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Code-Alternation among Bilingual Adolescent L_1 English Speakers in Yoruba-Speaking Urban Cities in Nigeria

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Abstract

Code alternation between two languages within or across utterances has been widely studied among bilingual Nigerians whose first language (L_1) is an indigenous language. This paper examines code-switching among a different and emerging population: Bilingual L_1 English Speakers, adolescents who acquire English as their first language while living in predominantly Yoruba-speaking urban environments. Drawing on survey data from 547 validated adolescent respondents (aged 10–19), analysed using chi-square goodness-of-fit tests, one-sample Z-tests, Cramér's V, and a domain-specific Bilingual Index (BI) at $\alpha = 0.05$, and interpreting the findings through Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model and Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory, 15 domain items examined yielded statistically significant chi-square values (range: $\chi^2 = 88.35–745.78$, all $p < .001$). The paper argues that code-switching and mixing among Bilingual Adolescents, L_1 English speakers, is prevalent but operates in the reverse direction from that typically reported for L_2 English-speaking Yoruba bilinguals. The bilingual choice was statistically dominant only in the home domain ($Z = 12.68$, $p < .001$; BI = 0.779). Yoruba was the marked low variety and was selectively retained in intergenerational interactions with grandparents (51.7%). 73.1% of respondents reported convergence, and 83.2% reported privacy; this result is consistent with CAT's predictions that speakers accommodate interlocutors for social affiliation. Discourse-pragmatic analysis showed near-universal code-mixing (83.4%), code-switching (76.8%), and bilingual pragmatic marker retention (78.8%), which illustrates Myers-Scotton's (1993) marked choice as an identity strategy in otherwise English-dominant interactions. The paper situates this English–Yoruba directionality within the broader literature on code-switching, discusses the bilingual pragmatic markers that accompany it, and considers its implications for language maintenance in Nigeria.

Keywords: Code-switching; code-mixing; bilingualism; Markedness Model; L_1 English speakers.

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Introduction

Code-switching, the alternation between languages or language varieties within or across utterances, is among the most extensively studied outcomes of language contact in multilingual societies[3]. Code-switching between English and an indigenous language is a familiar feature of everyday bilingual speech in Nigeria, where over 525 indigenous languages coexist with English as the official language[4]. Several studies have investigated code-switching across various contexts in Nigeria. For instance, Eneremadu et al. examine the pedagogical implications of code-switching as a medium of instruction in schools in southwestern Nigeria[5]. The study concludes that strategic code-switching enhances comprehension while enabling continued access to English as the primary medium of instruction. Similarly, Owaniyi and Adetuyi found in their study of code-switching among Yoruba-speaking English users in Southwest Nigeria that switching patterns tend to shift from English to Yoruba during informal interactions with peers and family[6].

Ayunda et al.also conduct a psycholinguistic analysis of code-switching among bilingual adolescents, concluding that such behaviour is not indicative of linguistic deficiencies but rather reflects a sophisticated and functional skill influenced by cognitive processes and social dynamics.[7] Agbo further explores the use of language, variation, and code-switching between English and Nigerian Pidgin among educated Nigerians, uncovering sociolinguistic phenomena such as stylistic code-switching, patterns of influence, and structural constraints[8].As shown above, most existing accounts are confined tocode-switching among the L_2 bilinguals, Nigerian English speakers whose L_1 is an indigenous language, such as Yoruba or Igbo [9], [10].To date, an empirical investigation of code-switching among adolescent L_1 English speakers in Nigeria is missing. It is against this background that this study investigates code-switching among a distinct and comparatively understudied group: bilingual adolescent L_1 English speakers who acquired English as their first

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[8]Agbo, O. F. "Language Use and Code-Switching among Educated English-Nigerian Pidgin Bilinguals in Nigeria." PhD diss., Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf,Repositorium 2022.
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language in urban, English-dominant households, while Yoruba was subsequently learnt as an additional language within the surrounding community.[11,12]This is to establish the unmarked code for the speakers and identify the bilingual pragmatic markers that accompany code-switching in their speech. Since the relationship of the first and second languages is reversed for these speakers compared with the population typically studied, it is plausible that the direction, function, and social meaning of their code-switching also differ.

