



## CODE SWITCHING AS A COUNTENANCE OF LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE: THE CASE OF THE EFIK BILINGUAL

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### ABSTRACT

*Bilinguals often switch between their two languages in the middle of a conversation. Spolsky (1998) says, code-switches can take place between or even within sentences, involving phrases or words or even part of words. The switching of words is the beginning of borrowing, which occurs when the new word becomes more or less integrated into the second language. In this paper, we examine the experience and countenance of the Efik bilingual in terms of language interference. This interference is as a result language contact – for this paper - Efik and English languages. We are looking at it from two axes: the sociolinguistic ambience and the morphosyntactic perspective. We are using both the Think Tank and the Lexical Functional Grammar-LFG theories respectively, to analyze the data. The theories have aided the discovery that the study of Interference, which has to do with the transference of elements of one language to another at various linguistic levels, is what leads to the high incidences of code switching by bilinguals. Amongst other findings discussed in this paper, we have found out that when code switching is to compensate for language difficulty, it may be viewed as interference and when it is used as a sociolinguistic tool, it is not.*

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**Keywords:** Borrowing, Code-switching, Interference, Inter-sentential, Intra-sentential morpho-syntax and sociolinguistics.

### INTRODUCTION

Interference may be viewed as the transference of elements of one language to another at various levels of linguistics which include: phonology, morphology, syntax and the orthography of the languages. Berthold *et al.* (1997) defines phonological interference as items including foreign accent such as: stress, rhyme, intonation and speech sounds from the first language influencing the second. Grammatical interference is defined as the first language influencing the second in terms of word order, use of pronouns and determinants, tense and mood. Interference at the lexical level

provides for the borrowing of words from one language and converting them to sound more natural in another and orthographic interference includes the spelling of one language altering another. Given these definitions of interference, code switching will now be defined and considered in terms of its relationship to this concept. (Skiba, 1997).

Offiong (2005) states that language contact remains the base in which speech communities experience several linguistic phenomena. These linguistic phenomena are interference, and other sociolinguistic concepts like bilingualism, code-mixing and code-switching, convergence, diffusion amongst others. All of these are viewed from the perspective that they are relatively associated with linguistic interference.

Crystal (1987) asserts that code, or language switching occurs when an individual alternates between two languages during his speech with another bilingual. A person who is bilingual may be said to be one who is able to communicate alternately to varying extent in two languages (Weinreich, 1974). This includes those who make irregular use of a second language and are able to use a second language but have for some time been dormant or those who have considerable skill in a second language. Code Switching is a practice of parties in discourse to signal changes in context by using alternative grammatical systems or subsystems or codes. The mental representation of these codes cannot be directly observed, either by analyst or by parties in interaction. Rather the analyst must observe discourse itself, and recover the salience of linguistic form as a code from its effect on discourse interaction. The approach described here considers code-switching as the practice of individuals in particular discourse settings. Therefore it cannot specify broad functions of language alternation, or define the exact nature of any code prior to interaction.

Codes emerge from interaction, and become relevant when parties to discourse treat them as such (Stroud, 1998). From Stroud (1998) view, code-switching is based strictly in conversational analysis. He seems not to be totally in agreement with this analysis. It seems clear that in order for observations about contextualizing functions of language use to have validity and reliability, they should be based on close observation of discourse. We, in as much as, we agree to some extent, ethnographic observations should be brought in, This is because of the societal involvement in the analysis. Peculiarity and social structures are also relevant in analysis like this. The Efik language is spoken in the South East Corner of Nigeria, precisely in Cross River State. The following Local Government Areas have Efik spoken as a first language – Calabar Municipality, Calabar South, Odukpani, Akpabuyo and Bakassi. It is spoken as a second language in Akamkpa and Biase in Cross River State as well as in Itu, Oron, Okobo, Uruan and some other Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State. Faraclas (1989) approximates that Efik has 360,000 speakers as first language and 2 million speakers as second language. More recently, Ethnology (2005) suggest that the first language speakers have a population of about five hundred thousand and about one million speakers as second language speakers. The language has been variously classified as a member of

the Lower-Cross group, of the Delta-Cross sub-family, which is an off-shoot of the enlarged Cross River sub-branch that is a major constitution of the Benue-Congo family of the Niger Congo phylum (Faraclas, 1989; Essien, 2000; Williamson and Blench, 2000; Mensah, 2010; Offiong and Ugot, 2012).

