

The Influence of the Nigerian Pidgin English on Eha-Amufu Secondary School Students' Usage of the Standard English

Ogechi Chiamaka Unachukwu, Goodluck C. Kadiri*, and Amaka Grace Nwuche

Department of English and Literary Studies University of Nigeria, Nsukka Enugu State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: Goodluck C. Kadiri, E-mail: goodluck.kadiri@unn.edu.ng

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ABSTRACT

The use of Pidgin English in the Nigerian context has gone beyond verbal communication to become more of a mode of behaviour as its expression has moved from informal conversation to formal situations. The above scenario necessitated this study which investigates Eha-Amufu secondary school students' usage of the Standard English in view of the use of the Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE). The study sets to find out what informs the usage and the extent the Nigerian Pidgin English has affected the use of the Standard English of these students using the affective filter hypothesis from Stephen Krashen's 2003 Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory. Using the questionnaire and essay writing as research instruments, data were collected from a sample of 200 students and willing teachers from four selected secondary schools in Eha-Amufu. Findings reveal that the use of the Nigerian Pidgin English is traceable to homes and peer group influence and has grossly affected the students' Standard English usage. The finding that students do not use Nigerian Pidgin English in their written essays was largely contradicted by the avalanche of the Nigerian Pidgin English expressions found in the written essays of the students which also reveal its adverse effect on the Standard English both in spelling and contextual usage. This research, therefore, concludes that a deliberate and conscious effort at instilling in the minds of Eha-Amufu students the knowledge of the adverse effect of NPE usage on their academic performance and the danger of its persistent use will go a long way in mitigating the adverse effects of Nigerian Pidgin English usage on the Standard English usage among them.

Key words: Standard English; Nigerian Pidgin English; Eha-Amufu; Students' Performance; Multilingual

INTRODUCTION

Language in multilingual societies such as Nigeria has always been a matter of concern to educators, educational planners and parents especially with regard to its appropriate use in communication. The English language is the medium of instruction in all Nigerian educational institutions at all levels. This is the basis for Olaore's (1992, p. 21) comments that in the country's language policy, the fact that for a long time to come, English will continue to play a prominent role in the socio-economic and political development in Nigeria as the language of administration, politics, industry, education, science and technology is of paramount importance.

The English language is the only language used for all forms of official transaction. Despite the central role the English language has been playing in communication process in Nigeria, the language excludes the majority of uneducated Nigerians who live in rural communities. Some Nigerian communities have more than six distinct but mutually unintelligible languages. This makes communication among neighbours difficult. The convolutions in the Nigerian

linguistics ecology as Otagburuagu, Emeka (1999, p. 99) notes, has made the use of the Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE henceforth) a more universal and inconclusive language, inevitable in both formal and informal domains.

Tracing the history of Pidgin English, Quirk et al (1985, p. 28) pointed out that Pidgin historically began as simply a language marked by traditional interference used chiefly by the prosperous and privileged section of a community represents by the unskilled and illiterate class of the society. This situation, however, is not so with the Nigerian Pidgin. Studies have shown that the Nigerian Pidgin began as an English-based Pidgin and later metamorphosed into various forms and patterns in its usage, (Obiechina, 1984; Elugbe, 1995 and Egbokhare, 2001). The NPE is seen as a version of English and ethnic Nigerian languages spoken as a kind of Lingua Franca across the country especially among students. In an attempt to define Nigerian Pidgin English, Elugbe and Omamur (1991), see it as some kind of a marginal language that arises to fulfil specific communication needs in a well-defined circumstance. Kperogi (2014) further

describes Pidgin as a technical term in linguistics that refers to a “contact” or “trade” language that emerged from the fusion of foreign, usually European language and indigenous, usually non-European languages. Here, the European language provided most of the vocabulary and the indigenous languages produce the structure of the language. The cultural language which the language emanates from has far-reaching influences on its predominant usage as is the case with the Nigerian Pidgin English. Its variation, no doubt is not unconnected with the culture of its users. It is in the light of this that Abdullah – Idiagbom (2010) quoting Brooks, N. (1969) posits that it is through the magic of language that man comes eventually to understand to an impressive degree the environment to which he lives and still more surprising, gains an insight into his own nature and his own condition.

