SOCIO CUM LINGUISTIC INTERPLAY IN LANGUAGE CHOICE AND PERFORMANCE IN A MULTILIGUAL MILIEU

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Abstract
Language ordinarily serves as a tool for communication. Communication is made effective by the individual's competence and ability in using any language. The reverse will, however be the case. Similarly, some other variables can enhance or mar communication. The variables which may aid or abate communication include those norms of the society that uses a particular language. These norms go a long way in regulating the choice one makes of diction, structure, pronunciation and even accent. Furthermore, the context where language is used equally determines what is to be said and how to say it. This paper therefore investigates the interplay of socio and linguistic variables in determining one's choice of code or language using the city of Awka and the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, one of the federal universities in the south eastern part of Nigeria as the setting. The data for the study were randomly collected from people, including students, artisans, businessmen, traders and other civil populace in the city. The result of the study indicates that the language that most people speak and the extent of their performance is a consequence of two variables: the linguistic knowledge of the individual and the society where the individual operates. The findings of this study will help effective communication to take place and enable people of all walks of life to interact well with others.

Language essence and Language use

Language is a tool used by individuals or group to interact or exchange ideas. It is also an exclusive property of a people or society. This therefore makes language a powerful symbol of group identity. As a result of this characteristic of language, it binds a people together and at the same time separates individuals or groups. It follows then that when language serves as a binding element the people so concerned show very high loyalty to that language. On the other hand, different languages act as distinguishing factors between individuals and groups so much so that it is at times a basis for delineating communities, while it forms battle lines in times of quarrels or wars. Furthermore, as a unifying factor, the users of a particular language master the language and its varieties very well and also acquire enough vocabularies and different colorations of the language.

Nida and Wonderly (1971) observe that language has different varieties each of which serves a specific function in the society or to the individuals that use it. They refer to these different varieties as 'the in-group language', 'the out-group language' and 'the language of specialised information'. In some situations, however, there may be need for yet another code. This very code serves the need for higher education and for specialised formal training. It also performs the role of providing specialised information, that is, the information that comes from the outside culture and not the culture of the immediate out group. This situation arises only in a multilingual and heterogeneous community.

As a result of the varieties of language, people of one community use one variety in place of the other for some reasons. Consequently, a situation may arise whereby people who otherwise are in one group are separated into various other groups because of varieties they speak. In a situation like this, the elite in the group use the improved, or the standard or the out group variety; while the illiterates speak or use the local variety that they are at home with. This also helps to cover their linguistic deficiency. This latter group guards their local

variety so jealously that it sometimes gives rise to cultural separateness that creates gaps among members of the different communities. As Edwards (1976:16) puts it:

> These loyalties express a simple sense of property, and also
> a realization that when language 'barriers' disappear, other
> forms of cultural separateness often disappear with them
> (as we will see, these barriers may be largely in the mind, the
> symbolic value of one's 'own' language bearing little relation
> to the purely linguistic distinctiveness).

The point Edwards is making here is that the presence of different languages occasionally creates some barriers which destroy good relationships and therefore hampers progress. This may give rise to political upheavals which Edwards describes as "a struggle not of principles but of races …"

In any case, one may be knowledgeable and proficient in the standard variety of one's language but still decides to choose another code or variety in order to reach all and sundry and engender harmonious relationship amongst a group of people, or to distance oneself from others or conceal certain things. Besides this, the language an individual chooses or the way he speaks it may be as a result of the dictates of societal values. Hence, Onwumelu (1990) observes that the language used by an individual in a society is not simply his thought but also an expression of his thought.

In his analysis of the problem of linguistic imperialism noticed in one of the federal universities in the country, Onwudiwe (1999:63) illustrates the case thus:

> During an English language lecture in one of our federal
> Universities in the western part of the country, the lecturer at a
> point code-switched to his vernacular (Yoruba) to the utter and
> spontaneous condemnation of the students … . But the lecturer
> sounding rather unremorseful rebuked the students stressing that
> they should in addition to whatever study they were undertaking
> try to learn the Yoruba language.

The above excerpt is a demonstration of linguistic superiority and also an example of ethnic imposition of its lifestyle on another person. This type of situation may either make someone learn to speak a language by force, or refuse to speak it. This is a contributory factor to the choice of, and performance in a language. Apart from these factors, one's competence and ability in a given language or lack of these can influence choice and performance in language.

