GOMBE SAVANNAH

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES (GOSAJOLLCOS)

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY

Volume 4 No. 1
September 2023

The Impact of Pidgin on the Written English of Final-Year Students of Government Science School Lafia, Nasarawa State

Emmanuel A. Envoh

and

Philip Chike Chukwunonso Aghadiuno

Abstract

The study examined the impact of Nigerian Pidgin English on the written English of final-year students of Government Science School Lafia. The study is based on variation analysis theory. To carry out the study, a written essay test was administered to the 2022 graduating class (SSS 3 students) of Government Science School Lafia. The test scripts were collected and studied to identify the impact of pidgin on the written English of the students. Findings reveal that the written English of the students is affected by the Nigerian Pidgin across many aspects of linguistic usage. The paper concludes that the morphological and syntactic variety of the Nigerian pidgin has affected the students' written English as many of their expressions contain traces of the Nigerian Pidgin even when they are expected to write in Standard English.

Keywords: English Grammar, Pidgin, Spelling Errors, Standard English

Introduction

Nigeria is a multilingual society with over five hundred and twenty indigenous languages (Ethnologue, 2009 cited in Udoh & Emmanuel, 2020). In addition to these languages, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is used in diverse degrees in different parts of the country and it has become a lingua franca for many. Nigerian Pidgin is an emergency language. It is very pertinent to note that what started as an "emergency language" between the white merchants to ease communication with the natives has now become a major language spoken among secondary school students, thereby affecting the students' competence in the use of correct English. As noted by Marchese and Schnkal (1980), in the Delta area of Nigeria, especially around Warri and Sapele, Nigerian Pidgin is more of a Creole.

Creole is a mixture of a European language with a local language and it is spoken as a first language. However, some view Pidgin as a variety of English, while others see it as a distinct language. A look at the structure of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) shows that it has its structures and patterns. Although, at its initial stage, NP was considered the language of those who could not

speak English. It is not only used by students in Nigerian schools during conversations, but it has also become a fascinating medium of communication at all times. Since pidginization, according to Hymes (1974), is "a complex process of sociolinguistics," (p. 84), this work aims to study the impact of Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) on the written English of students of Government Science School, Lafia.

Conceptual Review

Many concepts are deployed in this work that require clarification. To start with, Pidgin English has been defined differently by various scholars and linguists. Holm (1980) defines Pidgin as a reduced language used by groups with no language in common who need to communicate for trade or other purposes. It can also be seen as a language that arises to fulfill certain restricted communication needs among people who have no common language (Todd, 1974). From these two definitions, it can be seen that Pidgin English is a language that is used to communicate between groups of people that have no common language.

Furthermore, Ojaide and Ashuntantang (2020) see it as a language that emerges due to contact between people of different languages which is usually a combination of different languages. This shows that, though it is limited lexically and structurally, it is suitable for specialized communication. It has some unique features such as uncomplicated grammatical structure and reduced syllabus codes. It is further noted that Pidgin English lacks many things, such as reduction of consonant clusters, absence of tones (such as those found in West Africa and Asian languages), separate words to indicate terms usually preceding the verb, reduplication to represent plurals, superlative and other parts of speech that represent the concept being increased, a lack of morphemic variation (Wilson et al., 2013). Similarly, Decamp (1971), Hymes (1974) and Hudson (1990) in Idiagbon (1999) give a summary of the characteristics of Pidgin as follows: elimination of grammatical devices like inflections, plural possessives and tenses, the use of reduplication as an intensifier, the ability of a word to have a semantic extension.

Literature Review

The entrance of Pidgin English into Nigeria was made possible through the trade situation between Nigerians and the Portuguese from 1469 to 1539, and with the British during the 17th century. From that period onwards, Pidgin English has become a recognized language code in Nigeria. To support this idea, Faraclas (2004, pp.828) says: "Well over half of the 140 million inhabitants of Nigeria are now fluent speakers of the language Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE), making it the most widely spoken language in Nigeria, as well as the indigenous African language with the largest number of speakers."

