

**A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF PIDGIN
EXPRESSIONS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF
FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LOKOJA, KOGI STATE.**

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Abstract

The study examines the sociolinguistic analysis of pidgin expressions among undergraduate students of Federal University, Lokoja. Specifically, the objective of the study is to determine the extent of pidgin usage among students of Federal University Lokoja Kogi State. It also establishes that pidgin expressions are meant for informal communication among the students and to examine the influence of Pidgin English on student's performance in the use of standard written English. The data for this research were gathered from primary source: undergraduate students of the Federal University, Lokoja. A total of one hundred students were selected at random for analysis. Participants were drawn from four different faculties of the institution namely: Sciences, Management Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences. The research design for this study focuses on societal rule and constraints which reveals that language choice determines the use of one's code rather than another in various situations. This hypothesis is concerned with how language choice is used to reveal values which are fundamental to speaking in various situations within the frame work of the university environment. Hymes remarks that ethnography of communication is useful for the description and explanation of the distribution of the means of communication. This approach added that the use of language in an environment such as the university conforms to norms of that environment (University) and societal appropriateness in the use of language is more important than grammatical correctness. This approach, chosen for this work is considered suitable because interactions in the selected university such as buying and sellers (both the illiterate and the students alike), who use pidgin as a code which is mutually intelligible to communication. Therefore, the study adopts the anthropological approach by Hymes as its theoretical frame work. The findings reveals that the number of male students' usage

of the pidgin expressions identified is higher than that of the females; both males and females used more pidgin expression terms for 'woman' than 'man', students between the ages of 16-25 use more pidgin expressions than those above that range of age and the student ethnic backgrounds are evident in the pidgin expressions they used. The study concludes that sociolinguistic factors such as ethnicity and religion influence language use of the students of the Federal University, Lokoja.

Introduction

The term 'pidgin' is used to refer to a language which developed in a situation where speakers of different language have a need to communicate but do not share a common language. However, the use of pidgin in the Nigerian society is important because different people of different linguistic backgrounds are involved in communication and need to understand one another. Interaction is sometimes achieved through code-mixing and code-switching of the languages to enhance communication.

The universality and diversity of speech has led to a significant inference that language is an immensely ancient heritage of the human race, whether or not all forms of speech are the historical outgrowth of a single pristine form. Communication among people who speak the same language is possible because they share the same common language, (Rajend et al. 2000). The expression of the complex communicative needs of people is enhanced by their use of language, which enables understanding among a people who share the same linguistic identity.

Sapir defines language as a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols" (6). Sapir stresses that language is the institution whereby human beings communicate ideas, emotions and desires as well as interact with each other by means of habitual oral, auditory, and arbitrary symbols. When individuals of different backgrounds are made to interact with each other, a simplified language derived from two or more languages is developed, and such resultant language is called pidgin. Pidgins are simplified languages made up of parts of two or more languages used as a communication tool between speakers, who do not have a common language, and which helps to sustain interaction in a community. Labov (36), one of the pioneers in Sociolinguistics, notes that code-switching takes place in individual utterances, and that speakers form and establish a pidgin language when two or more speakers do not speak a common language. In speech communities such as Lokoja, communication takes place in a unique way by code-switching and code-mixing between speakers of two or more languages, and Nigerian Pidgin is used especially by students to facilitate education and interaction. However, to be considered pidgin it must be stable and have norms of meaning, grammar and pronunciation. Some of its characteristics are: limited vocabulary; elimination of many grammatical devices- such as number and gender; lack of inflectional and derivational morphemes; lack of verbal inflectional; loss of prepositions and indicators of time, aspect and mood,

lack of locative prepositions and plural indicator, movement rules among others. It has been discovered in the 21st century, that most people especially students in various Nigerian tertiary institutions, find it easier to communicate with pidgin whenever they are in an informal setting. It is also important to mention that pidgin has been able to secure a place in the corporate world. People switch to pidgin in the middle of a formal conversation either to explain themselves better or to cite an instance to juxtapose the message they are trying to pass across. In Federal University, Lokoja, a typical example of a multilingual setting, people from different cultural backgrounds live together in a room, and communication has to take place. This set of people prefer to use pidgin as a means of communication whenever they engage in conversations in any informal environment because there is no standard English where you have to abide by the rules of concord, syntax, phonology, and semantics among others. In other words, they feel more convenient when they express themselves in pidgin because there is always no tendency of being careful not to break the rules of concord, syntax, grammar, among others.

