An Autoethnographic Exploration of Code-switching as a Tool for Identity Negotiation: Reflections of a Nigerian Postgraduate Student

by Airemionkhale Esther Omonigho

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AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF CODE-SWITCHING AS A TOOL FOR IDENTITY NEGOTIATION: REFLECTIONS OF A NIGERIAN POSTGRADUATE STUDENT

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AIREMIONKHALE ESTHER OMONIGHO
220194286

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ABSTRACT

In this autoethnographic study, I explore the role of code-switching in my identity negotiation process across academic settings in Nigeria, Brazil, and the UK. I discuss how I subconsciously and consciously adapt my discourse to conform to the perceived expectations of my audience, using British-like English as a means to enhance communication effectiveness, establish my academic identity, and gain acceptance within the environment. I also explore the conflict and hierarchy of identity experienced in relation to Nigerian English and "proper English", shedding light on the complexity of language attitudes and the influence of educational contexts. This study provides Nigerians (in the country and diaspora), international audiences and the international academic community valuable insights into the phenomenon of code-switching and the complex interplay between language, identity, and social factors.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, there has been a notable increase in international student mobility in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, and Australia (Glass and Crus, 2023). For instance, as of September 2022, the UK Home Office granted 463,315 study visas to international students worldwide, with China leading the pack with 151,690 students for the 2021/2022 academic year, followed by Nigeria at third place with 44,195 students (Universities UK, 2023). For students moving to the UK, English serves as the common language for these diverse international students, acting as a lingua franca, influencing the linguistic landscape in the UK (Yoon, 2013; Abrar-ul-Hassan, 2021). While the shift towards English is expected for speakers of distinct language varieties, there has been an unexpected shift towards a British-like variety of English among speakers of other varieties, such as Nigerian English speakers (Mueller and Mair, 2013).

Drawing on Bourdieu's (1991) notion of the symbolic power of language, this autoethnographic project explores my perception of Nigerian English and my motivations for code-switching as an educated Nigerian English speaker in intranational and international academic settings. The study recognises the potential impact of linguistic changes on education, especially in the internationalisation of higher education. Previous research has shown that English plays a crucial role in quantifying intellectual development and academic performance in international education (Salamonson et al., 2008; Halic et al., 2009; Tenney et al., 2020; Azizullah and Shah, 2023). Areas such as academic performance, instruction models, academic and language support, and policies in universities make evident how language shapes individual identity.

The dissertation comprises five chapters, with the first providing an overview of the study's aims and significance. The second chapter will review the literature on language and identity, establishing the theoretical and contextual basis for the research project. The third chapter will delve into the research methodology. The fourth chapter will present, analyse, and discuss the project's findings, while the final chapter will draw conclusions from the research and make recommendations for future studies.

1.1. Background to The Study

The Cambridge Dictionary (2023) defines "English" as both the English language and the people from England, aligning with Tabouret-Keller's (2017) view of language as a means of communication and an influencer of identity and belongingness. A person's language can impact their social perception, potential for success, and prospects (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Kramsch, 2021). English serves as the official language in over 40 countries and is the national language in economically advanced nations like Britain and the United States, making it a key language in the contemporary world of globalisation (Hjarvard, 2017; Lønsmann and Mortensen, 2018; Badwan, 2021). However, there is ongoing debate regarding whether the term "global language" encompasses all English varieties or only those from economically dominant nations. This uncertainty calls for a reconceptualisation of "standard" English, its status, and its value compared to other English varieties, such as Nigerian English.

The spread of the English language to different territories has been facilitated by various factors, including commerce, religion, education, and colonialism (King, 2020). Nonetheless, the nativeness and standard English modelling depend heavily on the linguistic practices of a few economically and politically advanced English-speaking Western countries. Kachru's (1985) classification of World Englishes into inner, outer, and expanding circles (see Section 2.4) has been pivotal in understanding the movement of these varieties. Similarly, Kachru's (1997) concentric model remains a reference point for theories and debates on the appropriateness of English varieties, speaker identity, and the implications of language discrimination in academic settings (Kachru, 1997; A. Al-Mutairi, 2020; Flores, 2020). In this study, the focus is on Nigerian English and its relationship with the British academic setting. The aspects of language discrimination, appropriateness, and code-switching will be further explored through my speech and identity formation as a Nigerian English speaker.

1.2. Purpose of The Study

English in Nigeria emerged as a result of colonialism and has coexisted with indigenous languages, leading to the development of Nigerian English (Adamo, 2007; Agbo and Plag,

2020). As the country's official language, Nigerian English holds significant linguistic capital, influencing access to other forms of capital within Nigeria (Okunrinmeta, 2014; Faraclas, 2021; Egbokhare, 2021). In international contexts, accessing social capital through linguistic capital intersects with identity. This study explores Nigerian English speakers' linguistic capital and identity negotiation process in different academic settings.

Despite English being a global language, Nigerian English does not receive the same social and economic capital as other global English varieties, leading to less favourable perceptions of it in international settings (Cunningham, 2012; Xu et al., 2022). The 'nigerianisation' of the language may contribute to its perceived lack of intelligibility internationally, affecting the language behaviours of educated Nigerians in international contexts. This study investigates English-based language rights by examining the impact of "othering" and the perceived lack of *nativeness* on Nigerian English speakers' self-perception and identity construction. In this study, I explore the concept of race, nativeness, and capital through my own experiences and identity negotiation within various English varieties and contexts.

In an academic setting, a linguistic identity crisis may exist. Hence, speakers of non-Western English may adapt their English to gain capital similar to that of Western English speakers, often through code-switching. Code-switching becomes a crucial tool in identity negotiation for postcolonial English speakers in academic settings. In an international academic setting, code-switching may also serve as a means of identification and non-identification, thereby impacting the academic identity of a non-Western English-speaking student. Although code-switching is a common practice, it is important to mention that the opinions on code-switching may vary between Nigerians in the country and those in the diaspora, given the different contexts and stakes in international settings. In this study, I qualitatively explore the role of code-switching in the identity negotiation process of an educated Nigerian English speaker studying in a UK higher education setting. The purpose is to gain insights into how code-switching influences identification/non-identification among non-Western English-speaking students.

1.3. Research Questions

Based on the research purpose, this project aims to answer the following question: What role does code-switching play in the identity negotiation of a Nigerian English-speaking student in

diverse academic settings? To address this research aim effectively, the primary question has been refined into the following subquestions, which will guide the Literature Review and Methodology of this study:

- How do I perceive my English in a variety of academic settings?
- What factors motivate me to code-switch in an international academic context?

1.4. Importance of The Study

Sociolinguists, as noted by Nelson (2011, p.1), focus on how language functions within a society. Nigerian society has witnessed debates regarding the intelligibility of Nigerian English both nationally and internationally (Adamo, 2007; Oreoluwa, 2015; Okoro, 2017; Muller and Mair, 2023). Despite English being widely used in Nigeria, Nigerian English has yet to attain a standard variety like American or Canadian English (Adamo, 2007; Akinlotan, 2020). The importance of this study lies in exploring the role of code-switching in the identity negotiation of a Nigerian English-speaking student in various academic settings.

Formal instruction in British-model English from nursery to graduate level is prevalent in Nigeria due to its colonial history with Britain (Okunrinmeta, 2014). However, due to the influence of native languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa, Nigerian English is sometimes perceived as unintelligible in international settings (Cunningham, 2012; Are, 2016; Egbokhare, 2021). Although intelligibility is a broad concept, the idea that the responsibility of being heard and understood in English lies with the speaker has been culturally passed down to Nigerian English speakers. This perception of unintelligibility can lead Nigerian English speakers, including myself, to code-switch to a "more global" or "more standard" Western variety of English, motivated by factors like marginalisation beliefs, postcolonial insecurities, or bilingual empathy (Higgins, 2009; Myers, 2020; Chen and Fang, 2022; Stewart, 2022).

One significance of this study is its examination of a social phenomenon that sheds light on motivations for language behaviour and identity reconstruction within Nigerian society. Additionally, this research contributes to the expanding studies on World Englishes, addressing the notions of intelligibility and modelling among English varieties (Nelson, 2011). It

challenges the existence of a global model of English, which may not represent the cultural and national identity of other English varieties.

In academic contexts, speakers of non-standard varieties, who consider themselves native speakers, may face proficiency tests against a single global native standard, affecting their social and personal self-perception (Giles and Ogay, 2007). The study's exploration of language discrimination, othering, and the impacts of unaccepted nativeness on postcolonial African English-speaking international students in higher education is novel and relevant. It seeks to contribute insights that could inform international education policy and improve the dynamics in English-speaking institutional settings, especially for *native* African English speakers.

In the context of limited research on the impacts of globalisation on Nigerian English and its influence on speakers, this study's focus on code-switching and identity within Englishes is valuable for the literature on language and identity, raciolinguistics, and World Englishes (see Section 2.2.3 and Section 2.4). Moreover, the autoethnographic methodology employed in this research provides a starting point for further exploration into code-switching and its effects on academic identity in higher education.

1.5. Researcher's Positionality

I, the researcher, am a 24-year-old brown-skinned Nigerian woman, the fourth of five children in a middle-class family. I received my primary, secondary, and most of my undergraduate education in Nigeria, where English served as the language of instruction. Over seven years, I have gained experience as a language teacher, teaching international language learners French, Portuguese, and English to international language learners. This exposure has provided me with a relatively good educational background and international experience. Currently, I am pursuing postgraduate studies in the UK.

As a Nigerian studying in the UK, I frequently encounter new people, mainly British individuals. After conversations, many people comment on my English, remarking that, "Your English is really good" and "You speak like a native speaker." However, when I reveal that I am from Nigeria, I receive reactions like "Wow, you don't look Nigerian" and "You don't speak like a Nigerian." These encounters leave me uncertain about the meanings behind these

comments. I wonder if it is a positive thing that I do not sound Nigerian, what my perception of "Nigerian English" is, and why I do not sound Nigerian. It highlights an identity crisis where I question whether I am considered a native speaker or merely a "proper" English speaker.

As the researcher, I am an insider in this context, having firsthand experience with language and identity-related issues. This self-awareness guided my choice of methodology, as I recognised that code-switching and its role in identity performance and negotiation can be a sensitive topic. I selected autoethnography as my research methodology because it allows me to actively engage with my subject matter by critically reflecting on my code-switching and identity-related experiences and analysing them through theory.

In addition to my personal experiences, my interest in researching language and identity is rooted in my observations of negative attitudes towards code-switching among Nigerians, both within the country and in the diaspora, in international academic contexts. While researchers have recommended attunement or code-switching as a strategy for international intelligibility, I believe examining the potential costs and implications of such attunement for Nigerian English speakers is essential. This research, while serving as a form of sense-making for me as the researcher, ultimately aims to benefit a broader international and Nigerian audience, both within and outside the diaspora, by providing insights into the factors driving code-switching in English international academic contexts.

Chapter Summary
In this introductory chapter, I outlined the research background, purpose, primary research questions and the significance of the study. My positionality was also presented, highlighting their personal experiences and interest in the topic.

The next chapter will delve into a theoretical and contextual examination of the subject matter. Key concepts, such as code-switching and identity, will be discussed in detail. Additionally, the Nigerian socio-linguistic context will be explored, along with an analysis of models of World Englishes. This chapter aims to provide a solid foundation for understanding the topic of enquiry and set the stage for the subsequent chapters' in-depth exploration.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. An Overview of The Relationship between Language and Identity

In the context of language and identity, an individual's social and economic status can be discerned through their language use. As Tabouret-Keller (2017, p. 317) suggests, a single linguistic feature can indicate a person's group membership, making language a reflection of social status and inequalities within social groups. As an educated Nigerian woman, my language, behaviour, and race express my identity in different contexts. Language mediates identity, representing self-representation and how others identify me (Auer, 1998; Gandy, 1998; Myers, 2020). For example, I was once in a TV interview where the presenter could not pronounce my last name, and I thought, how could the Nigerian host not know how to pronounce my name? I identified the host as Nigerian because of their last name and the Nigerian English they spoke.

The study of the linguistic aspect of identity originated in the 1980s, focusing on how individuals negotiate their identities within various groups (Edwards, 2009; Tabouret-Keller, 2017). As previous research demonstrates, as social beings, humans convey their affiliations to specific groups through their speech (Norton, 1997; Ellwood, 2008; Tabouret-Keller, 2017; Myers, 2020). In the domain of education, investigations have explored personal and social identities and how language serves as an index for constructing academic identity in multilingual educational settings (Nguyen, 2018; Jahan and Hamid, 2019; Brutt-Griffler and Jang, 2022). In contexts like Africa and Asia, where multilingualism is prevalent, studies suggest that code-switching among students facilitates learning, empowers learners, and boosts self-confidence (Bilgin, 2016; Bhatti et al., 2018). Additionally, scholars have delved into how language practices enable individuals to negotiate and reconstruct their identities within hegemonic societies (Omoniyi, 2008; Faez, 2011; Myer, 2020).

Building upon the existing language and identity literature, this research examines the role of code-switching in reconstructing and negotiating the academic identity of an educated Nigerian English speaker studying in the UK higher education setting. This chapter will review the

current literature on identity, code-switching, and the linguistic context in Nigeria within the framework of World Englishes.

2.1. Identity

Identity is a multifaceted and complex concept, interpreted and defined differently across various fields. Etymologically, identity emanates from the Latin word "*idem*", denoting the quality of being the same (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). However, this definition is simplistic and unilateral. Clark (2013) suggests that identity encompasses similarities, uniqueness, and differences at both personal and social levels. The characteristics that create a sense of belonging to one social group may lead to non-identification within another.

McCune (2021) views identity as an overlapping continuous interaction between personal and collective values. To McCune (2021, p. 22), identity is presented as social, performative, multifaceted and 'potentially in tension'. Resonating with Edwards' (2009) notion of identity, a person's identification cannot be entirely distinct from the collective norm. Additionally, identity is neither fixed nor homogenous. The self is constantly recreated to find its place in the collective. These authors emphasise the intersecting and conflicting qualities of identity.

Norton (1997) proposes the personal as the centre of meaning-making and negotiation. Norton (1997, p. 410) posits that identity is "how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future." According to Norton (1997), individuals have sufficient power and agency to construct the self within a wider society. Parallel to Norton's (1997) views, identity is influenced by social, geographical, and temporal factors (Omoniyi, 2008; Evans, 2016). While some scholars believe that identity is individually constructed, it is primarily influenced by social factors such as the desire for affiliation or recognition. Individuals navigate their various identity facets through multiple means, including language behaviour and linguistic competence (Omoniyi, 2008; Myers, 2020). As noted by Evans (2016, p.4), language is a double-edged sword; it can either constrain or liberate identity through the meaning it conveys.

Drawing from social identity and poststructuralist theories, previous research has observed that social factors significantly influence individual identity (Norton, 1997; Pavlenko and

Blackledge, 2004; Omoniyi and White, 2008). Theoretical frameworks, such as Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004, p.21) three-type identity framework, propose that identity can be imposed, assumed, or negotiated within a specific context. While some identities are given, others are taken, and some are contested. Every individual possesses imposed and assumed identities, such as race and gender. However, this study primarily focuses on negotiated identity.

