LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF CODE MIXING AND CODE-SWITCHING AMONG THE EDUCATED IGBO BILINGUALS

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ABSTRACT

English as the official language in Nigeria has continued to play diverse roles. It is the language of education, government, administration, commerce, journalism, legislative and international deliberations; it lives alongside other Nigerian languages, interacts with them and adapts itself to the Nigerian environment. This interaction with Nigerian languages; Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba led to pidginization, nativization and acculturation of English. Igbo language and culture has also influenced the English language. The thrust of this paper is examination of speech behavior of the educated Igbo -bilinguals who may not be able to speak Igbo language without code switching or mixing of English language. This paper used texts of interviews and responses to questionnaire administered in previous works. It examined corpuses to identify linguistic features of code-switching in the speech behavior of the educated Igbo bilinguals. It analyzed the simple sentences and WH-clause structures of Engligbo using Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar Theory.
Keywords: Educated-Igbo bilinguals, nativization, Igbo language and Engligbo.

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the oldest human activity-speaking, listening, writing and reading. The dynamic nature of language and adaptability makes it an interesting field of study. Every language of the world especially English exists at various degree of contact with other languages. The point of contact could be individual or group level. This had resulted into borrowing of lexical forms, second language situation (if politically motivated), pidginization, creolisation and mixing of code and switching from one code to another.

It has been affirmed by linguists that 'Engligbo' the dynamics of English and Igbo contact situation remains an evidence of code-mixing and code-switching among the Igbo bilinguals both the educated and non educated Igbos. Just like pidgin, a mixture of English and Igbo languages derogatorily referred to as Engligbo has ceased to be a language of the uneducated and has almost completely become exclusive of the educated elite.

As a result of the code-mixing of English and Igbo various critics arose among the Igbos. Notable among these critics is a music maestro Oliver de Coque who in one of his popular songs enthused:
Onye asuzina Engligbo-*Let no one speak Engligbo anymore*
Onye cho isu Igbo ya suru gaba-*Who wants to speak Igbo should go on*
Onye cho isu oyibo ya suru gaba-*Who wants to speak English should go on.*

Asukota igbo na oyibo oburu ogbara   Igbo ghari- *When Igbo is mixed with English the Igbo man is flabbergasted*. Onye asuzina Engligbo- *Let no one speak Engligbo anyone.*

Anyanwu (2001:5) states that certain forces are at work in language contact situation. He identifies two forces: social interactions (between two speakers of different languages which make language contact inevitable) and language dominance (one language starts at each point of switch or mix before another language is picked up).

After a century and a half of interaction between English and the indigenous Nigerian languages on the one hand, and the indigenous languages amongst themselves on the other hand, the communicative roles of these languages have broadened and focused with English becoming language of the wider community. The ethnic languages are still pre-dominant in interpersonal encounters especially within the ethnic contexts: the home and in the family life.

In addition, a lot of indigenization of English and its hybridization is still taking place. The ultimate consequence of this contact among others includes interference between English and other indigenous languages. Also, the emergence of Nigerian pidgin and frequency of code switching and code mixing is common in the speech behavior of educated Nigerian speakers especially in informal situation.

There are textual evidences of code switching among the educated Igbo bilinguals. These are results of linguistic investigation and observation of the educated Igbo bilinguals who can hardly hold a sustained discourse in Igbo language (L1) without words, phrases or even sentences of English intruding into their expressions especially in informal context, although reverse is the case if the conversation is in English. It is remarkable that although some bilinguals speak other Nigerian or non languages-Hausa, Yoruba, French and German but these other languages do not feature in their speech as code switching when they hold conversation in Igbo. It is observed that there is positive correlation between the level of formal education and exposure and exposure to metropolitan culture and incidence of code alternation.

According to Uzoezie (2002:16) outlined some the pertinent questions on the issue of the educated Igbo bilinguals' code mixing and switching:
1. Why and when do Igbo-English bilinguals code mix and code switch/
2. Is there any positive link between the amount of code mixing and code switching and the level off education?
3. What imputes have (places) of domicile, languages of instruction in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions contribute to the relative use of this phenomenon in the speech of educated Igbo English bilinguals.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on Noam Chomsky' theory of grammar-Transformational Generative (TGG) propounded as a model for examination of language universal. In his earliest extensive discussion on the foundations of linguistics, Chomsky drew attention to what he called' the central fact' to which any significant linguistic theory must address itself.

