



## Negotiating Identity through Music: Code-switching between English/Nigerian English and Indigenous Languages

<sup>1</sup>Patience Ashesla GARBA, <sup>2</sup>Agatha Njideka NWANYA and <sup>3</sup>Dorathy Onyinyechi, IGBEAKU

<sup>1</sup>Department of Languages and Linguistics, Nasarawa State University Keffi, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Theatre and Cultural Studies, Nasarawa State University Keffi, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria,

Nsukka. Correspondence: [garbapatiencea@nsuk.edu.ng](mailto:garbapatiencea@nsuk.edu.ng)

### Abstract

*This study investigates the phenomenon of code-switching in Nigerian music, focusing on the interplay between English/Nigerian Pidgin, to indigenous languages – specifically Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa and Eggon. There are a number of articles on code-switching from English to the majority languages particularly Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. But there are few works on code-switching in the minority languages and none in Eggon to the knowledge of the researchers. These and more prompt the current study in other to fill the existing gaps. Drawing from some selected songs, the research explores the sociolinguistic, cultural and communicative functions of code-switching in musical context. The study also explains the types of code-switching in the languages under study and their similarities and differences. The researchers analyse the data using Markedness model, Interactional sociolinguistics, and description in order to explain code-switching as used in the data sourced from five songs' official recording and online lyric data base. The analysis reveals that musicians deploy multilingual resources not only for stylistic and aesthetic purposes but also as a means of negotiating identity and reaching diverse audiences. The findings highlight music as a dynamic site of language contact, where global and local identities intersect and where minority languages gain visibility alongside dominant national and international languages. This research shows that code-switching in music illuminates unique linguistic strategy in performance art, enriches understanding of language contact and creates multiple identity construction. It also serves as a means of preservation of indigenous languages including minority varieties like Eggon.*

**Keywords:** code-switching; Nigerian music; indigenous languages; minor/major group language

### 1. Introduction

Nigeria is a complex multilingual society with over 500 different languages spoken across the nation (Lewis et al. 2013). Code-switching also called code-mixing as a feature of languages in contact is a natural phenomenon in a multilingual society. Even though some scholars see code-switching as a negative factor, capable of causing internal confusion, reduces performance in both languages and can even cause language death (Lipski 1982:191, Ahukanna 1990).

More so, some monolinguals assume code-switching is as a result of lack of competence or vocabulary. Nevertheless, studies do not support these claims. It has been proven that code-mixing has positive impact on the people. These include show of togetherness by reducing the language difference. It also facilitate social accommodation of people with less fluency in the other language.

According to Chumbow (2014:328) if “ethno-linguistic identities is not handled by a spirit of

nationalism may result in misguided ethno-linguistic loyalties thus undermine nationalism and resulting in tension and conflict called ‘les guerres des langues (the war of languages)’. Calvet (1998) suggests one way to manage such language wars is by proper management of ethno linguistic diversity and multiculturalism. Code-switching could be used to manage linguistic diversity by accommodating two or more languages in a conversation. This is one of the objectives multilingual artists hope to achieve by code-switching in music.

This paper examines code-switching in some Nigerian music. The multilingual nature of Nigeria due to over 500 indigenous languages results in many issues. These range from tribalism syndrome, segregation, to the issue of National language, etc. In an attempt to reduce the language difference, some people see code-switching as a way to salvage the linguistic diversity problem. The current study examines the use of code-switching by some Nigerian artists and the roles it performs.

The objective of this paper is to examine the use of code-switching among some Nigerian artists in order to establish:

- a) the types and structures of code-switching
- b) the functions or roles of code-switching
- c) the similarities and differences between the switches among the different artists and languages used.

The study hopes to contribute to previous works on code-switching and to expose peculiarities in especially the use of minority languages (Eggon) against the norm (use of majority languages) Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

## **2.0 Literature review**

This section looks at terms and previous works on code-switching.

### **2.1 General overview of code-switching**

Essien (1995:28) sees code-switching as an avenue that facilitates social function and group participation.

Vanherk & Katamba (2011) describe code-switching as a common phenomenon among people who share more than one language. Igbonekwu & Amadi (2021) see code-mixing as a linguistic aid to effective communication, cohesion and oneness. Crystal (2008) defines code-switching as a transfer of linguistic elements from one language into another. This feature of language use attracts different attitude such as community support (expression of identity) to outright condemnation (speakers of the standard language involved).

