

**LANGUAGE USE IN EDO TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE CEREMONIES**

**BY**

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## CERTIFICATION

I JOAN EVBUOMWAN A student in the department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Benin, with Matriculation Number ART0911589 have completed the requirements for coursework and research for the Bachelor of Arts Degree of the University of Benin. The work embodied in this Project is original and has not been submitted in part or whole for any other degree or diploma programme of this or any other University or institution.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God almighty, who has been my help, my source and guide thus far, and to my parents Mr. Augustine Evbuomwan and Mrs. Julie Evbuomwan and my siblings, Lilian, Esohe, Isreal, Uyiosa and Osamagbe. May God richly bless you all.

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## ABSTRACT

The project discusses the traditional Edo wedding ceremony among bilingual Edo speaking families, with the following aims: (i) to throw more light on the discourse content and structure of the traditional Edo wedding bilingual discourse; (ii) to identify the place of semiotics and signage in the wedding discourse. Sociolinguistics and discourse analysis provided the theoretical framework for the study while two recorded wedding transactions were used as empirical data. Moreover, participant observation by the author, a Edo bilingual as well formed part of the research methodology. The findings show that: (i) a typical traditional Edo wedding in the twenty-first century almost always involves Language Interlarding, since it is practically impossible to identify pure Edo monolinguals at such weddings; (ii) Features of bilingualism are prevalent in the traditional Edo wedding discourse; (iii) Edo dialectal greetings or English greetings in their Edo equivalents are rampant in the traditional Edo wedding discourse;(iv) social semiotics – whether verbal or non-verbal - and signage, also feature prominently in this speech event; (vi) conclusively, Edo traditional wedding is in itself, an evolving register with an ‘inner circle’ of users.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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

Language is the medium or vehicle for conveying ideas, a system of arbitrary vocal symbol based on social cooperation; the totality of meaningful utterance in any given society. It is by far the most important means of human communication. The Edo's have a rich cultural heritage. Also, the Edo ethnic group in Nigeria seems to be the tribe in which most multicultural marriage transactions have been and are still being contracted. Issues of bilingualism and biculturalism therefore come to the fore in discussing the traditional Edo marriage ceremony.

Language use reflects the culture and world view of its users while a particular people's world view also affects their culture. Fischer et al (2005) explains that language signals where we come from, what we espouse, to whom we belong, it invests our individual, gender or ethnic franchise, it authorizes our pilgrimage through societies, it signals to others what we want and how we intend to achieve it.

Every human community speaks a language or languages. Language is defined in Longman Encyclopedia as “a systematic communication by vocal symbols”. Language is a trait which most decisively distinguishes human beings from all other creatures on earth (Trask 1995:87). Other creatures have languages but their languages constitute static noises which are not as systematic and organized as human languages.

Multiple levels of social interaction from international relations to intimate relationship, are born, enabled and empowered by language (Myer et al 2008).

Languages spoken in human societies could grow, thrive, mutate, decline or go into extinction. These changes basically depend on the speech communities towards the language in question. Fischer et al (2005:131) argues that “while all languages mutate, strong societies’ languages thrive and weak societies’ languages perish, that is, they are replaced by a foreign tongue”. Suffice it to say that a society that loses its language has invariably lost its cultural and ethnic identity.

Although some common words were noted, the Edo group of languages was very different from surrounding Nigerian languages like Ijaw, Yoruba and

Igbo. Edo language was considered difficult to learn by Europeans because sentences or phrases tended to coalesce into single word with the vowels elided or euphonic letters inserted, making it difficult to determine the precise words which are the component parts of such a phrase and that is how the language is also used in the Edo marriages. In this case, the study tends to examine the Language used in Marriage ceremonies in Edo.

## **1.2 METHODOLOGY**

In discussing and analyzing discourse texts such as speech events, empirical data (the two wedding transactions observed) are observed and discussed as language in use ‘above the sentence’.

Thus, the traditional ethnographic techniques, which are interpretive and which involve participant observation and informal questioning methods, were used for data collection. Apart from personal experiences and knowledge gathered over the years by the researcher being a native of Edo and as a participant in Edo traditional weddings, two live tape recordings of such

weddings in 2015 provided data for this study. Spontaneous conversations and dialogues among Edo English Bilinguals (YEB) at the weddings were analyzed. Both families at the two weddings recorded had literate couples and parents respectively; none of the parents had below secondary school education. Any monolinguals in the audiences had no specifically significant roles they played at the weddings. The spokeswomen for either side at both weddings were also bilingual and literate, as expected.

The data collected were analyzed by looking at the sociolinguistic and discourse features which characterize this speech event (Edo traditional weddings) as distinct and as an emerging register.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The general aim of this study is to investigate the Language used in Edo marriage ceremonies.

The objectives of this study are;

1. To throw more light on the discourse content and structure of the traditional Edo-English wedding bilingual discourse.

2. To identify the place of semiotics and signage in the wedding discourse.
3. To know the attitude of people toward the Language used in Edo Marriage Ceremony.

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

In general, the study will be of great significance to lecturers, students, particularly to the government and other Language speakers. This work is aimed at researching concerning the language used in Edo marriage ceremonies. Due to its findings, relevant and important facts will be provided and added to the knowledge of Nigerian researchers, so as to learn from the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the relevant literature on this subject matter will be reviewed, the review is divided into three that is conceptual review, previous studies and then the concern of the present study will be discussed.

