Code-Mixing in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

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Abstract
Code-mixing, a unique sociolinguistic/language phenomenon constitutes the focus of this work. This concept is thoroughly explored in Akachi Ezeigbo's Trafficked and Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus, in line with the fact that literature is a window to the world. The thesis of the work is that in everyday exploration/use of language and language resources for communication, code-mixing essentially becomes an inevitable tool for bilingual and multilingual interactions. A qualitative analysis of both Ezeigbo's Trafficked and Adichei's Purple Hibiscus was carried out in order to determine the motivation behind code-mixing, its functions and relevance in both novels. Altogether, eighteen (18) conversations involving code-mixing in the two novels were analyzed based on Howard Giles' communication accommodation theory (CAT), which emphasizes the need for adjustment - verbal and non-verbal - in one's speech behaviour in order to reduce social differences, as well as accommodate other interactants with whom one communicates. The analysis revealed that given the complex language situation in Nigeria - the contact between Nigerian indigenous languages and English - code-mixing therefore becomes the most effective strategy employed by Nigerians in a multilingual and bicultural society such as Nigeria, to fully capture the people's peculiar cultural and linguistic nuances and experiences. This is what Ezeigbo's and Adichie's characters reveal. Code-mixing as used by the novelists in their works, also relate to characters' specific moods and emotions, as well as their group identity. Thus, this paper also examines the modality by which code-mixing makes it easy for the authors to convey their messages to their audience, who readily appreciate the message, given the common linguistic background.

Keywords: Code-mixing, Sociolinguistic, Bilingual, Multilingual, Bicultural

Introduction

Language is essentially a communication system in the sense that it associates meaning with a set of signs or symbols. It is in this connection that Ndimele (2001:1) describes human language - a semiotic system, since it entails the use of certain agreed-upon symbols or signals to convey

meaning from one person to another within a given speech community. The number of languages used in the communication of meaning within speech communities, varies from one speech community to another

Nigeria, unlike some countries in the world is multilingual in the sense that it has more than four hundred languages spoken within its borders, with English as the language of official communication, as noted in Udofot (2016:4). The existence of multiple indigenous languages has resulted in Nigeria having a complex linguistic system, with many indigenous languages, various dialects, and the English language. In a multilingual and bicultural society such as Nigeria, therefore, literary artists are constrained in their literary works by many challenges. Prominent among such challenges is the expression of the peculiar Africa and Nigeria cultural experiences in English, the language of another culture. Thus, Nigeria novelists, like poets and dramatists, create literature deriving from Nigerian background with varying local situations. For instance, Achebe (1975:389) states:

> I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience, but it will have to be new English, still in communion with its ancestral home, but altered to suit its new African surrounding.

Therefore, to proffer solution to this nagging language problem, Nigerian novelists modify the English language, adopting various stylistic-creative strategies to pass their massages across to the readers. Among these stylistic-creative strategies is code-mixing. Granted, the culture of a people is best expressed and preserved in their literature through language; thus, to effectively and adequately articulate the Nigerian culture in English, the language must undergo some structural adjustment and changes. This informs the use, by Nigerian prose writers, of some innovative stylistics-creative strategies in their works to cater for the varying local situations. Among these strategies is code-mixing.

An Overview of Code-Mixing

The term 'code-mixing' has been variously defined in different areas of linguistics. Bokamba (1989:3) for instance, defines code-mixing as "the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words, phrases and clauses from a cooperative activity where participants, in order to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with

what they understand"; it is the transferring of linguistic elements from one language to another within the same speech event- a speaker begins a sentence in one language, then uses words or other grammatical features from another language within the same stretch of utterance.

Code-mixing and Code-switching are often used interchangeably in some contexts. To Sridnar and Sridhar (1980:409), code-mixing is "the transition from using linguistic units (words, phrases, clauses) of one language to using those of another within a single sentence; the mixing of two or more language or language varieties in speech". Code-mixing is similar to the use or creation of pidgin, but while a pidgin is created across a group that does not share a common language, code-mixing usually occurs within a multilingual setting where speakers share more than one language. In essence, code-mixing, code-switching, borrowing and style-shifting are some of the labels used in the literature on bilingualism (and multilingualism) to describe kinds of mixture resulting from language contact. Sociolinguists regard code-mixing and code-switching as offshoots of bilingualism. In many situations, a fluent bilingual changes his language (code) by using words from other languages at his disposal; that is, he/she mixes codes (languages) even within very short utterances.