Agbedo (2000) defines code-switching as “the linguistic act of using more than one variety of language or two separate languages”. He further suggests that code-switching can be learned by individuals as members of a speech community. Thus, code-switching indicates group membership. Agbedo notes that switches take place at within sentences and at grammatical significant boundaries. He adds that code-switching is governed by systematic rules. He identifies two principal directions of code switching: social motivations for switching (immediate discussion) and solidarity (group identity, relationship building), secondly, grammatical rules and specific syntactic boundaries determining where and how switches take place. Agbedo lists convenience, brevity, secrecy, linguistic inadequacy, oratorical excellence as reasons for code-switching. He further adds that code-switching has constraints such as where a switch may occur. Agbedo suggests it occurs where the syntax of the two languages align e.g. boundary of a relative clause.

There are several reasons for code-switching which include: ease of expression, domain of use, lack of competence or vocabulary in one language/subject; the intension of the speaker to exclude others from a conversation; in stylistics, code-switching can be used to show a change in tone or subject matter; code-switching can also be used to show one’s knowledge of many language. Holmes (2013) notes that codes-

witching bridge the gap between the speaker and hearer; it also accommodate more or less participants; it create better understanding of the addressee. These reasons for code-switching give better understanding and reduce misinformation.

Generally, sentential and intra sentential types of code-switching may be distinguished. Other types of code-switching include conscious; (deliberate switch to another language) unconscious (use of another language due to having the knowledge without realising it); conversational (a switch to another language without a change in topic and participants); anticipatory (start a sentence in one code and end in another); situational (controlled by the topic and participants) and metaphorical (deals with various communicative effects the speaker intends to convey). Nwanya (2011:148) maintains that most Nigerian hip-hop artists experiment with languages especially the three major Nigerian languages. Nwamara (2011:148) notes that “in Nigerian hip-hop music Nigerian pidgin or Nigerian ethnic languages are used in the song texts”.

## **2.2 Empirical studies**

In a study of code-mixing in Simi and Adekunle Gold's songs, Adeniyi and Kehinde (2022) analyse the use of code mixing as a style and means of identity of the singers. Adeniyi and Kehinde use the Theory of Sociology to analyse the data sourced from six songs: Dukuke, Sade, No Forget Me, Selense, Promise Me and Joromi. The findings show that Simi and Adekunle Gold make use of sentential and word code-switching to create unique style and diction through coinage.

Gwigty (2020) studies code-switching in contemporary Nigerian Hip Hop songs with the aim of examining the nature of code-switching found in these songs and the possible reasons behind them; and also, how the artistes code-switch. He observes that code-switching here involves English and one (or more) of the three major languages in Nigeria, which

are Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. However, the constant use of Yoruba by the artistes cannot go unnoticed. Thus, Yoruba appears to be the most frequently used among the Nigerian languages and indeed, the titles of some songs attest to this. The findings of the work also show that pidgin in most Nigerian hip hop songs is also common. In Nigeria, pidgin cuts across the country making it easy for all Nigerians from different tribes and background to communicate with each other. Hence, most artistes use pidgin as well in their songs' lyrics.

Agbedo (2011:52) in his study of ‘the problems of bilingual nation’, asserts that in Nigerian perspective, code-switching is not remarkably dissimilar from viewpoint of other countries of the world. In his view, the slang term “Wenglish” exists and points to a variety of English that is being influenced by Welsh. He noted also that in India, there is “Hinglish” the unofficial reference for the insertion of English words, phrase or clauses in a conversational utterance. There are also other varieties like “Tanglish” and “Banglish” (mixtures of English with Tamil and Bangla respectively). We also have “Taglish” Tagalog and English and in Singapore, “Singlish”, which is a mixture of English with Mandarin Chinese, Chinese dialects and Malay is spoken in Singapore. “Spanglish” in the US, Portunol in Brazilian – Uruguayan border. In Nigeria, we have the “Engligbo” which is a mixture of English and Igbo language. The present work indicates the existence of code-switching and mixing among Nigerian musicians where they switch from their indigenous languages to English, or pidgin and vice versa.

Emeka-Nworbia (2014) studies code-switching in Igbo-English bilingual conversations and identifies six functions of code-switching in conversations to be: affiliation and indication of solidarity to a particular linguistic group or a listener(s), mitigating and aggravating messages, compensation for conceptual or linguistic deficiency in the bilingual speaker's

linguistic repertoire, creation of emphasis, conscious display of the elites and prestigious language; and to conceal certain information for the sake of privacy and secrecy.

