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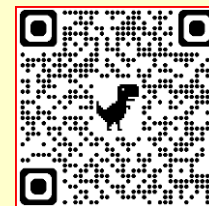
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CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC HYBRIDISATION OF ETUNO IN IGARA, AKOKO-EDO

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ABSTRACT

This article examines a hybrid influence of colonial renaissance, contact of Yoruba, Akoko and Edo languages, and the overriding influence of Nigerian Pidgin – a sort of lingua franca in the South-south geopolitical zone in Nigeria and a language of street communication – on Etuno, a dialect of Ebira in Akoko-Edo area of Edo state. The study examines 56 sentences collected from social interaction and less formal discourse usually in beer parlours, street talks, relaxation joints, motor parks, chit-chat talk among peers and among neighbours within a compound setting and in market interactions. Out of a total sixty (60) items that are infused into the 56 Etuno sentences by the various subjects, forty-five (45) of them are from English while fifteen (13) are from NP and we have two (2) items borrowed from Yoruba. These two (2) items actually are place names; “Ibadan” and “Eko”, which had to be loaned directly and used as such without any structural influence from Etuno. It is observed that code-mixing (switch at word/phrasal level) and loaning dominates the speech form of the subjects especially in a more relaxed setting. It is also observed that the infusion of English items is more prominent than NP. The finding shows a mix in the cultural pattern which reflects hybridisation of way of life, dressing, building, cultural values and beliefs.

KEY WORDS: Codeswitching, Hybridisation, Loaning, Migration, Socio-cultural contact.

1. Introduction

Many scholars who have worked on Ebira agree that the various ethnic groups who collectively constitute the four major linguistic groups of the Ebira race are said to have migrated at different times before the first world war (1914-1918) to the present various settlements scattered in various locations and states across Nigeria which include Adamawa and former Gongola among the Jukuns, Plateau among the Nassarawa tribes, Benue among the Igala extractions of the Itobe and Ajaokuta, Adavi, Okehi, Kotonkarfe, Okene and Lokoja local government areas in the present Kogi state and Edo among the Igarràs in Present Edo state of Nigeria. These

four major linguistic groups include:

- i. The Ebira Tao or Ebira Okene or Ehi/Ihima/ògàminana of Kogi State
- ii. The Ebira Igu or Ebira Koto/Panda of Kogi State
- iii. The Ebira Etuno of Edo State
- iv. The Ebira Oje or Ebira Toto or Agata of Plateau and Benue States

2. The Locale of Akoko-Edo

From historical records, the prevailing chieftaincy dispute between

the different clans of Epira that migrated together from Wukari down to Idah led to further migration of the Ètunọ group to a place called Ìgarrà in Akoko Edo Local government Area in the Afenmai Division in Edo state in the 19th century. The people prefer to be identified as Ìgarrà-Ètunọ. From our findings, this is because there are other speakers of Ètunọ in other places who did not migrate with them to Ìgarrà. Some still exist in Musum district of Bassa Local government Area in Benue state, Wukari in Taraba state and Kortokarifi in Nassarawa state. The people refer to themselves as ‘AnÈtunọ’ or ‘Anuno’ which means ‘The language we speak is Ètunọ’, though others refer to them and their language as Ìgarrà because they are geographically located in Ìgarrà. The main occupation of the men is farming while the women are engaged mainly in weaving.

Akoko-Edo formerly known as Akoko-Ìgarrà (or Akoko-oke) is the oldest singular local government that has never been split ever since its existence and the existence of Nigeria. It is as if it is constitutionally bound like Nigeria to be that indivisible entity. Akoko-Edo was a district until 1967 under Kukuruku division created in 1918. It became known as Akoko-Edo division when Kukuruku division was changed to Afenmai division in 1956. This which was sub-divided into two was socio-culturally and linguistically related and homogenous. Rather than pulling together linguistic and socio-culturally related people under the same political unit or administrative district to help keep their linguistic and socio-cultural uniqueness and enhance these unique qualities. Most towns and villages are not so. However, the political division that occurred during the mid-west 1963, Bendel 1976 and Edo or Delta 1991 never affected Akoko-Edo which is multilingual and multicultural.

