

# Socio-Linguistic Borrowing in Etunọ in Akoko-Edo, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Etuno is a dialect of Ebira located in Igara the headquarters of Akoko-edo local government area of Edo state. Etuno by migration found itself in a linguistic enclave surrounded by a dominant regional language; Yoruba, and other Akokoid languages such as Okpameri, Somorika, Uneme, Ososo, Etunọ, Ikpeshe, Okpe, Akan, Enwa among others. The contact situation of Etuno and these other minority languages and dialects in the continuum, also with English and the official language and Naija (Nigeria Pidgin) as a form of regional lingual franca, accounts for the a hybridization of lexical items in Etuno. Against this background, this research therefore aims at examining the contact situation of Etunọ, a dialect of Ebira language spoken in Ìgarà, Akoko-Edo local government area of Edo state Nigeria. The main objective of the work is to identify the extent of linguistic and socio-cultural borrowing from other dialects and languages within the linguistic enclave. Lexical and sentential data were elicited from selected natives of Ìgarà dominantly in a relaxed context. The researcher engaged in a participant observation to record the data conversation. The recorded data were transcribed and descriptively analysed. The study showed that there is heavy loan-words found in Etunọ from English, Naija (Nigeria Pidgin) and Yoruba. This reveals a pattern of code-mixing and code-switching in the conversation of the natives. The study also showed that socio-cultural items are also borrowed which is a reflection of the socio-linguistic hybridisation among the natives in the mixed community they found themselves.

**Keywords:** Etunọ, Language Contact, Loan-Words, Code-Switching, Socio-Cultural

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## 1. Introduction

The ancestral father of all Ebiroid family is known as Ebira and his wife, the mother of all Ebiroid family, is known as 'Onyebira'. 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 Ìgarà in Present Edo state of Nigeria (see Eberhard, Gar and Charles [9]). According to Bamigbade [5], there are four major linguistic groups of the Ebira which 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 Etunọ of Edo State

- iv. The Ebira Oje or Ebira Toto or Agata of Plateau and Benue States

Etuno is a dialect of Ebira located in Igara the headquarters of Akoko-edo local government area of Edo state. Etuno by migration found itself in a linguistic enclave surrounded by a dominant regional language; Yoruba, and other Akokoid languages such as Okpameri, Somorika, Uneme, Ososo, Etunọ, Ikpeshe, Okpe, Akan, Enwa Auga among others (Oyetade [13]). The objective of the work is to identify the extent of linguistic and socio-cultural borrowing in Etuno from other dialects and languages that surround Etuno in Akoko-edo area. Lexical and sentential data were elicited from selected natives of Ìgarà who are native speakers of Etuno, dominantly in a relaxed context. The method employed by the researcher to collect the data is participant observation and he employed the use of recording device to record the data conversation. These data were subjected to

descriptive analysis to determine the extent of hybridization in Etunọ (see Bamigbade [4]).

## 2. Lexical Borrowing in Etunọ

Language contact is a term used in sociolinguistics to refer to a situation of geographical continuity or close proximity between languages or dialects. Though, as earlier noted it is actually the contact of the speakers of the languages or dialects that results in the contact of the languages and dialects (Campbell [7]). The results of contact situation can be seen linguistically in the growth of loan words, patterns of phonological and grammatical change and mixed forms of language. Languages are said to be ‘in contact’ if they are used alternatively by the same persons i.e. bilinguals or group of persons. There are three basic elements necessary for consideration in the study of language contact. These include:

- i. The languages in question; which can be two or more
- ii. The speakers of these languages
- iii. The setting for the contact

The reason languages come in contact is because of simple movement of people. Immigrants bring their languages into contact with each other, and the cause for this migration could be either of war, education, or business, among other reasons. Language contact is the outcome of a complex intersection of linguistic, historical, and socio-cultural processes. More common are those cases of language contact in which the languages involved influence each other to varying degrees but without giving rise to distinct new codes. Contact can give rise to changes in any of a language’s subsystems. Research has generally revealed that the lexicon is most susceptible to contact-induced influence, followed by phonology, morphology and syntax, in that order. Bamigbade [5], for example presents a “borrowing scale” indicating that “non-basic<sup>1</sup> vocabulary items are the easiest to borrow”, while basic<sup>2</sup> vocabulary items are not often borrowed.

As time goes by, the accumulation of changes such in this regards may lead to language convergence. This is a situation where two or more languages begin to look alike in terms of their structural components still maintaining their distinct lexical components and then, their speakers still regard them as distinct languages. Lending from Adegbite [1], obviously, language contact is dependent upon various factors which include historical, social, structural, cultural, demographic, politico-economic and ideological, and hence subject to change over time. In this regards, lexical borrowing becomes a major linguistic tool which harmonises such contact induced language system. List, Nelson-Sathi, Geisler and Martin [10] opines that lexical borrowing can affect only small parts of the vocabulary of a given language (such as specific terms for religious concepts, cultural items, or

artifacts), or result in a situation where large parts of the language’s original lexicon are replaced. According to Zhang, Manni, Fabri and Nerbonne [15] this phenomenon can even result in complete relexification, as in pidginisation or Creole languages.

## 3. Etunọ Sound System

There is the need to show evidence of lexical counts of 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 Etunọ here.

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

Considering Muhammad [12], below is an adaptation of letters of Ebira alphabet from Bamigbade [5]:

### 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 Etunọ. There are eighteen (18) consonants, seven (7) vowels and three (3)

<sup>1</sup> Non-basic vocabulary items are list of items that are foreign (not native) to the culture of the speakers of a particular language.

