

IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE USE AMONG SIERRA LEONEAN REFUGEES IN
ORU CAMP, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the manifestations of ethnic identity through language use among Sierra Leonean refugees in Oru camp, Ogun State. This is with a view to ascertaining to what extent they maintained their indigenous languages and identified with the host community language. The study adopted the Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory. On the strength of a mixed methodology, questionnaires and interviews were used to elicit information from 120 respondents comprising teenagers, young adults and full adults. The result shows that in the home, a majority of the young and full adults used English and Krio (an indigenous language of wider communication) in spousal interactions and English only in parent-child interaction, mainly due to exogamous marriages. This implies that parents were not transmitting their indigenous languages to the next generation. In the neighborhood, a majority of the young and full adults used English and Krio in intra-ethnic interaction for reasons of accommodation. However, only the teenage group acquired and used Yoruba during interaction with the host community, while the young and full adult groups did not. It is recommended that refugees should fully maintain their indigenous languages and also identify with the language of the host community for purposes of inclusion and the benefits of diversity.

Key Words: Refugees, Linguistic Identity, Ethnolinguistics, Language Use.

Introduction

The concern of this study is to investigate the place of language in the construction of ethnic identities among Sierra Leonean refugees in Oru refugee camp, Ogun State. The reason for opting to study the language proposition among other inconveniences encountered by refugees is because language is central in the lives of individuals as a veritable means of identification and solidarity within and across cultures (Kim, 2001; Berry, 2008). This is especially so, as the Liberian refugees in this study have emerged from a hostile situation where survival partly depended on the language or identity one expressed (Ed-zar-zar, 2002). Of course, this is not a submission that inter-ethnic hostilities are provoked by linguistic disparities; instead it is other socio-political paroxysm which dislocates the equilibrium of society (Fishman, 1968; Romaine, 2003). However, irrespective of the remoteness of language factors from the socio-political antecedents which precipitate some of these unpalatable conditions, one of the

consequences is that the citizens of the affected countries, like the ones in this study, are often conscious of the primacy of ethno linguistic identity in their daily lives; that is their own language and culture in contrast to the language and culture of others.

However, due to the fact that refugees live among a different ethno linguistic group, they often find themselves in a cultural dilemma. According to Albrecht (2001) life as a refugee is problematic as it adversely affects one's sense of identity. Apart from material challenges, language barriers also frequently pose a difficulty as refugees struggle with issues of identity and belonging in a completely different ethno linguistic environment (UNHCR, 2008). They are usually presented with a bouquet of linguistic alternatives which persuade them to re-negotiate their identities. The question is, should they retain their heritage linguistic identity or should they adjust and identify with their host's culture. Whichever option they adopt has benefits and challenges; if they choose to maintain their indigenous languages, they benefit from perpetuating their language and ethnic identity through transmission to subsequent generations, but they might lose face with the host community. On the contrary, if they opt to integrate by adopting the language of their hosts, they may enjoy some instrumental benefits, depending on the utilitarian values of the host's language, but risk losing their ethnic culture. All this however, depend on the degree and pattern of acculturation.

Objectives

The study aims to

1. Examine the dynamics of identity projection in different domains as a reflection of the distinction between insiders and outsiders;
2. Highlight the various strategies adopted by the refugees to maintain their ethno linguistic identity, and
3. Estimate the extent to which the refugees had identified with the language of the host community.

Language and Identity

Identity represents an individual's perception of himself irrespective of the way he is perceived by other people; this perception ranges from the personal to social and ethnic. Although there are many means of projecting identity, like food, dress, patterns of worship, several writers have posited that language is the most powerful means of showing who we are or where we come from (Fishman 1989). By this postulation, Fishman underscores the symbiotic relationship between language and ethnic identity. Demirezen (2006:2) corroborates this assertion by stating that the relationship between language and ethnic identity is 'bi-directional' and Spolsky (1999) too, who cites the example of the children of Israel who maintained their ethnic identity during the slave period in Egypt by not abandoning their language. Appel and Musken (1987) state that language serves as a means of segregating (in a cultural sense) one group from others, so that members of one group see themselves as 'insiders' while others are 'outsiders'. This distinction, according to Gibson (2004) is evident among minority or immigrant groups within a dominant culture where bilingual language use is often analyzed as having two

parts; the 'we' verses 'they' code. In this distinction, the 'we' code represents in-group speech which connotes intimacy and solidarity and is largely confined to the home, while the 'they' code is associated with status and used with the dominant group. This condition is based on the fact that individuals may feel that they belong to a particular group because they share the same system of symbols and meanings and thus share, an 'us' feeling (Korth, 2005).

