

An Examination of code-switching among Isekiri-English Bilinguals

Adokpaye, Thelma,

M.A English Language

Department of English Language

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study set out to examine the Socio-linguistic constraints on conversational code-switching among educated Isekiri-English bilinguals living in Lagos. It was carried out with the primary aim being, to distinguish the social factors motivating the bilingual's code-switching and to establish the linguistic constraints on the code-switching.

This study was carried out with the aid of a preliminary 4 weeks of field observation of participants in different settings and interactions followed up with 4 hours and 20 minutes of tape recordings of naturally occurring conversation between participants. A detailed analysis of the recorded conversations was carried out to establish the nature of Isekiri-English bilingual code-switching;. Constraints on the switching was attributed to both linguistic and social factors. From this exercise, the varieties of code-switching, the matrix language, word classes and categories of items, the grammatical rules and the number of grammars involved in the code-switching situation were determined.

Finally, suggestions were given as to the possibility of establishing a universal grammar for code-switching by comparing the findings in this investigation with those of other people who have worked in this area of language contact.

Keywords: Linguistics/ socio-linguistic / bilingual/ code-switching/ language/ grammar

Supervisor: Goke Pariola.

For more information, please contact **ir-help@oauife.edu.ng**