The ancient Akoko-Edo is situated in the Northern part of Edo State in the south of the Niger-Benue Confluence. Its dominant geographical and environmental features comprise chains of ancient ridges and rugged rocky hills and a cave stretching across the length and breadth of what is known as the Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of the present Edo State with a population of 261,567 by the 2006 National Population Census occupies a land area of 1,371km. The area is described as the ancestral homeland of all the sub-ethnic people who have been the speakers of the ancient language which is classified as Edoid. Akoko-Edo is bounded in the North by the present Kwara State and part of Kogi State in the North-West by Ondo and in the South-East by Etsako-West and Etsako-North.

There are about 46 towns and villages in Akoko-Edo. These are: Akuku, Aiyegunle, Aiyetoro, Akpama, Ayanran, Ayanoza (Onyavuzo), Atte, Bekuma, Dangbala, Egbiegere (Egbigele), Ekor, Ekpe, Ekpedo (Uneme-ekpe), Ekpesa, Enwan, Erhuhu (Uneme-Erhuru), Eshawa, Ibilo, Ìgarrà, Ijaja, Ikakumo, Ikiran-Ile, Ikiran-Oke, Ikpeshi, Imoga, Lampese, Makeke, Ogbe Agbamijeje, Ogbe Agbanishemu, Oge-Bolorunduro, Ogugu, Okpe, Ojah, Ojirami-afekunu, Ojirami-kpeteshi, Oloma, Onumu-oke (Onumu), Onumuisale, Sasaro, Somorika, Ugboshi-afe, Ugboshi-ele, Uneme-Nekhwa, Uneme-Osu and Ososo.

Among the above towns and villages, the 12 identifiable tribes in Akoko-Edo are: Okpameri, Uneme, Ososo, Ètunọ, Ikpeshi, Okpe, Akan, Enwa, Akuku, Oloma, Egbigere and Sasaro. We equally found out that the tribes in Akoko-Edo can be grouped into five mainly. These include:

1. Okpameri; which comprises 23 towns and villages.
2. Uneme; which comprises 6 towns and villages.
3. Akan; which comprises Ayanran and Ikakumo.
4. Ètunọ (Ìgarrà) and Ososo are isolate tribes.

5. Other tribes that share some similarities with others are Ikpeshi, Akuku, Enwa, Oloma, Egbigele and Sasaro.

The Kukuruku province in Ìgarrà is rich in minerals such as lime stone used for cement. The Okpela cement factory located in the province mainly gets limestone for her production from the Kukuruku hills. Dangbala is another town in the Kukuruku province which is rich in Gold, Diamond, Barium, Uranium, Iron ore, Ferrous, Metal Ores and Emerald. Kukuruku province is also very rich in cash crops of cocoa, oil palm and kernel, cotton, timber, cashew nuts, shea-butter, and groundnuts. We were reliably informed that prior to the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria much attention was given to the Kukuruku province as it also supplied large quantity of food crops and animal husbandry to the Nigerian economy, however, the oil boom led to its collapse as a result of its abandonment.

Odemerho (2011:3) discovered that the dissection of the rocky outcrops of Northern Edo by rivers Onyami, Orle and Ubo and their tributaries created numerous natural passes thereby making the remotest parts of its hills slightly accessible from the west to the east as well as from the north to the south. He also observed that intense deep chemical weathering and wash processes of the past have yielded a large number of rock shelters, locally referred to as “caves” in the area.

Literature indicates that the Akoko Edo hills, especially its caves, must have served as permanent safe haven for different minority groups or as a temporary refuge for major groups like the Binis in the past. This is because of its location along the east-west or north-south migratory pathways of at least two ancient African (i.e., URO and KWA) groups located at the Niger-Benue confluence (Odemerho 2011:3). Therefore, the linguistic diversity and settlement evolution and diffusion into the entire Northern Edo region needed to be considered in the light of the mutual isolation informed by security conscious cave dwellers during troubled times and the limited accessibility presented by the rugged terrain of the Afenmai division.

3. Purpose of the Research

The border location of Etuno speakers in Igara, a border town of Edo, Ondo and Kogi States which cuts across three different geopolitical zones in Nigeria – South-south, South-west and North-central geopolitical zones – where different ethnic and linguistic groups meet serves as a problematic motivation for this study. The study therefore intends to examine the hybrid influence of colonial renaissance, contact of Yoruba, the lingua franca in the South-west zone; Akoko and Edoid languages, which constitute the close neighbouring languages; and the overriding influence of Nigerian Pidgin – a sort of lingua franca in the South-south geopolitical zone and a language of street communication – on Etuno, dialect of Epira migrants in Akoko-Edo area of Edo state.