According to Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004, p.21), negotiable identity may be contested by groups and individuals in a particular place and time. Identity may be negotiated through linguistic and metalinguistic resources. Sociolinguists and psycholinguists recognise the impacts of language practices on mediating identity (Omoniyi, 2008). Code-switching is one of the ways identity is negotiated through linguistic and symbolic representation within a context (Myers, 2020). The process of identity negotiation could be associated with an individual's response to their environment based on internal and external factors. The context explored in this study is academia. Therefore, the study centres on identity negotiation within an academic context.

2.1.1. Academic Identity

It has already been established that identity can be personal or collective. The academic context is part of the social; thus, academic identity may be categorised as a subset of an individual's social identity. McCune (2021) defined academic identity as a set of powerful narratives 'about' an individual constructed and reconstructed over time through social, cultural and historical processes. McCune (2021), by using the word 'about', may have unknowingly conceptualised academic identity as beyond the control of the personal. McCune (2021) shifts the focus from the self to the collective other. On the other hand, Ching (2021) views academic identity as the sense of self and belonging developed within the academic context. It entails an individual's perception of themselves as scholars, peers, researchers, or students and the values and attitudes they associate with their academic roles and performance. The author establishes the role and influence the self has in constructing how it is perceived. Although McCune (2021) and Ching (2021) conceptualised academic identity from two perspectives, both opinions are applicable and valid. An individual's sense of belonging and performance in an academic context is constructed through their perception of themselves and how others perceive them.

Omoniyi (2008, p.15) pointed out that an individual's social identity is determined by membership of social classes, 'which reflects differences in social roles and statuses, access to and control of means of production'. Academic identity is shaped through interactions with tutors, peers and the broader community (Ramsay-Brijball, 2004; Halic et al., 2009; ALKhatib et al., 2021). As the poststructuralist notion of identity posits, academic identity is complex, fluid and heterogeneous, like other forms of identities (Omoniyi, 2008).

This autoethnographic study explores how an educated Nigerian uses code-switching to reconstruct identity in academic contexts. As such, the term 'educated Nigerian' would refer to a Nigerian who has completed primary, secondary and university education. This conceptualisation responds to Udofot's (2004), a Nigerian author, classification of Nigerian English speakers. Using formal education as a parameter and international intelligibility and social acceptability as variables, Udofot (2004) proposed that the varieties of Nigerian English are non-standard, standard and sophisticated. According to Udofot (2004), the non-standard variety is used by students from the primary school level to university undergraduates and primary school teachers. Importantly, a vast difference exists between Udofot's (2004) non-standard Nigerian English variety and Nigerian Pidgin English (Egbokhare, 2021). Although this study has no room for such discussions, I have extensively discussed this in a previous essay (Airemionkhale, 2023, Unpublished MA Assignment).

Udofot (2004) suggests that speakers of the standard variety are reasonably fluent and mostly university graduates and lecturers, while the sophisticated variety may be considered the "elite" language. Udofot (2004) asserted that it is spoken by lecturers of the English language and those who have lived in "mother tongue areas". It would be appropriate to assume that mother tongue areas are "native-speaking countries" such as UK and USA. According to Udofot (2004), the higher the level of education and international exposure, the more standard and proper Nigerian English is. However, it discards the possibility that each language variety or dialect serves its speech community's communal and individual needs (Pennycook, 2010; Egbokhare, 2021). Although this categorisation helps understand English varieties within Nigeria, the model needs to be revised, as it was published almost 20 years ago and does not account for the language exposure provided by globalisation and social networks. For instance, in 2004, I was a primary school student, and I spoke Udofot's (2004) variety of standard

English because both my parents were teachers, English was the home language, the school language expectation was formal British-model English, and we had access to television and private education. My family was not an exception then; numerous families had similar access conditions. As a postgraduate student in the UK with deep linguistic knowledge, I would prefer to be classified as an educated Nigerian who speaks Nigerian English; whether standard or sophisticated is unimportant.

2.1.2. Language as Capital in Academic Settings

Interaction, as an influential factor in forming academic identity, is achieved through language use. As Bourdieu (1991) and Kramsch (2021) posit, language is symbolic in driving identity and access to social capital. In a multilingual hegemonic educational context, language can be used to impose, assume or negotiate identity based on the historical and cultural background of the language and its speaker (Ramsay-Brijball, 2004; Schneider, 2007; Halic et al., 2009; Myers, 2020). A student's language may influence their experiences and perspectives within the academic landscape (Halic et al., 2009).

Previous studies have discussed the relationship between the student's home language, the language of instruction and academic identity in higher education among non-native English speakers in international education (Lorenzo, 2021; Lorenzo, 2023). In a phenomenological study in the United States, Halic et al. (2009) investigated the impact of language on students' perception of their academic identity. The researchers interviewed eight international graduate students with native languages other than English. Their findings suggested that language and cultural identity impact the participants' academic experience and performance in international education contexts. The researchers reported that participants explained that when speaking English, they were worried that they sounded "wrong, unintelligent and non-authentic" (Halic et al., 2009, p. 84, 88). The researchers noted that, among non-native English speakers, language proficiency is how they construct their identity and perceive their academic performance. In the study, no reference indicated participants' ungrammatical language use, yet their perception of their English is negative. According to Flores (2015; 2020), language proficiency could be conceptualised within raciolinguistic ideologies, which argue that native listeners focus on the speaker's identity rather than the language use. Although Halic et al. (2009) set out to explore the language, culture and academic identity of non-native English

speakers in the higher education context, it fails to consider linguistic imperialism and discrimination as an underlying cause of negative attitudes towards non-native language use. My research draws on the evident relationship between language use and identity construction established within Halic et al.'s study.

Drawing on a poststructuralist theory of language use and identity, Yoon (2013) examined the process of identity negotiation between native and non-native English speakers in classroom discussions in an English-speaking international education setting. Through analysis of interviews and questionnaires, the study showed evidence of language-based marginalisation and power relation in the classroom. In this study, Yoon (2013, p.56) criticises the dichotomous notion of English ownership, arguing that native and non-native English speakers use language as a social practice. Yoon (2013), through the sampling process, explored the views of both domestic and international students. As Norton (1997) and Omoniyi (2008) proposed, the findings in Yoon's (2013) study suggested that power relations exist between native and non-native language use, and there is a need for communication accommodation. Although the author questioned the non/native speaker binary, the study did not attempt to clarify who should be identifiable as a native or non-native speaker. Even though the native students in the study all have hyphenated identities, e.g. Caucasian-American and Korean-American, they do not represent the African English speaker; thus establishing the debate on the nativeness of English and the disregard for the postcolonial varieties of English. Yoon's (2013) findings of the existence of power relations among native and non-native English speakers in an English-speaking context shape my assumption that external factors such as language bias impacts a speaker's perception of their language.

Goodman (2019) conducted ethnographic research on the perception of the English speech and academic skills of Nigerian and Ukranian students in an English-medium Ukrainian university. This author observed the students' presentation delivery and collected teachers' and students' perspectives on students' academic skills and English proficiency. Although Ukrainian teachers perceived the Nigerian students as native speakers possessing "perfect" presentation skills, many Ukrainian students in the study share an opposing view because of the Nigerian "loud" and "fast" speaking style (Goodman, 2019, p.5-6). Through a raciolinguistic lens, it is evident that students hold racial ideas on what *"proper"* should sound like. Furthermore, the study contradicts studies that claimed Nigerian English is unintelligible in international academic

settings (see Cunningham, 2012). Halic et al. (2009) and Yoon's (2013) research gives insight into the importance of English as an academic capital and intelligence scale in international education contexts. However, unlike Goodman's (2019) findings, their studies do not represent the perspectives and experiences of English-speaking African international students who consider themselves English native speakers.

As raciolinguistic research advances, very few studies investigate Nigerian English in an English-speaking international academic context from a raciolinguistic stance. Unfortunately, a minimal number of the existing raciolinguistic studies were done by Nigerian linguistics scholars. Nigerian scholars continue to focus on how indigenous Nigerian languages cause English to deviate from the British norm and how education can salvage the contamination (Opara, 2016; Okoro, 2017). My study fills the knowledge gap through an extensive theory-based autoethnography enquiry.

2.1.3. Identity Negotiation: The Process of Identification and Non-identification

Scholars have agreed that individual and social identities are ever-changing (Norton, 1997; Ellwood, 2008; Edwards, 2009; Tabouret-Keller, 2017). However, the essentialism notion of identity suggests that a fixed nature of identity is the basis of negotiation (Omoniyi, 2008; Zilliacus, 2017). The fixed conception of self could be perceived or identifiable by others, whether as gender, ethnicity, language or race. In a sociocultural setting, the self strives to situate itself as an insider or outsider as the situation demands. As Ting-Toomey (2017, p. 1) clearly explained, negotiation in identity could be understood as the role of verbal and non-verbal message exchanges in 'maintaining, threatening, or uplifting the various sociocultural group-based, relational role, or unique personal-based identity images' in context. In this research project, the process through which an individual or group reconstruct their role, positioning and affiliation within a domain will be referred to as identity negotiation.

Identity negotiation involves a range of strategies and approaches individuals employ to reconcile, integrate, or assert their identities. As identity is multifaceted, individuals actively engage with and navigate self, particularly when faced with conflicts arising from multiple social roles, contexts, or societal expectations. Additionally, Omoniyi (2008) argues that there is a hierarchy of identities at an individual level. Thus, individuals may negotiate their identity

based on a hierarchical scale in a conflicting context. For example, as a Nigerian student in a hypothetical academic discussion with other Nigerians, Chinese, Indonesians and British, I may need to negotiate my identity through my linguistic resources.

According to Omoniyi (2008, p. 18), relational factors are significant in conceptualising identity. In this study, identity is examined in terms of language use and language behaviour. Thus, I conceptualise the process of negotiating and performing identity as code-switching. Although code is viewed as a linguistic phenomenon, it is not limited to verbal language use. As Tabouret-Keller (2017, p. 315) pointed out, 'Language acts are identity acts. For example, the language behaviour of Nigerians reflects their cultural practices, history and identities. Identity is negotiated to denote affiliation and benefit from the capital available to a group through membership. It is a way of evading or establishing otherness. When there is a competing identity, an individual may stress sameness, difference or neutrality. My conception of code-switching is based on the raciolinguistic stance of language use and behaviour of Nigerians in the UK academic setting. This perspective views code-switching as a tool for identity negotiation for speakers of postcolonial Englishes in a UK postcolonial setting (Bisong, 1995; Edwards, 2009).

2.2. Code-switching and Identity in International Higher Education

2.2.1. Code-switching

Historically, code-switching has been conceptualised as a linguistic, psycholinguistic, cognitive and social phenomenon (Alvarez-Cáccamo, 2002a; Franceschini, 2002; Ramsay-Brijball, 2004; Omoniyi, 2005; Beatty-Martínez et al., 2018; Myers, 2020). Scholars often study code-switching as a language behaviour unique to bilinguals or multilinguals (van Hell, 2023). This view presents language as an *independent* code, limiting code-switching to moving from one language variety to another. In bilingual and multilingual studies, code-switching is defined as moving from one language to another within single or multiple discourses (Grosjean, 1982; Myers-Scotton, 1993; Bentahila and Davies, 1995; Poplack, 2000). In literature, other terms have been used to define the concept of alternating between *linguistic* codes: style shifting (Bullock and Toribio, 2009); code-mixing (Muysken, 2000);

code-meshing (Young, 2009) and translanguaging (Gárcia and Wei, 2014). The differences between these terms and code-switching often relate to how linguistic alternation is achieved.

According to Alvarez-Cáccamo (2002a, p. 35), conceptualising code-switching as a bilingual or multilingual behaviour stems from the assumption that speakers draw from pre-existing two or more distinct languages to produce a switched code. While code-switching could mean switching between two or more distinct languages, from a raciolinguistic and sociolinguistic perspective, it could also mean the process of switching speech style within one or multiple language systems (Alvarez-Cáccamo, 2002a, Ekoç and Etuş, 2017). Therefore, as code is not limited to distinct languages such as English and Portuguese, the definition of code-switching in this study includes and goes beyond what other terms intend to express.

In responding to language profiling-driven pedagogy, Young (2009, p. 50) articulated that code-switching is about race. Similarly, as Alvarez-Cáccamo (2002b, p. 3) suggested, I likewise argue that code-switching studies should represent the symbolic role code and language play for the individual and society. Thus, in my research, code-switching refers to alternating or attuning linguistic and symbolic codes such as language, accent, style, intonation, and vocabulary to depict identification or non-identification (Omoniyi, 2005, p. 703). Resonating with Omoniyi's (2005) expansion, Harvard Business Review's (2019, para. 3) definition captures the sociolinguistic view that code-switching involves acclimating speech style and demeanour 'in ways that will optimise the comfort of others in exchange for fair treatment'. Although this definition represents my view and supports the basis of my argument, I am aware that it may not apply to all code-switching studies in multilingual or multidialectal contexts.

2.2.2. Social Motivations for Code-switching in Nigeria

Gardner-Chloros (2009) suggested that code-switching could be dialectal, affecting everyone in contact with more than one language or dialect. In a hegemonic and multilingual setting such as Nigerian, there is language competition and hierarchy among the indigenous languages and English. Often, educated Nigerians are required to negotiate their identity through code-switching. In any speech community, each language user has distinct motivations for

code-switching. However, as Myers-Scotton (1993) and Myers (2020) noted, underlying social variables influence an individual's desire to or not to code-switch. Additionally, in a study among English and Igbo bilingual Nigerians, Obiamalu and Mbagwu's (2010, p. 34-36) findings suggested that the participants code-switch for socio-psychological reasons such as negative language attitude and cultural disloyalty towards Igbo. The participants in the study were reported to have code-switched to display "knowledge of a supposedly more prestigious language consciously." (Obiamalu and Mbagwu, 2010, p. 34).

Nigeria is a multilingual and multicultural country with English as its *only* official language. The relationship between English and the national languages is diglossic. Thus, an individual's code-switching behaviour could be classified as instinctive because there is a constant need to move up and down the language hierarchy (Obiamalu and Mbagwu, 2010; Adaora et al., 2022). Alternatively, code-switching may be motivated by a speaker's intent to accommodate their audience's speech (Agbo, 2022). Speech accommodation is when speakers adjust their speech patterns or style in response to their listeners (Giles and Ogay, 2007; Agbo, 2022). Giles and Ogay (2007) asserted that the immediate environment and socio-historical context influence speech accommodation. According to Giles and Ogay's (2007) communication accommodation theory, speech accommodation can depict convergence or divergence. In convergence, speakers adjust their speech patterns, accent, vocabulary or intonation to become more similar to the person they are interacting with. To achieve divergence, speakers intentionally emphasise their linguistic differences to highlight non-affiliation. In Nigeria, code-switching is a strategy for convergence and divergence. It is not an unusual language practice, and its genesis could be traced to the nation's colonial history (Obiamalu and Mbagwu, 2010).