Although this may be exaggerated, the statement underscores the vast number of the population who use Nigerian Pidgin English.

It should be noted that Nigerian Pidgin varies from place to place and has several peculiar varieties. Obiech (1984) meticulously deliberated on the variants of the Nigerian Pidgin as he identified five varieties, namely, Bendel which includes: Abraka, Warri, Isoko, Sapele. Agbor, Itsekiri, Effurun, Agbaraha-Oto, Urhobo and Ewa; Calabar which includes: Calabar. Cross River, Akwa Ibom and the Kalabari regions; Lagos variant which includes: South West, Eastern Part and South-Central; Kano/Maiduguri variant which includes: North-East, North-North, North-South and North-West; and Port Harcourt, which includes: Port Harcourt and the Regional Suburbs. Furthermore, NPE is widely used in major cities and towns in schools and market domains, in radio jingles, television adverts, and drama/plays.

The Status of Nigerian Pidgin

The use of Nigerian Pidgin seems to have gained popularity since Nigeria's independence in 1960. Pidgin is used profusely in many spheres of life, especially in informal situations. Pidgin discourse abounds (Osoba, p. l). Even though it is not yet an official lingua franca in the country, it is a daily phenomenon in the everyday affairs of an average Nigerian. The nature of Nigerian Pidgin, its easy mode of acquisition, as well as the multilingual background of Nigerians, may have been responsible for its present status and functions.

Even though Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is probably the language with the highest population of users in Nigeria, it does not enjoy official recognition and is excluded from the education system (Igboanusi, 2008). It lacks prestige because it is seen by many Nigerians as a "bad" form of English and associated with a socially deprived set of people (Igboanusi, 2008).

Reduplication in Nigerian Pidgin

Reduplication is a morphological process in which the root of a word or a part of it is repeated. In many languages, reduplication is used in inflections to convey grammatical functions and in lexical derivations to create semantic functions. Kachru (1982) noted that the reduplication of items belongs to various word classes. For instance, some English words are often reduplicated or repeated consecutively, either for emphasis, pluralisation or to create new meanings. Bobda (1994) identified three categories of words that generally undergo the process of reduplication; numerals, intensifiers and quantifiers.

In NP, reduplication is a borrowed form from the mother tongue or L1 of the speakers as it is a common phenomenon in many Nigerian Languages. When a foreign word is borrowed into another language it may or may not

retain its original pronunciation. Most speakers will pronounce the borrowed word according to the sound system of their language particularly if the phonemic sounds of the borrowed language do not exist in the borrowing language (Mensah & Mensah, 2014).

Pidgin speakers enlarge the functional power of a limited vocabulary through the use of reduplicated forms. (Ugot & Ogundipe, 2011). Reduplication in NP is used to express different grammatical and lexical functions, for example, luk-look; lukuluku-stare; lukuluku—someone who stares or gazes. 0k?

Impact of Nigerian Pidgin on the Written English of Secondary School Students
The morphological and syntactic variety of the Nigerian Pidgin has affected students' written and spoken forms of Standard English as observed by Amakiri and Igami (3). Some examples of distortion are:

NPE	**Standard English**
Go slow	Traffic jam
She don born	She has been delivered of a baby
Go front front	Go further

The high failure rate in the English language and the poor communication skills among Nigerian students are then blamed on the corrupting influence of Nigerian Pidgin. It is believed that one cannot write better English than how one speaks and, most Nigerians, especially students, speak Nigerian Pidgin English better than Standard English. Besides, some educated elites also use Pidgin in their conversations. This has given Pidgin a wider range of communication. The 1998 Educational Policy in Nigeria approves the use of the mother tongue in teaching children up to their third year in primary school. Where this is not possible, the dominant language of the community may be used. For some parts of the country, Nigerian Pidgin English has been used as an official medium of instruction at the primary level (Agheyisi, 1988). Children who are exposed to Nigeria Pidgin before learning English are sometimes found alternating between Nigeria Pidgin English and Standard English structures.

NPE	**Standard English**
I no know	I don't know
I sabi do am	I can do it.