#### **2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The section focus of this study is language use in Edo marriage ceremonies, and also the conceptual review of this study will be on language use in Edo marriage ceremonies.

##### **2.1.1 LANGUAGE**

Language is a major means of identifying a set of people, nation or country. Hornby (2001:667) defines language as the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by a people of a particular country. Crystal (1985:262) observes that of all the means of communication, language is the most frequently used and developed. Babatunde (2002:1) opines that the

indispensability of language has been inexorably tied to the existence of man in the society. Language plays an important role in our lives. Sellers (1991) asserts that:

*“Language is intrinsic to the way we think, to the way we construct our groups and self identities, to the way we perceive the world and organize our social relationships and political systems”.*

Daramola (2004:1) defines language as a patterned, social activity of human beings, displaying patterns of substance, (phonic and, at least potentially graphic), from {sic} (grammar and lexis) and context. Whitman (2007) cited in Fromkin et al (2007) asserts that *“language is not an abstract construction of the learned or of dictionary-makers, but is something arising out of the work, needs, ties, joys, affections, tastes, of long generations of humanity, and has its basis broad and low close to the ground”.*

Without society, language cannot evolve. Language was borne out of the need for communication by humans. It serves as a cord binding together the fabrics of society; it is a binding force among various members of the society, hence, its social function.

### **2.1.2 MARRIAGE**

Marriage is a ubiquitous institution as it encompasses all cultures, races, ethnic groups or religious groups (Vincent-Osaghae 2007:23). Marriage is the constitution in human history many scholars have defined the term “Marriage” as a social arrangement by which a child is given a legitimate position in the society, determined by parenthood in the social sense

Lowie (1950:65) defines “marriages as an institution family association that embodies the institution”. According to him; he said that two main reasons for marriage are as follow,

1. As the universal object of founding family
2. The constant need for co-operation in the daily routine of life

Leech (1950) identifies the functions of marriage as follows;

1. To establish the legal father of a woman’s children.
2. To establish the legal father of a woman’s children
3. To give the husband control over the wife’s sexual services
4. To give the wife control over the husband’s sexual services
5. To give the husband control of the wife’s property

6. To give the wife control over the husband's property
7. To establish a joint fund of property for the benefit of children
8. To establish a socially significant relationship between the husband's and the wife's domestic groups.

Ighodaro (1991:1) defines marriage as “when a woman leaves her home to join a man with the necessary right carried out by the man”. Marriage is a union between a man and woman for life that is both voluntary and legal. In a marriage contract is exchange of estates, properties, rights privileges, roles and statuses. Beyond a legal contract, marriage is a covenant as it is entered into by agreement and vows made by the parties when entering one for life i.e. based on “till death do us part” commitment. At the time of exchange of vows and the pledge to be committed, the man and woman involved are both required to be psychologically balanced, physically fit and emotionally stable: In short, they should be mentally alert so that none is deceived or cajoled into the ‘deal’ (Ani et al 2009).

In marriage, each partner, male and female, unique and individual needs. These needs may be emotional, physical, and/or spiritual in nature. Each

spouse's needs adds flavor to the marriage relationship. Without a variety of individual and different needs a marriage relationship would be non-stimulating, tedious, and thereby lack flavor. The failure to properly identify and meet the needs of one's spouse is one of the ways conflict and of course matrimonial failure occurs in marriage (online 1).

Considering the fact that men and women are imperfect people, it is logical to think that marriages will become strained at some points since it is constituted of fallible humans. However, in knowing this it should also be that these moments in marriage matter much. These moments are the opportunities for the bond marriage to grow (online 2).

The sanctity of the marriage unit is portrayed in the biblical saying "marriage is an honorable thing and the bed undefiled" but the extent to which couples understand this statement still remain a controversy. Marriage failure is not accidental, it comes by wrong actions and/or omissions that are not checked and corrected. This results in chain reactions that eventually give birth to instability. Some men scold their wives without looking inward to correct their own weaknesses. However, marriage failure could be traced to some variables

like barrenness, unemployment, unresolved conflicts, and sustained bad attitudes, psychological factors and so on. Even as a brawling wife is difficult to handle, so it is very hard to contend with a husband who is a (tyrant) ruler, dictator and insensitive to the family needs. It is better to stay on rooftop corner or pinnacle even if one falls down, than to live with a nagging wife: It is, “Better to live alone in a tumbledown shack than share a mansion with a nagging spouse.” Equally, “it is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.” (Holy Bible, Proverbs 21:9, 19, MSG, KJV). The attitude of husbands whose wives respond to them with serious misbehavior is a factor which may eventually become amplified beyond limit to leading to repeated quarrellings.

African culture that favours gender discrimination has in some way contributed to the chaos that many Nigerian marriages experience especially in wife abuse. In this light, Aina et al (1998:14) pointed to the dominance of patriarchy in the Nigerian family where husbands dictate for wives relating to the upkeep of the home and in most cases they have the final say in issues relating to child bearing, child rearing and general conduct in the home. When a

woman ‘misbehaves’ tradition empowers the man to correct his wife, some men beat up their wives repeatedly to injury. This implies that just as children are reprimanded and beaten, women are treated in like manner seemingly, and men are not to be hit by their wives even when they misbehave.

