



A Sociolinguistic Study of Language Use and Identity in Some Selected Gospel Music in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates how some selected Nigerian Christian artists use code switching and code mixing to connect with diverse audiences and also showcase their ethnic identities. The theories adopted for the study are the social identity theory and the communication accommodation theory. Findings reveal that the blending of indigenous languages with English in the selected gospel music serves as a tool for showcasing the ethnic group of the artists as well as reaching wider audiences. This result therefore emphasizes the role of language use in the Christian music industry in fostering cultural identity and its involvement in maintaining the heritage language of the people. The researcher therefore recommends the continuous incorporation of indigenous languages into Christian Gospel songs since it has demonstrated positive impacts on language maintenance, cultural visibility, and audience engagement. Future studies should investigate a larger corpus of gospel songs across more Nigerian languages to deepen understanding of multilingual practices and their sociolinguistic impacts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language and identity are two sides of a coin. Human beings cannot detach themselves from the society that parented them. People tend to consciously and unconsciously unite with their native language. A loss of a language is seen as the loss of the basic identity of the people who use that language. Although, the multilingual nature of Nigeria has given English language the opportunity to become the language in use in some sectors of the country such as media, government and education. Studies have shown that despite its position in language use in Nigeria, many people still blend English with their indigenous languages in different domains of language use, especially in informal gatherings. Generally, sociolinguists are interested in the status and use of every language. Sociolinguistics studies how language is used in a society. It is interested in the discovering of the state of every language in a community in order to promote the language, thereby preserving the culture and identity of a group of people. This is because language is the vehicle through which the culture of an ethnic group is portrayed in the society. One of the prominent figures in sociolinguistics has defined sociolinguistics as “the

study of language in its social context, including the way people use language in different social situations and the social norms that govern language use” (Hymes 1974, p.245). Sociolinguistics is concerned with how people use language, their choices of language depending on some factors such as situation, context, age, sex, needs, and people etc. He stressed the value of social context and language use in his definition. People use language differently depending of who they are discussing with, the subject matter of discussion, the domain of language use and the purpose communication. Wang (2023), views language in sociolinguistics as a multimodal construct intertwined with social meaning, indexicalities, and ideologies, expanding beyond verbal forms. This definition mentions one’s social identities which can be signified by the language, one speaks.

Gumperz (1982, p.1) posits that, “Language is not just a matter of learning a set of rules and vocabulary but a way of communication that is deeply embedded in the social and cultural context. This shows that language is dependent on society and culture and it is context based. It is an essential aspect of a society and its culture. Language cannot be separated from culture because language represents its user’s and has close relation to the attitude or behaviour of groups of speakers of the languages. Language, friendship, custom, practice communication, social action, economic activity, politics, and technology, all these are based on cultural patterns (Porter & Samovar in Mulyana and Grace, 2006). People generally are keen about the preservation of their language because it signifies the group that births them.

Multilingualism as a phenomenon exists in almost all the countries of the world. It is the language situation in Nigeria, Indian, Canada, Singapore, South Africa, Russia, China, Brazil, the United States, and Indonesia etc. Eberhard, Simons, and Fennig, (2024) reveal that, “520 living indigenous languages exist in Nigeria, out of which 12 are now extinct. In addition, 10 living non-indigenous languages are established within the country”. The pluralistic situation in the country has led to the choice of English as the official language as well as the language of instruction in the country. In addition, every ethnic group seeks for recognition and preservation of its language. A choice of a particular indigenous language over another has always led to rivalries, as language is closely linked to the identity of those who use it.

Multilingualism refers to the use of more than two languages by an individual or a society while bilingualism means the use of two languages by an individual or a society. Multilingualism arises from sustained language contact. Whenever two or more languages coexist within a community, bilingualism and multilingualism naturally emerge. Consequently, various sociolinguistic phenomena such as transfer, interference, borrowing, code-switching and code-mixing become common features of interaction. In a country like Nigeria, where

more than 500 languages are in use, individual and societal bilingualism are inevitable. Generally, bilinguals and multi-linguals engage in code-switching and code-mixing, both consciously and unconsciously in their everyday interactions. This may occur due to cognitive constraints, a desire to exclude others from a conversation, the need for clearer self-expression, or to signal solidarity with a particular social group to which they belong.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Code Switching and Code Mixing

According to Onuoha (2024, p. 18), “Code switching in song lyrics has become a common phenomenon but at such, code switching in naturally occurring conversation is different from code switching in music”. It has been observed that many gospel music artistes in Nigeria have preference for code mixing and code switching in the composition and rendition of their songs. Their motivations for employing code-mixing and code-switching range from the pursuit of economic advantages to the promotion and preservation of their indigenous languages, among other anticipated benefits. Many scholars have worked on the use of code mixing and code switching by Nigerian gospel music artiste. Onuoha (2024) worked on the topic: Code-Switching in Songs as a Tool for Nation Building. She concludes that, “Code-switching in the selected songs, is seen as a strategic choice made by speakers in order to achieve certain social or interactional goals in conversation. She discovered that the gospel artistes seem to use more of code-switching than the secular artiste in their music. It is discovered that the gospel artistes seem to use more of code-switching than the secular artiste in their music. Motito, Nwadubike and Oni (2025) worked on, **“Code-Mixing in the Gospel Songs of Some Nigerian Music Artistes. Their study** revealed that code mixing arises from limitations in the flow of expression. This according to them was the major reason for code mixing. Adamu and Hayab (2018) worked on the topic- “Code-switching in Nigerian Christian Songs. Their focus was to find out the linguistic content of the songs selected with a view to finding cases of code-switching. However, this focus of this research is different as it has unveiled how the blend of different languages by the selected gospel songs reflects the musician’s personal, religious and ethnic identities.

Myers-Scotton (2017) in Mirzaeva (2025) rightly posits that code switching is often considered through the lens of sociolinguistics, and appears not only as a linguistic strategy but as a profound manifestation of social identity and the group association. This statement by Mirzaeva (2025) is in line with the result of this study as the majority of our respondents agreed that Christian music artiste code-mix and code-switch in order to showcase the group to which they belong. Code switching, the alternation between two or more languages or dialects within a single communicative event, is a widespread phenomenon in multilingual societies

(Mirzaeva, 2025, p.1), while code mixing is the change of one language to another within the same utterance or in the same oral/ written text. Code switching can occur at various levels, such as inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switching. Inter-sentential code-switching occurs at the sentence boundary, and intra-sentential code-switching occurs within the sentence. At the same time, a tag switching involves insertion of tag in one language into an utterance that is in a different language. Suwito argued that code mixing is divided into two types, namely internal code mixing and external code mixing (Aprilia et al., 2020; Rokhman, 2013, p. 38). According to Santuso, Sariono, and Setyari (2023,p.1), “Suwito argued that Internal code mixing is a type of code mixing that inserts elements of the original language that are still related or cognate, while external code mixing is a type of code mixing that inserts elements from foreign languages.