An alternative explanation of the motivation for code-switching in Nigeria is translanguaging (Akinpelu, 2020). Translanguaging is a linguistic practice of bilinguals and multilinguals that integrates the fluid use of multiple languages in communication and meaning-making (Gárcia, 2009; Baker, 2011). Code-switching and translanguaging involve combining multiple elements to produce unique utterances and meanings; however, while translanguaging involves a speaker leveraging their entire linguistic repertoire in meaning-making, code-switching entails a selective use of language and metalinguistic resources in communication and self-representation (Gárcia and Wei, 2014).

Speakers may be motivated to alternate between codes because language varieties impact a speaker's social status and identity in the community, whether international or intranational. Code-switching and translanguaging in the Nigerian context have mainly been explored within intranational interactions; unlike previous studies, my research focuses on code-switching in international interactions. In this case, two fundamental sociolinguistic and raciolinguistic assumptions are considered. Firstly, power relations exist between the speaker and the sociolinguistic context (Bloom and Gumperz, 1972; Poplack and Meechan, 1998). Secondly, the speaker assumes it is their responsibility to be intelligible; hence they initiate attunement or accommodation.

2.2.3. A Raciolinguistic Perspective on Language, Identity and Capital

According to Alim (2016, p. 3), raciolinguistics is an interdisciplinary field that examines the relationship between race, language and power. It explores how racial identity intersects with language use, attitudes, and ideologies. Research in raciolinguistics seeks to explore how language reflects and reproduces racial inequalities and societal power dynamics (Flores and Rosa, 2015; Flores, 2020). Studies in raciolinguistics have concerned themselves with language variation and how it reflects *socio/linguistic* discrimination.

Flores and Rosa (2015), in their discussion on Englishes and appropriateness in multicultural academic settings, shed light on how racial stereotypes and biases shape linguistic practices and contribute to language-based discrimination amongst non-native and Western speakers. They articulate that language learners' speech is perceived as non-standard even though speakers do not speak ungrammatically. The researchers emphasised further that language discrimination emerges from racial and socio-economic stereotypes, which places the non-native speaker at a deficit. The authors' argument resonates with Kramsch's (2021) notion of language as holding 'our power to be listened to and taken seriously' (p.3).

In their research, Flores and Rosa (2015) argue that academic language is a racialised ideology instead of a linguistic practice because its approach towards bi- or multilingualism is subtractive. Focusing on three categories of English learners; long-term English learners, heritage language learners and standard English learners; the researchers presented the issue of language, identity and power in the English learning environment among non-native speakers.

They argued that language education research and practices should adopt a heteroglossic perspective towards the appropriateness of English in education. Although the researchers have in-depth analysed the monoglossic approach to multilingual practices, their findings remain only a starting point for exploring the appropriateness of *native* African English (particularly Nigerian) in international contexts. In modern times, many Nigerian English speakers acquire English as (one of) their first language(s). However, in academic contexts, they often face stereotypes and discrimination from listeners based on their accents and intonation, even though they possess high lexico-grammatical proficiency (Goodman, 2019). Flores and Rosa (2015) noted that proficiency in an academic language is grammatical, phonological and racial.

In light of stereotypes, Nigerian English speakers code-switch to be perceived as intellectual, competent, appropriate or even native-like. This accent attunement could be a negotiation of identity to achieve international intelligibility. As Edwards (2009) suggested, colonial history plays a vital role in the language behaviour of postcolonial English speakers. For social capital related to *standard* British English, parents want their children to have lesser contact with national languages so that the children can be immersed in the norm, which is British-like (Danladi, 2013). However, because cultural identity is linked to the national languages, Nigerian parents must create a hierarchy for the languages. Therefore, there is competition between national languages and English (Odugu, 2015). Code-switching, thus, becomes a tool for identification and non-identification.

2.3. English in Nigeria

2.3.1. Nigerian English
The history of English in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial period when the British established their presence in the region. In the 18th century, the British commenced trading with the western African territories (Falola and Heaton, 2008). English was first introduced to the borders of Lagos and Calabar through commerce. In the late 19th century, the British sought to establish their influence and dominance through colonisation. However, before the colonial administration, Nigeria was not a single nation-state. In 1914, the British merged the Northern and Southern Protectorates to form Nigeria as a single administrative entity. The implication of the merger was political, social, economic and linguistic, as these regions spoke

different languages (Fafunwa, 1974). Therefore, the colonial era disrupted traditional societies and sociolinguistic structures, making Nigeria multilingual (Akinlotan, 2020; Faraclas, 2021).

After the colonial regime, Nigeria reserved English as its official language due to Nigeria's linguistic diversity and English's socio-economic advantage as a prestigious language (Egbokhare, 2021; Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2021). Today, English is Nigeria's official language, alongside the national languages; Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. As the Nigerian official language, it is the most prestigious language in the country, serving as the language of governance, trade, education, media, and international communication. The English language has influenced the Nigerian education system, literature, music, film, and other forms of artistic expression, shaping the country's sociocultural identity and facilitating its global interactions. Sociolinguistically, Nigerian indigenous languages and Nigerians have also influenced the English language through nativisation within speech communities (Adamo, 2007).

2.3.2. English in Nigerian Education

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2014) states that in the first three years of Primary school, the medium of instruction will be the 'language of immediate environment for three years in monolingual communities' while English will be taught as a subject simultaneously. In the fourth year, English will progressively be the only medium of instruction. There are multiple issues with the practicality of this planning (Egbokhare, 2021). Firstly, it does not consider that Nigerian communities are largely multilingual due to commercial and marriage relations between ethnic groups, resulting in families having diverse home languages. For example, in my family, my father speaks Esan, while my mother speaks Yoruba; the home languages are English and Yoruba.

Considering that there are over 500 languages in Nigeria, many families are bilingual or multilingual. Thus, no single language of the immediate environment or mother tongue could cater to the academic needs of students in a community. Secondly, the planning proposes subtractive bilingual education by encouraging the strict use of English in education from the fourth year until the tertiary level (Ovu and Anyanwu, 2019). It indirectly hierarchises the importance and value of English over other national languages, resulting in a diglossic

relationship. Based on the Nigerian Policy on Education, Nigerians who studied in the Nigerian education system in the past decade have been taught to value English more than other languages they speak.

2.4. Models of World Englishes

For a while, humans attempted to intentionally develop a universal language that almost all humans could understand and speak. This hypothetical language aimed to foster cooperation and communication between all nations (Schneider, 2007). Unintentionally, English has been able to serve this purpose. In many countries, one variety of English is spoken, whether as a native language, a second language, a foreign language, a dialect or a creole (Adamo, 2007; Schneider, 2007). Kachru (1985) proposed the term 'World Englishes' as a concept of studying English and its spread. According to Kachru (1992, p.2), World Englishes are the diverse varieties of English and the distinct geographical identities it represents. Kachru (1985) proposed that English as a plural, as in *Englishes*, represents Western and non-Western English varieties. Furthermore, Kachru (1985; 1992) problematised the native and non-native speaker dichotomy, noting that English could acquire linguistic and cultural identities within new contexts, such as English spoken in Nigeria, Ghana or India.

Consequently, Kachru (1985) proposed a three-concentric circle model to World Englishes in response to the controversy over nativeness and ownership of English. Per Kachru (1985), the three categories of Englishes are the inner, outer, and expanding circles.

1. The inner circle represents countries where English is the mother tongue or native language, for example, the United States, Britain, Australia and Canada. Varieties spoken in these regions are considered the norm and standard.

2. The outer circle describes territories (former colonies) where English is used as a second or additional language, for example, India and Nigeria. English plays a significant role in these countries' governments, education and media.

3. The expanding circle represents countries where English is taught as a foreign language and is used primarily for special purposes, such as business, tourism, or international communication. Some examples include Japan and China.

Although Kachru's model appeared inclusive, it merely captured geographical locations where English is spoken and not the sociolinguistic function and identity of the language. Therefore, it remains similar to the problematic English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign language (EFL) model of Englishes. Furthermore, the concentric frame of the categorisation brings to remembrance the political, economic and social power that lies at the centre, in the inner circle.

Another framework that has influenced the study of World Englishes is Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model. Schneider (2007) theorised the varieties and variations of English from a sociolinguistic stance. The model focused on Postcolonial Englishes. The author proposes five stages of the spread of English in postcolonial contexts; foundation, exonormative stabilisation, nativisation, endonormative stabilisation, and differentiation. This model recognises that World Englishes are not static entities but dynamic systems shaped by sociolinguistic factors, historical contexts, and local cultures. Schneider (2007) argues that English varieties, such as Nigerian English or Indian English in India, should be studied as part of ongoing processes of nativisation and indigenisation.

Similar to Schneider (2007) is the five-stage model of the evolution of Nigerian English proposed by Akinlotan (2020), a Nigerian scholar. The five stages in the process are initiation, foundation, stabilisation, naturalisation and individualisation. Akinlotan (2020, p. 53) argues that English has undergone 'nigerianisation' and should be viewed as an appropriate individual and distinct English variety. Although it has deviated from the Western norm, it has been adapted to suit Nigeria's socio-cultural conditions. Moreover, it remains a culturally nuanced primary language in Nigeria and should be recognised by Nigerians and other Western countries as a standard.

As a postcolonial variety of English, Nigerian English is considered a contaminated and deficient *dialect* of English (Cunningham, 2012). Although some scholars argue in favour of its acceptance as a standard variety in its own right, in practice, the language attitude towards Nigerian English in an English-speaking international context is negative. The negative attitude is due to its perceived intelligibility in global contexts by some international listeners and *native* speakers (Cunningham, 2012; Duru, 2022). Nelson (2011, p.2) refers to intelligibility as

a characteristic of a language to be usefully communicative. Intelligibility is determined by specific linguistic elements, for example, accent, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary (Nelson, 2011). In studying the international intelligibility of World Englishes, Smith and Nelson (1985) view intelligibility in three aspects, namely, intelligibility (utterance recognition), comprehensibility (utterance meaning) and interpretability (meaning behind utterance). The focus of this study is utterance recognition of Nigerian English in international contexts; hence, it should not be misconstrued as comprehensibility and interpretability.

Chapter Summary

I have defined key concepts in this chapter, such as code-switching, identity and language as capital. Through reviewing the current state-of-the-art, I have drawn on multiple sources to develop a sociolinguistic and raciolinguistic theoretical framework to autoethnographically explore code-switching as a tool for identity negotiation in academic contexts. In the next chapter, I will discuss the research methodology, data collection and analysis methods in detail. I will also discuss the ethical consideration and limitations of the chosen approach.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This study explores the role of code-switching in the identity negotiation process of an educated Nigerian English speaker studying in the UK higher education setting. In this chapter, I present the research paradigm, methodology and framework employed to answer the research questions presented in Chapter One. The ethical considerations and limitations of the methodology process are also presented.

3.1. Epistemological and Theoretical Perspective

Good research is expected to demonstrate the researcher's awareness of their choices and how they have critically linked practice with theory to answer the research questions. Conscious and subconscious research choices are made based on the researcher's experiences, assumptions and worldview (Gray, 2022). As Waring (2012) precisely puts it, an enquiry is shaped by assumptions about existing knowledge (p.16). In designing research, a researcher attempts to align their beliefs about the nature of reality with their beliefs about the nature of knowledge (Kornuta and Germaine, 2019). Reality can be perceived as singular and objective or multiple and constructed. The former view about the nature of knowledge relates to objectivism, while the latter represents the constructivist view of reality. Although there are other ways to reality perception, these ontological views are the most prominent in educational research (Cohen et al., 2018).

In gaining knowledge about reality, objectivism holds that knowledge can be discovered or revealed through scientific, objective and measurable empirical methods (Cohen et al., 2018: Gray, 2022). This paradigm represents the positivist approach to research. On the other hand, constructivism views knowledge as actively constructed by individuals or communities as they interact with society. It emphasises the role of context and social interactions in shaping realities; therefore, it relies on qualitative and subjective methods in sense-making and interpreting realities (Denscombe, 2017). The interpretivism research paradigm is closely related to the constructivist view of the world. As a researcher and an individual, I believe in

multiple truths and realities. I perceive realities as constructed narratives drawn from sociocultural practices and an individual's perception of their environment (Erikson, 2018). Hence, in alignment with the interpretivism paradigm, I focus on the meaning an individual's experiences bring into the subject of enquiry. Based on my beliefs, assumptions and theoretical recommendations, a qualitative enquiry is a suitable option to explore code-switching and identity as it is not reductive towards possible outcomes. Per Gray (2022), in asserting that there could be multiple experiences of a single phenomenon, I believe that multiple contradictory but equally valid accounts of the subject of enquiry may exist (p. 24).

Coe (2012, p. 7) noted that interpretivism aims to 'understand individual cases and situations and focus on the meaning different actors bring to them'. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2018) pointed out that interpretivism does not seek universal statements or causal laws. The interpretivism perspective seeks to derive interpretations through individually constructed meaning; as such, it supports that different approaches can be used to study a subject. Some interpretivism research approaches are symbolic interactionism and phenomenology. Symbolic interactionism studies how social interactions shape individual behaviour and practices. Ethnography is a research methodology typically associated with the symbolic interactionism paradigm (Erikson, 2018; Gray, 2022). Phenomenology studies the subjective experience of individuals and the way they perceive and interpret a phenomenon in the world. While these two paradigms explore the subjective nature of human experience, their focus differs (Gray, 2022). Symbolic interactionism focuses on cultural practices, while phenomenology focuses on an individual's account and interpretation of a phenomenon based on the person's experiences (Pitard, 2019). In my research, I borrow from both qualitative paradigms and choose autoethnography as the most suitable methodology. In sociolinguistics, code-switching is viewed as a social phenomenon and human behaviour. The nature of my enquiry conceptualises codeswitching as symbolic of identity negotiation and a social phenomenon to be interpreted based on my lived experiences.

3.2. Research Design

Code-switching is an interdisciplinary phenomenon studied qualitatively and quantitatively over the years (Beatty-Martínez, 2020; Myers, 2020; Stewart, 2022). My research explores code-switching as a proxy for identity negotiation in a context where I am an insider, that is, a

community I *belong* to. Code-switching characterises human behaviour in context, and as Cohen et al. (2018, p. 18) noted, the perception of human behaviour is subjectively studied. To understand people's perception and practice of code-switching as conceptualised in my research, a qualitative method is required to make sense of social culture and identity.

As an insider within the research context, an approach to this study could have been ethnography. According to Denscombe (2017, p. 83), ethnography investigates people and cultures. Ethnography seeks to understand a group or community's culture, behaviour, and social interactions by actively participating in the daily lives of the people being studied to gain an insider's perspective. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.3) point out that an ethnographer is integrated "overtly or covertly in people's lives for an extended period, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions … to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry." Although I could have chosen an ethnographic approach, the ethical considerations such as seeking consent from the gatekeepers in the research context, the sensitivity of raciolinguistic discussions and the scope and time frame of an MA project significantly restrict this choice. Therefore, I chose autoethnography, an approach that explores cultural and social phenomena through the researcher's lived experience as an insider of the research context.