Chomsky observes that a typical language user has a certain limited sets of utterances, but can on the basis of this finite linguistic experience produce an infinite number of new utterances which are immediately acceptable to other members of the speech community.
In Chomsky's words, a language can be thought of as a set of sentences some of which will be familiar to any given user and some of which will be unfamiliar'. A grammar can be thought of a recursive definition of this (entire) set. He further states that language users are able to produce (and understand) sentences which provide semantic and phonetic interpretations for all the sentences of their language.

Chomsky in providing a new generative conception of grammar shows how syntax could provide a common ground for fruitful collaboration between linguists and psychologists; between competence and performance in the native speaker's knowledge of his language and the actual use he makes of that language in concrete situation. The innate ability of the native speaker in generating utterances in the language forms the basis for Engligbo as a language in view. The structural feature of Engligbo is capable of transformational procedures as new lexes are added into its form thereby generating new structures.

RESULT

In carrying out this investigation questionnaires were distributed to about one hundred (100) graduate Igbo workers within Awka, the Anambra state capital. Eighty four (84) of the one hundred questionnaires distributed to various professionals ranging from: Lawyers, Banker, Teachers and Lecturers etc. were duly completed and returned. The questionnaire responses were supported with recorded interviews, field notes and surreptitious tape recordings.

According to Uzoezie (1999: 15) the analysis of questionnaire analysis showed that the Igbo English Bilingual is living in a multi-dimensional socio-linguistic space in which stylistic and social pressures determine the language choice and output and that there is a positive correlation his/her level of formal education and exposure to the metropolitan culture and code variation and mixing. So speech behavior of our respondents could reasonably be taken to be representative of the behavior.

We discovered also that about eighty-one (81%) of the respondents spoke only Igbo in the pre-primary school period and at the primary school period almost all of them started learning English. Their responses showed also that about 10.7% learnt some pidgin at this period so it is assumed that an average Igbo child starts bilingualism from the primary school period. In the process of the child's secondary education, a new picture of language use

emerges. In the secondary school a tilting emphasis is in favor of English language. For example 40.4% of the respondents did not study Igbo language as a school subject in the secondary school while 84% of all the respondents studied English language and used it as a medium of receiving instruction in almost all the subjects. So at the secondary stage, English replaces Igbo as a dominant language of the Igbo speaker at least in terms of formal and systematic acquisition of knowledge.

At the post secondary school much attention is given to the use of English as a medium of communication. After the University Education and by virtue of their predominant urban residence, contact and association with varied linguistic background, the occupation and networks to which they belong, they would be forced to use more and more varieties of codes that are not necessarily Igbo, even among groups of people and individuals from Igbo speaking background. Amongst these codes is one involving a mixture of Igbo and English-Engligbo.

DISCUSSION

It has been observed that the fundamental aim in the linguistic analysis of a language (L) is to separate the grammatical sequences which are not sentences of (L) from the ungrammatical which are not sequences of L and study the structure of the grammatical sequences. (Batimores 1960: 1)

Chomsky in his examination of various linguistic theories which might be capable of developing grammars that are that would be adequate for natural languages considers the finite design and phrase structure constituent analysis design of grammar as inadequate.

The deficiency of phrase structure grammar is evidenced by the fact it does not account for the intuitively different meaning of two sequences like:

- The growling lion
- The raising flower

The two sentences above would be represented identically at the level of phrase structure as:

The + V+ ing-of +NP

The data above from a speech at a political rally has been divided into various units. The data contain simple sentences and clauses. The division is to make easy the description and analysis. Sentences 1, 8, 9, 13, are simple sentences while sentences 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14 contain clauses. The analysis of the clauses would be based on wh-relative clause. So clauses without wh- relative clause would be written before description and analysis

TEXT A (AT a political rally in Imo State) adapted from Uzoezie (1999)

1.   The impetus generated by otu anyi
2.   Ihe mere mu ji bia
3.   Kam gwa unu bu umunnem, my brothers and sisters.
4.   Who need to be told the truth.
5.   Let nobody say amaghi m.
6.   Makana anu agwaghi nwata na egbu okuii

7.   Ma a kaa e geghi nti na egbu nwata
8.   Our party is party of masses
9.   It belongs to onye obuna
10.   But unu makwa na anyi agaghi ewe ndi omekwe
11.   Lee anya everybody that matters is in our party except far disgruntled element

SIMPLE SENTENCE

The Engligbo from the shares the same simple sentence feature with English the guest and Igbo the host language. The feature of a single subject and a verb-NP + VP