Women who are marginalized by their spouses and the society become an unruly, yet interference from the families of either of the spouse could end up having negative effects on the marriage.

### **2.1.3 Types of Nigerian Marriages**

There are 3 types of marriages that are practiced in Nigeria- Traditional, Religious (Church/Mosque) and Civil (Court) marriage. A Nigerian couple can decide to take part in one or all of these, and the number usually boils down to culture and wealth. However, the traditional marriage is very important to Nigerians. Civil marriages take place at a government registry office. A religious marriage is one performed according to the customs and traditions of that particular religion. Such marriage takes place either in a church or mosque.

Christian males are allowed one wife while Muslim men are allowed up to four wives. Civil marriage only allows one wife as well regardless of religion.

#### **2.1.4 Edo Traditional Marriages**

The Edo have a rich cultural heritage. Also, the Edo ethnic group in Nigeria seems to be the tribe in which most multicultural marriage transactions have been and are still being contracted. Issues of bilingualism and biculturalism therefore come to the fore in discussing the Language used in Edo marriage ceremony.

Language use reflects the culture and world view of its users while a particular people's world view also affects their culture. Speech variation occurs due to a number of factors or variables such as language contact, social context, age, gender and social or educational status of participants/interlocutors. Some of these variables account for the peculiar features of language use that we find in the speech event discussed.

Also, in discourse analysis, texts are analyzed as language use 'above the sentence' and not only as sentences, sentence elements or a conglomerate of ideas (literary or otherwise) that are generated through sentence elements or

structures. Olateju (1998), quoting Coulthard (1977), states that the largest unit of discourse will overlap with the largest unit of grammatical organization.

Atolagbe (2010), discussing the discourse elements for monologues/speeches, argues that speech acts make up speech events and the elements of conversation identified by Olateju (1998:34) may be summed up into these two discourse units: Speech Acts and Speech Event. A speech event could be a dialogue, a wedding transaction or a lesson, for example. In analyzing discourse texts that involve conversations, it is often assumed that the Cooperative Principle by Grice and the Politeness Principle by Leech and their maxims are assumed to be understood and taken for granted by interlocutors.

## **2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES**

Marriage is a sacred institution and the parties to the agreement need to handle it carefully since the success or failure of any marriage has consequences. For a marriage to succeed, the man and wife must patiently adhere and cooperate with each other (Ani et al 2009).

However, in the modern world, the meaning of marriage has become more complicated as is manifested in high divorce rates and remarriages and many children are not raised in the traditional family unit (Online 3). A marriage may be in crisis if one or more of the four purposes of marriage namely childbearing, sexual satisfaction, companionship and economic satisfaction are not satisfactorily achieved (Tikumah 2009:11). Crises is a crucial time, the turning point in a marriage, that is a decision moment that varies from person to person according to individual experiences and the way people view situations (Ani et al 2009). The way a particular crisis situation among married couples is handled determines greatly whether marital failure occurs or not. Westlake also added that anything that disturbs the mutual sympathy and love between a husband and wife creates serious tension and if happiness is not attained the marriage is regarded as a failure.

Marriage is a social institution buttressed by law, social support and expectations, as well as the potential for spousal support and relationship, specific investments and yet, half of all marriages dissolve (Musick and Bumpass 2007). Again, despite the potential benefits of marriage, are clearly

not experienced equally or persistently for many marriages as factors supporting marriages vary across marriage unions and may be absent altogether in some (Musick and Bumpass 2007). The absence of supporting factors in a marriage may however signal failure.

In a purely African setting, the status of a wife in her husband's family remains shaky and unpredictable until she begets a child. She becomes really secure after the birth of a male child.

At this stage she is especially welcome as a responsible housewife in her husband's extended family. The birth of the child gives her the title "wife", prior to this time she may simply be referred to as a wife only in anticipation (Obi et.al 1970:9). The fate of a sterile woman in eastern Nigeria is a very hard one as she is commonly made the object of conversation and ridicule by some of her female neighbours so if an occasion for a quarrel arises, she gets the most painful telling off such that her women rivals would call her barren sterile monster who has her maternal organs for mere decoration, Obi also added.

The people's culture includes their beliefs, rules of behaviour, language, rituals, art, and technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion and political economic systems.

Culture distinguishes one human group from others. All of us are directly influenced by our culture; each society has its own culture which has a deep impact on the thinking and behaviour of its members According to World Book Encyclopedia (2003), culture is based on symbols; culture is learned and shared; culture is adaptive and culture does not perish with the death of an individual or group of individuals but then, culture is dynamic and changes with time. Through communication, cultural exchange can provide many benefits for all societies, even though such exchanges can also have drawbacks.

Adebite (2007) assumes that western nations dominate the media around the world, which in turn has a powerful effect on Third World cultures by imposing on them western values and thereby destroying their native cultures. "This means that the programmes from the developed countries which portray their culture will be imbibed by the developing nations". It is further assumed that western culture now dominates our local cultures because we are

consuming their mass media messages. However, Adegbite (2007:45) inform that UNESCO has been championing a “New Information Order” to correct cultural imperialism.