Autoethnography is the methodology upon which this research is designed. According to Ellis et al. (2011), autoethnography analyses a cultural or social phenomenon through the researcher's personal experience. The researcher plays a dual role of participant and researcher. Cohen et al. (2018, p. 297) view autoethnography as a personal ethnography accommodating the researcher's subjectivity. Although some scholars argue that credible research should be objective and impersonal, autoethnography emphasises the study of self as a study of people (Ellis et al., 2014). Code-switching is a practice I have engaged in all my life, whether as a child, student or professional. My interest in researching code-switching grew after critically questioning my motivations for code-switching through theoretical knowledge. Thus, I have chosen a methodology that allows me to acknowledge my subjectivity and biases while critically analysing the phenomenon.

Autoethnography can be evocative or analytical (Ellis et al., 2011; Wall, 2016). Evocative autoethnography elicits emotional responses using vivid descriptions and narrative techniques

(Ellis et al., 2014). On the other hand, analytical autoethnography places a greater emphasis on critical analysis, interpretation, and theoretical frameworks. Beyond storytelling, it delves into broader social, cultural, or political issues. In alignment with Anderson's (2006) view, I chose an analytical autoethnography to provide insights into larger social phenomena and contribute to academic discourse. As such, this analytical autoethnography involves the application of concepts and theories from relevant disciplines to analyse my experiences and uncover underlying meanings. This approach also allows the readers to critically reflect on and interpret their conscious or subconscious raciolinguistic practices through a theoretical perspective instead of simply responding emotionally to my experiences.

Ellis et al. (2011, p.2) noted that autoethnography sensitises 'readers on the issues of identity politics', a view that aligns with my research aim of exploring code-switching as a tool for identity negotiation. As I previously mentioned in Section 1.2 of the Introduction chapter, one of the purposes of this study is to help a wider audience (insiders and outsiders of the context) understand the concept of code-switching and identity negotiation within English varieties. Autoethnography achieve this aim as it allows me to explore the collective experience through a personal experience that can be relatable and transferable. As autoethnography is usually written in the first person (Cohen et al., 2018), the research questions reflect the *auto* (self):

- How do I perceive my English in a variety of academic settings?
- What factors motivate me to code-switch in an international academic context?

3.3. Ethical Considerations

When conducting research with human participants, it is crucial to consider their safety during and after the research process (BERA, 2018). In autoethnography, the researcher is the participant; however, other humans helped shape and bring to life the experiences to be shared. Therefore, ethics must be considered. Before conducting my research, I critically reflected on ways to be confidential, protect others' and my privacy and adequately represent others and myself in my research process. However, the ethical process is more demanding in autoethnography because 'everyone knows the story is about the life of the researcher' (Cooper and Lilyea, 2022, p. 204).

To begin with, I sought ethics approval from the University of Sheffield School of Education to ensure my research aligns with the British educational research standards. After approval, I sought verbal informal consent from individuals I was certain would be portrayed or implicated in my reflections, for example, my family members, friends, peers and tutors. After informally acknowledging their willingness to be represented and interviewed to confirm the authenticity of my recollections, I formally sent them the project information sheet and consent forms on the most accessible channel to them (WhatsApp or Email). I let my friends and family members know they were not required to participate in my research. However, I cannot state whether their participation was voluntary or because they felt obligated to support my academic efforts, aligning with Ellis (2007) and Edwards (2021) previously raised concerns about power relations in autoethnography, especially concerning consent from close relations.

Another relational ethical consideration is anonymity; although using pseudonyms is what the literature recommended, it is more complex because the researcher remains known. To ensure anonymity, the reflections (data) were shared and discussed with those implicated to ascertain that identifiable and traceable information was not included (Cohen et al., 2018). I also informed them they had the right to withdraw their consent and that the reflection involving them would be discarded. In some cases, there were unforeseen participants as reflections unfolded; in this situation, I reached them to seek consent, but I had to leave out those who did not give their consent. In writing, I chose relevant data after evaluating the risk of unintentional disclosure or misrepresentation of myself or others.

Finally, with the dual role of the researcher, reflections' could become evocative and impact the research process. In such situations, I sought advice from my supervisor and support from the University Welfare Service.

3.4. Data Collection

This analytical autoethnography uses a critical incident technique in data collection. The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) is a qualitative research method used to gather detailed information about specific incidents that have significantly impacted an individual in a particular context and in relation to a phenomenon (Viergever, 2019). The critical incident technique is suitable for studying behaviour, factors, events and experiences in context.

Viergever (2019, p. 1066) describes a five-step process to approaching a critical incident, which I followed (see Appendix 2):

Step 1: Describe and clarify the aim and purpose of the study.

Step 2: Define a critical incident's nature, relevance and impact on the research aim.

Step 3: Collect as data participant perceptions and reflections on the phenomenon and context under investigation.

Step 4: Data is analysed by first coding into groups or themes as necessary to achieve the aim of the study.

Step 5: Data is reported and interpreted with the researcher clearly stating limitations and biases.

This study explores the role of code-switching in the identity negotiation process of an educated Nigerian English speaker studying in the UK higher education setting. The criteria for choosing critical incidents were about the English language, code-switching, intelligibility and identity (negotiation). As a result, I chronologically reflected on critical happenings related to code-switching and identity from my childhood until the end of my MA. These reflections were recorded as reflective diary entries. The research questions were the main questions I asked myself to drive reflections. Therefore, this means that the memories were selected and constructed (Muncey, 2005). Memory is vital in discussing lived experiences; however, it may not be sufficient as it can be rather fragmented (Russel, 1998, Ellis et al., 2011). As Muncey (2005, p.70) suggested, a multifaceted approach is required to give credence to reflections. Therefore, where available, I used materials such as video recordings and pictures from the incident to supplement my memories. It is essential to mention that these recordings were not made with research in mind; they were merely captured memories; thus, they were objective. As suggested by existing literature, the validation strategy was to confirm reflections from others involved in the incident (Wall, 2016; Edwards, 2021). At the end of data collection, 21 written critical incidents resulting in 5446 words were available for analysis (see Appendix 1).

3.5. Data Analysis

The data were analysed using an interpretive thematic analysis adapted from a related study by Halic et al. (2009). Thematic analysis is used to identify and analyse patterns in qualitative data (Gray, 2022, p. 759). Peterson (2017) points out the researcher can immerse the *self* in data to identify and interpret common themes relating to the subject of enquiry. Similarly, this approach is highly reflexive (Braun and Clarke, 2021). This form of analysis is suitable for an interpretive research paradigm (Cohen et al., 2018). Following all the phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021), the data were inductively coded into themes and subthemes, allowing for the interpretation and analysis of the relationship between generated themes and existing sociolinguistics and raciolinguistics perspectives of code-switching and identity (Gray, 2022, p. 759).

The analysis process entailed initial coding, line-by-line coding, pattern recognition and categorisation (Fetterman, 2020). During the initial coding process, 170 codes were generated, which were further refined during the line-by-line coding into 97 codes. The pattern recognition and categorisation processes allowed for grouping codes into 33 categories (see Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5 &6). At the theme generation stage, 10 themes were initially generated due to the interdisciplinary nature of the research domain. However, owing to word count limitations and the scope of this research, the two most significant themes were selected for the 4000-word findings and discussion chapter. This decision was informed by Braun and Clarke's (2012, p. 65) recommendation to report between two to six themes for a +/- 10,000-word article.

3.6. Limitations

An argument against autoethnography is its potential to compromise objectivity and generalisability in studying a phenomenon. Similarly, the limited sample size may not capture the full diversity and complexity of the phenomenon or population. However, the purpose of this study on code-switching is not to arrive at a generalisable conclusion. Instead, it aims to give insight into theoretical, methodological and practical starting points for studies on code-switching by scholars, especially Nigerian scholars.

Autoethnography relies heavily on self-reflection and introspection. While this can provide rich insights into personal experiences, it is perceived to lack rigour and validation from other sources. This limitation raises concerns about the reliability and credibility of the research findings. I address this limitation in my research by seeking the validation of my reflections through the perspectives of others portrayed. Moreover, analytical autoethnography is reliable and credible in critically linking and contrasting personal experiences with and against existing literature (Anderson, 2006). As a relatively new and evolving research approach, a concerning limitation is the lack of convergence about methodological standards and guidelines for autoethnography like other qualitative methodologies. This lack of consensus made establishing an approach to my study challenging.

The limitation of this research methodology lies in the generalisability of the research findings since the researcher is also the research participant. However, through critical analysis, in-depth literature synthesis and input from other individuals within the research context, the finding will remain credible, valid and transferable for further enquiry.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed analytical autoethnography as the chosen research methodology to achieve the intended aim of this study. The ethical considerations have been presented. I have also given details on the data collection and analysis processes. In sum, I elucidated the limitations of the chosen research approach.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this autoethnographic study is to explore the role of code-switching in my identity negotiation process in various academic settings in Nigeria, Brazil and the UK. The focus lies in analysing my perception of the English language I speak and the motivating factors that prompt me to engage in code-switching within international academic contexts.

This chapter presents the research findings obtained through meticulous data analysis. The analysis involved initial coding, line-by-line coding, pattern recognition, and categorisation processes, leading to two main themes; British-like English as a proxy for intelligence and social motivations for code-switching in various academic contexts. As established in the literature review chapter, these themes are examined and interpreted using raciolinguistic and sociolinguistic lenses. Each theme effectively addresses the research questions that guide this study. The interpretive thematic analysis approach provided valuable insights into the phenomenon of code-switching, as outlined in the following research questions:

- How do I perceive my English in a variety of academic settings?
- What factors motivate me to code-switch in an international academic context?

4.1. British-like English as a Proxy for Intelligence

To ensure comprehensive data and perspectives, I reflected on critical incidents experienced as a primary and secondary school student in Nigeria, an undergraduate student in Brazil, and a postgraduate student in the United Kingdom. These critical incidents (hereinafter CI) represent two distinct international contexts, and it could be assumed that my perception of English in these contexts may differ. Despite Brazil not being an English-speaking country, I perceived my English as appropriate only when acknowledged positively by the listener, whereas instinctively and when met with negative reactions, I perceived it as substandard and improper. Depending on the listeners, I adapt my discourse by conforming to their perceived expectations or maintaining my everyday accent.

CI12, [University, UK, age 24]: "My first lecture in the School of Education had over 100 students from different backgrounds - Chinese, Indonesian, Indian etc. I did not see any Nigerians (at least not yet). I thought it was only me, and I was a bit worried about what to sound like. Should I sound like an educated Nigerian or British-like since that's the standard? In the first lecture, I sounded like the latter when I asked questions. I think my attunement was a bit much this time. It was my first lecture, I had to be articulate and sound intelligent, like I knew exactly what I was saying. I believed a British-like accent would make my audience want to listen to me, they would want to understand me like they would any native speaker."

Using Giles and Ogay's (2007) communication accommodation theory, I simultaneously strategised for convergence towards the intellectual audience and divergence away from the Nigerian accent. The same pattern of attunement is reported in CI13, CI14 and CI19's MA contexts. In C12, the convergence was upward towards a higher variety for the purpose of belongingness. The higher the power of the language, the lesser the need to accommodate; hence, I, the speaker of a "lower" variety, initiated accommodation. From the stance of language as capital, although I did not mention in the data that the British were the majority in the audience, I switched toward a British-like model. Two possible interpretations for the shift could be because I was in a British academic context or because British English is the model in the Nigerian education system. Just like Obiamalu and Mbagwu (2010) reported in their findings that English is considered prestigious, I viewed British or British-like English as more prestigious. I established an academic identity through British-like English instead of my Nigerian English. I saw the British-like variety as a means to enhance communication effectiveness, establish my personal narrative and gain acceptance within the academic environment (McCune, 2021; Ching, 2021).

Similarly, in C118 [University, UK, age 24], where I received a reference letter from a lecturer, they described me as having "native-level proficiency" to certify my academic prowess and identity.

Lecturer response to C118 [University, UK, age 24]: "I was a bit surprised to see I had used that term [native-level proficiency] as I wouldn't use that in my writing on language diversity - I can only think that in writing a reference to support someone, I was sub-consciously and pragmatically imagining that this would represent a positive case for a speaker at a workshop like the one you were applying for, though on reflection am reminded of the resonances of colonialism the term carries."

I was presented in a good light, as I would have preferred; nonetheless, the problem of native-speakerism and power relations within English varieties remain evident. Furthermore, discussing this with the lecturer prompted their reflection on language use in academia and potential colonial connotations. Thus, engaging ethically with others in autoethnography strengthens the study and provides learning opportunities for participants.

Furthermore, I explicitly showed cultural disloyalty and a negative perception of my Nigerian English. An interpretation is that language remained a means of self-representation and identification independent of the context. I have attributed a high capital and appropriateness to British-like English, and how I am represented depends on how others perceive my English in a given context (Auer, 1998). This representation is evident in some of the earliest critical incidents, as noted in the data:

> CI2 [Primary School, Nigeria, age 7]: "I remember this particular day, one of my teachers overheard me saying, 'I will tell Aunty for you'. The next thing I heard was, 'Stop speaking vernacular'. 'Stop speaking vernacular' is a familiar phrase from my primary school. I thought I had outgrown that because I spoke 'pure' English. Apparently, speaking vernacular was not just about the home language in school; it was also about nativising the English language by speaking English through Yoruba. The statement made total sense, and it was well understood among my peers. I think teachers understood it too. It was not much vernacular because I was obviously speaking English, right? But I was told the correct form is 'I will report you to Aunty'. The correct form just sounded totally wrong and unauthentic."

> CI14 [University, UK, age 24]: "I was an international student like them and worried about not sounding clear or being understood. I was not worried about grammar, but I was bothered about pronouncing the words wrongly or weirdly."

The data showed I experienced the same concern of *sounding wrong* reported in Halic et al.'s (2009) study of graduate students who studied English as a foreign language, even though English was neither a foreign language nor a second language to me. In the CIs above, the concern was about "sound", not grammar or vocabulary. The word "sound" could also be interpreted as intonation or accent. As seen in Halic et al. (2009) and Yoon (2013), I construed using the Nigerian accent in an academic setting as a lack of intellectual capacity. Therefore, even though I feel secure about my grammatical proficiency, I perceive my accent as inappropriate in the UK academic setting. This perception is rooted in the modelling of English in Nigerian education. In C12, a *nigerianised* sentence was regarded as vernacular, inappropriate and incorrect because it did not adhere to the standards of inner circle English,

represented by British English in this case. According to Akinlotan's (2020) model of Nigerian English, the "Nigerianisation" of English at the naturalisation stage should lead to individuation which proposes accepting the Nigerian English variety as a standard. However, in my data, the Nigerianisation, mostly evident in the accent, is the factor that emphasises inappropriateness in international academic settings.

