

ANALYSIS OF INTERFERENCE AND CODE SWITCHING IN THE SPEECHES OF IBO LEARNERS OF YORÙBÁ AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

BY

¹Abubakre, S.O., ¹Nwokeji S. A., ²Raji-Ellams, Z. & ³Abubakre O. A.

¹Department of Linguistics & Nigerian Languages, University of Ilorin, Ilorin

²Department of English, Bayero University, Kano.

³Department of Computer Science, Faculty of Communication and Information Science

Email: soobakre@unilorin.edu.ng

Abstract

This study examines the linguistic phenomena of interference and code-switching in the speeches of Ibo learners of Yorùbá as a second language in Nigeria. Through a qualitative analysis of speech data collected from students and community members in Oyo, the research investigates the impact of native language influence on Yorùbá language acquisition. Key findings indicate that interference frequently occurs at phonological, lexical, and syntactic levels, primarily due to the inherent differences between the Igbo and Yorùbá languages. Additionally, the study observes strategic code-switching, which serves communicative, social, and expressive purposes among the speakers. The paper also discusses the implications of these phenomena on educational policies and language teaching, recommending specific pedagogical strategies to mitigate interference and utilise code-switching effectively. This research contributes to our understanding of second language acquisition in multilingual contexts and offers insights for language policy and educational practices in Nigeria.

Introduction

Language is the primary vehicle of thought for both the philosopher and the teacher. Whatever their profession or involvement, people use language to clarify their thoughts. The purpose of this study is to look into the problems of interference and code switching as attested to in the speeches of Igbo learners of Yorùbá as a second language. It is also to determine why people code-switch, at what levels interference and code switching occur, and what the effects of interference and code switching are on the parties involved in the speech activities. The study will also look at plausible ways to remediate some of the errors analysed. The 1977 National Policy on Education, as well as its 1981 and 2004 revised versions, clearly stated government policy on language. The relevant section of the policy, which impacts the study of Nigerian language in schools and colleges, states the following:

In addition to appreciating the importance of language plays a crucial role in the educational process and serves as an a method for preserving the people's culture; the government believes that each child should learn about national unity. He speaks one of the three major languages other than his own mother tongue (Page 9).

The three major languages referred to in these policy statements are Hausa, Igbo, and Yorùbá . This policy statement implies that schools and colleges will study the three Nigerian languages as second languages, respectively. The Colleges of Education are studying Yorùbá as a second language. There is also a provision for acculturation. We admit non-Yorùbá speakers to study Yorùbá as a second language (L2). Some of them are Igbo-Yoruba L2 students. These students had no previous knowledge of the Yoruba language. However, they had already mastered their native Igbo language, so their pronunciation attested to the basic errors of a second language learner. This study focuses on the nature and magnitude of the errors. Interference and code switching have largely contributed to the majority of errors made by second language learners in their performance in L2 (Oluikpe 1981; Hill and Dobbyn 1979).

Language interference is a common language phenomenon. Obviously, when there is language contact, there is bound to be interference (the magnitude of it may differ from one language to another). When two or more individuals engage in a conversation using a target language, such as Yorùbá, their mother tongues tend to either consciously or unconsciously interfere or feature in the conversation. Language interference can occur at different levels and in different contexts. However, in oral conversation, the most prominent point of interference appears to be at the levels of pronunciation, phonology, and semanti. Speakers, for example, can experience interference during festivities; they can also experience it during trading activities, transactions, or expressing pleasantries. Therefore, various contexts and activities can attest to the presence of language interference. Speakers, for example, can experience interference during festivities; they can also experience it during trading activities, transactions, or while expressing pleasantries.

Similar to interference, speakers of a specific target language may purposefully switch from using that language to another, possibly their mother tongue. The occurrence of such code switching can also depend on various factors, such as competence or lack thereof in the target language. It may also be due to some personal idiosyncrasies. However, it is generally believed that the condition under which code switching can occur is less common or severe than what occurs in language interference. To this end, the study intends to use the Igbo learners of Yoruba as a second Nigerian language at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, to know or determine the level of, as well as the factors responsible for interference and code switching. The language aspect of the National Policy on Education saddles the colleges of education, as well as other institutions, with the responsibility of teaching the three major Nigerian languages as second languages. Consequently, the Federal College of Education (Special) is studying Oyo, Hausa, Igbo, and Yorùbá as second languages. This study, however, focused only on Igbo and Hausa learners of Yorùbá as a second language. The researcher avoids over-generalization by focusing solely on Igbo and Hausa learners of Yoruba as a second language. The researcher is aware of the need for native speakers' knowledge in analyzing the pronunciation errors attested to by Igbo and Hausa learners of Yorùbá as a second language. Therefore, the researchers, being native speakers and teachers of Igbo and Yorùbá languages, will be able to perceive, as well as analyse, from native speakers' points of view, the errors of pronunciation made by the learners of Yorùbá.

