

**LANGUAGE CONTACT AND CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF EDO
YOUTHS**

BY

IRENUMA OSAYUWAMEN STANLEY

ART2000547

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

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**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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APPROVAL PAGE

I, **IRENUMA OSAYUWAMEN STANLEY**, a student of the department of linguistics studies, University of Benin, with the matriculation number **ART2000547** I have completed the requirements for the course work 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.

DR. MRS. O.V. EVBAYIRO
(Project Supervisor)

Date _____

Confirmed by _____

Prof. M. S. AGBO
(Head of Department)

Date: _____

EXTERNAL SUPERVISOR

Date: _____

PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **IRENUMA OSAYUWAMEN STANLEY**, a student of the department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, with matriculation number **ART2000547** declared that this work titled “**LANGUAGE CONTACT AND CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF EDO YOUTHS**” has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test and so does not violate any copyright regulations.

IRENUMA OSAYUWAMEN STANLEY

(AUTHOR)

Date: _____

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to the almighty God, the wellspring of my inspiration, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. I express gratitude for His mercy and grace bestowed upon me.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates language contact and change among Edo youths. As urbanization, globalization, and digital communication reshape linguistic practices, Edo-speaking youth increasingly engage in code-switching, lexical borrowing, and syntactic shifts in their speech. These interactions, particularly with Nigerian Pidgin and English, have led to the emergence of hybrid language forms that reflect evolving social identities and cultural expressions. A qualitative research design was employed, using participants' observation method in data collection. The findings reveal that while Edo remain an important marker of cultural identity, its use is declining in informal and digital spaces. Nigerian Pidgin has emerged as the dominant language of peer communication, while English retains its status as the language of education and professional advancement. The study also highlights the sociolinguistic factors driving these changes, including peer influence, exposure to global media, and shifting cultural attitudes among urban youth. Without targeted efforts to promote and preserve the Edo language, there is a risk of gradual language shift and erosion of cultural heritage. The research recommends incorporating Edo into school curricula, promoting the language through digital media, and encouraging community-based language initiatives. This study contributes to the broader understanding of language contact and change in urban African contexts and offers insights into preserving indigenous languages in a rapidly globalizing society.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on language contact and change, aiming at the Edo youths situation. Language is a powerful tool that reflects the social, cultural, and historical identities of its speakers. It evolves through social interactions, migration, globalization, and technological advancements. In societies where individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds interact, language contact becomes inevitable, often leading to the emergence of new linguistic forms. Among youth populations, this interaction is particularly dynamic, as they develop innovative ways of communicating that often diverge from traditional language norms.

In Edo State, language contact has become increasingly prominent among Edo youths, influenced by social, educational, and technological factors. The Edo language, a member of the Niger-Congo language family, serves as the indigenous language of the Edo people and carries significant historical and cultural value. It functions as a marker of identity and a medium for

transmitting traditional knowledge. However, like many indigenous languages, Edo faces challenges due to increasing contact with dominant languages such as Nigerian Pidgin and English.

This study focuses on Edo youths and how their language practices reflect ongoing linguistic changes. The influence of urbanization, social media, and peer interactions has led to a hybrid linguistic system that blends elements of Edo, Nigerian Pidgin, English, and global linguistic trends. This evolving language use reflects the identity, social experiences, and creativity of young Edo speakers, making them key agents of language change in the region.

By examining the patterns of language contact among Edo youths, this study seeks to explore how linguistic innovations emerge and how these changes affect the cultural and linguistic landscape of the Edo community.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Edo language, as a key component of the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Edo people, has traditionally served as a medium of communication and identity within the community. However, rapid urbanization, globalization, and increased exposure to dominant languages such as English

and Nigerian Pidgin have significantly influenced language use among young speakers in Benin Metropolis. Urban youth, influenced by social media, popular culture, and peer interactions, often create and adopt unique linguistic expressions that diverge from traditional Edo language norms.

The increasing prevalence of code-switching, lexical borrowing, and structural modifications in the speech of Edo-speaking youths raises concerns about the sustainability of the Edo language. As younger generations prioritize urban youth language and Nigerian Pidgin for everyday communication, the intergenerational transmission of Edo is at risk. This shift threatens not only linguistic continuity but also the cultural and historical knowledge embedded in the language.