They are also heard pronouncing some words wrongly.

NPE	**Standard English**
Onle	only
Bodi	Body
Bele	belly
Moni	money

Phonologically, the Standard English consonants differ from Nigerian Pidgin consonants, 'them' becomes `dem', something' becomes `somtin'. Grammatically, the Pidgin variation is, 'I dey come' instead of 'I will be back'. This has led to the use of phrases like 'I am coming' to mean 'I will be back'. (Edupedia, 3).

Features of NP

The tables below illustrate some salient features of contemporary Nigerian Pidgin Specifically, it identifies some superstrate and substrate influences on Nigerian Pidgin, as well as instances of reduplication, compounding and clipping in Nigerian Pidgin.

Table 1: Superstrate and Substrate Influence on NP

Lexical source	NP Lexical item	NP meaning
English	Pale	Pal/friend
	Veks	Vex
Portuguese	Palava	Problem/trouble
	Pikin	Child
	Dash	Gift

Table 2: Reduplication in Nigerian pidgin

NP Reduplication	English base
Small small	Gently
Welu welu	Very well
Sharp sharp	Quickly

Table 3: Compounding in Nigerian Pidgin

N.P Compound words	Semantic Equivalent in English
Long throat	Glutton
Bad belle	Jealousy/envy
Busy body	Loquaciousness

Table 4: Clipping in Nigerian Pidgin:

Clipped words in NP	Semantic equivalent English
Palmy	Palm wine
Demo	Show off or use style on someone
Naija	Cafeteria

Empirical Review

Koźbial (2011) did a work on phonological error mapping of English-Polish contrastive analysis. The paper examined the phenomenon of phonological error mapping, from Polish (the participants' mother language, thereafter L1) to English (the participants' target language, thereafter L2). Phonological error mapping could be explained as the transfer of certain phonological rules (e.g. difference in vowel lengths or word/sentence stress allocation) from LI to L2. This transfer can occur when a learner lacks sufficient knowledge of L2 and tries to fill the gap with L1 rules, a positive transfer takes place when L1 and L2 have something in common and a learner can easily reassign information from LI to L2. However, this paper showed that in many cases where the transfer was expected, it did not occur. Similarly, there were some examples where participants showed tendencies to use transfer against their knowledge of L2.

In another work titled "Mother Tongue Interference on the Spoken English of Berom speaking Students in Plateau State Polytechnic," Marcus (2018) investigated the influence of mother tongue interference on the pronunciation of English sounds among Berom language speakers in Plateau State Polytechnic, Barkin Ladi, Nigeria. The study compared the segmental phonemes of English and Berom languages and showed how the differences cause problems in the spoken English of the Berom students. The study also attempted to identify the sounds of English which are the most affected by the sounds of Berom and suggested activities that will help reduce this influence.

The work of Labiba (2015) revealed that the Hausa learners of English as a second language experience difficulty with tense formation in English. Hausa tenses remain the same, unlike the English language where different tenses have different morphological forms, thereby causing negative transfer. The Hausa native speakers get confused when using possessive pronouns in their English construction.

This is because the use of possessive verbs (have and has) differs in the English language. "Have" is used for the first person singular, second person singular, first person plural, second person plural and third person plural. "Has" on the other hand is used for the third person singular only, but in the Hausa language, these differences do not occur. The Hausa native speaker may say, *He have a book* instead of *He has a book*; *I has a bag* instead of *I have a bag*. This interference occurs to the Hausa native speakers because in Hausa the word "Ida" stands for both "have" and "has".

Mahe and Adegboye (2017) 0ge Usage: The Case of Prepositions in Some Selected Schools in Bauchi State." The study investigated how the use of prepositions in Hausa affected the use of English. People tend to misuse the use of these prepositions. This is because of the influence of mother tongue

interference (Hausa) when speaking English as a second language. It investigated the errors committed by Hausa native students in the use of prepositions. The main cause of errors is overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, false concept hypothesized and, ignorance of rule restriction errors such as over-generalization. This is why the result of the findings showed a high percentage of errors committed by students on the use of prepositions. The result of the hypotheses tested showed that the errors committed are due to the interference of the first language Hausa (L1) with English (L2). In the research, it is concluded that the type of error committed by a student is dependent on the school attended. The errors committed by private school students were not as many as the errors committed by public school students. This is because private schools, employed graduate English teachers to teach the English Language, but in public schools, according to the biodata of the teachers, anyone, (teacher) as far as he can speak the language, can become an English teacher.

