Implications of Diglossia and Code Switching in Nigeria For English Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract
This paper discusses 'diglossia', a sociolinguistic phenomenon, as it relates to code-switching in Nigeria as a multilingual society. It firstly, examines the suitability of the social and linguistic contexts involved in determining the linguistic code used by both bilinguals and multilinguals in different communicative situations. It goes on to give a detailed description of the term *diglossia* and *code-switching* and highlights the distinctive features of a diglossia situation as well as motivation for code-switching. It also examines the eccentric features of the varieties of languages involved in diglossic situations. It further discusses the issue of code switching and the way it takes place in diglossic situations. It then explores the various diglossic situations that exist in Nigeria and the patterns of code-switching in each diglossic situation. Finally, this paper points out the implications of the diglossic situations in Nigeria for English language teaching and learning.
Key words: Diglossia, bilinguals, multilinguals, code-switching

Introduction
The choice of a language or variety for the purpose of communication at any given time is a common feature of bilingual or multilingual societies. In such societies, people are always challenged with communicative situations which demand that they choose an

appropriate code with which to express themselves. However, the choices they make are guided by a number of social and linguistic context factors.

Social contexts determine to a very large extent, the language or the variety that is chosen for use. It consists a lot of other factors that include: the time and place of communication, the formality of the occasion, the topic under discussion, the level of intimacy between interlocutors and so on. Again, the social characteristics of a person help to determine his choice of language or variety of a language at any given time. These social peculiarities are the person's social class, ethnic group, religious believes, values, age and sex.

Diglossia according to Ferguson (1959) means the co-existence of two language varieties, of which one is used in specific sphere that are complementary to others. Code-switching from one language to another is a common feature of a bilingual or multilingual society. Bilinguals and multilinguals always find themselves switching from one code to another, either consciously or unconsciously. There are many reasons why people code-switch but generally, they do so in response to social context factors.

Description of Diglossia

The word 'diglossia' was derived from a French word ‘diglossie’ and was brought into English language use by Charles Ferguson in 1959. Ferguson (1959) described diglossia as a linguistic situation, where two varieties of a language exist side by side in a speech community, with each having a definite role to play. In a diglossic situation, the two varieties of the language are distinct. One of the varieties is the standardized High variety (H) but the other variety is the Low variety (L), which may or may not be standardized. While the High variety prevails in all public spheres, the Low variety is the

uncertified variant used at the informal sphere level like families and friends.

According to Wardhaugh (1998), diglossia is a wide spread phenomenon. It is common in many parts of the world especially, in Greece, Germany, Middle East and Haiti. It has been extended by sociolinguists to include bilingual situations. Trudgill (1983) expressed that diglossia includes any linguistic situation, where language switching takes place. Wallwork (1978) stated that, diglossia is similar to bilingualism.

Bilingualism and diglossia

The co-existence of two languages in more or less stable contact in any community makes each of the languages to be connected with a specific subset of complementary values. To back this up, Ferguson (1959) coined the term diglossia which means the co-existence of two language varieties of which one is used in specific spheres that are complementary to those for the other. While the High variety prevails in all public spheres, the Low variety is the uncertified variant for the informal sphere of families and friends. According to Fishman (1971), Diglossia is that form of co-existence of two or more language varieties or languages where the values of social class and class-bound functions are complementary to one another.

The high variety is used for educational, religious worship as well as other aspects of high culture like the judiciary, government media, legislation and cooperate functions. The low variety is utilized for day to day pursuits, health, home including work sphere. Fishman (1971) opinion of diglossia is not narrowed down by the conditions that two varieties of the same language are involved as it is the case with Ferguson (1959) definition. Fishman's point of view is that, diglossia is the term to denote any situation where clear cut difference between

linguistic system correlates strictly with social class or class governed social functions.

However, Ferguson and Fishman agree without a doubt that the H, variety language in any given speech community is normally not acquired at home as part of the primary processes of language acquisition and socialization, but is consciously acquired as a result of education at school.

Bilingualism without diglossia

This is a situation where there are two languages spoken, none of them is regarded as High or Low, which means that, the co-equal national official status of both variety is a legal statement of this fact, this situation is obtainable in Belguim where Dutch and French are spoken. Another example is the acceptance of two dialects of Igbo language during the orthography challenge.

