

# Code Switching in English Language and Academic Performance of Selected Public Secondary Schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State

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## Abstract

English language proficiency holds paramount importance in today's globalized world, where it has emerged as the dominant language for international business, trade, and diplomacy, making it an essential tool for communication and success. Thus, this study assessed code switching in English Language and students' academic performance of selected public secondary schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. This study adopted a descriptive research design. A sample of 388 respondents were selected through a multistage sampling method. Four research questions and 2 hypotheses were raised to guide this study. The information collected were sorted, coded, and entered in data sheet created in the SPSS. Analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics fixed at .05. The results revealed that more than two-third of secondary school students frequently code switch in their communication, code switched easily, and actively involved in code switching behaviour. Also a positive relationship between code switching behaviour in English Language and students' academic performance ( $r = .326, p = 000 < .05$ ), as well as ease of use ( $r = .471, p = 000 < .05$ ) was reported. Additionally, there is a significant impact of code switching behaviour on academic performance of public secondary school students ( $F_{(1,387)} = 20.225; p = .000$ ). The study concluded that students' attitude towards English language and frequency of code-switching is crucial to enhance their academic performance. It is recommended that even if students may comprehend English well, code switching should occasionally be employed to enhance an utterance's referential message and to clarify and explain concept but not when lecturing or administering tests.

**Keywords:** *Academic Performance, Code Switching, English Language, Secondary Schools, Switching Behavior.*

## INTRODUCTION

Secondary education is an arm of Post-Basic Education and Career Development which children receive after a successful completion of six years of Basic Education and passing the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) as enunciated in the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of the National Policy on Education. According to Gegeleso and Ayodele (2023) the expectation is that at the end of secondary education, beneficiaries would have been prepared for meaningful living and self-reliance within the society as well as being prepared for the next level, that is, the tertiary education level.

Secondary education is an important sub-sector in national and individual development. It plays a vital role in creating a country's human resource base at a level higher than basic

education (Achoka et al., 2017). The vital role played by secondary education may partly explain the Nigerian government's decision to introduce free tuition in public secondary schools in order to increase its demand and facilitate access. Provision of quality secondary education is therefore important in generating the opportunities and benefits of social and economic development (Onsumu et al., 2016).

One major instrument for measuring the quality of products of secondary education in Nigeria is the academic performance of the students (Ijaiya, 2012). According to Adediwura and Tayo (2007), academic performance is designated by test and examination scores or marks assigned by the subject teachers and/or by examinations' bodies such as the WAEC, NECO, JAMB and NABTEB.

It could also be said to be any expression used to represent students' scholastic standing. Gegeleso and Ayodele (2023) reported that the academic performance of students at secondary school level is not only a pointer to the effectiveness of schools but also a major determinant of the well-being of youths in particular and the nation in general.

Lydia and Nasongo (2019) noted that the performance of students in any academic task has always been of special interest to the government, educators, parents and the society at large. Performance of learners is the act or process of imparting or acquiring knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life.

Academic performance is a critical indicator of educational success and an essential determinant of future societal contributions. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019), strong academic achievement serves as a foundation for higher education access, career advancement, and meaningful participation in economic and social systems.

The World Bank (2020) similarly highlights that academic performance plays a pivotal role in fostering individual development, economic growth, and poverty reduction, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Conversely, poor academic performance limits opportunities, perpetuates cycles of poverty, and exacerbates existing inequalities (Usher et al., 2020). These outcomes underscore the importance of understanding the factors that influence students' academic success.

These outcomes, both the benefits of strong academic achievement (OECD, 2019) and the consequences of poor academic performance (Usher et al., 2020; World Bank, 2020) underscore the importance of understanding the factors that influence students' academic success. Given these realities, researchers and policymakers have continued to explore the factors that influence students' academic success, particularly in developing countries where educational disparities remain a pressing concern (Adeyemo & Oni, 2023).