4. Methodology

The study examines 56 sentences collected from social interaction and less formal discourse usually in beer parlours, street talks, relaxation joints, motor parks, chit-chat talk among peers and among neighbours within a compound setting and in market interactions. The researcher employs a combination of participant observation, linguistic policing and focus group discussion approaches to collect the data.

5. Ètunọ Orthography

There is the need to show evidence of lexical items that are either

borrowed directly from other neighbouring languages or that has been influenced by some linguistic features of such neighbouring languages or perhaps English language in the contact encounter. It will therefore be necessary to consider the orthography of Ẹtunọ here.

Attempt at examining the adaptation of loan words from the neighbouring bigger languages and host languages of Ẹtunọ into the Ẹtunọ lexicon will be better understood with the knowledge of its orthography i.e. its alphabet and spelling system.

This is presented below as adapted from Bamigbade (2018):

Capital Letters

A	B	D	E	Ẹ	F
G	H	I	J	K	L
M	N	O	Ọ	P	R
S	T	U	V	W	Y
Z					

Small Letters

a	b	d	e	ẹ	f
g	h	i	j	k	l
m	n	o	ọ	p	r
s	t	u	v	w	y
z					

Vowel

A	E	Ẹ	I	O	Ọ
U					
a	e	ẹ	i	o	ọ
u					

Consonants

B	D	F	G	H	J
K	L	M	N	P	R
S	T	V	W	Y	Z
b	d	f	g	h	j
k	l	m	n	p	r
s	t	v	w	y	z

Digraph

CH	GB	SH
Ch	gb	sh

In all, twenty-eight (28) letters are attested in Ẹtunọ. There are eighteen (18) consonants, seven (7) vowels and three (3) digraphs.

The Vowel Sounds of Ẹtunọ

The vowel sounds of Ẹtunọ are shown in the following words:

1. /i/ - usi (thigh), ozi (child)
2. /I/ - Irezi (dog), Ireşa (name)
3. /e/ - age (kettle), Igene (headgear)
4. /ɜ/ - ireta (stone), ufe (moon)
5. /a/ - aza (people), asise (feather)
6. /o/ - oromi (orange), unomi (bird)
7. /ɔ:/ - onoru (man or male), onyenne (woman or female)
8. /u / - uvo (hand), uzomi (star)
9. /U/ - şU (lie down), mUnę (swallow)
10. /ei/ - eyi (face), oreyi (mirror)
11. /ɔi/ - oonoi (umbrella), oiku (anger).

The Consonant sounds of Ẹtunọ

Ebira has nineteen consonant phonemes (Adiva, 1989:39). This is presented in Table (5.6) below:

Table 1 : Ebira consonant phonemes (Adeniyi 2015)

	Bilabial	Labio-Dental	Alveolar	Palato-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Labial-Velar	Glottal
Nasal	m		n		ɲ	ŋ		
Plosive	P b		t d			k g		
Fricative		v	s z					h
Affricate				tʃ dʒ				
Tap			r					
Approximant	w				j			

The following words have the consonant sounds of the Ẹtunọ language.

1. /p/ - ipanu (plate), opaku (tortoise)
2. /b/ - ibanu (belt), agamba (kitchen)
3. /t/ - atito (ash/ashes), upoto (mat)
4. /d/ - ovidi (front/first), ivedi (bed)
5. /k/ - oku (firewood), ikopu (cup)
6. /g/ - aga (chair), ogede (banana/plantain)
7. /t/ - uchacha (grasshopper), ochi (stick)
8. /dʒ/ - ijimo (Friday), uje (joy)
9. /f/ - ufu(leg), ifo (knife)
10. /v/ - ivata (shoes), avi (leaf)
11. /s/ - iseyin (fish), osisi (love)
12. /z/ - eza (beans), ize (blessing/goodness)
13. /tʃ/ - oşi (broom), aşişi (nose)
14. /m/ - umoma (shadow), irama (back)
15. /n/ - ano (salt), ine (mortar)

16. /t/ - ira (fire), irare (tongue)
17. /w/ - awen (oil), owu (thread)
18. /j/ - uye (meat), eyin (water).

6. The Influence of English and NP on Ẹtunọ

It follows that if nouns show a greater propensity for borrowed status compared to verbs, and if influence on Ẹtunọ is from surrounding Edoid and non-Edoid languages, one might expect nouns rather than verbs to show fewer exact matches in the comparison we have undertaken. Compared to verbs, nouns are less resistant to borrowing; they will easily shift from one language complex to another.