Diglossia without bilingualism

Here, the existence of a relatively rigid social system where group membership is achieved by birth and cannot be easily lost. An example is the choice of the pre- 1914 where 18 European elites to isolated themselves from the rest of the population with whom they communicated through interpreters, they preferred to make use of some High status foreign language for intra-group communication. There is an existence of two or more languages but the elites speak only one language- the High variety. The interpreters are trained in both languages to enable them interpret speeches made by the elites to the other less privileged class.

Features of a Diglossic Situation

In an attempt to make full description of a diglossic situation, Ferguson (1959) carried out an in-depth study of four languages: Arabic, Greek,

Swiss German and Haitian Creole. He categorized each of these languages into two varieties: high (H) and low (L). He categorized the distinct features of these varieties and discussed them under four sub-heading which includes; Function, Prestige, Acquisition, and Standardization. He made further studies in 2006 and came up with five more features.

Ferguson (2006) explains diglossia under the following rubrics:

1. Function: The most important feature of diglossia is the specialization of the functions of the two varieties. One language serves two different functions. In some communicative situations, only the high variety (H) is appropriate but in other situations only the low variety (L) is used, for example:

S/N	High Variety (H)	Low Variety (L)
1	Sermons in churches	Informal conversation
2	Formal letters	Instruction to servants
3	Political speeches	Folk literature
4	Lectures	Buying and selling in the market
5	News broadcasts	Radio soap opera

The L, variety is the informal, casual conversational language

1. **Prestige:** The high variety (H) enjoys a greater and superior status than the low variety (L). It is believed that the 'H' variety is more intelligible, elegant, more coherent, and more logical than 'L' these qualities earn more respect and recognition for H variety leaving L variety inferior.
2. **Literacy heritage:** there are more literatures in the H variety**.** Textbooks and legal documents are written in H variety which gives it literacy heritage.
3. **Acquisition:** The low variety (L) is usually acquired naturally by the child in his home environment and is used at home to speak to children and spoken by children, but the high variety (H) is acquired

through explicit teaching in a formal setting.

4. **Standardization:** The high variety (H) is standardized but the low variety is not standardized but in some communities a standardized 'L' may arise as a result of imitation of the dialect by speakers of other dialects. When this happens the function of the low variety still remains limited to that of 'L'. It is standardized by means of formal codification, dictionaries, grammars, pronunciation guide and books are written with H variety

5. **Stability**: diglossia is an extremely stable phenomenon. The tension between H and L is reduced to some extent by the development of mixed intermediate forms which share some of the features of both H and L varieties.

6. **Grammar:** the syntax, complex sentences with numerous subordinate constructions of the H variety are appropriate while that of the L is simpler. There are considerable differences in the grammar of H and that of L.

7. **Lexicon**: there are words that are found in H variety that are also found in L variety. The vocabulary of H are shared with L variety, that notwithstanding, learned words and technical terms are only found in H variety. There are words in the home objects that have no equivalents in the H variety. There is also the existence of paired words.

The last but not the least feature as contributed by Fasold (1984) is the phonological feature. There is a substantial range of difference between Hand L varieties phonologies.

Code-Switching/code-switching in Diglossic Situations

Gal (1988), described code-switching as a conversational strategy used to establish relationships. It can also be used to cross or destroy group boundaries. In the diglossic situations described by Ferguson (1959), it is normal for people to switch from one variety to another unconsciously. For instance an interviewer on a Greek television will

introduce a guest and conduct the opening pleasantries in high variety (H) but gradually slips over to the low variety (L) as the interview progresses. It is also a typical behaviour for people to read aloud from a newspaper written in 'H' or listen to a formal speech in 'H' and then proceed to discuss the issues in 'L'. Also, it is important that the right variety be used in the right situations. Using the low variety (L) in a formal situation is not socially accepted because it makes one an object of ridicule. Similarly, using a high variety (H) in an informal situation is felt to be unnatural or pedantic.

Types of code switching

There are two major types of code switching are Situational code-switching and Metaphorical code switching.