The teachers and students are victim of these observations about the NPE. And perhaps the cultural influence of the native language on the teacher is largely reflected on the students since no student is believed to be greater than his/her teacher. In view of this, Akujobi and Chukwu (2012, p. 57) say that the quality of English used in the classroom is such that all pupils are to a serious disadvantage. It cannot be doubted that thousands of the most gifted are unable to further their education because they were not taught well the language in which they were examined. They further point out that according to the canons of the discipline for language pedagogy, the more the difference between the system of the target language, the more difficult learning invariably becomes and the smaller the difference, the easier the learning. The above assertion gives credence to the difficulty faced by students who grew up in an environment where native language is widely used than the Standard English in teaching and learning. This will make their learning of the Standard English a herculean task. Students’ daily use of their native language in communication within and outside the school has further enhanced the use of Nigerian Pidgin which is derived from a blend of the morphology of the native language and the syntax of the Standard English in its usage. It is against this background that this study attempts to explore what the Nigerian Pidgin English has done on Eha-Amufu secondary school students’ usage of the Standard English.

It is an established fact that Pidgin English exists in Nigeria which linguists call the Nigerian Pidgin English and that studies have been carried out on its effects on Standard English (Oko, 2003; Agbo, 2008) among others. The researchers observe that no special attention has been given to assess the level of the damage done on Eha-Amufu students’ use of the Standard English by constant use of the Nigeria Pidgin English. The problem which this research therefore seeks to investigate is the extent to which Pidgin English has affected the use of the Standard English among students in selected secondary schools in Eha-Amufu, Isi-Uzo L.G.A. of Enugu State.

The notion ‘Standard English’ is somewhat a direct and deliberate invention by the society to create a class and standard for a language. Standardization refers to the process by which a language has been codified in some way. The process usually involves the development of such things as gram-

mar, spelling book, dictionaries and possibly a literature (Wardhaugh, 2010, p. 31). Based on this, Standard English is defined by Trugill (1995, pp. 5-6) as that variety of English which is normally taught in schools and to non-native speakers learning the language. It is also the variety which is normally spoken by educated people and used in news broadcasts and other similar situations. For the purpose of this work, what has been accepted as the Standard English in Nigeria is a rendition devoid of native idioms or loan words from Nigerian dialects. It agrees with the rules of the English syntax and is also grammatical. Any usage either in writing or speech that deviates from the rules of the language is not standard. It encompasses grammar, vocabulary and spelling.

The aim of this study is to investigate the level of damage done on Eha-Amufu students’ use of the Standard English. Specifically, the study tends to:

1. Find out the extent of the Nigerian Pidgin English usage among secondary schools in Eha-Amufu.
2. Determine the factors that inform students’ usage of NPE in secondary schools in Eha-Amufu.
3. Ascertain the extent of harm done by Pidgin English on the written works of secondary school students in Eha-Amufu.
4. Find out ways to mitigate the effects of NPE on Standard English usage among secondary schools students in Eha-Amufu.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Research in linguistics and language learning and usage has always reflected other current events in the world. The history of linguistics and language learning are replete with accounts of teachers and applied linguistics making great efforts to unravel the complex question of language teaching and learning as well as language use. While some are interested in the essence of language as a phenomenon, others are interested in how it could be taught, learnt, used and categorized. Amao (2012) remarks that pidgin is not just some “distorted” or “bastardized” form of language, as some would think, and which perhaps makes them refer to it as broken, but that Pidgin is a complete language in its own right. For him, Nigeria’s multi-lingual background provides a veritable ground for the emergence of national language. Another level at which Nigerian Pidgin registers its way is the Nigerian music scene particularly with the emerging Naija Pop Culture. In support of this assertion by Amao, Fasan (2011) notes that Nigerian Pidgin English is a predominant language of expression and a form of solidarity or mark of identity among the various multi-ethnic groups of young people who crave to create effective urban culture in their respective locations. It is also acknowledged as a formidable stride in the recreation of Nigerian and African socio-cultural identity. This level of prominence carries over into the religious terrain in Nigeria as well as into the Nigerian film-making and music industry where the language enjoys unrestricted use, mirroring the way of life of Nigerian people. The foregoing serves to highlight the perceived and observable place of NPE in contemporary Nigerian society. The implication of this is that since enough research work that is commensurate