### **2.3 Theoretical framework**

This study is anchored on two major sociolinguistic approaches to code-switching: Myers-Scotton (1993) Markedness model and Gumperz (1982) Interactional sociolinguistics. These frameworks provide complementary perspectives for analysing the functions and motivations of code-switching in Nigerian music.

Myers-Scotton's Markedness model (1993, 1998) posits that language choices are rarely arbitrary but are socially motivated in any interaction, speakers draw upon a "rights and obligations" set that guides whether a language choice is unmarked (expected and socially appropriate) or marked (unexpected, signalling a shift in identity, emphasis or alignment). Applied to musical discourse, this model explains why Nigerian musicians may use Nigerian Pidgin or English as an unmarked choice for mass appeal and accessibility, while switching into Eggon, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba represents a marked choice to index ethnic identity, assert authenticity or intensify a message. The Markedness model therefore provides a framework for examining the social meanings behind linguistic alternation in musical performances.

In contrast, Gumperz's interactional sociolinguistics (1982, 1992) emphasizes the role of contextualization cues in communication. For Gumperz, code-switching is a contextualization strategy through which speakers convey subtle social and communicative meanings such as solidarity, humour, intimacy or persuasion. Within Nigerian music, these switches serve as cues for listeners, signalling shifts in audience, theme, or emotional intensity. For instance, the switch from English to Hausa in a verse may contextualize solidarity with Northern audiences while a return to

Pidgin may serve to unify broader Nigerian listeners across ethnic lines.

Together, these frameworks enable a multidimensional analysis of code-switching in music. Myers-Scotton's model illuminates the motivational dimension of language choice (why artists switch codes) while Gumperz's approach highlights the communicative dimension (how code-switching functions in meaning making). This dual theoretical lens is especially relevant for the present study, which explores how Nigerian musicians navigate English/Pidgin alongside Eggon, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba in ways that simultaneously reflects linguistic creativity, cultural identity, and social cohesions.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The study adopts a qualitative descriptive design within the framework of sociolinguistics. The analysis draws on insights from Myers-Scotton's Markedness model (1993) and Gumperz's Interactional sociolinguistics (1982) to interpret language choice as a socially and contextually motivated act.

Data are collected from selection of related Nigerian songs. The selection criteria includes the use of English/Pidgin English alongside indigenous languages specifically, Eggon, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. There is no specification for music genre or artist. Lyrics of the songs were sourced from official audio recordings and online lyric data base. Data analysis commences with the careful documentation and translation of the lyrics. Instances of code-switching were identified and categorised based on intra-sentential switching (within a single sentence), inter-sentential switching (between sentences/lines), and tag-switching (insertion of single words or phrases). The research focuses on Eggon, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba excluding other Nigerian languages.

### **4.0 Data presentation and analysis**

This sub-section presents the data for the study followed by the analysis. The data is gathered from

four (4) songs with clear code-switching. First is a summary of the details of the respective songs.

S/N	Artist	Music Genre	Album	Nature of Code-switching
1	Teddy-Bold	Rap	Restoration	English to Eggon
2	A. N. Anthony	gospel	Rafin Rai	English /Hausa/Pidgin
3	Dare	gospel	New Song	English /Hausa/Pidgin /Yoruba
4	Chinedu Izuchukwu Okoli	highlife	Game Changer	English, Pidgin and Igbo
5	Midnight Crew	Gospel	Kosibaba	Yoruba/Igbo/English

**4.1 Artist:** Teddy- Bold  
**Music Genre:** Rap  
**Album:** Restoration  
**Nature of Code-switching:** English to Eggon

#### Introduction

This is something that we once lost  
 And something that we want to rebuild  
 It's to get back to our roots  
 It's your boy Teddy- Bold  
 This is a rebirth, to all my people

#### Verse 1

Ayígá gí zgá gi mbò, gi kló gi mbò 'we do not used to love ourselves'

Ìpú tòno la wo ésòn gi 'only jealousy is in our hearts'

Do ka ba ànàño a fu óndnà ugun 'if you see your Muslim brother/sister'

Do si éyáyé ño da nà mbò 'you keep a straight face'

Do ka ba ànàño a yi ákulú 'if you see your Christian brother/sister'

Do si ámí whre mbò dà nà mbò 'you do not give him/her drinkable water'