In the light of this, the following sentences illustrate the influence of English and/or NP in the speech form of some of our interviewees:

1. *You dey talk cheche* – *You (Pro/Eng), dey (V/NP),*

- talk* (V/Eng)
‘You are talking small small’
You are using your words miserly/You are talking quietly
2. *Abeg guwze mi – Abeg* (Politeness Marker/NP), *mi* (Pro/Yor)
Please close door me
Kindly close the door
 3. *Pemisi spoon from kitchen ve mi– spoon* (N/Eng) *kitchen* (N/Eng)
Bring spoon from kitchen for me
Bring the spoon from the kitchen for me
 4. *Abeg si remote ono – remote* (N/Eng)
Please, bring remote me
Kindly bring the remote for me
 5. *Abeg pem-oni television ono – television* (N/Eng)
Please, bring-on television me
Kindly switch on the television for me
 6. *I wĩ go fwenyi now – I* (Pro/Eng), *wĩ* (V/NP), *now* (Adv. of time/Eng)
I want go bath now
I want to go and take my bath now
 7. *Sine teach ini church ragini? – teach* (V/Eng), *Church* (N/Eng)
What teach in church today?
What did they teach in church today?
 8. *Berem kayo onyalaw ko vi ni church ragini*
Tell your mother come to church today
Tell your mother to come to the church today
 9. *Abeg go yinieta yi mi – go* (V/Eng)
Please, go wash clothes for me
Kindly wash these clothes for me
 10. *Sine vi name mawu? – name* (N/Eng)
What is name your own?
What is your name?
 11. *Wia your onyi dey? Wia* (Wh question/NP), *your* (PRO/Eng), *dey* (Adv. of place/NP)
Where your mother is?
Where is your mother?
 12. *Kwete fi ni chair ono – chair* (N/Eng)
Stand up from that chair
Stand up from that chair
 13. *So oneo chop ragini? – chop* (V/NP)
What you eat today?
What did you eat today?
 14. *Uwa finish da? – finish* (N/Eng)
You have finish?
Have you finished?
 15. *Palẹ quiet ragini o – Palẹ* (N/NP)
Daddy is quiet today
Your Daddy is unusually quiet today
 16. *Wa shout – shout* (V/Eng)
You are shout
You are shouting
 17. *Odey keep quiet – keep quiet* (VP/Eng)
Please keep quiet
Please be quiet
 18. *Sinevi position nau? – position* (N/Eng)
What your position is?
What is your position?
 19. *Abeg remi y’ee imiro ono*
Please help clean mirror for me
Kindly clean that mirror for me
 20. *Uvami o dirty – dirty* (Adj/Eng)
 - My hand is dirty
My hand is dirty
 21. *Mummy o fine ragini gan – Mummy* (N/Eng), *fine* (Adj/Eng)
Mummy is fine today
Mummy is looking good today
 22. *Calendar ono no o fine – Calendar* (N/Eng)
Calendar the is fine
The Calendar appears good
 23. *Abeg close window ono – close* (V/Eng), *window* (N/Eng)
Please, close window the.
Kindly shut the window
 24. *Me sireyi hand-band awo ononi – hand-band* (N/Eng)
I like this your hand band
I like your hand band
 25. *Fuel o scarce iniseron – Fuel* (N/Eng), *scarce* (Adj/Eng)
Fuel is scarce of recent.
Fuel is scarce of late.
 26. *Dem go mee – Dem* (Pro/NP)
They will do it
They will do it
 27. *Hin dey con fron Afurata – Hin* (Pro/NP), *con* (V/ NP), *fron* (Prep./ NP)
He is coming from Afurata
He is on his way from Afurata
 28. *Su like fu – like* (V/Eng)
What you like most?
What do you like most?
 29. *Ya tank oshomoshi – tank* (V/NP)
We thank God
We thank God
 30. *Mesiereyi green cloth awo nini – green cloth* (NPhrase/Eng)
I like this your green dress
I like this green dress of yours
 31. *Si na mewu cry? – cry* (V/Eng)
Why are you cry?
Why are you crying?
 32. *Ma va marry ofuo – marry* (V/Eng)
I want marry tomorrow
I will be getting married tomorrow
 33. *Ibadan onijm stay – Ibadan* (N. of place/Yor), *stay* (V/Eng)
It is stay Ibadan stay
I live in Ibadan
 34. *Si ne vi irashi street awu? – street* (N/Eng)
What is name of your street?
What is the name of your street?
 35. *Abeg si ebagi blak ono va mi – blak* (Adj/NP)
Please bring that black bag for me
Kindly bring that black bag for me
 36. *Izim ve ra com fure? – com* (N/NP)
Where can I get comb?
Where can I get a comb?
 37. *E pen yi – pen* (N/Eng)
This is pen
This is a pen.
 38. *Ini ni can ono ya – can* (N/Eng)
It is can the inside
It is inside the can
 39. *Oshomoshi forgive ayi – forgive* (V/Eng)
God forgive us
May God Forgive us
 40. *Si key ono mi – key* (N/Eng)