It therefore, implies that the choice of one language instead of another is related to identifying with either the out-group or in-group; in other words, language choice is tied to the projection of image or identity. Romaine (2003:517) states that:

Although language choice is not arbitrary, not all speech communities are organized in the same way. Through the selection of one language over another or one variety of the same language over another speakers display what may be called "acts of identity", choosing the groups with whom they wish to identify.

In his typology of bilinguals, Olaoye (1998:117) explains that when a bicultural coordinate changes to another language, he sees himself as changing his personality or becoming 'a different person'. Haugen (1982 cited in Korth 2005) states that language choice is 'often a significant indication of the group with which one wishes to identify'.

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted in this study is the Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (ELIT) propounded by Giles and Johnson (1981). ELIT is conditioned on the notion of the 'other' as opposed to the 'self'. Giles and Johnson hold that as people grow up, they also learn to group themselves and other people into social categories which usually use language as a marker of ethnic distinction. Therefore, people who identify with a particular group are more likely to use the language of that group. Masaki et al (2010) posit that ELIT is one of the theories which provide explanations for the conceptual link between an individual's language use and cultural adaptation, and identity. This indicates that, as far as ELIT is concerned, language represents a primary feature of an individual's social group identity and to an extent world view. Contingent upon this position, a person's view of his or her heritage culture against other cultures is found to correlate with language preference, knowledge and actual use (Phinney et al, 2001).

Methodology and Data Collection

The methodology adopted in this study is the mixed method, incorporating the quantitative and qualitative approaches, both of which are employed in the fields of social science and anthropology (Korth, 2005). The use of the mixed method is beneficial because it helps in constructing comprehensive accounts and providing answers to a wider range of research questions and meaning (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2009; Holmes, 2008). Consequently, questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data.

The Population, Sample and Sampling Method

The population of this study is the Oru refugee camp in Ogun State Nigeria which inhabited Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees. The population of the sample is about 2000 going by the opinion of the leaders of the groups in the camp. Out of the number, 120 (12%) Sierra Leonean refugees constitute the sample frame for this particular study. This number is representative of the Sierra Leonean population in the camp. The reason for using 120 was due to limited time and resources. The respondents used in this study were selected based on the purposive sampling technique due to the limited number of the population.

Variables

The variables studied in this investigation are age and linguistic identity. Age is the independent variable while linguistic identity is the dependent variable. Age represents a vital variable in a sociolinguistic research of this nature due to disparities in perception among age groups. Therefore, age differences can index a distinction in value judgment and behavior.

Analysis and Discussion

The findings from the field work are presented below.

Demographic information

Various ethnic groups constitute the population of the Sierra Leonean refugees in Oru camp. They are as follows: Mende, Temne, Limba, Susu, Krio, Fula, Kono, Shabro, Kru, Mandingo, Bassa. However, three ethnic groups were sampled in this study (Mende, Temne and Limba) because of their numerical strength and for simplicity of analysis. However, among these languages, Krio is considered a national lingua franca owing to its wide use throughout the country. Krio is actually a creolised pidgin and similar in form with other West African Pidgin Englishes (WAPE) including Nigerian Pidgin (NP). However, it is native to the Sierra Leonean Krio people or Krios who number about 100,000 presently and probably the most widely spoken of all Sierra Leonean languages (Sengova 1987). Fyle (1994: 47) states that Krio has assumed recognition as 'the main vehicle of communication' in Sierra Leone, and used in the market place and in political speeches in making policy statements by heads of states. In the education sector, Krio is used to introduce pupils to English; thus, Krio is the window through which students gain entrance into modern education. It is also used in entertainment and enlightenment programmes.

The respondents were grouped into three age brackets: 13 – 19 (teenagers), 20 – 39 (young adults) and 40 – 60 (full adults).

Identity and Domains

In this study, two domains were selected: the home domain representing the in-group and the neighborhood domain representing the out-group.