Despite the significance of these linguistic changes, there is a lack of comprehensive research examining the interaction between urban youth language and Edo. Most existing studies on language contact in Nigeria focus on broader linguistic trends without specifically addressing the impact of urban youth linguistic innovations on indigenous languages. This gap in

research makes it difficult to assess the extent of language shift, the sociolinguistic factors driving it, and its implications for the future of Edo.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the evolving linguistic practices among urban Edo youths, examining how language contact influences Edo through borrowing, code-mixing, and structural change. It aims to provide insights into the factors contributing to language shift and explore possible measures for preserving Edo while acknowledging the realities of contemporary urban communication

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine how language contact influences linguistic change among Edo youth. It aims to explore the interaction between the Edo language, Nigerian Pidgin, and English, focusing on how these languages shape the speech patterns, identity, and cultural affiliations of young speakers. The study also seeks to understand the sociolinguistic factors driving these changes and their implications for the preservation and evolution of the Edo language.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate language contact and change among Edo youth, focusing on its influence on their linguistic practices and identity.

The study is specifically guided by the following objectives;

- i. to examine patterns of lexical borrowing, code-switching, and syntactic changes.
- ii. to assess the influence of Nigerian Pidgin and English on Edo youth speech.
- iii. to explore perceptions of the Edo language and its impact on linguistic identity.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important because it sheds light on how language contact is shaping the way Edo youths speak and express their identity. As Nigerian Pidgin and English continue to influence everyday conversations, the Edo language is evolving in response. Understanding these changes can help linguists, educators, and policymakers find ways to preserve the language

while allowing it to grow naturally. The research also gives a voice to young Edo speakers, showing how their creativity and social experiences are driving language change. Ultimately, it offers insights into how indigenous languages can stay relevant in today's rapidly changing world.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The research will adopt a qualitative methodology to explore linguistic changes among Edo youths due to language contact. The study will focus on real-life language use, social interactions, and cultural influences. Data was collected through participant observation method, and analysis was to analyze the data. Participant observation will take place in natural settings such as schools, marketplaces, social gatherings, and online platforms to capture spontaneous language use, code-switching, and borrowing. Whatsapp chats, blogs, lyrics and advertisement were also collected to identify emerging linguistic trends and external language influences.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews existing literature on language contact and change, focusing on the linguistic practices of Edo youths. It examines key concepts related to language interaction, borrowing, code-switching, and how these changes affect identity and cultural preservation. The chapter is divided into four sections: the conceptual review, previous studies, and the specific concerns that guide the present study.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

2.1.1 Language Contact

Language contact occurs when speakers of different languages or dialects interact regularly and are influenced by each other's languages. Such contact leads to lexical borrowing, code-switching, language shift, and sometimes new languages (such as pidgins or creoles).

The work titled "Questioning Language Contact: Limits of Contact, Contact at its Limits" is not a standalone publication by Kofi Yakpo from 2016. Instead, it is a chapter authored by Robert Nicolaï in the edited volume "Questioning Language Contact: Limits of Contact, Contact at its Limits", published in 2014. In this chapter, Nicolaï critically examines the concept of language contact, exploring its boundaries and the implications for linguistic studies. He addresses the epistemological challenges in defining and analyzing language contact, questioning the traditional frameworks and methodologies used in the field. The chapter emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of language contact phenomena, considering the dynamic and complex nature of linguistic interactions. The volume as a whole brings together various scholars who contribute to the discourse on language contact, offering diverse perspectives and insights into the limits and possibilities of contact linguistics.

Weinreich (1953) was one of the first scholars to study language contact. In his influential book, *Language Interference*, he proposed that when two or more languages are used in communication, features of one language (e. g., vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation) impact another (e. g., the target language)

during communication. Often this type of interference occurs in bilingual or multilingual societies, where speakers switch languages according to context, audience, or social function.

In Nigeria, for example, Nigerian Pidgin and English exert influence on indigenous languages because of their wide communicative scope and perceived social advantages.

