

**CODE SWITCHING AND MIXING BETWEEN USELU MARKET WOMEN
AND HAUSA TRADERS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES
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BENIN CITY,**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES,
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DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS, LINGUISTICS STUDIES, UNIVERSITY
OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

OCTOBER, 2025

DECLARATION

I declare that this project work is based on a study undertaken by me in the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin under the supervision of **DR. (MRS) I. N. GEORGE ESSIEN**. This work has not been previously submitted for award of a degree elsewhere. All ideas and views are product of my personal research effort and all references to works of others have been duly acknowledged.

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PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **Unuhiemi Sharon OJEMU** with matriculation number **ART2100812** declare that this work titled “**CODE SWITCHING AND MIXING BETWEEN USELU MARKET WOMEN AND HAUSA TRADERS**” has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test and so, does not violate any copyright regulations.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **Unuhiemi Sharon OJEMU (Miss)** with the Matriculation number **ART2100812** of the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.

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DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God Almighty my all in all my source of strength, wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He has been my help throughout this journey and on HIS wings only have I soared. I also dedicate this to my family who encouraged me all the way and whose encouragement have made sure that I give it all it takes to finish that which I started. May the blessing of God be with them now and always.

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With a heart filled with gratitude, I give all glory, honor, and praise to Almighty God, the giver of life, wisdom, and strength. Without His divine grace, this work would not have been possible. I am especially thankful to Our Blessed Mother Mary, legion of Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help, for her constant intercession, love, and comfort in times of difficulty. My heartfelt thanks also go to St. Anthony of Padua, my special patron saint, whose miraculous assistance and guidance have been a source of hope and inspiration throughout this academic journey.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	i
Declaration	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ii
Plagiarism Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Dedication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	v
Acknowledgements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	vi
Table of contents	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	viii
Abstract	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background of the Study	1
1.2	Statement of the problem	2
1.3	Research Questions	4
1.4	Study Aim and Goals	4
1.5	Study Purpose	5
1.6	Study Limitations	5
1.7	Study Scope	5
1.8	Methodology	5
1.9	Significance of the Study	5

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	Introduction	8
2.1	Conceptual Review of Literature	9
2.1.1	Multilingualism and Language Contact	9
2.1.2	Code-Switching	9
2.1.3	Code-Mixing	10
2.1.4	Functions of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing	10
2.2	Review of Previous Studies	11
2.2.1	International Studies	11
2.2.2	Studies in Africa	11
2.2.3	Studies in Nigeria	11

2.2.4	Previous Studies in Edo State	12
2.3	The Concern of the Present Study	14
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK		
3.1	Introduction	15
3.2	Ethnography	15
3.3	Ethnography of Communication	16
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF DATA/ANALYSIS		
4.1	Introduction	19
4.2.	Participant Observation Conversation Between a Hausa Trader and an Edo Market Woman at Uselu Market	20
4.2.1	Excerpt 1	20
4.2.2	Excerpt 2	24
4.2.3.	Excerpt 3	27
4.3.0	Interview Data from Uselu Market	32
4.3.1	Data 1: Interaction with an Edo female Trader	32
4.3.2.	Data 2: Interaction with a Hausa Male Trader	34
4.3.3.	Data 3: Interaction with an Agbor Male Trader (Resident in Benin)	37
4.3.4	Data 4: Interaction with an Edo Woman	40
4.4.5	Data 5: Interview with a Hausa Trader (Nasim, Age 27)	44
CHAPTER FIVE		
5.1	Introduction	47
5.2	Summary of the Study	47
5.3	Findings	48
5.4	Recommendations	49
5.5	Conclusion	54
REFERENCES		55

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing between Hausa traders and Edo market women in Uselu Market, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. It examines how language operates as a tool for communication, negotiation, and social interaction within a multilingual market setting. Guided by Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication framework, the study explores how participants strategically alternate between Edo, Hausa, and Nigerian Pidgin to achieve mutual understanding and maintain interpersonal relationships during trade exchanges. The research adopts a qualitative ethnographic design, utilizing participant observation and semi-structured interviews as primary methods of data collection. Data were drawn from naturally occurring market interactions and analyzed using Hymes' SPEAKING model to identify linguistic patterns and communicative functions. Findings reveal that Nigerian Pidgin serves as the dominant lingua franca and bridge for communication between Hausa and Edo traders. Code-switching and code-mixing are employed to ensure clarity, express politeness, mark identity, and strengthen social bonds. The study further establishes that linguistic flexibility and tolerance are vital to sustaining daily market communication in a multilingual environment. Traders switch languages not only to facilitate business transactions but also to foster mutual respect, understanding, and peaceful coexistence. Nigerian Pidgin emerges as a unifying medium that enhances social cohesion among speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Based on these findings, the study recommends greater recognition of Nigerian Pidgin as a practical and unifying language in multilingual communities. It should be integrated into sociolinguistic and educational discussions to reflect its real-life communicative significance in Nigeria's linguistic landscape.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is the primary medium through which human beings interact, express thoughts, and transmit culture. It is not only a tool for communication but also a marker of identity and social belonging. In multilingual societies, language use becomes even more complex as speakers often draw on multiple linguistic resources to facilitate communication in different contexts. Nigeria is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, with scholars estimating that over 500 indigenous languages are spoken across its regions (Bamgbose, 1991; Igboanusi, 2008). This high level of linguistic diversity makes multilingualism and constant language contact inevitable. In such contexts, two common outcomes of language contact are code-switching and code-mixing. Code-switching refers to the alternation between two or more languages within a conversation, while code-mixing involves the blending of elements from different languages within a single utterance.

These practices are not merely random; rather, they serve specific communicative, social, and pragmatic purposes such as signaling identity, negotiating meaning, expressing solidarity, or establishing social distance. Markets, as centers of trade and social interaction, are ideal spaces for observing language contact phenomena.

The Uselu Market in Benin City exemplifies this situation. Here, Edo-speaking women, who are predominantly traders, engage in frequent interactions with Hausa traders from Northern Nigeria. Since successful trading requires persuasion, clarity, and trust, participants employ different languages depending on their interlocutor and the communicative need at the moment. Hausa, Edo, Pidgin English, and sometimes Standard English are all used in the market space, reflecting Nigeria's linguistic ecology.

This study therefore investigates the patterns and functions of code-switching and code-mixing in Uselu Market. It seeks to understand the social motivations behind language alternation and its implications for communication and cultural exchange between Edo and Hausa speakers. By examining these interactions, the study sheds light on how multilingualism operates in everyday life and how language contact fosters cooperation, understanding, and sometimes even conflict in heterogeneous communities.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Language is very important for social interaction, especially in business. Persuasion, clear communication, and trust are key in business deals. In countries like Nigeria, where many languages are spoken, people need to be able to switch between languages to communicate well. Markets are one place where you see this happening a lot, as different language and culture groups come together to do business.