Idris (2016) worked on interference in the use of English question tags among Nigeria Certificate in Education Hausa students at the Federal College of Education, Zaria. It aimed at examining the problems in the use of the English question tags as employed by the Hausa learners of English as a second language. Illustrations of some of the problems identified are overgeneralization, interference of the learner's mother language, learner's age, learner's psychological attitude, and the insufficient language knowledge of English question tags. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were used. The study revealed that the Hausa learners of English as a second language have a peculiar problem of overgeneralization, inducing their rules informing and using English question tags. It also revealed that the greater the difference between the two languages the more negative the effects of the interference is likely to be. The study revealed that the usage of the English question tags was generally affected by the age of the Hausa learners of English as a second language and females often than not use English question tags more than their male counterparts.

In "Probing the Functions of Nigerian Pidgin English in FPO Akporobaro's (year) 'The Prostitute': A Stylistic Approach," Koutchade (2022) examines the functions of Nigerian Pidgin English used in the poem "The Prostitute," written by FPO Akporobaro in the collection of poem, *The Laments of the Town Crier and other Poems*. Through a descriptive research design based on a qualitative approach, the author analyses the poem in its context of production, and finds out that the poem has examples of phonological and cohesive features which add to the aesthetic value of the last (?), This paper is completely different from this study because, unlike

Akporobaro's work, the current study set out to analyze the impact of Nigerian pidgin on the written English final year students of Government Science School Lafia.

"Language of Prose: Pidgin in the Colonial Governance of Northern Nigeria" by Afeadie (2015) examined the use of Pidgin as the language of Governance and Administration during the Colonial rule in Nigeria, by using archival materials and oral interviews of former African employees. The paper found that African political agents were employed as intermediaries based on their knowledge of Pidgin and other local languages to bridge the communication gap between the government and the locals. This paper dwells mainly on the historical role of Pidgin in governance and administration, an aspect that is glossed over by the current research; in addition, the paper is different from the current study because the current is concerned with the study of the impact of Nigerian Pidgin on the written English of final year students of Government Science School Lafia.

In "Beyond Barriers: The Changing Status of Nigerian Pidgin" Jane Nkechi Ifechelobi and Chiagozie Uzoma Ifechelobi (2015) examined the evolution of Nigerian Pidgin over the years using an expository approach. The paper found that in a situation where two speech communities with a common language come together for a certain purpose, a means of communication emerges. The emergent languages are usually referred to as contact languages. This paper focuses on the evolution of Nigerian Pidgin over the years. However, the paper is different from the current study because the current study dwells on the impact of Nigerian Pidgin on the written English of final-year students of the Government Science School, Lafia, while Ifechelobi and Ifechelobi's paper exclusively examined the origin and development of Pidginy.

Aziza's (2015) "Aspects of the Syntax of Modern Nigerian Pidgin" focuses on two main issues: first, an analysis of some syntactic features of the NP spoken today in Ward by young educated people aged between 18 and 30 years to determine whether what they speak is a general NP or a decreolizing variety. The Syntactic features under investigation are number marking in nouns, number and gender marking in pronouns and the derivation of Yes/No and Wh-questions. This group of NP Speakers was chosen because it represents a very vibrant group in any language and a major indicator in determining the state of wellness of a language. A language that is attractive to the young and educated usually has a good chance of survival and its intergenerational capability is assured (Fisherman, 1991). The second focus of this paper is to examine the sociolinguistic profile of NP to determine its effect on the indigenous languages and on Standard English with which it co-exists as well as its prospects.