NP1 (the impetus) – VP1 (generated-by-NP2 otu anyia)

Sentence ⟶ NP + VP
      NP ⟶ Art + VP
      V ⟶ V + NP
      Thus:
      NP + VP
      Art + N + VP
      The + N + V + NP
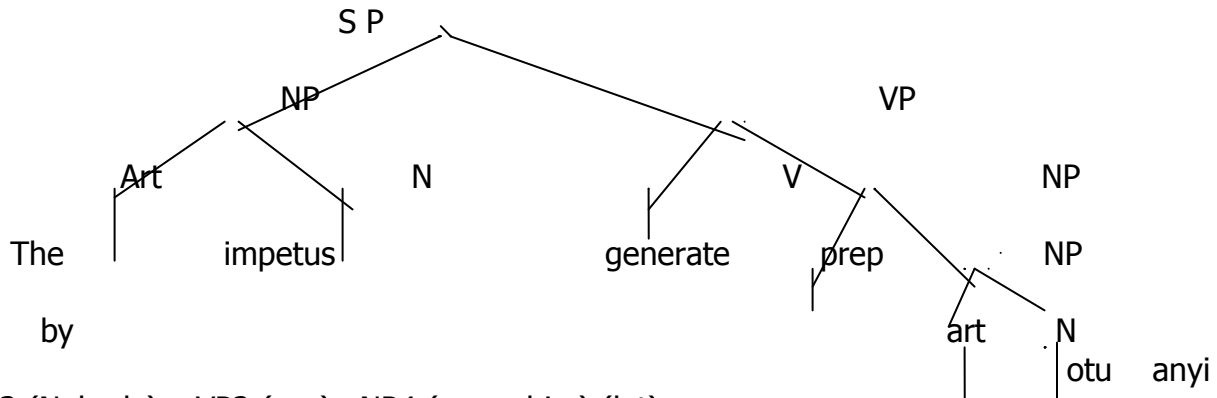   The + impetus + V+ P + NP
      The + impetus + generated + Prep + Art + N
      The + impetus + generated + by + Art + N
      The + impetus + generated + by + N + otu
      The + impetus + generated + by + anyi + otu

The arrows ⟶ in the strings above indicate rewriting rules of generative grammar.

NP3 (Nobody) – VP2 (say) –NP4 (amaghim) (let)
S ⟶ NP + VP
      N + V
     Nobody + say
a)   NP + VP
NP4 + VP3
N+ V
     M + amaghi + c (let) – conj.

Conj – NP + VP + NP + VP

      N + V + conj. + N + V

Nobody say – Conj. M = amaghi

The above sentence with its simple nature from the level of code mix contains two simple structures. The Igbo word *amaghim* is a simple sentence with a Noun (subj.) M and a V (amaghi) I did not know.

The construction is a compound sentence made up of two simple sentences and conjoining element (let) at the beginning of the sentences.

S   S

NP VP   NP   VP

N   V   N   VP

      Say   m   V

         Conj. Nobody   amaghi

         let   I didn't know
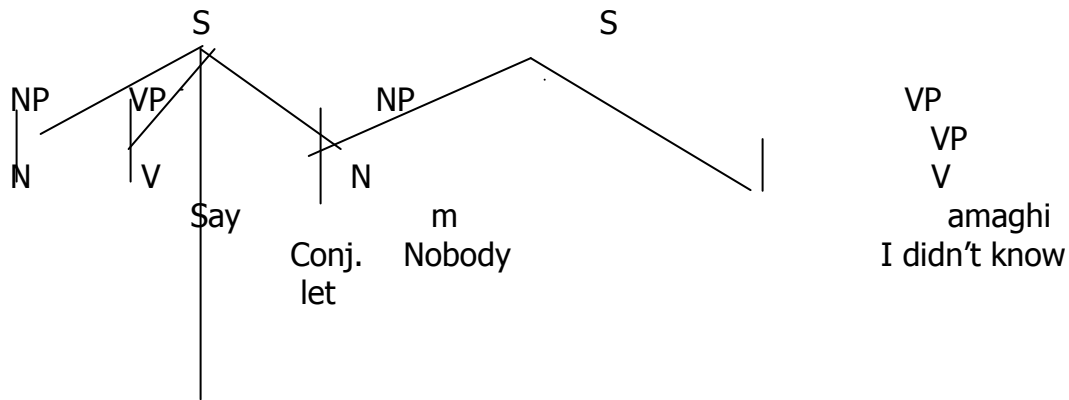
Our party is a party of the masses