1. Bilingual Code-Switching in the Nigerian Context

Code-switching occurs whenever bilingual or multilingual speakers alternate between two or more languages within a conversation, sentence, or utterance, and is widely recognised as a normal and prevalent feature of speech in bilingual communities[13]. Myers-Scotton associates code-switching with the expression of identity, ethnicity, and solidarity, arguing that its underlying functions are broadly consistent across different cultural settings even though its surface forms vary. In the Nigerian context specifically, Owaniyi & Adetuyi examine code-switching among Yoruba speakers of English in Southwest Nigeria and find that it serves to foster unity and empathy and to perform a range of other social functions[14], while Ayeomoni identifiescode-switching as the dominant pattern of language choice among Yoruba–English bilingual children.[15]

Ferguson's classic account of diglossia distinguishes between a High (H) variety, used for formal, prestigious functions, and a Low (L) variety, used in everyday, informal interaction[16]. Fishman's notion of domain, the family, friendship, education, religion, and employment, among others, describes the contexts in which H and L varieties are typically allocated.[17] In multilingual Nigeria, English has conventionally occupied the H position, associated with literacy, government, and education, while indigenous languages occupy the L position, associated with the home and informal interaction[18], [19]. Within this

[11]Babatunde, S., and D. Akinnawo. "The Impact of Language Choice on Language Endangerment in Educated Bilingual Homes in Nigeria." *International Journal of Multilingualism* (2026): 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2026.2616428.
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[14] Owaniyi, Adetuyi (2007) ibid
[15] Ayeomoni, (2006) ibid
[16]Ferguson, Charles A. "Diglossia." In *Language and Social Context*, edited by P. P. Giglioli, 232–51. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.
[17]Fishman, Joshua A. *Language in Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.
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arrangement, prior studies of L_2 English-speaking Yoruba and Igbo bilinguals generally find that the indigenous language predominates in the home domain, with code-switching into English reserved mainly for formal or official purposes[20],[21].

If, as the Markedness Model predicts, the unmarked code tends to track a speaker's dominant or first-acquired language in a given domain, then the direction of code-switching for bilingual adolescent L_1 English speakers might be expected to differ correspondingly, with switches into Yoruba, rather than into English, carrying the marked, socially loaded function.

Code-switching is closely related to, but distinct from, code-mixing, the insertion of words, phrases, or short formulaic expressions from one language into an utterance otherwise conducted in another. A growing body of research documents the bilingual pragmatic markers that Nigerian English speakers insert into their speech, including items such as “se”, “o”, “sebi”, “o ya”, omo”, “too”, and “fa” [22],[23],[24]. These markers perform discourse-pragmatic functions, expressing attitude, managing interaction, and signalling discourse structure, while simultaneously indexing Nigerian and, more specifically, Yoruba cultural identity[25],[26],[27] Comparable work on response tokens, discourse markers, interjections, and fillers among L_2 English speakers[28], [29],[30],[31],[32] provides a point of comparison for examining whether L_1 English speakers display similar patterns of pragmatic-marker use, and whether such markers function as a vehicle for code-mixing in their speech.