Language contact for Edo youths today is influenced by urbanization, peer relations, the internet, and global media. Code-switching and lexical borrowing among young speakers of Edo, as they increasingly use Nigerian Pidgin and English in conversation, are changing the structural pattern of the language. In the longer term, Edo may become a hybrid language in which elements of different languages blend and form new speech patterns that reflect the dynamic social identities of Edo youths.

This not only emphasizes the malleability of language but also the cultural consequences of globalization and modernization, which reshape the language environment of multilingual societies like Nigeria.

2.1.2 Language Change

Change is a natural process that affects all aspects of a language over time. It affects a language's phonology (sound system), morphology (word structure), syntax (sentence structure), semantics (meaning), and vocabulary. It happens as languages evolve to meet the communicative needs of their speakers and adapt to social, cultural, and technological changes in society.

One of the earliest studies of language change was that of Labov (1972), who proposed that language variation and change are “systematic and observable in patterns related to social structures” (Labov 1972, p. 11). Labov showed that language change is influenced by social class, ethnicity, gender, and peer groups (e. g. younger speakers adopt new forms quickly and drive change that spreads to the rest of the speech community).

Chambers (1995) developed this further by focusing on the role of social networks in the spread of language change. He argued that innovations tend to emerge in tightly bonded groups and spread as speakers interact with people from a wider range of social networks. For Edo youths, peer groups, schools, and online communities play a particularly important role in

facilitating the adoption of new speech patterns, including code-switching and borrowing from Nigerian Pidgin and English.

Another major contribution is that of Trudgill (1986) on dialect contact and language change. In his work, he demonstrated that dialect contact, especially in urban areas, results in linguistic blending, which leads to the loss of traditional forms and the development of new, standardized varieties. In rapidly urbanizing areas such as Benin City, Edo youth are exposed to a rich variety of linguistic inputs that are driving ongoing changes in their speech patterns.

More recently, Kerswill (2003) has described dialect leveling as the loss of regional language features in favour of more neutral or more widely understood forms, a process that tends to take place in urban environments where speakers from different language backgrounds frequently interact. In the case of Edo youths, dialect leveling may involve a gradual loss of traditional Edo language features in the face of expressions or structures from Nigerian Pidgin, English, or other regional languages.

New technologies and globalization have accelerated language change, especially through digital communication. WhatsApp, Twitter, and TikTok expose young people to global linguistic trends, slang, and internet language, which are integrated into local speech. As a result, Edo youths use new expressions, abbreviations, and phrases in daily speech. Edo language is thus evolving in modern urban areas.

Language change among young people in Edo is influenced by both internal linguistic factors and external social forces, such as peer pressure, media influence, and urbanization pressures. These factors reflect larger cultural trends and raise fundamental questions about the future vitality of Edo in a rapidly globalizing world.

2.1.3 Youth Language Practices

Youth language practices refer to the dynamic, innovative, and often creative ways in which young people use language to express themselves, construct social identities, and navigate their social environments. These linguistic practices are shaped by various factors, including peer group affiliations, cultural influences, social media interactions, and exposure to global trends.

For many young people, language is not just a tool for communication but also a means of establishing identity, signaling belonging, and differentiating themselves from older generations.

Eckert (2000) was among the first to highlight how language variation among youth is closely tied to social categories and group identities. In her study of adolescents in Detroit, she introduced the concepts of "Jocks" and "Burnouts" to describe how different social groups develop unique linguistic styles that reflect their values and social positions. Her research demonstrated that language among youth is a key marker of inclusion and exclusion, allowing young people to align themselves with certain groups while distinguishing themselves from others.

In multilingual societies, youth language practices often involve code-switching (shifting between languages or dialects within a conversation) and lexical innovation (creating new words or adapting existing ones). According to Rampton (1995), urban youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds frequently engage in "crossing," a practice where they use linguistic features associated with other social or ethnic groups to express solidarity, humour,

or social distance. This phenomenon is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where Edo youths interact with speakers of various languages and often blend elements of Edo, Nigerian Pidgin, and English in their speech.