One of the objectives of this paper is to investigate the experience and countenance of the Efik bilingual in terms of language interference. This triggers the notion that stipulates that speakers change from one language to another in the midst of their conversation. There are a lot of reasons for this, ranging from linguistic motivation to sociolinguistic motivation. The following research questions serve as guide to carrying out our investigation:

- 1 Is language choice a strong factor for code switching?
  1. Is the bilingual's ability the reasons for code-switching occurrences in the two languages in a discourse?
  3. Is it more of situational context that causes change of codes between interlocutors or metaphorical context?
  4. Is it the lack of strong lexical content in one language that aggravate code switching?
  5. In the context of this paper, is Code-switching advantageous to the Efik language in terms of developing the language?

### Significance of the Study

Offiong (2005) asserts that language contact is usually the reason for language shift as well as the reason bilinguals code-switch. Where contact exists and there is competition, the tendency is for the stronger language to draw more speakers towards it which thereby engineers code-switching. In the community where Efik is spoken, English is spoken by everyone. Ibibio also has a strong presence thereby making Efik less 'attractive'. Parents in many families are not doing the Efik language any good as they speak mostly English with their children. Linguists like Essien (2000), (Offiong, 2005; Offiong and Mensah, 2012), Mensah (2010) have tried consciously to maintain Efik by ensuring that linguistic materials are made available. Teachers of the language are also strongly encouraged to be interested in teaching from primary through the secondary up to the tertiary level. Efik even has a better advantage when compared to languages in the same geographical domain. The reason is that some scholars like Goldie (1890) and Ward (1933) had interest in Efik language and developed its orthography as far back as the late 1800s. This situation gave Efik a dominant status deriving from the practical need to communicate along the Cross River Basin. Udoh and Okon (2008) confirm this by asserting that:

A typical example is the Efik language which had been used along the Cross River Basin as a huge lingua-franca for trade, education etc. The language had orthography, a dictionary and a full Bible translation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was uncommon in most Nigerian languages. However, it is gradually being replaced by other local languages. These languages are even being used in churches where Efik had been in use, as some kind of liturgical language.

From the above piece on the significance of study, we are determining to view the reasons for switching from language A to B and from B to A as well as to know in which of the language the switching is strongest.

### **Reasons for switching from Efik to English and English to Efik**

Code switching is an alternation between languages amongst bilinguals which take a number of different forms. The alternations may be found in sentences or phrases from both languages. Code switching is a notion that stipulates that speakers change from one language to another in the midst of their conversation. Crystal (1987) states that, there are number of possible reasons for the switching from one language to another. The first of these is the notion that a speaker may not be able to express himself in one language so switches to the others to compensate for the deficiency. As a result, the speakers may be triggered into speaking in the other language for a while. In this case, there is a level of deficiency noticeable within the bilingual speakers. Even though education was introduced to the Efik people as far as 1800 by the missionaries, the level of literacy is still below 40%. These Efik bilinguals when speaking English code switch to Efik especially when they are sure that their listeners understand Efik. Where their listeners do not understand Efik, they switch to the Nigerian pidgin. Apart from the problem of deficiency in English by the Efik bilinguals, code switching occurs when the bilinguals are upset, tired or distracted.

Secondly, switching commonly occurs when an individual wishes to express solidarity with a particular social group. Rapport is established between the speaker and the listener when the listener responds with a similar switch. This type of switching may also be used to exclude others from a conversation who does not speak the second language. Skiba (2005) gives an example of speaking a language other than English. Others in the elevator who do not speak the same language would be excluded from the conversation and a degree of comfort would exist amongst the speakers in the knowledge that not all those present in the elevator are listening to their conversation.

Skiba (2005) gives another reason for bilinguals switching as presented by Crystal (1987) as the alternation that occurs when the speaker wishes to convey his attitude to the listener. Where monolingual speakers can communicate these attitudes by means of variation in the level of formality in their speech, bilingual speakers can convey the same by code switching. Crystal (1987) suggests that where two bilingual speakers are used to conversing in a particular language, switching to the other is bound to create a special effect. These notions suggest that code switching may be used as a sociolinguistic tool by the bilingual speakers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

We are presenting the following theoretical assumptions to investigate how bilinguals function when they are code-switching. The theories help us to properly analyze the data. It also explains to us why certain phenomena are peculiar in certain situations as it concerns code-switching.