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[20] Ayeomoni, (2006) ibid
[21] Ugot, (2009) ibid
[22]Unuabonah, Foluke O., ; Rotimi O. Oladipupo. "'You're Not Staying in Island *Sha* O': *O*, *Sha*, and *Abi* as Pragmatic Markers in Nigerian English." *Journal of Pragmatics* 135 (2018): 8–23. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2018.07.007.
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[26]Unuabonah, Foluke (2021): 390–406. ibid
[27]Unuabonah, Foluke O. (2021): 370–95. ibid
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2. Theoretical Framework

The linguistic diversity in Nigeria results in a variety of languages present in the speech repertoires of its speakers, which calls for determining which language should be used in a given domain. Furthermore, bilinguals often select their preferred language to either align with or distance themselves from others. Markedness and Communication accommodation theories are suitable to explain these. Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model proposes that, within a given community, one code is typically "unmarked," the expected, default choice for a particular type of interaction, while other codes are "marked", carrying additional social meaning when chosen.[33]Myers-Scotton observes that speakers intentionally select codes to convey their social position, and that when the preferred code is ambiguous, they often resort to code-switching to clarify and achieve a preferred social equilibrium.[34]Speakers may switch from the unmarked to the marked code, or vice versa, to negotiate identity, signal a shift in footing, or achieve a specific interactional effect. The model is central to this paper's interpretation of why English conventionally functions as the marked code in the home domain for L_2 bilinguals, as the unmarked code for Bilingual Adolescents and L_1 English Speakers, even within the family, and why switches into Yoruba carry marked significance for this group.

Similarly, Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)[35] posits that speakers adjust their communicative behaviour, including language choice and code-switching, to converge with or diverge from their interlocutors, depending on social goals such as approval, identity affirmation, or social distance. CAT is useful for interpreting why Bilingual Adolescents, L_1 English speakers, switch into Yoruba with particular interlocutors, such as grandparents, even though English remains their default code overall.

3. Methodology

This study is a survey research design using mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) for the analysis. To achieve this, a questionnaire was designed and administered both online and offline in some privately owned schools in some Yoruba-speaking urban cities. Privately owned schools were purposively chosen because of the tendency to see the kind of expected respondents more in private schools; the urban cities are suitable because the expected respondents are mostly found in the urban cities. The questionnaire was validated by an expert. The validator assessed the appropriateness and spread of the instrument items to determine the reliability of eliciting correct responses to the test items. Validator's suggestions and corrections were incorporated into the final copy of the research instrument. The reliability of the questionnaire

[33]Myers-Scotton, Carol. *Codes and Consequences: Choosing Linguistic Varieties*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (1998). 165.
[34]Myers-Scotton (1998). ibid
[35]Gallois, Cindy, Jake Gasiorek, Howard Giles; Jordan Soliz. "Communication Accommodation Theory: Integrations and New Framework Developments." In *Communication Accommodation Theory: Negotiating Personal Relationships and Social Identities across Contexts*, 192–210. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

was assessed using 10 randomly selected respondents. They were used in a pilot study that was not part of the sample used for the main study. The researcher and the research assistants observed the respondents to ensure that the administration of the questionnaire was limited to only schoolchildren who were L_1 English speakers. The researcher and research assistants, who were adequately trained on the administration and retrieval of the research instrument, patiently explained the questionnaire items to the respondents before filling them out to ensure accuracy. The research assistants, like the researcher, are bi/multilinguals in English and in one or more Nigerian indigenous languages. Some Yoruba-speaking cities were randomly selected, namely, Osogbo, Ile-Ife, Ondo, Ibadan, Ikeja, and Ilorin, which are the study areas, and provide the data from the adolescent bilingual L_1 English speakers. Over 600 structured questionnaires were administered to respondents aged 10–19, but only 547 valid (respondents who are L_1 English speakers, bilinguals of English and Yoruba) were analysed using chi-square goodness-of-fit tests, one-sample Z-tests, Cramér's V, and a domain-specific bilingual Index (BI) at $\alpha = 0.05$. All respondents identified Yoruba as their indigenous language and English as their first language. The questionnaire captured, among other things, respondents' use of code-mixing and code-switching, and their use of a defined set of bilingual pragmatic markers (response tokens, discourse markers, interjections, modal particles, fillers, and the Yoruba-derived markers "se", "o", "sebi", "o ya", "omo", "too", and "fa"). In the present paper, these items, together with domain-level language-choice data from the home/family, education, and religious domains, are analysed specifically to reveal the prevalence, direction, and function of code-switching. Quantitative findings are reported as frequencies and percentages and interpreted qualitatively using the Markedness Model and CAT.

