Code-Switching and Identity Construction in Nigerian Films: A Comparative Analysis of Language Use in *Maami* and *The Wedding Party*

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Abstract
This study explores the role of code-switching in Nigerian cinema with focus on identity construction, cultural representation, and power dynamics. Through a qualitative content analysis of two prominent films-Tunde Kelani's *Maami* (2011) and Kemi Adetiba's *The Wedding Party* (2016) selected on the basis of their prominent casts, high viewership, and marked use of code-switching, this study examined the complex interplay between language, culture, and society. Drawing on Myers-Scotton's (1993) Markedness Model, the analysis reveals that code-switching facilitates identity negotiation and construction, reflects cultural norms and values, and negotiates power relations among characters. The findings demonstrate that code-switching is a vital aspect of Nigerian films, mirroring the nation's rich linguistic and cultural diversity. They also underscore the significance of code-switching as a vital aspect of Nigerian cinema, highlighting its role in shaping identity, culture and power in multilingual societies. The study's findings have significant implications for language education, cultural studies, and film production, underscoring the importance of code-switching in real-life communication and cultural expression.
Keywords: Code-switching, Identity construction, Nigerian films, Language use, Cultural representation

Introduction

Nigeria's diverse cultural landscape and linguistic variety reflect its complex past and social dynamics. Language usage in Nigeria goes beyond communication; it shapes social interactions, cultural expression, and even political discourse (Arslan et al. 2024; Atobatele & Mouboua, 2024 Rahmani & Saeed, 2024; Rayhona, 2024). With over 500 languages spoken across various ethnic groups, each with distinct traditions and worldviews (Kori-Siakpere et al., 2024; Ethnologue; 2021, Eteng & Olabisi 2025), the country's multilingual setting gives rise to phenomena such as code-switching and code-mixing, where speakers alternate between languages in discourse (Sampurna, 2023; Mona, 2024).

In Nigerian cinema, code-switching is a conscious narrative tool used to construct character identities, reflect cultural dynamics, and engage diverse audiences. It refers to the alternation between two or more languages or varieties in a single conversation or text (Aina, 2020; Mona, 2024). It functions to signal solidarity, social differentiation, and emotional nunances, as well as to foster audience identification (Aina, 2020; Auer, 2018; Bryne, 2024; Imran, 2023).
Nollywood, Africa's largest film industry, reflects Nigeria's linguistic diversity by frequently incorporating multiple dialogues. Two acclaimed Nollywood productions- *Maaami* (2011) by Tunde Kelani and *The Wedding Party* (2016) by Kemi Adetiba offer compelling illustrations of how code-switching is employed to project identity, culture, and power. This study examines code-switching's role in these films, with particular focus on its functions in identity construction, cultural representation, and audience engagement.

A Brief Overview of Maami (2011) and The Wedding Party (2016)

Maami (2011)
Maami is a heartwarming and inspiring Nigerian film that tells the story of a single mother, Maami, who struggles to raise her son, Kashimawo, amidst adversity. With determination and commitment, Maami shapes Kashimawo's character and future, despite the challenges they face. The film reveals a complex narrative, including the abduction of Maami's first child, Korede, by the father for money rituals. Kashimawo grows into an outstanding student and talented footballer, earning a university scholarship and becoming a professional footballer. Throughout his journey, Kashimawo remains devoted to his mother, who instilled in him the values of hard work, resilience, and humility.

The Wedding Party (2016)
The Wedding Party is a romantic comedy-drama that follows the story of Dunni and Dozie, two lovers from different cultural backgrounds, as they get married in a vibrant ceremony. The film is a joyful celebration of love and culture, showcasing Nigerian traditions, music, and language. With a star-studded cast and vibrant cinematography, the movie explores the complexities of identity, class, and culture in Nigerian society. Code-switching is used to convey social status, power dynamics, and cultural nuances, adding depth and authenticity to the narrative.