The methodology adopted for data collection was a descriptive survey and the instruments used were a questionnaire and a tape recorder. Data were collected from 120 randomly selected young people all of whom have had at least a secondary school level of education in the English-based medium of education available in Nigeria. Their data revealed two important facts: first, modern NP as used by this group of speakers is decreolizing, that is, it is becoming more and more like English in its spoken form (Elugbe,1995, p.288) observed this phenomenon only in the written form of NP). Second, the socio-linguistic profile of NP is rising as it now features in more domains than it hitherto did.

This paper, however, differs from the current study because it focuses on an analysis of some Syntactic features of the NP spoken today in Warn by young educated people aged between 18 and 30 years to determine whether what they speak is a general NP or a decreolizing variety. The current study sets out to find the impact of Nigerian Pidgin on the written English of Government Science School, Lafia.

In "Linguistic Features of Pidgin in Stand-up Comedy in Nigeria" by Adetuyi, Jegede and Adeniran (2018), the study is aimed at looking at how comedians can create humour through the use of Pidgin in Stand-up Comedies. This study was carried out by identifying and categorizing the feature of Pidgin in selected Nigerian comedy shows interpreting the contents expressed in the comedy shows. The data (five Nigerian stand-up comedy videos where pidgin was adopted) for this research were downloaded on YouTube channels on the internet and analysed using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (particularly the interpersonal metafunction). This was done to reveal how language affects the social relationship between the comedian and his audience and how this language expresses humour. The analysis revealed that Pidgin is an informal language and so its informality creates an equal social relationship in an informal setting which aids laughter. Comedians can express humour in Pidgin because it is a no man's native language, and as such, they could use it creatively to achieve their aim—humour. The unserious and informal nature of the language and its method of presentation make their stories humorous.

However, unlike Adetuyi and Jegede's paper, the current study deals with the impact of Nigerian Pidgin on the written English of final-year students of Government Science School, Lafia.

Theoretical Framework

The Variation theory is adapted in this work. The initial methodology and theory underlying the variationist approach to discourse also known as "variation and change" were those of William Labov. The theory proceeds from the assumptions that linguistic variation is patterned both socially and

linguistically and that such patterns can be discovered only through systematic investigation of a speech community.

Variationists set out to discover patterns in the distribution of the social and linguistic factors that are responsible for variation (Schiffrin, 1987, 1994). Although, traditional variationist studies were chiefly concerned with the semantically equivalent variants (what Labov calls "alternative ways of saying the same thing"), such studies have now been extended to texts. Schiffrin also notes that it is in the search for text structure, the analysis of text-level variants and of how text constrains other forms that variationist approaches to discourse have developed.

Variationists use quantitative methods of analysis to test the hypothesis about constraints on the distribution of forms within a connected speech. These methods differ markedly from those of formal linguists. Schiffrin explains that variationist approaches compare different explanations by searching for data that confirm or disapprove of the co-occurrences predicted by each explanation. She notes that, although this is not a goal unique to variationists, variationist approaches add the strengths and limitations of quantitative analysis to such efforts. The variationists also consider the social context as part of the study of discourse, hence the setting in which a story is told allows or prevents the display of linguistic competence. It considers social context under certain methodological and analytical circumstances. Schiffrin, therefore, concludes that the variationist approach to discourse is based on socially realistic linguistics. Thus, a variationist approach to discourse is a linguistically based approach that adds social context to analyses of the use of language.

The theory of variation and change is relevant for this study because it will help to analyze the variations that exist in the written language of final-year students of Government Science School Lafia. These variations indicate the nature of discourse in a particular place, time, and even purpose. The above-mentioned variables in language discourse determine and influence the type of discourse a speaker uses which could be formal or informal discourse. This means that there are situations that warrant formal or informal discourse. This theory will serve as a tool to assess the variation and the factors that informed the changes in students' discourse.

The theory of variation and change is built on the fact that language changes due to the environment and socio-cultural background of speakers which is the basis of this study. Pidgin English evolves as a result of the variation in English. As the language travels and comes into contact with other languages, it undergoes changes and variations. Nigerian Pidgin evolves or emerges as a result of the contact, environment, and speakers. These speakers infuse native languages into English, causing variations of the English.