Ne lu ódlú ádlídzídzí 'let me tell you the truth'

Agogbre si óshé da gi, gi sùkùn 'may God give us strength'

Mo are la klo gi úmbugù gi damu mbò gi kpo māmá

'let's not bother with those troubling us'

O dzu pétné a wo lo ba 'it's all about peace'

Awo úmbugù mbò gi kpo lo mbò

'even if it's offensive, we should not give in'

Rest in peace to all the Eggon heroes in this battle field

#### Chorus

Restoration is the best way

We build all things we've lost

Now we're back on line, everything is alright

Everywhere is so peaceful

More love no hating

Now we are back on line

Everything is alright

The code-switching in this music is conscious and metaphorical. The artist Teddy-Bold started the song in English in the introduction. The verse one followed with a switch to Eggon and lastly to English in the last sentence. The code-switching here is inter-sentential. However, the artist's target is speakers of the same language (Eggon). The mixing of code here exclude speakers of other languages from the gist in the music. The part of the music that is in Eggon, verse one, expose a problem which speakers of other languages were excluded from. The artist switched to English in the last sentence

of the first verse and through the chorus which contains the solution to the problem. The verse in Eggon is kept secret with the use of the language, while the chorus which has nothing to hide is in a language with wider coverage. The use of Eggon in the verse shows the artist's group membership and shared ethnicity with the addressees in the words of Holmes (2013). The artist also tries to promote Eggon by rapping in the language which is not common and also encourage Eggon speakers that are not fluent or interested in the language to do so. This, in the words of Crystal (2008), attracts community support of the artist/music by the language speakers. Lastly, the artist tries to encourage togetherness and oneness of not only the Eggon people but the general public by the use of English in order to have wider coverage.

**4.2 Artist:** A. N. Anthony

**Music Genre:** Gospel

**Album:** Rafin Rai

**Nature of Code-switching:** English

/Hausa/Pidgin

**Verse 1**

Fire flows from the river

Grace flows from the river

Anointing flows from the river

Power flows from the river

I wanna drink from you eehh

Lord I wanna drink from you

**Chorus**

Ina so insha, daga rafin rai (I want to drink from the river of life)

Ina so in sha, ina so in sha (I want to drink 2X)

Daga rafin rai] 2X (from the river of life)

Ina so in sha] 2X (I want to drink)

**Verse 2**

Blessing flows from the river

Healing flows from the river

Restoration flows from the river

Power flows from the river

Life flows from the river

Fire flows from the river

Destiny in the river

New name in the river

In the music above 'Rafin Rai' (river of life),

the artist A. N. Anthony starts the song in

English then switches to slang in the last two

sentences in verse one. The artist then code-

switches to Hausa in the chorus, where he

expresses his longing for a drink of living

water (Jesus) from the river of life. The

second verse also involves a switch from

Hausa in the chorus to English. The code-

switching can be described as conscious and

metaphorical. This is because the artist

switches between the two languages

deliberately based on the communicative

effect he intends to convey. The code-

switching is inter-sentential, between

different sentences.

**4.3**

**Artist:**

Dare

**Music Genre:**

Gospel

**Album:**

New

Song

**Nature of Code-switching:**

English

/Pidgin English/Hausa/Yoruba

**Chorus**

I will play my mollo

I will play my getar

I will sing a new song to the Lord

**Verse 1**

The Lord is my refuge

He is my strong tower

My present help in times of need

The mighty one of Israel  
 He is my miracle worker  
 The husband to the widow

**Bridge 1**

At the mention of his name  
 Every knee must bow, every tongue confess  
 This my God e don do well for me  
 This my God e fit do well for you

**Verse 2**

With all my heart, with all my strength  
 I'm gonna let no rot in my place  
 Mai zan yi maka masoyina 'what will I do for  
 you my lover'  
 Kai kade (2X) ka isa yabo 'you alone are  
 worthy of praise'

**Bridge 2**

Oya, move your body  
 Touch the ceiling dirty your riga 'cloth'  
 He go make you prosper  
 Rangada mollo, rangada getar 'guitar'