4. Findings

Patterns of Code-Switching Among BL$_1$ES

5.1: Prevalence of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing

Table 1: Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit – All Domain Items (α = 0.05)

Domain / Item	IL Only	EL Only	Both	χ^2	df	p-value	Decision (α=0.05)
Home: Languages spoken at home	12	109	426	514.25	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Home: Language spoken most often	79	468	0	688.46	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Home: Language with father	46	227	274	158.97	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Home: Language with mother	78	178	291	124.57	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Home: Language with siblings	14	304	231	248.67	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Home: Language with grandparents	283	96	168	97.58	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Home: Language at family gatherings	89	190	268	88.35	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Education: With teachers	0	481	66	745.78	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Education: With students (general)	0	452	95	622.99	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Education: With friends in the classroom	0	431	116	545.60	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Education: With friends outside the classroom	0	307	240	285.81	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Religion: At religious centre	71	298	178	141.46	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Religion: With friends at religious centre	36	338	173	250.82	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Religion: Pastor/Imam language	58	258	231	129.17	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**
Religion: Other religious activities	47	281	219	161.21	2	< 0.001	**Reject H_0 (Sig.)**

For each domain item, a chi-square goodness-of-fit test was conducted against

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the null hypothesis H_0: observed frequencies follow a uniform distribution across the three language choice categories (Indigenous Language Only, English Only, Both). Degrees of freedom (df) = k − 1 = 2.

Table 2: Discourse -Pragmatic Markers in Conversation Yes/No Response (N=547)

Item	Yes (f)	Yes (%)	No (f)	No (%)	Total
Response tokens (e.g., 'yeah', 'uh-huh', 'right', 'mm')	506	92.50	41	7.50	547
Discourse markers (e.g., 'well', 'however', 'so', 'by the way')	457	83.55	90	16.45	547
Code-mixing (mixing two or more languages when speaking)	456	83.36	91	16.64	547
Bilingual pragmatic markers (e.g., 'se', 'o', 'sebi', 'o ya', 'omo')	431	78.79	116	21.21	547
Language switching between languages during conversation	420	76.78	141	25.78	561
Interjections (e.g., 'wow', 'ouch', 'great')	409	74.77	138	25.23	547

Table 3: Inferential profile of Discourse-Pragmatic Bilingual Behaviours (Ho; p_0 = 0.50; N=547)

Discourse-Pragmatic Behaviour	Yes (f)	No (f)	N	p̂	Z-stat	Bilingual Interpretation
Response tokens (e.g., 'yeah', 'uh-huh', 'right', 'mm')	506	41	547	**0.925**	29.36	Confirms bilingual pragmatic competence
Discourse markers (e.g., 'well', 'however', 'so', 'by the way')	457	90	547	**0.836**	24.82	Strongly bilingually marked speech.
Code-switching (mixing two languages)	456	91	547	**0.834**	24.82	Near-universal bilingual practice
Bilingual pragmatic markers (e.g., 'se', 'o', 'sebi', 'omo')	431	116	547	**0.788**	21.65	ILpragmatic markers retained in bilingual speech
Language switching between languages	420	141	561	**0.749**	19.88	The majority employ language alternation.
Interjections (e.g., 'wow', 'ouch', 'great')	409	138	547	**0.748**	19.71	Common cross-linguistic interjection use

Code-switching and code-mixing emerged as pervasive features of BL_1ES speech. Of the 547 respondents, 456 (83.4%) reported mixing two or more languages while speaking, and 420 (76.8%) reported switching between languages during conversation. These figures indicate that the great majority of this group routinely draws on both English and Yoruba in everyday talk, confirming that, despite the dominance of English across most domains, Yoruba remains an active and accessible part of respondents' linguistic repertoire.

