

# A Tri-Generational Study of Language Choice & Shift in Port Harcourt

Kelechukwu U. Ihemere

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A Tri-Generational Study of Language Choice & Shift in Port Harcourt Kelechukwu U. Ihemere This book is intended as a textbook for advanced undergraduate or graduate students in the field of bilingualism and language choice. It reports on a sociolinguistic study of the language choice patterns of the minority Ikwerre ethnic group of Port Harcourt City, Nigeria. Further, it aims primarily to present a systematic and coherent account of the extent and patterning of Ikwerre-NPE bilingualism within the Ikwerre community, focusing on: the means by which people in this community deploy two different codes in their day-to-day communicative interactions and the social and attitudinal motivations for language choice at both the group and individual level. To satisfy these objectives this study has taken into account the pre-existing linguistic, socio-economic and macro-sociological distinctiveness of the Ikwerre community. Thus, it has investigated prevailing local attitudes towards Ikwerre and NPE by incorporating matched guise tests to deepen our understanding of the processes of language choice and shift operating in the community. This was done to demonstrate that contemporary local linguistic attitudes working together with personal network ties would offer fuller and more adequate explanations of why members of the Port Harcourt Ikwerre community select either Ikwerre and/or NPE in their normal every day interactions. From the observations and findings made in this study I propose an account of the language choice patterns attested in my Port Harcourt Ikwerre community data that is based on establishing a broad typology which can be directly related to the bilingualism continuum. This framework should be equally applicable to similar bilingual settings around the world, which, like Port Harcourt, have experienced rapid metropolitan growth as a result of radical socio-economic change in their recent history. Finally, it is my hope that in the course of reading this book the reader can come to a place where their understanding and appreciation of the effects of languages in contact in non-Western communities is enriched with the illustrative material in this book.



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