Factors germane for language choice and performance

It has been repeatedly pointed out in this text that language is basically an instrument for communication. Communication is transference of one's thoughts and ideas to another person with a view to stimulating certain behaviour in the listener. Hence, Webster (1979) describes communication as a process of exchanging information between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour. Onwumelu (1990) highlights that interaction between interlocutors determines the way they use language as language signs affect all those who share the signs in a similar way, awaken in them similar expectations, similar preferences, and similar types of conduct. But the particular code to choose and one's performance in it have been discovered to be a consequence of certain variables. These variables are many and multifarious. However, this paper shall categorise the variables under two broad parts – psychological and linguistic variables and social variables.

Linguistic and psychological variables

Linguistic and psychological variables refer to those factors as the individual's language ability, his innate language aptitude, his developmental stage that is, whether he is an infant, a child, an adolescent, or an adult. It also refers to his emotion, personality, his mental state and language acquisition system. Language and language acquisition are principally psychological phenomena. Hence, Harley (1995:3) enumerates some of the psychological issues about language to include: recognising and understanding single words, identifying spoken words, recognising printed words and learning how to pronounce them, learning how to read, understanding words strung together to form sentences. Other issues are how language is stored, how we represent the meaning of words and text and how sentences are strung together to form larger units of discourse or text, the relationship between language and thought, language acquisition including language acquisition in exceptional circumstances such as the effects of linguistic deprivation, how bilingual children can learn two languages, etc. Psychological and linguistic variables which influence choice of and performance in a code are legion. However, few of the variables are investigated in this study. They include Linguistic competence, Status, prestige and occupation, Exclusiveness and Our sense of fitness.

(i) Linguistic Competence: The code to be used by any individual in any context depends largely on his linguistic competence in the available languages. Therefore, one major factor that can determine relationship amongst one another, apart from culture or nationhood is language. Hickerson (1980:84) observes that while some individuals may be bilingual, some may be monolingual. Whichever applies, he states that there may be a situation whereby some individuals may not be as competent to the same degree in more than one language with others in that community. In this circumstance, it follows that such an individual may resort to using that and only the language that he has control of irrespective of whether more than one language is used in that community. See a discussion between an Hausa hawker and his Igbo customer:

(1)	Trader:	Ah! Kwastoma, sanu.
	Customer:	Aboki, yaya kasuwa?
	Trader:	Dego diya.
	Customer:	How you de sell onions?
	Trader:	Albasa, six, ten nira.
	Customer:	Na here you de stay?
	Trader:	Yes! Ah! Megida, nwanna na your own? I fine.
	Customer:	How you no say na me get the car?
	Trader:	Yes!
	Customer:	You get am too?
	Trader:	Yes. Pata. Def. Roka.
	Customer:	Which moto bi Pata, Def… How you buy am?
	Trader:	Onye Hausa Sọkọtọ Stake. Arugungu. Doya.
	Customer:	Whatever that one mean; how you take buy am?
	Trader:	Black market.

In the discussion above, Abdulrahman the trader, who is a native of Sokoto resides in the cosmopolitan city, Awka, and a predominantly Igbo speaking community. He is not very literate and therefore not competent in both Standard English and Igbo languages. His customer, Edozie is an Igbo and also literate and competent in both Igbo and English languages. Their level of competence or lack of it as explained above affected the flow of

their discussion. Hence, Abdulrahman would rather code-switch to his mother-tongue, Hausa whenever he got stalked, while some of his responses indicate that he did not understand the Pidgin English spoken by his customer, Edozie. On the part of Edozie, he does not understand Hausa thus leading to communication failure. This is a case of lack of linguistic competence.

(ii) Status, Prestige and Occupation: This is a variable for choice of language that is most noticed in the present-day conversations. People are very conscious of their status and occupation whenever they engage in any conversation with people. They also consider the code or variety of it that will provide the necessary prestige that they need. Hence, Parkin (1971) accounts for a meeting of Nakawa Tenants Association where a Ugandan of Teso tribe addressed the meeting in English instead of Swahili language that would have reached every member of the meeting. His action however, met stiff protest by the poorer members of the meeting who lived in lower Nakawa as they could not understand him. They rather demanded a running translation as he spoke. But the young Ugandan could not deter for the fact that he had a good knowledge of English language as a clerk, and did not have sufficient knowledge of Swahili.