The code-switching in the extracts above is a conscious and anticipatory one. The artist starts the first two lines 'I will play my mollo' 'I will play my getar' in the chorus in English and end with Hausa words *mollo* and *getar* which are musical instruments. The switch could be as a result of the artist being conversant with the words. This switch is called intra-sentential i.e. the use of two different languages within a sentence. The first verse was in English without any switch. This may be intended to show mastery of the English language following the code switching in the previous section (chorus). However, there is a switch from English to Pidgin English and back to English in the last two sentences 'This my God e don do well for me' 'This my God e fit do well for you' in the following section (bridge). This switch based on the lyrics targets the less privilege, who might not understand English; thus, the use of pidgin which most populace, in Nigeria, understand. The second verse has a switch from English to Pidgin English and

Hausa. The code-switching in verse two can be described as both intra/inter-sentential. That is, both within a sentence and between different sentences. The artist in bridge two started with a Yoruba word, to English, to Pidgin English then to Hausa. This switch is also intra/inter-sentential. The artist here tries to use his music to communicate unity and oneness between the speakers of these different languages. It also show community support that is, an expression of what Crystal (2008) terms local identity. The music also has a wide coverage of speakers of the four different languages involved. Code-switching in the music facilitates social accommodation. The type of code-switching in the music is intra/inter-sentential which spice up the rhythm of the music. The use of code-switching in this music can be described as a style to foster the rhythm and acceptability of the song by speakers of the various languages.

**4.4 Artist:** Chinedu I. Okoli

**Music Genre:** Highlife

**Album:** Game Changer

**Nature of Code-switching:** English to Igbo

**Chant1**

The emperor (E)  
 The conqueror (E)  
 The champion (E)  
 The lion is here (E)  
 Nzogbu nzogbu (I)  
 Enyi mba Enyi (I)

**Chorus1**

Tuo ya dike - - ah aaah (I)  
 Le/Ne nu dike - - ah aaah (I)  
 Tuo ya dike - - ah aaah (I)  
 Le/Ne nu dike - - ah aaah (I)  
 Ihe eji a mara dike e ruo nu (I)  
 Egwu e change go (I/E)

Ihe eji a mara dike e ruo nu (I)  
Egwu adagharigo (I)

### Post Chorus1

O nwere ngabasi - - ah aaah (I)  
O na-emekasi - - ah aaah (I)  
O nwere ngabasi - - ah aaah (I)  
O na-apiakasi - - ah aaah (I)  
Ebubedike - - ah aaah (I)  
Ife erikekwe - - ah aaah (I)  
Nwanyị manarịa - - ah aaah (I)  
Achalaugo dike - - ah aaah (I)

### Verse 1

Clear the road for who sabi (P/E)  
Who dey who dey who dey who dey (P)  
Step aside for the game changer (E)  
Who dey who dey who dey who dey (P)  
Onye a na-ekwu maka ya a putago  
(I)  
Who dey who dey who dey who dey (P)  
Anụ a na-agba egbe o na-ata nri  
(I)  
Who dey who dey who dey who dey (P)

The song in the excerpts above is a self-acclamation and highlife music by an Igbo artist. The record opens with a bravado chant “The emperor, the conqueror, the champion, the lion is here... nzogbu nzogbu, Enyimba enyi”. In this song, Okoli brags about his capability, skills and potentials, and how he introduces new games into the industry to replace the existing one. In the introductory part (chant), Okoli praises himself to be the game changer and metaphorically refers to himself as the “the emperor, the conqueror, the champion and also the lion”. This implies that in the game of music, he is the emperor who cannot be conquered because he is always the conqueror and the champion. When he is on the stage, he roars like a lion and every other artiste bows in awe of his voice.

The introductory part (chant) composed of six lines written in English with a mixture of few Igbo words. Out of these, two lines are sung in Igbo and three in English. This is where we observed a type of switch known as Inter sentential code-switching where the song writer switches from predominant English sentence to Igbo, as in 4.4 chant 1 above.

Among the eight lines of the first chorus and the six lines of the first post chorus, it is only in line six of the first chorus that the singer switches and mixes both English and Igbo which leads to intra-sentential switch. Every other line was predominantly rendered in Igbo language.

The music has only one verse which is composed of ten lines rendered in English, pidgin and Igbo. This verse is a typical example of Inter- sentential code-switching where the singer perfectly switches from one language to the other. Here, the artiste in the first line and with the combination of English and pidgin, instructed the audience to make way for who *sabi* (he that knows it all) and quickly switches to pidgin in the penultimate line

“Make way for who *sabi*” is an example of intra-sentential code-switching between English and Pidgin where the singer started with English and ended with pidgin. Line 3 “*Step aside for the game changer*” is completely rendered in English and immediately followed in the penultimate line with pidgin. However, line 5 *Onye a na-ekwu maka ya a putago* and 7 *Anụ a na-agba egbe o na-ata nri* are presented in Igbo with their penultimate lines respectively written in pidgin.