Even though language contact is common in Nigerian markets, not much research has looked at how Edo-speaking women and Hausa traders interact in Uselu Market, Benin

City. Past studies on code-switching and code-mixing in Nigeria have looked at classrooms, media, politics, and religion, but not enough work has been done on markets, especially on the Edo-Hausa trade.

The use of code-switching and code-mixing in Urelu Market brings up some questions:

1. Why do people switch between Edo, Hausa, Nigerian Pidgin, and English when they are doing business?
2. What purposes does this switching serve in a business setting?
3. Does switching languages make it easier to understand each other, cooperate, and make sales, or does it sometimes cause misunderstandings and disagreements?
4. How does the language people choose show things? like power, identity, relationships, and negotiation in market interactions?

Because these questions have not been studied enough, there is a gap in what we know about sociolinguistics and how communication works in Nigeria. If we don't look into this, we might miss how language affects trade and communication in regular, daily situations.

So, this study will look at why Edo-speaking women and Hausa traders switch between languages in Urelu Market and what it means for communication and society. The results will help people understand how multilingualism works in Nigerian markets and show how language can help or hurt business and social interactions.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What code-switching and code-mixing patterns are common at Urelu Market?
2. What social reasons lead market women and Hausa traders to switch or mix languages?
3. How do these language habits help with communication and trade?
4. How do identity and social situations affect language choice in Urelu Market?

1.4 Study Aim and Goals

Aim:

This study looks into how Urelu market women and Hausa traders use code-switching and code-mixing to communicate.

Goals:

1. Find code-switching and code-mixing habits in Urelu Market.
2. Study the social reasons behind changing languages.
3. Check how code-switching and code-mixing make trade and communication easier.
4. Figure out the social and cultural meanings of language choice in the market.

1.5 Study Purpose

This study aims to give insight into how people communicate in markets with many languages. It also wants to add to what we know about language in Nigeria by showing how language affects trading and relationships in Urelu Market.

1.6 Study Limitations

This research is limited because of time, money, and how hard it is to properly talk to people since they all value their time. Since Urelu Market is big, we cannot talk to everyone. So, the study will only include some Hausa traders and Edo-speaking women. Also, language problems and some traders not wanting to be recorded (visually or audio) might cause issues.

1.7 Study Scope

This study focuses on Urelu Market in Benin City, Edo State. It only looks at the talks between Hausa traders and Edo-speaking market women. Other language habits or groups will not be studied.

1.8 Methodology

1.8.1 Data Collection

Data will be gathered through these methods:

Participant Observation: Watching how market women and Hausa traders interact in normal situations.

Interviews: Talking with chosen traders in a semi-structured way to learn about their language choices.

Audio Recordings: Recording real conversations as they happen to catch examples of code-switching and code-mixing.

1.8.2 Data Analysis

The collected data will undergo qualitative discourse analysis using the Ethnography of Communication approach. Instances of code-switching and code-mixing will be grouped by type (intra-sentential, inter-sentential, tag-switching, etc.) and understood regarding their social and cultural backgrounds.

1.9 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides valuable insights into how language functions as a tool for social interaction and economics exchange in a multilingual society. By examining communication among traders of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in Benin City markets, the research highlights the vital role of language in promoting understanding, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence in a culturally diversity environment.

The findings will contribute to the field of sociolinguistics and ethnography of communication by showing how traders employ strategies such as code switching, code mixing, and the use of Nigerian Pidgin to bridge communication gaps. It will also serve as a useful reference for scholars, linguists, and students interested in the dynamics of multilingual communication in everyday social contexts.

Additionally, the study has practical relevance for language planners and educators, as it emphasizes the importance of multilingual competence and tolerance in fostering unity and effective communication in Nigeria's multiethnic society.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature that provides the theoretical and empirical foundation for the study. It discusses the key concepts that are central to the research, examines findings from previous studies, and identifies the gap which this work seeks to fill.

The first part of the chapter presents the conceptual review of literature, where concepts such as multilingualism, language contact, code-switching, code-mixing, and their communicative functions are explained. The second part focuses on the review of previous studies, drawing evidence from international, African, and Nigerian contexts to show how language contact has been investigated in various settings. The third part outlines the concern of the present study, which highlights the specific gap in existing research and demonstrates the relevance of focusing on the linguistic interaction between Edo-speaking market women and Hausa traders in Uselu Market.

2.1 Conceptual Review of Literature

2.1.1 Multilingualism and Language Contact

Multilingualism is the ability of an individual or community to use more than one language in communication. Nigeria, with over 500 languages, is a prime example of a multilingual nation (Bamgbose, 1991). In such societies, contact between different language groups often gives rise to code-switching, code-mixing, borrowing, and other linguistic practices. Markets are one of the most common social domains where multilingualism is practically expressed, since traders and buyers must negotiate and build relationships despite linguistic differences.

2.1.2 Code-Switching

Code-switching refers to the alternation between two or more languages or varieties within a single conversation, discourse, or utterance. Gumperz (1982) describes it as “the juxtaposition of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems.” In multilingual contexts such as Nigeria, code-switching may occur between indigenous languages (e.g., Edo and Hausa), or between indigenous languages and English. Scholars (Myers-Scotton, 1993; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015) generally categorize code-switching into:

- i. Inter-sentential switching – switching occurs between sentences.

- ii. Intra-sentential switching – switching occurs within a sentence.
- iii. Tag-switching – insertion of tags or fillers from one language into another.

2.1.3 Code-Mixing

Code-mixing refers to the blending of elements (words, phrases, or morphemes) from two or more languages within a single utterance. It often shows a high level of bilingual competence. Bokamba (1989) explains code-mixing as the embedding of various linguistic units from one language into another, without strict regard to grammatical boundaries. Unlike code-switching, which may be deliberate for emphasis or identity, code-mixing often reflects everyday linguistic creativity in multilingual environments.

2.1.4 Functions of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing

Several scholars have identified the functions of these practices:

Communicative efficiency – to ensure understanding between speakers of different linguistic backgrounds.

Identity marking – to show group belonging or social solidarity.

Trade and persuasion – in markets, switching may help in attracting buyers or negotiating effectively.

Status and prestige – switching into English or other dominant languages may signal education, authority, or respect.

In market contexts, these functions become particularly significant because successful communication directly affects trade outcomes.

2.2 Review of Previous Studies

2.2.1 International Studies

Studies across the world have shown that markets are fertile grounds for code-switching. For example, in a study of Spanish-English bilinguals in the United States, Zentella (1997) found that traders switched languages to accommodate customers and signal solidarity. Similarly, Martin (2005), studying code-switching in Hong Kong, discovered that traders alternated between Cantonese and English depending on the buyer's identity and social status.