A. **Situational code-switching**: this is the type of code switching that occurs when a speaker changes from one language to another as a result of change in situation or social context. A change in the interlocutors can bring about a change in language as well as a change in the physical environment or setting. A teacher or lecturer may start a discussion with a student with a student in his or her office with English and changes to Igbo or any other language depending on the tribe or the language both of them have common knowledge of. The teacher or lecturer may do this to change his or her role as teacher / lecturer or superior or an authority so that the aim of the conversation will be achieved. This can also happen on realization that they both come from same town or language area. This switch can also come from the student for same reasons as that of the lecture's. Two Igbo students may also change from Igbo language to English language because the arrival of an Efik student in their midst so at to carry the non Igbo speaking student along. The entire discussion may not change but most of the words will be in English. On the other hand, two Igbo students speaking

English may switch to Igbo at the arrival of another students who they do not want to accommodate in their discussing.

B. Metaphorical code switching

This is the occasional change of topic or subject matter. The situation may remain the same but the topic of discussion changes. Some topics of discussion are more adaptable to one language than another. Political speeches for instance are usually found to be from mother tongue to English language. A discussion on cultural and domestics issues is better carried out in native language than in second language. Under metaphorical code- switching also, the switch may occur when one wants to introduce metaphors, proverbs, idioms and figurative expressions in one's mother tongue to enrich the conversation. Switches may occur while making commands, questions and so on, in a language which is more convenient.

Motivations for code switching

Though Language users have varying reasons for code-switching but code-switching is mostly done for psychological reasons. Obiamalu and Mbagwu (2008) noted that in Igbo, where English is used as a foreign language, code-switching and code-mixing are triggered by some socio-psychological motivations. These socio-psychological motivations include: language attitude, subconscious linguistic behavior, and cultural disloyalty. When an individual employs the use of an accent or dialect of a group, the audience is more receptive to the content. This context can easily be observed in political campaigns rallies and speeches. More psychological reasons for code-switches occur in the areas of trying to emphasize a command, eliminating ambiguity, for humorous effects, to show respect and avoid socio-cultural/ linguistic taboo and so on.

Also, code-switching can be Linguistic motivated. Code switching is motivated by the speakers need to repeat words or sentences for either

stylistic effect or for the purpose of emphasis. The repetition is meant to give more weight to the utterance made in one of the two bilingual's languages. It may also be used to qualify a message or to reinforce it, here, switching is motivated to clarify as well as elaborate a point, to exclaim or interject a point as a sign of exclamation or excitement. Switches are made in order to foreground statements, greetings; addresses and so on are used to foreground speeches. Adeniran (1990) used the term *phatic* for these types of foregrounding switches. Switching is motivated by need to introduce technical terms and expressions. This motivation is to satisfy speaker and listener's lexical needs. The desire to mark off quotation and direct quotation is also a reason for switching. It could be stereotypical imitation of speech in jokes or even in learned citation,

Other general reasons for code-switching manifests during praying, teasing, abusing, cajoling, mocking praising, cursing, swearing, bluffing, gossiping, disarming participants, making apology and showing multiple identity

Diglossic Situations in Nigeria

There are a number of linguistic situations in Nigeria that reflect the features of diglossia but for the purpose of this paper ,attention will be paid to switches made between English language, mother tongue and pidgin. In this situation, speaker code-switch from one language to another or one variety to another. These diglossic situations are outlined below:

a) Code-switching from Standard English to non-standard English
b) Code-switching from English to Pidgin
c) Code-switching from English to a local language
d) Code-switching from a local language to its variety

Code-switching from Standard English to Non-Standard English

Standard English in Nigeria refers to the British English introduced to Nigerian citizens by the European missionaries and colonial administrators. Nigerians, who acquired western education, speak Standard English. It is the official language variety for administration, governance, mass media, politics, commerce and so on. Non-standard English on the other hand, is the variety that is spoken by Nigerians, who are not well-educated. Below is an example of the two varieties:

1. Evan and I are sisters. (standard English)
ii) Evan and **me** are sisters. (non-standard English)
iii) I have to eat. (standard English)
iv) I have to **chop.** (non-standard English)

When there is code-switching from Standard English to non-standard English, the former becomes the high variety (H) while the later becomes the low variety (L): In terms of prestige, Standard English enjoy greater prestige.