However, communication is a major form of social interaction among various people in society, whether in formal or in informal settings. Globally, the English language is one of the acceptable languages of communication and interaction, yet the individual trajectories of language development and the particular language variety and modes of communication vary depending on the contexts in which they live.

This context is shaped by some variations in habits, cultures, traditions, regions and idiosyncratic aspects. In the 21st century, the world has become narrow, accessible, shareable, and familiar with the same pattern of communication for all people. In this manner, the English

language is used as a common language because it has some good qualities of universality. It plays a dominant role in almost all fields and specializations. For example, in science, research, business, politics, art, and education, English occupies a unique place as it is the language that is extensively used and so firmly established as a dominant global language (Rao, 2019).

Code switching (CS) is described as a situation that normally occurs in a wide range of communication use circumstances. Code switching has been used to accurately express meaning and to stress comprehension of concepts and meanings (Aisha Bhatti, 2018). It is also known as the act of employing a student's first language while speaking the target language.

It turns out that the nineteenth century saw a considerable increase in interest in code switching due to the emergence of modern society, globalization, and more interdependence between various ethnical groups (Alaa Al-Adnani, 2016).

The code switching process occurs in the speech of bilingual speakers who are able to speak both languages with a certain degree of proficiency (Simasiku, 2016). Alaa Al-Adnani (2016) explored code switching in bilingual communities who speak more than one language to communicate.

Additionally, bilinguals use CS when trying to communicate better to convey their thoughts. Moreover, bilinguals consider this phenomenon to be widespread and can be used in all aspects of life, whether at work, study, or even in daily life.

Code-switching is a linguistic phenomenon characterized by the interchange between multiple languages or language variations within a conversation. It is when bilingual speakers skillfully transition between languages, seamlessly integrating the linguistic elements within sentences across languages (McSwan, 2017).

The findings of this research indicate that the practice of code-switching aids learners in understanding better the difficult concepts in lessons and encourages their active participation in classroom tasks. Furthermore, it assists students in linking new information with their prior knowledge. As a result, learners view code-switching positively in a classroom environment, leading to favorable emotional effects (Mendoza *et al.*, 2021).

Meanwhile, researchers recommended conducting a study to help students improve their knowledge of the English language and practice speaking using the target language. A broader understanding of students' problems concerning speaking using the English language is advised because they have a more comprehensive knowledge of their first language (Enriquez *et al.*, 2022). Nevertheless, no study was conducted on the students' attitudes towards code-switching, especially in the local setting. As recommended in the study by Mansyur (2019), further research is needed on the linguistic attitude of data towards code-switching.

To further enhance the study, data collecting can be optimized by employing diverse data collection procedures to ensure the final data is more precise. This study therefore assessed the effects of code switching on English language development among senior secondary school students in Ikenne local government area, Ogun State.

### Research Questions

The corresponding research questions to the objectives are as follows;

1. What is the frequency of code switching among the selected secondary school students in Ikenne local government?

2. How ease is code switching in English Language among secondary school students in Ikenne local government?
3. What is the code switching behaviour in English Language among secondary school students in Ikenne local government?
4. What is the relationship between the code switching behaviour in English Language and secondary school students' academic performance in Ikenne local government?

### Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant impact of code switching behaviour on academic performance of public secondary school students
2. There is no significant relationship between frequency and ease of code switching among the selected secondary school students in Ikenne local government.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design:

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design to assess the effect of code switching on English language development among secondary school students in Ikenne local government area in Ogun State. This study includes students from junior secondary school 1 to senior secondary school.

### Population:

The population for this study covered all the 15,693 students in public secondary schools in Ikenne, Local Government of Ogun State, Nigeria. Ikenne Local Government Area has its headquarters at Ikenne. It has an area of 144km<sup>2</sup> and divided into five administrative, namely; Ikenne, Ilishan, Iperu, Iloru and Ogere.

The five administrative zones have a total of 11 public secondary schools. The schools are; Akesan Comprehensive Grammar School, Iperu, Christ Apostolic High School, Iperu, Ikenne community High School, Ikenne, Mayflower School, Ikenne, Ilishan High School, Ilishan and Isanbi Comprehensive High School, Ilishan.