2.2.2 Studies in Africa

Within Africa, researchers have documented code-switching as a central part of trade. Finlayson and Slabbert (1997) observed that South African traders often code-switch between Zulu, Sotho, and English in market environments. In Kenya, Mazrui (1995) found that Swahili-English code-switching facilitated smooth communication in multicultural urban markets.

2.2.3 Studies in Nigeria

In Nigeria, numerous studies highlight how multilingualism shapes everyday communication. Bamgbose (1991) notes that code-switching is a natural outcome of

Nigeria's multilingual reality. Akindele and Adegbite (1999) found that Yoruba traders in Ibadan markets often switch between Yoruba, Hausa, and Pidgin English, depending on the customer. In the North, Adegbija (1994) observed Hausa-English switching as a strategy for prestige and wider communication. However, limited research has been conducted specifically on Edo-speaking traders, particularly in Urelu Market, despite its prominence as a commercial hub in Benin City.

2.2.4 Previous Studies in Edo State

Several studies have been carried out within Edo State that provide useful insights into language contact, multilingualism, and code-switching. These works, though limited in number, offer an important background for understanding how people in the region use language to achieve communicative and social goals.

Zubair and Achi (2017) conducted a sociolinguistic study of language choice in Sabongida-Ora, a multilingual community in Edo State. Their findings revealed that speakers' choice of language depends largely on factors such as the topic of discussion, the interlocutor, and the communicative purpose. This study demonstrates that code choice in Edo communities is socially motivated, a finding relevant to understanding interactions in market contexts such as Urelu Market.

Similarly, Aigbedo (2023) examined the sociocultural expressions of ideology and identity in the Edo guild system. His study, based in Benin City, showed how language serves as a marker of identity and social belonging among members of traditional guilds.

This underscores the role of the Edo language in identity construction and supports the present study's focus on how market women use language to express solidarity and social positioning.

At the University of Benin, several student-based investigations have also explored multilingual practices. A sociolinguistic study on Code-Mixing and Code-Switching among University of Benin Students (UNIBEN, 2020) revealed that students frequently switch between English, Edo, Nigerian Pidgin, and other local languages to ease communication and express group identity. Likewise, Onaradia (2019), in a related undergraduate thesis at UNIBEN, analyzed the effects of code-mixing between English and indigenous languages, noting that switching often serves to bridge linguistic gaps in informal settings.

In another work, Aigbedo (2024) explored how specific registers and lexical items within the Edo guild system function as ethnolinguistic markers of identity. His findings emphasized that Edo speakers creatively manipulate their linguistic resources to index professional identity and cultural heritage. Although these studies highlight the dynamic use of language in Edo State, none specifically focus on everyday language contact between Edo-speaking market women and Hausa traders in Urelu Market.

Therefore, the present research fills this gap by documenting real-life multilingual interactions in the market space an informal domain where Edo and Hausa speakers meet daily to transact and negotiate meaning.

2.3 The Concern of the Present Study

While previous studies have documented code-switching in Nigeria and other African societies, there remains a gap regarding how Edo-speaking market women and Hausa traders communicate in Urelu Market. Existing research tends to focus on larger linguistic groups such as Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, and English. Very little has been written on the Edo language in multilingual interactions, particularly in informal trade domains.

This study, therefore, addresses this gap by:

1. Documenting the actual patterns of code-switching and code-mixing between Edo and Hausa traders.
2. Identifying the specific social and economic functions of language switching in Urelu Market.
3. Contributing to broader sociolinguistic discussions on how language contact shapes communication in Nigeria's informal economy.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Every research study requires a theoretical framework that guides the analysis and interpretation of data. Theories provide a lens through which researchers can understand social and linguistic phenomena. Since this study investigates code-switching and code-mixing in Uselu Market, it adopts the Ethnography of Communication as its primary theoretical framework. This approach is appropriate because it examines language as it is used in real-life communicative contexts, paying attention to the social, cultural, and situational factors that shape language behavior.

To ground this framework, the chapter begins with a discussion of ethnography as a method and then focuses on the Ethnography of Communication, as developed by Dell Hymes and other scholars.

3.2 Ethnography

Ethnography, derived from the Greek words *ethnos* (people) and *grapho* (to write), literally means “a written account of a people or culture.” In scholarly terms, ethnography is defined as the systematic study and detailed description of people, cultures, and their social practices. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), ethnography “is a form

of social research that emphasizes the importance of studying at first-hand what people do and say in particular contexts.”

In linguistics and anthropology, ethnography is used to understand how language is embedded in social life. Malinowski (1923), one of the pioneers of ethnographic fieldwork, emphasized the need to study language within its “context of situation.” This principle highlights that meaning in communication cannot be separated from the social and cultural environment in which it occurs.

Thus, ethnography is not only concerned with the structures of language but also with how language is used in real interactions. It involves participant observation, interviews, and the recording of natural speech, allowing the researcher to capture authentic communicative practices. For this study, ethnography provides a foundation for observing how Uselu market women and Hausa traders interact, negotiate, and build relationships through code-switching and code-mixing.

3.3 Ethnography of Communication

The Ethnography of Communication (EoC), developed by Dell Hymes in the 1960s, is an extension of ethnographic research specifically focused on language use. Hymes (1972) argued that linguistic competence (as proposed by Noam Chomsky) should not be limited to the knowledge of grammar alone but must include communicative competence—the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts.

Hymes (1974) defined the Ethnography of Communication as “the study of communication within the context of culture, with the aim of describing and analyzing the patterns and functions of communicative behavior in a community.” Unlike purely structural linguistics, the EoC is concerned with:

- i. Who speaks (participants)
- ii. What is being communicated (message)
- iii. To whom (audience/addressee)
- iv. When and where (setting and scene)
- v. Why (purpose or function)
- vi. How (form and channel of communication)

To capture these aspects, Hymes developed the SPEAKING model, an acronym that outlines the components of speech events:

S – Setting/Scene: The physical and social context of communication.

P – Participants: The speaker(s) and audience(s).

E – Ends: The purposes or outcomes of communication.

A – Act Sequence: The form and order of events in communication.

K – Key: The tone, manner, or spirit of communication (e.g., serious, humorous).

I – Instrumentalities: The channel (oral, written) and code (language or variety) used.

N – Norms: The social rules that guide communication.

G – Genre: The type of speech event (e.g., bargaining, joking, storytelling).

Applying this framework to Urelu Market, the EoC enables us to analyze how women traders and Hausa traders switch and mix codes depending on:

- i. The setting (market environment),
- ii. The participants (buyers, sellers, strangers, acquaintances),
- iii. The ends (bargaining, persuasion, building trust), and
- iv. The norms of interaction (acceptable ways of addressing others in trade).