This work attempts to discuss Nigerian Pidgin as a hybrid language that emerged due to the need for communication between groups that have no means of communication. It reviews the evolution of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in contemporary Nigerian society and some salient features of Nigerian Pidgin (NP). The work also examines how Nigerian Pidgin affects the written and spoken English of students, especially in secondary Schools.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design strategy for data collection and analysis. The data was collected through the administration of an essay test titled "The Best Day of My Life" given to Senior Secondary School three (S.S.S. 3) students of Government Science School Lafia, 2020/2021 session. After preliminary arrangements, the students were given 50 minutes and writing materials to write the test in not less than 350 words. The essay test question was found to be adequate because the students were conversant with essay writing and the different types of essays. The students were 35, and a total number of 35 scripts were retrieved after the exercise. Twenty of the scripts were purposely sampled. The identified errors in the scripts were classified, analysed and interpreted in tables in line with the theoretical framework used in the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The following tables present the data for the study:

Table 1: Spelling Errors

S/N	Error	Correct Form
1.	Bearly	Barely
2.	Secondry	Secondary
3.	Foget	Forget
4.	Had	Heard
5.	Adinmition	Admission
6.	Diaspoint	Disappoint
7.	Dicide	Decide

As shown in Table 1, the essay writing of the students is littered with spelling errors due largely to the influence of the spelling system of Nigerian Pidgin. The students tend to simplify the words as Nigerians do for easy pronunciation. For example, words such as "forget" is written as "foget," appointed is written as "appointed," decide as "dicide." The absence of "r" in "forget," for example, does not affect the pronunciation of the words.

Table 2: Lexical/Syntactic Substitution

S/N	Error	Correct form
1.	Clock	Time
2.	Trapped	Hung
3.	Catapult	Fling
4.	Assembly	Assemble
5.	Floricking around	Roaming around
6.	Concentration	Consideration
7.	Relieve	Give in/succumb
8.	Peace	Urinate

Table 2 shows lexical/syntactic substitution in the students' essay writing. It is discovered that students misuse certain words which they feel are synonymous with the standard word, but what they write is grammatically wrong. This occurs mostly when students lack the appropriate words in Standard English with which to express themselves. Examples of such words as seen from the Table are: "clock" instead of "time." These words are largely influenced by Nigerian pidgin. The students use "catapult" instead of "fling," concentration" instead of "consideration," "floricking around" instead of "roaming about," relieve" instead of "sucumb." This is traceable to the influence of Nigerian pidgin which gives one the freedom to code-switch.

Table 3: Tense Error

S/N	Error	Correct form
1.	Push	Pushed
2.	Thanking	Thank
3.	Happen	Happened
4.	Wake up	Woke up
5.	Wanted	Want
6.	Say	Said
7.	Try	Tried

As shown in Table 3, tense errors are also a prominent issue in the student essay scripts. This is due largely to the fact that in Nigerian pidgin English, whether an expression or word is in its past or present tense, it does not affect its meaning. Some examples are "push" instead of "pushed", "wake up" instead of "woke up", "say" instead of "said", "try" instead of "tried", "have" instead of "has" etc.

Table 4: Semantic Restriction

S/N	Error	Correct form
1.	Feed	Spoon-feed
2.	Crush	Infatuation
3.	Guy	Young man
4.	Game	Gambling

Table 4 shows semantic restrictions that are found in the students' essay test scripts. It is observed that students narrow the meaning of certain words or restrict the meaning of such words to mean just one thing. This is also traceable to the impact of Nigerian Pidgin English. Some examples of such words are "feed" restricted to "spoon-feed," "guy" restricted to a young man, and "game" restricted to gambling.

Table 5: Lexical Reduplication

S/N	Error	Correct form
1.	Slowly slowly	Slowly
2.	Low low	Low
3.	Better better life	Better life
4.	Very very	Extremely

In Table 5, the students' essay writing exhibits evidence of lexical reduplication by the repetitive use of certain lexical items to broaden or heighten the meaning of the expression. This explains why most of the essay writings have the following reduplication: slowly slowly, low low, better better life, very very. These lexical reduplications are common in Nigerian Pidgin which the candidates are acquainted with.