with the increasing growth and influence associated with the language is being carried out, Nigerian Pidgin English may well receive more audience from the government and secure a better place in Nigeria's language policy in the near future. In support of this, Balogun (2013) observes that Nigerian Pidgin English is a fully developed language with its own rich lexico-semantics and syntax, which has evolved like any other language through contact and modification. The paper points out that Nigerian Pidgin English is not an inferior language, or a plague-ridden linguistics system when compared to other well-described languages of the world. Rather, it is a variety that serves broad spectrum of Nigerian inhabitants, whose divergence transcends ethnic, religious and class boundaries. Given the crucial inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic communicative functions of Nigerian pidgin in various social strata of the people's life, he suggests that Nigerian pidgin should be given official recognition.

On the other hand, Oko (2003) observes that the Nigerian Pidgin English has effects on students' performance in English language in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The poor performance in English Language by the students in secondary schools is due mainly to the use of the Nigerian Pidgin English in oral and written communication. This researcher recommends that Nigerian Pidgin English should not be spoken side by side with the Standard English but be used in informal situations since it is not recognized as a medium of instruction.

The studies above show that many studies have been carried out in favour and against the Nigerian Pidgin English on its influence on the usage of the Standard English with little or no interest in any linguistic theory to support their cases. The present study is different from all of them because it focuses on the influence of NPE on Eha-Amufu students' performance in the use of the Standard English using Stephen Krashen's Affective filter hypothesis found in his Second Language Acquisition Theory.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is hinged on Stephen Krashen's 2003 Second Language Acquisition Theory. Krashen's theory of second language acquisition was refined over a period of time and is presented among other works in Krashen, Stephen (1981, 1982, 1985, 1989, and 2003) and Krashen, Stephen & Terrell (1983). The theory consists of five basic hypotheses: the Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis, the Monitor Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis, and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. For the sake of this work, the Affective Filter Hypothesis is used.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis

There are some affective factors in language learning that are like a filter which filtrates the amount of input in learners' brains. People with high affective filter will lower their intake whereas people with low affective filter allow more input into their Language Acquisition Device (LAD). Krashen argues that people acquire second languages only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are

low enough to allow the input 'in'. In his theory, the affective factors include motivation, attitude, anxiety, and self-confidence. His main viewpoints are as follows:

- A raised affective filter can block input from reaching LAD.
- A lowered affective filter allows the input to "strike deeper" and be acquired.
- The affective filter is responsible for individual variation in SLA.

Affective factors are seen to play an important role in acquiring a second language. Comprehensible input may not be utilized by L2 acquirers if there is a "mental block" that prevents them from fully profiting from it. The affective filter acts as a barrier to acquisition. The filter is up when the acquirer is unmotivated, lacking in confidence, or concerned with failure. The filter is down when the acquirer is not anxious and is trying to become a member of the group speaking.

The Affective Filter hypothesis, according to Krashen, Stephen (1982, p. 31), captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their Affective Filters. Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong Affective Filter – even if they understand the message, the input will not reach that part of the brain responsible for second language acquisition, or the language acquisition device. This is why most students resort to the use of Pidgin English. Those with attitudes more conducive to second language acquisition will not only seek and obtain more input, they will also have a lower or weaker filter. They will be more open to the input, and it will strike 'deeper'. He also points out that the Affective Filter Hypothesis can help explain why a certain student of a second language who receives a great deal of comprehensible input still does not reach a native-like competence. It is due to the high Affective Filter that prevents the input from reaching the language acquisition device. Put simply, for this type of an acquirer, input does not become intake (intake is defined as the input that reached the language acquisition device).