5.2 Bilingual Pragmatic Markers as a Vehicle for Code-Mixing

Bilingual pragmatic markers such as “se”, “o”, “sebi”, “o ya”, “omo”, “too”, and “fa” were reported by 431 (78.8%) respondents, indicating that code-mixing frequently takes the form of inserting short Yoruba-origin items into otherwise English-dominant utterances. More general discourse-pragmatic features were also widely endorsed: response tokens such as “yeah”, “uh-huh”, “right”, and “mm” were reported by 506 (92.5%) respondents; discourse markers such as “well”, “however”, “so”, and “by the way” by 457 (83.5%); and interjections such as “wow”, “ouch”, and “great” by 429 (78.4%). Taken together, these findings

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suggest that bilingual adolescent L_1 English speakers' code-mixing operates at two levels: the insertion of Yoruba-derived pragmatic markers into English-medium speech, and the broader use of English-language discourse-pragmatic features characteristic of fluent L_1 speech (see Table 2)

5.3 English as the Unmarked Code

Table 4: English as the unmarked language

Item	f	$\hat{p}$	H_o: p_o	Z-stat	p-value
Home: Both languages (home domain)	426	0.7788	0.3333	22.1008	< 0.001
Home: English only – most spoken language	468	0.8556	0.3333	25.9103	< 0.001
Home: IL only – grandparents	283	0.5174	0.3333	9.1306	< 0.001
Education: English only – with teachers	481	0.8793	0.3333	27.0894	< 0.001
Education: Both – outside the classroom	240	0.4388	0.3333	5.2304	< 0.001
Religion: English only – with friends	338	0.6179	0.3333	14.1191	< 0.001
Discourse: Response tokens (Yes)	506	0.9250	0.3333	29.3569	< 0.001
Discourse: Code-mixing (Yes)	456	0.8336	0.3333	24.8219	< 0.001
Reasons: Privacy (Yes)	455	0.8318	0.3333	24.7312	< 0.001
Reasons: Divergence (Yes)	118	0.2157	0.3333	-5.8351	< 0.001

Table 5: Effect Size – Cramér's V for Selected Domain Items

Domain / Item	χ^2	N	df (k-1)	Cramér's V	Interpretation
Home: Languages spoken at home	514.25	547	2	**0.6856**	**Large**
Home: Language with grandparents	97.58	547	2	**0.2987**	**Small**
Education: With teachers	745.78	547	2	**0.8257**	**Large**
Education: With friends outside the classroom	285.81	547	2	**0.5111**	**Large**
Religion: At religious centre	141.46	547	2	**0.3596**	**Medium**
Religion: Pastor/Imam language	129.17	547	2	**0.3436**	**Medium**

Table 6: Factors Responsible for Language Choice – Ranked by Frequency (N = 547)

Factors	Frequency (f))	% of Cases	Rank
Domain (speech situation or event)	402	73.49	1
Topic and purpose of discussion	354	64.72	2
Cultural identity	324	59.23	3
Language proficiency	309	56.49	4
Context	304	55.58	5
Interlocutor (the person being addressed)	287	52.47	6

Table 4 reveals that for BL_1ES, English functions as the unmarked code in the home/family, education, and religious domains. In the home/family domain, 468 (74.4%) respondents reported speaking English most often, compared with only 79 (14.4%) who reported speaking Yoruba most often; only 12 (2.2%) spoke an indigenous language at home exclusively. Also, it is only in the home domain that the bilingual index is very high, with the sample proportion of 0.7788.; when the frequency of both languages spoken at home (426)is

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divided by the total number (547) of the respondents. In the education domain, no respondent reported using only Yoruba in any sub-domain, and between 56.1% and 87.9% of respondents reported using English exclusively across different educational sub-domains. In the religious domain, English-only use ranged from 47.2% (with clergy) to 61.8% (with friends at the religious centre).