Literature Review

Code-switching is a common phenomenon in multilingual societies, particularly in contexts like Nigeria where linguistic diversity is deeply embedded in daily communication. Defined as the practice of alternating between two or more languages or language varieties within a single

conversation, code-switching serves multiple pragmatic and socio-linguistic purposes (Aina, 2020; Ezeh et al., 2022; Imran, 2023; Quin Yow et al., 2017; Sampurna, 2023). This linguistic phenomenon is a common occurrence in bilingual and multilingual communities, where speakers switch between languages to facilitate communication and understanding, construct identities, demonstrate solidarity, and express cultural values (Auer, 2018; Babalola & Taiwo, 2007; Fachriyah, 2017). Scholars identify two major types of code-switching: inter-sentntial code-switching (between sentences) and intra-sentential code-switching (within a single sentence or phrase) (Bolaji et al., 2014; Sampurna, 2023). In Nigerian films, both types are used to express nuanced meanings, mark social roles, and reflect contexts. Code-switching in films has been observed to perform various narrative functions, such as identity construction, cultural signaling, and resisting linguistic hegemony (Adegbite, 2020; Aina, 2020; Balogun & Oladayo, 2021). According to Macsaw, (2014) and Cantone (2007), code-switching enhances character development and narrative realism. Aina (2020) avers that language use in Yoruba-English switching affirms ethnic allegiance, while Imran (2023) observes that multilingualism in Nigerian films helps situate characters within specific social and emotional contexts. Balogun and Oladayo (2021) further contend that code-switching subtly resists the dominance of English, making space for cultural authenticity and inclusivity.

Code-switching in Nigerian film is not simply the alternation of languages but a means of articulating identity, capturing the realities of social life, and appealing to a range of audiences. According to Bello and Mustapha (2022), the Kannywood filmmakers employ code-switching, in part, due to the speakers' bilingualism and the absence of technological vocabulary, which renders the dialogues authentic and socially pertinent. Agbo et al. (2023) expand upon this by noting the way in which code-switching is deployed by characters as they negotiate onscreen relationships and cultural identities. Edosomwwan and Okoro (2024) elaborates further by noting the use of codeswitching between English and local languages in New Nollywood films, as a way of actors remain anchored in culture even as they address a broader audience (s).

Beyond Nigeria, code-switching serves important functions in other film industries. According to Dira et al. (2019), Indonesian films such as Twivortiare employ various forms of code-switching to reflect social environments and enhance the realism of dialogue. Similarly, in the context of Ali and Ratu Ratu Queens, Natalia 2022 observes that language switches are conditioned by the film's context. By investigating Everything Everywhere All at Once, Chen and Liu (2023) show that code-switching occurs not only on the level of language, but also at the levels of emotion and culture, thereby facilitating the narrative's resonance with audiences from various backgrounds. Amrian et al. (2023), for example, in his analysis of the Indonesian movie Imperfect, describes how code-switching and code-mixing help characters' communication and acculturation. Khena (2023) notes that, in Bollywood rap, code-switching is a resource for added punch and urbanity that appeals to youth. Anindita (2023) observes that Luca concludes that various types of switching fulfill communicative functions, among others in providing directions or commands. Also, Malhotra (2025) writes that Hinglish in Bollywood is not merely fashionable but a marker of contemporary cosmopolitan, urban identity as well as a metonym for cultural change.

All of the foregoing studies show that code-switching on film is far more than a technical language shift, but rather a significant and impactful storytelling device that mirrors actual social