The Home Domain

Information was elicited from parents represented by the young adults and full adults, and children represented by teenagers. The investigation was targeted at the language(s) used between husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters. This information sourced through the questionnaire is presented in the table below:

Table 1 – Language Use at Home

Country	Age group	Language(s)	Role Relations					
			Husband–Wife		Parent-Child		Brother-Sister	
			Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Teenagers	English	-	-	-	-	20	44.4	
	English /Kr	-	-	-	-	18	40.4	
	English/Yoruba-	-	-	-	-	7	15.6	
	English/Ethnic	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Total	-	-	-	-	45	100	
Young adults	English	4	8.9	35	77.8	-	-	
	English/Krio	38	84.4	7	15.5	-	-	
	English/Yoruba	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	English/Ethnic	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Missing	3	6.7	3	6.7	-	-	
	Total	45	100	45	100	-	-	
Full adults	English	2	6.7	21	70	-	-	
	English/Krio	23	76.7	6	20	-	-	
	English/Yorub	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	English/Ethnic	5	16.7	3	10	-	-	
	Total	30	100	30	100	-	-	

Chi-Square test summary: value χ^2 6.538 2 < 0.038

Husband-wife Interaction

The result shows that English and Krio are dominant in this role relation. Among the young adults a significant majority (84.4%) used English/Krio while 8.9% used only

English. None of the young adults used Yoruba or their indigenous languages in spousal interaction. Among the full adults, a significant majority (76.7%) used English/Krio while 6.7% and 16.7% used only English and their indigenous languages respectively. None of the full adults used Yoruba in spousal interaction.

Parent-Child Interaction

The result shows that English and Krio are dominant in this role relation also. Among the young adults, a significant majority (77.8%) used only English while 15.5% used English/Krio. No respondent used Yoruba or their indigenous languages. Among the full adults, a significant majority (70%) used only English with their children while 20% used English/Krio. However, an insignificant minority (10%) used their indigenous languages in parent-child interaction.

Brother-Sister Interaction

The result shows that in this role relation, English is also dominant. Among the teenage group, a significant number (44.4%) used only English while another significant number (40%) used English/Krio. However, an insignificant minority (15.6%) used Yoruba in sibling interaction. The use of Yoruba in this intimate domain represents a marked result. The chi-square test summary (χ^2 6.538, $2 < 0.005$) indicates that age had a significant effect on ethnic identity projection.

The implication of this result is that the refugees did not linguistically identify with their ethnic groups at home in the camp but preferred English/Krio. The attempt to find out the reasons for this marked experience through oral interviews yielded the following results:

My native language is Temne but my husband is Ibo. He was Ecomog soldier and we met in Sierra Leone when they came to fight the rebels, so we speak English in our family, all of us and children. But my new husband is Limba and we also speak English. .. Even though me and my husband come from different tribe, I try to use my dialect to talk to our children sometime... I speak Temne to them sometime, if they don't understand I explain it in Krio or English. (Saffiatu – Temne)

No, we no speak our dialect. My wife is from Kru, me I am Mende, so we speak Krio and English all the time and our children too. .. It is Junior's mother that speak dialect to him sometime whether he understand or not. I think he understand small small but he can't speak it. (Lebbie – Mende)

We speak English and Krio for house, both us and our small children ... We are from different tribe and speak different dialect. I am Limba but my woman is from Loko, she can't understand me and I can't understand her... My children don't speak Limba but my wife try to

call the names of things in Limba so that they will hear. Name of things like tree, house, bucket and even our local children games, they know it though they use English for the game but some names of things and songs are in our dialect. (Tenneh – Limba)

We come from different tribe, me and my wife, that is the one I marry for camp here. Because of that we use English and Krio to talk and also we talk to our children in English. But my wife sometime put small dialect to talk to the children because she is closer to them, and also when our people come from sierra Leone, they try to speak dialect with them (Sule - Limba)

Krio don master us, may be that is why. Me and my wife are from the same place, that is Mende, but we speak Krio and English and that is what we speak with our children. (Baro- Mende)

My wife is from Temne like me but you see in Salone everybody like to speak Krio and English and so we follow. We can speak Temne but somehow English and Krio is what we use. (Mike -Temne)

These interview extracts reveal two reasons why respondents did not linguistically identify with their ethnic groups in the home domain. The first reason is the fact of exogamous marriages in the camp. The first four interviewees (*Saffiatu, Lebbie, Tenneh, Sule*) reported using English/Krio with their spouses and children due to their mixed ethnic backgrounds. Marriages between men and women from different ethnic groups tend to result in the use of a neutral language in interactions. Myers-Scotton (1993: 39) states that

Most urban Africans speak their mother tongues with family members except where their marriage is inter-ethnic or they are highly educated: a situation which is hinged on the fact that the multi-ethnic nature of cities plus a sensitivity to ethnic rivalries only find resolution in neutral linguistic choices.

