A Sociolinguistic Study of the Use of Nigerian Pidgin English by Teenagers in Selected Places of Football Sports in Ilorin

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Abstract

This study investigated the Nigerian pidgin English used in selected places of football sports in Ilorin using a sociolinguistic approach. The objectives of the study were to observe and describe the linguistic features of the pidgin used among teenagers in Ilorin and to explain the social development that influences the use of the variety. The theoretical framework adopted for the study was Labov's (2015) variationist sociolinguistic theory and Hudson's (2001) fourth model of linguistic description. The study sampled purposefully ten places of football sport around students' areas in Ilorin which are places of contact between the students and indigenous people of Ilorin. The data was collected through personal observation which is one of the ethnographic instruments for data collection in sociolinguistic studies. The data collected were analysed qualitatively using the linguistic variables. The findings showed that the Nigerian pidgin English used was characterized by certain linguistic features such as vowel and consonant substitutions, vowel insertion, t-dropping; absence of inflectional morphology, fewer or no use of prepositions and frequent use 'of' in place of 'to', 'at' and 'in', different words formation-reduplication, borrowing, blending, compounding, and distinct maker forms for pronouns; many semantic borrowing, extension and shift; and simple clausal structures and few relative clauses with 'wey' as a marker. The study reveals that these linguistic features reflected the Yoruba linguistic structure and English lexis. It also reveals that the variety used is a reduced variety of language which emanated from the contact of the Yoruba language with the English language. It further reveals that these noticeable linguistic features indicate the use of a variety of Nigerian pidgin English among teenagers in Ilorin. It also shows that the linguistic features did not only reflect Yoruba linguistic features but also the football sport context and the informal language usage among teenagers. However, despite these noticeable features, the study observes that the Nigerian pidgin English usage in Ilorin is on the

verge of being subsumed into the Yoruba language due to the dominance of Yoruba speakers in the studied areas.

Keywords: Pidgin, Nigerian pidgin English, sociolinguistic variables and topology

Introduction

Although the origin of the term 'pidgin' is disputed or not clear, many scholars agree that it was derived from the Chinese word for business which metamorphosed into a variety of languages that surfaced from business contact (Holm, 2000; Aitchison, 2005; Finegan; 2012; Charles, 2013). So, for Hudson (2001, p. 60), pidgins are "varieties created for every practical and immediate purpose of communication between people who otherwise would have no common whatsoever…". Aitchison (2005, p.219) explains that pidgin is "a marginal language used by people who need to communicate for certain restricted purposes". These scholars maintain that pidgin is not a native language to any of the speakers who use it. Rather a simplified form of language used by speakers for the purpose of business or trade communication. As such, it could disappear at any time if not used by a speech community or developed into Creole. So, pidgins of any variety are usually considered as the language of contact, business or trade which emanate from the mixture of two or more different varieties in which a superstrate language provides the vocabulary to a local language that maintains its structure (Holm, 2000). For this reason, Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2011; and Charlie (2013) observe that pidgin has a limited vocabulary and morphological inflexion which results in simple syntactic structures. Hence, its simplification makes it easier to be used between different language speakers in social contact.

Meanwhile, there are a number of pidgins that emanate from trading, slavery or inter-tribal relationships that spread all over the world (Hudson, 2001; Folakemi, 2011). The Nigerian pidgin English first emanated from the initial contact between Portuguese, English, and indigenous people of Nigeria as far back as 1553 (Holm, 2000: Gharib, 2018). It gradually spread to other parts of the country as a result of the missionary and colonial intervention to become one of the common languages in some parts of the country (Eberhard, Gary & Charles, 2023). Its further spread is supported by the continuous coexistence of the English language with the indigenous language even after the country's independence. As a result, pidgin English has become one of the important varieties of language in the country used to sustain social relationships between speakers of different languages who have to interact for

the purpose of business, trade, marriage or inter-ethnic relationships. This is noted by Rickfoul (1991, p.224) who sees pidgin as "a lingua franca which arises to facilitate communication between speakers of different languages who are in sustained contact with each other". Jowitt (2000, p.15) indicates this thus: "The situation today is that pidgin flourishes as a medium of inter-ethnic communication, especially in the south, and especially in the large cities with many non-indigenous residents (Bendel, Benin, Port Harcourt, etc.) or throughout states with small ethnic groups". Therefore, linguists, particularly sociolinguists have developed an interest in the study of English pidgins in different contexts of its usage.

