

Influence of Social Variation (Age) in the use of Nigerian Pidgin (NP): A Survey of Selected Cities (Warri and Port Harcourt) in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

A number of studies have been done on the factors that drive language variation, among which are dialects, register and style. Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is a widely spoken language in Nigeria, with varying dialects and usage patterns across different regions and social groups. Despite its importance in Nigerian communication, much attention has not been given to how social factors such as age influence the use of NP. This study aims to investigate the influence of age on the NP used among speakers in Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria. This research is a descriptive survey of NP spoken by people of Warri and Port Harcourt based on age factor, and it provides accurate description of the NP data gathered. It examined how age variations result in NP variants. The study population included youths (18-45 years old) and the elderly (65 years old and above) in the streets, restaurants, professional workers etc. The study population was sampled using purpose sampling technique. The data collection method for this study is participant observation. The data were gathered by recording them and analyzed using content analysis. The results showed that age affects the variants of NP used by the population of Warri and Port Harcourt. The youths of Warri use NP slang, while the elderly use the mainstream NP. The work advocates that NP has the qualities of any other language, such as variation, idioms, and proverbs, and therefore should be given a pride of place in linguistics.

Keywords: Social variations, age variation, pidgin, English-based pidgin, Language variance

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INTRODUCTION

No language could have been without its users. The relationship between both is bi-directional, as they influence each other. People in a given society cannot be defined without a language, as it reflects their belief, culture, identity and ideology (Hudson, 2001; Kir, 2025). Language is an instrument, a tool for defining, classifying and creating a particular people in a specific place over a given period of time. People have so much influence over language. People's characteristics and entire lifestyle have bearing on the language they use; they are transmitted into their language. People determine the behaviour, composition and function of language.

Hence, it can be said that the survival, growth and development of a language are determined by its users. People use language to construct and understand reality as well as their identities. Yet, in order to study language-in-use, it needs more than only focusing on language, we need to look at discourses. Discourses include not only language, but they also comprise actions, interactions, values, beliefs, feelings, non-linguistic symbols, clothes, tools, objects as well as time and place dimensions (Gee, 2011). Language takes different shapes, assumes or displays different behaviours in different environment. This gives birth to language

variations. Nigeria's linguistic landscape is a very complex one. Of all the factors responsible for language variation, this work shall dwell on one of the most interesting and evolving factors, which is social variation. This work aims to look at the influence, impact social variation, specifically age has on the language, particularly, Nigerian Pidgin used in Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Over and above all languages in Nigeria is the English Language – a creation of British colonialism that survived because of Nigeria's multilingual and multi-ethnic nature. It is Nigeria's official language performing such functions as the language of communication, legislature, commerce, government and international relationship. Nigeria has extreme multilingualism accounted for by Ethnologue (www.ethnologue.org) that stated that there are over 500 languages spoken in Nigeria, including Nigerian Pidgin. Nigerian Pidgin is spoken by all but used as a lingua franca mostly in the South-South region of Nigeria. Over the years, Nigerian Pidgin has gradually gained importance, because educated Nigerians also use it in communication. Research has shown that Nigerian Pidgin is now the language with the highest population of users, and also a first language in some minority groups in Nigeria (Igboanus, 2008). Nigerian Pidgin has spread its tentacles in all areas of the nation. For instance, it is spoken widely by people of the study areas (Warri and Port Harcourt.) in all their daily ventures.

It is noteworthy that, like other languages, the Nigerian Pidgin used in the study area has its own variants. For instance, the one spoken by the elderly population is absolutely different from the one spoken by the younger population. The youths use slang, a stylish variety that is prestigious and only understood by them. The variety used by the elderly is plain, simple, but mostly old-fashioned. In all, this work is an investigation into the relationship that exists between social variation, age and the Nigerian Pidgin used in Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

All languages change over time and change is inevitable for any living language. History records that languages change over time at every level of structure which includes vocabulary, phonology, morphology and syntax (PBS, 2005). Linguists have noted that there are various factors responsible for language variation. A number of studies have been done on these factors that drive language variation, among which are dialects, register and style. Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is a widely spoken language in Nigeria, with varying dialects and usage patterns across different regions and social groups. Despite its importance in Nigerian communication, much attention has not been given to how social factor such as age influences the use of NP.