METHODOLOGY

This work adopted a descriptive research design. This design is considered suitable since this study seeks information to find out the extent of the damage done on Eha-Amufu students' use of the Standard English by the Nigerian Pidgin English with a view to suggesting solutions to the existing problem. The major motivation for this work is the relative poor performance in English of students these researchers have taught the English language in Eha-Amufu. This study was carried out in selected secondary schools in Eha-Amufu in Isi-Uzo L.G.A. of Enugu State. The population of this study is 200 SS3 students and all willing teachers drawn from the selected secondary schools. This research also used multiple purposive sampling techniques. This is to say that there was a mini grouping of the secondary schools because of the geographical location of schools in Eha-Amufu. They were

grouped thus: Eha-Ulo has six secondary schools; Eha-Agu has four secondary schools while Eha-Ohuala has one secondary school. Out of the six secondary schools in Eha-Ulo, four have SS3 students, so two were selected. Two schools out of four in Eha-Agu have SS3 students, one was selected. The only secondary school in Eha-Ohuala was used as well.

The schools are:

i. Eha-Ulo:

1. Community Secondary School, Umuhu Eha-Amufu = School A
2. Union Secondary School, Eha-Amufu = School B

ii. Eha-Agu:

1. St John's Secondary School, Agu-Amede Eha-Amufu = School C

iii. Eha-Ohuala:

1. Community Secondary School, Eha-Ohuala Eha-Amufu = School D

Approximate number of SS3 students in the schools is as follows:

School A: 108 students

School B: 100 students

School C: 50 students

School D: 103 students

55 students were sampled from Schools A, B and D while 35 students were sampled from School C. 200 students were sampled in all. This is because this number represents the view of students. All willing teachers were sampled in the selected schools. The instruments used for data collection in this research were questionnaires and students' written essays. The school examination scripts of the students were examined to know the extent the constant use of NPE in communication has affected their writing ability. The questionnaire survey was administered to both students and teachers. The analysis was demonstrated with tables using SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Science. There are four criteria for the measurement of performance in writing as stipulated by WAEC. These are content, expression, organization and mechanical accuracy. An essay is said to be good if it scores high in all of the above. The school examination scripts were graded. In the process, the presence and/ or impact of NPE in the students' writings were identified. A frequency count and description of the Pidgin usages provided the data for this study and showed whether or not Pidgin usages affect Standard English usages.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The results from the analysis of data were presented in tables showing frequencies and percentages with charts for vivid illustration of results. It also contains the discussion and answers to the research questions raised in this research. Out of a total of 200 copies of questionnaire distributed to students, 192 were returned, giving 96% return rate while all willing teachers in the schools were sampled.

The extent of NPE's usage among students in secondary schools in eha-amufu and what informs its usage

Figure 1 as well as Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 as indicated below provided the extent of NPE's usage among these students.

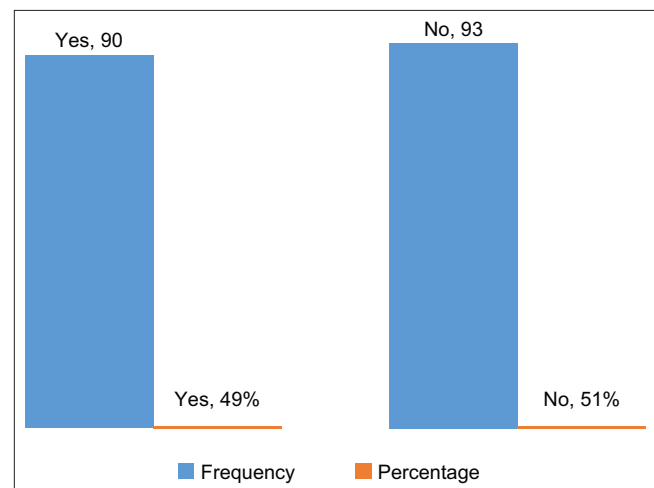


Figure 1. Distribution of responses showing respondents' disposition to speaking Pidgin English

Table 1. Distribution of responses showing demographic characteristics of respondents (students)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
7-10 years	-	0%
11-14 years	6	3%
15-18 years	153	80%
Above 18 years	33	17%
Total	192	100
Sex		
Male	86	45%
Female	106	55%
Total	192	100