**4.5 Artist:** Midnight Crew

**Music Genre:** Gospel

**Album:** Kosi oba bire

**Nature of Code-switching:** Yoruba to Igbo to English

### Verse 1

Kosi oba bire (there is no king like you)  
Kosi baba bire (there is no father like you)  
Koma solorun bire (there is no God like you) igwe  
(king)

### Bridge

E ba mi gb'olorun tobi (help me lift God high)  
Oba nla oba to ga (big king, mighty king)  
Edumare oba to ga (ruler of the universe, mighty king)

### Chorus

Igwe (king 4X)  
You are the great I am igwe  
Ooh oh oh igwe  
Heaven and earth adore you igwe  
Angels bow before him igwe  
What a mighty God igwe  
We serve igwe hey  
We thank you igwe  
We love you igwe  
We praise you  
Ooh igwe

In the song above by Midnight Crew, two types of code-switching are noticed. The first verse exemplify inter-sentential switch from Yoruba to Igbo. The bridge is in one language Yoruba while the chorus starts with Igbo then ends in English. The chorus shows clear examples of tag switch where the Igbo word *Igwe* is inserted in all the English lines.

The code-switching here is meant to enhance the style and rhythm of the song. It can be described as conscious and anticipatory code-switching. This is because the switch is plan and strategic. In the English version of the chorus, for instance, every line ends with a switch to Igbo. Not just Igbo but the same word is repeated. This shows a major difference between conversational code-switching and musical code-switching. In conversation, the switched words are not usually repeated while in Music, it might be repeated. The code-switching in the first verse is in Yoruba and Igbo. This is rather anomaly because most songs cited

above and in other code-mix songs featured an indigenous language and English or Pidgin English.

### 5.0 Summary of findings and conclusion

The findings show that the artists Teddy Bold, A.N. Anthony, Dare, Chinedu I. Okoli (Flavour) and Midnight Crew make use of inter-sentential, intra-sentential and tag code-switching. Specifically, only Teddy-Bold make use of only inter-sentential code-switching. The other artists in 4.1- 4.3 used both intra- and inter-sentential code-switching. The last example in 4.5 make use of tag code-switching more than the other data in 4.1-4.4. More so, the type of code-switching is conscious and anticipatory in 4.1, 4.3; while it is conscious and metaphorical in 4.2 (Fire flows from the river, destiny in the river, new name in the river) and 4.4 (the emperor, the conqueror, the champion and the lion). This is because the points of switches are similar in most of the songs under study except example 4.5 where a switch is observed in all the lines (nine lines) of the chorus. The other artists (4.1-4.4) switched at the penultimate and ultimate lines. This is not a coincidence but a sign of conscious planning and anticipation.

The study also shows that the roles of code-switching in Nigerian music include: to seek cooperation among speakers of the language (as in 4.1, verse 1 where the artists expose a problem among members of the tribe and admonished speakers of the need to be united in order to overcome the problem); the artist in 4.1 code-switching also play a role of secrecy where a common problem in the language was presented in the language for only the speakers' knowledge thereby not exposing it to other non-speakers of the language; to improve the style and rhythm of the song (this can be exemplify from the strategic positions of the switches as in the penultimate and ultimate lines in the data 4.1 verse 1; 4.2 verse 1; 4.3 bridge 1, verse 2, bridge 2; 4.4 chant 1, verse 1, and 4.5 verse 1); to earn acceptance and wider coverage: 4.1 for instance will not gain the interest of Eggon non-speakers without a

switch to English in the chorus which can apply to the general populace; similarly, in 4.2 to 4.5 the use of English, Pidgin English, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba which are official and majority languages make the songs to be accepted by almost every Nigerian.

One common switching style among the artists is the use of a different language in the last two sentences in a verse/chorus see 4.1 verse 1; 4.2 verse 1; 4.3 bridge 1, verse 2, bridge 2; 4.4 chant 1, verse 1 and 4.5 verse 1. This shows that the switch is plan and deliberate to achieve a particular style. One difference in the findings is the different languages that the artists used in the music. In 4.1 its English to Eggon; 4.2 is English to Hausa /Pidgin English; 4.3 is English to Hausa/ Pidgin English and Yoruba; 4.4 is English to Igbo/ Pidgin English and 4.5 is Yoruba to Igbo to English.