This study aims to investigate the influence of age on the Nigerian Pidgin used in selected areas in Nigeria, Warri and Port Harcourt.. By exploring the research questions, this study hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between age and language use in Nigeria, and provide insights for language planning, education, and communication policies.

Objectives of the study

This study aims to look at the influence and impact age of users has on pidgin used in Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria. This work is conducted specifically to ascertain the characteristics of Pidgin used by youths and adults in Warri and Port Harcourt.; and to discover the vocabulary and stylistic differences in the use of Pidgin by youths and adults in Warri and Port Harcourt., Nigeria.

Research question

One research question guides this study below.

How does age affect pidgin varieties in Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social variation

Language is a social phenomenon that is subject to change since it is influenced by elements that change as well. Language varies from region to region within a nation and from one speech community to the other within a region. It may also differ across age group, ethnic groups, gender and socioeconomic boundaries. That is to say, the speech characteristics of an individual may distinguish him as middle class, working class, educated or non-educated hence referred to as social variations in language use. Luhr (2002) defined social variation as variation in language due to social factor. Social variation is responsible for the varieties of language use according to class, education, occupation, age, gender, etc. Finegan (2008) opined that "the characteristic linguistic practices of ethnic groups, socioeconomic groups, and gender and age groups also constitute dialects". According to him, a person's dialect is the characteristics of his or her nationality, region, gender, and constitutes a person's persona.

This means that the wide range of social differences between speakers which relate to variation in their language is what social variation is all about. It accounts for the reason why two speakers cannot speak alike; why people speak differently based on their social background and status. Social variation is the link or connection that exists between language and social factors. It is the correlation or agreement that exists between social factors and language. In light of this, Yule (2006) defined social dialect as a variety used by groups defined according to class, gender, age and a number of other parameters. This means a group of people with common social characteristics, goals and are identified by the kind of language they use. People outside of these groups are labelled differently. This is supported by Umera-Okeke (2013) definition that refers to sociolect or social dialect as a situation, where a particular variety of language is

associated with a particular group. People of the same class have their own peculiar language that marks them off from the rest of the world. In all, social variation shows how language is governed, ruled or controlled by social factors.

The onus of this study is to establish that Nigerian Pidgin as a full-fledged language has social variations. The study will explore variance according to age in Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria where it is quite obvious that there are differences in the speech of the elderly and young people.

Language variance due to age

Variance due to age is a non-negotiable phenomenon. This is notable in the variation that exists in the language used by the elderly and young people. Age is a social aspect that affects how languages vary. The main focus of research on language and age is how people's use of language changes with age. It is clear that language greatly differs by age around the world. According to Holmes (2008), a person's speech characteristics change with age. According to Wardhaugh (2006), linguistic variety is more readily correlated with gender and age than with some other characteristics like race and ethnicity. As a result, numerous sociolinguists have adequately addressed the age factor.

Age is described in sociolinguistic studies using a variety of terminology. People's "age" is determined by their chronological or lifespan years of existence, according to Duszak and Okulska (2011). They have been on earth for that amount of time since birth. Childhood, adolescence, early/young the elderly, middle age, and old age are the five physical indications of age, according to Chambers in particular (Abdullah et al. 2018). Young children, adolescents, youths, and the elderly all speak differently, according to Chambers and other researchers who have extensively researched variance caused by age factor. Every society is divided into three subcultures: children, adult and youth subcultures. In Sapele, the study area, we have the adult subculture, youth subculture as well as children subculture. Lie et al. (2011) defined a subculture as the smaller, coherent collective groups that exist within a larger dominant culture and which are often distinctive because of race, social class, gender etc. They also posited that subcultures may also be delimited by age (for example, youth culture, Generation Z), appearance (for example, dress, body piercings), behaviour (geeks, nerds), language (use of slang, terminology, code-mixing), non-verbal actions (use of certain gestures), physical disability (deaf culture), profession (for example, legal culture, business culture), technology (for example, online/digital culture) and many other attributes.

