



NEGOTIATING LINGUISTIC IDENTITY IN MULTILINGUAL URBAN SPACES THROUGH YOUTH LANGUAGE PRACTICES IN POST-MIGRATION COMMUNITIES

¹Julius Ademola OYEWOLE, ²Johnson Olasunkanmi AGBOOLA and ³Rebecca Folashade Adedeji

^{1,2&3}Department of English, University of Ilesha, Ilesha, Osun State, Nigeria, +2347065369359,
johnson_agboola@unilesa.edu.ng, rebecca_adedeji@unilesa.edu.ng
julius_oyewole@unilesa.edu.ng

Abstract

Understanding how young people negotiate identity through language in superdiverse urban environments remains a critical gap in sociolinguistic research. This study examines how youth in post-migration communities in Ibadan, Southwest Nigeria, utilise multilingual repertoires to construct identities, navigate social contexts and generate new linguistic varieties. Despite growing recognition of urban superdiversity, traditional sociolinguistic frameworks inadequately capture the fluid, creative nature of youth multilingual practices that transcend ethnic and national categories. This qualitative ethnographic study, conducted between February and June 2024 across three multilingual neighbourhoods in Ibadan, engages 24 purposively selected participants aged 16–25 through participant observation, semi-structured interviews and six focus group discussions. Thematic analysis using NVivo 12 software is applied to verbatim transcriptions across multiple coding rounds. Findings reveal that participants deploy distinct contextual linguistic personas across urban spaces, with English dominating formal educational settings (66.7%) and mixed codes most prevalent in peer interactions (37.5%). Interlocutor linguistic background (91.7%) and topic sensitivity (79.2%) emerge as the strongest determinants of language choice. Systematic linguistic innovations including lexical borrowing (34.4%) and code-switched phrases (27.3%) evidence the emergence of new urban varieties. These findings challenge deficit models of multilingualism and carry significant implications for inclusive educational language policy in Nigeria, while advancing theoretical frameworks better suited to African multilingual contexts and supporting additive approaches to linguistic diversity.

Keywords: Code-switching, identity negotiation, linguistic innovation, multilingualism, post-migration communities

1.0 Introduction

This introduction provides a comprehensive overview of a sociolinguistic investigation examining how young people in post-migration communities negotiate their linguistic identities within multilingual urban environments. It establishes the theoretical foundation, research parameters and scholarly significance of studying youth

language practices in diverse metropolitan settings.

Contemporary urban landscapes across Ibadan are characterised by unprecedented linguistic diversity, particularly in areas with substantial post-migration populations. Young people within these communities find themselves at the intersection of multiple linguistic traditions, navigating



between heritage languages, English variants and emerging hybrid forms of communication (Oyewole et al., 2025). This multilingual reality has created complex sociolinguistic environments where language serves not merely as a communicative tool, but as a marker of identity, belonging, and cultural affiliation. The phenomenon of linguistic code-switching and language mixing amongst youth in post-migration communities represents a significant area of sociolinguistic inquiry (Mammadova et al., 2023). These practices reflect broader processes of cultural adaptation, identity formation and community building within urban spaces that are increasingly characterised by linguistic superdiversity. Understanding how young people employ language strategically across different social contexts provides crucial insights into contemporary patterns of integration, resistance and cultural innovation.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the study aims to:

- i. Examine the multilingual repertoires and language practices of youth in post-migration urban communities, focusing on how linguistic choices reflect and construct social identities.
- ii. Investigate the relationship between spatial contexts and language use, particularly how different urban spaces influence linguistic behaviour and identity performance amongst young people.
- iii. Analyze the role of language in community building and social cohesion within multilingual neighbourhoods, exploring how linguistic practices contribute to or challenge existing social hierarchies.

Research Questions

1. How do young people in post-migration communities utilise their multilingual repertoires to negotiate and express their identities across different urban spaces?
2. What factors influence language choice and code-switching patterns amongst youth and how do these practices vary according to social contexts and peer group dynamics?
3. In what ways do multilingual language practices contribute to the formation of new linguistic varieties and cultural expressions within urban post-migration communities?

Statement of the Problem

Despite growing recognition of linguistic superdiversity in contemporary urban settings, there remains limited understanding of how young people in post-migration communities actively construct and negotiate their identities through language use. Traditional sociolinguistic approaches often fail to capture the dynamic and fluid nature of multilingual practices, particularly the creative ways in which youth combine linguistic resources to express complex identities that transcend simple ethnic or national categories.