2.2. Language Use and Identity

It is of interest to note that people love to promote their language whenever they have the opportunity to do so. This is because language reveals their identity. Block (2007, p.40) describes language identity as “the assumed and/or attributed relationship between one's sense of self and a means of communication which might be known as a language, a dialect or a sociolect.” The complex relationship between language, culture, and identity is explained below:

Culture, identity and language may be inextricable from each other; all create identity, or, at least, important aspects of identity. But language not only creates the contours of identity, it also may set up the conditions for other kinds of inclusion and exclusion, belonging and not belonging, success and failure... Language gives meaning to social structures, identity-creating and oppressive ones (Baez 2002, p.123).

2.3. Music in Nigeria Context

Music has been defined in several ways by different scholars since its definition is culture-bound. Okafor (2005, 270), defines music as “humanly organised sound”. Another scholar defines music as “as a universal language.” Everyone, regardless of the native backgrounds recognizes music. Music is an essential aspect of culture. It reflects people’s cultural heritage which has been handed down from generation to generation. Nzewi and Nzewi (2007, p.6) remark that, “in indigenous Africa, music is closely interwoven with how the society or community conducts its political, religious, health, economic, educational and social affairs.” Herndon and McLeod (1990) also define music “as a human activity, which is

determined by culture”. Adedeji and Omosilade (2012) in Vidal (1986) note that, —musicians in African societies are the custodians of their culture.

People sometimes showcase their culture through music. It is important to mention that, despite the fact that Christian music cuts across many cultures (because Christianity is being practised by people from various ethnic backgrounds) gospel musicians still find a way of portraying their culture through language. Although many scholars have examined code-switching and code mixing in the Nigerian Christian songs, the aspect of purpose of code switching seems to be under-researched. Investigating the language use and identity of these Nigerian Gospel Music artistes will reveal how the use of language (Code-mixing and code switching) helps to promote and preserve the artiste’s ethnic affinity.

2.4. Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to:

- analyse the use of code-switching and code-mixing in some selected Nigerian gospel songs
- examine how the use of code-switching and code-mixing by Nigeria gospel musicians have helped to showcase the Nigerian Indigenous languages, the culture and identity of the Nigerian people
- discover how language use in the selected gospel songs reflect the musician’s personal and ethnic identities.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on two theories- the social identity theory and communication accommodation theory. The social identity theory was propounded by the British social psychologist, Henri Tajfel in 1970. His student, John Turner expanded the theory later. The theory was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. John Turner was said to have developed the theory when he conducted some studies by dividing people into minimal group. He noticed that the people in different groups displayed alliance for one another when they were asked to assign points to people in their group; they awarded more points to their in-group members. This showed that people will always give solidarity to any group they belong to. Turner and Oakes (1986) posit that, “Social identity theory says that the portion of one’s self-concept is dependent on the importance and relevance placed on the group membership(s) to which an individual belongs.” This theory is a suitable model for data analysis in this study, since it examines how Nigerian gospel musicians use code-switching to promote their language as well as their culture.

Communication Accommodation theory (CAT) was proposed by Howard Giles in 1971. According to Giles, Edwards, and Walther (2023) CAT "seeks to explain and predict when, how, and why individuals engage in interactional adjustments with others such as a person changing their accent to match the individual they are speaking with". It explains that, "when speakers change their communication style, listeners are interpreting such alterations" (Wikipedia 2025). The concept was later applied to the field of [sociolinguistics](#), in which linguistic accommodation or simply accommodation refers to the changes in language use and style that individuals make to reduce the social distance between themselves and others.

4. METHODOLOGY

The category of people for this research is teenagers and young adults. Both quantitative and qualitative research designs are combined for this study. A hundred questionnaires were administered to the respondents. A total of 80 are recovered and analysed using descriptive statistics involving frequency counts and percentages. Results obtained are presented in tables. The questionnaire is made up of 18 items. The first part is related to the personal data of the respondents, the second part has to do with language use in gospel music while the third part covers language use and identity. The qualitative research entails the analysis of the selected Christian gospel songs based on linguistic and sociolinguistic elements found in the lyrics of the songs. The artistes and the songs selected for this study are:

1. Oba ni Jesu by Emma OMG and the Oh Em Gee Band,
2. Nara by Tim Godfrey
3. Power! That surpasses every power by Joshua Mike Bamiloye (Jaymickee),
4. You are worthy by Tope Alabi,
5. Miracle No Dey Tire Jesus" by Moses Bliss featuring Chizie and Festizie
6. "Baba" (No One Else Besides You)" by Dunsin Oyekan,
7. Godiya by Joe L, Kaestrings and Limiblaze

The researcher translated the indigenous languages used by the artistes into English language in order to communicate to wider audience. The interpreted sentences and words are enclosed inside brackets.

5. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1. Section 1: Qualitative Analysis of the Selected Gospel Songs

Datum One: Oba ni Jesús by Emmanuel Edunjobi (EmmaOMG) and **OhEmGee Band** (2022)

Oba ni Jesús (3ce)

(Jesus is King)

Oh! Oh! Oba ni Jesús

(Oh! Oh! Jesus is King)

Jesus yours is the victory

Verse one:

Mo ti sonù sínú ìgbèkùn èsè mí

(I was lost in the shackles of my sin)

S'afónifoji iku, atigbàgbe' mí

(Before now, I was forgotten in the graveyard)

A ti rò mì pin, pé'kò sí ìrètí' fún mi mó'

(They thought I could not make it, that there's no hope for me)

Torí' mo j'èbi, gbogbo èsùn ta kàn mó' mi...