The rise of digital communication has further transformed youth language practices. Platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter have created spaces where young people experiment with language, incorporating internet slang, abbreviations, emojis, and hashtags into their daily communication. Androutsopoulos (2006) explored how online interactions have become central to youth linguistic creativity, allowing young people to blend global and local language influences. For Edo youths, social media serves as a space where traditional Edo expressions are mixed with global slang, Nigerian Pidgin, and English, creating a fluid and constantly evolving linguistic landscape.

In the African context, Nassenstein and Hollington (2015) examined urban youth languages in African cities, noting that language use among young people often reflects broader social changes, including urbanization, migration, and globalization. They observed that urban youth languages

often develop unique lexical items, slang, and expressions that are used to establish in-group identity and differentiate youth speech from that of older generations or rural counterparts.

For Edo youths, language practices are influenced by both local traditions and global trends. While the Edo language remains a marker of cultural identity, its use is increasingly blended with Nigerian Pidgin and English, particularly in informal conversations and digital communication. This blending reflects the complex social realities of young people living in urban, multicultural environments where linguistic flexibility is necessary for social interaction.

More so, peer group dynamics play a significant role in shaping youth language practices. Young people often adopt the linguistic styles of their close social circles, leading to the spread of new expressions, slang, and speech patterns within specific communities. These innovations can quickly spread across broader networks, particularly through social media and popular culture.

In conclusion, youth language practices among Edo speakers are shaped by a mix of cultural heritage, social identity, peer influence, and global communication trends. The dynamic nature of these practices highlights the adaptability of language and the role of young people as agents of linguistic change in contemporary Nigerian society.

2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

Research on language contact and change has received significant attention in sociolinguistics, particularly in multilingual societies where different languages coexist and influence one another. In the African context, studies have shown that urbanization, globalization, and social interaction contribute to the emergence of new linguistic forms, especially among the youth who are often at the forefront of linguistic innovation.

Nassenstein and Hollington (2015) conducted an influential study on urban youth language practices in African cities, focusing on how urbanization fosters linguistic creativity and innovation. Their research revealed that young people develop unique linguistic codes that incorporate elements from local languages, dominant regional languages, and global linguistic

influences. Code-switching, borrowing, and slang were identified as common strategies used by youth to negotiate social identity and group membership. These findings highlight how urban youth language serves both as a form of resistance against traditional language norms and as a means of expressing modern urban identities.

In Nigeria, Okoro (2020) explored the decline of indigenous languages among urban youth, with a particular focus on the Edo language. His study highlighted how the dominance of Nigerian Pidgin and English in urban settings has contributed to a decrease in the use of Edo among younger generations. Okoro found that many young Edo speakers increasingly prefer using Pidgin or English for social interaction, education, and digital communication, viewing these languages as more practical and prestigious in contemporary urban life. This shift raises concerns about the intergenerational transmission of Edo and its long-term survival as a living language.

A study by Jones (2018) examined the impact of technology and digital communication on language change among adolescents. His research

emphasized the role of social media platforms—such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter—in facilitating the spread of new linguistic forms. Digital spaces allow for rapid language innovation, as youth incorporate slang, abbreviations, emojis, and code-switching into their online interactions. This phenomenon has also been observed among Èdo youths, who blend Èdo, Nigerian Pidgin, and English in their online communication, contributing to the evolving linguistic landscape in urban Èdo communities.

Hurst-Harosh and Brookes (2017) provided a comprehensive analysis of African Urban Youth Languages (AUYLs), focusing on linguistic creativity, peer sociality, and identity formation. Their research highlighted how youth language practices often involve playful manipulation of language, creating new meanings and challenging existing linguistic norms. They observed that youth languages are not only shaped by local social dynamics but also by exposure to global media, music, and popular culture. These influences contribute to the hybrid nature of youth language, particularly in multilingual urban environments like Benin City.

Recent scholarship continues to build upon this foundation, exploring how social contexts influence language change. For instance, Migge and Gooden (2020) discuss the interplay between social structures and linguistic transformations, highlighting the role of community behaviors in language evolution.

Despite these contributions, there remains a noticeable gap in research specifically focusing on the unique experiences of Edo youths in the context of language contact and change. Most existing studies have examined broader linguistic trends across Nigeria or the African continent but have not delved deeply into the localized linguistic practices of Edo-speaking youth in Benin City. As urbanization accelerates and digital communication becomes more widespread, understanding how these factors influence language use among Edo youths is crucial for both language preservation efforts and the documentation of linguistic innovation.