Akande and Salami, assume that the urban characters of the university environment are strong factors influencing the students use and attitude to Nigeria Pidgin English (NPE). They hold that apart from their education, living within the university communities, the students are likely to enact more urban networks that are usually made up of multilingual and multicultural contents. It is noteworthy to emphasize that university communities have a large number of users of Nigeria Pidgin English. Basically, it could be argued that Nigerian Pidgin English plays a unifying role among its users, as it is the language of the educated and the uneducated, irrespective of their linguistic backgrounds. Akande(38) argues “it could be regarded as a marker of identity and solidarity. It is an inter-ethnic code available to Nigerians who have no other common language.

Statement of the Problem

Language is used for the purpose of communication between individuals. When a common language is lacking, communication becomes a problem. This study attempts to contribute to the existing literature on Nigerian pidgin in line with many researchers such as Adeyanju (1989), Todd (1974), Gani-Ikilama (2005) who observe that, Nigerian pidgin is spoken in market places, barracks, campuses, etc From the data collected, it is evident that students of Federal University Lokoja feel more comfortable whenever they are expressing themselves in Nigeria pidgin English. The study examines the degree of pidgin in use, the various types, the gender involved, and the cultural undertone.

Previous studies on Nigeria Pidgin English have focused on the origin and characteristics of Nigeria Pidgin English. Studies on how it performs its unifying roles among its users in a multilingual setting such as Federal University, Lokoja have not received adequate scholarly attention. Standard English, Broken English and non-indigenous language are spoken in the study area. The cosmopolitan nature

of Federal University, Lokoja has made Nigeria Pidgin English an additional language of learning and interaction. The scope of this study covers Federal University, Lokoja. It is in the light of this that this study investigates the extent to which students of Federal University, Lokoja, Kogi State make use of Nigeria Pidgin English along with other languages. This study seeks to investigate if there is any significant impact of code switching and mixing codes, and the extent of the use of Nigeria Pidgin English in the course of educational activities. The status of pidgin in Nigeria has contributed to the poor performance of students in English language and other subjects. There is always the tendency to pronounce English words wrongly: father instead of / fa:(r)/. Also students allow the entrenchment of pidgin lexical items into English sentences:

- (a) *me I don't know*. Instead of (b) *I do not know*. Since (a) was lifted from the sentence, (c) below, which is the pidgin version of the sentence (a). (C) *me a no know*.

Thus, due to this problem of expression, some undergraduates rather conceal wonderful ideas in their minds because of limited English vocabulary to express their ideas. These effects of pidgin are caused by three factors; the Socio-cultural background of students, peer group influence, and nonchalant attitude towards the English language. The inefficiency of some teachers also affects the interest of students towards studying and improving in the English language. If these students, who are likely to emerge as Nigeria's representatives in the global market, do not learn to confidently express themselves in the English language which is a global language, it is likely that this might impede their international transaction.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to carry out a sociolinguistic analysis of Nigeria Pidgin English expressions among undergraduate students of Federal University, Lokoja. Specifically, the objectives of the study include to:

- i. Determine the extent of pidgin usage among students of Federal University, Lokoja.
- ii. Establish that pidgin expression is a language meant for informal communication among the students of Federal University, Lokoja.
- iii. Examine the influence of Nigerian Pidgin English on students performance in the use of standard written English.