dynamics, cultural identities, and emotional expressions in the real world. Nigerian films commonly deploy it to connect local traditions with global influences, facilitating audience engagement with characters in meaningful ways. International films demonstrate the potential of code switching in adding narrative complexity with the viewingto engage multicultural audiences affectively and culturally. In Nollywood and Bollywood films as well as Indonesian films, code-switching continues to enrich and authenticate the dialogue of films, and is an essential feature of cinematic storytelling in a multilingual world. In sum, these works authenticate the status of code-switching as an impactful linguistic and narrative device within Nigerian film, one that reflects the social and cultural realities of a linguistically heterogeneous nation. While code-switching is a prominent feature in multilingual contexts, its role in Nigerian cinema remains underexplored. Prior studies have focused on code-switching in music, education, and discourse (Adegbite, 2020; Aina, 2020; Balogun & Oladayo, 2021; Ezeh et al., 2022; Imran, 2023), and some on filmic representation (Agbo et al., 2023; Balogun & Oladayo, 2021; Dira et al, 2019; Edosomwwan & Okoro, 2024;Malhotra, 2025). However, comparative analyses linking linguistic behavior to cinematic portrayals of class, culture, and gender are limited. This study bridges the gap by analyzing Maami (2011) and The Wedding Party (2016) through Myers-Scotton's (1993) Markedness Model, thereby demonstrating code-switching's role in identity negotiation and reflective of Nigeria's multicultural realities.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative content analysis of two purposively selected Nigerian films: Tunde Kelani's *Maami* and Kemi Adetiba's *The Wedding Party*. The films were chosen due to their high viewership, cultural resonance, and evident use of code-switching. The Markedness Model of Code-switching by Carol Myers-Scotton (1993) views code-switching as a motivated, rational social choice in which speakers make selections of unmarked (default, expected) and marked (non-default, non-expected) language to gain Rights and Obligations (RO) Sets in interaction. Unmarked options reflect the standard social expectations for a given communicative context and indicate the expected social role or relationship, while marked options depart from such social expectations in order to indicate different social roles of stances, including solidarity, dominance, familiarity, social distance etc. When marked options are deployed, they are typically accompanied by prosodic or metalinguistic indicators that draw attention to them. The social meaning in these linguistic choices is the way these choices of language use have meanings embedded in and reflective of social identities, relations of power, and interpersonal dynamics in a culture. In Nigerian films like Maami and The Wedding Party, this model enables us to interpret how characters' code-switching serves as a performative resource for the creation of purportedly ethnic, social, and cultural identities—as language shifts between codes like English, Yoruba etc., and Pidgin index moves between formal and informal, high and low, and ethnic in-group solidarity and social distance. For this reason, this study applies the emphasis on marked and unmarked choices in the negotiation of identities as a tool for understanding the ways in which filmmakers appeal to more or less marked code choices to represent complicated social realities and constructions of identity in a multilingual society within the Markedness Model of code choice. In particular, it is chosen because of its ability to model, in a systematic way, the ways in which linguistic choices convey social meaning. The study explains how code-switching reflects issues of identity, power and culture. A few demonstrated scenes were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis in order to develop codes to capture the patterns and functions of code-switching in the dialogues. Translations and cultural context were taken

into consideration to help with interpretation and with providing a proper sociolinguistic understanding.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The strategic deployment of code-switching in Nigerian cinema serves as a linguistic mechanism for negotiating identity, power dynamics, and cultural representation. Through a critical analysis of *Maami* and *The Wedding Party*, this study elucidates the complex interplay between language, culture, and society, highlighting the ways in which code-switching functions as a tool for identity construction, social positioning, and cultural expression.

1. **Language Use as a Tool for Identity Negotiation and Construction in *Maami* and *The Wedding Party***

In *Maami* and *The Wedding Party*, code-switching serves as a linguistic marker of social identity and relational positioning. Code-switching in the Nigerian films Maami and The Wedding Party functions as a linguistic marker of social identity, which is how people characterize and are characterized by others through language that indexes ethnic, cultural, and social group affiliations, and their relative positioning in interpersonal relationships involving the contingent and situational exercise of linguistic resources to negotiate or contest relations of power and establish social categories and relationships, thereby shedding light on the complex relationship between language, identity, and power.