- Give me the key
Give me the key
41. Si *cup* ono mi – *cup* (N/Eng)
Give me the cup.
Give me the cup.
42. Si *chair* ono mi
Give me the chair
Give me the chair
43. Vadi *changi* a wu – *changi* (loan N/Eng)
Come and collect your change
Please come for your balance
44. Pemi nasi ekeshi ni ebag ve
Go and bring money from the bag
Get some money from the bag for me
45. Pemi fu *fan* ono mi – *fan* (N/Eng)
Go and put on that fan
Go to switch on the fan
46. E *resolve* da o – *resolve* (V/Eng)
They have resolved
They have resolved it
47. E resolve ireyi no da
They have resolve the matter
They have resolved the matter
48. Ma nini Church
I go to Church
I am going to Church
49. Ya nini Church
We go to Church
We are going to Church
50. Wa *get* isi aka? – *get* (V/Eng)
You understand what we say?
Do you understand what we are saying?
51. Ma *travel* ne *Eko* – *travel* (V/Eng), *Eko* (N. of place/Yor)
I travel to Lagos
I am travelling to Lagos
52. Ye ri fonu aya wu?
Where phone your is?
Where is your phone?
53. Me ri television
I watch television
I am watching television
54. E ri television
We watch television
We are watching television
55. Ya watch television
We watch television
We are watching television
56. Ma *play* *football* – *play* (V/Eng), *football* (N/Eng)
I play football
I am playing football

It is observed that code-mixing (switch at word/phrasal level) dominates the speech form of the subjects especially in a more relaxed setting. This is noticed in social interaction and less formal discourse usually in beer parlours, street talks, relaxation joints, motor parks and other less formal settings. Also, some of these sentences were collected from chit-chat talk among peers and among neighbours within a compound setting and in market interactions. It is observed that the infusion of English items is more prominent than NP.

From the data above, out of a total sixty (60) items that are infused into the Ẹtunọ sentences by the various subjects, forty-five (45) of them are from English while fifteen (13) are from NP and we have

two (2) items borrowed from Yoruba. These two (2) items actually are place names; “Ibadan” and “Eko”, which had to be loaned directly and used as such without any structural influence from Ẹtunọ. Also, the Yoruba accusative case pronoun *mi* ‘me’ appears so well across the data. The influence of Yoruba is further observed in the names of some of the streets in Igarra, such streets names as Àjàyí Street, Òkè-Asípa Street, Láwàní Street and Òréré Òkè-òde Street. Igarra natives also bear countless Yoruba persons’ names as evidence in the names of some of our language assistants.

Though, we observed that some of the English items infused are used in the context of NP judging from the discourse context. For instance, talk (1), go (6 and 9), now (6) and get (50):

1. You *dey* talk cheche – You (Pro/Eng), *dey* (V/NP), *talk* (V/Eng)
‘You are talking small’
You are using your words miserly/You are talking quietly
6. I *w̃* go fwenyi now – I (Pro/Eng), *w̃* (V/NP), *now* (Adv. of time/Eng)
I want go bath now
I want to go and take my bath now
9. Abeg *go* yinieta yimi – *go* (V/Eng)
Please, go wash clothes for me
Kindly wash these clothes for me
50. Wa *get* isi aka? – *get* (V/Eng)
You understand our talk?
Do you understand what we are saying?