Within the Markedness Model, these figures indicate that, for this group, English is the default, unmarked choice across formal and informal domains alike. Where code-switching into Yoruba occurs in these domains, it therefore constitutes a marked choice, carrying additional social meaning rather than reflecting an unmarked default.

Additionally, in Table 5, the Cramér's V values indicate large effect sizes for the education domain (teachers' sub-item) and medium-to-large effects across home and religion items, confirming that differences in language choice distribution are both statistically significant and practically meaningful.

5.4 The Exception: Switching into Yoruba with Grandparents

The clearest exception to the dominance of English occurs in interactions with grandparents: 283 (51.7%) respondents reported speaking only Yoruba with grandparents, compared with 96 (17.6%) speaking only English and 168 (30.7%) using both languages. This makes grandparents the sole interlocutor category in the home domain for whom Yoruba is the majority choice, and the context in which switching from English (the otherwise unmarked code) to Yoruba is most pronounced (see Tables 1 and 3).

A related, though less pronounced, pattern appears at family gatherings, where 268 (49%) respondents reported code-mixing English and Yoruba, compared with 190 (34.7%) using English only and 89 (16.3%) using Yoruba only. Family gatherings, which typically bring together speakers of different generations, thus appear to function as a context in which switching between the unmarked (English) and marked (Yoruba) codes is especially likely, plausibly reflecting accommodation to older relatives present (see Table 3).

5. Discussion

Q1: To what extent do bilingual adolescents, L_1 English speakers,engage in code-switching and code-mixing between English and Yoruba?

The findings indicate that code-switching among BL_1ES operates in the reverse direction from that typically reported for L_2 English-speaking Yoruba bilinguals. Where Ayeomoni[36] and Ugot[37] describe Yoruba–English and Igbo–English bilinguals who prefer their indigenous languages in informal domains and switch into English chiefly for official purposes, that is, switching from an unmarked indigenous-language base into a marked English code, BL_1ES display the converse pattern. For this group, English serves as the unmarked base

[36] Ayeomoni, (2006) ibid
[37] Ugot, (2009) ibid

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across the home/family, education, and religious domains, and switching to Yoruba constitutes the marked choice.

This reversal is consistent with the broader finding, reported in the parent study, that BL_1ES depart from the pattern observed among L_2 English-speaking bilinguals in Nigeria, for whom indigenous languages typically dominate informal domains[38],[39],[40]. It also echoes patterns reported among Singaporean children, for whom English is widely used across family and social contexts with increasing dominance across ethnic groups[41].

Q2: What are the bilingual pragmatic markers that accompany code-switching in the respondents' speech?

The high rate of bilingual pragmatic-markers use (78.8%) suggests that much of BL_1ES code-mixing occurs below the level of a full code-switch, that is, through the insertion of short, conventionalised Yoruba-origin items ("se", "sebi", "o ya", "omo", and similar) into utterances that remain otherwise English-medium. This is consistent with prior research on bilingual pragmatic markers among L_2 speakers of Nigerian English, and suggests that such markers may serve as a relatively low-cost means by which BL_1ES maintain a connection to Yoruba and to Yoruba cultural identity, even as English remains their unmarked medium of communication[42].

In Markedness Model terms, these markers might be understood as brief, bounded incursions of the marked code into an unmarked-code utterance, a pattern of code-mixing that preserves the overall unmarked status of English while still indexing Yoruba identity at the level of individual lexical items.