Literature Review

Pidgins

Pidgins are contact languages created out of a mixture of other languages used as a means of communication between speakers of different languages (Gani-Ikilama, 84). Pidgins have rudimentary grammars and restricted vocabulary serving as an auxiliary language. A pidgin develops when people are forced to develop a common means of communication especially due to the absence of a common lingua franca.

Pidgin languages exist in most multilingual communities as is the case with Nigerian Pidgin. Languages that have given rise to notable Pidgins are; English, French, Spanish, Zulu and Chinook (Akinluyi, 97).

The Concept of Nigeria Pidgins English

Pidgin is a variety of English which developed for practical purpose, such as trading, among group of people who have a lot of contact, but who did not know each other's language. Sociolinguistics describes pidgins as a marginal language, which arises to fulfill certain restricted functions among groups with no common language. Todd (1) defines pidgins as a marginal language, which arises to fulfill certain restricted communicative needs among people who do not share a common language." This means that pidgins are simple form of languages commonly used for limited communication between people with no common language and that, pidgins are more generally the result of any situation of language contact e.g. trade situations. Le Page (17) extends this idea by referring to the communicative act of a speaker on any given occasion as an "instant pidgin, since speakers in any situation will need to accommodate settings for speakers to negotiate a common set of meanings through the linguistic means available to them.

Bloomfield (474) claims that pidgins are "varieties whose grammar and vocabulary are very much reduced". He also added that, "The resultant language must be a native to none". To Bloomfield, pidgin is not an individual's own language, it is a simplified language that develops between two or more groups to meet their communicative needs. Hall (7) echoes this view many years later when he makes the following claim: "Two or more people use variety whose grammar and vocabulary are very much reduced in extent, and which is native to neither side. Such a language is a pidgin." Holmes (4-5) defines Pidgin as: "a reduced language that results from extended contacts between groups of people with no language in common, it evolves when they need some verbal communication perhaps for trade but no group hears the native language of any other group for social reasons that may include lack of trust or close contact". To Holmes pidgins have no native speakers, it is no one's first language but it is a contact language which occurs in trade contact, ethnic or refugee situation where participants need a functioning common language. The definitions of pidgins are many and varied, and as Traugot (99) points out, "despite the attempts to define the terms "Pidgins" and "Creoles" in homogenous ways, they have proved to defy such definitions. De Camp (27) too makes the following remarks:

There is no agreement on the definition of the group of languages called pidgins and creoles. Linguists all agree that there is such a group. That includes many languages and large number of speakers, and that pidgins and creoles studies have now become an important field within linguistics. Each of the definitions above tends to ignore or overlook certain important characteristics or potentials of pidgins. For example, those who stress the makeshift character of pidgins ignore the fact that

pidgins can develop to a considerable degree of stability and complexity. Those on the other hand, who focus on the reduction in the grammar and lexicon of pidgins ignore the development and stages of pidgins as they make certain assumptions about pidgins that; pidgins grow out of an initial non-intimate contact between speakers of different languages quick comprehension in the language is more highly valued than correctness or the differentiation of shades of meaning.

Origin of Pidgin

The origin of pidgin language dates far back into history. However, one can only speak of it with tendered evidence from around the Middle Ages, that is between A.D 500-1500. Hall (1966.25) puts it this way: the earliest pidgins which we have direct record are those which European crusaders and traders spoke in the eastern end of the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages. Another linguist, Valkhoff (1) observes that in the Middle Ages, commercial relations between the Romantic traders or seamen, Turks and Arabs in the eastern and southern Mediterranean gave rise to a kind of auxiliary or emergency language.

Elugbe and Omamor (1) explain the origin of pidgins thus: “the one fact about Pidgin language all over the world is that, it arises from contact situations. In particular such contact situations must be those in which the groups in contact have no common means of communication”.

Today, pidgins are becoming a mother tongue in some parts of Nigeria as seen in Delta State and Port-Harcourt (Spencer, 71).