Code-switching from English to Pidgin

It is a common practice for educated Nigerians, who dwell in cities like Lagos, Benin, Port Harcourt and Warri to code-switch from English to Pidgin, when communicating with people especially in informal situations. This practice is also very common among universities undergraduates in most Nigerian Universities and Colleges especially amongst the male students. Switching from English to Pidgin is also a common feature of the Police and Army Barracks in Nigeria.

In this case, English assumes the status of the high variety (H), while pidgin becomes the low variety (L). English enjoys greater prestige than pidgin.

Code-switching from English to a Local Language

Nigeria as multilingual country has over 400 indigenous languages, three of which are regional languages, (Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba). In varied situations of daily living educated Nigerians code-switch from English to their local languages and vice versa. They do this, in response to the communicative situations they find themselves.

The situation being described here is bilingualism. Many Nigerian use English and their local languages interchangeably. This situation is made possible because many Nigerians are literate in English. In this diglossic situation, English assumes the role of the high variety (H), while the local language assumes the role of the low variety (L).

Code-switching from a Local Language to its Variety

Many Nigerian languages have two or more varieties, one of which is standardized. So, code-switching can take place between a local language and its variety. For instance, an Igbo speaking person from Ebonyi State can speak standard Igbo to people from Imo and Anambra States but speaks his own dialect to someone from his own speech community. The standard variety of the local language becomes the high variety (H) while the other variety becomes the low variety (L), but their functions are not strictly defined.

Diglossia Situations in Nigeria; Pidgin and Creole Perspective

As speakers of different languages interact, one language is bound to influence the other; such influence is as result of language contact. Thus Language contact is a situation where two or more languages or varieties of languages interact which usually produce pidgin, Creole, code-switching and mixed languages. This is not farfetched in Nigeria where Pidgin English is found to be a means

of communication between the educated and non-educated. Pidgin language is a language with simplified structure of two languages in contact developed to fulfill the purpose of communication. It is usually developed among speakers without a common language to communicate with each other. It can also be said to be language born out of necessity. In a heterogeneous speech community, language contact gives rise to variety of changes; one which is the creation of a unifying language. This created language is termed a contact language. It is in view of this that Nigeria pidgin is always referred to by language scholars as a contact language which evolved to fulfill communication needs of the people in contact.

Elugbe and Omamor (1991) described pidgin as a language arising out of contact situations and also as a product of multilingual situation where communication is made possible only through improvisation of a language. Nigerian pidgin therefore is a language which evolved out of two or more languages in contact (English and local language) to fulfill communication purposes for these group of people without a common language. For instance, the Warri people of Delta state are known for their unique and consistent usage of pidgin language to the extent that English teachers find themselves almost having to teach English language in pidgin language which of course automatically means that other subjects are thought in pidgin. This pidgin language seems to have been created from the multilingual situation found in the state to fulfill the communication need of the people. Summarily pidgin can be referred to as the spontaneous creation of language out of a mixture of other languages to serve as a means of communication between speakers of different tongues.

From the foregoing discourse, the three major features of pidgin language are that firstly, no speech community can claim ownership of it, secondly, it solves communication need in a multilingual

situation and thirdly, it is not any speakers Mother Tongue (MT). Trask (2007) opined that pidgin can undergo three stages, the third stage is the point at which pidgin can turn into a mother tongue (MT), this in order words means that a pidgin language may not be anyone's mother tongue at the time of conception but can undergo further evolution process. Linguists refer to this as creolization. This can also be found in same Warri, Delta state earlier mentioned, where children are born into a pidgin language and their mother tongue is silent or forgotten. In this area extra effort has to be made to get a native language speaker. This is because pidgin language has been serving their communication need over a long time.