Code-mixing is a "natural and powerful communicative feature of bilingual interaction which presents linguists with one of the most intriguing and analytical challenges" (Crystal 2002:365). While code switching is believed to be done consciously, code-mixing usually occurs unconsciously. However it occurs, there are reasons why participants (bilinguals) in a conversation, code-mix.

Reasons for Code-Mixing

Whenever bilinguals mix two languages (codes), there must be motivation or plausible reason for this. Grosjean (1982:54) suggests some reasons for code-mixing. He maintains, for instance, that some bilinguals mix two languages (codes) when they cannot find proper words or expressions to explain some points, or when there is no appropriate translation for the language being used. Also, interlocutor's message, situation, their attitudes and emotions generate code-mixing. Grosjean maintains that code-mixing can also be used for many other reasons, such as quoting what someone has said, thereby emphasizing one's group identity. It may also be used to specify the addressee, as switching to the language of a particular person in a group will clearly indicate that one is actually

addressing that person. Elsewhere, Sauvage, studying the complexity of code-mixing switching in Belgium, notes that people code-switch for several reasons: (1) to accommodate the other speakers, (2) to avoid accommodating others or (3) to express another aspect of their cultural identity. Needless to say, code-mixing may also serve as an effective sociolinguistic strategy for warming oneself into people's minds. In this case, once the speaker mixes codes in speech event - codes (languages) which are well understood by his listener, there will be mutual trust between the two participants (2002:241).

Since code-mixing is usually employed in informal situations, participants in a conversation may use this as a strategy to alter the actual meaning of what they are talking about, thereby concealing vital information from non-initiates in the language (code) of conversation. In her work on code-switching, communication scholar Karl Scott discusses how the use of different ways and codes in communicating creates different cultural contexts and different relationships among the interlocutors (2000:246). There are many other reasons or motivation for code-mixing, as the conversation by characters in Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* and Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* will reveal.

Methodology and Theoretical Basis

Eighteen (18) stretches of utterance involving code-mixing were purposively selected from the two novels under discourse. Those eighteen (18) utterances were selected because of their depiction of the concept of code-mixing and not because of any methodological specifications. These conversations were the analyzed based onHoward Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), with a spur to similarity attraction component of the theory. Communication accommodation is a theory which emphasizes the adjustments in terms of language use that people make while communicating. Developed by Howard Giles, a professor of communication at the University of California, the theory stresses the need for people to minimize the social difference between them and other, with whom they interact. The factors that ensure the accommodation, as noted in Agbedo (2015:72), are adjustments which, can be verbal or non-verbal. Verbal adjustments involves the introduction for instance into sentences of words – perhaps from other languages – which have less complex structure in order to accommodate the other participants in the communication.

Evolved from speech adjustment in psychology theory, CAT elaborates the human tendency to adjust their speech behaviour while interacting. The reason behind this behaviour is in order to control the social differences between the interactants in a communication event. People notes Agbedo accommodate their communication activities to get approval and to set positive self-image before the other interactants. As explained in Agbedo (2015:73), there are two types of accommodation process associated with this theory: convergence and divergence. In convergence, which concerns this work on code-mixing, the speakers tend to adapt the other person's communication characteristics to reduce the social difference.

Also referred to as interpersonal accommodation theory", CAT, according to Scollon (2001:18) has sprung from the awareness that speakers are not merely "incumbents" for roles imposed on them by society but rather inquirers attempting to comprehend themselves and others. It therefore follows that accommodation and highlights its "negotiative" nature, as a stand of the accommodation theory, similarity attraction theory lends itself to the concept of convergence, which emphasizes the process whereby two or more individuals alter or shift their speech to resemble, that of those they are interacting with. This is what happens during code-mixing. It informs this study's choice of the theory for the analysis of the various code-mixed sentences in the novels under discourse. Fittingly so, Sauvage (2002:24) identifies the "accommodation of other speakers" as one of the reasons for code-switching or code-mixing.

Code-Mixing in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*

In *Trafficked*, one is particularly intrigued by the authors' deployment of code-mixing to physically and psychically articulate the social malady being written about, and to reflect the author's personality. The diverse streams of language mix in the novel is aimed at representing the different dialects and regions in the country to which the author wishes to draw the readers' attention. Adepeju (2011:5) notes that these language strategies - 'code-mixing' and 'code-switching' are peculiar to bilingual and bicultural environments and through this, the author is able to expose the minds of readers and make them to identify themselves with the characters depending on the ethnic-nationality of the reader. Ezeigbo also employs code-mixing in her novel *Trafficked*, in order to show the direct effects of bilingualism and multilingualism on Nigerians. Her utilization of code-mixing to explain complex language situation in summarizing her style in *Trafficked*. Ezeigbo's unique use of language is one of the author's techniques to convey meaning to her audience. Each meaning, therefore is

physically and psychically articulated to suit the socio-political issues discussed in the novel. And not only that, it also reflects the author's communicative preferences.