Reinecke (64) reports that the resultant effects of such situations are the universal explanation of the origin of pidgin languages. According to him, the use of makeshift language is a universal phenomenon, to be witnessed wherever immigrants, invaders, tourist, sailors and traders, meet and communicate. A number of reasons may be proffered for this development. Firstly, they were brought together under a new situation for some purposes, and secondly, the attempt to start a form of verbal interactions must be seen as inevitable since we are not told that any of the groups of people suffers any form of speech disability. The importance of such emergent language can be seen from a utility view point. Therefore, it can be deduced that trade is one of the common pretexts for the occurrence and development of pidgins: the slave trade is a very glaring one.

Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE)

The development of pidgins in Nigeria can be traced back to the 16th century; it started among the mercantile palm oil trade in Calabar and other Nigerian coastal towns in the last quarter of the 18th century and developed as a contact language between participants in this trade. The contacts with the British through trade, colonial administration, as well as missionary activities also meant there were contact and the use of English. The colonial administrators, for instance were so eager to get to the natives that they did not mind if Nigerian Pidgin was a result of their efforts

to teach the English Language. According to Ayandele (339), an official in the colonial office once commented that “the earlier we can make English even if it must be “Pidgin English the common speech of Nigerians the better.”

Dating the pidgins to the 17th century, even to an earlier age it is a trade language. The development of pidgins is linked earlier to Nigerian history which came earlier as a result of urbanization. Mafeni (98) says that historically, Nigerian Pidgin which was introduced as a result of the early contact between the Europeans and Africans on the coast. The spread of Nigerian Pidgin has helped not only by factors mentioned above, but also in school system. As a result, among the mixed population in most tertiary institutions, pidgin is very was used much more outside the classroom as a result of relaxation and in informal situations such as in the market place, (Taiwo, 8). With time, Nigerians found pidgin very useful for communication with one another. Elugbe and Omamor (12) explain that; the different coastal groups in contact with the white visitors soon discovers that their means of communication with each other (even with absence of Europeans) since they had no language of their own. Therefore, appraising the evolutionary trend of Nigerian Pidgin, Mafeni (98) says: Nigerian Pidgin is essentially a product of the process of urbanization. While its origin lies historically in the early contacts between Europeans and Africans in the coast, its development and spread is a result of contacts between Africans. Taiwo (18) remarks as follows: The Niger Delta ...was inhabited by many ethnic groups each having its own language or dialect for communication between the people on the one hand and the various agencies –missionaries“ administrative staff, traders, had to be in some form of English. The situation gave rise to some form of ...Pidgin English.... Wardhaugh (20) buttresses the fact that, language is used in the society to meet the communication needs of people. To Wardhaugh, the development of pidgins in Africa due to the coming of Europeans has led to increased inter-ethnic interaction and also promotes trade. To Wardhaugh, pidgins are effective languages for communication. Also, Holmes (21) notes that the rapidly growing towns of Nigeria have increasingly become the melting pots of the many tribes and races which constitute Nigeria and pidgins seems to be today a widely spoken lingua franca, many towns and city dwellers being at least bilingual in pidgins and indigenous language. Nigerian Pidgin English has a Creole that is mother tongue in some parts of the country. According to Alabi (19) he says that, “Nigerian Pidgin English is also a mother tongue for a number of families” in certain areas and communities.

To Elugbe and Omamor (3), whatever our beliefs and convictions about the origin of pidgins based on European languages we must conclude that Nigerian Pidgin English arose out of contact between a Nigerian population and a visiting European group. Pidgins is a language which has affected lives of many Nigerians, especially those living in Zaria, Kaduna, Delta, Lagos, Benin, Warri, Sapele, and Port-Harcourt and so on. However, Nigerian Pidgin English is produced under socio historical circumstance; it is mostly in the urban areas that pidgins are spoken. The

grammar of Nigerian Pidgin consists of its lexicon, syntax, and phonology. In what follows, we review these areas as they exist in the literature.