Parkin reports further, that to the members, the young Teso was simply showing off, or is acting proudly and does not want to bring himself low by speaking his local dialect, Swahili. Apart from this innate tendency, the speaker's choice of English is as a result of his education and working class. It further shows that in selecting a language to be used in such situation, status differences are expressed.

In our own setting in Awka, the above situation is a frequent occurrence as is exemplified below:

(2) Police Officer: Ọga, good morning sir!
Civil Servant: Good morning to you.
Police Officer: Can we see your papers?
Civil Servant: Which papers do you mean?
Police Officer: Your papers now, all your papers!
Civil Servant: But, you should be specific. Vehicle documents are many and varied.
Police Officer: O. K. Bring the ones you have; first, your driving licence, vehicle licence, Insurance cover, and so on, and so on.
Civil Servant: You see, if you had been specific from the beginning, do you realise that you would have saved yourself and me time. Now, I'm late to the office and may need to be helped by your being very fast about it all. Now, have the papers.
Police Officer: Ọga, thank you! You can please, go.

The scene of the above discussion is Awka, Capital of a state within an Igbo tribe; and the discussants are of Igbo origin. As such, they are knowledgeable in the Igbo language. One is a civil servant and the other a public servant. So, both are expected to be literate. What obtains here is a case of interaction between status unequal. The Police Officer is at his duty post, so he started by asserting his authority. But, when he understands his opponent, he bulges. However, they engaged in the use of the English language which many be seen as a status symbol. Again, the code used here introduces atmosphere of formality and respect. Also, it is an exercise of the use of official code required by their work, and a mark of prestige.

(iii) Exclusiveness: In a multilingual setting, a particular language or variety may be selected at a particular occasion for a specific purpose. For instance, in an account by Onwudiwe (1999) of a conversation involving three undergraduate students in a Nigerian federal university, the code suddenly shifted from English to Igbo to the instantaneous protest of the Yoruba member of the group who, was in the minority and who called for reversal to "the SI Unit", English. But, one of the two Igbo students informed the aggrieved Yoruba student that the shift was because the matter they discussed no longer concerned all of them. This is a case of choice of code based on its exclusiveness. And Parkin (1971:359) supports this where he says:

> … the use of tribal vernacular by persons in conversation
> denotes their exclusiveness: those not of the tribe or un-
> able to understand the language are excluded from   the
> conversation, an exclusion which may or may not be in-
> tended by the speakers. … That is to say, the speakers use
> their vernaculars with impunity because the activities fall
> into a zone of 'affective neutrality' as far as inter-tribal
> relations are concerned.

Language is used exclusively for various purposes. These may be to exclude non-tribal members in an occasion from the crux of the ceremony. It may also be used in crises to calm quarrelling relations; and is often a devise by children to protect most of their activities from adult understanding and control. Equally exclusive in nature is the use of language to express one's temperament. Anger, disturbance or hurt, whether physical or mental can stimulate verbal expression of one's feelings in such a way as could be as personal as the feelings that evoke them. It needs be pointed out here that when pains or frustration is full, our cathartic expression becomes more obviously symbolic. Edwards (1976) notes that at such moments, we move from the very common expressions to words that might be used in other ways; most often words that are socially disapproved of. At a time like this, we swear or curse or even substitute words that sound something like the popular curses we long ago learned were 'adult' and special.

Other forms of language or code used exclusively to promote unity and demonstrate solidarity are argot, jargon and slang. Whereas these language forms are generally privative, some are more decent, respectable than others. Thus, one can use a language or code simply to identify with or offer solidarity to a community or group. Of course, to do the reverse may mean excluding oneself from a community of speakers.

Our data reveal the following example in the exclusive use of language at a liquor bar:

(3)   1st Person: Ọ̀ọ̀ gịnị bụ ive nwa? Ejekọrọ m be va avụ. Ọ chọọ
                      ịma ụdị e si jee ya nwa bụ ije ya chọlụ m bịa be m.

      2nd Person: I sokọrọ m ga-eje akpam alo. Ọ̀ọ̀ obere okwu u ka
                      Ị na-eloru ilo. O lukọrọnụ ive Matthew melu oge
                      avụ m gwaa ị na mụ na ya nwelu okwu.

      Stranger: Val. gbanyelu m mmanya ka unu na-asụ ife mmadụ
                      amarọọ.