#### - **Marriage Issues**

This sub-section of this article examines the main factors associated with marriage failure. These factors constitute critical issues that this paper focuses on. According to Diehl (2012:25), Marriages fail because the stresses of life on the outside overwhelm the weaknesses on the inside. He added that marriages fail for very predictable reasons: selfishness, brokenness, and ignorance.

In marriage, each partner, male and female, has their own unique and individual spices which are commonly referred to as needs. These needs may be emotional, physical, and/or spiritual in nature. Each spouse’s needs adds flavor to the marriage relationship. Without a variety of individual and different needs a marriage relationship would be non-stimulating, tedious, and thereby lack flavor.

We will look more at the failure to care, which is directly caused by not meeting needs. A growing marriage understands that part of God's design is to

meet their needs through one another as husband and wife. In order to do that, we must be willing to share openly with one another. Your spouse may not be thinking the same thoughts as you. Often times they do not handle situations the way you would handle them. Everything from the everyday driving route to the way the toilet tissue rolls over or under could be different. Being different doesn't compromise the potential of the relationship. Being different is a SPICE of relationships. In marriage, the needs of the husband are often different from the needs of his wife. As a matter of fact, his top emotional needs usually do not match any of her top emotional needs. It is important for each spouse to understand each others needs and seek to meet them.

In addition to the above quotation on the nexus between lack of understanding individual needs and marriage failure among couples, the paper further suggests the way forward referring to a biblical passage:

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself (Phillipians 2:3); do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

The inability to develop a real interest in understanding each other's needs is source of trouble. Also, realize, just because your spouse does not treat you or respond to you the way you need to be does not mean that he/she does not care and is not treating you the best way he/she knows how to. That is why it is so important for both spouses in a marriage relationship to be sensitive and lovingly communicate what emotional needs have "need" of more attention. First and foremost, we must identify the needs of men and women in marriage. Notice they are very different.

### **2.3 The Concern of the Present Study**

The rapid disappearances of most languages of the world are now a source of concern to linguists which affect the social life of many communities' languages. The main cause of the endangerment of Edo language in these regions is the political, social, economic and linguistic domination of the indigenes by migrant majorities who are mostly Anglophone. This work seeks to examine the language use in Edo marriage ceremony.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The theoretical framework for this study is Fairclough's (1995) model of Critical Discourse Analysis - a three dimensional framework that seeks to map three separate forms of analysis unto one another. That is, it analyses language texts (spoken or written), discourse practices (processes of text production, distribution and consumption), and discursive events as instances of socio-political practice.

#### **3.1 Property of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

Fairclough (1989:20) defines CDA as an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that does not only see "language as a form of social practice," but also focuses on the idea that social and political dominion is reproduced by "text and talk." Thus, Fowler (1991:67) describes critical discourse analysis as a theory that sets out to respond to the problems of "fixed, invisible ideology permeating language".

CDA focuses on the hidden relationship between the discourse practice, events and text on the one hand and the wider socio-cultural context on the other hand. Meaning exists in that hidden relationship because it is all about the “unsaid said” concealed in a text. The “hidden agenda” of any text must be seen from the socio-cultural background that informed the construction of that text. In order to encode these hidden ideologies and power involved in discourse, Fairclough (1989:15) notes that “language connects with the social through being the primary domain of ideology, and through being a site of, and a stake in the struggle for power.” Supporting this view, Luke (1997) posits that CDA reveals the ways discourses are used every day for power relation, and by extension, for signification and the construction of new knowledge. That is why Thompson (2002) asserts that CDA helps to make clear the connections between the use of language and the exercise of power. CDA helps to legitimize the voice of the marginalized and by extension, take the voice of those in power into question. Thus by so doing, it reveals the agenda and motives that serve sectional or self interests which help to maintain and subjugate the other.

As an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse, CDA views “language as a form of social practice” (Fairclough 1989:20) and focuses on the idea that social and political domination is reproduced by “text and talk.” According to van Dijk (1988), CDA is concerned with studying and analyzing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias, and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts. By so doing, it illuminates ways in which the dominant forces construct texts that favour their interest.

According to Sheyholislami (2001), one key principle of CDA is that the way we write, what we say, is not arbitrary – it is purposeful whether or not the choices are conscious or unconscious. Thus, Batstone (1995:198-199) contends that critical discourse analysts seek to reveal how texts are constructed so that particular perspectives can be expressed delicately and covertly.

Fairclough (1987, 1993), van Dijk (1988), Wodak (2001), Thompson (2002), and McGregor (2004) contend that CDA takes an interest in the ways in which linguistic forms are used in various expressions and manipulations of power.

The form and structure of sentences can suppress information that exists in a text because of the attitude of the dominant group in the discursive construction.

CDA therefore aims at demystifying the text.

Fairclough (2000) observes that there are three central tenets of CDA. To him, discourse is shaped and constrained by: (a) Social Structure, (b) Culture, and (c) Discourse. Social Structure includes age, class, status, ethnic identity, and gender. Culture could be considered as the generally accepted norms of behaviour in the society. Discourse refers to the words we use. Thus, the goal of CDA is to determine the relationship between these three central tenets. Our discourses reflect the societal norms and beliefs, that is, we say things in conformity with the way they should normally be said in our society, and there are certain things we do not say because the society has constrained us not to say them. Likewise, our identity in the social structure is shown in the way we think, act and speak. Thus, text is produced by socially-situated speakers.