Sometimes, Ezeigbo's use of code-mixing in *Trafficked* is so glaring that the reader cannot help but notice it. For instance, on page 191 of the work, we see Efe, a character in the work, shouting a mixture of four languages (codes) in order to draw people's attention to her aid: "Thieves! Ole! Barawo! Onye Ori!". Efe shouts in these languages so that in case anyone does not understand one, he will understand the other. The setting of this particular scene is a street in Lagos (Nigeria). This reveals the complex linguistic situation in Nigeria as Efe has to shout the word "thief" in the different languages of Nigeria. Efe, resorting to a code-mixing of English, Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo words for thief serves to show the metropolitan nature of Lagos, a city that is found for being the melting pot of Nigerian [and African] languages and culture. In fact, it is often claimed that there is hardly any tribe, language or culture in the world that is not represented in Lagos. So, by this behaviour, Efe is expressing her consciousness of Lagos as a confluence point of Nigerian languages and culture, while at the same time hoping to attract the needed aid from person(s) from any of the ethnic groups which she readily identifies with.

Code-mixing is the most prominent stylistic device that Ezeigbo employs in her narrative. There are many instance of code-mixing in the work, but here are a few examples:

S/N	Code-Mixed Sentences	Interpretation/ Meaning
1.	"Haba, go down now…." (4)	This is a Nigerian pidgin English expression used by a character to express his exasperation at the refusal of the person to come down from the plane.
2.	"Hmm, iyawo!" (20)	"iyawo" is the Yoruba word for wife.
3.	"make I call onye mango for you?" (25)	This is a mixture of English, Igbo and Nigeria pidgin English "onye mango" means mango person or the person who sells mangoes.
4.	"….he was destined to be ozonwu, a palm tree trampler, only na-ozonkwu" (31).	In this mixture of English and Igbo, the author provides the meaning of the Igbo expression still in the same sentence.

5.	"….. he had caught some okpo and asa, and carried them hom….." (35).	"okpo" and "asa" are the names of small fresh water fishes that live in the stream and river of the south of Nigeria.

From the example above, we can see that the way Ezeigbo employs language is indeed unique as a result of using the device of code-mixing. Sometimes, in bilingual and multilingual societies like Nigeria, people mix their speech in order to fit in with other participants in the communication; talk about a particular topic, change the context; or to convey the identity of the person who is code-mixing. Based on the examples listed above, we can see that characters, from the instance when Alagbogu comes to visit Ogukwe, Nneoma's father, converse in a mixture of English and Igbo. This shows that they are in an informal setting, and so are at ease to converse in whatever language they want. Below is the excerpt that reveals their conversation pattern between Alagbogu and Ogukwe:

"Alagbogu, nno welcome," Adoze greeted.
"How is your family"
"they are better than me." He ginned, exposed two rows of discoloured teeth.
"Nsogbuadihi.there is no problem at all…."he replied.
" I came here to tell you… your daughter Hannah …"
"Ewo! Did you say Hannah, my daughter took part in this abomination?"
Alagbogu continued, "that is what I heard.
Whether it is true or false, your brother cannot say.
I have not gone beyond Onitsha not to talk of ObodeOyibo, the white man's land".
(Ezeigbo, 2008:38-40).

The above excerpt explains that code-mixing establishes the identity of a person as it does with Alagbogu and Ogukwewho are of the Igbo origin; and it is used when a speaker is sure that his listener understood both languages which he mixed.

Code-Mixing inChimamandaAdichie's*PurpleHibiscus*

As in Eziegbo's *Trafficked*, Adichie employs code-mixing in her *PurpleHibiscus*in order to narrate the Nigerian peculiar linguistic and cultural nuances. Since code-mixing is one of the sociolinguistic

phenomena that occur in Nigeria's multilingual/bilingual society, Adichie copiously employs it in her narrative. Like Ezeigbo, Adichie mixes Standard English, Pidgin English and sometime Igbo, depending on the prevailing circumstances, in her attempt to cater for different situations that suit the Nigerian environment in her narrative. In the work, *PurpleHibiscus*, the different characters and families use a mixture of Igbo and English. An example is where mama says to Kambili in a mixture of Igbo and English: "Nne, ngwa. Go and change". Again, she says to papa, "your tea is getting cold" and to Jaja, "come and help me".