The Nigerian Pidgin Lexicon

One of the criteria of a true Nigerian Pidgin which Hall (66) puts forward is that of a sharply used vocabulary. The vocabulary of a Nigerian Pidgin is indeed small compared to the English language, but an examination of what Nigerian Pidgin does with its vocabulary is necessary for proper assessment of its adequacy. Hall (23) compares: “so as to say anything that can be said in English. The implication is that there is no reduction in the overall semantic domains covered by a Pidgin English but merely in the number of items used to map them” If therefore, a given semantic field has to be covered by a few words rather than many, each word has to signify a wider range of phenomena. Akinluyi (77), gives some other examples in Nigerian Pidgin word “sabi” to know has the following meaning thus, it is based on context by the interlocutors a person gets to understand the meaning of what is communicated. Know a food item; as in “I sabi beans”

To recognize a food item; as in “I sabi rice” Have the technical know-how; as in “I sabi drive” Other Nigerian Pidgin English examples are:

Nigerian Pidgin English	Standard English
Fyne	lovely, beautiful, attractive, gorgeous
Spol	destroy, damage, deface, soil
Get	possess, have, own, obtain
Muve	Excuse

As a result of this characteristic, pidgins is said to hardly have synonyms; context therefore plays a vital role in disambiguating meaning.

Nigerian Pidgin Syntax

Pidgins have been described as being syntactically simpler than their source languages and Nigeria Pidgin is no exception that is why, it is easily used for interactions in the market between buyers and sellers. Mafeni (71) Elugbe and Omamor (91) among others have given some description of Nigeria Pidgin syntax. This section gives a brief description of the syntax of Nigerian Pidgin with their English translations to enable us see how to compare with English.

(a) Sentence structure:

According to Mafeni (71), Nigerian Pidgin has a fixed word order usually SVO and Nigerian Pidgin sentences are usually short and simple. e.g.

V - Chop (Eat)

VO - Chop de fud (Eat the food)

SVO - I bin chop de fud (He eat the food)

Sometimes, complex sentences occur in complex Nigerian Pidgin; for example.

“I no go go dai if yu no tel me wetin di man bin tok.” Meaning: “I will not go there if you don’t tell me what the man said”.

“I no con laik dai wai wai u con handle the tori” Meaning: “I don’t really like the way you handled the issue”.

Negation: Nigerian Pidgin uses the negative marker “No” and this may occur in the pre-verbal slot. e.g. kom (come) No com (don’t come) Dem no fit com (they can’t come)

(b) Plurality:

Omamor (87) holds that plurality in Nigerian Pidgin may be indicated in a number of ways.

- i) Proceeding the noun by appropriate adjective qualifiers such as “plenty, meni” (plenty, many) as in (I have many toys)
- ii) The use of “ dem” after the noun head as in
de toys dem (the toys)
- iii) No overt marker at all in which case plurality is determined contextually.

Toys no de fo market (There are no toys in the market).

According to Omamor and Elugbe (91) when definite reference is intended, plurality is commonly marked by the third person pronoun ‘dem’ occurring after the noun head which is itself preceded by the definite article ‘di’ (the or the demonstrative dis (this) and dat (that). e.g. di man dem (the men) dis pikin dem (these children) dat boi dem (that boys) dos geh dem (those girls)

Nigerian Pidgin Phonology

There is no uniform system of sounds pronunciation as far as Nigerian Pidgin is concerned although scholars like Agheyisi (71) and Schneider (66). Kisob (28) acknowledges that, “a pidgin differs in detail depending from where it is spoken” and also that; “It is influenced by local dialects”. According to Mühlhäusler (86), of all parts of grammar, those of pronunciation and phonology remain the least stable in stabilized pidgins. The researchers share this view and are of the opinion that, the reason for this instability is the existence of variety in the spoken form. It is difficult if not impossible to talk about the phonology of Nigerian Pidgin. This is because, as for Nigerian English, speakers of Nigerian Pidgin by and large bring into it the phonology of their first languages. Phonologically, therefore, this gives Nigerian Pidgin different varieties such that for example, while the average Nigerian may say / tʃɔp / for “chop” which means “to eat”, a Yoruba person may pronounce the same word as / ʃɔp / because the sound / tʃ / does not occur in Yoruba.