### **3.2 Relevance of this Theory to the Present Study**

There are a number of crucial concepts in CDA which require special attention because they imply discursive power abuse. Van Dijk (2006) examines

some of the properties of manipulation, within the “triangulation” framework that explicitly links discourse, cognition and society. A discourse analytical approach is necessary because most manipulation, according to van Dijk, takes place by text and talk. However, insight from van Dijk’s approach shows that the subjects being manipulated are human beings, and this usually occurs through the manipulation of their “minds”. Since manipulation “implies power and power abuse”, van Dijk recommends a social approach to the study to because a cognitive dimension is important as well, since manipulation always involves a form of mental manipulation. Manipulation, according to van Dijk (2006) does not only involve power, but precisely, *abuse* of power, that is, *domination*. Manipulation can imply the exercise of a form of *illegitimate* influence by means of discourse where manipulators make others believe or do things that are in the interest of the manipulator and against the best interests of the manipulated (Wodak, 1987; Chouliaraki, 2005; Martín Rojo and Van Dijk, 1997). Manipulation can equally be a form of (legitimate) persuasion (see Dillard and Pfau, 2002; O’Keefe, 2002). Insight from van Dijk’s notion of manipulation will be incisive to our understanding and analysis of speech events.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

## **4.0 Introduction**

Marriage is an important aspect of human societies which creates identity and root. It is a legal and social commitment that two people make to share their lives. It is believed to be for procreation, love, companionship, security, status, religious obligations, economic considerations and conforming to social standards. This chapter aims at presenting and analyzing the data collected in this research work.

### **4.1 Participants in Edo Traditional Marriage Ceremony;**

The participants at the Edo traditional marriage include the following, in order of importance:

- 1 a) Ovbiọha 'bride'
- b) ọdọ ovbiọha 'groom'
- c) Avbe bie ovbioha 'brides paraents'
- d) Avbe bie odo 'groom parents'
- e) ọka egbe 'family header'

- f) Egbe Okhuo 'bride's family'
- g) Egbe ọdọ 'groom's family'
- h) Avbe ọse ovbiọha 'bride's friends'
- i) Avbe ọse ọdọ 'groom's friends'
- j) Siblings of the bride and groom; grandparents of the bride and groom; relations such as cousins, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces and household members.
- k) Friends of the bride and groom; colleagues, neighbors and all informed acquaintances.
- l) All wives married into that family and all in-laws of the family.
- m) Spokeswoman (or a spokesman) for the bride's family
- n) Spokeswoman (or spokesman) for the groom's family

- o) Any traditional representative who comes, as one of the categories of participants mentioned earlier and doubles partly as an officiating minister

## **4.2 Edo traditional marriage procedure traditionally,**

Two procedures are involve in the marriage

- a. Introduction ceremony
- b. The traditional ceremony

### **4.2.1 The Introduction ceremony**

This is the part of the ceremony where the groom's family introduces themselves to the bride's family, and asks for their daughters hand in marriage to their son. This is formally done some months before the real traditional marriage. But nowadays it is done the same day with the traditional marriage.

### **4.2.2 The traditional ceremony**

This ceremony signifies the union of the bride and groom with the full blessing of the parents and members of both extended families. It is part of the tradition that the groom's family and friends bring gifts for the bride which includes a suitcase filled with traditional clothes, pairs of shoes to match the traditional clothes.

All participants come out in their very best, to portray the side to which they belong- bride or groom, in very good light- as rich or well-to-do, enlightened, educated, well mannered persons, highly placed or notable persons in the society, etc. All this 'show' is intended to create a lasting impression in the minds of the guests – the groom's family, which may be coming from a different cultural/dialectal background or the hosts-the bride's family. The wedding is generally hosted and sponsored by the bride's family, in their house or any other designated venue. Sometimes however, the groom's family might decide to assist in sponsoring the marriage financially if they are well-off and

particularly want to show this to the bride's family which may not be as wealthy as they are.

In the Edo traditional marriage ceremony, not all participants at the marriage play significant roles as far as verbal communication are concerned. It is presumed that every invited participant has come to felicitate with the bride, the groom or their respective families, so both the bride and groom have to respond to every greeting from anyone and everyone that turns up at the marriage, whether familiar or unfamiliar to them.

#### **4.2.3 The Chief Interlocutors at the Traditional Marriage Ceremony**

The chief interlocutors are people who take part in conversation, they are mostly called 'middleman'. They direct the activity of the marriage ceremony, since not everybody can talk in the ceremony; these people are directed to talk on behalf of the family. These people are show as follow;

- 2a) The spokesman for the bride's family –who directs the course of the discourse and speech event all throughout the twin ceremony of introduction and engagement.

- b) The spokesman for the groom's family – who speaks on behalf of the groom's family and ensures that the discourse follows the prescribed and anticipated patterns, thus checking the sitting chairman intermittently, as the former responds to the latter in the course of the conversations or dialogues.

Secondary interlocutors are the bride and groom who are called upon to speak sparingly at certain points during the ceremony, as well as their parents who have to pray for the couple: they say a few words at certain points of the wedding celebration. Close relations like the siblings talk only when they have to introduce themselves.