      Val: Debegoo onwe ị duu na m maalị ive va na-ekwu.
      Stranger: Asighịkwanụ m ha ekwuna ife dịịrị ha kama mmanya
                      ka m sị gị gbanyelu m.

2nd Person: Haa! haa! haa! Anyị eluo ụnọ. Ọ̄ nka a bụ a sị mmadụ
kwuchaa okwu, ọ sị, tuo m eluo m ụnọ!

The above conversation was between three people of one dialect base and one stranger, at a drinking spree. What makes the other a stranger is because he comes from a different Igbo dialect area; otherwise, they are all native speakers of Igbo. Although the conversation was supposed to be a free one, the three people of same dialect occasionally code-switched to their home base dialect to discuss issues they considered exclusive to them. At such times, the stranger was partially excluded and this brought about protest by the stranger. Again, despite the fact that the scene was in a dialect area different from that of the three brothers, their mother-tongue (dialect) dominated the dialect of the immediate environment. Therefore, the three brothers speak their dialect to satisfy their linguistic need by code-switching whenever they deemed necessary in other to switch-off the stranger who was not competent in the dialect.

(iv) Our sense of fitness: This variable applies when a speaker understands his audience and commands good competence of his choice code. Hence, Burton (1980:149) states: "different audiences, different occasions, different purposes and different subject matter" determine choice of the appropriate code. In other words, the everyday examples of selecting language to suit the occasion are the result of our sense of fitness.

Illustration the above assertion, Burton says claims that it is obscene to say 'shurrup' to our grandmother, even though we might well say so to a friend; or say 'Ok, I get that. Now what?' to a lecturer, though we might say it to a fellow student or apprentice who is instructing us in process or procedure is as a result of 'respect, or social sense, or good manners'. In other words, the reverse could as well be the case.

Hayakawa (1972:65) speaks of 'politeness' as another consequence for our consciousness in selecting a code to use and when to use it – our sense of fitness. According to him,

> In everyday language there seem to be certain
> "unmentionables" – words of such strong affective
> connotations that they cannot be used in polite
> discourse.

Such unmentionable words in English, according to him, are words dealing with excretion and sex. He continues:

> This double task (of language) confronts us in
> almost all ordinary conversation, oratory, persuasive
> writing and literature. Much of this task, however, is
> performed intuitively; without being aware of it, …
> Improvement in our ability to use it, depends therefore
> not only on sharpening of our insight into the affective
> elements in language through social experience, through
> contact with many kinds of people in many kinds of
> situations and through literary study. (Hayakawa, 1972:71-72).

Therefore, to use a particular code in a particular manner is both a function of intuition and that of the apprehension of the fundamental elements of language which controls our usage of the language in a given manner to a particular individual, and in a given situational context. That is our sense of fitness.

Social Variables

At times, the language that an individual chooses at a particular occasion is a condition of societal needs and values. These needs and values may include communicative needs of language, the individual's need for identity in a multilingual society, the role of the culture of the immediate environment and that of the social context. In this paper, the social variables that influence choice of one's code that are presented and discussed are Social identity, Communicative needs, Situational culture and Situational variation.

(i) Social Identity: Sometimes, people deliberately select a language they use simply on socio-linguistic grounds. This is with a view to secure a place in a multi-faceted social arena. Hence, Hudson (1980:195) insinuates: "A great deal of evidence shows that people use language in order to locate themselves in a multi-dimensional social space". In other words, language provides social identity for people.

Again, Wardhaugh (1998:94) opines,

> … a monolingual individual would be regarded as a misfit,
> lacking an important skill in society, the skill of being able
> to interact freely with speakers of other languages with whom
> regular contact is made in the ordinary business of living.

Lyons (1978:727), echoing Wittgenstein's idea says:

> One acquires one's command of a language, not by first
> learning a single set of prescriptive rules which govern its
> use on all occasions, but by engaging on a variety of diff-
> erent language-games, each of which is restricted to a spe-
> cific kind of social context and is determined by particular
> social conventions.