We collected our data from 30 respondents. Twenty of them are Igbo learners of Yorùbá and second language residents at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, while the remaining ten are government workers and traders living in Oyo. They are between the ages of seventeen and thirty-five.

The researchers are aware of the importance of tape recorders in the collection of data. However, we didn't use a tape recorder in this study because we wanted the data to be as natural as possible. Therefore, some of the respondents remained unaware of the ongoing research. The researchers are interested in the points at which interference and code switching occurred during conversations between the respondents. Therefore, this limitation was deliberate. We hope this study will serve as a reference point for other researchers in their studies of any second or foreign language. We also hope that this study will provide valuable insights and solutions to the challenges faced by Igbo speakers of Yorùbá . The study would serve as a tool in the hands of linguistics and language teachers in their study and teaching of socio-linguistics or other language-related disciplines at the various levels of institutions of learning. The study will aim to address the following questions:

Are there cases of interference and code-switching in the speeches of Igbo learners of Yorùbá as a second language?

Do code-switching and interference occur at varying levels?

Does interference and code switching have any significant effect on the parties involved in speech activities?

Do the pronunciation errors mentioned in the speeches of Igbo learners of Yorùbá as a second language have any remedy?

Literature Review

As a nation, one of Nigeria's five main objectives is to build a united, strong, and self-reliant nation. However, unity cannot exist in isolation; it requires reinforcement. Language congruity is critical to both development and unity. Nigeria, as a nation, comprises many languages. These languages are unintelligible, therefore for the desired unity to be achieved, we need to lean and understand one another's language and cultures. In recognition of this, the Nigerian government introduced the study of the three main languages (Hausa, Igbo, and Yorùbá) as L2 courses of study in the College of Education. At junior secondary school, it is mandatory for all categories of students to offer one of the three main Nigerian languages other than their mother tongue as a course of study.

There are different sets of learners of the three main Nigerian languages as second languages in the colleges of education (especially at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo). The categories of learners of Yoruba as a second language are those whose mother tongue of first language is one of the following: Hausa, Igbo, Efik, and Ibibio Egbira, among others. Even though most of the languages in Africa are essentially similar in structure, there are large differences in their linguistic features. Therefore, one expects some errors in performance by the users of these languages as second languages. In light of this, this study examines some pronunciation errors made by Ibo Yorùbá learners as a second language.

Various writers have written different works in the area of language interference as well as code-switching in languages. People have different views on what interference (and code switching as well) entails. Stevens (1964), for instance, makes a point about the influence of the mother tongue on the performance of a speaker of a second language. He points out that:

The extent of the learners' command of their primary language, including the question of whether he has learned to read and write in it and his experience and awareness of diversity, such as accents, dialects, and scales of formality or informality among others, will affect his progress in the foreign languages.

According to Steven's statement, the mother tongue can also affect the learning of a second language. This also demonstrates that linguistic interference can occur from the perspective of the mother tongue or the target language. Saville Troike (1975), in his own write-up, mentioned the errors in vocabulary and grammar that users of a second language make in their performance in the second language. He attributed the errors to a carryover from the habits of the mother tongue. He opines that:

Problems occur in grammar and vocabulary all of which results from natural tendency of a speaker to carry over the habits of his native language into the second language or to translate from one into the other. All these problems of perception and sue of a language is termed linguistic inference.

There are different forms of interference, and Mackey (1972) identifies the following:

Cultural Interference

This is a scenario in which a bilingual tries to express cultural elements from his mother tongue while communicating in the second language. Such cultural elements in the first language (L1) may be unfamiliar to the second language (L2). Therefore, for the speaker of L2 to be understood as he tries to express or explain things that are of L1 import, using the foreign expression, he has no choice but to allow L1 context to interfere in L2. An instance of cultural interference occurs when an Igbo Yoruba speaker encounters a situation that calls for the expression of acceptance, love, joy, peace, and the like. He expresses this situation by presenting kolanut. Kolanut in Igbo culture symbolises joy, love, peace, and happiness. In the Igbo community, the bride's family presents kolanut as a symbol of acceptance when a girl betrothes to a man. However, Yorubas express this acceptance verbally, leading to the sharing of drinks brought by the groom's family. In effect, for an Igbo speaker of Yorùbá to

demonstrate the presentation of Kolanut in an L2 situation, it is to allow cultural interference of his L1 to take place in L2.