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for this study was determined by using the Slovin's formula. Slovin's formula provides the sample size (n) using the known population size (N) and the acceptable error value (e).

Slovin's formula permits a researcher to sample the population with a desired degree of accuracy and also gives the researcher a clue of how large the sample needs to be to ensure a reasonable accuracy of results (Ellen, 2018). This helped the researcher to obtain the sample and also to use the results to make sampling decisions based on the data.

Slovin's formula is written as:

$$n = N \div (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where n = Number of samples, N = Total population (15693) and e = Error tolerance (0.05)

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= \frac{N}{(1+Ne^2)} \\
 n &= \frac{15693}{(1 + 15693 \times 0.05 \times 0.05)} \\
 n &= \frac{15693}{(1 + 15693 \times 0.0025)} \\
 n &= \frac{15693}{1 + 39.2325} \\
 n &= \frac{15693}{40.2325} \\
 n &= 390.06 \\
 n &= 390
 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, sample of 390 students represented the number of respondents across the selected schools to which copies of the questionnaire were administered. The sample was selected using multi-stage sampling technique.

Stage 1: The Local Government Area was divided into five major (5) administrative zones namely Ikenne, Ilishan, Iperu, Irolu and Ogere.

Stage 2: out of five (5) administrative zones in the Local Government Area., three (3) was selected using S.R.S, where all the 5 zones were listed differently on a paper and wrapped. The papers were thrown into a box and was picked blindly. The researcher picked Ikenne, Iperu and Ilishan zones.

Stage 3: from each of the selected administrative zones, 2 public secondary schools were selected to give a total of 6 participating public secondary schools in all (see Table 3.2). These schools have the highest number of students.

Stage 4: from each of the 6 participating public secondary schools, the classes in the selected schools was stratified into Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School.

Stage 5: involved the use of proportional stratified random sampling method for the selection of 390 students for the study. The reason for the use of proportional stratified random sampling method is to ensure that each stratum (school) has the same sampling fraction and that all the elements or groups under investigation are well represented in the sample.

A proportionate number of respondents for each of the six schools was calculated by adopting this formula:

$$\frac{Q \times n_0}{N}$$

Where

- Q = The number of female students from each of the schools  
 $n_0$  = Sample size of finite population  
 N = Finite population size (Total number of female students from the 6 selected schools)

The sample size of 390 was distributed in proportions as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of students}}{\text{Total Number of students in all the school}} \times \text{Sample size} = xx$$

**Table 1: calculated proportion for the selected secondary school**

Name of school	Population	Proportion	Sample size of each school
1. Akesan Comprehensive Grammar School, Iperu	821	$821/11624 \times 390 = 27$	27
2. Christ Apostolic Grammar School, Iperu	2045	$2045/11624 \times 390 = 69$	69
3. Ikenne Community High School, Ikenne	1779	$1779/11624 \times 390 = 60$	60
4. Ilishan High School, Ilishan	1460	$1460/11624 \times 390 = 49$	49
5. Mayflower School, Ikenne	4852	$4852/11624 \times 390 = 163$	163
6. Isanbi Comprehensive High School Ilishan	667	$667/11624 \times 390 = 22$	22
<b>Total</b>	11624		Total = 390

Source: Population as at 2025 collected from the school management

Selection of the students was done using simple random sampling technique in which a sample of 390 was selected.

**Instrument:** The instrument used for this study was a well-structured survey questionnaire. The research instrument was divided into four sections.

**Section A:** This section elicited responses on demographic variables of participants like such as religion, cultural background, gender, age, among others.

**Section B:** elicited information on respondents' use of language switching. It is a 6item scale. The items were measured on 7 continuum scale ranging from 0 to 6 (Very Ease = 6, and Not at All = 0). Respondents' use of language switching as a variable was measured as either high (score between 70 & 100), moderate (score between 50 & 69) or low (score between 0 & 49).