S   ⟶   NP + VP

        Art + N+ V1 +NP

        Art + N + V1 + Art + N + NP
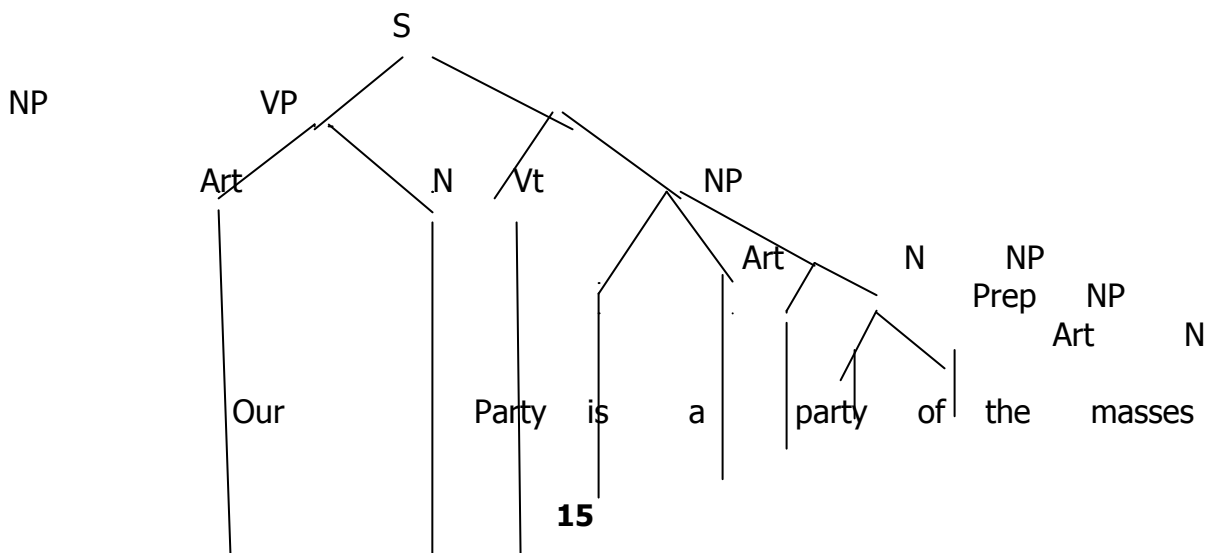
         Our + party + is + a + N + NP

Our + party + is + a +party + prep + NP
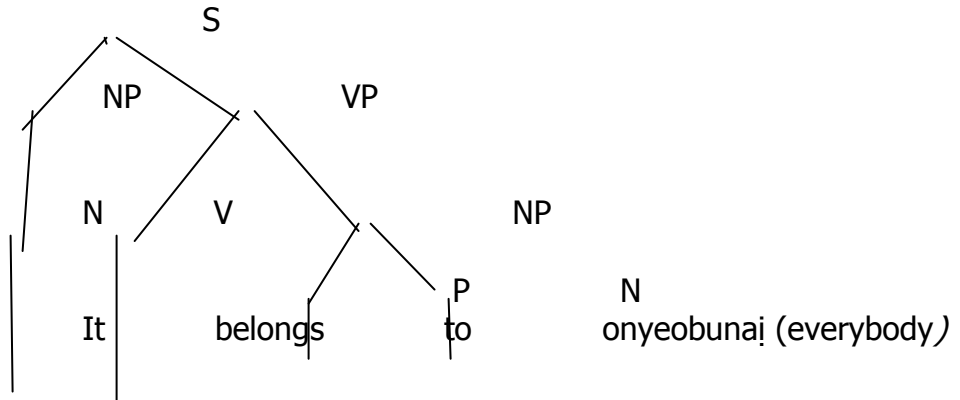
Our + party + is + a +party + of + Art +N

 Our + party + is + a +party + of + the + N

Our + party + is + a +party + of + the + masses

S

NP   VP

     Art   N Vt   NP

                         Art   N   NP

                                     Prep NP

                                        Art   N

     Our   Party is   a   party of the   masses

15

9. It belongs to onyeobuna

S ⟶   NP + VP

     N + V + NP

    It + V + P + N

    It + belongs + P + N

    It + belongs + to + N

    It + belongs + to + onyeobuna


12.   Ọwụkwa nanị ịtụnyere anyị vote gị

S ⟶ NP + VP

    N + V + Adj. Phrase + V + NP

    N + V   +   Adv + Adv +   V +   N +   N   +   Adj.