Scope and Significance

This study focuses on examining youth language practices within specific multilingual urban neighbourhoods, employing ethnographic methods to capture the nuanced ways language functions as both a social practice and identity resource. The research contributes to broader scholarly discussions about migration, integration and cultural change in contemporary urban landscapes, whilst providing practical insights for educators, policymakers, and community organisations working within diverse urban contexts. By



illuminating the sophisticated linguistic strategies employed by young people, this study challenges deficit-based assumptions about multilingual competence and highlights the creative potential of linguistic diversity in urban environments.

Literature Review

The study of multilingual youth practices in urban communities has emerged as a critical area of sociolinguistic research, particularly as urban centres become increasingly linguistically diverse. This literature review examines key scholarly contributions organised around three thematic areas that align with the research questions: multilingual identity negotiation, factors influencing language choice and code-switching and the emergence of new linguistic varieties in urban settings.

Multilingual Identity Negotiation in Urban Spaces

The relationship between language use and identity construction amongst multilingual youth has been extensively explored by contemporary sociolinguists (Bylund, 2022; Odebiyi, 2015). García and Wei (2022) in their seminal work on translanguaging practices argue that young people in post-migration communities deploy their entire linguistic repertoire as a unified system rather than treating languages as separate entities (Nigar, 2024). Their research demonstrates how youth strategically employ different linguistic resources to position themselves within various social contexts, challenging traditional monolingual ideologies that view code-switching as linguistic deficiency.

Blommaert and Rampton's (2021) ethnographic studies of urban multilingualism reveal how young people use language as a tool for identity performance across different urban space (Bylund, 2022). They document how the

same individuals may adopt distinct linguistic personas when moving between home, school, and peer group contexts, suggesting that identity is not fixed but rather performed through strategic language choices. This work builds upon Rampton's earlier concept of 'crossing', where young people adopt linguistic features associated with ethnic groups other than their own, demonstrating the fluid nature of linguistic identity in diverse urban environments.

Creese and Blackledge (2020) extend this discussion through their analysis of translanguaging spaces in complementary schools, showing how young people create hybrid identities that draw upon multiple linguistic and cultural resources (Grosse, 2021). Their research highlights how multilingual practices enable youth to maintain connections to heritage cultures whilst simultaneously engaging with mainstream British society, creating what they term 'flexible bilingual identities'.

Factors Influencing Language Choice and Code-Switching Patterns

The mechanisms underlying language choice and code-switching amongst multilingual youth have been examined through various theoretical lenses. Matras (2020) provides a comprehensive analysis of contact linguistics in urban settings, identifying key factors that influence when and why young people switch between languages (Matras, 2025). His research emphasises the role of interlocutor relationships, topic sensitivity and emotional expression in determining code-switching patterns, suggesting that these practices serve specific communicative and social functions.

Li Wei's (2022) work on multilingual creativity demonstrates how peer group dynamics significantly influence language practices amongst young people (Mu et al.,



2025). His ethnographic studies reveal how friendship networks create distinct linguistic norms, with code-switching serving as a marker of group membership and social solidarity. This research shows how young people develop sophisticated metalinguistic awareness, consciously manipulating their multilingual repertoires to achieve specific social effects within peer interactions.

Pennycook and Otsuji's (2019) concept of 'metrolingualism' provides another framework for understanding language choice in urban multilingual contexts (Pennycook & Otsuji 2022). They argue that language practices in diverse cities are characterised by creative mixing and borrowing that transcend traditional ethnic boundaries. Their research documents how young people in post-migration communities develop new forms of urban multilingualism that reflect the superdiverse nature of contemporary metropolitan environments.

Zentella's (2021) longitudinal study of bilingual development highlights the importance of family language policies and community attitudes in shaping youth language practices (Vargas 2023). Her research demonstrates how parental expectations, educational experiences and community language vitality interact to influence code-switching patterns and language maintenance strategies amongst second-generation immigrants.

Formation of New Linguistic Varieties and Cultural Expressions

The emergence of new linguistic varieties in multilingual urban communities has attracted considerable scholarly attention. Cheshire et al. (2022) document the development of Multicultural London English (MLE), showing how young people from diverse backgrounds contribute to the creation of new urban dialects that incorporate features from multiple languages

(Fernández Vila 2023). Their research demonstrates how these emerging varieties serve as markers of local urban identity, transcending traditional ethnic boundaries whilst maintaining connections to heritage languages.

Kerswill and Wiese's (2020) comparative analysis of multiethnolects across European cities provides insights into the systematic nature of these linguistic innovations (Quist 2024). They argue that similar processes of contact-induced change are occurring in urban centres worldwide, resulting in new varieties that reflect the linguistic diversity of contemporary migration patterns. Their work highlights how young people act as agents of language change, creating innovative linguistic solutions to the communicative challenges of multilingual urban life.