Every culture, subculture, group has specific rules and norms that guide its appropriate behavior. Every member of a group must keep to these rules and norms in order for them to achieve their goals. Members of each subculture are graded by age, that is, they belong to the same age group. And these groups are united by the language they

use and it is what defines them. Previous studies have demonstrated that persons of different ages speak in ways appropriate to their age group. In other words, group membership is a key factor in language variance. According to research, speakers will alter their language use to accommodate or be accommodated in a certain group, or even more so if they want to exclude others. According to Abdullah et al. (2018), who discuss the connection between group membership and language use, "it is regarded that when persons belong to the same age group, they often communicate similarly. However, due to the wide range of ages in a society, a speaker may employ various linguistic traits with various other speakers. The ability to understand words with specific meanings is provided to members of a subculture through argot, which is the jargon or slang of a certain group or class. It creates communication channels that only members of that particular group can use.

According to the Britannica Dictionary, 'youth is defined as the time of life when someone is young; the time when a young person has not yet become an elderly'. It is the quality or state of being young. Based on this definition, a youth is neither a child nor an elderly. The United Nations (2023), for statistical purposes, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. While The World Health Organization (WHO) defines youth as people between the ages of 15 and 24, and young people as people between the ages of 10 and 24. Several UN entities, instruments and regional organizations have somewhat different definitions of youth, which the United Nations secretariat recognizes

Certain factors distinguish the elderly from a youth. An elderly person is seen as one that is come of age, one that takes up responsibilities, especially financially and one that is mature. Youth, on the other hand, is seen as one who is not yet mature. The characteristics of both groups influence their language use. Youths are very active, vibrant and energetic. They are hence extremely inventive and creative in all spheres, including language. Imagine how quickly and easily young people in the study regions are inventing, coining, and creating new terms. It is quite astounding. Their language resource pool is enormous and constantly expanding. To mirror their environment, they create their own language. Fads and trends, which are movements toward adoption of a certain lifestyle or particular taste in clothing, music, or leisure activities, are the main variables that affect youngsters' language (Aguirre, 1974). Youths create their lives around the new, typically in-vogue objects they crave. Fads are patterns of behavior that appear suddenly and disappear just as quickly. Fads come and go, but fashions are behavioral patterns that endure. These trends cause the language of young people to fluctuate. Children and teenagers view the elderly language as being antiquated, old, and too similar to their own. Being young and energetic, they create their own variety for the novelty and craving of new or risqué terminology.

The variety of pidgin used by the youths in the study area

is a whole lot different from that of the elderly population. It is known as pidgin slang, a type of language consisting of words and phrases that are regarded as very informal, are more common in speech than writing and are typically restricted to a particular context or group of people. Their own pidgin has style and it is usually trendy. Most of the lexemes are amusing and pleasant to the ears unlike that of the elderly.

Pidgin: A brief literature

Pidgin is a language used for exigency between people of diverse tongues, who lack mutual intelligibility of their languages. Such people often time find themselves converged together in a particular place for an urgent purpose, which could be business, missionary activities and so on.

Hence to Hudson (2001), pidgin is a variety created for practical and immediate purpose of communication between people who otherwise would have no common language whatsoever, and learned by one person from another within the communities concerned as the accepted way of communicating with members of the other community". Akmajian et al. (2017) opined that a pidgin typically arises in colonial situations though it primarily starts as a trade language. These definitions underscore the various views about the emergence of Pidgin. Pidgin is, according to Hudson (2001), "a variety created for practical and immediate purpose of communication between people who otherwise would have no common language whatsoever, and learned by one person from another within the concerned communities as the accepted way of communicating with members of the other community." Still on the same track, Umera-Okeke (2013) sees pidgin as, 'an auxiliary language (language used for communication by groups that have different native tongue) that develops a common means of communication without sufficient time to learn each other's native language properly'. In line with this, Jeff (2008) defines Pidgin and creole as emerged languages in need of communication among people who do not have single language to use – e.g. among plantation labourers who came from different geographic origins. Pidgin is a language system that developed among people that do not have common language to share, it is a language of contact situation where there is no common language to use.

Pidgin has limited vocabularies, grammatical structures and seems to lack rules that govern its usage; anything goes when it comes to its usage. Sentences and expressions in pidgin can be fragmented and full of errors. This is one of the reasons it is regarded by some people as a bastardized, gibberish language. Pidgin is the property of the users, and a part of them. It is used readily by its users to express themselves proficiently and conveniently in all their daily ventures. People of the study area, Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria use pidgin in all facets of their lives and everywhere, including offices,

parks, schools, streets, churches etc.