The above assertions and insinuations are manifested in the following interaction between a Yoruba lecturer and a Bookshop attendant in the university in Awka:

(4) Customer: Kedu maka afịa?
    Attendant: Avịa dị mma!
    Customer: Kedu maka ndị be gị?
    Attendant: Arụ dị va.
    Customer: Achọrọ m biro. I nwee eliganza?
    Attendant: Ọ dị ya.
    Customer: Ego ole?
    Attendant: Twenty naira
    Customer: I nwee Dictinary nkee – Comtemporary Dictinary?
    Attendant: Waa! I don't have it.
    Customer: But, Ị maa the current prise?
    Attendant: Three thousand five.
    Customer: Do you have this vest – school vest?
    Attendant: Yes!
    Customer: Òóò, nke a bụ black. I nwee ụcha; nke ọcha, white?
    Attendant: Mba!
    Customer: Ọ nọrọ ya? Ọ gugo?
    Attendant: Ééē!
    Customer: O.k. Ndewo! Biko, onyeisi m sụ m ka m chekii carbon paper; onyeisi, my H.O.D. say make I check carbon paper. (laughs). You see, ana m asụ Igbo wobere wobere.
    Attendant: (laughs) You de try sef. Ọ̀ò carbon paper, kọọ̀ duplicating paper?
    Customer: Sorry. Duplicating paper. How much?

Attendant:	#250.
Customer:	Hei! i bi like say i too cost.
Attendant:	No! The price fall down self. Na #270 before.
Customer:	O.k. Ka m ye i ego.

Mr. Adebisi is a Yoruba and a lecturer. On the other hand, Mr. Ede the attendant is an Igbo and has lived in Awka for a long time as a staff of the University. As Mr. Adebisi has found himself in Awka, an Igbo speaking community, he understands that to achieve good neighbourliness and enjoy his stay there, he has to learn and speak the language of the community. Therefore, despite his position as a lecturer, the environment and the attendant who himself is educated; he resorts to speaking more of Igbo, even if it means switching to and fro pidgin and Standard English. His effort, no doubt provides him the social identity he needs.

(ii) Communicative needs: The choice of any code in a multilingual society depends to a great extent on whether it meets communicative needs that cannot be readily or easily met by the others code(s). Contributing to this assertion, Wardhaugh (1998:118) says:

> An individual must … belong to various speech communities
> at the same time, but on any particular occasion will identify
> with only one of them, the particular identification depending
> on what is especially important or contrastive in the circumstance.

Lending credence to the above claim, Edwards (1976:18) says: "… a language survives as long as it meets communicative needs that cannot be met as easily, or appropriately, in the other". Edwards illustrates this scenario with the status of English in the United States and Canada where it serves as a code for educational and economic success; but French serves local purposes in Montreal, where new generations of French-Canadians learn French as their first language as the early world of home, neighbourhood and church has been a French speaking world.

Wardhaugh (1998) and Edwards (1976) here reiterates the communicative essence of language. Thus, Hayakawa (1972) imputes that when language is used to express the feelings of the speaker, at this time language is said to be affective. Therefore, whichever language the speaker employs determines the result he gets.

Let us further substantiate the communicative needs of language with the following excerpts:

(5i) (A church service - Baptism – in an Anglican church in Awka)

Priest:	Dearly beloved, foreasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin; and that Our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the Kingdom of God, except he be regenerated and born anew of Water and the Holy Spirit. I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of His bounteous mercy, He will grant to these infants and person that thing which by nature thy cannot have. …

(Silence …)

Priest:	Therefore, let us pray… (pause …) Almighty and everlasting God, who of Thy great mercy …

Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism is a solemn service. This service was conducted by a High Priest in the Anglican Communion and was attended by dignitaries, including University dons, highly placed civil servants and university students. As expected, the code chosen is, according to Wardhaugh (1998) the H-variety of the English language.

As a special (solemn) service, it creates special language to give the aura required. The English language used is therefore far from the usual day-to-day level of English. It is full of sentiments and apostrophe in order to create the impression that the Almighty God is present at the occasion and is immediately descending on everybody present, especially the infants to be baptised.

(5ii) (An interaction between an Igbo trader and a Police Officer of Tiv tribe at a Police post)

Police Officer:	Happy weekend, Okosisi! Your people dey here o!
Trader:	O. C. How are you?
Police Officer:	Oga, we dey. Na only sun we de suffer, oga. We sure say nothing dee for booth.
Trader:	Come! Have it. (Gives him #100 note and drives off).

This is another case of affective use of language. First, the two people are from different tribes, hence the use of Pidgin English. But, more than that, the tone of the Police officer is a cordial one and it instantly yielded his intended motive. This is the sole essence of communicative need of language.