From a sociolinguistic standpoint, CI2 and CI14 highlight the conflict and hierarchy of identity I experienced in relation to Nigerian English and "proper English". Omoniyi (2008) argues that in specific contexts, identity may conflict. In cases of conflict, identity negotiation is required. Like the CIs above, in CI15, CI6, C19 and CI20, the British-like English was portrayed as unauthentic and performative. Nonetheless, I code-switched to British-like English when trying to establish intelligence, showing that British-like holds a symbolic power of higher social and academic capital (Kramsch, 2021). This conflict between the two varieties of English shapes my perception of Nigerian English as not being "pure English." This sheds light on the complexity of language attitudes and the influence of educational contexts on language perceptions. My perception of Nigerian English is shaped by the societal value attributed to British-model English and the pressures to conform to its standards.

Like the participants in Goodman's (2019) study, the colleague, an English as a second language learner, had a notion of what native-speaker English should sound like, disregarding postcolonial or new Englishes (Schneider, 2007).

> CI6A [University, Brazil, age 20]: "I said something about going home, and this person laughed at my pronunciation of the word 'home'. They said it sounded funny, and where did I learn the pronunciation? They asked why I had to emphasise the 'h' the way I did. It was not that they did not recognise the word or it was wrong; the tone was just different and unusual. I tried to hide my embarrassment by saying that was the correct pronunciation."

The colleague perceived my accent as funny, which led to feelings of insecurity. My reaction to the comment showed that I did not perceive my English as a norm; therefore, I needed to prove that it was also good English. In other critical incidents within a UK academic context, a native speaker colleague used the word "funny" to describe my pronunciation of a word (CI13, age 24). In a different context, I used the same word to describe my accent to a native speaker who wanted to know how I spoke "normally" (CI19, age 24). My acceptance that my accent is

"funny" reflects an indifferent or negative attitude towards my English shaped by others' perceptions. As Edwards (2009) and McCune (2021) proposed that identity is collectively shaped, the perception of international academic listeners reinforced my negative attitude towards Nigerian English in international contexts. Alternatively, referring to my English as "funny" could result from the optimisable identity code-switching affords me (Ting-Toomey, 2017).

The instinctive emotions that emerged from others' perceptions of my English were embarrassment, shame, and insecurity (CI5, age 20; CI12, age 24; CI13, age 24). These feelings are associated with low self-esteem and self-worth. Often, these emotions arise when individuals perceive themselves negatively or believe they have fallen short of societal or personal expectations. I perceive my English as below societal expectations (Omoniyi, 2008). This interpretation is drawn from my description of British-like English in that I was not confident in my English. Therefore, I optimise my identity through code-switching. In CI12, I described speaking British-like English as "having a cover, protection", and the "cover" is taken away in an international context when my Nigerian accent "slips" in (CI6, age 20; CI3, age 24).

> CI6B [University, Brazil, age 20]: I later realised that my Nigerian intonation had slipped in. I was unaware. That was not how the British pronounced it; that was how I pronounced it. I had pronounced the word like any other educated Nigerian. It was correct but different. I wonder if I said that was the British pronunciation because it is the standard I always strove for.

Aligning the evidence with the concept of the symbolic power of language, I perceived Nigerian English as incapable of protecting me (Bourdieu, 1991; Kramsch, 2021). Similarly, as Tabouret-Keller (2017) suggested, my language acts were my identity acts. Accordingly, I used a variety of English different to my national language to negotiate and assert my identity in an international academic setting (Omoniyi, 2005; 2008).

My negative perception of my English is evident across the data. However, my conscious response to my instinctive feelings about others' perceptions of my English varied across critical incidents. As a 20-year-old in CI6, I was embarrassed because my accent was deemed amusing, and the embarrassment led to a desire for an optimised identity and non-identification

with a Nigerian accent in the Brazilian context. However, as a 24-year-old in CI13, the impulsive embarrassment was followed by a conscious self-security:

> CI13 [University, UK age 24]: When I said the word "module" pronounced as [ˈmɒdjuːl], they could not recognise the word. So, I said it again after the third time, and they said, 'Oh, you mean 'module' [mɑːˌdʒuːl] - pronouncing it their way. I said, yes, "module" [ˈmɒdjuːl] - pronouncing it like I did the first and second time. They said the pronunciation was funny. I felt embarrassed at first, but then I reminded myself I said it right, so it was not my fault that they could not recognise the word.

> CI7 [University/Work, Brazil, age 20]: I spoke with a clear accent. I do not know why I did not even try to sound British-like. I think because they were Brazilians and I was the teacher. Many of the students said they liked my English because it sounded like Wakanda's English and was easily understandable.

The interlocutor in CI13 was a non-British native speaker, and repeating the word the same way thrice reflects that I viewed the responsibility of intelligibility as two-way. This reaction could have been drawn from my professional status and the agency of being an English teacher who worked with non-British native speakers for four years or as a scholar with multiple academic successes. Although I was secure about my English here in CI7 and CI13, an analysis of the written reflection showed that I was not speaking Nigerian English but "pure" English. This interpretation is evident because I referred to the variety I spoke in the critical incidents as "clear" English instead of "normal" English, which I called my Nigerian English across the data. A *clear* accent describes divergence and nonidentification achieved through code-switching (Edwards, 2009).

Similarly, in C14 [University, UK, age 24], I reported that my Nigerian accent's "sing-song" effect was reduced in a recorded academic presentation, but the accent was not *entirely* faked. Additionally, it could be argued that I developed a new English code in the UK academic setting that is simultaneously convergent and divergent. This code became my "clear" or "in-between" English identity as it emphasises nonidentification with neither Nigerian English nor British-like English, but it gives me access to a wider academic community (Omoniyi, 2008). This clear code could be a result of my academic knowledge of language and identity. Although the in-between space does not feel *normal* or authentic, its neutrality overrides the identity crisis. Thus, it does not sound weird to Nigerian or international listeners. My adoption of a new code and linguistic identity in an academic context reflects how I developed a sense of self within an academic context through language (Ching, 2021). In the UK

academic context, I construct my academic identity over time through code-switching in relation to social and geographical expectations.

The data suggests that my Nigerian accent is considered deficient in an intellectual context; thus, I code-switch to assert my intelligence. Associating Nigerian English with intellectual deficiency is evident in CI15 [UK University, age 24] when I stated "worrying about" other Nigerians on my programme who do not code-switch. The same perspective is shared by a friend's response in CI17:

> CI17 [UK social context, age 24]: "My [Nigerian] friend responded that they expect all Nigerians who move to English-speaking Western countries to acquire 'proper British English'. They said they should eliminate the 'poor accent' they have learnt. They said they understood why my accent had not really changed. They said it is because, 'Your English has always been good from day one, so you are secure... My friend said if they moved, they would definitely speak better because it is necessary".

An autoethnographic study is a study of the self as the study of a people. As seen in CI17, other Nigerians perceive their English as "improper", which needs fixing in the "source" context. This person views the ability to speak British-like as an upgrade. They perceive exposure and international experience as a finetuning tool for Nigerian English and accent. Therefore, they expect I have garnered enough confidence and capital for my English through international exposure. Similarly, Nigerian students perceiving me as "intelligent" and "eloquent" while speaking "in-between" English reflects their perception of "pure" English or British English as a proxy for intelligence [CI15 University, UK, age 24].

4.2. Social Motivations for Code-Switching in International Contexts

In Nigeria, English assumes a gatekeeping function in education, symbolising access to prestigious circles. The Nigerian Policy for Education places a higher value on English; moving upward and downward between "proper" English, Nigerian English, and indigenous languages is common. In all CIs, code-switching is consciously or subconsciously motivated by external factors such as British English's hierarchy and prestige and the audience's size and quality.

4.2.1. Hierarchy and Prestige of British English

For many Nigerians, formal education is the initial platform for standard English language usage (Okoro, 2017; Faraclas, 2021). However, some parents use their indigenous Nigerian language and English at home. In my case, Yoruba and English were the languages used in my household, thus constituting both my home and first languages. The primary motivation for the code-switching observed in CIs is the perception of British English as a superior and more prestigious variety (Obiamalu and Mbagwu, 2010). I described that even in Nigeria, I used different varieties of Nigerian English as the school language norms differ from social and home English use.

> CI1A [Primary School, Nigeria, age 6]: "When I was about six years old, I came back from school and told my mum that I did not want to speak Yoruba-English mix anymore, I only wanted to speak English. Pure English. I decided to speak pure English because my teachers had taught me that other languages asides from proper English were vernacular, and British-model English was the proper language. My teacher ensured to remind me that "we speak British English here". I did not know the meaning of vernacular, but it sounded like a terrible word. I felt I needed to stop speaking the bad language and ensure we did not speak it in my house. [...] My mother raised me using Yoruba and English. She taught me to read in English [...]. Although she never taught me to read in Yoruba, Yoruba was important in our home. I honestly do not remember how she felt about my switch to English, but I was determined I did not want to speak Yoruba anymore."

At age 6, teachers focused on ensuring students spoke standard British English. This messaging created a perception that speaking pure English was a marker of higher status and intelligence, while speaking Nigerian English or Yoruba was associated with lower status. Referencing Abrar-ul-Hassan (2021, p. 2), English plays a gatekeeping role in higher education in the modern world. However, as indicated in the data, not all forms of English are global. Hence, the non-recognition and unacceptance of Nigerian English threatened my personal and linguistic identity. Stigmatising other language varieties I speak significantly impacts my language choices. The language discrimination or shaming in CI1 resulted in me code-switching in school and at home as "proper" English became our home language. The school serves as a significant linguistic environment for young learners. My teachers, as role models, played a crucial role in shaping my language attitudes and choices. The teachers

indirectly influenced my language preference by emphasising British English as the "proper" language.

Even though I switched my code at home, my parents did not react negatively. This indifference could mean that they perceived "pure" English as a necessary capital that is more prestigious. In CI20 [University/Social, UK, age 24], where I "unintentionally" code-switched to a British-like accent while speaking to my mother over the phone while in the library, there was no indication of a negative reaction towards my code-switching. The library is representative of a highly intellectual context, and I subconsciously switched "upward". Although I code-switched, my mother responded with her normal accent. However, she spoke "pure" English in a subsequent phone call when she normally used a Yoruba-English mix.

The socio-economic benefit attributed to "pure" English is a motivating factor for code-switching. As a 6-year-old who chose to stop speaking the home language, I was rewarded for speaking a relatively better language. By rewarding a behaviour, it is expected that it should be maintained. Similarly, my father may have seen a potential return on investment in private education through my newly established linguistic identity.

> CI1B [Primary School, age 6]: When my father came home later that day, I told him the same thing and implemented it on the spot. He must have been surprised but proud of me. He did not say he was proud, but I remember he bought me a juice box the next day to commend my initiative. He thought it was brilliant. It felt good to be seen as brilliant. My father was a public secondary school teacher at that time who enrolled his children in private schools. He must have been proud that he was getting value for his money."

The same phenomenon is seen in CI15, where I was perceived as intelligent and "my" English was perceived as "well" by a Nigerian. I described their comment as "satisfying", and I maintained code-switching. Relating these findings to Bourdieu's (1991) concept of language as capital, English is perceived as a valuable language capital. This perception incentivises me to code-switch and speak a language devoid of any vernacular influence in academic settings.

4.2.2. Audience Quality and Size

In speech accommodation, the speaker adapts their speech in response to the interlocutor's language behaviour and context (Giles and Ogay, 2007). The quality and size of the audience in an academic context determine my choice to code-switch and the extent of the switch.

In CI1, the teacher said, "We speak British English here". The "here" could be interpreted as the context or the audience. The listener's relational power determines the kind of English I speak in international contexts. Code-switching may be for identification, nonidentification or neutrality. The desire to fit in and feel a sense of belonging within the university community motivates me to code-switch to align with the linguistic practices I perceived as appropriate or acceptable.

In addition to CI12, the following CIs references my conscious choice in terms of language attunement:

> CI15 [University, UK, age 24]: "In the second lecture in Module 1, more students came, including Nigerian students. They did not need to tell me they were Nigerians, I heard them speak. I knew it, and I was happy to hear them […] I needed to settle on how I wanted to sound. I needed to consider the large audience and also remember I now had Nigerians in the audience, I could not afford to sound weird to my fellow Nigerians too."

> CI18 [University, UK, age 24]: "My Module 2 seminar was even a smaller group, I spoke English in the seminar. I wanted everyone to follow what I was saying. I also needed to communicate, which certainly makes one sound intelligent. I spoke the in-between variety."

In referencing the presence or absence of Nigerians as a variable for the extent of attunement and identity performance, it reflects the influence of cultural affiliation and the desire to maintain a connection to my Nigerian identity while also navigating the expectations of the academic environment. Using my "in-between" English as an adult (CI13; CI15; CI18), I negotiate my academic and national identity. Obiamalu and Mbagwu (2010) stated that cultural disloyalty was one of the reasons bilingual Nigerians code-switch from Igbo to English. Cultural loyalty motivates me to subtly attune my discourse instead of a full switch.

4.3. Conclusion

Upon analysing my critical reflections, the data reveals that my perception of Nigerian English varies depending on the original language of the context, others' perception of my English, and the perceived value of English within the specific context. The contexts examined were Nigeria, Brazil and the UK. However, very few CIs were linked to Brazil, primarily because Brazil is not English-speaking. I perceive Nigerian English as a substandard variety, albeit rarely considering it a standard form. The data showed that my language attitude towards Nigerian English could range from negative to positive, thereby significantly impacting me on emotional, cognitive, and social levels. Although the data encompasses various relevant aspects regarding my perception of Nigerian English, this discussion primarily focused on the underlying factors that have shaped and influenced my perception and motivated me to code-switch. Notably, some subconscious factors contribute to my perception of Nigerian English as improper, deeply rooted in my academic background in Nigeria.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This autoethnographic study provides a nuanced exploration of the role of code-switching in my identity negotiation process within a variety of academic settings. I set out to answer these questions: a) how do I perceive my English in international academic settings? b) what factors motivate me to code-switch in an international academic context? The findings suggest that my attitude towards Nigerian English is intuitively negative. However, I have cultural loyalty towards my national identity. Just like language and identity theories propose, socio-cultural factors prompt my code-switching in various settings. This project offers valuable insights into the complex interplay between language, identity, and social contexts.

The data show a diglossic distinction between Nigerian and "proper" English in international contexts. These two varieties are perceived as different, with Nigerian English considered inferior to British-model English, which I often strove to meet. Drawing upon Bourdieu's (1991) concept of language as capital and symbolic power, it becomes apparent that my accent did not afford me sufficient social capital and power. Similarly, most listeners failed to recognise my variety of English as a standard form, and there is no indication that I fundamentally viewed it as such.

Analysing critical incidents from different educational phases in Nigeria, Brazil, and the United Kingdom demonstrates how my perception of Nigerian English varies depending on the context. The pressure to conform to British-model English as the standard form in Nigerian schools leads to an identity crisis that I navigate through code-switching. My identity negotiation involves adapting language to meet societal expectations and maintain a sense of belonging within the academic landscape. The study further highlights the significant influence of the audience's quality on code-switching behaviour. In educational contexts, the desire for

validation and the need to optimise identity in front of an intellectual audience motivates me to code-switch. Additionally, socio-economic benefits and rewards for using "proper" English contribute to adopting a language void of vernacular influence.