Grammatical or Lexical Interference

This involves introducing foreign forms into the bilingual's speech. In this case, the grammatical relationship of language A to language B is applied. In this case, if there is a difference in the word order between the two languages in question, then the speaker tends to carry over the word order of his language to the second language. There is also a tendency to overlook a relation in language B that has no prototype in language A. For example, Igbo marks subject-verb agreement, while Yoruba leaves the morpheme unmarked, leaving only relics in most sentences. An Igbo Yoruba speaker, on the other hand, ensures that the subject-verb agreement morpheme is included in every Yoruba sentence he pronounces.

Phonological interference

This affects the units and structures of intonation, rhythm, and articulation. Weinreich defined phonological interference as the manner in which a speaker perceives and reproduces the sounds of a particular language in terms of another. One of the languages will be primary (e.g., Igbo), while the other will be secondary (in this case, Yorùbá). The secondary language reproduces the sound of the primary language. According to Weinreich, interference occurs when a speaker identifies the phonetics of the primary language in the secondary language and, in reproducing it, subjects himself to the phonetic rules of the primary language. For instance, certain Igbo dialects confuse the consonants 'r' and 'l'. People from this dialect area carry over the confusion in their pronunciation of the Yorùbá 'r' and 'l' sounds, respectively.

Semantic interference

This closely relates to cultural interference. It stems from the speaker's experience in the two languages. However, semantic interference is often caused by the speaker's attempt to import his experience from the L1 situation, where he has a stronger familiarity, into the L2 situation, where the familiarity is less strong. In essence, semantic interference involves an L2 speaker bringing a situation or experience from his L1 into the understanding of a situation or experience in which the speaker is involved in the L2. Although learners of Yorùbá don't always express this situation clearly in their speeches, English provides ample examples. One of them is an Ibo speaker of English, who says, "I am coming," when in reality he is on temporary leave. This is unacceptable in the context of English language usage because it implies that the person speaking is actually performing the action of coming to somebody. Next, we discuss code-switching.

Code-Switching

Nartey (1982) observed that *a possible behaviour of English versus Ghanaian code-switching is that socio-cultural factors are more important than structural factors in code switching.*

He based his argument on the following factors that influence code-switching:

- The nature of the topic under discussion is significant.
- II. The speech's intended audience.
- III. The speaker's emotions, motivation, and level of aspiration, as well as his age. Examples of such names abound. They go by names like Chinyere, Chinaya, Tochukwu, Emeka, and Afunze, among others. Plants such as Utazi and Ugwu also have names. Translating such things into Yoruba may not be straightforward.

Bell (1976) noted that bilinguals struggle to avoid code switching and mixing due to their familiarity with bilingual speakers and their confidence in their ability to communicate in any language. Some even do it to boost their egos. Ibo speaker of Yorùbá frequently mix Igbo with Yorùbá to prevent a third party from understanding their discussion.

In the same vein, Lindholm and Padilla (1978) in their article 'Child Bilingualism' stressed the occurrence of language mixing in multilingual settings. They opined that: "In most multilingual environments (Nigeria as an example), the communication process involves language mixing."

Lindholm and Padilla's statement is true because language mixing (particularly English mixed with Yoruba) is a common occurrence in most Yoruba cities. One often witnesses utterances like

'Mi o lè take irù nonsense, bẹ̀è yen' Ó ye ki understand nnkan ti mo n bà e so

In these examples, English words like 'take', 'nonsense', and 'understand' were sandwiched in between Yorùbá utterances. Appeal and Muysken (1988) noted that if one bases their analysis on simple diagnostic criteria, it may be difficult to distinguish cases of code-switching and code-mixing from cases of borrowing. However, they identified three types of code-switchers:

- **The tag-switches:** They explained that this entails an exclamation or a tag in a different language from the rest of the sentences. For example, in the sentence

Ewo! Ófé je gbógbó è tán.

"Ewo" in Igbo is an exclamation meaning 'Ha' ormy goodness'. Yorùbá, however, translates the rest of the sentence. It simply means 'he wants to eat all of it'.