(Because I was guilty the devil tied me down)

Sùgbo', gbegbà mo dòmìnira, to rí' moti gba Jésù

(But, lift him up, I have been set free, because I have accepted Jesus)

Péré'péré', ati san gbèsè mi nípa èjè Jésù

(Completely, my debt was paid)

Jesus yours is the victory

Chorus

Halleluyah, praise the one who set me free

Halleluyah, death has lost its grip on me

You have broken every chain There's salvation in your name

Jesus Christ my living hope

Chorus 2:

Wos, sope,

Ọba ni Jésù (3ce)

(Jesus is King)

Oh! Oh! Ọba ni Jésù

(Oh! Oh! Jesus is King)

Jesus yours is the victory

Table 1a

Lyric Line	Type	Sub-type	Languages	Function
Oh! Oh! Ọba ni Je’su, Jesus yours is the victory	Code Switching	Inter-sentential	English/Yoruba	Expression of joy and to reach wider audience
Peré’ peré, àti san gbèsè mi nípa èjè Je’su, Jesus yours is the victory	Code switching	Inter-sentential	English/Yoruba	To express joyful emotion and also reach wider audience

Emmanuel Edunjobi, the composer of the aforementioned song, is a native of Abeokuta, a major city in Ogun State, Southwest Nigeria which situates him within the Yoruba ethnolinguistic group. The linguistic pattern evident in the composition reflects his cultural and linguistic background, as nearly 90% of the song is rendered in the Yoruba language. The limited instances of code-switching into English appear to be strategically employed to enhance accessibility and comprehension among non-native Yoruba speakers. This finding underscores the tendency of Nigerian gospel artistes to utilize their musical productions as platforms for the promotion and representation of indigenous languages and cultural identity.

In addition, the table above shows that code-switching took place in the last line of the chorus of the song mentioned above. For instance, the combination of the sentence: “Oh! Oh! Ọba ni Jesu” and the following line—Jesus yours is the victory—demonstrates inter-sentential code-switching, since the switch happens at the boundary between the two sentences.

The reason for code-switching here could be to reach wider audience and also to express the joyful emotion of the artiste. It also shows his deep respect and honour for God. The use of Yoruba word, “Ọba”, expresses the speaker’s intention and his connection to God. This is because in the Yoruba culture, the king wields great power and influence over the people he governs.

Datum 2 Nara by Timothy Chukwudi Godfrey (Tim Godfrey) 2019

Verse:

You’ve done so much for me

I cannot tell it all

Nara Ekele Mo

(Take all my praise)

If I had ten thousand tongues

It still won't be enough

Nara Ekele Mo

(Take all my praise)

Chukwu na gwom oria le (The God that heals me)

When you heal, you heal completely

Nara Ekele Mo

(Take all my praise)

Chukwu mara obim o (The God that heals you)

Isi ikendu le isi ndu m le, we say (The God that knows my heart)

Nara Ekele Mo

(Take all my praise)

Table 2a

Lyric Line	Type	Sub-type	Languages	Function
You've done so much for me				To express a joyful emotion, showcase his ethnic identity
I cannot tell it all Nara Ekele Mo (Line 1-3)	Code Switching	Inter-sentential	Igbo/English	and reach non-native speakers of Igbo language
If I had ten thousand tongues It still won't be enough Nara Ekele Mo (Line 4-6)	Code Switching	Inter-sentential	Igbo/English	To express deep dedication to God, promote his mother-tongue and also include people from various ethnic background in the worship
Chukwu na gwom oria le When you heal, you heal completely Nara Ekele Mo (Line 7-9)	Code switching	Inter-sentential	Igbo/English	To show his appreciation to God through his native language and at the same time reach wider audience.
Chukwu mara obim o Isi ikendu le isi ndu m le, we say Nara Ekele Mo (Line 10-12)	Code switching	Inter-sentential	Igbo/English	

Lyric Line	Type	Sub-type	Languages	Function
				To promote the language of the artist and also to include non-native speakers.

Analysis

The composer of the song examined above was born in Kaduna State, Nigeria, where he also spent his formative years and obtained his early education. Notwithstanding this northern background, he is ethnically of Igbo origin, specifically from Abia State in South-eastern, Nigeria. His linguistic choice in the composition—English and Yoruba, without any incorporation of Hausa—demonstrates a strong sense of ethno-linguistic vitality and cultural affiliation. This observation further corroborates the tendency among many gospel music artists to employ their mother tongue in musical composition as a means of expressing and projecting their ethnic identity. Moreover, code-switching in such contexts often serves a pragmatic purpose, particularly in facilitating communication with a broader audience and enhancing the economic reach and sustainability of their musical productions.

Again, Datum 2 shows there is a switch from English to Igbo and vice-versa. Different types of code-switching occurred in the verse above. For instance line 1-3, line 4- 6, 7- 9 all showcase inter-sentential code-switching. Again, inter-sentential code-switching occurred in line 11-12. For instance:

“Chukwu mara obim o, Isi ikendu le isi ndu m le, we say, Nara Ekele Mo.

It is pertinent to observe that English constitutes the dominant language in the lyrics, accounting for approximately 70% of the linguistic content (see Datum 2). Furthermore, although the motivations for code-switching in the song are multifaceted, the most salient appears to be the intention to reach a broader audience.

Datum 3 Power! That surpasses every power by Joshua Mike Bmiloye (Jaymickee)

Verse 1 (Daddy Verse):

Ọmọ, we wrestle, sómọ

(My friend, do you know we wrestle?)

Ko yà mo'bi tò ma lọ si o

(So that you know where to go)

Life is a battle, sóomò

(Do you know that life is battle?)