All other participants communicate verbally in chorus with others while greetings of different individuals, groups or families are going on, or when appropriate songs at each juncture are being rendered by either of the two sides – the bride's or the groom's side.

#### **4.2.4 The discourse structures of the interlocutors are seen below;**

3. a) A: Spokesman for the bride's family (Initiation)

B: Spokesman for the groom's family (response)

b) A: Spokesman for the bride's family, to any individual, group or family member of the groom's family (Initiation)

B: Spokesman for the groom's family (Prompt)

B1: An Individual, group or family member of the groom's family (Response)

c) A: Spokesman for the bride's family to an individual, group or family member of the bride's family (Initiation)

A1: The individual, group or family member of the bride's family (response).

Analysis the discourse structure of the interlocutors

In 3 above the 'A' is the man who speak, respond or prompt in Edo marriage ceremonies and 'B' is the spoke man for the groom family, he is the one who speak, respond in Edo marriage ceremonies, there discourse takes this following form;

That is:  $A \rightarrow B; B \rightarrow A; B \rightarrow A1 \rightarrow A; A \rightarrow B1 \rightarrow B; B \rightarrow A.$

'A' always initiates each 'turn' in the discourse. Hardly can A1, B1 or even B initiate a 'turn' as a discourse fragment. If 'A' – the spokesman for the bride's

family- becomes over bearing, bossy or is digressing in any way, ‘B’ – the spokesman for the groom’s family- is the only one who can politely or tactfully put her in check; otherwise the family of the groom or the groom in particular may face certain sanctions such as paying some fines, or being delayed or humorously being punished – like prostrating for a longer period than is necessary. Even members of the bride’s family have to ‘bid’ for a turn informally if they must initiate any dialogue and that must be with the implicit approval of ‘A’, spokesman for the bride’s family. This discourse structure shows the powers of the ‘sitting chairman’ in particular and her counterpart ‘standing chairman’. However, such powers are exercised in concert with parents of the bride and the groom respectively, who must approve directly or tacitly such powers. The two spokesmen are paid by parents on either side and how well they perform at the end of the day determines their pay check and whether or not they get more of such invitations. It must be stated here, that there are professional ‘standing chairman’ and ‘sitting chairman’ nowadays, who do not necessarily have to be relations of either the bride or the groom. All they need to perform effectively is a short ‘brief’ or ‘terms of reference’ as it

were, given to them by the parents or family on either side. The Master of the ceremony (MC) is introduced to key figures in the family, given strict instructions on aspects of the celebration that must not be compromised such as the list of goods expected and money to be paid by the groom's family, the time to be spent at the ceremony, etc.

#### **4.2.5 Discourse content of the Edo traditional marriage**

The wedding starts off with the bride's family all seated at the venue, excluding the bride and her close friends. Next the arrival of the groom's family, which is heralded by singing, dancing up to the door steps of the groom's house or the venue. They are led by Spokesman 'B' and then the entourage is stopped and challenged by 'sitting chairman'- spokesman 'A' and her team who want to know from the visitors their 'joyful mission'. Before this is concluded, some statutory amount must be paid by the groom's family through their spokesman, after which the groom's family is welcomed and ushered in. Notably, the groom must be conspicuously absent until he is sent for by the standing chairman or else such an act could be seen as an affront on the bride's family, which would deserve a fine.

From this point onwards, the discourse takes the form of

- 4
- a) A talk to B;
  - b) B talks to A;
  - c) A talk to B1;
  - d) B (Prompt) B1 talk to A,
  - e) A (Prompt) A1 talk to B, A (Prompt) talk to A1 talks to B1,
  - f) B (Prompt) talk to B1 talks to A1.

That mean that in 4(a) above the Spokesman 'A' speaks to spokesman 'B' who responds and in 4(b) Spokesman 'B' speaks to Spokesman 'A' who also responds in 4 (c) Spokesman 'A' speaks to members of the family of the groom, to some member(s) of the groom's family or the groom himself. And in 4(d) the Spokesman 'B' prompts the groom's family, group or individual, who then responds accordingly in chorus or individually to the Spokesman 'A' and also in 4(e) Spokesman 'A' prompts the bride's family, group or individual, who then responds accordingly, in chorus or individually, either to the spokesman 'B', or to members of the groom's family while in 4 (f) the Spokesman 'B' prompts the

family, group or individual from the groom's family, who then responds accordingly to the family, group or individual from the bride's family.

Throughout, an appropriate song or two, a greeting or two accompanies each exchange or discourse fragment as illustrated as follows.

#### **4.2.6 Exchange/dialogues**

5 A: Who are those? What have you come for?

B: We from Ẹnabulele's family, Ẹfa compound in Udo, have come to deliver a message to our father, chief, highly revered Ehiator

A: Is that why you are making so much noise?

B: Please don't be offended, we are joyful because of our father's son, Osagbovo, who saw a rose flower in your garden.

It is observed in the 5 above that the spokesman 'A' ask the spokesman 'B' a question, this form of question as used in this context signify an expecting question that make it look as if he those not know them before. Also in the context the (rose flower) as used above is metaphorically, the rose is used to mean the bride.

After this welcome address the main ceremony then start which take place after the spokesman A have accepted the groom family to join them and the next exchange take this form, below are the data;

### **Exchange two**

6 A: My dear, Osaretin, do you know this gentleman?

A1: The bride, (smiling) yes, he is my husband

A: Ah ah! Osa, you see, I have told you that you didn't take permission from our father before you started wooing my younger sister. In fact, she's calling you her husband already. Your fine will be much higher.