From our data above many of the lexical items that are infused from English/NP into the Ẹtunọ sentences are largely verbs and nouns, though a few are also found from other word classes such as adjectives, pronouns, adverbs and prepositions. The distribution is presented below:

Table 4: Summary of Lexical Borrowing from NP

S/N	Items	Frequency
1.	Noun/English	21
2.	Verb/English	14
3.	Pronoun/ English	3
4.	Adjectives/English	3
5.	Adverb/English	1
6.	Noun Phrase/English	1
7.	Verb Phrase/English	1
8.	Loaned noun from English	1
9.	Noun/Nigerian Pidgin	2
10.	Verb/Nigerian Pidgin	4
11.	Pronoun/Nigerian Pidgin	2
12.	Adjectives/Nigerian Pidgin	1
13.	Adverb/Nigerian Pidgin	1
14.	Preposition/Nigerian Pidgin	1
15.	Wh question/Nigerian Pidgin	1
16.	Politeness Marker/Nigerian Pidgin	1

17.	Noun/Yoruba	2
	Total	60

7. Socio-Cultural Influence

Due to the mixed socio-cultural setting in Akoko-Edo area, especially Ìgarrà zone with the highest density of cultural and linguistic diversity in Edo North, cases of cultural influence were observed. Influence of Yoruba cultural values on Ètunọ culture. This cuts across way of life, local food, dressing pattern, world view, housing form and other socio-cultural identifiable ethnics. Yoruba native food such as *amala* and *Ewedu* (Yam flour and a type of draw vegetable soup) and *moinmoin* and *eko* (bean cake and solid pap) are found to be common among the Ìgarrà. Their kind of *Amala* and the *moinmoin* is more solid than that of the Yoruba which is usually very light. The majority of the women are also found wearing *iro* and *buba* just like the Yoruba women while the use of *buba* and *sokoto* is noticed among the men as well.

Also as observed by Chokor (2011), the predominance of storey structures in Akoko-Edo, the hillier country compares to relative numbers in Owan and Etsako, could be adduced to issues relating to safety, security and status concerns, or cultural borrowing from elsewhere. Those who support borrowing and transfer of ideas on housing argue that a second wave of migration, this time away from the hills in contrast to migration into the hills, may have followed colonial intervention.

From our field work findings, we noted that colonial pacification may have encouraged some migration from Akoko-Edo area, west into Yoruba towns and cities, especially into Ilesha, Ibadan and Ondo regions and subsequently into farms as casual labourers. Obviously, some of the present-day farm labourers who are popularly referred to as the '*Àgàtú*' by the Yoruba, a close interaction with them revealed that they are from various tribes. It is a case of generalisation that the Yoruba referred to them all as '*Àgàtú*'. It was discovered that they include different ethnic groups such as the Tiv, Ebira (Ètunọ inclusive – although the Ètunọ are also referred to as the '*Gàrà*' or '*Ìgarà*'), Igala and Idoma. The researcher stumbled across an English teacher of a secondary school in Ile-Ife whom with her husband are also evidence of such colonial induced migration.

We realised that during the colonial period, cases of migrants contact with what has been described as Brazilian-style tenement building architecture in the 19th century resulted, brought by ex-slaves who returned from Brazil; this design had become popular in the Yoruba country, particularly in cities and opines that the houses were intriguing, whether storey or non-storey structures, they had the rectangular shape of the compound but instead of a courtyard, a central corridor was evolved linking rooms in tenement form for different migrant families. He however concluded that this housing style is therefore a microcosm of the traditional compound found in Yorubaland (Chokor, 2005).

From the foregoing, all indication shows that after the earliest immigration of several ethnic groups into the Afenmai hills for safety among other reason, which included the Ètunọ people, subsequently, with the dousing of the threats and insecurity that warranted the uphill migration, the various ethnic groups began to descend the hills settling in the valleys of the hills and in neighbouring location. This gave room to out-migration of the various ethnic groups towards the south and the west for different reasons. Some of these reasons include quest for education, westernization, trade and farm labour work.

This out-migration affords the Ètunọ people amongst other ethnic groups contact with Yoruba (to the West) and other Edoid languages (to the South). Thus, the housing forms in Akoko-Edo indicate contact with the Yorubas. Since, the housing form is a part of the socio-cultural system of the people and there are indications that what he described as the Brazilian-style tenement building architecture was popular among the Yorubas hence, such housing style borrowing is evidence of socio-cultural contact which cannot be exonerated of sociolinguistic contact. We therefore put it as socio-cultural shift inclusive of sociolinguistic shift.