Talking about Nigerian Pidgin, it is assumed that the NP first started from business activities that occurred in the market place between European traders in 1469, and the various ethnic groups of Nigeria along the coast of Niger-Delta (Egbokhare, 2001), and this meeting gave birth to the language, pidgin. The pidgin that developed along this coast was an admixture of the Portuguese language and the Niger-Delta languages, which was strictly used for business purpose.

Another account of the emergence of Nigerian Pidgin was that which attributed it to the encounter of Nigerians with the British colonial masters. At the onset, Nigerians could not use English, just as the colonizers could not understand the indigenous languages. The only solution to this situation was to create an emergency language, which both parties could understand and use to meet their communication needs. This Nigerian Pidgin comprises the English language, as the superstrate with Nigeria's indigenous languages as the substrate. Thus, Nigerian Pidgin is an English-based pidgin. Illah (2001) has it that Nigerian Pidgin developed because the colonial masters felt Nigerians were too inferior to use their language and would not want to speak it with them. This led to the creation of pidgin, a no man's language.

However, with time, this pidgin crept into every nook and cranny of Nigeria with many speakers of it emerging. For Ihimere (2006), Nigerian pidgin has become the native language of approximately 3 to 5 million people and a second language for at least another 75 million. There is no Nigerian that does not understand pidgin- the educated, stark illiterates, the rich as well as the poor can switch to the use of Pidgin depending on the social context. Jowitt (1990) supported this view by stating that Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) has taken a vital place of honour not only among the illiterates but also the literate members of the society. He noted that the use of pidgin signals proximity and informality and, that it is good for cracking jokes.

The kind of pidgin used by the people of the study area is so fascinating, and worth studying. It is totally different from the type used in other parts of Nigeria. Its expressions and mode of its vocabulary formation, especially by the youths are interesting, and have drawn the attention of scholars to its study. Its usage and vocabulary as well as grammar is not restricted here, as it serves the multi-purpose needs of its users. This work advocates for the appreciation of pidgin that is marginalized, looked down on by most educated Nigerians.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This is a descriptive research aimed at finding out age variations in the use of Pidgin in Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria. To obtain evidences sort for the researchers employed a cross-sectional survey.

A subset of the population of the study area was observed for a short period of time in respect to the types of pidgin they use. The data gathered were then analyzed.

Sampling /Data collection and analysis

The population of the study comprises the young and the elderly people of Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The young individuals include both males and females from 18-45 years, while the elderly from sixty years and above. The actual names of the participants were not given. Their names were represented as Speakers. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants of the study whose speeches were recorded and analyzed. The targeted groups were listened to on the streets, restaurants, markets, barbing salons, offices, etc. in their casual conversations. Participant observation method was used for data collection in this work. The speeches of the study participants were described and analyzed through content analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study findings were purely based on answering the single research question posited for this study which is “how does age affect pidgin varieties in Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria”?

Varieties of NP used by young people in Warri, Delta State

The variety of NP used by the youths in Warri is different from that of the elderly. It is known as NP slang, a type of language consisting of words and phrases that are regarded as very informal, are more common in speech than in writing and are typically restricted to a particular group of people (Chen, 2006). The NP of the youths has style, is trendy and ever evolving. Most of the lexemes sound so pleasant to the ears, amusing and very interesting, unlike that of the elderly. The conversation below was taken by the researcher at Effurun, a small area in Warri. The conversation was between two youths (males).

Conversation 1

Speaker A: D man too like bobby! (The man likes female breasts a lot)

Speaker B: e go pray make e no delete on top of bobby (He should pray not to die on top of female breasts)

Interpretation: ‘Bobby’ means ‘breast’ in NP slang. Two neighbours were gossiping their male neighbour. One of them exclaimed: ‘d man too like bobby’, which means the man is promiscuous and he is very particular about the breast of females. The other neighbor expression simply means he should caution himself or else his flirting around women would ‘delete’, that is kill him one day.

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Conversation 2

Speaker A: Leave her, she don see moni and her head don dey plait dada! (Let her be. She has seen money and she has changed her mind) Number go touch her soon (She will be poor soon)

Speaker B: the babe lick me dry (The girl sucked me dry). She be sucking blood (She is a pest that sucks one's blood)

Interpretation: This was uttered by a man to his friend to calm him down after his fiancé broke his heart because of money. Her ‘head don dey plait dada’ means she changed her mind because of money, leaving the man for a rich man. The slang “number go touch her” means she will be poor again and will regret her actions later after she must have gone through hell in her present relationship. Speaker B’s expression means the girl wrecked him completely financially and still left him for another richer man.