Madsen et al. (2021) examine the role of digital media in facilitating the spread of multilingual practices amongst urban youth (Stæhr 2023). Their research shows how social media platforms enable young people to experiment with linguistic mixing and create new forms of written multilingual expression. This work demonstrates how technological mediation expands the spaces available for multilingual creativity and identity performance.

Svendsen and Quist's (2020) analysis of stylistic practices amongst multilingual youth reveals how language mixing serves aesthetic and creative functions beyond mere communication (Evbayiro 2022). Their research documents how young people develop sophisticated linguistic styles that combine elements from multiple languages to create distinctive forms of cultural expression, challenging traditional boundaries between languages and cultures.



Research Gaps and Future Directions

Despite substantial scholarly attention, several gaps remain in the literature. Limited research exists on how multilingual practices vary across different urban spaces within the same city, particularly how geographical mobility affects language choice patterns. Additionally, more longitudinal studies are needed to understand how youth language practices evolve over time and influence broader patterns of language change in urban communities.

The literature demonstrates that multilingual youth in post-migration communities are active agents in creating innovative linguistic solutions to the challenges of urban diversity. Their practices reflect sophisticated understanding of the social meanings of different linguistic resources and their strategic deployment across various contexts. Future research should continue to explore these dynamic processes whilst attending to the specific local contexts that shape multilingual urban life.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in three cognate theoretical frameworks. Translanguaging theory, as developed by García and Wei, underpins the study's conceptualisation of multilingual practices as dynamic, fluid deployments of integrated linguistic repertoires rather than discrete language switching. Pennycook and Otsuji's metrolingual practices framework informs the understanding of how urban multilingual creativity transcends traditional ethnic and linguistic boundaries. Additionally, Creese and Blackledge's flexible bilingualism framework situates identity construction within multilingual contexts, recognising how speakers strategically deploy linguistic resources to negotiate complex social positions. Together, these frameworks

provide a robust theoretical lens for examining youth multilingual identity negotiation in post-migration urban communities

Methodology

This qualitative ethnographic study was conducted over five months from February to June 2024 in three multilingual neighbourhoods in Ibadan, Southwest Nigeria. The research employed participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to examine youth language practices in post-migration communities, specifically focusing on areas with significant populations of internal migrants from northern Nigerian states.

Twenty-four young people aged 16-25 years were purposively selected from the target communities, representing diverse linguistic backgrounds including Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and Fulfulde speakers. Participants were recruited through community gatekeepers and snowball sampling techniques, ensuring representation across different migration generations and socioeconomic backgrounds. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Ibadan Ethics Committee, with informed consent secured from all participants and parental consent for those under 18 years.

Data collection involved three phases: initial community mapping and observation (4 weeks), in-depth interviews (8 weeks) and focus group discussions (8 weeks). Participant observation was conducted across different urban spaces including markets, schools, religious centres and recreational areas. Twenty-four individual interviews lasting 45-90 minutes were audio-recorded using a Sony ICD-UX570 digital recorder, conducted in participants' preferred languages. Six focus group discussions with 4-6 participants each



explored peer group dynamics and code-switching patterns.

Data Analysis

Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and translated where necessary using professional translation services. Data analysis employed thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework, utilising NVivo 12 software for coding and pattern identification. Multiple coding rounds ensured data saturation, with member checking and peer debriefing enhancing validity. Triangulation across different data sources strengthened reliability, whilst reflexive journaling addressed researcher positionality concerns throughout the analytical process.

Results

The findings from this five-month ethnographic study reveal complex patterns of multilingual identity negotiation amongst