Theoretical Framework

The anthropological approach of ethnography of communication carried out by Hymes (74), which focuses on societal rules and constrains reveals that language choice determines the use of one code rather than another in various situations. According to Hymes, this hypothesis is concerned with how language choice is used to reveal values which are fundamental to speaking in various situations within the

framework of the University environment. Hymes remarks that ethnography of communication is useful for the description and explanation of the distribution of the means of communication. To Hymes, the use of language in an environment such as the University conforms to the norms of that environment (University) and societal appropriateness in the use of language is more important than grammatical correctness. This approach chosen for this work is considered suitable because, trade interactions in the selected academic environment such as buying and selling are carried out by buyers and sellers (both the illiterates and the educated alike), who use pidgin as a code which is mutually intelligible to communicate.

Therefore, the study adopts the anthropological approach by Hymes (74) as its theoretical framework. This hypothesis reveals that, the code used in the environment such as the University should conform to the norms of the environment.

Methodology

Survey research design was used for the study. This is to examine the sociolinguistic variation analysis of language used among undergraduate students of Federal University, Lokoja, Kogi State. It is an investigation in which sample of the population is studied and the selection was such that the sample is representative of the whole population. Information gathered should be able to generalize the whole population and thus useful for development and planning purposes (Okafor 61). Survey research design provides the framework for anticipating and taking decisions on the issues that will arise in the conduct of the research and the study is aimed at eliciting information that will enhance decision on an inquiry.

Federal University, Lokoja is the area for the study. The researchers recorded their conversations with the aid of audio tape recorder. The recorded conversations were later transcribed for analysis.

The transcribed data was analyzed in two ways: the identified expressions are categorized into different kinds of pidgin expressions and a tabular analysis identifying the different factors affecting the use of this expression such as: age, gender, ethnicity, etc. which contribute to diminishing students effort at mastering the writing of standard English and poor performance of students in the use of standard English amongst students of Federal University, Lokoja.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The transcribed data is analyzed in two ways: the identified expressions are categorized into different kinds of pidgin expressions. The second analysis is a tabular analysis identifying the different factors affecting the use of these expressions. The data for this study consists of 30 purposively selected pidgin words/expressions from the respondents out of the many heard. These pidgin expressions selected were categorized and presented in a tabular form followed by explanation on each of the table for analysis.

Table I: Categories of the pidgin expressions

Identified pidgin (non-standard expression)	Types of pidgin (Non-Standard expression)	Meaning
How far?	Pidgin	Hi
How bodi?	English pidgin	How are you doing
Wetin	English pidgin	What?
I no no	English pidgin	I don't know
I dey fine	English pidgin	I am fine
I no sabi	English pidgin	I don't understand
Wetin dey happen?	English pidgin	What is going on?
Wahala	English pidgin	Problem
Comot	English pidgin	Get out of here
Comot for road	English pidgin	Make way
Dem send you?	English pidgin	Hv you been sent to torment me?
Kilohaps	Yoruba + English	What is happening
Holy water	Religious term + code mix	Sexual encounter
You story get K- leg	English pidgin	Your story sounds suspect or exaggerated
Aash	Yoruba/code mix	Prostitute
Mugu	Hausa/code mix	Intelligent, wise
Maga	Slang	Misbehave
I wan chop	English pidgin	I want to eat
Come chop	English pidgin	Come and eat
Abeg no waste my time	English pidgin	Please don't waste my time
I dey go church	Pidgin + religious code	Am going to church
Make you no vex me	English pidgin	Don't upset me
One four three	English words	I love you
I no agree	English pidgin	I don't agree
Hommie, I wan go jack	English slang code mix with pidgin	Friend, I want to study
Abi?	English pidgin	Isn't it?
Na so?	English pidgin	Is that so?
Wayo	English pidgin	Trickery
Now now	English pidgin	Immediately
Area boys	English pidgin	Street smart young boys
God don butta my bread	English pidgin	God has answered my prayers