Conversation 3

Speaker A: Kasala don burst o! (Problem has started)

Speaker B: Wetin de sup? (What is happening?)

Speaker A: Pc come our hk con krench everibody there (Policemen came to our HK to arrest everybody there). Even chairmo de among o (Even our chairman was among them)

Speaker B: nawa o (Exclamation). well chairmo go peel dem something sha Well, our chairman will bribe them with money). Na normal na (It is normal)

Interpretation: ‘Kasala’ means ‘trouble’. In one two-bedroom apartment at Jakpa Junction, Warri, called HK (a house rented by internet fraudsters where they accommodate and train upcoming ones on how to defraud people online), some policemen visited them unexpectedly and got everybody they met in the house arrested. ‘Krench’ means to arrest. Speaker A, who was part of the fraudsters was not around when the police officers came to get them arrested, was telling another of their gangster, who was not also around then, that they were in trouble. Though Speaker B was surprised and said their chairman, referred to as ‘chairmo’ (the owner of the HK) will bribe his way out, ‘peel them something’.

From the above, one can see that their language is very forceful, energetic and lively. They use exaggeration a lot to create effect and emphasis. And they are also metaphorical. In sharp contrast to the youths’ language, the elderly do not exaggerate; they go straight to the point, and their expressions and words are very mild.

Conversation 4

Speaker A: Abeg wetin bi d koko of today's maras? (What is the main topic of today?)

Speaker B: the thing be say no let anybody use u take shine (The thing is do not allow anybody to use you to their advantage).

Interpretation: "Koko" as Nigerian slang in this context means "the main issue, topic, and news". A group of guys were quarrelling over money and were trying to resolve it but to no avail. This prompted one to say 'wetin be the koko...'; which means what is the essence of this argument when nothing meaningful has been arrived at. As a form of advice, another guy there told him not to allow anyone to use him to get what they want.

Conversation 5

Speaker A: I go control you when I show town (I will call you when I get to town).

Speaker B: na yor way na (That is how you behave)

Interpretation: "Control" as Nigerian Pidgin slang means "call". When a Nigerian says "I go control you later", he is simply saying "I will call you later". This is a guy telling his friend that he would call him later when he comes back from where he is going to. The friend say 'na yor way na', which means he knows since it is his usual habit to call him.

Varieties of NP used by the elderly in Warri, Delta State

The features of the youths' variety are the direct opposite of those of the elderly. The NP used by the elderly in Warri is archaic, especially in the eyes of the youths. Their language is mild, simple, easy to understand and usually literal; straight to the point. They do not exaggerate like the youths since they have limited linguistic reserve and lack creativity and innovation capability. The following conversation took place between two women at a park in Warri.

Conversation 6

Speaker A: Dem fine wel, wel! (They are very fine!)

Speaker B: Thank God o (Thanks be to God)

Interpretation: Two women met themselves at the park in Warri and one asked after the family of the other. The other replied that his family were hale and hearty: 'dem fine wel, wel'.

Conversation 7

Speaker A: watch that yor pikin well well o (Keep an eye on that your child very well). im eye no don (He has a bad attitude). Eye de shook am wawawa (His eyes are up)

Speaker B: I no know for am o (I do not know for him)

Interpretation: The above was said by a grandmother to her daughter about her son. She is asking the mother to

caution and discipline him for he has the tendency of joining gangsters. The expression, 'eye de shook am wawawa' means having the desire or tendency to do evil or become bad. Also, 'eye no done' means someone not having the right motive or mind.

Conversation 8

Speaker A: remove yor eye glass (Take off your eye glasses)

Speaker B: Why u say make I remove am (Why do you ask me to remove them)

Speaker A: e make u b like old papa (They make you look like an old man)

Interpretation: The above conversation ensued between aman and his wife. The wife told him to take off his eye glasses for he looks old wearing them.

Conversation 9

Speaker A: "I don start to take some herbs my doctor recommend, but I no sure if e dey work."

Speaker B: "I dey take some herbs too. Sometimes, e dey take time to see results, but I believe in am."

Speaker A: "I go try keep the faith. I no fit afford to fall sick now, I get plenty things to do."