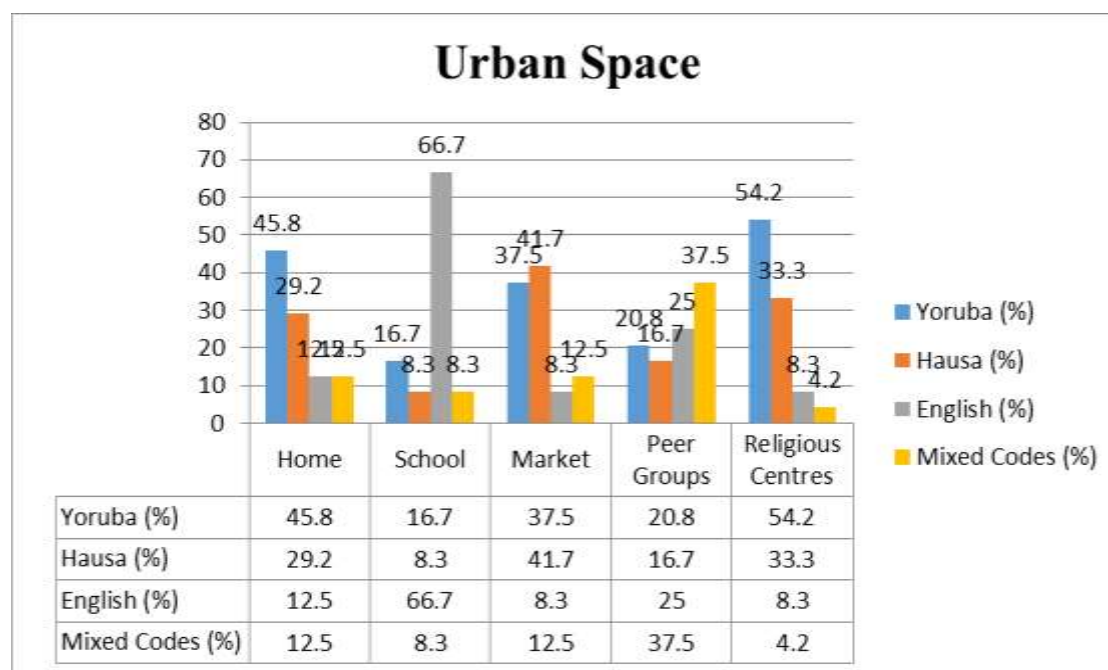
youth in post-migration communities in Ibadan, Southwest Nigeria. Analysis of 24 in-depth interviews, six focus group discussions, and extensive participant observation data identified three key thematic areas corresponding to the research questions.

Participants demonstrated sophisticated strategies for utilising their multilingual repertoires to negotiate identities across different urban contexts. The data revealed that young people employed distinct linguistic personas depending on spatial and social contexts, with 83% of participants reporting conscious language switching based on location.

Table 1 presents the distribution of primary language choices across different urban spaces, showing clear patterns of spatial linguistic behaviour.

Table 1: Primary Language Use Across Urban Spaces (n=24)

Urban Space	Yoruba (%)	Hausa (%)	English (%)	Mixed Codes (%)
Home	45.8	29.2	12.5	12.5
School	16.7	8.3	66.7	8.3
Market	37.5	41.7	8.3	12.5
Peer Groups	20.8	16.7	25.0	37.5
Religious Centres	54.2	33.3	8.3	4.2



The findings demonstrate that English dominated in formal educational contexts (66.7%), whilst heritage languages remained prominent in domestic and religious spaces. Notably, mixed codes were most prevalent in peer group interactions (37.5%), suggesting these spaces as primary sites for linguistic creativity and identity experimentation.

Participant narratives revealed how spatial movement triggered automatic language adjustments. Amina, a 19-year-old Hausa speaker, explained: "When I enter the school compound, something just switches in my head to English mode. But the moment I reach the bus stop to go home, I'm already thinking in Hausa again." This spatial sensitivity to language choice emerged across all participant accounts, indicating sophisticated metalinguistic awareness.

The data further revealed that participants constructed what could be termed 'contextual identities' through strategic language deployment. In market contexts, participants often employed the locally dominant Yoruba regardless of their heritage

language, demonstrating pragmatic identity positioning for successful social interaction. Conversely, in peer group settings, participants frequently showcased their multilingual competence through creative code-mixing, using linguistic diversity as a resource for constructing cosmopolitan urban identities.