Ogun layé'òré, powers clash

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(The world is a battle field, powers clash

Isejú'kan pére', yawa go gas

(Just one minute, you may die)

Omo, oò le'lo ma forí'ẹ́ fágbon

(My friend, you can be wounded)

I go meet person wey get power pass

(I will meet someone who has power)

Mo sa wonu Jesù, mo ti gba'radì

(I will run to Jesus, I am ready for the battle)

Mo ti gba agba'ra to gbagba'ra mi

(I gotten the power that took my power)

Awon ogun òrun ready pèlu'idà lówo'

(The forces of heaven are ready with the sword in their hands)

Anytime to ba'dijakadi

(Anytime, it turns to a fight)

Agba'ra tí Mo'sè fi pókun niya

(The power that Moses used to path the red sea)

So na'kalè fun woli Elijah

(Brought fire down for Prophet Elijah)

Ti m nba activate, kò'o nse sere'sere'o

(If I activate, it is not play play)

To ba ti ri' mi, koya

(When you see me, move)

Wo, ma'lo speculate

(Look, do not speculate)

Esu daddy yin gan

(Even, satan your Father)

To ba gbóruko Jesù, a' sa

(If he hears the name of Jesus, he will run

Soómo

(Do you know)

Table 3a

Lyric Line	Type	Sub-type	Languages	Function
Omo, we wrestle, (line 1)	Code switching	Intra-sentential	Yoruba/English	To showcase the language of the artist and reach wider audience.
Life is a battle, soómò (line 3)	Code Switching	Inter-sentential	Yoruba/English	To reach wider audience and promote the mother tongue of the artiste
Ogun layé' òré, powers clash (line 4)	Code switching	Inter-sentential	Yoruba/English	Same as above
Ti' m nba' activate, ko nse sere sere o (line 12)	Code mixing	Intra-sentential	Yoruba/English	To involve non-native speakers of Yoruba and showcase the ethnic group of the artist
Wo, ma lo speculate (line 14)	Code mixing	Intra-sentential	Yoruba/English	Same as above
Ise'ju'kan pére', yawa go gas (Line 5)	Code switching	Inter-sentential	Yoruba/Pidgin English	To appeal to the interest of young people and reach wider audience
Awọn ogun ọrun ready pelu idà lówọ' (9)	Code mixing	External mixing	code Yoruba/English	To promote the language of the artiste
Esù daddy yi'n gan (line 15)	Code mixing	External mixing	code Yoruba/English	To reach wider audience and promote the native language of the speaker

Joshua Mike-Bamiloye, popularly known as “Jaymickee,” was born in Ilesa, a town in Osun State, Nigeria. This indicates that he is of Yoruba ethnic origin, as Ilesa is predominantly inhabited by Yoruba people who speak the Yoruba language.

However, his linguistic choices in the composition of the song mentioned above demonstrate his multilingual ability. In the song, he blends English, Yoruba, and Nigerian Pidgin. As shown in Datum 3, the artist employs these three languages in the composition, highlighting his competence as a multilingual performer.

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The analysis further demonstrated that code-mixing and code-switching constituted the dominant linguistic strategies in the song. Only a few instances of the exclusive use of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin were observed, while there was no instance of English being used independently in the composition.

This result showed that the artiste's preference for code-switching and code-mixing appeared to be motivated by the intention to reach a wider audience and, to some extent, to foreground his linguistic and cultural identity through the use of his mother tongue. Specifically, code-switching occurred in lines 1, 3, 4, and 5, whereas instances of code-mixing were identified in lines 9, 12, 14, and 15.

Datum 4 You are worthy by Tope Alabi (2018)

Chorus 1

You are worthy, You are worthy, You are worthy of my praise

You are worthy, You are worthy, You are worthy of my praise

Verse 1

Èlẹ̀bùrúíkẹ́'ò, O-rań'mọ̀-niṣẹ́'-fàyàtí'ò, ara'ni-bánilọ́'ò, you are worthy
(My loving God, the one sends you, backs you up and abides with you)

Ọ̀ba tó'gbà mí'là'ò,

(The God who saves my soul)

ọ̀lọ̀wọ́'ina'ò

(God of fire)

Ìwọ nikan l'ògo ye o,

(You alone art worthy)

Verse 2

Lion of the Tribe of Judah, kinging in His majesty

Ruler of the universe, I tremble at your feet

Lion of the Tribe of Judah, kinging in His majesty

Ruler of the universe, worthy of our worship

Chorus 2

You are worthy (o worthy), You are worthy (o worthy o)

You are worthy, iwọ t'ángẹ̀lì n bọ̀ ló'jọ̀jọ̀,

(You' whom angels worship everyday)
 Agbagba mę̀rìnlẹ̀lógún ẹ̀i adẹ́kalẹ̀, You are worthy
 (The twenty-four elders removed their crowns)
 Wọ̀n bọ̀ iwọ̀ nìkan torí iwọ̀ nìkan lo' tọ̀ sí, you are worthy
 (They are worshipping you only because you are worthy)
 Aye'aye, ẹ̀dẹ́ gbogbo tí n' bẹ̀ nísálẹ̀, You are worthy,
 (All the creatures here on earth)
 (Ìwọ̀ nìkan ni wọ̀n dọ̀balẹ̀ fun)
 (You alone, we worship),
 You are worthy of my praise
 Bẹ̀ẹ̀ lo' ún titun si lójoojúmọ̀, You are worthy
 and you are new everyday)
 Bẹ̀ẹ̀ lo' n yatọ̀ si ní ògo itẹ̀, You are worthy
 (and you are different on your throne)
 Itẹ̀ ologó to' n dẹ́n gbinrin, you are worthy
 The throne of glory that is shining very bright
 (Ogo to' bi ògo, to' da' ògo, to' ọ̀n-ọ̀ ògo, You are worthy
 The praise that gave birth to glory and created glory and backs the glory,
 Ìwọ̀ nìkan lo' worthy o,
 (You are alone art worth)
 Mo b'ọ̀lẹ́ fun ọ̀, mo fiyìn fun ọ̀
 (I give you all the glory, I give you all the praise
 Mo fọ́go fun ọ̀
 (I give you all the glory)
 Mo dara ọ̀ mọ̀ àwọ̀n t'ọ̀run lati sọ wí pé, you are worthy
 (I join the heavens to say)
 O ẹ̀' torí o worthy o
 (Thank you because you are worthy)

Table 4a

Lyric Line	Type	Sub-type	Languages	Function
You are worthy, iwọ̀ t'ángẹ̀lì n bọ̀ lo jọjọ (Chorus 2, line 2)	Code Switching	Inter-sentential	Yoruba/English	To reach wider audience and showcase the indigenous language of the gospel artiste

Lyric Line	Type	Sub-type	Languages	Function
Eleburuike, O-rań mọ nişẹ- fàyàtí o, arańi-bańilò o, You are worthy (Verse 1, line 1	Code Switching	Inter- sentential	Yoruba/English	Same as above
O şé torí o worthy o (Chorus 2, line 15)	Code mixing	Inter- sentential	Yoruba/English	Same as above
Ìwọ nìkan lo worthy o (Chorus 2, line 8)	Code mixing	Intra- sentential	Yoruba/English	Same as above
Mo dara pọ mọ àwọn t'ọrun lati sọ wí pé, You are worthy (Chorus 2, line 14)	Code switching	Inter- sentential	Yoruba/English	Same as above
Agbagba meńinlelógún şi ade'kalẹ, You are worthy (Chorus 2, line 3)	Code switching	Inter- sentential	Yoruba/English	Same as written above

Analysis

Tope Alabi, the composer of the song presented in Datum 4 hails from Yewa in Ogun State, Nigeria. She is a Yoruba–English bilingual; however, the majority of her musical compositions are rendered in Yoruba, or in Yoruba that is code-mixed or code-switched with English.