Speaker B: "No be small thing. We don pass that stage where we fit ignore our health, we need to be more careful now."

Conversation 10

Speaker A: "I hear say one of our nieces go marry next month. E no easy, wedding dey expensive now."

Speaker B: "I hear too. We go need to help them as family, na tradition. But e get as the economy be."

Speaker A: "True, I go do my best. But e no easy to manage this things."

Speaker B: "At least, we go show them love. That's the most important thing now."

Speaker A: "I just dey hope say the marriage go last and be fruitful."

A critical look at the above analysis of the NP used by both the elderly and youths of Warri shows that the varieties of NP used by Warri young people are very difficult to understand; they are strong and at the same time very interesting and amusing. The elderly' varieties are easy to understand, simple and very mild. Table 1 presents the differences between the NP words/expressions used by the youths and the elderly of Warri.

Varieties of Nigerian pidgin used by youths in Port Harcourt

Conversation 11

Speaker A: I go challenge that your 3 k (I will disagree with

Table 1: Comparison of NP words/expressions used by the young people and the elderly of Warri and their contextual meanings.

Youths' NP	Elderly's' Nigerian Pidgin (NP)	Contextual meaning
Bobby	breast	A woman's breast
Delete	die	Pass away
Plait dada	Body de catch	arrogant
Number	No get money	Poverty
Lick	chop	To eat
Kasala	wahala	problem
Sup	Wetin de happen	What is happening
Krench	carry	To arrest
Peel	give	bribe
Smallie	girlfriend	girlfriend
detro	hard	Economic meltdown
sheygbin	chichi	dime
square	dash	give
Head de game	Eye correct	Well behaved
Join press	use	use
maga	mumu	foolish
control	call	call
Take shine	Play wayo	Take advantage of you
Show town	See you	Come around
Arrange lem	Cook food	Prepare meal
voicemail	Enta bush	misplace
sky	50 naira	50 naira
nak	fuck	Sexual intercourse
barney	girl	girl
wound	fuck	Sexual intercourse
Wetin de play	Wetin de happen	What is happening
Do street	419	fraudster

Source: Researcher

that your three thousand naira)

Speaker B: na every money dem de fit challenge? (Is it every money they can reduce?) na to cut the one you fit cut (You have to reduce the one you can).

Speaker a: guy, your hand soft o (Guy, your hand is full with money)

Interpretation: the above conversation was between two youths in a shop at Rumokoro Road, Port Harcourt, where phone accessories are sold. The above conversation simply means the buyer (Speaker A), who went to the shop to buy a phone charger, telling the seller that the cost is high. The buyer used the word, 'challenge' to disagree with the price given by the seller. The amount is three thousand naira. He also used 'k' which is thousand, but youths prefer the 'k' to the thousand because it sounds pleasant to them. The seller refused to reduce the price, telling him it is not every price that can be reduced (na every money dem de fit challenge). Instead, he advised the buyer to go for the one (phone charger) he can afford (na to cut the one you fit cut). The buyer said to him that he is rich, which is, 'your hand soft o' in NP.

Conversation 12

Speaker A: you don finish? (are you done?)

Speaker B: yes na (Yes, of course). na you I de wait (you are the one I am waiting for)

Speaker A: Omo, na going things na (My friend, it is time to go now)

Interpretation: The above conversation took place

between two colleagues working in a business center. After the close of work, one of them asks the other if he is done with his work (you don finish). The other (Speaker B) replied that he is done, and he is waiting for the first one (Speaker A). Speaker A said, 'Omo, na going things na'. 'Omo' is a slang word fondly used by youths to refer to their friends and it is also a form of exclamation. 'na going things na' as used above means 'let us start going home'.

Conversation 13

Speaker A: wey you (Where are you?). How far? (What is going on?) You go come tomorrow? (Are you coming tomorrow?)

Speaker B: u don de crase small, small (You are going insane gradually). Come do wetin? (What am I coming there for?)

Interpretation: The above conversation was between two friends at a gym. The first friend (Speaker A) asks the other one (Speaker B) if he is going to come the next day. He says, 'wey you, how far?' 'wey you' is used by youths to call or draw the attention of their age mates; it is almost used to replace the name of a person. 'How far' as used there is to know what one's view, decision is. He wants to know whether his friend would show up tomorrow. The friend, who is not satisfied with the activity there, replied him, 'u don de crase small, small. Come do wetin?', which means his friend is going insane gradually for asking him to come back tomorrow, knowing he is not satisfied with what he is offered. 'Come do wetin?' means what he is coming there to do again tomorrow.