The second reason accounting for non identification with the indigenous languages at home in the camp is obviously the status or prestige of English and Krio. The last two interviewees (*Baro and Mike*) reported that, although they (husband and wife) come from the same ethnic group (endogamous marriage) they used English and Krio in both spousal and parent-child interactions. Even though they cited custom or habit as the reason, it is apparent that the remote factor is the prestige which English enjoys above indigenous languages in Africa. In sub-saharan Africa, it is assumed by many that European languages are the best for education (Adegbija, 1994), and for that reason, parents usually start early to speak English to their children. Myres-Scotton (1993:121) affirms that:

Further, some speak this language (English et al) at least part of the time at home, for the instrumental reason that it gives their children some practice in the medium which is crucial to their educational advancement.

The implication of this result is that a significant majority of the parents in the study were not transmitting their indigenous languages to the next generation, and consequently the children did not linguistically identify with their ethnic groups. Romaine (2003:528) notes that “the inability of minorities to maintain the home as an intact domain for the use of their language has often been decisive for language shift”.

Language Maintenance

A fall-out from this investigation is the strategies adopted by the refugees to maintain their ethnic identity. Although English was mainly used across role relations, there were reports indicating the minimal use of indigenous languages by the mothers. The male respondents (*Lebbie, Tenneh, Sule*) and the female respondent (*Saffiatu*) admitted that the mothers made deliberate attempts to transmit their indigenous languages to their children while the fathers did not. It seems that the role played by parents in this respect is ideologically based; it is believed that women worked mainly at home and so are closer to the children while the fathers are always away working. Perhaps while the women were more interested in their children’s ethnic identity, the fathers were more interested in their global identity which can guarantee their success in the future. The choice of English therefore suggests that the need for upward social mobility far outweighs ethnolinguistic considerations.

The second strategy is the occasional entrance of guests from the homeland to the camp. The respondent (*Sule*) reported that his children had access to their indigenous language when relations visited the camp from Sierra Leone. Such contacts with the homeland have implications for ethnolinguistic vitality. Holmes (2008:64) testifies that “a regular stream of new migrants or even visitors will keep the need for using the indigenous language alive”.

The third strategy is the use of cultural or extralinguistic resources to boost ethnolinguistic vitality. One of the respondents (*Tenneh*) reported that their children played folk games in the camp. As the respondent testified, although the games were performed in English, there are certain aspects of the games which must be expressed in the indigenous language, like the names of objects and especially the songs which accompany the games. The important fact here is that local folk games offered the children an opportunity to use their indigenous languages, to a little degree, thereby exposing them to their culture. In conclusion, it is evident that identity projection in this intimate domain is not predicated on context but on the needs of the participants.

The Neighborhood Domain

In the neighborhood domain, the respondents reported the languages they used in different role relations in the camp. The role relations are ethnic neighbors (intra-ethnic), national neighbors (inter-ethnic) and international neighbors (host community). The information sourced with the aid of the questionnaire is presented in the table below:

Table 5 – Language Use in the Neighbourhood

Age group	Language(s)	Role Relations					
		Ethnic Neighbours		Nat. Neighbours		Int. Neighbours	
Teenagers		Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
	English	35	77.8	35	77.8	-	-
	Krio	10	22.2	10	22.2	-	-
	Krio/Ethnic-English/Yoruba	-	-	-	-	45	100
	Total	45	100	45	100	45	100
Young adults							
	English	2	4.4	2	4.4	30	66.7
	Krio	43	95.6	43	95.6	15	33.3
	Krio/Ethnic -	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	45	100	45	100	45	100
Full adults							
	English	2	6.7	2	6.7	20	66.7
	Krio	18	60	28	93.3	10	33.3
	Krio/Ethnic	10	33.3	-	-	-	-
	Total	30	100	30	100	30	10

Chi-Square test summary: value χ^2 16.967, 4 < 0.002

Intra-ethnic Interaction

The result shows a marked use of English and Krio in this role relation. Among the teenage group, a significant majority (77.8%) used English while a minority (22.2%) used Krio. Among the young adults, a significant majority (95.6%) used Krio while a minority (4.4) used English. Among the full adults a significant majority (60%) used Krio while a minority (6.7%) used English. However, a significant minority (33.3%) of the full adults used Krio and their indigenous languages among respondents from the same ethnic group.