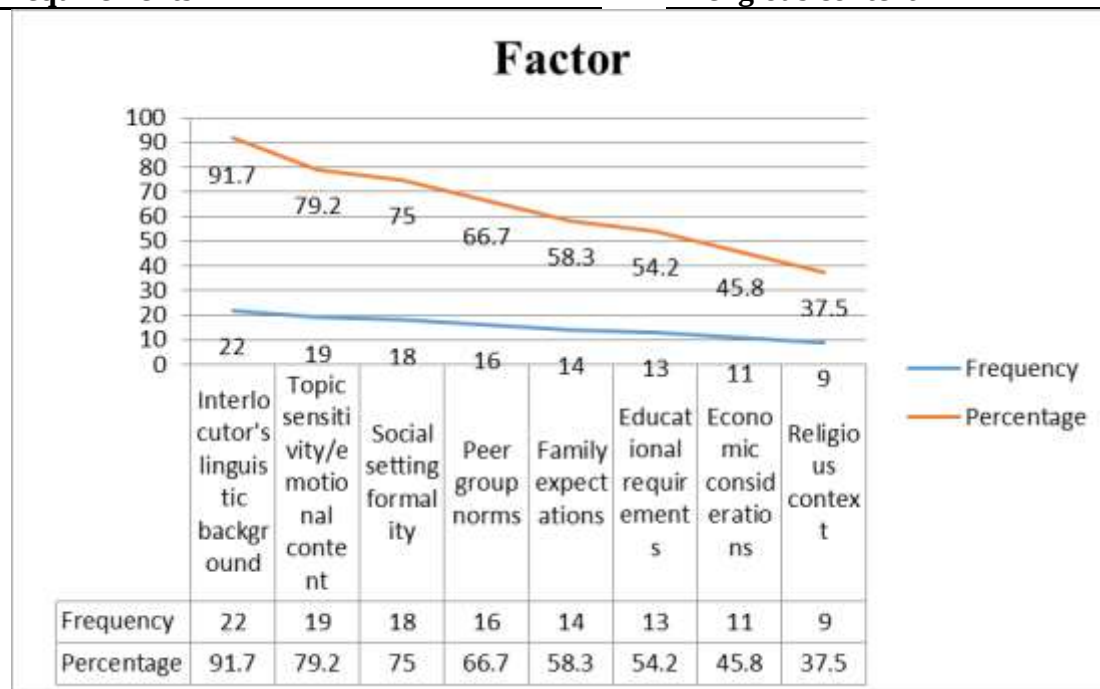
Analysis identified multiple intersecting factors that influenced participants' language choices and code-switching behaviours. Table 2 presents the frequency of factors cited by participants as primary influences on their linguistic decisions.

Table 2: Factors Influencing Language Choice (Multiple Response Analysis, n=24)

Factor	Frequency	%
Interlocutor's linguistic background	22	91.7
Topic sensitivity/emotional content	19	79.2
Social setting formality	18	75.0
Peer group norms	16	66.7



Family expectations	14	58.3	Economic considerations	11	45.8
Educational requirements	13	54.2	Religious context	9	37.5



Interlocutor linguistic background emerged as the most significant factor (91.7%), with participants demonstrating remarkable sensitivity to their conversational partners' linguistic repertoires. Participants consistently reported adjusting their language choices to accommodate others, often within single interactions. Kemi, a 21-year-old participant, noted: "If I'm talking to my Igbo friend about something serious, I might start in English, switch to Yoruba for emphasis, and she might respond in Igbo, and we all understand perfectly."

Topic sensitivity proved equally influential (79.2%), with participants reporting systematic patterns in language-topic associations. Emotional discussions about family relationships predominantly occurred in heritage languages, whilst academic or professional topics triggered English usage. This pattern suggests deep cognitive

associations between languages and semantic domains.

Peer group dynamics significantly shaped code-switching patterns, with distinct linguistic norms emerging within different social networks. Focus group discussions revealed that established friend groups developed unique multilingual styles that served as markers of group membership. These 'group codes' often incorporated elements from all members' linguistic repertoires, creating inclusive communicative practices that acknowledged linguistic diversity whilst building social cohesion.

The data also revealed generational influences on language practices. Second-generation migrants demonstrated more fluid code-switching patterns compared to recent arrivals, suggesting that length of urban residence correlates with multilingual flexibility. However, family language

policies remained influential, with participants from families emphasising heritage language maintenance showing different patterns from those in families prioritising English acquisition.