- **Intra-sentential switches:** These are switches that occur in the middle of a sentence. We witness this phenomenon when a sentence initiates in one language, transitions to a different language in the middle, and concludes in the original language.

III. **Inter-sentential switches** occur between sentences. The speaker finishes a sentence in one language before changing to another. He continues in this vein until the end of the discussion. An example is:

O ti ni asidenti. Ugbo ala ya ma bara ohia tu a ria ugboro aro. O ti sare ju. Ma si kilo fun un ko to lo.

It means 'He had an accident.' His car swerved into the bush and tumbled three times. He was speeding. "And I warned him before he began the journey." In the above statements, the speaker started her speech in Yoruba but later changed to Igbo, and then she ended it in Yoruba. This example of an intersentential switch reflects the mood of the speaker, who is a bilingual who changes his code voluntarily as directed by his state of mind. Every speaker who code-switches does so because he expects his audience to understand him. If a speaker realises that his listener(s) will not understand him, he is unlikely to code-switch. However, it is also possible for a speaker to code switch if he does not have enough knowledge and understanding of the language in which he is holding a conversation. In conclusion, the speaker's utterances may reveal his emotions, motives, and level of aspiration. It is common to hear some individuals insert interjections and phrases that appeal to their own moods and those of their listeners.

Research Methodology

This section takes a look at the methods employed in the collection of data used for the analysis of errors of pronunciation attested to in the speeches of Igbo learners of Yorùbá as a second language. It also describes the instruments used. Residents of Oyo, who are Ibo learners of Yorùbá, provided the data for this study. The respondents are largely students of the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo. We also include some non-student Igbo speakers of Yorùbá who reside in Oyo. We do this to explore potential generalizations based on our findings. The majority of the residents are either traders or junior workers in the ministry who have little or no educational background.

Ibo residents in Oyo who learn or speak Yorùbá as their second language (L2) make up the population from which the samples for this study came. However, due to the size of the population and the limited study time, we only selected a sample of the entire population. We carefully selected thirty samples, representing both males and females. Twenty of them are Ibo learners of Yorùbá as L2 at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, in

Oyo State. They are between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five. We selected ten samples from the locality outside the college setting. They are traders and junior workers at the Ministry, ranging from fourteen to forty-two years old. We distributed the samples across the dialect areas of Igbo land. They speak Igbo, their mother tongue. The samples reside in various locations, leading to the collection of data from various contexts and locations. The researchers collected Yorùbá language data, which contains errors in pronunciation made by Ibo learners of Yorùbá. We used the data to identify and analyse areas of interference and code-switching. Interviews and observations are the instruments used for data collection. The interview took the form of questions and answers. We asked the respondents to list some items in Yorùbá. Dialogue was also employed. The researchers observed the respondents in such speech contexts as they engaged in Yorùbá-based speech activities. This is to ensure that the data collected is as natural as possible.

The researchers are aware of the importance of tape recorders in collecting this type of data. It makes the work of both the researcher and the respondents less arduous and boring. This is due to the ability to record in just five minutes what would have taken thirty minutes to write. Besides, it guarantees the preservation of every segment of the interview. Therefore, the researcher meticulously recorded the data collected during the formal part of the interview on tape, and wrote down the remaining data collected through observation, as there was no pocket tape available to use without the respondents' knowledge.

The Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, hosted part of the research. We first asked twenty resource persons, who are students, to participate in a simple speech activity where they introduced themselves. We also asked them to participate in various types of dialogues, ranging from buying and selling to current affairs. They also participated in micro-teaching, where Yoruba served as the medium of instruction. The researchers also gave some lexical items their own tones to pronounce. We conducted the remaining portion of the research in a market setting. We observed ten Ibo speakers of Yorùbá. The researchers also engaged the respondents in conversation to elicit their responses. Five of the samples live on the same street as the researcher. This enabled the researcher to hold a constant and close conversation with them. They use the remaining five samples to sell spare parts and food items.

In this study, however, only a selection of the larger part of the conversation and dialogue was used for analysis, especially where the data would make the meaning of the problem under discussion clearer. The researcher then inferred that there was a pattern of L1 interference in L2 as well as code-switching among Ibo Learners of Yorùbá, who live in Oyo. Such inferences formed the basis for the discussion of findings, summary, and conclusion that followed the analyzed data.