Furthermore, the rendition of the song in Datum 4 revealed the deliberate use of both code-mixing and code-switching for a variety of communicative purposes, among which the intention to reach a wider and more linguistically diverse audience seemed to be particularly significant. The researcher also observed that her selective use of Yoruba, Yoruba code-mixed or code-switched with English, and, in only one verse, English alone, in the composition of *You Are Worthy* demonstrated a high degree of linguistic competence and her ethno-linguistic vitality. This pattern of language use suggests that the artiste may be described as a compound bilingual, exhibiting substantial proficiency in both languages and the ability to deploy them strategically within a single musical composition.

Datum 5 "Miracle No Dey Tire Jesus" by Moses Bliss featuring Chizie and Festizie:

Chorus:

Miracle no dey tire Jesus oh

To bless person no dey tire Jesus oh

E don do am before

He still dey do am again

Chai!

Miracle no dey tire Jesus

Verse 2:

Miracle Ópò!

Ópò pọ pọ ópò

Goodness, favour, mercy sure

(E sure sure sure e sure)

My brother tell me what you want

He'll give you everything and more...

Miracle no dey tire Jesus!

Verse 3:

My eyes have seen,

And my ears have heard

(And my ears have heard)

Of the favour and the blessing

Of the Lord upon my life

Bába' you too much o

Jesus na bába' overdo

(Overdooo)

Refrain:

Oh taste and see

(O taste and see!)

That the Lord is good

(That the Lord is good)

Bába' your goodness e dey make my belle full

Bába' you too much oh ehhe

This one na blessing overdose o

Miracle no dey tire Jesus

Table 4a

Lyric Line	Type	Sub-type	Languages	Function
Miracle ópò (Verse 2, line 1)	Code mixing	External	English/Yoruba	To show a joyful emotion, and ensure wider accessibility
Bàbà'you too much o (verse 3, line 6)	Code mixing	External	Yoruba/Pidgin English	Same as written above
Jesus na bàbà'overdo (Verse 3, line 7)	Code mixing	External	Yoruba and Pidgin English	Same as written above
Bàbà' your goodness e dey make my belle full (Refrain, line 5)	Code mixing	External	Nigerian Pidgin English/Yoruba	Same as written above
Bàbà'you too much oh eh Refrain, line 6)				

Moses Bliss, the lead artiste of the song presented in Table 5a, is a native of Akwa Ibom State in the South-South region of Nigeria. The linguistic ecology of this region is multilingual: Nigerian Pidgin functions widely as a lingua franca, while English serves as Nigeria's official language and the principal medium of formal communication. The major indigenous languages spoken in Akwa Ibom State include Ibibio, Annang, and Oro, which are classified as minority languages within the broader Nigerian sociolinguistic context.

Notably, the songwriter did not employ his indigenous language in the composition of the song. Instead, he incorporates Yoruba alongside Standard English and Nigerian Pidgin. This linguistic choice appeared to reflect a strategic orientation toward broader audience reach, given the wider demographic spread and cultural influence of Yoruba within Nigeria's gospel music sphere.

Again, the researcher observed that Standard English and Nigerian Pidgin constitute the dominant codes in the song, while the use of Yoruba is relatively minimal. This limited deployment of Yoruba suggested restricted proficiency in the language compared to English and Pidgin. Overall, the pattern of English–Pidgin code-mixing, with occasional inclusion of Yoruba, indicated a deliberate linguistic strategy aimed at maximizing accessibility and enhancing the song's appeal to a diverse and economically viable audience.

Datum 6 "Baba (No One Else Besides You)" by Dunsin Oyekan (2025)

Chorus:

Bāba! Bāba! (Father! Father!)

No one else besides You

No one but You

(Repeat)

Verse 1:

My love! My life!

Only You will I serve

No one but You

Bridge (Yoruba):

Iwo nimo ní (You alone I have)

L'áiyé' lórùn, (In heaven and on earth) Iwo ní' mo ní (You alone, I have

All I have is You

In heaven and on earth, all I have is You)

Outro:

Jesù, ìwo nì mo' ní (Jesus, all I have is you)

Jesus all I have is You

All I have is You in heaven and earth

All I have is You

Jesus all I have is You

Table 6a

Lyric Line	Type	Sub-type	Languages	Function
Bāba! Bāba!				To express his deep appreciation to God through his native language, show case his group identity and include non-native speakers of Yoruba
No one else besides You	Code	Inter-		
Intro (Line 1 and 2)	Switching	sentential	Yoruba/English	
Jesù, ìwo nì mo ní	Code	Inter-	Yoruba/English	The sentence was repeated using another language (English) in order to emphasize the statement and also to include non-native speakers of Yoruba
Jesus all I have is You	Switching	sentential		
Outro, line 1 and 2				

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The song presented in Datum 6a was composed by **Dunsin Oyekan**, a native of **Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria**, where **Yoruba** is the predominant indigenous language. The artiste's use of both **Yoruba and English** in the composition reflected his ethnic identity. However, **English is the dominant language** employed, suggesting a deliberate orientation toward reaching a broader audience. The employment of **inter-sentential code-switching** seemed to serve multiple functions: it allowed the artiste to convey emotional nuances without language barriers and simultaneously signalled his group identity to the audience.