Q3: Whichcode, English or Yoruba, functions as the unmarked code for Bilingual Adolescents, L_1 English Speakers, and in which contexts;

If, as these findings suggest, English constitutes the unmarked code for BL_1ES across most domains, and Yoruba is increasingly confined to marked, interlocutor-specific switches, chiefly with grandparents, this can carry implications for the long-term vitality of Yoruba within this population. Code-switching has traditionally been understood as a sign of bilingual vitality, in which both languages remain actively available for use[43]. For BL_1ES, however, the directionality of switching, with Yoruba as the marked, less frequently selected code, and its majority use confined to a single interlocutor category, may itself be an early indicator of generational language shift, in which Yoruba's domains of unmarked use progressively narrow across successive generations.

[38]Ayeomoni, (2006) ibid
[39] Ugot, (2009) ibid
[40]Jowitt, David. (2013): 1–12.ibid
[41]Buschfeld, Sarah. *Children's English in Singapore: Acquisition, Properties, and Use*. London: Routledge, 2020. 74-77
[42]Unuabonah; Oladipupo, (2020) ibid
[43] Poplack, (2009) ibid

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Q4:Interpret these patterns using Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model and Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory

Applied to the present data, the marked switch into Yoruba, most evident with grandparents and at family gatherings, can be interpreted as a deliberate accommodation to interlocutors for whom Yoruba may be the more comfortable or expected code, and as a means of signalling intergenerational respect, intimacy, or cultural belonging that English alone may not adequately convey.

The motivational data from the study reinforce this interpretation;324 (59.2%) respondents endorsed cultural identity as a factor influencing language choice, and convergence with interlocutors by 400 (73.1%) as a motivation for switching. Both findings are consistent with a Markedness Model account in which the marked choice (Yoruba) is selected precisely because it carries social meaning, signalling identity and accommodating an interlocutor, whereas the unmarked choice (English) does not (see Table 6)

Similarly, Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory[44] provides a complementary lens for the grandparent-specific switching pattern. Convergence, adapting one's speech to resemble that of the interlocutor, offers a reasonable explanation for why English-dominant adolescents switch into Yoruba specifically with grandparents, who are more likely than parents, siblings, or peers to be Yoruba-dominant themselves. The much lower rate of Yoruba-only use with parents (8.4% with fathers, 14.3% with mothers) and siblings (2.6%) suggests that convergence pressure is weaker with interlocutors who are themselves English-dominant, consistent with an accommodation-based account of the observed directionality.

6. Conclusion

This paper has examined code-switching among adolescent Bilingual L_1 English Speakers (BL_1ES) in selected Yoruba-speaking urban cities in Nigeria. The findings show that code-switching and code-mixing are pervasive in this group's speech, with 83.4% of respondents reporting code-mixing and 76.8% reporting code-switching, and with bilingual pragmatic markers of Yoruba origin — “se”, “o”, “sebi”, “o ya”, “omo”, “too”, and “fa” — used by 78.8% of respondents.

Crucially, the directionality of this code-switching differs from that typically reported for L_2 English-speaking Yoruba bilinguals. For BL_1ES, English functions as the unmarked code across the home/family, education, and religious domains, and switching into Yoruba constitutes the marked choice, most clearly seen in the strong preference for Yoruba with grandparents (51.7% Yoruba-only) and in the elevated rate of code-mixing at family gatherings (49%). This pattern is consistent with Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model, which frames

[44]Giles, Howard. "Communication Accommodation Theory." In *Encyclopedia of Human Relationships*, edited by H. T. Reis and S. Sprecher. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2009. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412958479.n89.

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such switches as deliberate, socially meaningful choices, and with Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory, which frames the grandparent-specific pattern as a case of convergence toward a Yoruba-dominant interlocutor.

These findings extend the literature on Nigerian code-switching by documenting a population for whom the conventional English–indigenous-language diglossic hierarchy is, in important respects, inverted. They also point to a need for further research, including longitudinal work, tracking whether the marked status of Yoruba among BL_1ES represents a stable feature of adolescent bilingual repertoires or an early stage in a broader pattern of language shift away from Yoruba in urban, English-dominant Nigerian households.

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