Inter-ethnic Interaction

The result indicates that language use among respondents from different ethnic backgrounds, who did not share the same indigenous language is unmarked. Expectedly,

among the teenage group, a significant majority (77.8%) used English while a minority (22.2%) used Krio. Among the young adults, a significant majority (95.6%) used Krio while a minority (4.4%) used English. Among the full adults, a significant majority (93.3%) used Krio while a minority (6.7%) used English.

Refugee-Host Interaction

The aspect of interaction between the refugees and the host community presents results which are both marked and unmarked. Expectedly, 100% of the teenage group used English and Yoruba in interaction with the host community. Unexpectedly, a majority (66.7%) among the young adults used English while a minority (33.3%) used Krio. A majority (66.7%) among the full adults used English while a minority (33.3%) used Krio in interacting with the host community. The chi-square test summary (X^2 16.967, $4 < 0.002$) indicates that age had a significant effect on ethnic identity projection.

There are two marked results in this investigation which needs explanation. First, it is expected that, at least, the young and full adult groups should use their indigenous languages during interaction with their own ethnic kin but only a minority did so. Consequently, the respondents were asked why they used mainly English in intra-ethnic interaction. The inquiry through oral interviews yielded the following results.

I am Mende ... I am not too used to my native Mende and that is because I try to avoid anything sentiment ...So I always speak so that people will not say that I am secretive or too tribal (Lebbie - Mende)

We speak Temne if we want to say something secret, like gossip, we use Temne when we want to gossip so that other people will not hear what we are saying. But generally we speak Krio and English because of other people so that they will not think we are talking bad about them (Amanda- Temne)

I am Limba but when I meet my Limba person we speak Krio or English. We speak Krio because I am Freetown person, not village boy, I grew up in Freetown where other tribe are and we speak Krio, everybody (Santike - Limba)

The interview extracts reveal that the respondents used English in intra-ethnic interaction for reasons of inclusivity or convergence; that is a consideration for the feelings of other non-ethnic 'others'. The first two respondents *Lebbie and Amanda*, admitted using English in this role relation essentially because they did not want to be misunderstood by people from other ethnic groups who might be present. As a result they converged horizontally, in order to accommodate other listeners for the sake of politeness. The other reason is simply a preference for English for reasons of status and not non-proficiency in their ethnic tongues. The third respondent (*Santike*) actually articulated what seems to be the remote reason for non-identity with their ethnic groups through language. He posited

that he was a 'Freetown person, not a village boy'. His expression smacks of conceit and suggestive of the fact that he perceived himself and desired to be seen as a modern cosmopolitan person in the camp. It is possible that he and his ilk associated English and partly pidgin with modernity and civilization while they associated their ethnic languages with backwardness hence; 'Freetown' symbolized modernity and 'village' stood for antiquity.

The second marked result is that only the teenage group interacted with the host community in Yoruba. While it is expected that the refugees should adopt Yoruba it is surprising that only the teenage group did so. Consequently, questions were posed to the respondents and the oral interview yielded the following results.

My little children do not speak Yoruba except the big ones in school. 14 years old. They mingle with Yoruba children, in fact they do Yoruba in school (Lebbie - Mende)

My son try well well because he is in JS three in Rita-Mary (school). In Rita-Mary they learn and speak Yoruba very well. In fact, Yoruba and English is their language... if he don't speak Yoruba he can't communicate with them. (Victoria – Temne).

Some of them (my children) who school here speak Yoruba very well, and I am happy, very happy. (Sule – Limba).

The interview extracts reveal that the teenage group acquired proficiency in Yoruba from two sources: school and neighborhood. The children's acquisition of Yoruba proved that they had integrated into Yoruba culture, while their parents did not. Thus, through the children Yoruba had entered the homes of the refugees in the camp. This result is in alliance with previous studies (Rees, 1960; Hoff 1968) which suggest that the children are those who use the host's language and often serve as interpreters to their parents. The practice of learning Yoruba as a school subject is in keeping with the National policy in Education in Nigeria. One of the provisions of that policy is that at the Junior and Senior Secondary School levels, the child must study one of the three major indigenous languages in Nigeria. The consequence of this practice is that, it precludes the languages of minority groups like the refugees and condemns them to study another indigenous language other than their own. Evidently, this is a violation of the international statutes which support an official recognition and promotion of minority languages. Two of these statutes are the following:

A sub provision of article 4.3 of the UN Convention on the rights of the child (1989) states that:

Every state should guarantee basic linguistic human rights to all children in the education system, in day-care, schools and institutions

of higher education, regardless of whether these children belong to linguistic majorities or minorities, and regardless of whether the minority children represent indigenous minorities, traditional minorities, immigrated minorities or refugee minorities. (cited in Maja 2008)

