live when discussing matter.

## **5.1 CONCLUSION**

Most Igbo-English bilinguals code-switch because they want to show high proficiency in the prestigious English language and play down on their mother tongue (Igbo language). The data collected for this research contributes to Igbo variationist sociolinguistics. The analysis centred on conversations by Nguru Igbo-English bilinguals living in Abuja. This study analysis code switching with the aim of getting answers to the research questions stated in the first chapter, one of these questions, 'what are the functions of code switching to the community?' Was answered in chapter 3 with the data presented as well are others. The variationist and speech act theory helped us to understand the social norms and motivation for code switching in the researched community which has improved the knowledge of the researcher on the studied area. This research has shown that bilingualism and code switching work together. A bilingual most use a second language for a specific goal, either to greet a friend, make a joke, a complaint or be more expressive when talking to someone. The researcher has observed, bilingualism is an individual attitude and code switching is a social attitude used to create identity to a language.

Finally, it is important that every Igbo speech community in Nigeria be sensitized on the consequences or negative effects of code-switching as a major cause of language endangerment.

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