This dynamic relationship between language, identity, and social perception highlights the intricate nature of code-switching to adapt to different audiences and contexts. The findings underscore the significance of language as a tool for identity negotiation and the impact of social norms and expectations on language attitudes. Understanding the complexities of code-switching in international academic settings can aid educators, policymakers, and individuals in fostering inclusive linguistic environments that value diverse language expressions and eliminate language discrimination and stereotypes. This study calls for greater recognition of the various linguistic repertoires within academic spaces and highlights the importance of fostering language acceptance and appreciation.

In summary, this autoethnographic exploration of code-switching and language perception in various contexts adds valuable dimensions to the ongoing discourse on language and identity. It opens the door to further research into how language attitudes are shaped and how individuals negotiate their identities in a multicultural world.

5.1. Reflections and Changes

Before starting my autoethnographic dissertation, I was convinced I embraced my Nigerian accent and linguistic identity. However, the research process unveiled my subconscious code-switching behaviour and a deeply ingrained negative attitude towards my English variety. This newfound awareness has prompted me to consciously embrace my authentic self and speak without hesitation, recognising that my language is proper and worthy of respect. This process of self-discovery and acceptance has proven more arduous than I initially anticipated, but I am committed to persisting on this path of intellectual and professional transformation.

As a language teacher, this process has instilled in me a profound understanding of the power of every reaction and response in shaping language attitudes. I am now devoted to creating an equitable, inclusive and supportive environment for learning. Just as I seek to break free from

the constraints of societal expectations, I am determined to empower my students to embrace their unique linguistic identities.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings and insights presented in the dissertation, this autoethnography study is a springboard for future research projects in language studies and identity negotiation within international academic settings. This dissertation focused on a Nigerian's language behaviour, limiting its generalisability. A recommendation is a comparative analysis of language attitudes and identity negotiation strategies among students from different cultural backgrounds within the same academic setting. Similarly, it will be beneficial to the academic community to conduct longitudinal studies to examine how language attitudes and identity negotiation evolve over time for students studying in international academic settings. Longitudinal research would offer insights into the long-term impact of linguistic capital on academic experiences and language attitudes. Finally, I recommend an examination of how language policies and language of instruction in educational institutions shape students' perceptions of their variety of English. Understanding the effects of language policies could help create more inclusive and supportive language learning environments.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Sample Critical Incidents (CIs)

Age	Context	Reflections
Age 6	Home, Nigeria	I am from a family of seven. My father is Esan, and my mum is Yoruba. My mom was a stay-home home when I was a kid, so we were more familiar with her language, Yoruba and English. When I was about six years old, I came back from school and told my mum that I did not want to speak Yoruba-English mix anymore, I only wanted to speak English. Pure English. I decided to speak pure English because my teachers had taught me that other languages asides from proper English were vernacular, and British English was the proper language. My teacher ensured to remind me that "we speak British English here". I did not know the meaning of vernacular, but it sounded like a terrible word. I felt I needed to stop speaking the bad language and ensure we did not speak it in my house. I moved from speaking the normal home language to speaking the school language at home. My mother raised me using Yoruba and English. She taught me to read in English with both Yoruba and English. Although she never taught me to read in Yoruba, Yoruba was important in our home.

I honestly do not remember how she felt about my switch to English, but I was determined I did not want to speak Yoruba anymore. When my father came home later that day, I told him the same thing and implemented it on the spot. He must have been surprised but proud of me. He did not say he was proud, but I remember he bought me a juice box the next day to commend my initiative. He thought it was brilliant. It felt good to be seen as brilliant. My father was a public secondary school teacher at that time who enrolled his children in private schools. He must have been proud that he was getting value for his money. I remember that English became the predominant language at home. Till date, we always tease my younger brother that he speaks the worst Yoruba ever, haha. I bet it was because I initiated the whole let's speak English only thing. I even remember my dad speak English at family meetings and when it comes to discussing serious issue. I think English is just the most convenient for us at home.

This incident is critical because it subconsciously shaped my perception of English in relation to my actual home language - Yoruba English. I was rewarded for believing English was better, and my competence and use of English made me appear academically sound even as a 6-year-old. Thinking about it now, I was so good at English in secondary school that I represented my school at a spelling bee. Could this be a reason why I am so interested in foreign languages? |
| Age 7 or 8 | Primary School, | As I grew up, it became harder to speak pure English. You know, there were children whose parents did not mind if they spoke Yoruba or |

	Nigeria	English or even mixed both. And there were children who would always remind others to stop speaking vernacular. I was one of the latter. I remember that whenever a student spoke 'vernacular', I was the one who threatened to 'tell Aunty for you'. These kids would quickly adjust and speak properly. I basically meant I would report the person to the teacher. I remember this particular day, one of my teachers overheard me saying, 'I will tell Aunty for you'. The next thing I heard was, 'Stop speaking vernacular'. 'Stop speaking vernacular' is a familiar phrase from my primary school. I thought I had outgrown that because I spoke pure English. Apparently, speaking vernacular was not just about the home language in school; it was also about nativising the English language by speaking English through Yoruba. The statement I uttered made total sense, and it was well understood among my peers. I think teachers understood it too. It was not much vernacular because I was obviously speaking English, right? But I was told the correct form is 'I will report you to Aunty'. The correct form just sounded totally wrong and unauthentic I wanted to speak proper English, but somehow, I fell short. Nonetheless, switching to the proper expression was not hard for me because I was quite smart, and I needed to ensure my teachers could see it. That is not the only phrase we used to say in school, but it actually stuck, and I do not know why. This is critical because I am reminded that I cannot be creative with language that is not considered mine originally. And I must stick to the norm to remain smart.
20	University, Brazil	One day, while having a conversation, I said something about going home, and this person laughed at my pronunciation of the word 'home'. They said it sounded funny, and where did I learn the pronunciation? They asked why I had to emphasise the 'h' the way I did. It was not that they did not recognise the word or it was wrong; it was that the tone was different and unusual. I tried to hide my embarrassment by saying that was the correct pronunciation. They said yes, but it still sounded funny. I said yes, well, that is how the British pronounce it. I later realised that my Nigerian intonation had slipped in. I was unaware. That was not how the British pronounced it; that was how I pronounced it. I had pronounced the word like any other educated Nigerian. It was correct but different. I wonder if I said that was the British pronunciation because it is the standard I always strove for. Thinking about the incident now, I realise I was not that proud of speaking the Nigerian way. There is indeed no single Nigerian way of speaking, but there is a way to feel the Nigerianness in English, and I did try to hide it. I was trying to optimise my linguistic identity, be seen as better, and be acknowledged as a good English speaker, but it did not feel authentic.
20	Work, Brazil	Later on, during my year abroad, I had the opportunity to intern as a native English teaching assistant at a language school. I had colleagues

		from other English-speaking countries, and it felt great to be finally acknowledged as a native speaker. I remember the first lesson. I spoke normally, with my Nigerian accent. I do not know why I did not even try to sound British-like. Many of the students said they liked my English because it sounded like Wakanda's English and was easily understandable. For the first time, I thought my English could also be a standard because it was not that bad after all. This incident is critical to me because it was the first time my English was acknowledged in an international academic context.
24	University, UK	On my first day at the seminar, I realised there were few people. It was relieving that I could aim to be clear in my speech. I did not need to code-switch that much because there was not much to lose in a smaller setting. Just at the start of the seminar, I was having a conversation with a colleague about the programme and the module structure. When I said the word "module" pronounced as [ˈmɒdjuːl], they could not recognise the word. So, I said it again after the third time, and they said oh, you mean 'module' {mɑː.dʒuːl] - pronouncing it their way. I said, yes, "module" [ˈmɒdjuːl] - pronouncing it the like I did the first time. They said the pronunciation was funny. I felt embarrassed at first, but then I reminded myself I said it right, so it was not my fault that they could not recognise the word. I also felt proud of myself for saying it like any other educated Nigerian would have. Two feelings at once, embarrassment for not being understood and pride for choosing to maintain my Nigerian pronunciation of the word. In the course of the seminar, we introduced ourselves. Of course, I said I was Nigerian, and my colleague said, 'Oh, I thought you were a native speaker of English. I see why you pronounced 'module' that way.' I was confused about whether I was no longer a native speaker because I mentioned I was Nigerian or because I spoke in a weird way.

I felt like my nationality had sold me out. Oh, how I wanted to be acknowledged as a native speaker without having to sound different than I normally do. I think what was more important for me is that people don't mistake where I am from because of how I speak. Still, I didn't want them to assume where I was from because of how I spoke. Just to add to that, I did not want them to think, 'Oh, you speak good English'. I wished they would just see that English is also my language without having to sound different. I decided it was better to attune a little - just enough not to be asked, 'Where are you from?'. It was not like I did not want people to know my nationality. I just did not want my English to be questioned. |
| 24 | University, UK | At the end of the first Module of my MA, I had a group presentation with some peers. I remember my peers wanted me to lead the presentation because they believed my English was really good. However, I was a bit nervous because I was an international student like them and worried about not sounding clear or being understood. I was not worried about grammar, but I was bothered about pronouncing |

		the words wrongly or weirdly; honestly, that was what I saw the Nigerian accent as at that time. So I code-switched, but it was just enough attunement to make me feel like I sounded reasonable and intelligent. In a 22-second recording my peer made of my presentation, I sort of studied my attunement. I realised I had reduced the sing-song effect of the Nigerian accent, I did not really sound British-like, I just spoke pure English, like I was taught in my secondary school. I was so proud of myself that I did not entirely fake it. Watching the recording and hearing my own English made me feel more confident. I think I was well understood because my group had a distinction in the presentation. This was critical because the first assessment affirmed my academic intelligence through spoken language.
24	University, UK	In the second lecture in Module 1, more students came, including Nigerian students. They did not need to tell me they were Nigerians, I heard them speak. I knew it, and I was happy to hear them. Different Nigerian English accents depend on the native language spoken; not all are intelligible within Nigeria because one cannot be familiar with all the 500+ languages in the country. I could understand these Nigerian students because I was quite familiar with the native languages I guessed they spoke. These ones were not code-switching; they did not attempt to even when asking questions in the large classroom. I was kind of proud of them and worried for them at the same time. I was thinking, are they even thinking about how they sound and if people will understand them? Was it because they were not as young as me? Why were they so secure? I envied them a bit, but I could not be like them.

I needed to settle on how I wanted to sound. I needed to consider the large audience and also remember I now had Nigerians in the audience, I could not afford to sound weird to my fellow Nigerians too. I decided it was better to code-switch a bit and try to sound neutral. Not too Nigerian-like, not too British-like, just English, just in-between, and I did it. I knew I got it right when one Nigerian student commented that I spoke well and that I was intelligent. That was a satisfying experience because, at least, I was not told I sounded unusual or I was 'forming'. This in-between accent was what I used to all through Modules 1 and 2 among my peers and tutors. |
| 24 | Social, UK | A while back, I rang up a friend I had not heard from since I moved to the UK. This person is one of those friends I have thought-provoking conversations with, and it was so good to hear from them. In the first 30 seconds of the call, my friend jokingly said, 'Your accent has not changed much, thank God'. I paused for a minute, chuckled and asked what they meant. 'Is my accent supposed to change?' 'Or is it supposed to change a lot?'. My friend responded that they expect all Nigerians who move to English-speaking Western countries to acquire 'proper British English'. They said they should eliminate the 'poor accent' they have learnt. They said they understood why my accent |

		had not really changed. They said it is because, 'Your English has always been good from day one, so you are secure'. They said this generation does not speak good English like our parents and grandparent. My friend said if they moved, they would definitely speak better because it is necessary. They said I had good exposure, so maybe I do not feel the need to find favour in the sight of others like some Nigerians feel. They mentioned that the current Nigerian economic situation had rid many Nigerians of self-security, and they need to speak proper English to get good opportunities. I told them that I change my accent when I need to also. And they said that is expected, but at least 'it is not fake because you already speak English well'. This incident made me think about how other Nigerians and I see our English as compared to other Western English. Should this incident serve as permission to always code-switch in international settings?
24	University, UK	Some time ago, I requested a reference letter from one of my professors, and when I received the letter, I was delighted about the lecturer's perception of me and my English. Every time I spoke English when the lecturer was present, I spoke my "in-between" English. It was neither Nigerian nor British-like. It was just easy to identify with neither. The lecturer thought I had a native-level proficiency in English. I was joyed to see that. You know, being acknowledged in an academic setting is quite a big deal for me. On the one hand, I thought, yes, I'd been recognised as a speaker of proper English, but on the other hand, I thought I was not recognised as a native speaker, I was only native-like. Again, the identity crisis is that I do not even know if I should call myself a native speaker or not. I really do not know what qualifies me to native-like, but it felt good and sad at the same time. Well, what matters is my proficiency level helps me to communicate my intelligence and my lecturer recognised my ability to be 'articulate' in English.
		Lecturer's Response: I agree that the concepts of native speaker and native-like speaker are problematic in our current super-diverse linguistic world - both in terms of the 'othering' work they do, the implication that the vague notion of 'native-speaker' is constructed as the 'ideal model' or 'proper' and the fact that it feels a bit of an old fashioned term to use. I was a bit surprised to see I had used that term as I wouldn't use that in my writing on language diversity - I can only think that in writing a reference to support someone, I was sub-consciously and pragmatically imagining that this would represent a positive case for a speaker at a workshop like the one you were applying for, though on reflection am reminded of the resonances of colonialism the term carries. Thanks for sharing this as it's given me pause to reflect on the term and how and why it gets used. I don't think I will use this term in references in the future but will seek an alternative to comment favourably on the articulacy and eloquence of a

		speaker. I think your point that 'it felt good and sad at the same time' is an important and powerful one, in reminding writers that their words potentially have an impact on those they use those words to describe.
24	Social, UK	I remember one time I was studying in the library and my mum called. Normally, when Mum and I spoke, we used a balanced amount of Yoruba and English. We would mix every now and then, but of course, she ensured she spoke a lot of Yoruba. But this day, I was out, I did not want to mix Yoruba and English because I was in an academic setting. I also did not want to use the Nigerian accent because I felt uncomfortable with it then. I did not want to use a British-like accent with my mum because it would be so weird. After about 2 seconds of quick thought, I used the British-like accent. My mum did not react weirdly she just responded like she would. After the conversation was over, I asked myself, 'Esther, what was that'. The most interesting part was the next time my mum called, instead of calling me 'Omo mi' (my child) which she usually called me, she called me 'my baby girl, my sweet baby girl' and then followed by a few sentences in pure English, no Yoruba. I wondered if my accent in our previous conversation was why she decided to join in. I did not ask her what was happening because it would be strange to have that conversation. Honestly, I just code-switch because British English just sounds better. It does not sound funny like Nigerian English. Wait, that is not true. It sounds funny. I remember making fun of the accent; there are funny-speaking native speakers in the UK too. At least they are still British native speakers, so they can afford to sound funny, I cannot.
24	Social, UK	Recently, I was conversing with my friend about my English since I moved to the UK. My friend currently lives in Nigeria, but they travel a lot. I was sharing with them my research interest, and my friend told me that I do not code-switch per se. They said I choose to do it when I want. This was their explanation: "I think your command of English is clearly different pre and post-moving to the UK. You have a random code-switch most noticeable when trying to explain a concept, lightly being jovial, or speaking to an organized audience; at an event, on television or other expressions." Thinking back on the times I've code-switched in an international setting while speaking to an international or national audience, we both realised that I code-switch to a seemingly higher variety of English, which is British-like, whenever having intellectual conversations or in a prestigious context. However, in this situation, unlike what they said about my choosing to code-switch, I explained that I did not always mean to code-switch. It appears that I had attached sounding intelligent to the British-like accent.