**Section C:** elicited information on respondents' ease of language switching. It is a 4item scale. The items were measured on 7 continuum scale ranging from 0 to 6 (Very Ease = 6, and Not



at All = 0). Respondents' ease of language switching as a variable was measured as either high (score between 70 & 100), moderate (score between 50 & 69) or low (score between 0 & 49).

**Section D:** elicited information on respondents' code switching behaviour. It is a 8 item scale. The items were measured on 5 continuum scale ranging from 1 to 5 (Strongly Agree = 5, and Strongly Disagree = 1).

### Procedure for Data Collection:

Ethical clearance for the study will be sought from Babcock University Health Research Ethics Committee (BUHREC). A letter of introduction from the HOD of Education, Babcock University will be presented to the respective Principals of the schools and permission was obtained from the administration of the schools to carry out the study.

Respondents were informed about the objectives and the course of the study. Consent was obtained and questionnaires were administered to all students in their classrooms during recess. Questionnaires were collected after completion and were checked for appropriateness and complete filling. Data collection was done within a period of 2 weeks.

### Method of Data Analysis:

Data for this study were analyzed using statistical package for social science Version 27. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Descriptive statistics (frequency distribution table, percentages, mean and standard deviation) was used to analyze the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and research questions. Inferential statistics (Pearson Product Moment Correlation) was used to analyze the hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

**Table 2: Respondents' Socio-demographic Characteristics**

SN	Variable (N = 388)		Frequency	%
1	Age	13-15	216	55.7
		16-18	172	44.3
		<b>Mean <math>\pm</math> SD = 13.69 <math>\pm</math> 4.15</b>		
2	Gender	Male	171	44.1
		Female	217	55.9
3	Educational Level	SS1	152	39.2
		SS2	126	32.5
		SS3	110	28.4
4	Class	Art	151	38.9
		Commercial	135	34.8
		Science	102	26.3
5	Primary Language	Yoruba	320	82.5
		Igbo	46	11.8
		Hausa	22	5.7

Three hundred and ninety (390) respondents were estimated and participated in this study. All questionnaires were distributed but only three hundred and eighty-eight (388) were adequately filled and used in the analysis. Thus, 99.5% questionnaire retrieval success was recorded.

The respondents' socio-demographic characteristics revealed that the age of the participants ranged from 13 years to 18 years with a mean age of 13.69  $\pm$  4.15 years. The gender

of the respondents revealed that 171 (44.1%) were males and 217 (55.9%) were females. The result of the analysis further revealed that 152 (39.2%) were in SS1, 126 (32.5%) were SS2, and 110 (28.4) were in SS3. Also, 155 (38.9%) were in the Art class. Majority (82.5) of the respondents have Yoruba as their primary language.

**Table 3: Descriptive results on frequency of code switching among secondary school students**

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
How common is it for you to switch languages with friends?	-	32 (8.1)	132 (34.0)	224 (62.9)
How common is it for you to switch languages with family?	-	-	100 (25.8)	288 (74.2)
How common is it for you to switch languages at school?	-	55 (14.2)	189 (48.7)	144 (37.1)
How common is it for you to switch languages in your community (for example: church, market)?	-	11 (2.8)	123 (31.7)	254 (65.5)
How common is it for you to switch languages when talking to yourself?	-	-	89 (22.9)	299 (77.1)
How common is it for you to switch languages when counting?	-	-	100 (25.8)	288 (74.2)
Weighted mean = 3.39 (84.8%)				

The results presented in Table 3 revealed the frequency of code switching among the selected secondary school students in Ikenne local government. They have an overall mean score of 3.39 on a scale of 4. When the mean score was translated to percentage, it was revealed that 84.8% of secondary school students in Ikenne local government frequently code switch in their communication.