B: (Prompting groom to prostrate, apologize) to B1: (prostrating):  
'sorry ma'.

B: (chanting) May it never happens; that's a taboo; that is, 'He couldn't have done that without permission.

As seen above in 6, the spokesman A ask the bride if he know the visitor who is looking for her and it was seen that the bride then smile to show a familiarity and this signify relationship between this people, the bride then finally answer the question and say He is his husband, this bring the notice of garnering and the spokesman reply but was now referring to the groom and his family that the bride has started calling her husband even without the permission of the father, this show that the father of the bride has the final say when it come to giving out daughters' and the groom and the spokesman prostrate to apologize the kind of language that is used and they then conclude that only the father of the bride can give them the girl hand in marriage.

After these the propel introduction of the family then is the next on the list and the exchange then take this form; data is seen below;

### **Exchange three**

7     A:     So now, visitors, in-laws, introduce yourselves so our family can  
                  know you better

B (prompts groom's parents) B1/groom's parents, then others in turns started from Avbe ni bie odo 'groom parent' and then the oka egbe 'family header'.

As seen above in 7, the spokesman then asks everyone to introduce their self and this introduction start from the groom parent and then the family header and so on.

### **4.3 Semiotics and signage**

The relationship between language and culture is that one can describe the ways of life of a people, simply by studying the language of the group in question (Bello, 2008:17). Culture, according to Ogunsiji (2001) is 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and all other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society'. Sociolinguistics examines the interaction between these two aspects of human behaviour: use of language and the social organization of behaviour. Sociolinguistics attempts to explain linguistic attitudes, uses and beliefs. And in line with Adegbija's (1994:27) submission, 'the social, cultural, political,

economic and historical contexts in which we have grown up and interacted through languages have a decisive impact in the moulding and shaping of our attitudes’.

Humans have the capability to regulate and reshape the semiosphere anytime they want, unlike the biosphere and that is why cultures are both restrictive and liberating. These claims are evidenced in the practices that make up the Edo traditional wedding, because an already fixed system of ‘signification’ exists in the culture with regard to marriage celebration. A ‘sign’ is something that stands for something or someone else in some capacity (Danesi, 2004; Van, 2005). We can talk of objects as signs, specific language use as signs (for example, metaphors, irony, and metonymy), visual signs, and non- verbal signs such as facial expressions, gestures, body language and music. Narratives, myths or mythologies can also function as signs.

At the Edo traditional wedding, the ‘spoke person’ makes use of so many of these signs semiotically and wittingly. In observing the maxims of Grice’s Cooperative Principle (CP) and the Politeness Principle (PP), both spokeswomen try to ensure the various conversations and actions that take place

are felicitous, when considered as speech acts. Where face threatening acts occur inadvertently, such as the groom attempting to shake the hands of the sitting chairman (which is regarded as disrespectful), the concerned Spoke person promptly mitigates the effects of such face threatening acts tactfully.

### **Items associated with the marriage**

- |   |    |                |                    |
|---|----|----------------|--------------------|
| 8 | a) | oruka          | ‘ring’             |
|   | b) | ẹkpétin        | ‘bride’s box’      |
|   | c) | ẹvbéè          | ‘kolanut’          |
|   | d) | ẹdùn           | ‘bitter kola’      |
|   | e) | owọ̀n          | ‘honey’            |
|   | f) | ehiẹn Ẹdo      | ‘alligator pepper’ |
|   | g) | unwẹ           | ‘salt’             |
|   | h) | anyọ           | ‘wine’             |
|   | i) | ọghẹde negiẹre | ‘banana’           |

- j)    ivin                            ‘coconut’
- k)    ùnwébo                       ‘sugar’
- l)    ẹwé                             ‘goat’
- m)    inyá                           ‘yam’

As seen above in 8 (a) the marriage ring’s conveys a meaning of union, this bring the couples together, it signify sing of togetherness. Another materials used include: ‘owon’ (honey), ‘ẹvbée’ (kolanuts), ‘ehien Edo’ (alligator pepper), (ùnwébo) sugar, (ùnwẹ)salt, water, (ayon)wine (optional for some Christians), assorted drinks, goat(s), or a cow, and the bridal gifts of yams, fruits, drinks, cash, a box or suitcase of wears, etc. for the bride, and so on and so forth. Most of these items are semiotic and must be used or be made available; otherwise adequate money/cash replacement can be accepted by the bride’s family if allowed by the older generation of family members. The ‘owon’ (honey) signifies a happy ‘sweet’ fulfilled life, as well as the ‘unwébo’ (sugar). The ‘ẹvbée’ (kola nuts) and the ‘ẹdùn’ (bitter kola) signify longevity and the

fulfillment of purposeful tradition and culture in the life of the couple. The ‘ehien Edo’ (alligator pepper) signifies inaccessibility to witches and wizards. The ‘ùnwe’ (salt) also signifies a purposeful, useful and fulfilled life. The fruit signifies fruitfulness in the marriage (children, prosperity, etc). Water signifies the source and fountain of life to which the couple are being committed as they are joined together, while the ‘anyo’ wine, which is used in prayers, signifies the approval of the ‘gods’ and their protection over the couple. Lastly, the wedding rings seal the vows of the marriage between the couple while the gifts and cash make up the dowry. A few families refuse to collect the cash, maintaining that their daughter ‘is not for sale’ and should not be treated as such. Most of these items are touched and used in praying for the couple. After all the ceremony, the bride will now depart and follow his new husband some item are taking along with her. These items are show below;