Through this lens, code-switching and code-mixing are not random linguistic behaviors but meaningful communicative strategies shaped by the socio-cultural and economic realities of the market.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA/ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and discusses the data collected during the fieldwork at Uselu Market, Benin City. The aim is to examine how code-switching and code-mixing occur in real-life interactions between Edo-speaking market women and Hausa traders, as well as to explore the communicative, social, and economic functions of these linguistic practices. The data for this study were obtained through participant observation, interviews, and recorded market conversations. These interactions reflect the multilingual nature of Uselu Market, where Edo, Hausa, Nigerian Pidgin, and English are frequently used in daily communication.

In analyzing the data, this chapter applies the principles of the Ethnography of Communication (Hymes, 1974) to interpret language use in its natural social and cultural context. Specifically, the analysis focuses on the SPEAKING model (Setting, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre) to explain how situational factors influence language choice and switching patterns.

4 2. Participant Observation Conversation Between a Hausa Trader and an Edo Market Woman at Urelu Market

4.2.1 Excerpt 1

The excerpt was taken around 10:16am in Urelu market, Edo state, Benin City Nigeria between a Hausa trader and an Edo woman (buyer)

A Hausa trader, selling heaps of onions on a mat. Female trader 1: an Urelu woman known for her humor and sharp tongue, approaches his stall.

Female trader 1:

Malam ! Senu ! (Good day /hello o!)

(She smiles widely and adjusts her wrapper.)

Malam (smiling back):

Senu, madam! Yaya gida? (Good day, madam! How is home?)

Iye (laughing): Gida dey fine o! But this your onion too cost today(home is fine,but your onions are very expensive). Kè ré ghá rhíe ò! (It's too expensive!)

Malam : No be my fault, madam. Transport from Sokoto na wahala. Price don high for North!(It's not my fault,ma. The cost of transportation is very high

Iye (switching tone, playfully):

Ah Malam, kai, ka rage mana! Wallahi, I be your good customer! (Ah Malam, please reduce for me! I'm your good customer!)

Malam (chuckling): Hahaha! Madam, you sabi Hausa small small o!(Ma, you seem to understand Hausa a little)

Iye: Na so so market Hausa I don learn!(Yes I just understand the Hausa spoken in the market)Me I sabi say, “kai Malam, farashi da yawa!” (Ah Malam, the price is too much!)

Malam ;(laughing harder): Toh! You sabi talk well well. But make I give you small reduction. One bag ₦34,000(well you understand my language small for that I'll cut down the price

Iye; (pretending to be shocked): Ah! ₦34,000? Kai kai! Malam, na robbery be that o!(For that amount?I feel cheated/robbed)

(She claps her hands dramatically other market women nearby laugh.)

Iye ; (continuing in Edo-Pidgin mix): Nè mí yá rhiè alùbòsà, mà gh'óghían! (I want to buy onion, but I don't have much money!)

Abeg, take ₦22,000, make I fit chop small gain.

Please accept this amount so that I'll be able to gain something)

Malam; (smiling, shaking head): Iye , you sabi price pass Hausa woman! Okay, ₦25,000 last. Wallahi, na final price be that!

(You know how to price more than an Hausa woman okay I'll give you for 25000 last price)

Iye; (laughing, handing him money):

Good man! May Allah bless your market! Next time, I go speak full Hausa for you o!(Next time,I will speak Hausa more to you)

Malam ;

Amin! Next time, I go speak small Edo too!(Amen ! next Time I'll speak small Edo too)

Ethnography of Communication Analysis (Using SPEAKING Model)

S – Setting and Scene:

The conversation takes place at Uselu Market in Benin City, during a busy day filled with trading activity. The environment is lively, noisy, and informal — typical of market interactions.

P – Participants:

The main participants are Iye, an Edo woman (buyer), and Malam, a Hausa trader (seller). They represent two different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds but share the goal of completing a trade.

E – Ends (Purpose):

The purpose of the exchange is to negotiate the price of onions. A secondary purpose is to build rapport and maintain good social relations between the buyer and seller.

A – Act Sequence:

Iye greets Malam warmly using Hausa. Malam responds with Hausa greetings, creating a friendly start. As bargaining begins, both participants switch between Pidgin, Hausa, and Edo, using code-switching and code-mixing to express emotion, emphasize points, and maintain understanding. The negotiation moves from high tension to laughter and eventual agreement.

K – Key (Tone):

The tone is friendly, humorous, and lively, with moments of playful exaggeration — especially when Iye pretends to be shocked at the price. The atmosphere remains relaxed despite the bargaining.

I – Instrumentalities (Language Codes):

Languages used include Nigerian Pidgin, Hausa, and Edo. Both participants engage in code-switching and code-mixing, showing linguistic flexibility and mutual accommodation.

N – Norms of Interaction:

Market norms allow emotional expression, humor, and playful bargaining. Asking for price reduction and blessing the trader's market are polite and expected communicative behaviors in Edo markets.

G – Genre:

The conversation belongs to the market negotiation discourse, a common form of everyday interaction that combines trade, humor, and social bonding.

4.2.2 Excerpt 2:

This excerpt is between an Uselu market woman and A Hausa man where the Hausa man sells pepper and the Uselu woman visits his shade to purchase the goods he sells and this excerpt was taken around 11am at Uselu market in Benin city, Edo state, Nigeria.

Where malam is referred to an Hausa man

Edo Woman:

Abeg, Malam, how much be this small basket of pepper? (Please, malam how much for this small basket of pepper)

Hausa Trader: ₦3,000, madam.

Edo Woman: ₦3,000 ke? You too dey increase price!

Hausa Trader (switches to Hausa): Madam, farashi bai yawa ba (the price is not much).

Edo Woman: Ah, I no understand that one o! Na because of pepper you dey cause me?(Did you just insult me because of pepper?)

Hausa Trader (switches back): I say the price no too much.(I meant the price was not much)

Edo Woman (laughing): Okay, now I understand.

So wetin you talk las las e no fit go for ₦1000

(What are you concluding on can't the price be 1000 naira?)

Hausa trader: oya mama leave am for ₦2000 (okay ma leave the price at 2000)

Edo woman : salobua!(Exclamation, God)

Make I thief give you na wetin I get o Malam (should I still? I'm bargaining what I have)

Hausa trader: mama add ₦500

Edo woman:(communicating with her friends who just passed with a sign language of later we will see) Malam abeg pack this thing make i dey go na so una go dey cheat person (feeling like she was cheated)Add Jara o(addition, extra)

Hausa trader: that one no be problem I go add am for Jara (no problem I will add extra)

Edo woman : uwese (thank you)

Hausa trader: Alhamdulillahi(thank God)

Edo woman: stretches her 1300 instead of 1500

Na wetin I get o (explaining that's what she has)

Hausa trader: no wahala madam

Ethnography of Communication Analysis (Using SPEAKING Model)

S – Setting and Scene:

The event takes place in the evening at Urelu Market, a busy environment filled with noise, bargaining, and movement. The atmosphere is informal and interactive typical of Nigerian markets.