**Table 4: Descriptive analysis on easiness of the code switching in English Language among secondary school students**

	Not at all	Less Easy	Moderately Easy	Very easy
How easy is it for you to switch languages while speaking?	-	-	-	388 (100.0)
How easy is it for you to understand when other people switch languages in spoken conversation?	-	-	-	388 (100.0)
How easy is it for you to switch languages while writing (for example: literature, text messages, social media)	-	-	-	388 (100.0)
How easy is it for you to understand languages switches in written text.	-	-	131 (33.8)	257 (66.2)
Weighted mean = 3.91 (97.8%)				

The results presented in Table 4 revealed how ease the code switching is in English Language among secondary school students in Ikenne local government. They have an overall mean score of 3.91 on a scale of 4.

When the mean score was translated to percentage, it was revealed that 97.8% find code switching easy in English Language among secondary school students in Ikenne local government.



**Table 5: Code switching behaviour in English Language among secondary school students**

I code switch in order to:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Express oneself, compensate for the deficiency, "fill the gap" when lacking the necessary lexicon, to use a more proper word/ expression	90 (23.2)	217 (55.9)	40 (10.3)	10 (2.6)	31 (8.0)
Express my feelings more accurately	201 (51.8)	100 (25.8)	49 (12.6)	38 (9.8)	-
Express my emotions more accurately	301 (77.6)	87 (22.4)	-	-	-
Express or convey an idea or a thought more accurately or more effectively	170 (43.8)	200 (51.6)	18 (4.6)	-	-
Express unity, group membership	156 (40.2)	232 (59.8)			
Communicate solidarity or affiliation, belonging	98 (25.6)	222 (57.2)	68 (17.5)	-	-
Fit in, talk like others in a group, not to stand out	117 (30.2)	271 (69.8)	-	-	-
Express humour, cause a humorous effect or laughter	198 (51.0)	190 (49.0)	-	-	-
Weighted mean = 4.04 (80.8%)					

On the code switching behaviour in English Language among secondary school students in Ikenne local government, it was observed that the participants has weighted mean score of 4.04 on a scale of 5. When the mean score was translated into percentage, it was observed that 80.8% of the respondents actively involved in code switching behaviour.

**Table 6: PPMC showing the relationship between code switching in English Language and students' academic performance**

		code switching	academic performance
code switching	Pearson Correlation	1	.326**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	388	388
academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.326**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	388	388
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

From Table 6, it could be said that there is a positive relationship between code switching behaviour in English Language and students' academic performance ( $r = .326$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ ).

Therefore, the hypothesis that stated "There is no significant relationship between code switching behaviour in English Language and secondary school students' academic performance in Ikenne local government" was rejected while the alternate hypothesis is sustained.

**Table 7: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis of impact of code switching behaviour on academic performance of public secondary school students**

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P
Regression	105.342	1	105.342	20.225	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	2046.977	387	5.209		
Total	2152.319	388			
R = .221; R <sup>2</sup> = .049; R <sup>2</sup> (Adjusted) = 0.047; Stand error estimate = 2.282					

Table 7 shows that the hypothesis that stated "there is no significant impact of code switching behaviour on academic performance of public secondary school students" was rejected. This is because the academic performance of public secondary school students yielded a coefficient of multiple regression ( $R$ ) of 0.221 and a multiple regression square of .049.

This shows that 4.9% of the total variance in the academic performance of public secondary school students is accounted for by their code switching behaviour. The table also indicated that the analysis of variance of the multiple regression data produced an F-ratio value significant at less than 0.05 level ( $F_{(1,387)} = 20.225$ ;  $p = .000$ ).

**Table 8: PPMC showing the relationship between code switching in English Language and students' academic performance**

		Frequency	Ease
Frequency	Pearson Correlation	1	.471**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	388	395
Ease	Pearson Correlation	.471**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	388	388
**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

From Table 4.7, it could be said that there is a positive relationship in frequency of the use of code switching and ease of use ( $r = .471$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ ).

Therefore, the hypothesis that stated "There is no significant relationship between frequency and ease of code switching among the selected secondary school students in Ikenne local government" was rejected while the alternate hypothesis is sustained.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of the first research question revealed that more than two-third of secondary school students in Ikenne local government frequently code switch in their communication. This implies that the rate at which secondary school students switched code is very high.