The result in Table 1 above shows preponderance of respondents between the ages of 15-18 years (80%). This is an obvious fact because students in SS3 are expected to fall within that age bracket having spent 6 years in their primary education and another 6 years in secondary education added to the age of enrolment into any school (i.e. between 4-6 years). This is followed by respondents above 18 years (17%). These are likely the categories of students that started school late. Lastly, respondents between ages 11-14 years recorded 6 (3%) leaving those between 7-10 years with no response at all. On the sex distribution of respondents, the result shows that there are more female respondents 106 (55%) when compared to their male counterpart with 86 (45%) as indicated in Table 1 above.

There is a slight margin between respondents that claim to have ever spoken Nigerian Pidgin English and those that say "No" (i.e. they don't speak Nigerian Pidgin English). From the result (see Figure 1), 51% of the respondents claim they don't speak NPE while 49% say they do speak NPE. The result shows an average response between respondents that speak NPE and respondents that do not speak Pidgin NPE. The tendencies to speak or not to speak Nigerian Pidgin English can be traced to the kind of home and family background each child grew up from. This, to a large extent,

Table 2. Distribution of responses showing the extent to which respondents use the Nigerian Pidgin English

S/N	Variable	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
1	I use NPE with my class mates.	31 (16%)	47 (24%)	12 (6%)	49 (26%)	53 (28%)	192 (100%)
2	I use NPE during class activities.	10 (5%)	13 (7%)	12 (6%)	47 (24%)	110 (58%)	192 (100%)
3	I use NPE with some of my Teachers.	8 (4%)	21 (11%)	10 (5%)	43 (22%)	110 (58%)	192 (100%)
4	I use NPE in writing to my Classmates.	14 (7%)	19 (10%)	13 (7%)	45 (23%)	101 (53%)	192 (100%)
5	Some of my Teachers use NPE to teach.	11 (6%)	19 (10%)	15 (8%)	35 (18%)	112 (58%)	192 (100%)
6	I use NPE at home.	53 (28%)	65 (34%)	15 (8%)	27 (14%)	30 (16%)	192 (100%)

Table 3. Distribution of responses (from open-ended question 5) showing other areas where respondents use the Nigerian Pidgin English

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	In the market	58	45%
2	At Church	32	25%
3	At Playing ground	16	12%
4	Among peer group	7	5%
5	At social gathering	4	3%
6	Among relatives	2	1.5%
7	Social media	11	8.5%
	Total	130	100

predisposes them to gain mastery in speaking a particular language.

From the result in Table 2 on the extent to which respondents use the Nigerian Pidgin English in selected schools in Eha-Amufu, there is a preponderance of the respondents that use NPE at home as indicated by 118 (62%) respondents (i.e. SA+A).

However, the other responses show that none of the respondents agree to the statement indicated as most of the responses were largely negative (i.e. addition of D+SD). More specifically among these responses, majority of the respondents (157 representing 82%) claim they do not use NPE during class activities; while 153 (80%) say they do not use NPE with their teachers. Also, equal number of respondents (76%) claim they do not use NPE in writing and that some of their teachers do not use NPE to teach. At the bottom of the table are 102 respondents (54%) who claim they do not use NPE with their classmates.

From the result in Table 3 on other areas where respondents use the Nigerian Pidgin English, those who use it in the market ranked highest with 45%. This is followed by those who use it in the church (25%), at playing ground (12%) and social media (8.5%). This shows the places these students interact more using NPE and this complements the earlier results in Tables 2 and 3 above.

From the result in Table 4 on the factors that determine respondents' usage of the Nigerian Pidgin English in selected Schools in Eha-Amufu, those who enjoy speaking NPE with their friends ranked highest in the affirmative responses (i.e. SA + A) with 103 (53%). The other response on the affirmative were those who claim that NPE is easier to learn than the Standard English (101 representing 53%)

of the respondents. However, the remaining responses were on the negative in respect to the statement posed to the respondents (i.e. D + SD). On the top of this category of responses are those who claim that their parents do not encourage them to speak NPE (181 representing 94% of the respondents). This is followed by respondents who say that their teachers do not encourage them to speak it as well (174 representing 90%). Also, 160 respondents (84%) say they do not prefer NPE to Standard English while equal number of respondents (129) representing 67% say that the Nigerian Pidgin English conveys what they want to say better than Standard English even though it is prohibited in their schools.