Data Presentation

In this section, the researchers present the data collected during this study as well as the analysis of such data. To explain the researchers' observations, the researchers used a selection of transcribed lexical items, sentences, and speech activities from the sampled population. We conducted our analysis under the following headings: Language interference involves tonal interference, other lexical items, syntactic and semantic interference, and language code switching.

Language Interference

Some of the data collected showed clear cases of language interference. Some interference cases involved tones, some involved segmental sounds, and some were either semantic or syntactic in nature.

(a) Lexical items involving tonal interference.

We used some notation for the purpose of interpretation.

H = high tone

Low tone (L)

M = mid tone

HL and LH, among others, represented a sequence of these tones. Listed below are some of the examples.

(A) Lexical items involving tonal interference

Yorùbá Words	Pronunciation by the Sample
LM	LH
Ègbin	ègbín
Íran	írán
Òfo	òfó
Òkan	òkán
Ère	èré
Ère	èré
MH	LH
Ori	ori
Owo	owo
Ewe	ewe
Apa	apa
Iku	iku
Abo	abo
MM	HH
Igba	igba
Eja	eja
Enu	enu
Omi	omi
Rere	rere/lele
Ikin	ikin
LL	LL
Ojo	ojo
Agba	agba

Eba	eba
Aisan	aisan
Amala	amala/amara
Osa	osa
LH	LM
Ojo	ojo
Igba	igba
Erin	erin
Apon	apon
Iya	iya
Ala	ala/ara
ML	HL / LL
Obe	obe / obe
oko	oko / oko
Ejo	ejo / ejo
Odu	odu / odu
Igba	igba / igba
Ayo	ayo / ayo

The data revealed that Ibo speakers of Yorùbá as a second language misperceive the sequence of Yorùbá tones. However, there appears to be a pattern of perception that takes the following form:

- They all recognized a sequence of LM tones as LH.
- The realization of a sequence of MH leads to LH.
- The sequence of MM became HH.
- The realization of a sequence of LL as LL
- The realization of a sequence of LH results in LM.
- HL/LL represents the realization of an ML sequence.

We traced these perceived sequences to the interference of the Igbo tonal system in the realisation of Yorùbá tones. The Ibo speaker of Yorùbá interpreted all occurrences of midtone as either high or low. This is because there is an absence of the midtone in the Igbo tonal inventory.

(b) Lexical items involving segmental interference.

Yorùbá Words	Pronunciation by the Sample
Igba	ígba
Ikàn	íkàn/íkàn
akin	akin
erin	erin/elin
Ikin	ikin
Ibon	ibon
Aso	aso
Ese	ese
Erin	erin/elin
Ere	ere/ele
ere	ere/ele
Eko	eko
Egbe	egbe
Egbe	egbe
Ese	ese
Ise	ise
Ise	ise
Oku	oku
Odun	odun
Aduke	aduke
Arugbo	arugbo
Oso	oso
Toro	Toro/Tolo
Alaru	alaru/alaru/aralu

Alaakara	alake/araka
eree	ere/ele
Eemo	emo
Oriire	orire
Oloogun ologun	
Aaro	aro/alo

According to the above, the sample was unable to pronounce the following sounds: '‘ and 'Ö'. Instead of the Yorùbá vowel ‘‘‘ sound, the sample pronounced ‘e’ as seen in words like ‘àdùke’. Apart from this, there was the Yorùbá consonant sound [ʃ]. They pronounced it as [s] (as in [oʃó], which was pronounced as [òsó]). This observed error in the pronunciation of the [ʃ] and [s] sounds could be traced to interference. In the Igbo sound inventory, the consonant [s] and the vowel ɛ are missing. Therefore, because they are not part of the internalised sounds of his mother tongue, the Igbo learners of Yorùbá found it difficult to adjust to acquiring those sounds. They therefore replaced them with the nearest sounds in Igbo, which are ‘e’ and ‘s’, respectively.

At first, it appeared that the source of the error in the pronunciation of ʃ was the influence of the Oyo dialect, where s and ʃ are confused. In Oyo dialect, s is pronounced while ʃ is pronounced ‘s’ in words like ‘ifu’ (yam) and /ese/, which are realised in Oyo dialect as ‘isu’ and /ɛʃɛ/, respectively. However, a close look at the speeches of the Ibo learners of Yorùbá as attested in our sample revealed that /s/ and /ʃ/ are not confused by them. Only /ʃ/ was realised as /s/. As a result, we concluded that the Igbo language interfered in the L2 situation. The recorded data also revealed that some of the samples confused the consonants /l/ and /r/. For example, some of the samples realised /ere/ as /èlè/ instead of /r/ realising /l/. We also observed that the same set of samples that realised /r/ as /l/ also realised /l/ as /r/. Therefore, we concluded that the confusion was due to the dialectal influence of some of the samples, not necessarily a general interference problem. The Speakers of Awgbu and Okposi dialect areas of Igbo land are affected.