The informality and familiarity between mama, Jaja and Kambili on the one hand, and mama's formality with her husband, Eugene, on the other, is noted through the stylistic device of code-mixing. In another instance, mama says to her children: "Umum", hugging us. She also says: "my children" (Adichie 2006:42). Also code-mixing is employed in the novel to showcase the pragmatics of greetings in African settings, where there is usually a mix of English and the indigenous languages. For instance in greeting her father Kambili says, "good evening, Papa, nno" (Adichie 2006:48). A closer look at the greeting patterns in the novel reveals that indeed, this pattern occurs throughout the novel whether it isbetween children and their parents or between adult of the same age group.

Apart from mixing both English and Igbo to distinguish between formal settings and informal settings, Adichie also mixes Standard English with Nigerian Pidgin English in order to differentiate between normal and abnormal situations in the novel. For instance:"Omelora! Good afunsah!' they chorused. They wore only short…." (Adichie 2006:63). This scene represents a session between papa (Eugene) and three little local boys. Another instance is when the local people of Abba went to Eugene's house to eat and feast. Here, we notice conversation patterns like: Gudumorni. Have you woken up, eh?" and Gudumorni. Did the people of your house rise well oh?"(Adichie 2006:66). Sometimes, Adichie mixes pidgin with Standard English when the characters have to make complains and petitions. For instance, when the students of the university are rioting, they shout "All we are saying, sole administrator must go! All we are saying, he must go! No be so! Na so!" (Adichie 2006:233).These students employ code-mixture to lay their complaints, protest, express their anger and make their demands for better living conditions or seek redress

In another instance, in Aunty Ifeoma's household where Jaja and Kambili spend the holidays, Aunty Ifeoma mixes Igbo with English based on her mood at specific moments. For instances: "Do you not hear what I have said, Igbo? Aunty Ifeoma said, raising her voice", "Ebekwanu? No," Amaka, o gini?", and so on (Adichie 2006:220-232). Other instances of her changing moods and the attendant use of Igbo words to mark these moods are evident in the novel. From the foregoing therefore, we can see that characters use code-mixing to adequately express emotions such as anger, joy, surprise and shock as situations demand. For example, the following sentences express mama's shock at the death of her father-in-law, Papa Nnukwu: "Papa Nnukwu is dead," Jaja said. Mama's hand flew to her chest. "chim! When?" **(**Adichie 2006:197**).** In order to further express her pity, Mama exclaims: "Ewuu, so he has gone to rest, Ewuu" (ibid).

Points of Similarity in the Two Texts

The first point of similarity that readily tends itself to any reader of these novels: *Trafficked* and *Purple Hibiscus*, is the socio-political concerns in the novels. In Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus,* for instance, the issues of social injustice, corruption and the cult of mediocrity which impede the progress of poor African nations are examined. This social injustice may give rise to revolt, which invariably leads the economy to go down. To Adichie, the sense of activism and patriotism is another dimension of feminism aimed at challenging a dictatorial political system under the cover of democracy.

It satirically castigates the Nigeria society for its inadequate educational system, social injustices and corruption. Dubbed a Bildungsroman, Stobie (2010:421) maintains that Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* highlights the devastating effect of patriarchal control and dominance in society, exemplified by an infallible extremist, dogmatic father, Eugene. However, Adichie's impulse, Stobie further avers, is reformist, as she offers alternatives to absolutism by endorsing respect [for Eugene], tolerance, forgiveness and hybridity. She promotes a progressive not extremist view of culture, religion, spirituality and gender roles. In the same vain, Ezeigbo's *Trafficked,* notes Onyerionwu (2008:12) is mainly concerned with those issues – trafficking, betrayal, love, friendship, stigmatization and education – that affect women in our society. The author maintains that Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* exposes certain vulnerabilities of the Nigerian socio-economic terrain which has presented the modern Nigerian woman as prey to dangerous tidal waves of post-modern phenomena listed above. Another point of similarity in the two texts is that they are both written by

Igbo authors. Since both Ezeigbo and Adichie are Igbo, much of their code-mixed sentences or expressions in the work are similar. For instance, the use of the expression "o di egwu" which means "it is terrible" is used by characters in the two novels, *Trafficked*and *PurpleHibiscus*, who like the authors, are predominantly Igbo. Other expressions that occur in both texts include "Umunna" and "nno" (which means 'extended family' and 'welcome' respectively). For instance, from both texts, we have: "good evening, papa, nno "(Adichie 2006:45) and "Alagbogu, nno…." (Ezeigbo 2008:38).