Datum 7 Godiya (Yahweh Godiya Gareka) by Joe L, Kaestrings and Limiblaze (2025)

Chorus: Oh say, Yahweh Yahweh

Godiya ga re ka (oh) Godiya ga re ka (Thanks is ascribed to you (oh) thanks is ascribed to you
Yahweh Yaweh

Godiya ga re ka (oh) Godiya ga re ka (Thanks is ascribed to you (oh) thanks is ascribed to you

Verse 1

I was lost before but you found me

Took me out the deep when I was drowning

Way maker, there's nothing beyond you

There's not a thing you can't do

Cause on that day when my world was crashing

You were my light in the midst of the darkness

You were my hope and my firm foundation

And my faith will not be shaken

Chorus 2

Just lift up your hands and give Him thanks

Oh, Menene zan ba ka Yesu, Yesu, Yesu, Yesu (Oh what will I give to you, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus)

Menene zan ba ka Yesu, Yesu, Yesu, Yesu (3ce). (What will I give to you Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus)

Godiya ga re ka, Godiya ga re ka (Thanks is ascribed to you Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus)

Menene zan ba ka Yesu, Yesu, Yesu, Yesu (3ce). (What will I give to you Jesus, Jesus. Jesus, Jesus)

Oh oh oh Ya Yesu Nagode (3ce) (Oh! Oh! Oh! my Jesus thank you)

Everything that You've done

Everything that you do

Table 7a

Lyric Line	Type	Sub-type	Languages	Function
Oh say, Yahweh Yaweh Chorus (Line 1)	Code switching	Tag switching	English/Hebrew	To reach a wider audience
Oh oh oh Ya Yesu Nagode Everything that You've done	Code switching	Inter sentential code switching	English/Hausa	To include non-native speakers of Hausa, show appreciation to God through his mother tongue and portray the ethnolinguistic group of the music artiste

Analysis

Limoblaze, whose real name is Samuel Onwubiko, hails from a town in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. This indicates that his mother tongue is likely Igbo, as Abia State is predominantly an Igbo-speaking region of Nigeria.

Similarly, Kaestrings, born Innocent Owoicho-Oche, is of Idoma origin, an ethnic group in Benue State. Although Idoma is his native language, he also speaks Hausa, having grown up in Zaria in northern Nigeria. This demonstrates his multilingual ability, as he communicates in Idoma, Hausa, and English.

The third artiste Joe L Barnes, is not Nigerian but American. Joel Barnes', mother tongue is English.

The linguistic backgrounds of these three artistes showed that they come from diverse ethnic groups. As indicated in Table 7a, the song incorporates three languages: English, Hausa, and

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Hebrew. Their language choices appeared to emphasize religious identity over ethnic affiliation. Notably, none of the artistes is a native Hausa speaker, yet Hausa is the only Nigerian indigenous language used in the composition of the song. It is also significant that English took the lead in the composition of the song as almost 80% of the song was presented in English. This suggests that their linguistic choices may have been strategically motivated to expand their audience reach, appealing to local, national, and international listeners alike.

5.2. Section 2: Quantitative Analysis of the Sociolinguistic Study of Language Use and Identity in Some Selected Gospel Music in Nigeria

This analysis examines the sociolinguistics study of languages use and identity in some selected gospel music in Nigeria. A survey questionnaire was administered and a total of 80 people filled the survey. In addition, descriptive analysis was carried out with the use of frequencies, percentage and table.

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1b

S/N	Categories	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1.	Age		
	Under 18	5	6.3
	18-30	69	86.3
	31-45	5	6.3
	46-60	1	1.3
2	Gender		
	Female	43	53.7
	Male	37	46.2
3	Ethnic Group		
	Yoruba	68	85.0
	Igbo	5	6.2
	Hausa	3	3.6
	Ikwerre	1	1.3
	Ogoni	1	1.3
	Igala	1	1.2

4	Religious Denomination		
	Pentecostal	59	73.7
	Orthodox	5	6.2
	Other	16	20.0
5	Role in Gospel Music		
	Choir Member	35	43.8
	Composer	6	7.5
	Producer	2	2.5
	Media/Technical	3	3.8
	Instrumentalist	2	2.5
	Listener	39	48.9

The age distribution of respondents shows that the study was dominated by young adults. A large majority (86.3%) were between **18 and 30 years old**, while those **under 18** and **31–45 years old** each accounted for **6.3%** of the sample. Only **1.3%** of the respondents were between **46 and 60 years old**. This indicates that the participants were mostly youths and young adults. In terms of gender, the results show a fairly balanced distribution, although females were slightly more represented. **Females accounted for 53.7%**, while **males made up 46.2%** of the respondents. The ethnic group distribution reveals that the respondents were predominantly Yoruba. **Yoruba participants constituted 85.0%** of the sample. The Igbo ethnic group accounted for **6.2%**, followed by Idoma with **3.6%**. Ikwerre, Ogoni, and Igala ethnic groups each contributed between **1.2% and 1.3%**, showing minimal representation from these groups. Regarding religious denomination, most respondents identified as Pentecostal, making up **73.7%** of the sample. Orthodox Christians accounted for **6.2%**, while **20.0%** indicated belonging to other denominations. This shows that the participants were mostly from Pentecostal backgrounds. In terms of their roles in gospel music, the largest category was **listeners**, who made up **48.9%** of the respondents. **Choir members** followed with **43.8%**, showing strong participation in singing roles. Composers represented **7.5%**, while media/technical crew accounted for **3.8%**. Instrumentalists and producers each had small involvement, making up **2.5%** each. This distribution shows that while many participants engage directly in church music activities, a large portion also consumes gospel music as listeners.

Table 2b Language Use of Selected Christian Music Artists.

S/N	Categories	Frequency	Percentages (%)
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1.	Which languages do you most frequently encounter in Nigeria gospel music?		
	English only	38	45.6
	English code-mixed with Yoruba	50	60
	Yoruba only	9	10.8
	English code-mixed with Pidgin English	17	20.4
	English code-mixed with Igbo	32	38.4
	English code-mixed with Hausa	16	19.2
2.	How often do you notice the blend of two or more languages (code mixing and code switching) in Nigeria gospel songs?		
	Very often	47	58.8
	Sometimes	26	32.5
	Rarely	4	5
	Never	1	1.2
	Missing	2	2.5
3.	What do you think is the main reason for using multiple languages in Nigerian gospel music?		
	To enhance message delivery	18	21.6
	To reach wider audience	29	36.2
	To express ethnic/cultural identity	28	35.0
	For artistic effect	4	5.0
	Other	1	1.2
4.	What are your reasons?		
	To reach wider/global audience	6	7.2
	For clarity of message	5	6
	None	61	73.2
	Others	8	9.6
5.	Do you think the use of code-switching and code-mixing help to preserve or revitalize the languages involved?		
	Yes	70	87.7
	No	7	3.7
	Not sure	3	3.6