Instances are given below:

Excerpt I:

Grandpa to boys: "Eyin Omo Aleigboran. Obi, je ka lo si school, ka lo gba ball jare." [You disobedient boys. Obi, let's go to school, let's go collect the ball." (*Maami)*

Excerpt II:

Saamu (The Gateman) to Maami: Who be that? Oga dey? Wetin I want Na this my son... (*Maami*)

Excerpt III:

Maami- Saamu (The Gateman): Bami gbe omo Mi. [Give me my child] (*Maami*)

Excerpt IV:

Passerby to the dispatch rider: Were, ki lo de? [Mad fellow, what is wrong?} Aunty Yemi Sko ko! Na only you o! (*The Wedding Party*)

Excerpt V:

Dunni's Father to the event planner representative: Wo wa, Don't Mr. me, come, maa bo [look, come here. Don't Mr. me] (*The Wedding Party*)

Excerpt VI:

Dunni's Mum: We are going to take picture. Mum, just one. Oya, lets come together. (*The Wedding Party*)

These examples reflect how characters switch between Yoruba, Pidgin, and English to express familiarity, discipline, sarcasm, or affection. The choice of language often signals the speaker's identity and relationship to the listener.

'sIn excerpt 1, "Eyin Omo Alai gberan", denotes a collective address term for the stubborn boys playing football behind an old man house. Equally, "Obi, je ka lo school, ka logba ball" projects the boys' use of language to express relationship and familial support while in excerpt 3, Maami and gateman, code-switch to negotiate identity and communicate effectively. This highlights the importance of linguistic competence and benefit of bilingualism in facilitating effective communication in a bilingual society. Also, in excerpt 4, "Were, ki lo de? Aunty Yemi Sko ko! Na only you o!" demonstrates code-switching between Yoruba and English to caution and call the dispatch rider to order while in excerpt 5, Dunni's Father switch codes to effectively express his displeased state over the wedding planner's intended flop in preparation for the wedding reception. One could infer that indigenous language use positively and effectively express asnuanced intention perfectly. In excerpt 6, Dunni's mum switches code, to establish group identity and social relationship. Hence, in the above excerpts,' code-switching is used to reflect actors identity, and multilingual landscape of Nigerian society in Cinematic renditions. It also serves as a potent tool for expression of intended meaning and expression of speakers' intentions.

2. Social Context and Cultural Representation through Code-switching

The deployment of code-switching in *Maami* and *The Wedding Party* reflects cultural values, social settings and emotional states.

By cultural values, we mean how native languages convey cultural identity, respect and solidarity. Social settings involve adapting to formal or informal settings, public or private spaces, and social status while emotional states depict expressive of intimacy, anger, or affection through strategic language use.

This analysis highlights the significance of code-switching in understanding the cultural, social, and emotional nuances of Nigerian societies.

Instances below are apt:

Excerpt VII:

Maami: Maami o so fun mi pe mi ni baba. [My mother did not tell me that I do not have a father] (*Maami*)

Excerpt VIII:

Maami to Saamu (the gateman): Bami gbe omo mi, olorun a mu gbogbo yin lojo kan.[Give me my child, God will catch you one day]. These rich people. Very wicked people. Den go dey do bad bad things to make money abi? Dey suffer we poor people. Buy many cars, marry many wife. You join them abi? E maajere ise owo yin. [You will reap your acts].

Mama, take your pikin go.I go tell Oga, I don run.

Kashi to Maami: Maami, iru ede wo le so yen? Hausa ni oko mi? O gbo kin sori, o ti mon iru Iya ti o ni.Wa mon mi tan, lojo kan. [My mother, what kind of language did you speak? It is Hausa, my dear. You have not heard me speak that, you don't know the mother you have, you will know me all one day] (*Maami*)

Excerpt IX:

Mama Miko: Eyin omo, e gbe ounje lo jare. [You children, take the food away, plese] (*Maami*)

Excerpt X:
Dunni's mother to her husband: Olowo ori mi. A le nobody. [My darling husband, a noboby's concubine] Baby, My Bambam! Olori of the universe. [Queen of the universe] (*The Wedding Party*).