This study contributes to sociolinguistics and ethnomusicology in several ways. It illuminates unique linguistic strategies in performance art. It also enriches understanding of language contact and identity construction by demonstrating how musicians alternate between English, Pidgin English and indigenous languages to affirm cultural belonging and articulate multiple identities. The study also underscores the communicative and literary functions of code-switching showing how language alternation intensifies meaning, broadens audience reach and facilitates the preservation of indigenous languages, including minority varieties such as Eggon. By extension, code-switching in music encourages tolerance in diversity.

In conclusion, from the findings in this study, it can be said that Nigerian music artists make use of code-switching as a style in their songs in order to attract acceptance and community support. This is obvious in the use of English and Pidgin English which are the official and a kind of 'national language' in Nigeria in all the songs reviewed. Some scholars even suggested the use of Pidgin English as the National language in the country. This is because most Nigerians

understand/speak Pidgin English. In addition, there is no significant difference in the use of code-switching involving the majority and minority group languages in Nigeria.

## References

- Adeniyi, K. O. & T. A. Kehinde (2022). Code-shifting or code-switching as a style in Simi's and Adekunle Gold's songs. *International Journal of Linguistics Studies*. Doi 10.32996/ijls [www.al-kindpublisher.com/index.php/ijls](http://www.al-kindpublisher.com/index.php/ijls). Assessed on 6<sup>th</sup>/28/2023.
- Agbedo, C. U. (2011). *Problems of Multilingual Nations: The Nigerian Perspective*. Nsukka Nigeria: ACE Resources Konzults.
- Agbedo, C. U. (2000). *General linguistics: Historical and contemporary perspectives*. Nsukka: KUMCEE-Ntaeshe Press Inc.
- Ahukanna, J. G. W. (1990). Bilingualism and codemixing in language use in Nigeria: the case of igbo-English bilinguals. In Emenanjo E. N. (Ed). *Multilingualism, minority languages and language policy in Nigeria*. 175-185. Agbor: Central Books Ltd.
- Crystal, David (2008). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Blackwell Publishers.
- Emeka-Nworbia, N. U. (2014). Code-switching in Igbo-English bilingual conversation. *British Journal of English Linguistics* Vol.2, No.3, pp.1-6.
- Essien, O. (1995). The English language and code-mixing: a case study of the phenomenon in Ibibio. In Bamgbose, A., Banjo, A. and Thomas A. (eds.). *New Englishes: A West African perspective* 269-283. Ibadan: Mosuro Books.
- Gwigt, S. O. (2020). *Code-switching in contemporary Nigerian Hip Hop songs*. Maiduguri, Katangu Press.
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gumperz, J. J. (1992). Contextualization and understanding. In Duranti, A. & Goodwin, C. (Eds.). *Rethinking context: Language as an interactive*

phenomenon (229-252). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Holmes, J. (2013). *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Routledge.

Igbonekwu, F.C. & Amadi, S. C. (2021).

Codeswitching and codemixing among Igbo-English bilinguals in multilingual contexts: A study of selected catholic priests religious discourse. In Adeniyi, H., Obiamalu, G., and Olagunju, T. (Eds.) *Interdisciplinary approaches to the study of Africa languages. Essays in honour of Francis Egbokhare*. Lagos: Free Enterprise Publishers and the Linguistic Association of Nigeria.

Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). *Social motivations for code-switching: Evidences from Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Myers-Scotton, C. (1998). A theoretical introduction to code-switching. In Aver, P. (Ed), *Code switching in conversation: Language, interaction and identity*. (PP 18-39). London: Routledge.

Nwabara, A.- I. (2011). Naiji Hip-hop song texts and their implications to sustainable development. In ABC Chiegbokaetal (ed.). *The humanities and sustainable development*. Nimo: Rex Charles and Patrick.

Nwanya, A. N. (2010). Contemporary Nigerian music culture in the wakeof globalization in Nerus Y. T. and Nwankwo I. (Eds.). *Nigeria Literature Structural Adjustment Policy and Globalisation. Proceedings of international conference on Nigerian Literature*, Gombe, Gombe State.

Herk, V. G. & Katamba, F. (2011). Language in Social Contexts. In O'Grady, W., J. Archibald & F. Katamba (Eds.). *Contemporary linguistics, an introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Malasia: Pearson Education Limited.