6. How does the use of code-switching in gospel music affect your sense of inclusion or participation in worship?		
Increase Inclusion	61	73.2
Decrease Inclusion	7	8.4
No effect	12	14.4

The responses show that several languages appear frequently in Nigerian gospel music, with **English code-mixed with Yoruba being the most commonly encountered language**, reported by **60%** of respondents. This is followed by **English (45.6%)**, and **Yoruba alone (10.8%)**, indicating that Yoruba and English are the dominant languages in the genre. **Pidgin English** is also relatively present at **20.4%**, while English code-mixed with **Igbo (38.4%)**, English code-mixed with **Hausa (19.4%)**. Most respondents indicated that they **notice code-mixing and code-switching very often**, with **58.8%** selecting this option. Another **32.5%** notice it sometimes, while only a small fraction rarely (5%) or never (1.2%) notice language blending. A few responses were missing (2.5%). This suggests that the mixing of languages is a common and easily observed feature in Nigerian gospel songs. When asked about the main reason for using multiple languages in gospel music, **reaching a wider audience** was the most selected option at **36.2%**. About **35.0%** of the respondents believed the purpose was to express ethnic or cultural identity, while **21.6%** selected to **enhance message delivery**. Only **1.2%** attributed it to artistic effects. This shows that audience reach and cultural expression are perceived as the strongest motivations. Regarding personal reasons, a large majority (**73.2%**) indicated “**None**”, meaning they did not have personal or additional reasons beyond the options provided. Other responses included reaching a **wider/global audience (7.2%)**, ensuring **clarity of message (6%)**, and various other reasons like multilingualism, culture, and to preach the gospel among others (9.6%). The responses also show strong support for the idea that indigenous languages in gospel music help preserve or revitalize those languages. **87.7%** of respondents agreed that indigenous language use supports preservation, while only **3.7%** disagreed and **3.6%** were unsure. This reflects general optimism about the cultural value of language use in gospel music. Lastly, most participants felt that the use of Code-switching in gospel music **increases their sense of inclusion in worship**, reported by **73.2%**. Meanwhile, **14.4%** felt that it had no effect, and **8.4%** said that lack of its use decreases their sense of inclusion. This shows that English generally enhances accessibility for most listeners, though a small proportion feels excluded by it.

Table 3b Language Identity

	Frequency	Percentage
1 In your opinion, how does the language used in Nigeria gospel music reflect the musician's personal identity (e.g. ethnic, regional, religious.)?		
Does not reflect	4	5
Somewhat reflect	27	33.8
Strongly reflects	49	61.2
3. How does language choice in music contribute to communal identity(e.g. church, ethnic group, national identity)?		
Causes diversion	2	2.4
Has no effect	6	7.2
Strengthen communal bonds	72	90.4
4. Have you noticed gospel songs that address political or social issues in Nigeria? If yes, what languages are typically used for such messages?		
Yes	43	51.6
No	20	24
Not sure	17	20.4
5. Does the use of local languages in gospel music evoke stronger emotional or spiritual response to you?		
Yes	55	66
No	7	8.4
Sometimes	18	21.6
6 Please, explain your choice above		
Better Understanding / Clarity	22	24.40%
Strong emotional & Spiritual Connection	28	31.10%
Cultural & Linguistic Depth (Yoruba emphasis)	29	32.2%
No Effect	7	7.80%

Others	4	4.40%
7. Do you feel gospel music in your language(s) represents your identity more authentically than music in other languages?		
Agree	27	32.4
Disagree	2	2.4
Neutral	20	24
Strongly Agree	31	37.2
8. Give examples of gospel musicians who portray their ethnic background in their songs rendition		
Tope Alabi	34	42.5
Dunsin Oyekan	13	16.3
Mercy Chinwo	13	16.3
BBO	10	12.5
Sola Allyson/Alaseyori	9	11.3
EmmaOMG	77	8.8
Nathaniel Bassey	4	5
Chioma Jesus	4	5
Sunmisola Agbebi	4	5
Kaestrings	3	3.8
9. How has the use of code switching and code mixing in Nigerian gospel music helped to showcase the indigenous languages, the culture and identity of the Nigerian people?		
Code-mixing and code-switching have been used as a means to preserve the indigenous languages involved from one generation to another	29	36.25%
The use of code-mixing and code-switching by Nigerian gospel music artistes has helped to portray deeper	21	26.25%

meaning and emotional aspect of their songs		
Code-mixing and code-switching have been used as a means to preserve..., The combination of indigenous languages with English..., The use of code-mixing and code-switching...	11	13.75%
The combination of indigenous languages with English by Nigerian music artistes has helped to publicize the Nigerian indigenous languages	9	11.25%
Code-mixing and code-switching have been used as a means to preserve indigenous languages	10	12.5%

The survey explored how language in Nigerian gospel music reflects personal and communal identity, and how it shapes emotional, cultural, and linguistic experiences for listeners. When asked whether the language used in Nigerian gospel music reflects a musician's personal identity—such as ethnic, regional, or religious identity—most respondents felt it does so strongly. Specifically, 61.2% indicated that the language strongly reflects the musician's personal identity, 33.8% felt it somewhat reflects it, while only 5% thought it does not reflect the musician's identity at all. This suggests that the language choice in gospel music is widely perceived as an authentic expression of the artist's background. On the communal level, the role of language in reinforcing identity was even more pronounced.

A significant majority of respondents (90.4%) agreed that language choice strengthens communal bonds, whether at the level of the church, ethnic group, or national identity. Only a small fraction felt it has no effect (7.2%) or causes diversion (2.4%), indicating that gospel music is an important tool for fostering unity and shared cultural understanding. Regarding gospel songs that address political or social issues in Nigeria, 51.6% of respondents noted that they have observed such songs, while 24% had not, and 20.4% were unsure. This shows that socially conscious gospel music is relatively common, and it often incorporates indigenous languages to convey its message. Local languages also appear to evoke stronger emotional and spiritual responses. About 66% of respondents reported that gospel songs in local languages resonate more deeply with them, compared with 8.4% who did not feel this way and 21.6% who experienced it only sometimes. When asked to explain why, respondents highlighted

factors such as the ability to better understand the lyrics (24.4%), stronger emotional and spiritual connection (31.1%), cultural and linguistic depth—particularly in Yoruba (13.3%) and inclusiveness or accessibility (7.8%). Some respondents were unsure (11.1%), while a small number felt no effect (7.8%).