### **Sociolinguistic Think Tank Theory**

Cummin (1984) present the 'Think Tank Theory. In this think tank theory, a picture of the head was used in place of the balance theory's two bilingual balloon. The think tank theory maintain that despite the factors that the linguistic contents of the think tank retain specific L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> characteristics (that is they do not become linguistically homogenized) the same mental expertise underlies performance (namely processing of input or output) in both languages. The quantity and quality of linguistic output in both languages is an important stimulus for the growth of the total think tank theory. The think tank theory is based on the following three assumptions:

1. That, whichever language a bilingual uses, the thought that accompanies talking, reading, writing and listening comes from the same place. That underlying two languages are integrated sources of thought in form of two cylinders powered by the same engine.
2. Although the same ability underlies the two languages, precise connotations of words may be different in different languages.
3. All language skills contribute to the growth of the think tank. Speaking, listening, reading or writing in the first or second language helps the whole tank develop.

Barker (2002) summarizes the think tank theory thus:

- i. Bilingualism is viable because people have the capability to store adequately two or more languages in their mental lexicon.
- ii. Conceptual and academic skills (cognitive functioning) and educational attainment may be fed through one monolingual channel (i.e. fed in the same tank).
- iii. When one or both languages channels are externally stopped from functioning fully e.g. through motivation to learn a language or pressure to replace the home language by the majority languages, cognitive functioning and academic development may be impeded.

This theory is functional in code switching because bilinguals have the ability of code alternation. They switch points from one language to the other. Bilinguals are however, not precise when they switch from one code to another. Different bilinguals will switch at different points without any particular format. We will also look at another theory which will give us a clear-cut-mark in differentiating bilingual countenance.

### **The Syntactic Framework (Lexical Functional Grammar-LFG)**

Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG) is a linguistic theory which studies the various aspects of linguistic structure and the relations between them. Traditional LFG analyses focus on two syntactic structures. Constituent structure (C-structure) represents word order and phrasal groupings, and functional structure (f-structure) represents grammatical functions like subject and object. These structures have separate representations, but are related to each other in systematic ways (Dalrymple, 1993). Our interest has to do with constituent structure, which Essien (1990) refers to as syntactic categories.

Lexical Function Grammar is a theory of the structure of language and shows how different aspects of linguistic structure are related. As the name implies, the theory is lexical: the lexicon is richly structured, with lexical relations rather than transformations or operations on phrase structure trees as a means of capturing linguistic generalizations. It is also functional. Grammatical functions like subject and object are primitives of the theory, not defined in terms of phrase structure configuration or semantic LFG assumes that the two syntactic levels are important in the analysis of linguistic structure. Functional-structure represents abstract grammatical functions like subject and object as well as abstract features like tense and case, another level, (Constituent)-structure, represents the concrete phrasal expression of these relations, governed by language-particular constraints on word order and phrase structure. Our interest for the analysis is on the second one. This duality of syntactic representation is motivated by the different nature of these two structures both within and across languages. In analyzing the switching by bilinguals, we will closely watch tense, case and word order.

Languages vary greatly in word order and phrasal structure, and the theory of constituent structure allows for this variation within certain universally defined parameters. In contrast, all languages share the same functional vocabulary. This theory will aid us analyze the competence of bilinguals in code switching. Switchers respond to some kind of triggering. Triggering occurs when new topics are introduced in a conversation. In this case the interlocutor must be smart at using different grammatical structures of different languages. Word order is dissimilar between Efik and English simple because they are from different families. However, when triggering occurs, the bilingual will always adjust to the word order of his L<sub>1</sub>. While carrying out our analysis, we will understand how the LFG theory interprets the word order in the two languages under discourse.

### **Analysing Inter-sentential and Intra-sentential code switching**

Switches occurring at the lexical level within a sentence (Intra-sentential switches) are referred to as code mixing. On the other hand, changes over phrase or sentences (Inter-sentential switches) including tags and exclamations at either end of the sentence are called code switching (Hoffmann, 1998). The definition above tends to be at variance with the sub heading under which we are describing these switches. In as much as inter-sentential switches are viewed from the perspective of code mixing, we will analyse beyond mixing, therefore extending the notion of intra-sentential to code switching.