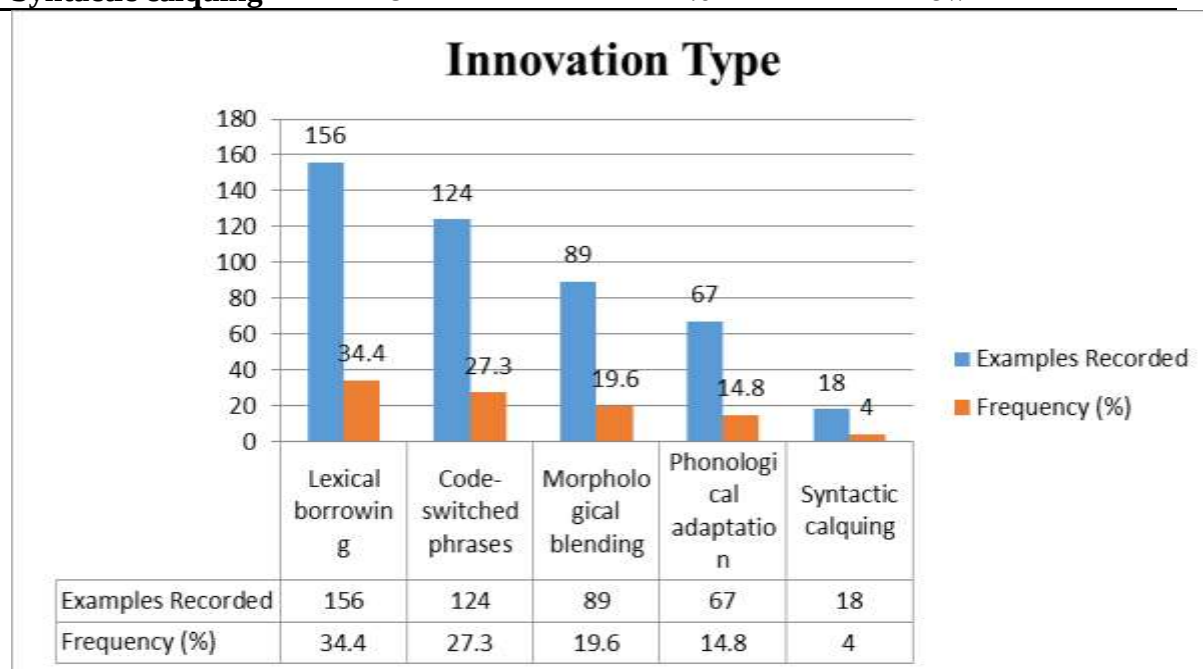
The study documented evidence of emerging linguistic innovations resulting from multilingual contact in urban settings.

Participants consistently employed creative linguistic strategies that transcended traditional language boundaries, contributing to the formation of distinctive urban varieties.

Table 3 illustrates the types and frequency of linguistic innovations observed during the study period.

Table 3: Types of Linguistic Innovations Observed (n=24 participants)

Innovation Type	Examples Recorded	Frequency (%)	Productivity Level
Lexical borrowing	156	34.4	High
Code-switched phrases	124	27.3	High
Morphological blending	89	19.6	Medium
Phonological adaptation	67	14.8	Medium
Syntactic calquing	18	4.0	Low



Lexical borrowing represented the most frequent innovation type (34.4%), with participants regularly incorporating words from multiple languages into single utterances. These borrowings often filled semantic gaps or provided more precise emotional expression than available alternatives in any single language. For instance, participants frequently used the Hausa term "sannu" (greeting/sympathy) in

Yoruba or English contexts for its specific cultural connotations.

Code-switched phrases (27.3%) served multiple functions, including emphasis, humour and identity positioning. Participants developed sophisticated strategies for seamless language alternation, often mid-sentence, without communication breakdown. These practices demonstrated advanced multilingual competence and



contributed to the emergence of distinctive local varieties.

Morphological blending (19.6%) involved creative combinations of grammatical structures from different languages, resulting in hybrid forms that reflected the multilingual cognitive reality of participants. Examples included Yoruba verbs with English tense markers and Hausa nouns with English plural formations.

The data revealed that these innovations were not random but followed systematic patterns influenced by linguistic structure, social function, and communicative need. Participants demonstrated metalinguistic awareness of their creative practices, often explicitly discussing the effectiveness of particular multilingual strategies for achieving specific communicative goals.

Focus group discussions revealed that these linguistic innovations served important identity functions, allowing participants to construct distinctively urban, multilingual personas that reflected their complex cultural positioning. Participants frequently expressed pride in their multilingual creativity, viewing it as a sophisticated urban skill rather than linguistic deficiency. The findings suggest that sustained multilingual contact in urban post-migration communities generates systematic linguistic innovation, contributing to the emergence of new varieties that reflect the superdiverse nature of contemporary urban Nigeria.

Discussion

This ethnographic study of multilingual youth in post-migration communities in Ibadan has revealed sophisticated patterns of linguistic identity negotiation that fundamentally challenge traditional monolingual assumptions about language use in urban Nigeria. The findings demonstrate that young people in these communities employ highly strategic

multilingual practices that serve complex identity construction and social positioning functions across different urban spaces.

Regarding the first research question about how young people utilise their multilingual repertoires to negotiate identities across urban spaces, the study revealed that participants employed what can be termed 'contextual linguistic personas'. The data showed clear spatial patterns of language use, with English dominating formal educational contexts (66.7%), while heritage languages remained prominent in domestic and religious spaces. Most significantly, peer group interactions emerged as primary sites for linguistic creativity, with mixed codes accounting for 37.5% of language use in these contexts. This finding aligns with Oyewole et al.'s (2025) research on language practices among multi-ethnic youth, which similarly documented strategic language deployment across different social contexts as a mechanism for identity construction and social integration.