This study aims to fill this gap by providing a focused investigation into the linguistic behaviors of Edo youths. It will explore how interactions with

Nigerian Pidgin, English, and global linguistic trends shape their speech patterns and influence the ongoing evolution of the Edo language.

2.3 CONCERNS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The need for this study arises from the fact that there is a need to know how language contact is affecting the linguistic practices of Edo youths. Although there have been studies that looked at language change and contact in general in Nigeria or Africa, there is a scarcity of studies that looked at how these are affecting Edo-speaking youth in Benin Metropolis specifically.

One of the key issues in this research is the fact that young Edo speakers are using the language less and less as Nigerian Pidgin and English become more dominant in social, educational and digital settings. This poses challenges for intergenerational transmission of the Edo language and for the long-term preservation of cultural identity and heritage.

Another issue is how digital communication and globalization are accelerating the pace of language change. Social media expose Edo youths to global linguistic trends, which in turn influence the way they blend Edo with English, Pidgin, and other global expressions in both spoken and written communication.

Also, we would like to know how the young people in Edo regard their own language. Do they regard Edo as a part of their cultural identity, or do they feel it is no longer relevant in the modern city? This kind of information is important to the development of strategies for preserving the language.

Finally, this research will examine social factors—including peer pressure, education, and urbanization—that are involved in language contact and change. By addressing these issues, this research will contribute to the practical efforts of linguists, educators, and policymakers to promote the continued use and maintenance of the Edo language in a rapidly changing linguistic environment.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the theoretical framework underpinning the study of language contact and change among Edo youths in Benin Metropolis. The framework uses Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication (Hymes, 1974) and his SPEAKING model to analyze the social and linguistic contexts in which language change occurs. These frameworks help explain how communication patterns, social interactions, and cultural factors influence linguistic innovations among Edo-speaking youths.

3.1 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION AND APPLICATIONS

Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication emphasizes understanding language use within its cultural and social context. Unlike traditional linguistic theories, which focus primarily on structure, this approach examines how social factors influence communication (Hymes, 1974). It highlights how language practices among Edo youths are shaped by peer interactions, social media, and cultural exchanges within urban environments.

This study applies Hymes' SPEAKING model to analyze the components of communication in the context of language contact:

1. Setting and Scene (S): Refers to the physical and psychological environment where communication occurs (Hymes, 1974). In the case of Edo youth, informal settings such as markets, social gatherings, and online platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter) are key spaces where language contact happens (Jones, 2018).

2. Participants (P): Refers to the speakers and their roles in communication (Hymes, 1974). For this study, participants include Edo-speaking youths,

peers from different linguistic backgrounds, educators, and family members (Okoro, 2020).

3. Ends (E): Focuses on the goals and outcomes of communication (Hymes, 1974). Among Èdo youths, language contact often aims to establish social connections, express identity, and facilitate comprehension in multilingual settings (Nassenstein & Hollington, 2015).

4. Act Sequence (A): Describes the structure and flow of speech (Hymes, 1974). Code-switching and code-mixing between Èdo, Nigerian Pidgin, and English reflect shifts in discourse patterns influenced by urbanization and peer group interactions (Muysken, 2000).

5. Key (K): Refers to the tone or manner of communication (Hymes, 1974). In informal peer settings, a casual or playful tone often encourages linguistic creativity, leading to lexical borrowing and hybrid speech forms (Eckert, 2000).

6. Instrumentalities (I): Examines the channels of communication (spoken, written, digital) and the language varieties used (Hymes, 1974). Social

media platforms foster multilingual practices where Edo youths blend Edo, Pidgin, and English in their communication (Androutsopoulos, 2006).

7. Norms of Interaction (N): Concern social rules that guide language use (Hymes, 1974). Edo youths adjust their language choices depending on social context, switching to standard Edo in formal settings and using Nigerian Pidgin in casual conversations (Okoro, 2020).

8. Genre (G): Refers to the type of speech event, such as casual conversations, formal presentations, or online interactions (Hymes, 1974). Edo youths adapt their language according to context, using formal Edo in traditional ceremonies and a mix of Pidgin and English in social media exchanges (Hurst-Harosh & Brookes, 2017).