Table 2: Frequency table of the pidgin and the socio-linguistic factors affecting the use of pidgin

Pidgin-expression	No. of Times used	% of use	Age		Sex		Religious	Ethnicity	Class
			16-25	26-30	M	F			
How far?	4	5%	2	2	1	3	-		General
How bodi?	3	3.75%	1	2	2	1	-		General
Wetin?	3	3.75%	2	1	3	0			Business Studies student
I no no	8	10%	4	4	6	2			General
I dey fine	2	2.5%	2	0	1	1			General
I no sabi	2	2.5%	2	0	2	0		2	General
Wetin dey happen?	6	7.5%	4	2	5	1		6	Business faculty
Wahala	2	7.5%	2	0	2	0			Business faculty
Comot	1	1.25%	1	0	1	0			Business faculty
Comot for road	4	5%	3	1	3	1			Business faculty
Dem send you?	2	2.5%	2	0	1	1			General
Kilohaps	9	11.25%	9	0	7	2		9	General
Holy water	2	2.5%	2	0	0	2	1		Business studies
K- leg	1	1.25%	1	0	1	0			General
Ashi	3	3.75%	2	1	0	3			General
Mugu	2	2.5%	0	2	1	1		4	General
Maga	1	1.25%	1	0	0	1		1	General
Iwan chop	2	2.5%	1	1	1	1			Arts
Come chop	2	2.5%	1	1	1	1			sciences

Abeg	3	3.7%	2	1	2	1			ciences
I dey go church	1	1.25%	0	1	0	1	1		usiness student
One four three	02	2.5%	02	0	2	0			Sci-ences
I no gree	4	5%	3	1	3	1			Arts.
Hommie, I wan go jack	1	1.25%	0	1	1	0			General
Abi?	1	1.25%	0	1	1	0			usiness student
Na so?	2	2.5%	2	0	1	1		2	Sci-ences
Wayo	2	2.5%	1	1	1	1			Arts
Now now	2	2.5%	2	0	2	0	0	0	Science
Area boys	3	3.75%	2	1	3	0	0	0	General
Butta my bread	1	1.25%	0	1	0	1	0	0	General
Total Pidgin Frequency	80	100%	56/70%	24/30%	53/66.25%	27/33.75%	02/2.5%	7/33.8%	

Discussions of Findings

Table 2 reveals that the number of male students' usage of pidgin identified is higher than that of the females. Data gathered from their conversation has revealed that males use more derogatory words than females. The study also shows that there are many pidgin terms that are commonly used by undergraduate students. The males use the pidgin expressions about 53 times which is 66.25% while the females use them 27 times -33.75% thus, indicating that gender can also affect the use of pidgin by the students. This shows that pidgin expressions have some implications such as: diminishing students' effort at mastering the writing of Standard English and poor performance of students on the use of Standard English amongst students of Federal University, Lokoja.

Apart from gender, the study shows the age differences in the use of slang and pidgin among the students. The statistics shows that 70% of the pidgin used during the study were used by students in the age category of 16-25, while that of 26 and above have 30% of usage. It means students between the ages of 16-25 use pidgin more than those between ages 25 and above. The study shows that pidgin

expressions are used for informal communication amongst the students of Federal University, Lokoja.