Also, in order to capture the reality of Nigeria's language situation, both Ezeigbo and Adichie code-mix the larger group indigenous language of Nigeria-Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo- with Standard English and Nigeria Pidgin English respectively. They insert words from one language into the expression and sentences of another. With this in mind, it is also important to note that the major characters in both novels are of Igbo origin, as this says a lot about why mostly Igbo is used in code-mixing in both novels. In addition, both authors call some of the nouns they use in their works by their Igbo names because the predominant code-mixed language in the work, for instance in *PurpleHibiscus*, is Igbo. This can be seen when Adiche mentions Orah leaves, Okpa (corn cake), anara (garden egg) and azu (fish) (pp. 178,179,29 & 40). In the same vein, Ezeigbo makes mention of udara fruits, Amumanu (meat / animal), okpo and asa (types of fish) (pp. 45 & 35).

The Effect of Code-Mixing on the Author's Concern in the Texts

Since code-mixing has earlier been defined as a language phenomenon in which two codes or languages are used for the same message, and is an effect of bilingualism and multilingualism; it is important that we in turn find out why code-mixing is employed as a major stylistic device in *Trafficked* and *Purple Hibiscu*s and how it affects the authors' messages in the texts. Both Ezeigbo and Adichie use code-mixing to represent the characteristic speeches of semi-literate characters in their novels. For instance, Ezeigbo mixes Standard English and Nigerian Pidgin English to reflect the complaints of the lower class about the economic situation of Nigeria and the way citizens are forced to live in penury as a result of unemployment or better standard of living. Here is an excerpt from the work *Trafficked*, to buttress this point:

Abeg make una go sleep. Unadey look fight.

> Wetindemdey fight for sef? He grumbled.
> Na so so fight for dis country every time:
> Niger delta; ife and modakeke; Aguleri;
> And umuleri; Muslim and Christian;
> University student and police; president
> And vice president.Na so sowahala.
> Una wan bring de fight come for oasis?
> Abeg, make una no put me for trouble
> (138).

This quotation is the complaint of a night watchman for Oasis, the rehabilitation centre for the deported trafficked girls. With this code-mixed expression, the author tactically draws the reader's attention to the theme of conflict in Nigeria – political, economic and social. Adichie does the same thing when she narrates the riot of university students in Enugu. She is also drawing the reader's attention to the poor living conditions of lower and middle class members of the Nigerian society using code-mixed expressions. Here is the excerpt from *PurpleHibiscus*: "all we are saying, sole administrator must go! Na so! Shouts and yells accompanied the singing; a sole voice rose, and the crowd cheered" (238). All in all, whether one is looking at *Trafficked* or *PurpleHibiscus*, one immediately realizes that the authors – Ezeigbo and Adichie – skillfully explore and apply the device of code-mixing in order to pass their messages across to the readers – messages heaped with economic and socio-political realities of the Nigerian society.

Conclusion

This study examined the concept of 'code-mixing' as applied by Ezeigbo and Adichie in their novels, *Trafficked* and *Purple Hibiscus* respectively. It goes without saying that code-mixing and code-switching are very relevant sociolinguistic concepts that find application in all spheres and modes of communication within a multilingual and bicultural society such as Nigeria. The aims of the linguistic exploration included to determine the motivation behind code-mixing, its functions as well as relevance in advancing the socio-political thrust of the novels under discourse. Being a qualitative study, data for the study were gotten from the primary texts under consideration. Altogether, eighteen (18) conversational pairs – nine from each novel – involving code-mixing were purposively selected based on their relevance to the study, and analyzed using Howard Giles' communication theory (CAT) as theoretical basis. From the analysis, it was

discovered that Ezeigbo and Adichie are very much conscious of the multilingual and bicultural nature of the Nigerian society, which constitutes the setting for their novels. Hence, by employing the linguistic strategy of code-mixing in their works these novelists are able to fully capture the peculiar cultural and linguistic nuance ad experiences of Nigerians-the readers.

Again, with this linguistic strategy, the authors are able to explore the minds of the readers as well as make the readers to readily identify themselves with characters in the novels, depending on the respective ethnic nationality of each reader. The study ultimately reveals the author's solidarity with their linguistic and cultural identity. Thus, the study concludes that an exploration of code-mixing and code-switching in texts is essentially an excursion into the rich linguistic and cultural backgrounds from which these novelist write, and which helps to illuminate the socio-political concerns of the novels under discourse.

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