Conversation 14

Speaker A: How far, u no see? (what is happening, did you see it?)

Speaker B: oh boy, no be here o (it is tough). to get that kind charger na die na (it is very difficult to get that kind of charger)

Interpretation: The above conversation took place between two friends. The first one (Speaker A) asks the other one 'how far, you no see?'. 'How far' as used here is speaker a trying to get information from his friend. He is asking his friend whether he saw the Phone charger he went to buy. The friend (Speaker B) replied, 'oh boy, no be here o. to get that kind charger na die na', which means he did not see it to buy. 'No be here and na die na' means it is very difficult. That means it is very difficult to get the kind of phone charger he is looking for.

Conversation 15

Speaker A: if na meat pie, I de go collect am for Genesis, Kilomanjaro) If it is meat pie, I just go to Genesis, Kilomanjaro to buy it. 5 hundred naira or 600 hundred I collect and pay). I use five hundred naira to buy it. nawa for you o (You are too funny)

The above was spoken by a youth in the middle of a conversation among some youths. He simply said he would prefer to go to Kilimanjaro or Genesis (fast food restaurants) to buy a piece of meat pie at 500 or 600 naira, than buying elsewhere. 'He ended by saying, 'nawa for you', which is used by youths to somewhat insult or blame someone for not understanding a situation or trying to make a mistake.

Varieties of Nigerian pidgin used by the elderly in Port Harcourt

Conversation 16

Speaker A: I wan buy gala (I want to buy Gala sausage roll)

Speaker B: gala? Na only butter bread, no doughnut I get (it is only butter bread, no doughnut that I have).

Speaker A: Ok. Give me

Interpretation: The above conversation was between two elderly (a seller and a buyer) in a mini kiosk at Choba, Port Harcourt. The buyer (speaker A) simply wants to buy one piece of gala. He said, 'I wan buy gala', meaning I want to buy gala. The seller replied that she only has doughnut, and not Gala sausage roll. The buyer asks her to give her.

Conversation 17

Speaker A: Chidi, no return again from village? (Is Chidi not going to return from the village?)

Speaker B: that him house no comfortable for them, dem be 15 for there (The house he was staying here was not comfortable for them; there were fifteen persons in the house)

Speaker A: Dem be Aboki? (Are they Fulani people?)

Interpretation: the above conversation took place between two women, who are colleagues. They were talking about one of their male colleagues who has travelled to his village for a year now and has still not returned. The man's name is Chide. The first woman (speaker a) asks, 'Chidi, no return again from village?', meaning, 'is Chidi not going to come back from his village anymore?'. The other woman said, where he lives in PortHarcourt is not comfortable, that there are 10 persons living in the apartment where he lives. Speaker A replied in surprise, 'them be Aboki?'. 'Aboki are Fulani people that migrate from the North to the Southern part of Nigeria to stay for business purpose. They are usually large in number and can stay in one-bedroom apartment without stress. The woman is asking if they are Aboki because southerners hardly jam-packed themselves in a small apartment like the 'Abokis'.

Conversation 18

Speaker A: you go fit help me buy the ofor leaf tomorrow (Can you buy ofor leaf for me tomorrow?)

Speaker B: if I see for the market wey near my house (If I can get it from the market close to my house). If I no see I go goChoba market, but dem say na only one woman de sell for there (If it is not there, I will go to Choba market, but they say it is only one woman that sells it there).

Speaker B: ok.

Interpretation: The above conversation took place between two women. The first one (Speaker A) asked the other one (Speaker B) if she could buy ofor leaf for her at a market close to her house. The other said if she sees the leaf near the market close to her house she would buy, or she would go to Choba market where there is only one woman selling the leaf there.

Conversation 19

Speaker A: Madam, how much for the plantain? (Madam, how much is the plantain?)

Speaker B: na 2500 (It is two thousand and five hundred naira)

Speaker A: guy, e too cost I swear (Guy, it is too expensive, I swear)

Speaker A: no be me cause am (It is not my fault) everything dear for the country na (everything is expensive in this country).