Code switching is a speech style in which fluent bilinguals move in and out of two (or more) languages as illustrated in the Efik – English examples below:

- 1 (a) The girls ema kut mme ndiye mkparawa odo  
‘The girls had seen those handsome young men’
- (b) \*The girls had kut mme ndiye mkparawa odo  
‘The girls had seen those handsome young men’

Code switching at sentential boundaries is generally referred to as inter-sentential code switching, while switching below sentential boundaries, as illustrated in (1) is called intra-sentential code switching. It is necessary to note that code switching at some boundaries is licit, as in (1a), while switching at boundaries is not, as in (1b).

Poplack (1980) proposed constraints which govern the interaction of two language systems. He proposed the Equivalence Constraint and the Free Morpheme Constraint defined below:

The Equivalence Constraint: Codes will tend to be switched at points where the surface structures of the languages map into each other. The Free Morpheme Constraint: A switch may occur at any point in the discourse at which it is possible to make a surface constituent cut and still retain a free morpheme.

The idea of Equivalence Constraints is that code switches are allowed within constituents so long as the word order requirements of both languages are met at S-structure. Free Morpheme Constraints on the other hand tell us that a code switch may not occur at the boundary of a bound morpheme. The lexical functional grammar theory gives us this latitude to understand the constraints bilinguals pass through in the process of switching.

To ensure the effective use of code switching as already mentioned, there are however two main restrictions as developed by Poplack (1980), cited by Skiba (2005). The first of these is the free Morpheme Constraint. This constraint suggests that “a speaker may not switch language between a word and its ending unless the word is pronounced as if it were in the language of the ending” (Cook, 1991). Using the assumptions of the LFG, we are able to understand the consequences as regard the constraint. We can illustrate this in Efik with the instances of morphological switches as it concerns the following partial and entire phrase.

2. Nwan mi odrop mi  
‘It is my wife that dropped me’
2. Enye iki playke ball  
‘He did not play ball’
3. Edem iki benefitke ke mbubehe odo  
‘Edem did not benefit from that business’

From the morphological switching above, we observed that the English verbs introduced in the two sentences had the ‘-ke’ suffix attached to them. ‘-ke’ in Efik is a negation morpheme which is morphologically attached to “play” and “benefit”. The English words are morphologically adapted to Efik. This also applies to “odrop” meaning – he dropped. This is viewed from the perspective of intra-sentential code switching and it is captured using the LFG theory.

Also equivalence constraints which is characterized by the notion that “the switch can come at a point in the sentence where it does not violate the grammar of either language” (Cook, 1991). The illustration of the equivalence constraints of an Efik/English switch with the suggestions that

switches such as ‘a house eyen edenowo’ or ‘ufok eyen edenowo’ (intention is a house boy, which is translated as ‘eyen ufok’) is odd.

The first two examples are unlikely as they are wrong in Efik. Efik and English do not share the construction in which the verb is followed by the object. These examples can be found in both inter-sentential and intra-sentential code switching. On this basis, constraints provide a mechanism whereby two languages may be integrated together without causing interference in the conservation between two bilingual speakers.

### **Analysis of the Extent of Code Switching**

English has had contact with Efik since the 1800. Changes have happened within the two languages because of this contact. Efik – English bilinguals are opportuned to be exposed to these languages. These bilinguals acquire their mother tongue from birth and perfect this language acquisition as they grow up. Depending on the house hold, some families introduce a second language very early even before the child starts schools, yet others wait until the child comes in contact with the second language which is English in schools. Because of the values of our society, English came into the system with its culture and its different accent. The child acquiring the English language as much as possible imbibes these culture and tries to emulate these different accents.

Because of this strong influence of English, educated Efik bilinguals show traces of using both their mother tongue (Efik) and a second language (English). In general discourse amongst bilinguals, one will notice the admixture of codes, and at other times, complete switch to English. The think tank theory obviously constitute the superstrate source of switching, making it easily analyzable. In this case, borrowing usually takes place from Efik to English. [Chimhundu \(1993\)](#) remarks that major characteristics of borrowing include the adoption and adaptation of terms through integrating them firmly in linguistic structure of the receiving language. Loan word adaptation implies that speakers will show faithfulness to the source word and at the same time try to make the loanwords conform to their native segmental inventory, phono-tactic constraints and morphological system ([Kenstowicz and Suchato, 2006](#); [Mensah, 2011](#)).

As we looked through letters written in Efik over time, we realized that all addresses of these letters were written in English instead of Efik. Examples of these switches are:

5. 7 Douglas Avenue  
Off Atekong Drive  
State Housing  
Calabar  
20/08/06

Instead of:

6. Anam ufok itiaba  
ke Efak Douglas



ke ewaghade ekpon Atekon  
ke itie ufok kofamen, obio Efik  
anam usen edip ke ofion itiaba ke isua  
tosin iba ye itiokiet.