Excerpt XI:
Vanilla (Bride's American friend) to one of the servers at the reception: Excuse me, Please, can I get two wraps of Amala, yam flour, fried stew, asun, ponmon, Saki and fried chicken. [Excuse me, Please, can I get two wraps of yam flour, beans stew, fried stew, smoke goat meat, cow skin, cow skin fries, and fried chicken]. (*The Wedding Party*).

Excerpt XII:
Mama Miko: They said they want Iya Michael food, the local food. Hhmmn!, Iya Michael local food lo gba fe! [Mummy Michael's food is the best] Madam Continental. Na Iya Michael food den wan chop, I wan use your plate serve food. [Continental lady, the guest wants to eat mummy Michael's food, I want to use your plate to serve] (*The Wedding Party*].

Code-switching can be used to negotiate identity, as seen in the excerpt 7 above, "Maami o so fun mi pe mi ni baba"[my mother did not tell me that I do not have a father], the speaker uses code-switching to establish a familial relationship and assert authority. In excerpt 8 also, *Maami* switches to Yoruba to express her emotion towards the displeased state of the terrible act of child kidnapping and atrocities committed by the rich people as expressed in the movie. This equally facilitated the understanding between the interlocutors in the context. In excerpt 9, "Mama Miko: Eyin omo, e gbe ounje lo jare. [You children, take the food away, plese]" Mama Miko (the caterer) switches to Yoruba to address her audience and establish a sense of community. Also, in excerpt 10, "Dunni's mother to her husband: Olowo ori mi. A le nobody. [My darling husband, a nobody's concubine] Baby, My Bambam! Olori of the universe. [Queen of the universe] (*The Wedding Party*)". Dunni's mother switches to Yoruba to appreciate and eulogize her husband while her husband's response and complementation project rich Yoruba heritage in language use. In addition, Vanilla, Dunni's Friend in excerpt 11, switches to express rich Yoruba heritage in respect naming of cultural food. More so, in English terms may not capture the nuanced meaning perfectly. Moreso in excerpt 12, switching and mixing codes in the discussion placed more prominence on Nigerian cultural heritage.

Here, switching between Yoruba and English underscores cultural knowledge and class identity. Vanilla's incorporation of Nigerian food names illustrates cultural immersion and respect. Similarly, Maami's emotionally charged lament about the rich switches codes to express frustration and social injustice, amplifying her role as a working-class mother.

3. Audience Connection and Engagement

Code-switching fosters authenticity and resonates with audiences familiar with Nigeria's linguistic practices.

Instances are given below:

Excerpt XIII:
Kashi's reading of Yoruba storybook: "Emi ni Enkoro. Ode ni baba to n bi mi se. Bi o ti loogun to, ko kappa Maami tori ogbologbo aje ni iya mi se." [I am Enkooro, my father is an hunter.

Despite being powerful, he couldn't control my mother because she is a powerful witch] (*Maami*)

Excerpt XIV:
Ore sise dabi ere sisa Idije relay, ti won gbe igi yen fun e, iwo na a gbe fe lomin. [Helping people is like a relay race, once the baton is handed over to you, you hand over to others]. (*Maami*)

Excerpt XV:
Maami to the gateman: Switch to Hausa: Saanu. Who be that? Oga dey? Wetin I want? Na this my son, dey say make I bring ham. Make he come dey sweep the kitchen dey wash plate. Madam, take your pikin go mansan mon san. And make I no come back samsam.Why? Open gate. Wetin, open the gate naw. (*Maami*)

Excerpt XVI:
Follow that boy. You must catch that boy. I need that boy. I will kill you, abeg. Na my only son. Yee. "Kia me na si kan su" in Hausa (You are one of them).Walahi, ki nan sikin su fa (Am not one of them) (*Maami*)