    Ọ + wụ +   kwa + nanị + ịtunyere + anyị + vote +   gị

The sentence has as its subject and object prepositions. The subject which is singular has 'Ọ' it', a third person singular pronoun. The object class has 'anyi' 'us' a first person plural pronoun. Engligbo exhibits the same characteristics like English in the transportation of the verbal element from the adverbial position to the verbal class. The adverbial phrase 'kwa nani' 'indeed only' separates the transitive verb ' ịtụnyere' from the auxiliary verb 'wụ is'. In this construction an emphatic sentence is realized from the combination of two syllables of the initial Igbo word-'Ọ bụ' 'it is'.

At the level of code mixing in the sentence an English word-'vote' a noun (object) is modified by a possessive pronoun 'gị'. The realized phrase is 'vote gị 'your vote'
In the modifying or qualifying function of an article in Engligbo as in the host language-the adjective or qualifier comes after the noun which it qualifies or modifies. That is the noun precedes its modifying element.
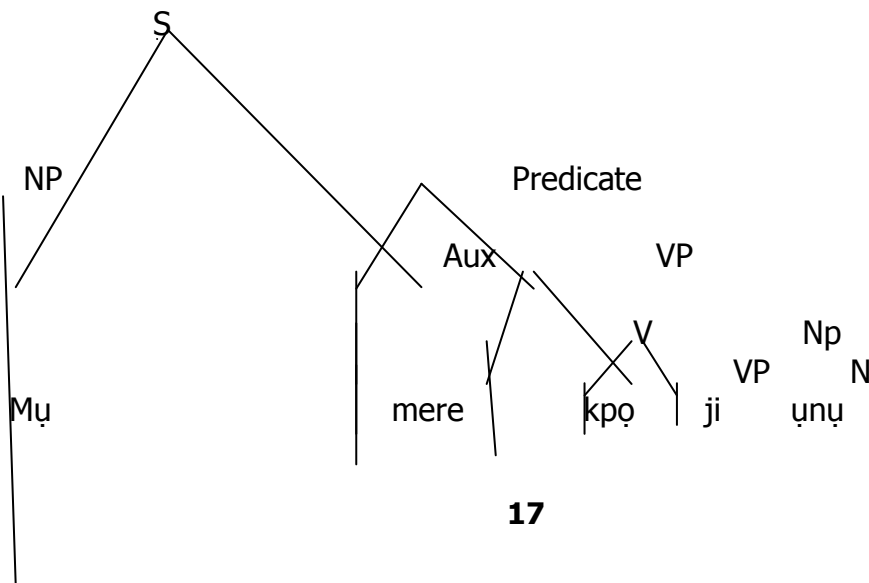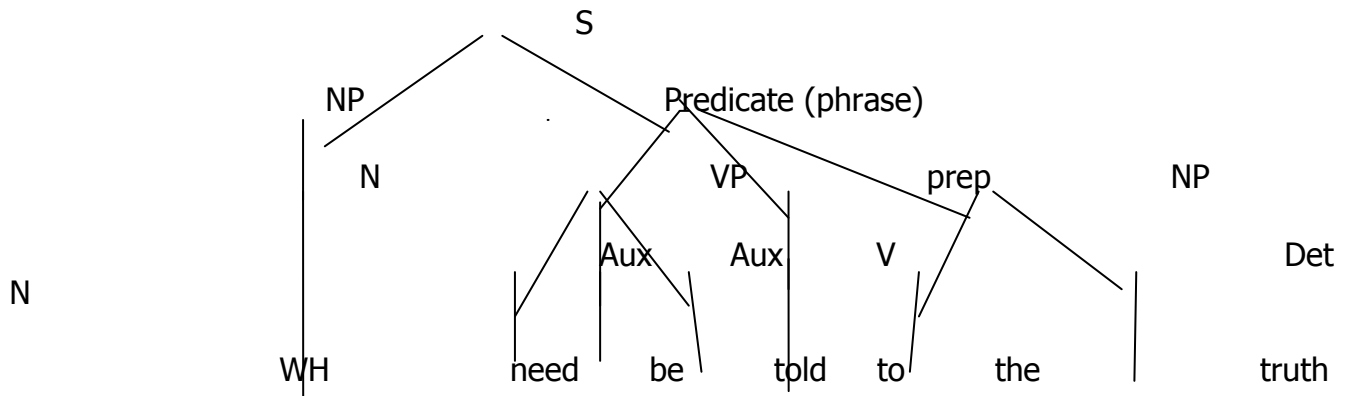
Vote gị- Vote your
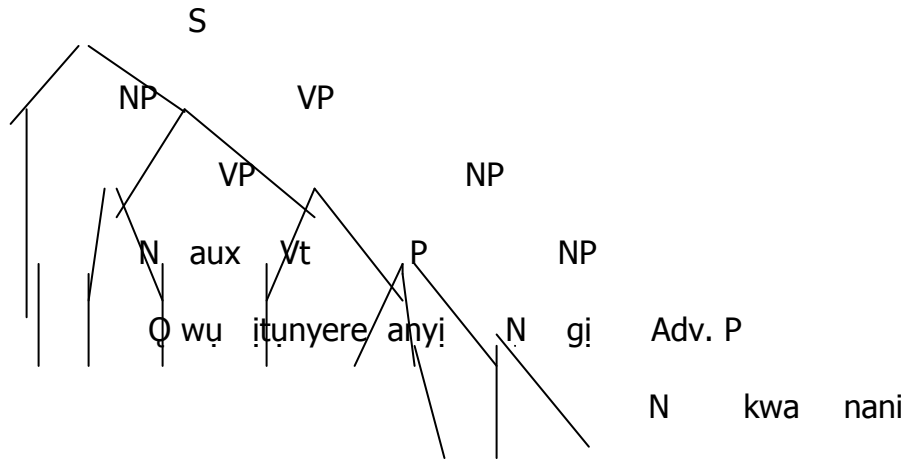
CLAUSE CONSTRUCTION-   WH-CLAUSES