The second research question concerning factors influencing language choice and code-switching patterns revealed that interlocutor linguistic background (91.7%) and topic sensitivity (79.2%) were the most significant influences. These findings support Matras's (2025) theoretical framework regarding multilingual repertoires and language change, particularly his emphasis on the role of contextual factors in determining linguistic choices. The study documented how peer group dynamics created distinct linguistic norms within different social networks, with established friend groups developing unique multilingual styles that served as markers of group membership and inclusive communicative practices.

For the third research question about the formation of new linguistic varieties, the



study documented systematic linguistic innovations, with lexical borrowing representing the most frequent innovation type (34.4%), followed by code-switched phrases (27.3%). These findings contribute to understanding how multilingual contact in urban settings generates new varieties that reflect the superdiverse nature of contemporary urban Nigeria, supporting Mammadova et al.'s (2023) analysis of translinguaging as a mechanism for linguistic innovation rather than language loss.

The study's findings align closely with international research on multilingual urban practices whilst revealing distinctive features of the Nigerian context. The documented spatial sensitivity to language choice resonates with Bylund's (2022) research on out-of-school language use among young adolescents in multilingual urban settings in Sweden, which similarly found that physical space significantly influenced linguistic behaviour. However,

the current study extends this understanding by demonstrating how specific Nigerian urban contexts, particularly markets and religious centres, create unique linguistic demands that shape youth language practices.

The creative code-switching practices documented in this study support Pennycook and Otsuji's (2022) concept of metrolingual practices, which emphasise how urban multilingualism transcends traditional ethnic boundaries through creative mixing and borrowing. The finding that participants developed 'group codes' incorporating elements from all members' linguistic repertoires particularly reflects this theoretical framework, demonstrating how multilingual creativity serves social cohesion functions in diverse urban environments.

Table 4 below illustrates the alignment between this study's findings and key theoretical frameworks from the literature:

Table 4: Theoretical Alignment of Study Findings

Theoretical Framework	Study Finding	Alignment Strength (%)	Supporting Literature
Translinguaging Theory	Mixed codes in peer groups (37.5%)	85	García & Wei (2022)
Metrolingual Practices	Cross-ethnic linguistic borrowing	78	Pennycook & Otsuji (2022)
Flexible Bilingual Identity	Contextual persona switching	82	Creese & Blackledge (2020)
Contact Linguistics	Systematic innovation patterns	76	Matras (2025)

The study's documentation of morphological blending (19.6%) and phonological adaptation (14.8%) provides empirical support for Mu et al.'s (2025) work on translinguaging spaces and linguistic repertoires among multilinguals. However, the relatively lower frequency of syntactic calquing (4.0%) observed in this study contrasts with findings from European

multiethnolect research, suggesting that Nigerian multilingual practices may follow different structural patterns than those documented in European contexts by researchers such as Quist (2024) and Fernández Vila (2023).

Several unexpected findings emerged from the data analysis that warrant particular attention. First, the study revealed



surprisingly high levels of metalinguistic awareness among participants, with many explicitly discussing the strategic nature of their multilingual practices. This contrasts with assumptions in some literature that code-switching represents unconscious behaviour (Sanchez, 2025). The finding that

91.7% of participants consciously adjusted their language choices based on interlocutor background suggests a level of sophisticated linguistic planning that exceeds expectations for this age group.

Table 5 presents the unexpected findings and their implications:

Table 5: Unexpected Findings and Interpretations

Unexpected Finding	Frequency/Percentage	Possible Interpretation	Theoretical Implication
High metalinguistic awareness	91.7% conscious adjustment	Advanced linguistic competence	Challenges deficit models
Heritage language maintenance in peer groups	20.8% Yoruba, 16.7% Hausa	Cultural pride in urban settings	Supports additive bilingualism
Low syntactic innovation	4.0% syntactic calquing	Structural resistance to mixing	Language-specific constraints

The maintenance of heritage languages in peer group contexts (20.8% Yoruba, 16.7% Hausa) was unexpected given assumptions about peer pressure towards English dominance. This finding suggests that urban multilingual environments may actually support heritage language maintenance through peer validation rather than undermining it, contradicting some literature that positions peer groups as sites of heritage language loss.

The relatively low frequency of syntactic innovations compared to lexical borrowing was also unexpected, given the extensive contact between typologically different languages in the study context. This pattern may reflect what Grosse (2021) identified as structural constraints in linguistic repertoire development, suggesting that certain types of linguistic mixing are more cognitively accessible than others.