P – Participants:

The participants are an Edo woman (buyer) and a Hausa trader (seller). Both come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds but share a common communicative space through trading.

E – Ends (Purpose):

The main purpose of the interaction is bargaining to agree on the price of pepper. A secondary purpose is to maintain friendly social relations despite linguistic differences.

A – Act Sequence:

The woman starts by asking the price in Pidgin. The Hausa trader replies and switches briefly to Hausa for emphasis, which the woman doesn't understand. He then returns to Pidgin to clarify. The interaction proceeds with negotiation, mild argument, humor, and finally agreement with the addition of jara (extra).

K – Key (Tone):

The tone is lively and partly harsh, as is typical in market exchanges. There is a mix of seriousness and playfulness as both participants express emotions freely.

I – Instrumentalities (Language Codes):

Languages used include Nigerian Pidgin, Hausa, and Edo. There is constant code-switching and code-mixing to aid understanding and express emotion.

N – Norms of Interaction:

Market communication allows expressive gestures, humor, and negotiation. Bargaining and requests for jara are culturally acceptable norms that strengthen social bonds between buyers and sellers.

G – Genre:

The genre is marketplace discourse an informal, face-to-face negotiation that combines trade, humor, and social connection.

4.2.3. Excerpt 3 : this excerpt was taken at Uselu market in Benin, Edo state, Nigeria.

The interaction took place around 11:30am between an Edo female trader and a Hausa male trader. A Hausa trader, who usually sells onions, walks up to Female Edo traders stall to buy some fresh pepper and palm oil.

Malam (Hausa man)

Malam: Mama, good morning o! How market?

(Madam good morning how is the market going)

Female Edo trader(smiling):

Ehen, Malam senu!(Hello) You don leave your onions come buy pepper today?

(Malam you left your onions to get pepper)

Malam (laughing): Yes o! My wife say make I buy small pepper and red oil for soup.

How much be this bottle?(Yes, my wife asked me to get some ingredients for soup. How much do you sell a bottle?)

Female Edo trader: That one na ₦2,000.

Malam (shaking his head): Ah ah, madam, e too cost! Make am ₦1,500.

Female Edo trader (in Edo, teasing):

I gha rie ghian! (You no go buy if you no get money!)

You think say I go sell for free?

(Do you think I'll trade for free?)

Malam (smiling, switches to Hausa):

Madam, ki rage kadan fa! (Please reduce it small!)

Female Edo trader (pretending not to understand):

Ehn? Wetin you talk? Talk the language wey I sabi

(what did you say? Speak with the language I am familiar with)

Malam (switching to Pidgin): I say make you reduce am for me small now.

(I said you should cut down price for me)

Female Edo trader: Okay, because na you, I go sell ₦1,800.

Alright I'll bring down the price because of you)

Malam : Na correct woman you be(you're the real deal) Nagode sosai! (Thank you very much!)

Female Edo trader: (smiling proudly):

You welcome, Malam. Next time bring onion come dash me small!

(When next you come bring free onions for me)

Malam (laughing as he pays):

No wahala, I go bring am! (No problem I will bring it)

Ethnography of Communication Analysis (Using SPEAKING Model)

S – Setting and Scene:

The interaction takes place in the Urelu Market on a bright late morning. The environment is lively, noisy, and filled with trading activities. The atmosphere is informal, friendly, and familiar, showing a sense of community between buyers and sellers.

P – Participants:

Malam: A Hausa trader who usually sells onions but is now buying pepper and palm oil.

Female Edo Trader: A native Edo market woman selling vegetables and palm oil.

Both share a trader-to-trader relationship and communicate across ethnic boundaries.

E – Ends (Purpose/Goals):

The goal of the interaction is to negotiate price and complete a transaction.

Socially, it also reinforces friendship, understanding, and humor between Hausa and Edo traders.

A – Act Sequence:

The conversation begins with greetings, followed by price inquiry, negotiation, teasing, and eventual agreement. Both participants shift languages (Edo, Hausa, Pidgin) to express themselves better and create mutual understanding.

K – Key (Tone/Mood):

The tone is playful, humorous, and friendly. Even during bargaining, both laugh and tease each other showing that trade in the market is not just economic but also social.

I – Instrumentalities (Forms of Communication):

Languages used include:

Nigerian Pidgin (main medium of understanding),

Edo (for teasing and expressing identity),

Hausa (for politeness and cultural expression).

The switching between these languages reflects mutual accommodation and respect.

N – Norms:

It is normal for market interactions to include bargaining, teasing, and code-switching. Politeness and friendliness are expected, even when negotiating prices.

G – Genre:

The genre of this interaction is market discourse specifically bargaining conversation. It is informal, interactive and marked by humour, code switching and social bonding between traders.

4.3.0 INTERVIEW DATA FROM USELU MARKET

4.3.1 Data 1: Interaction with an Edo female Trader

Uselu Market, Benin City.

Date: [October 4,2025]

Language(s): English, Nigerian Pidgin, Edo, and some Hausa words (code-mixed and code switched).

Transcript (Field Conversation):

Researcher: Good afternoon ma. Please, can you tell me your name?

Respondent (Edo woman): My name Imuahen (said in Benin).

Researcher: Thank you, ma. When you buy or sell things to Hausa traders here, what language do you usually speak with them?

Respondent: I dey use English and Pidgin most times. Sometimes, I fit add small Hausa words, like sannu, ina kwana, or lafiya.

Researcher: So, you mix the languages when you talk?

Respondent: Yes, I dey mix am. Sometimes I go start with English, then change to Pidgin, then use small Hausa. That one make communication easy.

Researcher: Are you not upset that they don't speak your Benin language?

Respondent: No o. I no mind. As far as dem understand wetin I dey talk, na the important thing be that.

Researcher: Have you ever tried teaching any Hausa person your language?

Respondent: Yes. I even get one Hausa boy wey dey stay my house. I teach am small Benin, make e no go feel say we dey talk about am when we dey speak. I just wan make e understand small so e no go feel left out.

Ethnographic Observation:

The respondent demonstrates code mixing and code switching in her everyday interaction with Hausa traders. She alternates between English, Pidgin, and Hausa to achieve mutual

understanding. Her positive attitude toward linguistic diversity indicates a cooperative communicative competence typical in multilingual markets.