Consequently, by way of definition, creolization is a process by which pidgin acquires the status of an MT of a speech community. A Creole comes into being when children are born into a pidgin speaking community and acquires the pidgin as a first language as we have in Warri Delta and some other parts of the country like Port-Harcourt in Rivers state. This paper cannot help but briefly refer to the national language policy issues. Nigeria being a multilingual nation has been experiencing agitation by language scholars on the inclusion of Nigeria pidgin as a national language. Speaking in favour of this, Elugbe and Mamor asserts that if Nigeria were in need of national language that would not be associated with any linguistic or tribal group, Nigeria pidgin (NP) would be a choice. NP has come to stay in Nigeria, however, part of the obstacles towards its choice as a lingua franca is the negative attitude of government policies as well as Nigerians towards it especially the elite class. This is because pidgin language usage in Nigeria is regarded as a low language variety; it is a street and ghetto language. This attitude can be premised on the confusion between NP and *broken English* which is a resultant effect of ill-informed early version of evolvement. This

notwithstanding NP's availability as a means of communication is undeniable. However, situating NP in the context of diglosia, the language because of its negative perception in the nation is analysed as a low (L) valued variety as compared with the English language which the high (h) variety.

Furthermore, the classification of the NP as a L variety can be hinged on Holmes analogy that ' a pidgin can be as useful as a lingua franca, that it may be expanded and used as even by people who share tribal language….in multilingual speech communities, parents may use a pidgin so extensively during the day, in the market, at church, in offices and in public transport…..for L variety of any language, its use is usually for informal settings and this is the case of NP at present.

On the other hand, Nigerian Creole can be situated in the diglossic context. Having earlier explored this term above as a linguistic situation where a pidgin language attains the status of an L1 of a linguistic community. Holmes (2013) defines it as a pidgin which has acquired native speakers. Pidgin attains this status by expanding and elaborating its lexical items and grammatical structures. Few examples of Creole in Nigeria multilingual system include;

Dem kom now now	(Creole)
They just arrived	(Standard Englis)
Na mi tell am	(Creole)
I told him/her	(Standard English)
See am	(Creole)
See it	(Standard English)
Take am	(Creole)
Take it	(Standard)

Creole can also be seen when words are being borrowed from the indigenous language into Standard English. Examples include;

Yu bi wayo man.	(Creole)
You are a cheat	(Standard English)
This girl is orobo	(Creole)
This girl is fat	(Standard English)
Mai oga	(Creole)
My boss/master/superior	(Standard English)

Wayo is a word in Hausa language, while Orobo and Oga are words in Yoruba language

Lastly, when Nigeria Creole depends on the formality contexts we observe the under listed expressions.

Am coming this is an expression when one is actually going

He is not on seat.	Said when the person being looked for is not in his her o office.
She is lekpa on campus.	Referring to one's body structure
Let us break morning kolanut	referring to offering a visitor k kolanut in the morning.

Implications of Diglossia and Code-Switching for English Language Teaching and Learning

The concepts of diglossia and code-switching have serious implications for English language teaching and learning in Nigeria. Firstly, diglossia emphasizes the importance of matching the right variety with the appropriate situation. This is also important in English language learning. Learners should be taught to use formal language in formal situations and informal language in informal situations. A child should learn how to greet people in the village in his local language and not in English.

Secondly, it has been observed that code-switching occurs frequently and unconsciously in diglossic situations. Therefore, English language teachers should emphasize that learners learn to keep to one particular code at a time instead of mixing them up. This is pertinent because many Nigerian undergraduates find it difficult to speak English accurately without mixing their sentences with pidgin. In addition, the concept of diglossia and code-switching relates mainly to oral communication.

Therefore, English language teachers should give more attention to oral communication in the classroom. The emphasis should be on teaching English as it is used for communication in natural situations of daily living, for different purposes and functions. They should provide learners with learning activities that reflect real-life experiences. Also learners should be given opportunities to practice the linguistic forms and structures they learn in the classroom, as they are actually used in real-life situations.

Conclusion

Diglossia is a common phenomenon in the world today but many people are not conscious of it. In a bilingual society, where few people are exposed to literacy or western education, diglossia is bound to occur. Nigeria as a multilingual society has varied diglossic situations. In all these situations, people code-switch from one language or variety to another either consciously or unconsciously. It is important that Nigerians become aware of the diglossic situations, so that they can always use the right language or variety in the appropriate situation. English language teachers on their part should emphasize appropriacy of form and function.

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