The effects of the Nigerian Pidgin English on the written essays of secondary school students in Eha-Amufu

Tables 5 and 6 below indicate responses from the students showing the extent of harm done by the Nigerian Pidgin English on their academics and the distribution of scores obtained by these students in their written essays.

From the result in table 5 on the extent of harm done by NPE on students' academics, none of the respondents agree to the statements indicated as each of their responses to the statements were largely negative (i.e. D + SD) as indicated above.

More significantly, there was a preponderance of response from the respondents (170 representing 88%) claiming that they do not use NPE sometimes in writing assignments. This is followed by those who claim they can write a full page of essay or letter writing without using NPE (164 representing 85%). Also, 155 respondents (80%) claim that their spelling is not affected by NPE; even as 144 (77%) deny that they rarely use NPE in writing assignments. At the bottom of the table are respondents who deny the fact that they use the Nigerian Pidgin English unknowingly in examination (145 representing 75%) and those who say that their spoken English is not affected by the Nigerian Pidgin English (139 representing 72%) as indicated in the result.

Using a benchmark of 40% and above as pass mark, the result in Table 6 above indicates that only an abysmal 19% of the students passed English Essay. The remaining 81% (140 out of 171) students failed in their essay as a result of deficiencies in content, organization, mechanical accuracy and expression. More specifically, out of the 19% that passed, 10% scored between 40 – 49%; 4% each recorded between

Table 4. Distribution of responses showing factors that determine respondents' usage of the Nigerian Pidgin English

S/N	Variable	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
1	I enjoy speaking NPE with my friends.	41 (21%)	62 (32%)	15 (8%)	34 (18%)	39 (21%)	192 (100%)
2	I prefer NPE to Standard English.	14 (7%)	9 (5%)	8 (4%)	40 (21%)	120 (63%)	192 (100%)
3	NPE is easier to learn than Standard English.	51 (27%)	50 (26%)	7 (4%)	35 (18%)	49 (25%)	192 (100%)
4	NPE is not prohibited in my school.	25 (13%)	28 (15%)	10 (5%)	53 (28%)	76 (39%)	192 (100%)
5	NPE conveys what I want to say better than Standard English.	21 (11%)	32 (17%)	10 (5%)	46 (24%)	83 (43%)	192 (100%)
6	My parents encourage me to use NPE.	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	7 (4%)	44 (23%)	137 (71%)	192 (100%)
7	My Teachers encourage me to use NPE.	9 (5%)	1 (0.5%)	8 (4%)	35 (18%)	139 (72.5%)	192 (100%)

Table 5. Distribution of responses showing the extent of harm done by the Nigerian Pidgin English on students' writing

S/N	Variable	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
1	I sometimes use Nigerian Pidgin English in writing assignments.	8 (4%)	7 (4%)	7 (4%)	44 (23%)	126 (65%)	192 (100%)
2	I cannot write a full page in essay without using Nigerian Pidgin English.	12 (6%)	9 (5%)	7 (4%)	32 (17%)	132 (68%)	192 (100%)
3	I rarely use NPE in writing assignments.	16 (8%)	14 (7%)	16 (8%)	45 (23%)	99 (54%)	192 (100%)
4	My spelling has been affected by NPE.	9 (5%)	15 (8%)	13 (7%)	46 (24%)	109 (56%)	192 (100%)
5	NPE has affected my spoken English such that I cannot end a conversation without using Pidgin.	17 (9%)	22 (12%)	14 (7%)	49 (26%)	90 (46%)	192 (100%)
6	I use NPE in Examination unknowingly.	9 (5%)	28 (15%)	9 (5%)	31 (16%)	114 (59%)	192 (100%)

Table 6. Distribution of scores showing students' performance in essay from the sampled respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
(F) Below 0-39%	140	81%
(D) Between 40-49%	17	10%
(C) Between 50-59%	6	4%
(B) Between 60-69%	6	4%
(A) 70% and Above	2	1%
Total	171	100

50 – 59% and 60 – 69% respectively leaving the remaining 1% of the students scoring above 70% (excellent) in the essay writing

Ways to mitigate the effects of the Nigerian Pidgin English on Standard English usage among secondary school students in Eha-Amufu

Table 7 below shows a distribution of responses from sampled teachers on how to mitigate the adverse effects of the Nigerian Pidgin English on Standard English usage among their students.