Discussion

From the findings, it is important to discuss the salient issues. One of such issues is the status of Nigerian Pidgin English. In "In Defense of Nigerian Pidgin," Temitope (2013) argues that Nigerian Pidgin English is a fully developed language with lexico-semantics and syntax, which have evolved like any other language through contact and modification. Nigerian Pidgin is also said to have simplified grammar. Nigerian Pidgin English words are often written as they are pronounced. For example, naija, beta, fad, etc.

When students employ this technique in their writing, it leads to spelling errors. Some examples noted in the data are: "Meat" instead of "meet," "secondary" instead of "secondary," "most" instead of "must," "had" instead of "heard," "cusine" instead of "cousin, "February" instead of "feburary."

Code-switching is one of the features of Nigerian Pidgin. Code-switching involves alternating between distinct languages in the same discourse. This technique gives one the freedom to use any word or expression that best suits one's imagination to describe a thing or an action. Students substitute certain words in place of the original words in Standard English, most of which are ungrammatical and incorrect. Examples of such words found in the students' essay scripts are: "clock" instead of "time," "floricking around" instead of "roaming about," "relieve" instead of "succumb," etc.

Nigerian Pidgin has present, past and future tenses such as "bin" showing past tense as in "I'm come here" which is the equivalent of "he/she came here" in standard English, present tense such as "dey" as in "I dey come" which is equivalent to "I am coming" in standard English, "go" as "I go come" which is equivalent to "I will come" in standard English.

Sentences are made in pidgin such as "my fada have car," "he push me," "I try to laugh." That is to say that in Nigerian Pidgin, whether a lexical item appear in its present, past or future tense it does not contradict its meaning. This reveals why the students essays are filled with tense errors such as "wake up" instead of "woke up," as in "I woke up," "have" instead of "has," "say" instead of "said," "try" instead of "tried," "take" instead of "took," "happen" instead of "happened," "thanking" instead of "thank," and host of others.

The semantic restriction is a semantic feature in Nigerian pidgin English. It is used to narrow or limit the meaning of a given word in Nigerian pidgin. According to Garba (2015), such words which are originally found in English or some of the indigenous languages have their meanings restricted by the time they appear in Nigerian pidgin English. This is why the students' essay scripts are littered with words such as "feed" restricted to "spoon-feed," "crush" restricted to "infatuation," "guy" restricted to "young man," "game" restricted to "gambling." This restriction affects the students' written English negatively.

Reduplication is a morphological process in which the root of a word or a part of it is repeated. Reduplication in Nigerian Pidgin is used to express different grammatical and lexical functions. In the students' essay scripts, it is observed that the students use reduplication to extend or amplify the meaning of expressions. Such lexical items as identified in the students' essay scripts are *very very*, *slowly slowly*, *low low*, *better better* life. As noted by Garba (2015), the reduplication of items belongs to various word classes. Some English words are often reduplicated or repeated consecutively, either for emphasis, pluralisation or to create new meaning.

Conclusion

Nigerian Pidgin affects the proficiency in standard English in Nigerian secondary schools. The Nigerian Pidgin exerts some substantial negative effects on the effective learning of English. The inability of the students to know the differences or features of the two poses a problem in the learning of the English language in secondary schools. As may be noted, the outright ban on Pidgin English in secondary schools does not seem to solve the problem. It is suggested that students should be taught to understand the adverse effects of Pidgin on their academic performance.

References

Adetuyi, C. A, Jegede, C. A. & Adeniran, A. A. (2018) Linguistic features of Pidgin in Standup Comedy in Nigeria. *World Journal of English Language*, 8, (2).

Afeadie, P. A. (2015). Language of Power: Pidgin in the colonial governance of northern Nigeria. *Legon Journal of the Humanities 26*, 19-37.

Agbo, O. F. (2020). The relationship of Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin in Nigeria: Evidence from copula constructions in ICE-Nigeria. *Journal of Language Contact, 13*, 351-388.