Ihe –VP (mere)-NP (mu)- C-ji -VP (kpo) – NP (ụnụ)

4.   Who – VP (need) – C –to –VP (be told) – VP (the truth)

6. makana – VP1 (anụ) –VP2 (awaghị)- na –VP (egbu)- NP (okii)

7. ma –NP (a) –VP (kaa) –NP (e)- VP (gheghị) NP (ntị)- na – VP (egbu) –NP (nwata)

10. but-NP (ụnụ)- VP (ma) – VP (agaghị ewe) – NPC (ndịomekome)

11. VP (lee anya) – NP (everybody) – that – VP (our party) – except- NP (a few disgruntled element)

14. NP (everybody) – VP – VP (wants) – NP (ma mmịrị, ma ọkụ, ma okporo ụzọ)

Ihe – VP – NP1- C – ji – VP2 – NP2

4. Wh – VP – C – to – VP1 – NP

6. makana – VP1 – VP2 – C – na – VP3 – NP

7. ma – NP1– VP1- NP2 – VP2 – NP3 – C – na VP3 – NP

10. but – NP1 – NP2 – VP1 – NP3

11. VP1 – NP1 – that – VP2 – VP3 – C – in – NP2 – except – NP3

14. NP1 – VP1 – what – NP2 – VP2 – NP3

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                              S
                 NP                 Predicate (phrase)
                      N                    VP        prep       NP
                                    Aux  Aux   V                       Det
   N
                      WH      need  be   told  to     the           truth
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CONCLUSION

Engligbo, a product of bilingual situation resulting from code mixing and switching of Igbo and English abridges missing links in Igbo world view to the English world view. Engligbo performs this function through lexical borrowing from English language. Some English words have no Igbo equivalence while some are too long and others are pronounced the same as the words in English. The educated Igbo bilinguals mix English pronunciation with Igbo letters which have similar phonemes. Engligbo thus replaces English phonemes while the pronunciations remain the same. For example:

Certificate	Safiritikate
Field	Fildi
Window	Windo
Motor car	Moto kaa
Computer	Kọmputa

Engligbo maintains the subject, verb, object (SVO) structure of the simple sentence. The complex sentence is realized through the transformation al process of relativization.

RECOMMENDATION: I recommend that more researchers and linguists should carry out more studies on Engligbo and other similar varieties realized from code mixing and switching of bilinguals- Engliyoruba, Englihausa and Englibibo. This will enable policy makers and language planners have clearer insight into the linguistic situation in Nigeria, and a better knowledge of the effects of languages in contact.

'Yiddish (a North American language) in contact with American English was never discarded. According to Rayfield (1970: 58), the Yiddish word' fresn) conveys a better meaning than any English word the idea of eating with a derogatory implication. So Engligbo should not be discarded.

Finally, texts should be written to encourage further studies and use of Engligbo. In the case of Pidgin several studies have been done because of availability of written texts.

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