### **Items taken to the matrimonial home**

- |   |    |     |                  |
|---|----|-----|------------------|
| 9 | a) | olo | ‘grinding stone’ |
|   | b) | odo | ‘mortar’         |

- c) akhe unwomwe 'pot'
- d) emwin-ebo 'plate'
- e) ero 'knife'
- f) ekuye 'spoon'
- g) ẹkpétin ukpon 'box of clothes'

All this are taking along with the bride to her husband home, most of this item are kitchen item to show that the new wife is expected to be cooking for her new husband, as show above, the 'olo' is a (grinding stone), the 'odo' that is (mortar), the 'akhe unwomwe' (pot), 'emwin-ebo' (plate), the 'ero' (knife), and the 'ekuye' (spoon). All this will be useful for the wife in her new home.

#### **4.3.1 Music and dance**

Music is a form of artistic expression that could suggest positive meanings or feelings such as joy, happiness, fulfillment, etc. It could also be used to express sadness or sorrow as we find in dirges or at burial ceremonies where the mourners sing slowly and mournfully, with intermittent shouts or

outbursts. Music may also be enjoyed simply as a form of relaxation. At the Edo traditional wedding, the first use of music- an expression of joy, rejoicing, happiness and fulfillment is the main purpose. There is a lot of singing on both sides, accompanied by dancing. The ‘wives of the family’ (that is any female married into the bride’s family or the groom’s family) - run all the necessary errands: errands of carrying the gifts in or out, collecting offerings periodically from guests, serving all the participants and even chorusing the songs or chants by their spokeswomen. All these activities make the wedding very lively and interesting from the beginning to the end. The native drummers also add pep to the celebration by beating the talking drum to traditional or Christian songs that are very popular and simple to follow, at every opportunity or prompting of the spoke persons.

#### **4.3.2 Money**

Money is central to the transactions and the exchanges that make up this speech event. The groom, his parents and family members or friends are usually stretched to the limits in attempts to get as much cash as possible from the

groom's family. This is particularly so if the groom's family is wealthy or if they appear to be stingy. Unfortunately, apart from the statutory amounts demanded by individual families from a groom's family and which come enveloped already, most of the money collected goes into the purses of the 'spoke persons', especially the standing chairman.

Only once or twice throughout the entire two to four hour ceremony, is money collected for the bride, and then all participants are expected to give her something obligatorily, unlike all other non-statutory collections that are optional. Whatever the groom receives, as he dances around, greeting his in-laws and his family, or while dancing with his bride, is all that is his and much of this is still wittingly taken from him under so many guises by the 'Scope persons'.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, we shall be giving the summary, findings and conclusion of the present study.

#### **5.1 SUMMARY**

This study analyzed language use in marriage ceremony. The first chapter is a general introduction to the whole work. Here, the background to the study, methodology, aims and objectives and justification of this work is discussed. The second chapter reviews the works that have been done in the field of language, Marriage, Edo Marriage Language Culture, and the previous study were review and then the present study was discussed. And the third chapter I adopt the theoretical framework of the critical discourse analysis by Fairclough and this theory was used to analyze marriage ceremony conversation. The fourth chapter analyzes the selected conversation used on the marriage ceremony by the participants, and the discourse structures were also analyzed

also exchange were also talk about and then, Semiotics and signage were discussed. The fifth chapter sums up the whole work by stating the researcher's summary, findings in the course of the work and concluding the work as a whole.

## **5.2 FINDINGS**

This study finds that:

1. Despite the fact that the key participants in the traditional Edo wedding are Edo English bilinguals and it might be difficult to identify who really are Edo monolinguals among them from their language usage, language interlarding is totally unavoidable. In fact, such interlarding occurs at different parts of their sentences, especially in the utterances of the spokespersons for the two families- the 'spokesman for the bride's family' and the 'spokesman) for the bride's family'. This is supported in the findings of Adegbite (2007) and Ogunsiji (2008).
2. Social semiotics and signage also feature prominently in this speech event, whether as 'verbal' or 'non-verbal semiotics. From the objects used for the 'wedding proper' (honey, salt, kolanuts etc.) the display of money/

wealth, music, body language and choice of language, or even the attire /dressing of the couple and other participants (as discussed in the sections above), one can decipher so much ‘signification’ that is unique to the Edo culture, in contrast to the English culture, habits or worldview.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

In line with de Beaugrande’s (1993) treatise on evolving a theory for the concept of ‘Register’ in discourse studies, the speech event discussed in this essay should provide supportive empirical data for such a theory. This is to suggest that the bilingual discourse of Edo traditional wedding is in itself an evolving register to which can be ascribed an ‘inner circle’ of users. To be a successful participant at the Edo traditional wedding therefore, one must belong to this ‘inner circle users’ of a fast emerging register that can be learnt or acquired through frequent participant observation by any Edo- English bilingual or anyone that is interested.

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