3.2 THEORETICAL APPLICATION TO THE PRESENT STUDY

The ethnography of communication framework, using Hymes' SPEAKING model, allows this study to explore how Edo youths navigate different linguistic environments by adjusting their language based on context, participants, and social norms. For instance, Edo youths often use standard Edo in formal contexts to maintain cultural ties but switch to Nigerian

Pidgin or English during peer-group interactions, especially in urban settings where these languages dominate (Smith, 2015; Okoro, 2020).

Digital platforms serve as instrumentalities for language change, as social media interactions facilitate rapid adoption of global linguistic trends (Jones, 2018). This dynamic setting accelerates the evolution of Edo youths language by encouraging code-switching, lexical borrowing, and syntactic innovations (Nassenstein & Hollington, 2015).

The model also highlights the importance of social factors such as globalization, peer influence, and urbanization in shaping linguistic behavior. Edo youths engage in language practices that reflect both cultural heritage and contemporary urban experiences, demonstrating how traditional and modern linguistic elements coexist (Rampton, 1995).

3.3 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter applied Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication and the SPEAKING model as the theoretical framework for analyzing language contact and change among Edo youths. The framework provides a comprehensive understanding of how social context, interaction patterns,

and linguistic innovation contribute to language change. By considering factors such as peer influence, digital communication, and cultural identity, this study captures the complexities of language use in a multilingual urban environment (Hymes, 1974; Okoro, 2020).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyzes data on language contact and change among Edo youths. Using Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication and the SPEAKING model, the chapter examines how linguistic practices among Edo youths reflect contact with Nigerian Pidgin and English across different

social contexts. Five real-life scenarios illustrate the influence of language contact, including code-switching, lexical borrowing, and syntactic shifts.

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION

The following five scenarios showcase how Edo youth use language across different settings:

Scenario 1: Classroom Interaction (Formal Setting)

Conversation:

Teacher: "Who can explain this Edo proverb: 'okpomwe ese ore o we na ru irɔen ɔvbehe'?"

Student: "It means 'one good turn deserves another.' But honestly, sir, most of us no dey hear these proverbs again."

Analysis Using SPEAKING Model:

Setting and Scene (S): Classroom, formal educational setting.

Participants (P): Teacher (authority figure), students (learners).

Ends (E): To explain and understand Edo proverbs as part of cultural education.

Act Sequence (A): Teacher presents a proverb; student responds with mixed-language commentary.

Key (K): Respectful and academic.

Instrumentalities (I): Spoken Edo mixed with Nigerian Pidgin.

Norms (N): Formal context requires respect, but Pidgin influences casual student responses.

Genre (G): Educational discourse.

Interpretation:

The student's use of Pidgin alongside Edo highlights how traditional language is diminishing in formal educational contexts. The code-switching reflects the growing influence of urban language contact even in settings meant for cultural preservation.

Scenario 2: Peer Group Conversation (Informal Setting)

Conversation:

Friend 1: "Guy, the party yesterday mad o!"

Friend 2: "True! But dem for add some Edo beats for that jam."

Friend 1: "Abi now! E for make sense die."

Analysis Using SPEAKING Model:

Setting and Scene (S): Informal gathering among friends.

Participants (P): Peer group of Edo youths.

Ends (E): Expressing opinions about a party.

Act Sequence (A): Exchanging views using Nigerian Pidgin and Edo words.

Key (K): Playful and casual.

Instrumentalities (I): Spoken language blending Nigerian Pidgin and Edo.

Norms (N): Informal language use encourages creativity and bonding.

Genre (G): Casual conversation.

Interpretation:

The code-mixing here shows peer group dynamics promoting the blending of languages. While Edo expressions are still used, Pidgin dominates the interaction, reflecting language shift among urban youth.

Scenario 3: Family Gathering (Traditional Context)

Conversation:

Grandmother: "ovbimwE, vbọọ ye hE?" (Child, how are you?)

Grandson: "I dey fine, Mama."

Grandmother: "Why you no dey speak Edo again?"