From the result in Table 7 above on the ways to mitigate the adverse effect of the Nigerian Pidgin English on Standard English usage given by teachers from the selected schools, all the statements posed to the teachers received an affirmative response except that on reviewing Nigeria's educational curriculum to accommodate NPE which received a greater negative response (37 representing 79%).

More specifically on statements that received positive response, most teachers (43 representing 94%) believe that

parents should be made to know the negative effects of their children using the Nigerian Pidgin English as against Standard English; while 43 (93%) respondents share the view that there should be regular seminar and workshop for teachers on effective use of Standard English. Also, 37 (91%) respondents say that the Nigerian Pidgin English should be prohibited in Nigerian schools while 41 (89%) respondents agree with the fact that students should be made to know the difference between Standard colloquialism and NPE.

Lastly, 38 (84%) respondents say that students should be made to pay fine each time they use the Nigerian Pidgin English so as to help mitigate the adverse effect of its usage on Standard English.

Summary of Findings

During the investigation to find out the extent to which NPE has affected the use of Standard English among students in Eha-Amufu, the study found out the extent of NPE usage, the factors that inform students' usage, the extent of harm done on their use of the Standard English and outlined some ways to mitigate these effects. The findings from this study reveal that students' use of the Nigerian Pidgin English is traceable to their homes. They use it often at home (as indicated by 118 respondents representing 62%). Their responses in other statements in Table 2 show that they rarely use NPE in other areas such as with classmates, during class activities and with some teachers. Students use NPE more at home or outside school activities like in the market and in the church (see Table 3) than during school activities. Also, from the results in their

Table 7. Distribution of responses from the teachers showing ways to mitigate the adverse effect of the Nigerian Pidgin English on Standard English usage

S/N	Variable	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
1	NPE should be prohibited in Nigerian schools.	26 (57%)	11 (24%)	3 (7%)	4 (9%)	2 (3%)	46 (100%)
2	There should be regular seminar and workshop to train teachers on effective usage of standard English.	25 (54%)	18 (39%)	- (0%)	- (0%)	3 (7%)	46 (100%)
3	Parents should be made to know the negative effect of NPE on students' academic performance.	20 (44%)	23 (50%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	46 (100%)
4	Students should be made to pay fine for speaking NPE in class.	13 (30%)	25 (54%)	5 (11%)	1 (2%)	2 (3%)	46 (100%)
5	Nigerian's educational curriculum should be reviewed to accommodate NPE as a style of writing.	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	8 (17%)	29 (62%)	46 (100%)
6	Students should be made to know the difference between standard colloquialism and Nigerian Pidgin English.	19 (41%)	22 (48%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	3 (7%)	46 (100%)

written essays in Table 6, it has affected the writing style of students. This finding contradicted the result in Table 5 which shows the response on the extent of harm done by NPE on students' academic performance. All respondents disagreed with these researchers that the Nigerian Pidgin English has an adverse effect on their use of the Standard English. But when given a simple essay on 'How I Spent My Last Holiday', the effects were quite obvious. This corroborates with the assertion that Pidgin is a fundamental simpler form of communication and that the grammar and phonology are usually as simple as possible consisting of uncomplicated grammatical structure, reduction of syllabus codas and reduction of consonant cluster, Wilson et al (2013, pp. 125-126).