(iii) Situational Culture: The situation where a language is used wields a very great influence on the language. In other words, the context of situation determines the code to be used. As Halliday and Hassan (1990:46) say:

> The context of situation, however, is the immediate environment.
> There is also a broader background against which the text has to
> be interpreted: its CONTEXT OF CULTURE. Any actual context
> of situation, the particular configuration of field, tenor, and mode
> that has brought the text into being, is not just random jumble of
> features but a totality – a package, so to speak, of things that typi-
> cally go together in the culture. People do these things on these
> occasions and attach these meanings and values to them…

The main import of this passage is that for any language to be used in any situational context that language has to conform to the culture of the environment.

However, the culture of a situational context may influence a foreign language when adapted to a point that it loses its original flavour and takes on much of the flavour of the new habitat. That is to say, it becomes culture-bound and as such, a different form of the original language comes into effect and it becomes functionally accepted in that situational context. Hence, quoting Chinua Achebe's lecture in the University of Ghana in 1964, Onwumelu (1990) says that Achebe described the culture-bound variety of English in Africa as English that must be in communication with its ancestral home, but altered to suit its African environment.

This culture-bounding often gives rise to various modifications in the meanings of words and phrases, a process Onwumelu (1990) refers to here as nativization of English. She goes ahead to illustrate the result of this process with the following expressions in English with their meanings in the native English speaker context and in the Nigerian English speaker context:

(6)	**Statement**	**Native English speaker meaning**	**Nigerian English speaker meaning**
(i)	Sorry	expression of apology	expression of sympathy

(ii)	Well done	congratulatory remark: meaning – "You have done well"	message of encouragement meaning – "You are doing something commendable"
(iii)	You have tried	"You have made an effort."	"Your effort has been successful."

Similar examples abound in some kinship terms such as cousin, aunt, brother, husband, wife, etc. which have cultural connotations in the Nigerian context. In the area of study, the following data were collected:

(7) (Conversation amongst 'Icho' players)

Idejiogwugwu (contender):	Nwoke m, tụọ icho.
Ụgbọ (champion):	Ọ nahụụ ahụ ghụ. E mee kịtaa e buru ghu nọọ ukwu n'ana.
Idejiogwugwu:	Ị na-apa atụra, ọ rọ n'ọnụ ka ikeghu zuru.
Ụgbọ:	Ọ na-abụ n'ọnụ, ị makwọnụ na ife m ji achọ ịzụ ghụ icho bụ na i buru ibu; m palụ ghụ etu a, igwoo!
Idejiogwugwu:	M ma vaa emenu ghu arụ ka o vo ghu n'anya.
Nwazuru (observer):	Ị yara atụ icho, ka ọ kwa ka ọ bụrụchaa!
Ụgbọ (broke into singing):	"Ị ma nwoke ahụ a na-akpọ Ugbọ Nnewi! Eze icho, ọgalanya ngada." Zụọ icho. Icho Ngene Nweri. Icho Ngene Adinma!
Idejiogwugwu:	Ò ó ò!
Nwazuru:	Na ọ bụrụ egbene Nwajiobu. Di anyị o nwetekwe ghu na pịashị!
Idejiogwugwu:	"Oh no…!"
Nwazuru:	Ọ kwa Onoh nwa Ngwo? Nwoke wụọ ya ụjanwụrụ.
Ụgbọ:	Mba nù! Ka m wụọ ya 'e mete' gịnị
Nwazuru:	Tụọ ya 'aragana.'
Ụgbọ (carrying out his final onslaught):	'Afịa udene na kpalakwukwu! Ọ bụghị ndụ, nya zụta ọnwụ.'
Nwazuru:	Ọ gọ m, ị nyaa!

Icho is a game played by anybody. Therefore, anybody that plays it can meet contender, young, old, status equal, status unequal, etc. Again, as everybody's game, it can be played at an informal setting, thus involving the use of informal language and slangs. The form of language used is at times exclusive in nature, that is akin to the culture of the game.

(iv) Situational Variation: The choice of a particular language or its variety could be as a result of encounter with, and competence in two or more languages. This sometimes results to codeswitching and even codemixing. This is a case of situational variation. Codeswitching, for instance bears testimony to an individual's experience, his apprehension of the situation and of course his linguistic ability. Therefore, Winkler (2007:211) asserts:

> "Most of the world's people live in bi- and multilin-
> gual communities, a result of which is that many peo-
> ple have communicative competence in at least two
> languages. Sometimes in these communities, the two
> languages co-exist. However, the use of each of the
> languages would be used at a time.