Agheyisi, R. N. (1988). Standardization of Nigerian Pidgin English. *English World Wide*, *9*(2), 227-241.

Aziza, R. O. (2010). Human and material resources in the teaching of Urhobo Language. In E. Emenanjo (Ed.,), *Empowering Small Nigerian Languages*. Port Harcourt: Grand Orbit Books, pp. 99-112.

Aziza, R. O. (2015). Aspects of the syntax of modern Nigerian pidgin. In Ruth Kramer et al. (Eds.,), *Selected proceedings of the 44th Annual Conference on African Linguistics.* Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings, pp. 11-16. Retrieved 10 June 2022 from project. www.lingref.com,document#3122

Balogun, T. A. (2013). In defence of Nigerian pidgin. *Journal of Languages and Culture, l4* (5), 90-98.

Edupedia. (2015). Pidgin English versus WAEC/NECO. Lagos-books club: Nvordpress.com. Retrieved 13 June, 2015.

Faraclas, N. (2004). Nigerian Pidgin English: morphology and syntax. In B. Kortmann, B Kate, M. Rajend, W. S. Edgar, & U Clive U (Ed.s). *A handbook of varieties of English*: 2. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 828-853.

Garba, A. (2015). *Reduplication in Nigerian English*. Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto.

Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations in sociolinguistics on ethnographic approach*. Philadelphia: the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Holm, J. (1980). *Pidgins and creoles Volume 1, theory and structure*. Cambridge Language Surveys.

Igboanusi, H. (2008). Empowering Nigerian Pidgin: A challenge for status planning? World Englishes, 27(1), 68–82.

Ifechelobi, J. N. & Ifechelobi, C. U. (2015). Beyond barriers: The changing status of Nigerian pidgin. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 3(1), 208-216.

Koutchade, I. S. (2022). *British Journal of English Linguistics*, *8*(6), 21-33.

Onyejelem, D. O. & Onyejelem, P. O. (2020). The influence of Pidgin in Nigeria: Evidence from copula constructions in ICE-Nigeria. *Journal of Language Contact*, *13*, 351-388.

Osoba, J. B. (2014). The use of Nigerian pidgin in media adverts. *International Journal of English Linguistics* 4(2).

Roger, B., & Dendo, M. (2005). *A dictionary of Nigerian English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schiffrin, D. (1987). Discourse Markers. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Schiffrin, D. (1994). Making a list. *Discourse Processes, 17*, 377– 406.

Solomon, O. (2007). *The influence of Nigerian pidgin on the written English language of students of Command Secondary School, Kaduna*. An Unpublished M.A Thesis A.B.U Zaria.

Todd, L. (1974). *Pidgins and creoles*. London: Routledge.

Udoh, I., & Emmanuel, I. (2020). Nigerian languages and identity crises. *Language and Semiotic Studies*, *6* (3).

Ugot, M., & Ogundipe, A. (2011). Reduplication in Nigerian Pidgin: A versatile communication tool? *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, *8* (4), 227-233.

Ummulkhairi, H. (2015). *The impact of pidgin English on students' competence in Nigerian universities, the Department of Modern European Languages and Linguistics*, Faculty of Arts and Islamic studies, Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, pp. 9- 10.

Unachukwu, O. C. (2015). *Effects of pidgin English in Standard English usage among students in selected secondary schools in Eha-Amufu, Isi-Uzo L.G.A. of Enugu State*. Retrieved 20 January, 2022 from worldpopulationreview.com

Yaro, B. I. (2015). A lexico-semantic study of the language of advertisement in Pidgin English. Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, pp. 1-38.

Emmanuel A. Envoh, English language Unit, Department of General Studies, Isa Mustapha Agwai 1 Polytechnic, Lafia**.**
Email: emmanuelenvoh@gmail.com

Philip Chike Chukwunonso Aghadiuno, School of Communication Technology, Isa Mustapha Agwai 1 Polytechnic, Lafia**.**
Email: chike.aghadiuno@imap.edu.ng