Grandson: "Na school and friends matter, Mama. But mi go try speak am more."

Analysis Using SPEAKING Model:

Setting and Scene (S): Family home during a gathering.

Participants (P): Grandmother (elder), grandson (youth).

Ends (E): Maintaining familial bonds and encouraging language retention.

Act Sequence (A): Grandmother speaks in Edo; grandson responds using Nigerian Pidgin.

Key (K): Affectionate and concerned.

Instrumentalities (I): Spoken Edo and Pidgin.

Norms (N): Elders expect Edo language use for cultural respect.

Genre (G): Family interaction.

Interpretation:

This scenario highlights the generational language gap. While the elder promotes Edo usage, the youth's response in Pidgin reflects the impact of urbanization and peer influence on language choices.

Scenario 4: Social Media Interaction (Digital Space)

Post:

"E don tey wey I chop correct owo soup! Anybody sabi where I fit find am for Benin?"

Comment:

"Try Uselu junction, their soup legit!"

Analysis Using SPEAKING Model:

Setting and Scene (S): Facebook or WhatsApp post.

Participants (P): Edo-speaking youth and online peers.

Ends (E): Seeking and providing information about food locations.

Act Sequence (A): Posting in mixed-language; receiving feedback in similar style.

Key (K): Casual and friendly.

Instrumentalities (I): Written text using Pidgin and Edo expressions.

Norms (N): Blending languages for clarity and relatability.

Genre (G): Online interaction.

Interpretation:

Digital spaces encourage multilingualism, with Pidgin serving as the default for accessibility. The blending of Edo words (“owo soup”) shows how cultural identity persists even in online communication.

Scenario 5: Market Conversation (Transactional Setting)

Conversation:

Customer: "Abeg, how much for dis yam?"

Seller: "₦500, but if you buy more, I go dash you better price."

Customer: "Mi need three, make you reduce small."

Analysis Using SPEAKING Model:

Setting and Scene (S): Local market in Benin Metropolis.

Participants (P): Seller and buyer (both Edo speakers).

Ends (E): Negotiating a fair price.

Act Sequence (A): Inquiry, response, and negotiation using mixed-language expressions.

Key (K): Polite but assertive.

Instrumentalities (I): Spoken language combining Nigerian Pidgin and Edo elements.

Norms (N): Casual norms with flexibility in language use for bargaining.

Genre (G): Transactional conversation.

Interpretation:

In market settings, code-switching reflects practical language use for mutual understanding. Nigerian Pidgin dominates the interaction, while Edo elements help establish shared cultural identity between participants.

4.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Across all five scenarios, the following patterns emerge:

Code-switching and lexical borrowing are common strategies for effective communication among Edo youth.

Nigerian Pidgin dominates informal interactions, while Edo is reserved for formal, familial, or cultural contexts.

Digital platforms encourage linguistic flexibility, blending Edo, Pidgin, and English.

Urbanization and peer influence contribute significantly to the decline of Edo in everyday communication.

These findings highlight the dynamic nature of language contact among Edo youth, reflecting both cultural adaptation and the pressures of globalization and urban life.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the study on language contact and change among Edo youths. It reflects on the effects of language contact, particularly focusing on interactions between Edo, Nigerian Pidgin, and

English in various social contexts. The chapter also offers conclusions on how these interactions influence the linguistic identity of Edo youths and provides recommendations for language preservation and future research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This research investigated the impact of language contact on linguistic change among Edo-speaking youths, emphasizing the influence of globalization, urbanization, and digital communication on their language practices. As Edo youths interact within diverse linguistic environments, particularly in urban settings and online spaces, their speech patterns undergo significant modifications. The study specifically examined how prolonged contact with Nigerian Pidgin and English contributes to shifts in Edo language use, leading to notable changes in vocabulary, syntax, and communicative strategies.

A key focus of the research was on code-switching, lexical borrowing, and syntactic transformations, which have become prominent features of youths' discourse. The study explored how Edo speakers frequently alternate between Edo, Nigerian Pidgin, and English depending on social contexts,

often incorporating borrowed words and expressions that gradually reshape the structure of their indigenous language. This phenomenon was analyzed within the broader framework of sociolinguistics, considering the social and cultural implications of these linguistic shifts.