Hickerson (1980:85) had earlier opined:

> Every individual has a unique speech repertoire which
> reflects his or her own experience – the language used
> in the home, school, and community, the changes in
> moving from one community to another, personal ac-
> quaintances and the amount of influence each has on
> the other; the effects of books, movies and so on. Out
> of this repertoire – which makes up the individual's
> competence or general knowledge – he selects the
> speech behaviour appropriate to each situation. In
> other words, an individual's performance shows a
> range of variation, since he is able to switch from one
> style of speaking to another.

Hickerson's projection here also reveals one important issue relative to the code and the situation – ability to assess each situation and to understand the code suitable at that moment. It is only when this is done that the speaker can go to his speech repertoire to select the language or variety that is suitable.

Coupland (2007) likens speech repertoire to a closet which contains specified number of clothing items open to selection at various occasions. Thus, he states that individuals select speech items to match particular situations they find themselves in. He says, however, that the individual can deviate a bit to be different. Romaine (2000:55) adds: "Although speakers in diglossic situations must know more than one code, only one code is usually employed at one time". Hence, Edwards (1976:35) concludes: "It is usually impossible to answer the question – 'Who uses language, or dialect or way of speaking? – without having to ask - 'And when does he do so and to convey what meaning?'"

Our data buttresses the above claim with the following discussion between a Yoruba Youth Corper and an Igbo woman trader:

(8)	Youth Corper:	Well done, Madam!
	Woman Trader:	È héè! Ndeewo. Welcome.
	Youth Corper:	Please a chọrọ ofe.
	Woman Trader:	Ofe?
	Youth Corper:	Ee, i nwee tomato?
	Woman Trader:	Ò kwa tomato, ọ dị ya. Ndị a fifty fifty naira; ndị a hundred naira.
	Youth Corper:	Ì ree nke fifty naira ịtọ hundred?
	Woman Trader:	Èé-è! Fifty fifty naira, i goro m meziere gị ya ọfụma.
	Youth Corper:	I nwee eru?
	Woman Trader:	Eru? Kedu nke bụ eru?
	Youth Corper:	Sorry! Eru na ogili. Na Yoruba de call am eru.
	Woman Trader:	Mba! E nweghị m ogili.
	Youth Corper:	Azụ bụ ole; ego ole bụ azụ?
	Woman Trader:	Ọ̀ọ̀ nke ndụ, kọ̀ọ̀ nke ọkpọọ?
	Youth Corper:	I nwee nke a bụ kpacha kpacha ka ọ chizọba maọbụ shiny?
	Woman Trader:	Chizọba na kpachakpacha dị ya. E nwere ndị #80 na ndị #60. Ma shiny adịrọọ. Ọ gwụla.
	Youth Corper:	Kpachakpacha dị ọkpụmkpụ too much. Ọ kpụmkpụ dị ya too much.
	Woman Trader:	I wepụ ya, i mezieya ọfụma ọkpụkpụ ya na-apụ
	Youth Corper:	O.K. Ye m ịbụọ. Ego ole? Nke #150 ka ayị nwee ebe a. I have only #150.
	Woman Trader:	Ka m wepụrụ gị #5. Nyezie m #155.

Youth Corper: O. K. Tiye m tomato #100, magi #60. Tiiye n'akpa.

The setting above is a local market in the city of Awka, and the major code for communication is Igbo. The Youth Corper is fairly competent in Igbo, hence the smooth flow of the bargaining. However, the Youth Corper could not help switching to English language or his mother tongue each time he is choked. Interference of his mother tongue is also evident here. Nevertheless, he has been able to use some special language of the traders which helped him in bargaining well and also helped him to come closer to his customer. Same is the scenario in example (4) above. Both examples are therefore good illustrations for selecting a code in this type of situation.

Summary and Conclusion: The findings of the investigation as reported in this paper reveal that an individual's choice and performance in any code or variety of a code at any given time, particularly in a multilingual milieu is a consequence of linguistic and psychological, and social variables. Each of these variables represents prerequisite psycho cum social steps germane for good choice and performance in any code at any time to take place.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that each context has a code which suits it, some contexts may accommodate two or more variables. All the same, for effective communication to take place, the speaker must be competent in the code he chooses, as well as understand the context where he intends to use the code. Failure to do this will lead to communication failure.

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