Data Analysis (Using Hymes' SPEAKING Model)

Component	Explanation from Data
S – Setting/Scene	The interaction takes place in Uselu Market, Benin City a multilingual trading environment.
P – Participants	Edo female trader (respondent) and Hausa traders (interlocutors).
E – Ends (Goals)	The goal is effective communication for trade transactions and social harmony.
A – Act Sequence	The speaker alternates languages to ensure comprehension: English → Pidgin → Hausa.
K – Key (Tone/Mood)	Friendly, cooperative, and accommodating.
I – Instrumentalities	Use of multilingual codes (Pidgin, English, Hausa, and Edo) in speech.
N – Norms	Switching between languages is normal and accepted in the market context.
G – Genre	Informal, face-to-face marketplace conversation.

4.3.2.DATA 2: Interaction with a Hausa Male Trader

Setting: Uselu Market, Benin City.

Participants: Researcher (interviewer) and Suleman (28-year-old Hausa trader).

Date: [october 4,2025]

Language(s): Pidgin English, English, Hausa. and some few words in Edo.

Transcript (Field Conversation)

Researcher: Good afternoon Wetin be your name and how long you don dey sell for this market? (Good afternoon what is your name and how long have you been selling in this market?)

Suleman: My name na Suleman. I don dey this market for like seven years now.(My name is sule man .and I have been selling in this market for 7years)

Researcher: Seven years? So, which kind language you sabi talk for here?

(Seven years? what languages do you know how to speak)

Suleman: I dey hear and speak small-small Pidgin, Edo, Hausa, and English. I sabi English well, and I don learn some Edo words like lare, bokian, and others.

(I know languages like Hausa little of pigin ,English and Edo (làré,come bòkiàn weldone,and others)

Researcher: Ehen, that one good. So, how you dey take talk with your Edo customers?

(That is good ,so how do you communicate with your Edo customers?)

Suleman: We dey use Pidgin and English most times. Some of them go throw small Edo inside, I go understand small-small. We dey flow well.

(We use pidgin and English most times, then we play around with Edo words and we get along)

Researcher: You dey ever vex say dem no sabi Hausa?(Are you upset in anyway that Edo speakers do not speak your language ?)

Suleman: No o! Why I go vex? As far as we fit understand each other, e don do. We just dey buy and sell, everything go fine.

(No,why will I as long as we understand ourselves when we buy and sell)

Ethnographic Observation

This exchange illustrates how Suleman, a Hausa trader, uses Pidgin English as a neutral bridge for communication with his Edo-speaking customers. His ability to understand and use multiple languages Hausa, English, Pidgin, and Edo highlights the functional multilingualism common in Nigerian markets. His nonchalant attitude toward language difference emphasizes mutual respect and linguistic tolerance.

Data Analysis (Using Hymes' SPEAKING Model)

Component	Explanation from Data
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S – Setting/Scene	Urelu Market, Benin City a multilingual, commercial environment.
P – Participants	Hausa trader (Suleman) and Edo customers.
E – Ends (Goals)	To maintain effective trade communication and social relationships.
A – Act Sequence	Exchange conducted mainly in Pidgin, with switches to English and occasional Edo or Hausa words.
K – Key (Tone/Mood)	Friendly, open, and relaxed a typical market atmosphere.
I – Instrumentalities	Verbal communication through code-switching and code-mixing.
N – Norms	Switching languages is normal and accepted for clarity and friendliness.
G – Genre	Informal market conversation.

4.3.3.DATA 3: Interaction with an Agbor Male Trader (Resident in Benin)

Setting: Urelu Market, Benin City.

Participants: Researcher (interviewer) and an Agbor man (livestock trader, resident in Benin for 35 years).

Date: [october 4,2025]

Language(s): English, Pidgin, Edo, and Hausa.

Transcript (Field Conversation)

Researcher: Good afternoon, sir. You be Benin man?(Are you a Benin man?)

Respondent: (laughs) No o, I no be Benin. I be Agbor man. But I don stay for Benin for over 35 years. If I no tell you, you for think say I be Benin man.

(No I am not.i am from agbor although I have stayed in Benin for more that 35 years, without being told you would have assumed I am from Benin)

Researcher: So you sabi speak Benin language well-well now?(Meaning you know how to speak Benin well?)

Respondent: Yes na. I fit speak am well. I don learn am small-small since I dey here.(Yes,I have been learning it since my stay here)

Researcher: Okay sir. For this your livestock business, how you dey take communicate with the Hausa traders? (Okay,this business of yours how do you use it in communicating with the Hausa traders?)

Respondent: We dey use Pidgin mostly. Everybody for market dey understand am. Sometimes small English dey enter, especially when we dey buy or order goods from Kanu or other northern states.(We use pidgin English most times for understanding especially when we buy or order goods from kanu)

Researcher: So una dey switch from Pidgin to English depending on wetin una dey do?
(So you switch from English to pidgin depending of the context during conversations?)

Respondent: Yes. For here (Benin market), na Pidgin we dey use. But when I dey talk to the people wey dey supply us from North for example beans or rice in bag we fit use more English. But for market here, e no matter the language, as long as we understand each other. (Yes, in Benin market we use pidgin but when I'm taking my goods from kanu I use english. The thing is we understand ourselves not minding how we switch between languages)

Researcher: You like working with Hausa traders? **Respondent:** Yes o. Dem be very friendly people. We dey do business well together. No wahala at all. (Yes they are very friendly and we do business together well)

Ethnographic Observation

This interview reveals that the respondent, an agbor man who has lived in Benin for 35 years, has integrated linguistically and socially into the Benin speech community. Despite being a non-native speaker, he uses Pidgin English as his main medium of interaction with Hausa traders. His long-term exposure to the Benin environment has also enhanced his proficiency in the Edo language. The shift between Pidgin and English depending on the communicative context reflects functional code-switching a pragmatic adaptation to audience and purpose.

Data Analysis (Using Hymes' SPEAKING Model)

Component	Explanation from Data
S – Setting/Scene	Uselu Market, Benin City multilingual trading center.
P – Participants	Agbor trader (resident in Benin) and Hausa traders.
E – Ends (Goals)	Effective communication for buying and selling livestock and grains.
A – Act Sequence	Switch between Pidgin and English depending on trading context (local vs. distant transactions).
K – Key (Tone/Mood)	Calm, friendly, and cooperative.
I – Instrumentalities	Use of Pidgin, English, and some Edo in speech.
N – Norms	Language switching is accepted and not restricted by ethnicity.
G – Genre	Informal market negotiation and friendly exchange.