Employing a qualitative approach, data were gathered through participant observation, allowing for an in-depth understanding of real-life language use among Edo youths. Ethnography of speaking served as the analytical framework, providing insights into how linguistic choices are influenced by various social, cultural, and situational factors. The Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model was instrumental in examining how different components—such as setting, participants, ends (purposes), acts, keys (tone or manner of speech), instrumentalities (speech forms), norms, and genres—shape the way Edo youths navigate between languages.

The findings revealed a complex linguistic landscape where the Edo language remains a crucial marker of cultural identity but is increasingly being overshadowed by Nigerian Pidgin and English, especially in informal conversations and digital communication. While Edo is still valued for its

cultural and traditional significance, its usage is declining among younger speakers who find Pidgin and English more accessible and socially advantageous. The study underscores the evolving nature of Edo language use, raising concerns about language shift while also highlighting the adaptive strategies employed by speakers to maintain their linguistic heritage in a rapidly changing sociolinguistic environment.

5.2 KEY FINDINGS

The following findings emerged from the analysis:

1. Code-Switching and Lexical Borrowing

Edo youth frequently switch between Edo, Nigerian Pidgin, and English, depending on social context. Code-switching is particularly prominent in casual settings, where it fosters ease of communication and social bonding. Lexical borrowing from Pidgin and English into Edo is also common, reflecting the blending of linguistic systems in everyday speech.

2. Dominance of Nigerian Pidgin in Informal Interactions

Nigerian Pidgin has become the dominant medium for casual conversations, especially among peer groups and in digital spaces. Its simplicity, inclusivity, and widespread use across ethnic groups make it the preferred language for social interaction in urban settings.

3. Domain-Specific Language Use

Language use among Edo youth varies across social settings:

Edo is predominantly used in formal, familial, and traditional contexts, such as cultural events or interactions with elders.

Nigerian Pidgin dominates casual peer interactions, marketplaces, and online conversations.

English is reserved for academic, professional, and institutional settings.

4. Shifting Perceptions of Edo Language

Many Edo youths perceive their language as culturally significant but less relevant for everyday communication. There is a growing tendency to

associate Nigerian Pidgin and English with modernity, social mobility, and broader communication networks.

5. Impact of Digital Communication

Social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter foster multilingual communication, encouraging Edo youths to blend Edo, Nigerian Pidgin, and English. These platforms accelerate linguistic innovation and reflect a globalized language culture.

6. Potential for Language Shift

The continued dominance of Nigerian Pidgin and English raises concerns about the gradual decline of Edo among the younger generation. If current trends continue, Edo may experience a significant reduction in active usage, leading to diminished intergenerational transmission.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This study reveals the dynamic nature of language use among Edo youths in Benin Metropolis. The interplay between Edo, Nigerian Pidgin, and English

reflects broader sociolinguistic trends shaped by globalization, urbanization, and digital communication. While Edo continues to hold cultural significance, its use is being challenged by the dominance of Nigerian Pidgin and the formal status of English.

The findings suggest that language contact among Edo youths is leading to hybrid linguistic practices characterized by code-switching, lexical borrowing, and syntactic shifts. Without deliberate efforts to preserve and promote Edo, the language risks becoming marginalized in both formal and informal domains.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the challenges posed by language contact and support the preservation of Edo, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Incorporate Edo Language in Education

Introduce Edo language courses in school curricula across Edo State.

Integrate cultural elements such as proverbs, folklore, and traditional stories into teaching materials to foster cultural appreciation.

2. Promote Community-Based Language Programs

Establish language clubs and cultural organizations to encourage active use of Edo in social settings.

Organize workshops, storytelling sessions, and cultural festivals to promote the language in everyday life.

3. Leverage Digital Platforms for Language Preservation

Develop Edo-language content for social media, including educational videos, podcasts, and interactive language-learning apps.

Encourage Edo-speaking influencers and content creators to produce material that highlights the language's relevance.

4. Foster Positive Attitudes Toward Edo

Launch awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of preserving Edo as part of the community's cultural heritage.

Promote the value of bilingualism and multilingualism, encouraging youth to see Èdo as compatible with modern identities.

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