When asked whether gospel music in their own language represents their identity more authentically than music in other languages, 37.2% strongly agreed, 32.4% agreed, 24% were neutral, and only 2.4% disagreed. This suggests that language is a key factor in how listeners relate to and identify with gospel music. Respondents also identified gospel musicians who actively portray their ethnic backgrounds in their music. Tope Alabi was the most frequently mentioned (42.5%), followed by Dunsin Oyekan and Mercy Chinwo (16.3% each), BBO (12.5%), and Sola Allyson/Alaseyori (11.3%). Other musicians such as Nathaniel Bassey, Chioma Jesus, Sunmisola Agbebi, and Kaestrings received smaller mentions, indicating that while certain artists are particularly associated with ethnic representation, others are recognized to a lesser extent. The survey further examined the impact of code-switching in Nigerian gospel music. Many respondents (36.25%) felt that these techniques help preserve indigenous languages for future generations. Others noted that code-switching provides deeper meaning and emotional resonance to the songs (26.25%), while 11.25% emphasized that combining indigenous languages with English helps publicize Nigerian languages. Smaller percentages highlighted multiple effects simultaneously, reflecting the multifaceted role of these linguistic techniques in both cultural preservation and expressive richness..

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigates the use of code-switching in selected Nigerian gospel songs. It analyses seven gospel tracks. Findings show that Nigerian Christian musicians employ code-switching in both the composition and performance of their songs for various communicative purposes. The analysis reveals the use of different types of code-switching and code mixing, including inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag switching, although inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching were more prominent than tag switching. Additionally, the study observes that gospel artistes switch codes to express joyful emotions, reach broader audiences, promote their indigenous languages, and highlight their ethnic, religious and cultural identities. These findings align with Onuoha's (2024, p. 26) work, *Code-Switching in Songs as a Tool for Nation Building*, which concludes that code-switching helps preserve and promote indigenous languages and cultures, thereby strengthening national identity and pride.

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In addition, this study engages with society through the use of questionnaires to examine how code-switching and code-mixing by Nigerian gospel musicians contribute to the promotion of indigenous languages, culture, and identity. The findings show strong support for the view that the use of indigenous languages in gospel music aids language preservation and revitalization: 87.7% of respondents agreed that indigenous language use supports preservation, while only 3.7% disagreed and 3.6% were undecided. This suggests that code-switching and code-mixing in gospel music play a significant role in promoting indigenous languages in Nigeria. Furthermore, the artistes demonstrate bilingual competence and affirm the importance of preserving their native languages. Additionally, 73.2% of respondents agreed that code-switching and code-mixing enhance their sense of inclusion during worship, 14.4% reported no effect, and 8.4% indicated that the absence of such practices reduces their sense of inclusion. Overall, these findings indicate that code-switching and code-mixing generally increase listeners' engagement in worship, although a small proportion of listeners feel excluded by their use.

The study also examines how language use in the selected gospel songs expresses the musicians' personal and ethnic identities. Findings reveal that Nigerian gospel music embodies both individual and communal identities of the artiste. When respondents were asked whether language use in Nigerian gospel music reflects a musician's personal identity—such as ethnic, regional, or religious background—the majority agreed that it does. Specifically, 61.2% of respondents strongly believed that language choice in gospel music reflects the musician's personal identity, 33.8% felt it reflects this identity to some extent, while only 5% believed it does not reflect the musician's identity at all. These results indicate that language choice in gospel music composition serves as a powerful means of identity reinforcement, demonstrating that language is inseparable from identity.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has analysed the use of code-switching and code-mixing in some selected Nigerian gospel songs. The study discovered that code-switching and code-mixing are utilized by Nigerian gospel artistes for different purposes. The analysis of the six gospel songs composed by Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa artistes revealed that Christian musicians actively employ inter-sentential, intra-sentential to a lesser extent, tag switching to enrich their compositions and also to showcase their ethnic identity. (See Section 1, Table 2a-7a). The research further discovered that several languages appear frequently in Nigerian gospel music, with English code-mixed with Yoruba being the most commonly encountered language, reported by 60% of respondents. (See Table 2b, number 1). This result confirms that code-mixing and code-switching are commonly used by Nigerian Gospel Artistes.

In addition, the study has also examined how the use of code-switching and code-mixing by Nigeria gospel musicians have helped to showcase the Nigerian Indigenous languages, the culture and identity of the Nigerian people. This research has shown that the use of code-switching and code-mixing by Nigeria gospel musicians has brought about multiple communicative including emotional expression, audience expansion, cultural promotion, and the reinforcement of ethnic and personal identities. The responses of the subjects revealed that audiences perceive code-switching and code-mixing as valuable tools for preserving indigenous languages and fostering cultural identity, with 87.7% agreeing that indigenous language use enhances language preservation (See Table 2b, number 5). Again, the integration of multiple languages increases listeners' sense of inclusion during worship, strengthening their connection to the music and its message. Overall, the findings affirmed that code-switching in gospel music not only enhances artistic creativity but also contributes meaningfully to cultural continuity, identity affirmation, and national unity. This study showed how code-switching in gospel music contributes to preserving Nigeria's indigenous languages. Language and the people that use it are inseparable. The maintenance of a language is tantamount to the preservation its users. This is a core part of the concerns of sociolinguists.

Additionally, this research also observed how language use in the selected gospel songs reflects the musician's personal and ethnic identities. When asked whether the language used in Nigerian gospel music reflects a musician's personal identity—such as ethnic, regional, or religious identity—most respondents felt it does so strongly. Specifically, 61.2% indicated that the language strongly reflects the musician's personal identity. This result revealed that language choice in gospel music is widely perceived as an authentic expression of the artist's background. This research therefore concludes that the use of code-switching by Nigerian artiste has led to language maintenance. The pattern of language use in the Gospel music industry revealed maintenance and not a shift.

The researcher recommends that Gospel musicians should be encouraged to continuously incorporate indigenous languages into their music, as this will have positive impacts on language preservation, cultural visibility, and audience engagement. The study also suggests that churches, cultural organizations, and music associations should create platforms, workshops, and events that celebrate multilingual gospel performances, thereby reinforcing cultural pride and interethnic understanding. In addition, future studies should investigate a larger corpus of gospel songs across more Nigerian languages to deepen understanding of multilingual practices and their sociolinguistic impacts.

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