Interpretation: The above conversation was between an elderly and a youth at Choba Market, Port Harcourt. the youth (Speaker A) asks the seller, 'how much for the plantain', that is, 'how much do you sell this plantain? The

Table 2: Differences between the NP words/expressions used by the youths and theelderly of Port –Harcourt.

Youth NP	The elderly Nigerian Pidgin (NP)	Contextual meanings
challenge	price	Bargain
hand soft	Big man	Wealthy
Na going things	Na go we de so	To go out
Omo	pikin	Child
How far	Wetin you de talk	What are you saying
Na die	Big wahala	Serious problem
Fuck up	shame	To fail
Block	wayla	Rob
Na wa for u	Na u sabi	It is yor business

Source: Researcher

seller replied, 'na 2500', that is , ' it is tow thousand five hundred naira'. The buyer replied that it is too expensive (guy, e too cost I swear). The seller said that she is not the reason for its high price, that everything is expensive (dear) in the country.

There is a clear-cut difference in the NP of both participants above. While the elderly woman uses a plain and simple NP, the youth adds style to his own. He says 'guy', that is how youths refer to their friends or people of the same age with them. Also, 'I swear' as used here is a slang used by youths to exaggerate and show the degree or effect of something on them.

Conversation 20

Talking About Business (Male and Female, 2 speakers)

Speaker 1 (Male): "Ah, I don see say your shop dey move well. You don make more sales this week?"

Speaker 2 (Female): "Omo, e no easy o! But thank God, the business dey pick up small small. I just buy new goods for the shop now."

Speaker 1 (Male): "That's good! Port Harcourt market no be small thing. If you no sabi, you go just dey there dey waste your time."

Speaker 2 (Female): "True. Na why I dey always try to upgrade. I no wan make people feel say I dey old school."

Speaker 1 (Male): "E good like that. Just make sure say you no dey lose guard. Customer service be everything for this business."

Speaker 2 (Female): "I go try. Customer go always return if you treat am well."

From the above analysis of the NP varieties used by the youths and the elderly of Port-Harcourt, it is seen that the NP utilized by the elderly is simple and easy to understand. Whereas, the NP variety of the youths is slang. It is quite similar to the variety used by the youths in Warri. Though both are similar, that used by the youths of Warri is stronger and very difficult to comprehend. Also, NP slang is used by almost ninety percent of youths in Warri everywhere in almost all their endeavors both by the educated and non-educated youths. As observed in this study during the data collection, not all youths in Port-Harcourt can use NP slang and it is not spoken

everywhere in Port Harcourt. A lot of them use the ordinary, mainstream variety that can be understood by all. We can safely say that the youths of Port Harcourt are at the middle level, that is, they speak partly like the people of Lagos and partly like the youths of Delta State).

The differences between the NP words/expressions used by the youths and elderly of Port -Harcourt are shown in (Table 2).

Conclusion

This has been an interesting study to the researchers. It has shown that Pidgin, like other languages is arbitrary and dynamic evolving depending on the context of use and other social factors. Age variation has been studied and these researchers have avoided making any judgmental statements as to their preference for the youth or the elderly use of Pidgin in Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The paper has discovered that the elderly and youths vary in the kind of Nigerian pidgin they use. While youths can be said to use slang pidgin, which is trendy, innovative and thought provoking, the elderly use ordinary pidgin that is plain, simple and archaic. It has been discovered that Warri and Port Harcourt, Nigeria Pidgin characteristics is dependent on the age bracket that uses them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations are given:

1. No doubt, the various pidgins used in the study area are so amusing and interesting, especially that of the youths. It is recommended that scholars should endeavor to do more studies on other social and regional varieties of Pidgin. Its study and even usage should be encouraged among scholars and graduates.
2. There is need to evolve a standard Pidgin in Nigeria as NPE exhibits regional and social variance. For mutual intelligibility, cross-regional studies must be done and standards made.
3. Linguists should look towards adopting a standard pidgin as Nigeria's national language. It has been observed that in the multilingual Nigeria, Pidgin serves as a cohesion language as everyone understands it.

This stance will eliminate the fear of political and social dominance of any of the indigenous languages on the other. Pidgin belongs to all.

4. The study also recommends that Pidgin should be included in our educational curriculum because of the role it plays in Nigeria as language of communication that gets down to the lowest members of every society.

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