Although Ìgarrà town constitutes a non-Edoid community who are viewed as relatively newcomers their compound housing forms and layouts are similar to those found in many other Akoko-Edo villages and communities, especially Somorika, Ojirami, Okpe, Enwa, Ososo and Akuku. These communities have varied claims of origin which include Benin, non-Edoid and Ife and autochthonous. In addition, it was observed that both Ìgarrà and Enwan have, perhaps, the densest traditional two-storey housing structures in rural Nigeria reflecting early attempts to adjust to limited land within local technologies. Obviously, the forms of housing in hilly country appear not only closer to those of the Yoruba with the earliest history of urbanization in Nigeria but seem to support the more autochthonous and non-Edoid or Yoruba origin held by the people when compared to those from Etsako and Owan.

Akoko-Edo may have received strong influences from the Yoruba west through exchanges across the Osse River over time, which may have reverberated on the Yoruba too. The Osse River represents a major divide between Yoruba west of the river and the Edo North groups east of the river. For instance, the Isua people in Akoko area of Ondo State who speak language said to be similar in form to the Esan and Uneme of Edo North while the Ekpimi of Ondo State are said to have forms similar to Ibilo, Lampese and Imoga of Edo State.

It was also observed that during pre-colonial times, there had been a footbridge across the Osse River, which provided avenues for spatial interaction, social exchanges and trade. In relation to this, Chokor (2011) identifies two of the historical signposts of these influences, which include Ogendegbe, a notable warrior in the period, and an Ijesa man whom while crossing to Ìgarrà, took along with him aspects of Yoruba values and established such influence in Ìgarrà; so also, was Okere who married from Owo in the early part of the 17th century. This reveals the link of the various groups in Ìgarrà to diversified origin and forms.

For instance, we observed that while the Ìgarrà are Igbara-based from Kogi state, the Okpe in Akoko-Edo appear to have forms similar to the Urhobos of Delta State. Many of the groups, even the Yoruba based groups, do not understand each other. Difficulty in communication amongst the various groups may have influenced the need for NP as lingua franca and subsequent adoption of Yoruba in business transactions, markets and churches especially following the Ogendegbe incursions.

Other significant aspects of socio-cultural shift include personal names, family names and place names. Evidence abounds in this regard, particularly in Ìgarrà, pointing to the influence of Yoruba names in Ìgarrà. As observed in some findings such as Pogoson (2011), we equally observed that so strong were Yoruba influences that place and family names at times changed from names in the local language to Yoruba depending on the level of influence and control and the time. For instance, *Makeke* was the name of a small town in that area in the early 19th century. It changed to *Ilu titun*

sometimes in the 1830's/40's. *Ilu titun* has Yoruba origin which means "new town". But the change has been reversed as the people of the town now prefer their town to be called Makeke. Pogson also noted in an interview a man who changed his surname from *Kekere-Ekun* back to his original name, *Akpe* in the late 1970's. Yoruba influence must have accounted for the initial change of the name from the local version *Akpe* to *Kekere-Ekun*. Personal names and even surnames of some of our informants also bear witness to this, such names as Balogun, Bamidele, Adeleke, Alabi, Olatunji and Ojo. He submits based on this that these influences tended to be expedient in that many people wanted to identify with the Yoruba at this time in order to be able to get education that was fast-growing and permeating the area. It was from Yoruba land that some of the earliest educational experiences seeped into Northern Edo area.

8. Conclusion

Our findings reveal that the linguistic situation in which Ẹtunọ has found itself in Ìgarrà and the way forward from the stand point of this work may be viewed from the migration and socio-cultural contact. Migration of the earliest Ẹtunọ speakers which separated them from the other Ebira clans and established divergent speech form between the Ẹtunọ and the other dialects of Ebira such as the Ebira Okene, which is regarded as the standard variety of Ebira, Ebira Koto otherwise called 'Ebirikoto' and Ebira Panda. Then, contact of Ẹtunọ with the Edoid languages (the host linguistic group in Akoko-Edo region surrounding Ìgarrà where the Ẹtunọ speakers later settled and inhabit till date), Yoruba and NP (Native NP – since claims has it that NP is fast creolizing in Edo-Delta region, hence; the native form of NP is found here).

These contact situations include contact with; Yoruba and Akoko to their west, a number of varieties of Okpamheri in different neighbouring villages and towns and other Edoid languages is a major factor responsible for hybridisation of Ẹtunọ.

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