On the factors that determine their usage of NPE, this study found that most of the respondents (53%) enjoy using NPE (see Table 4), even though a greater percentage (84%) denied they prefer using the Nigerian Pidgin English when compared to Standard English usage. There appear to be some form of contradiction in these statements because one cannot claim to prefer what he/she does not enjoy using. More respondents (67%) claim that NPE conveys what they want to say better than the Standard English. This agrees with what Balogun (2013, p. 95) found out. According to him, the Nigerian Pidgin English serves as a convenient form of communication in reaching targeted audience in the informal setting.

It has been established that Pidgin is a simplified language and its constant use results in the inability of students to make a complete sentence and spell a word correctly in the Standard English. This has been a major problem that has always resulted in mass failure in the English Language in WAEC as seen in the findings recorded in Table 7, even though the sampled students in this study claim that NPE has not affected their written and spoken English in any way (see Table 5). However, confirmatory findings from the marked scripts of the students show a preponderance of indiscriminate use of NPE expressions in their work. Below are some examples of notable spelling and grammatical errors found in their essay scripts.

Wrongly used	Corrected one
Beral	Burial
No	Know
Privelege	Privilege
Restorant	Restaurant
No be there I dey? I was dear some weeks	I was there for some weeks
Som weeks	Some weeks
When I rich there	When I got there
Inmidetely I rich there	Immediately I got there
I'm happy the time I here message	I was happy when I got the message
I am hearing it in my ear now now	I just heard it
I traveled to PH	I travelled to Port-Harcourt
Make you ask why	You may ask why
When I reach there I rest	When I got there, I took some time to rest
The last holiday was the best of all holidays I have been going to	The last holiday was the best I have ever had
While on the vehicle, I pass many highways	While on the journey, I saw many buildings
Wen I try to come	When I tried to come
Siblins	Siblings
I help my mother to cooking food	I helped my mother in cooking
As I dey waka to gombe	On my way to Gombe

Based on the result in Table 7, the following will help in mitigating the effects of the Nigerian Pidgin English on the Standard English usage among secondary school students in Eha-Amufu.

1. There should be regular seminar and workshop to train teachers on effective usage of Standard English. Government and school proprietors should also employ qualified teachers.

2. Parents should be made to know the negative effects of NPE on students' academic performance.
3. Students should be made to know the difference between standard colloquialism and NPE.
5. Teachers should also be exposed to seminars and workshops to train them on how they can help improve students' use of the Standard English and ways to mitigate the incessant use of NPE by students.

CONCLUSION

From the findings in this study, it can be inferred that there is relative influence on Eha-Amufu students' use of NPE from their home and since parents appear not to take it up with the students at home, the effect has now been felt in the school. Also, the Nigerian Pidgin English (as was found in this study) was used to create a form of identity for these students who find it convenient to express themselves easier in NPE than in the Standard English when communicating with their peers. This has become a mental block to these students. Because they can express themselves with NPE, they are no more motivated to learn the approved language of education in Nigeria which is the English language (the Standard English according to this research).

There is a sense of denial among these students when confronted with their weakness as regards the use of NPE. None of the students would want to give an impression of himself or herself as one that uses NPE in examination or in writing assignments. But a closer scrutiny of their essay writing reveals the true nature of people who pretend over issues of this magnitude.

Using outright ban or prohibition of NPE in these secondary schools may not stop its usage but a deliberate and conscious effort at instilling in the minds of these students the knowledge of NPE's adverse effect on their academic progress and the danger of its persistent use will go a long way in mitigating the adverse effect of using Pidgin in secondary schools in Eha-Amufu.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing, the researchers make the following recommendations:

1. There should be constant monitoring and evaluation of language use in teaching and learning in secondary schools in Eha-Amufu and Nigeria at large to check the trend of NPE usage.
2. Teachers should always correct students each time they use NPE in formal school settings.
3. Students should be constantly exposed to debate competitions and other activities that will help improve their use of the Standard English especially students in rural areas where such is not practiced.
4. Parents should be made to know the negative effects of NPE on students' academic performance. Once this is done, students' use of the Nigerian Pidgin English at home will be minimized. Using NPE at home is like a 'mental block' that prevents them from fully using the Standard English correctly. Once the students are motivated from the home, they will have a lower affective filter which allows more input into their Language Acquisition Device (LAD).

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