4.3.4. Data 4: Interaction with an Edo Woman

Date:(October 4,2025)

Language(s): pidgin English, Esan, Edo, Auchi and few Hausa words

Transcript (Field conversation)

Context of Interaction

The interview was conducted with a female trader (Rose Akigbe) at the Uselu market, Benin City. The respondent is multilingual she speaks Edo, Esan, and Auchi, but identifies Edo as her dominant language. She interacts regularly with Hausa traders and prefers communicating with them in a mixture of Edo, Pidgin, and sometimes English.

Interview Excerpt (Translated & Simplified)

Interviewer (in Pidgin): Madam, e dey pain you say the Hausa men no sabi speak your Edo language? (Ma are you upset that the Hausa traders don't speak language?)

Respondent: No o, I no mind. As far as dem fit understand small wetin I dey talk, I dey okay. (no I do not mind as long as I understands me

Interviewer: So how una dey take communicate for market? (How do you communicate with them in the market)

Respondent: I get one Hausa man wey I dey always buy things from. E dey try understand me well well. I like wetin e dey sell, and we dey always gree for price.

(I have a particular man I buy things from so he understands me well and I understand him well and he always agrees on the price)

Interviewer: You talk say you sabi other languages too?

(You said you know other languages too?)

Respondent: Yes, I sabi Esan and Auchi, but I speak Edo pass. Even my husband vexes one time because I dey speak Esan for my children. E chase me commot house. Later I come back, I start to speak Edo so the children go understand me well. Till today, if dem call me, na for Edo dem dey talk. (Yes I know how to speak Esan and Auchi, but I speak Edo more. Even when my husband chased me out from the house because I did not speak Edo to the children, I had to go back to speak Edo to the till date we still talk in Edo language)

Interviewer: How you take talk to the Hausa traders? (How do you talk with the Hausa trader?)

Respondent: I dey mix am small Edo, small Pidgin. Sometimes if dem talk Hausa, I fit understand small. Dem be friendly people, we dey relate well for market. (I mix small Edo with pidgin and sometimes too I speak small Hausa to them because they are friendly)

Ethnographic Observation

The respondent's narrative reveals a high level of linguistic flexibility. Her multilingual ability (Edo, Esan, Auchi, and some Hausa) allows her to navigate social and linguistic boundaries effectively. Her story about switching from Esan to Edo in her household further demonstrates the sociolinguistic pressures of language choice, where certain languages (Edo) hold more social prestige or communicative utility within her environment.

Her use of Pidgin and Edo in market interactions reflects code-mixing and linguistic accommodation, strategies employed to promote understanding and maintain good relationships with Hausa traders.

Analysis Using Hymes' SPEAKING Model

Element based on data

S – Setting and Scene	The interaction takes place at Uselu market, a multilingual trading environment where daily communication is essential for business transactions.
P – Participants	Edo female trader (respondent) and Hausa traders (buyers/sellers); interviewer as observer.
E – Ends	The goal of the interaction is to achieve understanding, complete trade successfully, and maintain social harmony despite language differences.
A – Act Sequence	The respondent describes her typical exchange with Hausa traders using Edo and Pidgin to negotiate and build rapport.
K – Key	The tone is friendly, cooperative, and tolerant. There is mutual respect between the traders.
I – Instrumentalities	Languages used include Edo, Pidgin English, and

	occasional Hausa phrases.
N – Norms	Mutual understanding and respect govern market interaction. Code-mixing is socially accepted as a communicative strategy.
G – Genre	Informal conversational discourse (market interaction/interview narrative).

4.3.5. Data 5: Interview with a Hausa Trader (Nasim, Age 27)

Context of Interaction

This interaction took place at the Uselu Market in Benin City. The respondent, Nasim, is a 27-year-old Hausa man who hails from Northern Nigeria. The interview was conducted in Pidgin English, which served as a neutral medium of communication between the interviewer and the respondent. Nasim has been trading in Benin for several years and has daily contact with Edo-speaking women traders.

Interview Section (In Pidgin English)

Interviewer: you fit speak Benin small? (Do you know how to speak Benin?)

Nasim: No, I no sabi am well. I only sabi small words like uwese and iye and some other short short ones. (No, I just know little words in Edo like uwese and iye)

Interviewer: Okay, so how una dey take talk for market with the Benin women? (So how do you communicate with them?)

Nasim: We dey talk well. Dem understand me when I use Pidgin or small English, and me too don sabi some words wey dem dey use. (We talk well and understand me when I use English language, pidgin English and I understand some words they use as well)

Interviewer: Apart from Hausa, you fit speak any other language? (Apart from Hausa what other languages do you know how to speak?)

Nasim: I fit speak small English and small Pidgin. Na Pidgin and English I dey use for market when I dey talk to the Benin women. (I speak little of English, pidgin but I use English more when talking to Benin women)

Interviewer: So una no dey get wahala for understanding each other? (So you guys don't have any misunderstanding?)

Nazism: No wahala at all. We dey understand ourselves. Dem dey friendly and I like to sell give dem.

Observation (no problem at all we understand ourselves well and they are very friendly)

From this interview, it is observed that Nasim is linguistically adaptive and socially accommodating. Though Hausa is his dominant language, he makes conscious efforts to

learn and use short Edo expressions such as uwese (thank you) and iye (mother). This shows an awareness of linguistic diversity and a desire to connect with his customers.

His ability to combine Pidgin English and simple English demonstrates the practical multilingualism common in Nigerian markets. The conversation also reflects how Pidgin English functions as a lingua franca, bridging the communication gap between Hausa and Edo speakers.

Analysis Using Hymes' SPEAKING Model

Element	Explanation Based on Data
S – Setting and Scene	The interaction took place at Uselu Market, Benin City a multilingual marketplace where Hausa, Edo, and Pidgin are spoken daily.
P – Participants	Nasim (Hausa male trader, age 27), Edo women traders, and interviewer (using Pidgin).
E – Ends	The goal is effective communication for successful trade and friendly relationships among traders.
A – Act Sequence	The respondent narrates how he communicates using Pidgin and English, and mentions his knowledge of basic Edo words.
K – Key	The tone of the conversation is polite, relaxed, and

	cooperative.
I – Instrumentalities	Hausa (L1), Pidgin English (main communication medium), English, and a few Edo words.
N – Norms	Pidgin English serves as an acceptable and neutral code for interethnic communication; showing friendliness and respect through language is valued.
G – Genre	Informal interview and everyday market interaction.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study, the major findings, recommendations, and the conclusion. The research explored language use among Hausa and Edo traders in selected markets in Benin City, Edo State. It focused on how both ethnic groups negotiate meaning, conduct business, and maintain social relationships in a multilingual environment through code-switching, code-mixing, and linguistic accommodation. Using the Ethnography of Communication framework (Hymes’ SPEAKING model), the study analyzed real market conversations and interviews to show how language operates as a tool of commerce and social cohesion in the marketplace.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The study examined communicative patterns between Hausa traders and Edo market women in Benin City, particularly in Uselu market. Through participant observation and structured interviews, data were collected in natural market settings to capture spontaneous language use.