Reflective Journal

20/06/2023

Primary School

1. When I was about six years old, I came back from school and told my mum that I did not want to speak Yoruba-English mix anymore, I only wanted to speak English. *[Subtractive Bilingualism and Language shift , Influence of school environment and language expectations on language choice and attitudes]* Pure English *[(British) English as a proper and superior language variety]*. My mother raised me using Yoruba and English together *[Subtractive Bilingualism and Language shift]*. She taught me to read in English with both Yoruba and English. *[Code-mixing as a home culture]*

Although she never taught me to read in Yoruba *[Subtractive Bilingualism and Language shift]*, Yoruba was important in our home *[Influence of school environment and language expectations on language choice and attitudes]*. I honestly do not remember how she felt about my switch to English *[Parents' language preferences and involvement in child's academic pursuits]*, but I was determined I did not want to speak Yoruba anymore *[Influence of school environment and language expectations on language choice and attitudes]*. When my father came home later that day, I told him the same thing and implemented it on the spot *[Parents' language preferences and involvement in child's academic pursuits]*. He must have been surprised but proud of me. He did not say he was proud, but I remember he bought me a juice box the next day to commend my initiative. *[National and international socio-economic benefits/advantages of proper English language]* He thought it was brilliant. It felt good to be seen as brilliant *[Desire for recognition and validation]* *[Parents' language preferences and involvement in child's academic pursuits]*. *[Parents' language preferences and involvement in child's academic pursuits]* *[Subtractive Bilingualism and Language shift , Parents' language preferences and involvement in child's academic pursuits, Desire for*

recognition and validation, Being perceived as intelligent because of language choice/accent] My father was a public secondary school teacher at that time who enrolled his children in private schools. He must have been proud that he was getting value for his money. *[Parents' language preferences and involvement in child's academic pursuits]*

The reason I decided to speak pure English from that moment on was that my teachers had taught me Yoruba was vernacular *[Influence of school environment and language expectations on language choice and attitudes, Societal and peer influence on language attitudes/choices],* and English was the proper language *[(British) English as a proper and superior language variety, Societal and peer influence on language attitudes/choices]*. I did not know the meaning of vernacular, but it sounded like a terrible word. *[Influence of school environment and language expectations on language choice and attitudes, Societal and peer influence on language attitudes/choices]* I felt I needed to stop speaking the bad language and ensure we did not speak it in my house too. *[Subtractive Bilingualism and Language shift , Societal and peer influence on language attitudes/choices, (British) English as a proper and superior language variety]* I moved from speaking the normal home language to speaking the school language at home. *[Influence of school environment and language expectations on language choice and attitudes, Societal and peer influence on language attitudes/choices, (British) English as a proper and superior language variety]*

This incident is critical because it subconsciously shaped my perception of English in relation to my actual home language - Yoruba English *[Subtractive Bilingualism and Language shift , (British) English as a proper and superior language variety, Influence of school environment and language expectations on language choice and attitudes]*. *[Code-switching as a strategy/skill for identity negotiation]* I was rewarded for believing English was better, and my competence and use of English made me appear academically sound even as a 6-year-old *[Being perceived as intelligent because of language choice/accent]*. Thinking about it now, I was so good at English in secondary school that I represented my school at a spelling bee *[Being perceived as intelligent because of language choice/accent]*. Could this be a reason why I am so interested in foreign languages? *[]*

11. During the induction week, I did not say much. I was observing others and how they spoke English. I've never really experienced such variety of English until I arrived in the UK *[]*. I honestly tried to understand how people choose to sound. It was fascinating to watch that very few students spoke at the induction. *[National and international socio-economic benefits/advantages of proper English language, Code-switching as a strategy/skill for identity negotiation]* It felt like the most secure spoke up *[(British) English as a proper and superior language variety]*. My first lecture in the School of Education had over 100 students from different backgrounds - Chinese, Indonesian, Indian etc. I did not see any Nigerians (at least not yet). I thought it was only me, and I was a bit worried about what to sound like *[International intelligibility of Nigerian English, Motivation/factors for switching , Perception of Nigerian English/accent as "poor English/ accent" by Nigerians]*. Should I sound like an educated Nigerian or British-like since that's the standard? *[Code-switching as a strategy/skill for identity negotiation, National and international socio-economic benefits/advantages of proper English language, (British) English as a proper and superior language variety]* In the first lecture, I sounded like the latter when I asked questions. I think my attunement was a bit much this time. *[Societal and peer influence on language attitudes/choices, Perception of Nigerian English/accent as "poor English/ accent" by Nigerians, Going to a better land, remember to speak better but do not forget your home country , Unintentional code-switching, National and international socio-economic benefits/advantages of proper English language, Code-switching as a strategy/skill for identity negotiation]* It was my first lecture, I had to be articulate and sound intelligent like I knew exactly what I was saying. *[Code-switching as a strategy/skill for identity negotiation, (British) English as a proper and superior language variety, Being perceived as intelligent because of language choice/accent]* I believed a British-like accent would make my audience want to listen to me, they would want to understand me. Like they would any native speaker. *[Being perceived as intelligent because of language choice/accent , Code-switching as a strategy/skill for identity negotiation]*

Interestingly, many mistook me for a native British-English speaker *[Language practices as a symbol of national identity, Impacts of Code-switching, (British) English as a proper and superior language variety]*. It

was not what I wanted per se, but it did feel like having a cover, protection. *[National and international socio-economic benefits/advantages of proper English language]* In a large lecture room with an audience from multiple contexts, I used what I considered most understandable English *[Motivation/factors for switching]*, which is the British model. *[(British) English as a proper and superior language variety]* I consider the larger audience and the language that make me sound more intelligent. *[Motivation/factors for switching]* I consider the capital, *[Motivation/factors for switching]* I accommodate speech to optimise and perform my identity *[Code-switching as a strategy/skill for identity negotiation, Motivation/factors for switching , (British) English as a proper and superior language variety]*.

Appendix 3: Codebook (Initial Coding)

Tag	Description	number of highlights
Balancing language use to belong and identify		19
(British) English as a superior language		15
Influence of school environment on language choice		12
Code-switching as a strategy/skill		11
British model as a superior variety		11
Being perceived as intelligent because of choice of language		10
Societal influence on language attitudes		10
Identifying what variety to speak at the context demands		9
Constructing self-perception and identity		8
Desire for belongingness		8
The size/quality of the audience as metric for code-switching (potential profit or loss)		8
Speaking pure English	Higher variety of English	7
Linguistic competence reflecting academic perception		7
School environment and language expectations		7
Social benefits of proper English		7
Trying to hide Nigerian intonation and linguistic identity		7
Feeling secure with language competence		7
Boost in confidence regarding English proficiency		7
Motivation for switching		7
Academic recognition and achievement		6
You must be perfect, proper and onpoint		6
International intelligibility of Nigerian English		6
English is my language too		6
Language shift	Moving from one language to another	5
Feeling of accomplishment		5
Conforming to language norms for acceptance		5
International/British model as the best educational standard in Nigeria		5

Text   Tag

	A	B	C
25	Language shift	Moving from one language to another	5
26	Feeling of accomplishment		5
27	Conforming to language norms for acceptance		5
28	International/British model as the best educational standard in Nigeria		5
29	Feeling ashamed and questioning Nigerian English intelligibility		5
30	Worries about linguistic competence		5
31	Perception of authenticity in language use		4
32	Desire for proper English and smart image		4
33	Economic benefits/advantages of language		4
34	English as a global language		4
35	Finding my pronunciation funny		4
36	Nigerian English is not recognised. It is not a standard		4
37	Switch slightly, not too much		4
38	Academic intelligence affirmed through spoken language		4
39	Bilingualism	Speaking more than one language	3
40	Code-mixing as a home culture	Mixing two or more languages	3
41	Parent involvement in academic pursuits		3
42	The place of native languages at school		3
43	Desire for recognition and validation		3
44	Difficulty in maintaining pure English		3
45	Peer influence on language choice		3
46	Impossible to know English enough		3
47	Awareness of English varieties		3
48	Being rebuked for speaking proper English		3
49	Language preference and choosing		3
50	Being considered different by a group you hope to belong to		3
51	Unintentional code-switching		3
52	I spoke normally, with my Nigerian accent		3
53	Proud of my English		3
54	Being mistaken for who I was not		3

Text   Tag

	A	B	C
	you hope to belong to		3
			3
52	I spoke normally, with my Nigerian accent		3
53	Proud of my English		3
54	Being mistaken for who I was not		3
55	Just in-between, not identifying with any nation. Just to sound intelligent		3
56	First languages	The languages a child learns from birth	2
57	Profitability: Being rewarded for speaking English.	The benefits of speaking English	2
58	Negative perception of vernacular languages		2
59	Threat of reporting for speaking vernacular		2
60	Loss: Getting rebuked for speaking improper English		2
61	Pressure to conform to the acceptable norm		2
62	Speaking high English when you should be speaking low English.	There is a language for every context.	2
63	Unable to understand Nigerian English		2
64	Maybe the listener is also responsible for intelligibility		2
65	Being acknowledged as a native English speaker		2
66	Positive feedback on Nigerian accent		2
67	Shift in Perception and Confidence		2
68	English is a gatekeeper in international education		2
69	Trying not to code-switch too much	Balancing British English and Personal Identity	2
70	Ease of Integration in Sheffield		2
71	Code-switching in international context is a sensitive topic among Nigerians		2
72	We all attune our discourse		2
73	No need to code-switch when a Nigerian speaks to another Nigerians		2
74	Language as a symbol of national identity		2
75	You are not a native speaker because of your nationality even though you speak 'so well'		2
76	Attunement and code-switching for some confidence		2
77	Association of unchanged accent with security		2
78	Economic situation impacting self-		

	A	B	C
	Association of unchanged accent with		
78	Economic situation impacting self-security and accent modification		2
79	Recognition of native-level proficiency		2
80	Questioning the need for constant code-switching and allowing others to request adjustments		2
81	Parental support/indifference		2
82	Subconsciously choosing to use a British-like accent		2
83	Literacy in English only	Learning to read in native language was not necessary	1
84	The place of native language in the home		1
85	Parental pride and reward for language shift		1
86	Perception of value for money in education		1
87	Connection between language preference and interest in foreign languages		1
88	Positive reinforcement and motivation		1
89	Unstable language shift		1
90	Parents' language preferences		1
91	Cautioning the so called expert		1
92	Feeling ashamed for letting the teacher down		1
93	Nativising the English language through Yoruba		1
94	Teacher's feign of unintelligibility of language		1
95	Negative reinforcement and motivations to speak English		1
96	Punishment for speaking vernacular		1
97	Monetary fines for vernacular use		1
98	The place of proper English at home		1
99	Not rewarded for speaking proper English at home		1
100	Proper English language as fundamental to accessing international opportunities		1
101	Language as a symbol of ethnic identity		1
102	The importance of native language		1
103	Non-identification with 'unintelligible' other Nigerian English speakers. (me and them)		1

Text   Tag

	A	B	C
	and them)		1
104	Asking why am I being myself	When I speak like a Nigerian, I feel authentic and confident	1
105	The listener recognises the word	Is the English unintelligible or is it just different from what the listener has known	1
106	Emphasising correctness with British model		1
107	Feeling unintelligent for speaking normally		1
108	My English was not that bad after all		1
109	Nigerian English as a standard		1
110	Realizing the value and understanding of one's own English		1
111	Cultural Reference and Representation/ Comparisons to Wakanda's English		1
112	Problematic requirement for English proficiency test for Nigerians		1
113	Displeasure with the requirement but complying with it		1
114	Speaking normally during the speaking test		1
115	Surprise at having to prove English proficiency again in two years		1
116	Withdrawn advantage		1
117	Negotiating English Proficiency and Requesting exemption from retaking IELTS test		1
118	Obtaining a letter from the Brazilian language school as proof of English proficiency		1
119	Questioning the acceptance of a letter from another Nigerian		1
120	Expressing excitement about studying English in the UK		1
121	Going to the better land		1
122	Changing accent upon arrival in the UK		1
123	Discussing code-switching of Nigerians on social media		1
124	Never heard so many types of English	Observing Language Variation	1
125	Observing other's perception of their own English so as to decide how I should sound		1
126	Those who were sure of their English contributed		1

Text   Tag

	A	B	C
	Never heard so many types of English	Observing Language variation	1
125	Observing other's perception of their own English so as to decide how I should sound		1
126	Those who were sure of their English contributed		1
127	International intelligibility of other Englishes		1
128	The code-switching was a bit too much		1
129	The protective power of British accent.	The advantage and leverage	1
130	Code-Switching in the First Lecture		1
131	Recognising British accent as the standard		1
132	Prioritising understandability and intelligibility		1
133	Listener not recognising the word being said		1
134	Language practice symbolises national identity	National identity impacts language practise	1
135	Don't define me by how I speak		1
136	Desire to challenge assumptions and stereotypes		1
137	How others perceive my English		1
138	I did not entirely fake it		1
139	Recognition of Nigerian students through their accents		1
140	Happy to hear a familiar accent		1
141	Understanding Nigerian English accents based on native languages	Intelligibility within Nigeria	1
142	These Nigerian students were not code-switching		1
143	Not all students code-switch		1
144	Age as a factor for code-switching		1
145	Envy and comparison with other Nigerian students		1
146	The in-between language as my new code		1
147	Meeting new people		1
148	You hear an accent that is not there because I said I am Nigerian		1
149	Nationality as a proxy for perception		1
150	Speaking with a better accent improves self-image and others perception of the person		1
	Ambivalence towards compliments on		

Text   Tag

	A	B	C
	because I said I am Nigerian		1
	Nationality as a proxy for perception		1
150	Speaking with a better accent improves self-image and others perception of the person		1
151	Ambivalence towards compliments on not sounding Nigerian		1
152	Expectation for Nigerians to acquire "proper British English"		1
153	Perception of Nigerian accent as "poor accent"		1
154	Access to good primary/secondary academic background in Nigeria		1
155	Adapting accent when necessary		1
156	Nigerians' perception of their English		1
157	Speaking English to ensure understanding		1
158	Rejecting the notion of speaking British English and embracing Nigerian English		1
159	Irony of code-switching while arguing against language imperialism		1
160	Want to understand rationale of code-switching		1
161	Perception of Nigerian accent as lousy		1
162	Nigerian English is internationally intelligible to native English speakers		1
163	Realisation that being understood is not solely dependent on the speaker		1
164	Reflection on accent changes within a year due to code-switching		1
165	Subconsciously choosing to use a British-like accent while talking to the mother		1
166	Mother's subconscious use of English and change in terms of endearment		1
167	Perception that British English sounds better than Nigerian English		1
168	Nigerian English sounds funny		1
169	Realisation that funny-speaking accents exist in native speakers as well		1
170	Ability to choose whether to switch or stay		1
171	Speaking British-like English means intelligence.		1