Excerpt XVII:
Chief to the gateman: Rankadede, where is the boy? Oga, the boy I don run, jump fence. Why did you allow that to happen? Don't you know that can be very dangerous? What if they go to tell the police, you want to put me to trouble. Oga sorry. Sorry for your head. Now, listen to this. By tomorrow, you must get me another boy. Okay. Thank you oga. God go bless you. Get out! (*Maami*)

Excerpt XVIII:
Vanilla to Dunni's father: E kaaro Sir. Omo Nigeria rere. How are you? (*The Wedding Party*)

Excerpt XIX:
Dunni to her mum: Mum, you cancelled my caterer and replaced them with Iya Miko! Dunni, mu suuru! Her food taste better and her gbegiri is one in town. Kinni mo so! What did I say? E dide, E lo be fun mi. (*The Wedding Party*)

Excerpt XX:
Vanilla, (Dunni's friend) to the server at the reception: Excuse me, please, can I get 2 wraps of Amala, Gbegiri… (*The Wedding Party*)

In excerpt 13 and 14 above, Kashi switching to Yoruba in reading the storybook engages the audience and promotes cultural heritage as well as identification with indigenous languages rich in culture and useful in imparting norms, values and discipline to children and adult, as well as engaging viewers emotionally and culturally. Mixing the English expression in the sentences compares the human kindness to relay race which illustrates being a source of blessing to others when blessed. With the idiomatic expressions which engages the audience and promotes cultural heritage. This is evident in this excerpt, "Ore sise dabi ere sisa Idije relay, ti won gbe igi yen fun e, iwo na a gbe fe lomin. [Helping people is like a relay race, once the baton is handed over to you, you hand over to others]. In excerpt 15, "Saanu. Who be that? Oga dey? Wetin I want? Na

this my son, dey say make I bring ham. Make he come dey sweep the kitchen dey wash plate. Madam, take your pikin go mansan mon san. And make I no come back samsam.Why? Open gate. Wetin, open the gate naw. Maami switches to Hausa when communicating with the gate man. This facilitates understanding and connection. This projects the communicative importance of being a bilingual in a multilingual society like Nigeria. Equally, the switching of codes by the gateman in response to his boss questions (Rankadede, where is the boy? Oga, the boy I don run, jump fence. Why did you allow that to happen? Don't you know that can be very dangerous? What if they go to tell the police, you want to put me to trouble. Oga sorry. Sorry for your head. Now, listen to this. By tomorrow, you must get me another boy. Okay. Thank you oga. God go bless you) shows adaptive nature in facilitating communication irrespective of the status and linguistic background. More so, in excerpt 18, Vanilla, Dunni's friend switches to Yoruba to greet the bride's father. Vanilla's greeting in Yoruba bridges cultural gaps and enhances relatability, while Kashi's use of indigenous proverbs and lore provides deeper cultural insight into Yoruba cosmology.

This projects respect for cultural heritage, and the affirmative expression resonates the richness and value of Yoruba in projecting respect and culture. Dunni's mum in switching codes contextualizes the conversation, signaling changes in topic and tone from a reprimanding tone to a more positive one. Equally, in excerpt 20, Vanilla switches code to engage the server and to maintain identification with Yoruba culture.

4. Code-switching and Power Dynamics

Language choice reflects and negotiates social hierarchies in both films.

The linguistic situation in both *Maami* and *The Wedding Party* reveals the complicated relationship between language and social stratification. Language is used in this context as an index of social status, level of education, and cultural background, so that authoritative characters make use of formal language and code-switch into English in order to exert power over and above others while subordinate characters tend to speak informal language or use local language varieties to index their relatively lower social status. In addition, the use of language creates relations of power that allow characters to index and position themselves within social power structures by means of power and resistance through code-switching. Switching to English might index education, refinement, or prestige, granting characters a moment of high social standing, while shifts to native languages or dialects could index solidarity, familiarity, or cultural authenticity in ways that undermine the official order of things. In this way, the films offer a nuanced representation of social stratification within Nigerian communities, recognition of the complexities of language associated with power and identity.