<sup>2</sup> Basic vocabulary items are list of items that are native to the culture of the speakers.

digraphs.

### 3.1. Ẹtunọ Vowel Sounds

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

1. /i/ - usi (thigh), ozi (child)
2. /I/ - Irẹzi (dog), Ireṣa (name)
3. /e/ - age (kettle), Igene (headgear)
4. /ɜ/ - ireṭa (stone), ufẹ (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/ - ẹU (lie down), mUṇe (swallow)
10. /ei/ - eyi (face), oreyi (mirror)
11. /ɔi/ - oonoi (umbrella), oiku (anger).

### 3.2. Ẹtunọ Consonant Sounds

Ẹtunọ has nineteen consonant phonemes Adive [3]. This is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Ẹtunọ consonant phonemes Adeniyi [1].

	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/ - oṣi (broom), aṣiṣi (nose)
14. /m/ - umoma (shadow), irama (back)
15. /n/ - ano (salt), ine (mortar)
16. /r/ - ira (fire), irare (tongue)
17. /w/ - awen (oil), owu (thread)
18. /j/ - uye (meat), eyin (water).

### 3.3. Tones

Three tones are attested in Ẹtunọ. These include;

- High / ˊ / i.e. [ ˊ ] e.g. [fù] ‘cook’  
 [mí] ‘extinguish’  
 Mid / ˊ / i.e. [ ˊ ] e.g. [ni] ‘choose’  
 [ne] ‘throw’  
 Low / ˋ / i.e. [ ˋ ] e.g. [và] ‘pour’  
 [fù] ‘roast’

As noted in Bankale [6], downdrift is observed in Ẹtunọ, e.g.

- [zózà] [ ˊ ˋ ]  
 [ètà] [ ˊ ˋ ]  
 [ozí] [ ˊ ˋ ]

Bankale [6] also observed that identical tones are lowered as observed below:

- [Uvɔrɪ] [ ˊ ˋ ]  
 [a dʒ ɛ] [ ˊ ˋ ]  
 [Irèfù] [ ˊ ˋ ]  
 ɔpànè [ ˋ ˋ ]  
 [asísè] [ ˊ ˋ ]  
 [óbá] [ ˋ ]

It is equally observed that the mid tone is left unmarked Bankale [6].

## 4. 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 interviewee:

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 wṣ go fwenyi now* – *I* (Pro/Eng), *wṣ* (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. Find the summary of lexical borrowing in Ètunọ in Table 2 below:

**Table 2.** Summary of Lexical Borrowing in Ètunọ.

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

From the data above, out of a total sixty (60) items that are infused into the Ètunọ 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 Ètunọ. 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 small’

You are using your words miserly/You are talking quietly

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

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?

## 5. Discussion of Findings

From our data above many of the lexical items that are infused from English/NP into the Etunọ sentences are largely verbs and nouns, though a few are also found from other word classes such as adjectives, pronouns, adverbs and prepositions. This high degree of lexical borrowing and linguistic mix is observable due to the high mixed socio-linguistic setting in Akoko-Edo area, especially Igarra zone with the highest density of cultural and linguistic diversity in Edo North. To support this, in their bag of sound hypothesis, Miller, Tresoldi, Zariquiey, Beltrán and Morozova [11] observed that even if a given language has many sounds occurring exclusively in borrowed words—this does not mean that these sounds need to occur in each and every borrowed word. Thus, while the presence of specific sounds may be a powerful indicator of a borrowing or an inherited word, this evidence may be too sparse in comparison with the full lexicon of a given language. This situation of borrowing equally permeates way of life, local food, dressing pattern, world view, housing form and other socio-cultural identifiable ethnics. Yoruba native food such as *àmàlà* and *ewédú* (Yam flour and a type of draw vegetable soup) and *móinmóin* and *ẹkọ* (bean cake and solid pap) are found to be common among the Etunọ, though their kind of *àmàlà* and the *móinmóin* and *ẹkọ* is more solid than that of the Yoruba which is usually very light. The majority of the women are also found wearing *iró* and *bùbá* just like the Yoruba women while the use of *bùbá* and *şókòtò* is noticed among the men as well.

From our field work findings we noted that colonial pacification may have encouraged some migration from Igarra, west into Yorubá towns and cities, especially into Iléşà, Ibádán and Òndó regions and subsequently into farms as casual labourers. Obviously, some of the present day farm labourers who are popularly referred to as the '*Ágàtú*' 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 '*Ágàtú*'. It was discovered that they include different ethnic groups such as the Tiv, Ebira (Etunọ inclusive – although the Etunọ are also referred to as the '*Gàrà*' or '*Igarra*'), 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 and contact.

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 [8]

which is a evidence of cultural borrowing.

From the foregoing, all indication shows that after the earliest in-migration of several ethnic groups into the Afenmai hills for safety among other reason, which included the Etunọ 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 Etunọ 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 an evidence of socio-cultural contact which cannot be exonerated of sociolinguistic contact. We therefore put it as socio-cultural shift inclusive of sociolinguistic shift.

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 Issua 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.

We observed that while the Igarra 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-linguistic shift include personal names, family names and place names. Evidence abounds in these regard, particularly in Igarra, pointing to the influence of Yoruba names in Igarra. As observed in some findings such as Pogeson [14], 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 *Ilú titun* sometimes in the 1830's/40's. *Ilú 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*. Pogeson also noted in an interview a man who changed his surname from *Kékere-Èkùn* 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 *Kékere-Èkùn*. 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 tend 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.

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