The findings revealed that the market environment is a vibrant multilingual space where traders communicate effectively despite language differences. Pidgin English emerged as the primary language of communication, while Edo and Hausa were alternately used to express identity, emotions, or emphasis.

The SPEAKING model guided the analysis of the recorded conversations, illustrating that each interaction was shaped by factors such as the participants' ethnic background, the purpose of the exchange, the informal tone of the marketplace, and the strategic use of multiple languages to ensure mutual understanding.

Overall, the study demonstrated that communication in Nigerian markets transcends economic activity—it is a social act that fosters cultural coexistence, understanding, and respect among traders of diverse backgrounds.

5.3 Findings

The key findings of the study include:

1. Functional Multilingualism:

Traders in the market exhibit linguistic flexibility by switching among Pidgin English, Edo, Hausa, and English depending on the situation and the interlocutor.

2. Pidgin English as a Bridge Language:

Nigerian Pidgin serves as a neutral language that bridges communication gaps between people of different ethnic groups. It ensures smooth interaction and understanding during trade negotiations.

3. Strategic Code-Switching and Code-Mixing:

Traders use code-switching and code-mixing not only for comprehension but also to display cultural familiarity, express humor, and strengthen social rapport.

4. Positive Attitudes Toward Multilingualism:

Both Hausa and Edo traders show openness and respect toward each other's languages, demonstrating that linguistic difference is not a source of conflict but of cooperation.

5. Language as Identity Marker:

Switching into one's native language (Hausa or Edo) often marks identity and emotional expression, helping traders assert a sense of belonging even in a shared space.

6. Market as a Social Space:

The market is not just a site of commerce but also a social environment where language mediates friendship, solidarity, and peaceful coexistence.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Promotion of Nigerian Pidgin as a Functional Lingua Franca

The study clearly shows that Nigerian Pidgin serves as the most effective medium of communication between Edo and Hausa traders in Benin markets. It operates as a neutral linguistic bridge that cuts across ethnic, religious, and educational boundaries. Because of its simplicity, flexibility, and wide acceptance, it allows speakers from different backgrounds to transact smoothly and maintain cordial relationships even when they do not share a native language.

Despite its enormous communicative value, Nigerian Pidgin has often been marginalized in formal discourse and policy. It is frequently regarded as “broken English” rather than as a legitimate language variety with structure, rules, and wide functional use. This attitude contrasts sharply with its real-life importance: millions of Nigerians rely on Pidgin daily in commerce, entertainment, religion, and social interaction.

Therefore, the study recommends that Nigerian Pidgin be officially recognized and promoted as a national lingua franca not necessarily to replace English, but to

complement it as a truly indigenous language of interethnic communication. Such recognition should take the following specific forms:

1.1 Educational Incorporation:

Curriculum developers should design functional literacy materials in Pidgin for adult education, informal learning, and civic campaigns.

In multilingual urban areas, early exposure to Pidgin could help children who speak different mother tongues transition more easily into formal schooling, while still valuing their native languages.

1.2. Media and Public Communication:

Government and media organizations should increase the use of standardized Nigerian Pidgin in radio, television, and public information campaigns, especially in markets and rural communities where Pidgin ensures wider reach.

News and public service announcements in Pidgin have proven to reach audiences more effectively than messages in Standard English.

1.3 Policy Recognition:

The Federal and State Ministries of Education, as well as the National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN), should acknowledge Pidgin as a language of national unity in their language policy documents.

Recognizing it formally would validate the linguistic reality of millions of Nigerians and promote inclusivity across ethnic lines.

1.4 Linguistic Standardization and Documentation:

Linguists and universities should intensify efforts to document, describe, and standardize Nigerian Pidgin especially its regional varieties such as Benin Pidgin, Warri Pidgin, and Lagos Pidgin.

This would strengthen its prestige and encourage its use in education, literature, and the creative industries.

1.5 Market and Community Empowerment:

Market associations should be encouraged to use Pidgin in written notices, safety campaigns, and meetings to ensure that all members, regardless of origin, fully understand proceedings.

Since the market is a multilingual hub, embracing Pidgin officially could enhance transparency, unity, and effective information dissemination.

2. Encouragement of Multilingual Education and Cultural Competence

Language policies in Nigeria should emphasize multilingual education, encouraging citizens to acquire communicative competence in at least one major indigenous language apart from their mother tongue. In Edo State, this could include introducing basic Hausa expressions in schools or adult education programs, and vice versa. Such initiatives would foster cultural empathy, mutual understanding, and national unity, especially in urban markets where daily interaction depends on language versatility.

3. Inclusion of Intercultural Communication Training for Traders

Market associations, local councils, and NGOs should organize language and intercultural communication workshops for traders. These programs can help Hausa, Edo, and other ethnic traders learn simple greetings, phrases, and polite expressions in one another's languages. Such knowledge will improve business interactions, minimize misunderstandings, and strengthen interpersonal relationships within the marketplace.

4. Promotion of Cultural Awareness and Tolerance

Since the study revealed that language use in markets fosters peaceful coexistence, local authorities should capitalize on this by organizing interethnic cultural exchange events within market communities. Events like "Market Day Festivals" or "Language Appreciation Days" can celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of traders, reinforcing the idea that difference is a source of unity rather than division.

5. Support for Research on Market Communication and Multilingualism

More academic and sociolinguistic research should be encouraged in other markets across Nigeria to compare language use patterns in different regions. Such studies would provide valuable data for policymakers and linguists, highlighting how informal domains like markets serve as models for grassroots multilingualism and peaceful coexistence.

6. Integration of Market Communication Insights into Language Policy

Government and linguistic organizations should recognize that multilingual interaction in markets demonstrates natural language harmonization without external enforcement. Insights from this study could guide the creation of inclusive language policies that reflect Nigeria's everyday communicative realities, rather than prioritizing only official languages like English.

5.5 Conclusion

The study concludes that language use among Hausa and Edo traders in Benin City markets reflects the multilingual, multicultural, and cooperative nature of Nigerian society. Through code-switching, code-mixing, and the dominant use of Pidgin English, traders overcome linguistic barriers and maintain successful economic and social relationships.

The findings affirm that the market is more than an economic institution—it is a social and linguistic ecosystem where people from diverse backgrounds coexist peacefully, guided by mutual respect and communicative adaptability.

Ultimately, effective communication and tolerance remain vital for sustaining unity and economic progress in a linguistically diverse nation like Nigeria.

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