In these examples above, we realize that it is more convenient to write in English instead of Efik, because Efik addresses are more cumbersome. In written discourses like letter writing addresses, the code switching consist of 100%.

Code switching is a speech style in which fluent bilinguals move in and out of two (or more) languages as illustrated in the Efik – English examples below:

- 7(a) The students ema ekut titia mmo  
(b) “The students had seen their teacher”  
8(a) \*The students had kut titia mmo  
(b) “The students had seen their teachers”

We notice that the second code switched sentence is incorrect because code switching has what is referred to as sentential boundaries. In the incorrect sentence, we noticed that the code-switching at some boundaries are illicit while it appeared correct in the first sentence. Looking at example 7(a), we notice the extent of code-switching in normal conversations amongst bilinguals. These illustrations outline that code switching consist of 84% single word switches, 10% phrase switches and 6% clause switches. The analysis above expresses adequately, the enquires earlier put forward in questions 1-4. The validity addresses the questions which actually elicit our inferences from the theories used.

### **Norms of Code Switching**

A varying degree of code switching may also be used between bilingual conversationalists depending on the person being addressed, such as family, friends, officials and superiors and depending on the location such as church, home or place of work (Skiba, 1997). The implication here is that there are patterns which are followed reflecting when it is appropriate to code-switch with regard to addressee and location. These patterns are the established norms for that particular social group and serve to ensure appropriate language use. Milroy (1987) is a further proponent of this proposal with the observation that bilingual speakers attributed different social values to different codes or languages. Since a different social value is associated with each code, the speaker considers use of one code more appropriate than the other with different interlocutors. We present examples of perceived appropriate use of a given language over another with regard to the conversational participant.

**Table-1.** English sociolinguistic features in the oral discourse produced by combined group of Efik-English bilinguals

	Sentence with Switching of Codes	Gloss (English)	Standard Efik
1	Nyòm ndí <u>watch show</u> ódò	I want to watch that show.	Nyòm di ká nké sé sé éwútdé ké ánwá mbré
2	Ówódò édí a <u>very big man</u>	That person is a very big man.	Ówódó édi átá ákwá ówò.
3	<u>Spirit</u> mi imáhá sè nkútdé	My spirit does not like what I have just seen.	Ésìt mi imáhá sé nkútdé émi
4	úfòk mmo édí <u>storey building.</u>	Their house is a storey building.	Úfòk mmo édi Úfòk éyòñ.
5	Nyòm ndí yòñ, <u>You know</u>	I want to go, you know (emphasis).	Nyòm ndí yòñ
6	Údíhé <u>serious</u>	You are not serious.	úfìóké sé ánamdé
7	Ídém fó? <u>Fine</u>	How are you? Fine.	Idem fó? ọsọñ
8	Nkpọ émi ndọhọdé fi émi, <u>you won't understand</u>	This thing I am telling you, you won't understand.	Nkpọ émi ndọhọdé fi émi, idi wáńáké fi

In the above Table, we see code-switching as occurring naturally and unobtrusively such that it is not an interference to language but rather a verbal mechanism of presenting an individuals social standing with regard to a particular conversational participant. As such, code-switching performs a sociolinguistic function for the Efik bilinguals.

We can consider code switching as it relates to language acquisition. In doing this, the theories discussed earlier are postulated to show how an individual attains near language perfection and these will now be outlined. Skiba (2005) considers (Chomsky, 1972; Chomsky, 1975; Chomsky, 1979) assertions, where he suggests that language acquisition takes place as the brain matures and exposure to the appropriate language is obtained. This aligns with the Think Tank theory of Cummin (1984). Chomsky also suggests that people are aided by innate universal language structures and as children learn, they realize how to express the underlying universal structure according to their particular culture. This lends credence to language development when students are exposed to cultural elements required to express the universal structure appropriate to the cultural and social requirements of the individual. This biological theory is not accepted by behaviours which are examples of operant conditioning, as advocated by Skiba (1997). Behaviourists argue that individuals are reinforced by their own speech which matches the reinforcement of providers of affection during childhood. Barker (2002) summary of the think tank theory thus explains the credence to language development and interpret the innate ability of Efik bilinguals.