UNESCO Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights

One of the basic considerations of this declaration is that a language group is 'any group of persons sharing the same language which is established in the territorial space of another language community but which does not possess historical antecedents equivalent to those of that community. Examples of such groups are immigrants, refugees, deported persons and members of diaspora. (cited in Maja, 2008)

On the strength of these provisions, it is apparent that the children of the refugees in Oru camp have a right to education in their mother tongue but these rights are denied. This denial is what Skutnabb-kangas (1994) terms linguistics genocide or subtractive language education in the sense that it subtracts from a child's linguistic repertoire instead of adding to it. Nicholas (2011) refers to it as submersion education because it submerges indigenous children into an alien language and culture and expects them to sink and swim. The obvious consequence is that the children are denied an opportunity to identify with their ethnic groups linguistically. The importance of initial education in one's mother tongue cannot be over emphasized, especially with respect to the construction of ethnic identity. Edwards (1984) and Adegbija (1994) emphasize that such a facility promotes self esteem in the individual pupil; facilitates the learning of an additional language later; promotes cohesion and solidarity within minority communities; helps to maintain traditional relationships and attitudes between the generations and sexes and contributes to social control.

Sequel to the teenagers' linguistic acculturation, it is strange that the young adult and full adult groups did not report using Yoruba in interacting with the host community, but English and Krio, in this case, Nigerian Pidgin (NP). An inquiry was carried out through oral interviews to unravel the reason(s) for the marked behavior and the results are as follows:

...I don't think I'm interested, this thing is not easy Osy, how can I learn their language. I no tell you what they do to my daughter; their boys rape my daughter and I report to police, but the police did not do anything. (Saffiatu)

...It is good to speak Yoruba because of integration but the integration is not working. All the things they promise us they have not done it...

How can you give a family 75 thousand naira, not one person, a whole family, even the 75 thousand we have not seen it (Lebbie).

...Most of us here don't speak Yoruba because of the way they take us. If you see the way they look at us... as if we are not human being like them (Sule)

The respondents (*Saffiatu, Lebbie, Sule*) stated that they did not identify with Yoruba due to the hosts negative attitude towards them. *Saffiatu* was disgusted with the idea of learning Yoruba because of the sexual abuse her daughter suffered in the hands of the host community. *Lebbie's* reason for lack of facility in Yoruba was that the integration (welfare) package promised by the United Nations and the Nigerian Government was a mirage. *Sule's* concern was that the hosts treated them with disdain and condescension which he found unpalatable. This finding corroborates the position of Fasold (1984), Holmes (2008) and Edwards (1982) that attitudes towards a language are often a reflection of attitudes towards the speakers of the language. In other words, if you don't like a people, you don't like using their language. In this case, the refugees reacted to the negative attitude of their hosts by not acquiring Yoruba, despite the benefits of doing so. This result also replicates Anurag's (2011) finding in India where refugees who felt marginalized did not integrate, especially with regards to the acquisition of the host's language. The implication of this finding is that the relationship between hosts and guests was strained.

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate ethnolinguistic identity among Sierra Leonean refugees in Oru camp and aimed at ascertaining the patterns of language use at various domains, language maintenance and adaptation to the language of the host community. First, it is evident that the projection of identities in various domains had little to do with context but with the needs of the participants. Possibly due to their peculiar circumstances, the refugees were more interested in their existentialist challenges than the linguistic demands of particular domains. Therefore, it could be posited that identity projection in the home and neighborhood domains did not really reflect the distinction between insiders and outsiders. Second, there was minimal and negligible attempt by parents to transmit their indigenous languages to their children and as a result the children could not project an ethnolinguistic identity. However, the maximal use of pidgin across domains was a means of projecting Sierra Leonean identity. Third, with the exception of the teenagers, the respondents did not adapt to the language of the host community for reasons of prejudice. It was a case of conflict of perception. The way they saw themselves was not the way they were seen by their host community and this led to an ethnocentric distinction between 'we' and 'they' in the camp.

Based on the foregoing, it is recommended that parents in Oru camp should take explicit steps towards actual use of their indigenous languages, especially in intimate domains, in order to boost ethnolinguistic vitality. As far as the relationship between the refugees and

the host community is concerned, this study recommends a town hall meeting patterned after Smith (2006) and Lyon (1988) where both parties would meet for socio-cultural exchanges, thus endorsing and fostering inclusion and diversity.

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