That is, code-switching is used with a view to compensating for the lack in the lexicon, expressing oneself, one's thoughts and ideas easier, more accurately, more precisely or more effectively, bringing forth humour or making a situation safer when using taboo words and discussing topics.

This result support the findings of previous researcher like Noińska and Golubiewski (2018), Noińska and Pietraś (2020) that code-switching occurs purposefully and is not regarded as a random phenomenon. The outcome of the second research question results revealed that almost all the respondents (97.8%) find code switching easy in English Language.

The reason for this may be as a result of the fact that many people that code switched have the tendency to show identity with a group, to address a different audience, and to attract attention. This is in line with the findings of Walid (2019) who reported that the most common reasons or functions of code-switching are solidarity, social status, topic, affection, persuasion, and the lack of specific vocabulary in a given language.

On the code switching behaviour in English Language among secondary school students in Ikenne local government, it was observed that 80.8% of the respondents actively involved in code switching behaviour. This might be because students engage in code-switching according to various circumstances, for instance depending on the purpose of the conversational exchange and social factors, such as social background, age etc. and might occur without any justifiable reasons.

This result corroborates Adams (2023) study that demonstrated that code-switching constitutes an indispensable part in the respondents' daily interactions although their attitudes, functions and factors which determine the incidence of code-switching are miscellaneous and vary considerably. The results of this study shows that there is a significant impact of code switching behaviour on academic performance of public secondary school students, as about 5% of the total variance in the academic performance of public secondary school students is accounted for by their code switching behaviour. This implies that apart from code switching, there are other factors influencing students' academic performance.

This supports the findings of Santos (2021) that the utilization of code-switching had a significant impact on the academic performance of students. Scholars like Hamid (2016), and Park (2015) affirmed that code-switching does not solely address learners' linguistic limitations; rather, it is seen as a strategy used mainly for pedagogic reasons.

This includes code-switching for effective classroom management and code-switching as a strategy to accommodate learners. Accommodating learners' linguistic background in a multilingual context has its own pedagogic advantages which may make teaching and learning a worthwhile experience on the part of both the teachers and learners

Additionally, a positive relationship was found between the frequency of the use of code switching and ease of use. This supports the findings of Maed and Barcelona (2023) that attitudes towards English and the frequency of code-switching significantly influenced their academic performance in English. Also, Conklin (2022) opined that individuals who live in a multilingual environment frequently switch between languages to meet complex communicative demands. When speakers code-switch, they must have a diverse range of lexical terms and phrases to shift between languages freely in various contexts.

## CONCLUSION

The current study found that more than two-third of secondary school students frequently code switched in their communication especially in English Language, while a positive relationship was found between code switching behaviour in English Language and students' academic performance.

It can be concluded that students' attitude towards English language and frequency of code-switching is crucial to enhance the academic performance. This means that the more they engage in learning English language there is a greater chance that they would excel in their academic performance.

### Implications of the Study

The following were the implications drawn based on the findings of the study:

- 1) Despite governments' expectations that teachers should only speak English in the classroom, code-switching was occasionally permitted or even required by the actual classroom environment. Even if students may comprehend English well, code switching should occasionally be employed to enhance an utterance's referential message and to clarify and explain concept but not when lecturing or administering tests.
- 2) Though, English is used as a means of instruction in most Nigerian schools, educators and teachers might want to consider the students' language preferences and attitudes toward the medium of instruction to promote learning.
- 3) Students might need appropriate linguistic scaffolding to be actively involved in the class. Thus, teacher's use of an appropriate methodology seems to be significant where active participation is crucial. This must be appropriately supported by means of linguistic scaffolding and suitable activities and tasks.
- 4) The impact of the utilization of code-switching on academic performance underscores the attention of students and teachers to the endorsed outlets of learning in the classroom. Programs, seminars, and language policy are essential avenues to address the demands of education in the present time.

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