### Code-Switching As a Means of Language Development

Code-switching could be a bilingual countenance that is elicited by some level of inadequacies of one or both of the interlocutors. While a conversation is on, the bilinguals switch codes from time to time depending on so many factors – it could be the level of education, exposure, environment

amongst others. There is always a disruptive tendency for a listener especially when the speaker cannot express himself adequately or the first language (Efik) lacks suitable lexicon (scientific lexical items) for the interlocutors to borrow from. These borrowing from the second language enriches the first language. This tendency provides an opportunity for language development. Skiba (2005) maintains that “language development takes place through samples of language which are appropriate and code-switching may be signalling the need for provision of appropriate samples”. He further says that, “the listeners in this case, are able to provide translation into the second language, thus providing learning and developing activity”. This, he says in turn, “will allow for a reduced amount of switching and less subsequent interference as time progresses”. These principles may also be applied in the second language. Examples of language development from the perspective of Efik developing from English are found in the lexical items listed below:

9. Efik	English Gloss
Tumbit	Tumbler
Akrasi	Glass
Brankid	Blanket
Soop	Soap
Tiande	Candle
Midion	Million
Doya	Lawyer
Ben	Pen

The above Efik listed words have become integrated into the Efik lexicon. This has been so because of the switches of the speakers over a period of time. Research question 5 is adequately answered here. Also the Think Tank Theory which views the stimulus for growth captures this aspect of language development.

Cook (1991) asserts that code-switching may be integrated into the activities used for the teaching of a second language. At beginners’ level, students may use second language for obtaining information from materials, such as a trained brochure or a phone message to answer comprehensive questions in the first language. At advance stages, the student may be required to research on a topic and provide a report in the first language. This approach is one which uses code- switching as a foundation of the development of a second language learner who can stand between the two languages and use whichever is most appropriate to the situation, rather than becoming an imitation native speaker (Cook, 1991).

As we discuss the findings, it is necessary to state that the outcome of this study portrays the experience and countenance of the Efik bilingual in terms of language interference. This interference is as a result language contact. We looked at it from two axis: the sociolinguistic ambience and the morphosyntactic perspective, using two theories to present the framework which were the Sociolinguistic Think Tank Theory and the syntactic framework (Lexical Functional

Grammar-LFG). The light of these theories aided us accept the fact that code-switching is a countenance of interference. We used the qualitative research method which is a combination of research principles using unstructured forms of data collection and these were (i) Participant Observation and (ii) Case Study. These methods accounted for the reasons for switching from Efik to English by the bilinguals and also while analyzing inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching.

In carrying out the survey, we realized that code-switching allows a speaker to convey attitude and other emotions using a method available to those who are bilinguals and again serves the advantage of the speaker, much like bolding or underlining in a written text to emphasize points. Utilizing the second language, then, allows the Efik bilingual speakers to increase the impact of their speech and use it in an effective manner. In the findings also, the results showed that code-switching is a behavioral phenomenon. Behavior and attitude of the interlocutors gave the reason for certain switch patterns as found in the study. Interference, borrowing, free morpheme constraints and equivalence constraints accounted for the results that was noticed in this paper. Also language development is another area that this work has exposed through code-switching.

## CONCLUSION

From the above discussions, it may be concluded that code switching is not language interference on the basis that it supplements speech where it is used due to an inability of expression. Code switching provides continuity in speech rather than presenting interference in language, in our case, Efik benefiting from English. The sociolinguistic benefits have also been identified as a means of communicating solidarity, or affiliation to a particular social group, whereby code switching should be viewed from the perspective of providing a linguistic advantage rather than an obstruction to communication.

Again, if we view code switching from the teaching perspective, it can be seen as language interference. In this case, we determined language usage considering extra individual and extra linguistic purposes, or social needs, taking a 'socio-functional approach to study Efik and English'. However from another perspective, code switching means that the two languages are kept separate and distinct which creates a barrier to interference. This is on the basis that if an individual code-switches, he will try to make up his own variations of the words he is unable to correctly say, thus preventing interference at a phonological level.

Code-switching may be viewed as an extension to language for bilingual speakers rather than an interference and from another perspective it may be viewed as interference, depending on the situation and context in which it occurs. This conclusion is drawn from the notions that switching occur when an Efik speaker of English needs to compensate for some difficulty, express solidarity, convey an attitude, or show social respect (Skiba, 1997). Finally, we can conclude that when code-

switching is to compensate for language difficulty, it may be viewed as interference and when it is used as a sociolinguistic tool, it is not.

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