Text   Tag

73

Appendix 4: Line-by-line Coding

Tag	Description	Number of highlights
Subtractive Bilingualism and Language shift	Moving from one language to another	10
Code-mixing as a home culture	Mixing two or more languages	3
Being perceived as intelligent because of language choice/accent		23
Influence of school environment and language expectations on language choice and attitudes		21
Societal and peer influence on language attitudes/ choices		14
Desire for recognition and validation		8
Constructing self-perception and identity		8
Difficulty in maintaining pure English		3
Parents' language preferences and involvement in child's academic pursuits		8
Nativising the English language through Yoruba		1
Perception of authenticity in language use		4
Awareness of English varieties		3
Loss: Getting rebuked for speaking improper English		2
Conforming to language norms for acceptance		6
Punishment for speaking vernacular		4
You must be perfect, proper and onpoint		6
The place of proper English at home		1
Not rewarded/rebuked for speaking high (proper) English at home, where you should be speaking low English		4
Speaking high English when you should be speaking low English.	There is a language for every context.	2
National and international socio-economic benefits/advantages of proper English language		12
Code-switching as a strategy/skill for identity negotiation		33
Language preference and choosing		3
Desire for belongingness		11
The importance of native language		1
International intelligibility of Nigerian English		6
English as a global language		4
English is my language too		8
(British) English as a proper and superior language variety		35
Maybe the listener is also responsible for intelligibility		2

	intelligibility		2
31	The listener recognises the word	Is the English unintelligible or is it just different from what the listener has known	1
32	Emphasising correctness with British model		1
33	Unintentional code-switching		3
34	Feeling secure with my Nigerian accent and English use		18
35	English is a gatekeeper in international education		2
36	Withdrawn advantage		1
37	Questioning the acceptance of a letter from another Nigerian		1
38	Nigerian English is not recognised. It is not a standard		9
39	Expressing excitement about studying English in the UK		1
40	Going to a better land, remember to speak better but do not forget your home country		4
41	Ease of Integration in Sheffield		2
42	Code-switching in international context is a sensitive topic among Nigerians		2
43	Discussing code-switching of Nigerians on social media		1
44	We all attune our discourse		2
45	No need to code-switch when a Nigerian speaks to another Nigerians		2
46	Never heard so many types of English	Observing Language Variation	1
47	Observing other's perception of their own English so as to decide how I should sound		1
48	Those who were sure of their English contributed		1
49	Worries about linguistic competence		5
50	International intelligibility of other Englishes		1
51	The code-switching was a bit too much		1
52	Being mistaken for who I was not		3
53	The protective power of British accent.	The advantage and leverage	1
54	Code-Switching in the First Lecture		1
55	Recognising British accent as the standard		1
56	Motivation for switching		7
57	Prioritising understandability and intelligibility		1
58	The size/quality of the audience as metric for code-switching (potential profit or loss)		8
59	Listener not recognising the word being said		1
60	You are not a native speaker because of your nationality even though you speak 'so well'		2
61	Language practices as a symbol of national identity	National identity impacts language practise	7

	nationality even though you speak 'so well'		2
61	Language practices as a symbol of national identity	National identity impacts language practise	7
62	Don't define me by how I speak		1
63	Desire to challenge assumptions and stereotypes		1
64	Switch slightly, not too much		4
65	How others perceive Nigerian English		8
66	Attunement and code-switching for some confidence		2
67	I did not entirely fake it		1
68	These Nigerian students were not code-switching		1
69	Not all students code-switch		1
70	Age as a factor for code-switching		1
71	Envy and comparison with other Nigerian students		1
72	Just in-between, not identifying with any nation. Just to sound intelligent		3
73	The in-between language as my new code		1
74	Meeting new people		1
75	You hear an accent that is not there because I said I am Nigerian		1
76	Nationality as a proxy for perception		1
77	Speaking with a better accent improves self-image and others perception of the person		1
78	Ambivalence towards compliments on not sounding Nigerian		1
79	Expectation for Nigerians to acquire "proper British English"		1
80	Perception of Nigerian English/accent as "poor English/ accent" by Nigerians		19
81	Association of unchanged accent with security and intelligence		2
82	Economic situation impacting self-security and accent modification		2
83	Access to good primary/secondary academic background in Nigeria		1
84	Adapting accent when necessary		1
85	Speaking English to ensure understanding		1
86	Recognition of native-level proficiency		2
87	Rejecting the notion of speaking British English and embracing Nigerian English		1
88	Irony of code-switching while arguing against language imperialism		1
89	Want to understand rationale of code-switching		1
90	Nigerian English is internationally intelligible to native English speakers		1

91	Realisation that being understood is not solely dependent on the speaker		1
92	Questioning the need for constant code-switching and allowing others to request adjustments		2
93	Reflection on accent changes within a year due to code-switching		1
94	Subconsciously choosing to use a British-like accent while talking to the mother		1
95	Mother's subconscious use of English and change in terms of endearment		1
96	Realisation that funny-speaking accents exist in native speakers as well		1
97	Ability to choose whether to switch or stay		1
98	Subconsciously choosing to use a British-like accent		2

Appendix 5: Code Grouping

Tag	Research Questions	Number of highlights
Code-switching as a strategy/skill for identity negotiation		48
(British) English as a proper and superior language variety		42
Motivation/factors for switching		24
Being perceived as intelligent because of language choice/ accent	What factors do I consider before code-switching in an international academic context?	23
Perception of Nigerian English/accent as "poor English/ accent" by Nigerians		22
Influence of school environment and language expectations on language choice and attitudes		21
Feeling secure with my Nigerian accent and English use		21
National and international socio-economic benefits/advantages of proper English language		17
Societal and peer influence on language attitudes/choices		14
Desire for belongingness		11
Language practices as a symbol of national identity		11
Subtractive Bilingualism and Language shift	How do I perceive the intelligibility of my English in an international academic setting?	10
Nigerian English is not recognised. It is not a standard		10
Just in-between, not identifying with any nation. Just to sound intelligent		10
Impacts of Code-switching		10
Desire for recognition and validation	**What is my data telling me about my research questions?**	8
Parents' language preferences and involvement in child's academic pursuits		8
International intelligibility of Nigerian English		8
English is my language too		8
How others perceive Nigerian English		8
Conforming to language norms for acceptance		6
Unintentional code-switching		5
Code-mixing as a home culture	How do I perceive code-switching in the UK HE context? Would it be as a form of bilingualism (expressing multiple identities	4
Perception of authenticity in language use		4
Punishment for speaking vernacular		4
Not rewarded/rebuked for speaking high (proper) English at home, where you should be speaking low English		4
Going to a better land, remember to speak better but do not forget your home country		4

28	Going to a better land, remember to speak better but do not forget your home country		4
29	Questioning the need for constant code-switching and allowing others to request adjustments		4
30	Difficulty in maintaining pure English	**How do I tell others what I found?**	3
31	Code-switching in international context is a sensitive topic among Nigerians		3
32	Loss: Getting rebuked for speaking improper English		2
33	Speaking high English when you should be speaking low English.		2
34	The importance of native language		2

Appendix 6:Theme Generation

	A	B	C	D
1	**Research Questions**	**Tag**	**Themes**	**Deleted**
2	How do I perceive my English in an international academic setting?	Ensuring that pupils are speaking pure English + Desire for proper English and smart image + You must be perfect, proper and on point + British model as a superior variety + International/British model as the best educational standard in Nigeria + Emphasising correctness with British model + Recognising British accent as the standard + Expectation for Nigerians to acquire "proper British English" = (British) English as a proper and superior language	**British-like English as a Proxy for Intelligence**	Literacy in English only + First languages = Subtractive Bilingualism and Language shift
3	How do I perceive code-switching in the UK HE context? Would it be as a form of bilingualism (expressing multiple identities simultaneously) or identity optimisation (identification	Not rewarded for speaking proper English at home + Being rebuked for speaking proper English= Not rewarded/rebuked for speaking high (proper) English at home, where you should be speaking low English.	The Perception of Nigerian English in International Educational Contexts	Feeling ashamed for letting the teacher down = Loss: Getting rebuked for speaking improper English
4	What factors do I consider before code-switching in an international academic context?	Parents' language preferences + Parental support/indifference + Parental pride and reward for language shift + Positive reinforcement and motivation + Perception of value for money in education = Parents' language preferences and involvement in child's academic pursuits		Nigerian English is internationally intelligible to native English speakers + The listener recognises the word + Listener not recognising the word being said = International intelligibility of Nigerian English
5	Perceived as Vernacular	School environment and language expectations + Teacher's feign of unintelligibility of language + Negative perception of home languages + The place of native language in the home + The place of native languages at school + Societal influence on language attitudes + Peer influence on language choice + Shift in Perception and Confidence + Societal and peer influence on language attitudes/choices = Influence of school environment and language expectations on language choice and attitudes	The Diglossic Relationship between Nigerian and British model English in Nigerian Educational Contexts	Changing accent upon arrival in the UK + Trying not to code-switch too much = Going to a better land, remember to speak better but do not forget your home country
6	Perceived as Standard Language	Academic recognition and achievement + Linguistic competence reflecting academic perception + Speaking British-like English means intelligence + Academic intelligence affirmed through spoken language = Being perceived as intelligent because of language choice/accent	The Influence of School Language Expectations on Language Attitudes - Linguistic Competence as a Reflection of Academic Achievement	
7		Proper English language as fundamental to accessing international opportunities + Social benefits of proper English + Profitability: Being rewarded for speaking English + English is a gatekeeper in international education + English as a global language + The protective power of British accent. = National and international socio-economic benefits/ advantages of proper English language	Socio-economic Advantages of Speaking British-model or proper English in International Educational Contexts	Recommendation - Our Nigerian teachers think us small
		Language as a symbol of national identity +Recognition of Nigerian students through their accents + Language as a symbol of ethnic identity + Happy to hear a familiar accent +		

	A	B	C	D
8		Language as a symbol of national identity +Recognition of Nigerian students through their accents + Language as a symbol of ethnic identity + Happy to hear a familiar accent + Understanding Nigerian English accents based on native languages + You are not a native speaker because of your nationality even though you speak 'so well' + You hear an accent that is not there because I said I am Nigerian + Nationality as a proxy for perception = Language practices as a symbol of national identity and vice versa		
9				
10		Non-identification with 'unintelligible' other Nigerian English speakers. (me and them) + Trying to hide Nigerian intonation and linguistic identity + Perception of Nigerian accent as lousy + Perception that British English sounds better than Nigerian English + Nigerian English sounds funny + Feeling unintelligent for speaking normally + Negative reinforcement and motivations to speak English + Feeling ashamed and questioning Nigerian English intelligibility + Nigerians' perception of their English + Worries about linguistic competence+ Withdrawn advantage + Questioning the acceptance of a letter from another Nigerian + Nigerian English is not recognised. It is not a standard = Perception of Nigerian English/accent as "poor English/ accent" by Nigerians	**Social Motivations for Code-Switching in International Contexts**	
11				
12		Identifying what variety to speak at the context demands + Balancing language use to belong and identify + Awareness of English varieties + Code-Switching in the First Lecture + Ability to choose whether to switch or stay + Mother's subconscious use of English and change in terms of endearment + Subconsciously choosing to use a British-like accent while talking to the mother + Constructing self-perception and identity + Language preference and choosing + Adapting accent when necessary + Envy and comparison with other Nigerian students + Observing other's perception of their own English so as to decide how I should sound + Reflection on accent changes within a year due to code-switching + We all attune our discourse= Code-switching as a strategy/skill for identity negotiation (establishing identity)	Hierarchy and Prestige of British English: Code-switching as a strategy and skill to establish identity	
13				
14		The in-between language as my new code + Switch slightly, not too much + I did not entirely fake it + Don't define me by how I speak + The code-switching was a bit too much + Unintentional code-switching = Just in-		

15		Rejecting the notion of speaking British English and embracing Nigerian English + Ambivalence towards compliments on not sounding Nigerian + Irony of code-switching while arguing against language imperialism + Realisation that funny-speaking accents exist in native speakers as well + Being mistaken for who I was not + Recognition of native-level proficiency + Subconsciously choosing to use a British-like accent = Impacts of Code-switching	Impacts of Code-switching on Language Behaviour and Identity
16			
17		Age as a factor for code-switching + The size/quality of the audience as metric for code-switching (potential profit or loss)+ Prioritising understandability and intelligibility+ Want to understand rationale of code-switching + These Nigerian students were not code-switching + Not all Nigerian students code-switch + No need to code-switch when a Nigerian speaks to another Nigerians + Meeting new people + Attunement and code-switching for some confidence + Speaking with a better accent improves self-image and others perception of the person + Speaking British-like English to ensure understanding + Pressure to conform to the acceptable norm + Conforming to language norms for acceptance + Finding my pronunciation funny + Unable to understand Nigerian English= How others perceive Nigerian English = Motivation/factor for switching	Factors that motivate Nigerian English Speaker to Code-switch in International Contexts
18			
19		Maybe the listener is also responsible for intelligibility + Realisation that being understood is not solely dependent on the speaker = Questioning the need for constant code-switching and allowing others to request adjustments	External Factors that motivate Nigerian English Speaker to Code-switch in International Contexts
20		Asking why am I being myself + Being considered different by a group you hope to belong to + Desire for belongingness + Feeling of accomplishment = Desire for recognition and validation	Internal factors that motivate code-switching in IHE
21		I spoke normally, with my Nigerian accent + Positive feedback on Nigerian accent + Proud of my English + Feeling secure with language competence + My English was not that bad after all + Nigerian English as a standard + Realising the value and understanding of one's own English + Boost in confidence regarding English proficiency + Speaking normally during the speaking test + Association of unchanged accent with security + Economic situation impacting self-security and accent modification + Being acknowledged as a native English speaker + English is my language too +	

Appendix 7: Ethics Approval Letter

Esther Airemionkhale
Registration number: 220194286
School of Education

Dear Esther

PROJECT TITLE: An autoethnographic exploration of code-switching and its impacts on identity: Reflections of a Nigerian Postgraduate Student
APPLICATION: Reference Number 054014
ORIGINAL APPLICATION: Reference Number 044897

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 31/05/2023 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 054014 (form submission date: 30/05/2023); (expected project end date: 31/08/2023). This is an en bloc application based on University research ethics application form 044897
- Participant information sheet 1122726 version 1 (30/05/2023).
- Participant consent form 1122727 version 1 (30/05/2023).
- Participant consent form 1122728 version 1 (30/05/2023).
- Participant consent form 1122729 version 1 (30/05/2023).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

James Bradbury
Ethics Administrator
School of Education

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

- The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/research-services/ethics-integrity/policy
- The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPolicy.pdf
- The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
- The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.