Another area of phonetic interference was the inclusion of some vowels that are not Yorùbá vowels in some words. The vowels are /i/ and /u/. These vowels are absent in the Yorùbá sound inventory. However, only environments with close or low vowels contain them. They are the lowered versions of the vowels ‘i’ and ‘u’. We highly suspected the influence of vowel harmony in Igbo. Yorùbá, lacking such harmony, does not attest to the presence of the two vowels in its words. We observed that Ibo learners of Yorùbá pronounce Yorùbá vowel words with an initial high tone. An example is /ígbá/ ‘garden egg’. This is a violation of the Yorùbá syllable structure rule, where a vowel's initial syllable cannot carry a high tone. Again, this occurrence is due to interference. These initial vowels carry a high tone in Igbo native words.

C. Other lexical items

In some example data under (b), we observed that certain Yorùbá words have lengthened vowels. Such words are ‘aláákàà ereé, ààrò, oloògùn’. When the sample pronounced these words, they could not recognise them as lengthened vowels; instead, they pronounced single vowels. We also suspect language interference. It is possible that such occurrences of lengthened vowels are minimal or rear in Igbo; hence, the respondents found them difficult to pronounce. However, this is not conclusive, as it is possible that the difficulty may stem from the tonal complexity of the words involved.

(d). Syntactic/Semantic interference

There are some sentences recorded that involve both syntactic and semantic errors.
For example, see the following:

Igbo

- Titi o so e wa
- Mo ti lo oja
- A mu owo egbe tiwa wa
- Mo fe ra ere
- Oko mi ko dara
- Ori re o baje
- Fun mi owo mi
- "Baba o ti lo
- Omo o wa

Yorùbá

- Titi so pe e wa
- Mo ti lo si oja
- A mu owo egbe tiwa wa
- Mo f era eree
- Oko mi ko dara
- Ori i re baje
- Fun mi ni owo mi
- Baba ti lo."
- Omo wa

Firstly, some of the words that contain phenetic errors also contain semantic errors. For example, 'apá' is pronouncing 'àpá', which in Yorùbá means 'scar' not 'arm'. When used in context, it can be challenging to discern whether the speaker is referring to 'arm' or 'scar'. An instance of it is

Àpá mí n dùn mi

This could indicate that either "My arm is hurting me" or "My scar is hurting me".

In their speech, they also mentioned the terms 'ègbé' and 'ègbé'. The respondents pronounce both terms as 'ègbé'. The meaning of 'ègbé' in Yoruba is 'association'. The error led to a change in the form 'association' to 'woe' or 'doom'. In the data above, the speaker wanted to say 'I (have) brought our own association fee', but the sentence as pronounced means 'I (have) brought our own woe/doom fee'. Semantically, paying a certain price for one's "doom" may seem far from reality.

Syntactically, as observed in our data, the prepositions ni and si were missing in our respondents' speeches. The reason for this gap was not immediately known. However, it could be a result of interference. There is also a syntactic construct that was not fully realised in the speeches of the standard Yoruba users but that the Igbo user of Yoruba included in his speech. In Yoruba, the construct is called the concord marker. Most sentences leave it unmarked, and when marked, it manifests as either a high tone or a lengthened vowel on a high tone. Examples are:

Ojo ro, "It rained," and

Ilee mo says, "It is dawn."

However, the Igbo speaker realised the construct as /o/ in our examples 1, 6, 8, and 9. The starting revelation is that some dialects of Yorùbá, like Ondo, Ikale, and Akoko, among others, use construct in its full form too, and there was no evidence that the respondents ever came into contact with these dialects. The occurrence may well lend support to the notion that the concord marker in Yorùbá is /o/ and that what we perceive in the standard Yorùbá is its relics.

Code-switching

The importation of Igbo words, phrases, and sentences into Yorùbá speech without any modification is evidence of this. The following are contexts where code-switching took place among our sample.