Thus, it can be said that as the age increases the use of pidgin decreases. These findings support the claim by de Klerk and Bembe who argued that pidgins (non Standard English) are expected to be used more by young youth than older youth. Older youths have shown to be more conservative in their use of variables than younger age groups. This shows that age can also affect students' choice and use of pidgin in their conversations.

It is also evident from table two that though some of the slangs and pidgin expressions are used generally by all the students from the different faculties under study, there are some pidgin expressions that are specific to a particular faculty as a form of the class factor. For instance, the data presented show faculties of Arts, Management and Sciences have some specific expressions (pidgin word) that are mostly peculiar to only those in that faculty (class of students) which makes it possible for them to exclude outsiders in their conversation. The students of Business Studies, though the use of some specific pidgin expression and in communicating among themselves, their pidgin expressions are not as technical as those of the three faculties mentioned. From this, it can be argued that pidgin can be used according to the class (area of specialization) and class can also affect the variety of pidgin one chooses to use in communication.

Ethnicity is another sociolinguistic factor that affects the use of pidgin. From the study, words and expression from the students ethnic backgrounds are evident in the pidgin used by these students. About 33.75% of words from their native languages were incorporated into the slang and pidgin of the students. However, despite its presence the number is too minimal to grossly affect intelligibility of the entire communication process as used by the students of Federal University, Lokoja.

Religion is also a significant factor that can influence the use of pidgin but in this study the number of occurrence in usage 2.5% is insignificant as such has no much impact on the use of pidgin by the students of Federal University, Lokoja.

The study examined a sociolinguistic analysis of pidgin expressions among undergraduate students of Federal University, Lokoja Kogi State. The aim of this study was to examine the use of pidgin expressions among students during communication. Specifically, the objective of the study was to determine the extent of pidgin usage among students of Federal University, Lokoja; to establish that pidgin expressions are language choice meant for informal communication among the students of Federal University, Lokoja and to examine the influence of Nigeria Pidgin English on students' performance in the use of standard written English. The data for this research were got from primary source: undergraduate students of the Federal University Lokoja. A total of one hundred students were selected at random for analysis. Participants were drawn from the four different faculties of the institution-

Sciences, Management Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences. The study findings revealed that the number of male students' usage of the pidgin expressions identified is higher than that of the females, students between the ages of 16-25 use more pidgin expressions than those above that range of age and our ethnic background are evident in the pidgin expressions used by selected students. It is clear that male and female usage of pidgin differ. This difference occurs mostly in vocabulary use, voice and tone, syntactic structure and style of using language. In conclusion, sex marks the distinction between women and men as a result of their biological, physical and genetic differences. Gender roles are set by convention and other social, economic, political and cultural factors. Bearing these in mind, it can be said that the reason behind this is the gender roles between male and female undergraduate students. Male's and female's speech differs because both gender are brought up differently therefore, male and female have different roles in the society. It should be pointed out that the difference are still endless for researchers to find out more explicit and detailed difference between male and female in their way of expressions.

Conclusion

Multilingualism in Nigeria involves not only the indigenous languages, but also the major groups of non-Nigerian languages. The first group comprises English language and Nigeria Pidgin, which is the deviation contact between English and the indigenous language. The strength of multilingualism is in the flexibility that shows for greater participation in social and economic process of different linguistic groups. This is a situation in Lokoja; it shows the extent to which interactions are made possible. The relevance of this concept to this research work lies in its mobility as one of the strategies to facilitate communication. This study discovered that class is an important sociolinguistic variable affecting the use of pidgin expressions by the students. It showed that different classes had some peculiar pidgin expressions for certain situations. Other sociolinguistic factors that affect the students' use of pidgin expressions are age and gender. It was revealed that students within the age of 16-25 use more slang and pidgin irrespective of how many years they have spent in the university. Some pidgin expressions were peculiar to a particular gender. It served as a code amongst them. However, the research showed that amongst the students of Federal University, Lokoja, ethnicity and religion do not so much influence their use of pidgin.

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