Instances are given below:

Excerpt XX:

Chief to the Gateman: You must catch that boy. I need that boy. I will kill you, abeg. (Maami)

Excerpt XXI:

Maami to Saamu (the gateman): Bami gbe omo mi, olorun a mu gbogbo yin lojo kan. [Give me my child, God will catch you one day] (Maami)

Excerpt XXII:

Maami to Kashi: GRA ni won pe. Ibi ni awon olowo n gbe.[This place is called GRA. This is where wealthy people reside] (Maami)

Excerpt XXIII:

Pastor: All the daughters of Jezebel, present here. All these Wobes' children! (Wedding Party)

In excerpt 20 above, the use of English in hierarchical command (Chief to Gateman) signals authority. The gateman hurriedly chases Kashi with a cutlass in a bid to threaten and kidnap him based on his boss' directives, projects the use of language to express power dynamics. Also, in excerpt 21, [Bami gbe omo mi, olorun a mu gbogbo yin lojo kan. [Give me my child, God will catch you one day] Maami switches to Yoruba to show emotional intensity of power dynamics. Equally, Dunni's father in excerpt 22, Maami switches code to expatiate the peculiarity of the serene environment to her son, Kashi. The pastor's code-switching dramatizes his speech and satirizes moral posturing, subtly critiquing social and gender expectations.

Summary of Findings

The study reveals several key findings regarding the use of code-switching in Nigerian films and its sociolinguistic implications. Firstly, it observes that code-switching in the selected Nigerian films is predominantly motivated by communicative needs, cultural identification, and audience relatability. The films analyzed demonstrate that characters frequently switch between English and indigenous languages (primarily Yoruba) to better express emotions, assert authority, and reinforce their ethnic or cultural identity. Secondly, the study finds that the strategic use of code-switching serves not only as a stylistic device but also as a marker of bilingual competence and social belonging. The patterns identified suggest a deliberate linguistic strategy aimed at mirroring the everyday speech patterns of Nigerian bilinguals and multilinguals. Furthermore, it fis realized that the deployment of code-switching enhances the realism of character portrayal and contributes to the narrative structure and thematic depth of the films.

The study also establishes a connection between code-switching and identity construction. It is evident that the characters in the selected films use code-switching as a tool for negotiating identity, signaling in-group membership, and establishing socio-cultural boundaries. In doing so, the films serve as a platform or media through which the multilingual reality of Nigerian society and the hybrid identities that emerge from it is reflected.

Conclusion

Code-switching plays a vital role in Nigerian cinema, reflecting the nation's multilingual reality and serving as a rich resource for cultural representation, identity formation, and audience connection. In the evaluation of *Maami* and *The Wedding Party*, this study has underscored the importance of language in storytelling and cultural authenticity. Code-switching, as shown, is not merely a linguistic feature but a socially embedded practice that shapes the cinematic experience and reflects broader societal dynamics. This study therefore demonstrates the significance of code-switching in Nigerian cinema, highlighting its role in shaping identity, culture, and power dynamics. Findings underscore the importance of code-switching as a linguistic mechanism for identity negotiation, cultural representation, and audience engagement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance both scholarly inquiry and practical engagement with linguistic practices in Nigerian films. First, filmmakers are encouraged to continue incorporating code-switching in film dialogues, as it enriches the authenticity of character interactions and mirrors the linguistic diversity of Nigerian

society. Such inclusion not only enhances audience engagement but also serves as a means of preserving and promoting indigenous languages.

Second, language educators and curriculum developers should consider integrating Nigerian films that feature code-switching into language and literature syllabi. This approach can help students better understand the dynamics of bilingual communication, sociolinguistic variation, and the role of language in identity construction.

Finally, further scholarly research is recommended to explore the impact of code-switching on audience perception and language attitudes across diverse demographic groups. Expanding the scope of analysis to include more films from different ethnic backgrounds could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the sociolinguistic landscape of Nigerian cinema.

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