Context 1 (academic setting)

One day, two students were talking with a lecturer. The researchers observed the following conversation between them:

Speaker A: Bawo ni? Nigba wo ni o de

Speaker B: Ewo, mi o ti lo, sugbon m gara eje echi

Speaker A: Chineke, a tip-e-ju.

In the above example, the speakers would code switch from one language to the other because they found it convenient to do so. They are proficient in both languages; as a result, they were able to switch from Igbo to Yorùbá and vice versa without inhibiting comprehension. Therefore, one can say that the level at which a speaker can switch can be a result of the speaker's conscious efforts to display an equal level of competence and performance in both languages.

Context 2 (market setting)

Speaker A (speaking to speaker B): Chineke bia, aso yii o lewa. Mo fe lo na an.

Speaker B: Akwa die be a mara mma

Speaker A: Ogorun Naira ni opa kan jale

Speaker B: Bar a a, Nnari abuo ni Aba

Speaker A: Maa din ogun Naira. Ge opa meji wa

In the aforementioned conversation, speakers 'A' and 'B' employed code-switching to exclude speaker 'C' from specific pricing-related parts of the conversation, thereby preventing speaker 'C' from learning the details of what speakers 'A' and 'B' were discussing about the clothing price. The reason for this code-switching was a deliberate attempt to safeguard the interests of speakers 'A' and 'B', to the detriment of speaker 'C', who comes from a different language background.

In conclusion, it can be argued that language interference is a result of the speakers' incompetence in the knowledge and use of their native language. The inherent problems in both L1 and L2 languages compound this issue. Interference does not yield the same results as code-switching scenarios. Speakers consciously code-switch for ulterior motives and convenience when switching codes. Despite being aware of the importance of tables in data analysis, the researcher has not used any. This is because the errors of pronunciation attested to in the speech of the respondents cut across age, education background, and profession. Such errors are common for Igbo speakers of Yorùbá as a second language.

Therefore, while language interference is a sociolinguistic problem that can inhibit speech comprehension and lead to interpersonal misunderstanding between the encoder and the decoder, code-switching does not portend such problems. Therefore, we should aim to reduce instances of L1 interference with L2

Discussion of Findings and Conclusion

This study aims to identify instances of L1 interference in L2 and code-switching. We used Ibo who are learners of 9Yorùbá in Oyo as a Case Study. We conducted the study among a cross-section of Ibo that are residents in Oyo. We used Ibo students learning Yorùbá as a second language and non-students as samples. They vary in their ages, educational backgrounds, and local government areas. We collected the data from various locations and contexts.

The final analysis summarizes the study's findings as follows:

- There was a clear occurrence of L1 interference in the resource persons' use of L2.
- Age, educational background, and gender have no effect on the level of interference or code-switching observed in the speeches of Yoruba Igbo learners in Oyo.
- The level of interference can be determined by a speaker's dialectal accent or features in L2.
- Language interference in the resource person's speech habits was not intentional. Even when the speakers were causing such interference, there was nothing they could do to correct the error on their own. This is because most of the errors are instances of features of the Igbo language that do not have equivalents in the Yoruba language, and vice versa.

- The majority of phonological errors are lexical in nature. The Igbo inventory of sounds lacks Yoruba sounds, which primarily cause these errors. The perception of tones has the highest level of interference.
- The minimal sentential interference highlights the similarities between the structures of the Igbo and Yoruba languages.
- Igbo learners of Yoruba attest to code switching in their speeches.
- The level of code-switching is not as high as that of interference.
- Code-switching occurred with the conscious knowledge of the speakers in different contexts. People primarily use it to alert others to a situation and prevent a third party from comprehending the context. However, some of them code switch when they lack the vocabulary to use in an appropriate situation.
- Code-switching can occur when speakers have equal competence in both languages. For them to code mix without disrupting structures, it shows that they have knowledge of both languages.

Conclusion

From the summary, it can be concluded that the inclusion of language education, especially second Nigerian language learning, in the National Policy on Education and subsequent implementation of the policy help to substantiate the concept of 'unity in diversity' bring out some of the things that is, language is a unifying factor despite any other observable differences. However, despite the differences in our languages and cultures, we can still learn one another's language without so many problems once we appreciate one another's culture.

Ibo learners of Yorùbá as a second language attest to pronunciation errors, most of which are the result of first language or mother tongue (Igbo) interference in the L2 (Yorùbá). The researchers believe that correction is necessary because the errors primarily stem from tonal and lexical factors. This is because tonal problems are not such that they could be neglected in the case of a tonal language like Yorùbá, whose meaning is attached to tonal placement. We should remediate these errors to prevent the unpleasant effects of incorrect usage.