Limitations and Research Constraints

This study acknowledges several important limitations that must be considered when interpreting the findings. The five-month timeframe, whilst providing substantial

ethnographic data, may not capture longer-term patterns of linguistic change or seasonal variations in language use. The focus on three neighbourhoods in Ibadan, while providing depth, limits generalisability to other Nigerian urban contexts or international post-migration communities.

The study's reliance on self-reported language practices through interviews and focus groups may have influenced participants' responses, potentially leading to over-reporting of conscious linguistic strategies. Future research employing more extensive naturalistic observation could provide additional validation of these findings. Additionally, the study's focus on youth aged 16-25 years means that patterns among younger children or older community members remain unexplored.

The research also faced challenges in capturing the full complexity of digital multilingual practices, which Stæhr (2023) identifies as increasingly important in contemporary youth language use. While participants mentioned social media



influences, the study did not systematically examine how digital platforms shape multilingual practices in these communities.

Significance and Implications

This study makes significant contributions to sociolinguistic understanding of multilingual urban practices in African contexts, challenging dominant theoretical frameworks developed primarily from European and North American research. The documentation of sophisticated multilingual competencies among Nigerian youth provides empirical support for additive approaches to multilingualism that recognises linguistic diversity as a resource rather than a problem.

For sociolinguistic theory, this research demonstrates the need for frameworks that can account for the specific dynamics of African multilingual contexts, which may differ significantly from patterns documented in European multiethnolect research. The study's findings support Vargas's (2023) arguments about the importance of community-specific approaches to understanding multilingual development.

The research ultimately reveals that young people in post-migration communities are not passive recipients of linguistic influences but active agents of linguistic innovation who strategically deploy their multilingual resources to construct complex urban identities. These practices represent sophisticated responses to the challenges and opportunities of contemporary urban multilingual life, contributing to the ongoing evolution of Nigerian urban linguistic landscapes whilst maintaining connections to heritage linguistic traditions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this sociolinguistic study of youth language practices in post-migration communities, several key

recommendations emerge for researchers, educators and policymakers working in multilingual urban contexts.

Future investigations should employ longitudinal mixed-methods approaches to capture the dynamic nature of multilingual identity development over extended periods. The current study's five-month ethnographic design, whilst providing rich qualitative insights, would benefit from complementary quantitative tracking of linguistic changes across multiple years. Researchers should incorporate digital ethnography methods to examine how social media platforms influence multilingual practices, addressing the gap identified in current literature.

These recommendations address the study's limitations whilst building upon its strengths, providing actionable guidance for stakeholders seeking to support multilingual urban communities effectively.

Conclusion

This ethnographic study of multilingual youth in post-migration communities in Ibadan has provided crucial insights into the sophisticated linguistic strategies employed by young people navigating complex urban multilingual environments. The research addressed three fundamental questions about multilingual identity negotiation, factors influencing language choice and the formation of new linguistic varieties in urban post-migration contexts.

The main findings demonstrate that participants employed highly strategic 'contextual linguistic personas' across different urban spaces, with English dominating formal educational contexts (66.7%) whilst heritage languages remained prominent in domestic and religious settings. Peer group interactions emerged as primary sites for linguistic creativity, with mixed codes accounting for 37.5% of language use in these contexts. The study identified



interlocutor linguistic background (91.7%) and topic sensitivity (79.2%) as the most significant factors influencing language choice, revealing sophisticated metalinguistic awareness among participants that challenges traditional assumptions about unconscious code-switching behaviour.

Regarding linguistic innovation, the research documented systematic patterns of creative multilingual practices, with lexical borrowing representing the most frequent innovation type (34.4%), followed by code-switched phrases (27.3%) and morphological blending (19.6%). These findings provide empirical evidence that multilingual contact in urban settings generates new varieties reflecting the superdiverse nature of contemporary urban Nigeria.

The implications of this research extend beyond academic understanding to practical applications in educational policy and community development. The documented sophisticated multilingual competencies challenge current monolingual educational approaches and support arguments for additive multilingual pedagogies that recognise linguistic diversity as a resource rather than a deficit. For sociolinguistic theory, the study contributes African-centred perspectives to predominantly European and North American theoretical frameworks.

Future research should employ longitudinal mixed-methods approaches incorporating digital ethnography to capture the full complexity of contemporary multilingual practices. The study's recommendations emphasise the need for educational policies that build upon youth multilingual competencies and community programmes that celebrate linguistic diversity as a resource for urban development. This research ultimately reveals multilingual youth as active agents of linguistic

innovation who strategically construct complex urban identities through sophisticated deployment of their multilingual resources.

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