Recommendations

The study's findings suggest the following:

- (i) To familiarize students with the salient similarities and differences between their language and a second language, schools should provide lectures on comparative linguistics at the start of the learning activities. What was found in this paper could be extended to other languages. This will bring them into awareness of what is similar and what new things to learn.
- (ii) Students should receive more drills to help them improve their proficiency. The researchers recommend using a tongue twister and musical models (d r m) to teach students how to produce the correct segmental sounds and tones. Teachers can repeat these sounds in several words and concatenate them to enhance learners' understanding.
- (iii) Model speeches involving such sounds and other items should be recorded on tape for learners to listen to it repeatedly at convenient times. We cannot overemphasize the importance of practice in language skills acquisition.
- (iv) We should encourage students to speak only the target language, the L2, in this case, YORÙBÁ, as this will enhance quick understanding and mastery of the language.
- (v) Writers and other Stakeholders should produce appropriate language materials for Yorùbá for learners of Yorùbá as L2 and make them readily available.
- (vi) It is important to intensify and adequately fund acculturation programs. Places designated for learning the standard model of the Yorùbá language and culture should host this project. Not only that, acculturation should not span less than a period of six months. This will allow for minimal familiarity with the speech community.
- (vii) Allowing students to participate in drama, debate, and musical concerts using the Yoruba language as the medium of expression is a crucial step. This will enhance their proficiency in the language. If the government implements its language policy, Yorùbá learners of Yorùbá as L2 and other L2 learners should receive incentives

such as book allowances or acculturation alliances, among other things, to increase students' enrollment in Yorùbá as L2 courses.

(ix) Only qualified teachers should be allowed to teach Yorùbá, and their goal should be to pique students' interest in the language.

(x). There is a limit to the extent to which learners of Yorùbá speakers should code-switch in order to avoid miscommunication, resulting from unintelligibility of utterances.

The findings of this study is not exhaustive as all pronunciation errors among Ibo learners of Yorùbá are not presented in this paper due to the scope. There are other related areas for further study. For example, further studies can examine the impact of acculturation on the acquisition of Yorùbá as a second language, the influence of the environment on the acquisition of Yorùbá as a second language, ana factors militating against the adoption of an indigenous language such as Yorùbá as a national language in Nigeria.

References

- Akuezuilo, E. O. (1993). **Research methodology and statistics**. Nuel Centi Publishers.
- Appel, R., & Muyakeen, P. (1988). **Language contact and bilingualism**. Hodder and Stoughton.
- Awobuluyi, O. (1978). **Essentials of Yoruba grammar**. University Press Limited.
- Bell, R. T. (1976). **Sociolinguistic goals: Approaches and problems**. I.T. Batsford Ltd.
- Emenanjo, N. (1987). **Elements of modern Igbo grammar**. University Press Limited.
- Fishman, J. A. (1966). **The implications of bilingualism in language teaching and learning**. Newbury House.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1981). **National policy on education** (Revised).
- Harmer, J. F., & Hablance, M. (1989). **Bilinguality and bilingualism**. Cambridge University Press.
- Hill, L. A., & Dobbyn, M. (1979). **A teacher training course (lecturers' book)**. Cassell Limited.
- Hyltentank, & Ober, L. K. (1989). **Bilingualism across the life span: Aspects of acquisition, maturity, and loss**. Cambridge University Press.
- Linholm, K. J., & Padilla, A. M. (1978). *Child bilingualism: A report on language mixing, switching, and translation*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Nartely, J. N. A. (1982). *Switching and interference or faddism: Language use among educated Ghanaians*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Oluikpe, B. O. (1979). **Igbo transformational syntax**. Africana Publishers.
- Oluikpe, B. O. (1981). **English in Igboland**. Africana Publishers.
- Owolabi, K. (1989). **Ijinle itupale ede Yoruba: Fonetiki ati fonoloji**. Onibonoje Press.
- Richards, J. C. (1971). **Error analysis and second language strategies** (Series Vol. 17).
- Saville-Troike, M. (1973). Bilingual children. In **Bilingual education series** (Vol. 2).
- Stevens, P. D. (1964). **Linguistic science and language teaching**. Longman and Indiana University Press.
- Yusuf, O. (1992). **An introduction to linguistics**. University of Ilorin Press.