However, though the pidgins have certain common characteristics, they could vary in some attributes that are already identified by a particular language speaker or region. This paper thus investigates the sociolinguistic features of Nigerian pidgin English used among teenagers in places of football sports in Ilorin, Nigeria. The places selected were students' areas: Tanke, Gaa Akanbi, Pipeline, Geri Alimi, Oko Erin, Maraba, Sango, Gambari, Oja Gbooro, Sabo Oke and Mandate. These places were selected because they are places of contact between students and the indigenous people of Ilorin. This sample is based on the assumption that the existence of Nigerian pidgin English in Ilorin depends on the existence of non-native Yoruba speakers.

Conceptual Review: Nigerian Pidgin English and Its Varieties
In recent times, Nigerian pidgin English has gotten more attention and acceptability among the people of Nigeria; even within the academics as it is now studied as a course from undergraduate to postgraduate levels in some universities such as the University of Ilorin, Nigeria; University of Nigeria, University of Benin, Nsukka, National Open University of Nigeria, among others. It is also commonly used in media houses around the country, particularly with Wazobia Frequency Modulation (FM) Abuja, Cool Frequency Modulation (FM), Bereke Family Radio, etc. And even the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) started its version of some programmes in Nigerian pidgin English in 2017. In fact, statistics show that it is used by 120 million people in the country, including 4 million as its native speakers (Eberhard, Gary & Charles, 2023). Thus, it is noted that even though it has no official status, it has permeated the system of the country; market, politics, education, media, etc. This has given a serious impetus for the investigation of its features, functions and status among researchers.

So, the Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) is an English-based pidgin that is widely spoken across Nigeria despite without any official status for its recognition (Jibril, 1995). It is the simplified form of English especially used by many people who speak different languages or of the same language as an easy way of communication. Arguably, although it contains some deviations from standard British English, it is not the same as 'Broken English' because it is not technically a violation of the English rules but rather a reduction of rules; that is a variety in which its patterns are reduced to the native language structure (Holm, 2000). However, it is sometimes erroneously considered substandard English by most educated Nigerians because of the inferior status often associated with it (Teilanyo, 2004).

Nevertheless, this does not prevent its spread among Nigerians when the need arises. As a result, what is now referred to as Nigerian Pidgin English emanated from the places the English has contact with the indigenous language as the medium of communication or lingua franca (Jibril, 1995; Jowitt, 2000; Ehondor, 2020). This makes the Nigerian Pidgin English vary from one location to another.

As a result, like Nigerian English, Nigerian pidgin English has also developed its locational variations or dialects. These variations are mainly the Warri Nigerian English pidgin, Sapele, Benin Nigerian pidgin English, Ajegunle Nigerian pidgin English, the Igbo Nigerian pidgin English, Hausa Nigerian pidgin English, Yoruba Nigerian English, and others. This study focuses on the Yoruba Nigerian pidgin English use in Ilorin, the state capital of Kwara in the Western part of Nigeria. Besides, the study is a purely sociolinguistic study that aims to investigate the social variables that account for a variety of languages. Hence, for conceptual clarification, this study refers to Yoruba Nigerian English pidgin as the variety of the Nigerian pidgin English widely used by the Yoruba speakers of English or influenced by the Yoruba language itself.

Theoretical Framework
This study adopts Labov's (2015) variationist sociolinguistic theory and Hudson's (2001) four model of linguistic variables as its theoretical framework. Labov's theory considers variation as part of the characteristics of languages, including pidgins which reflects on the social variables of context i.e. region, age, ethnic group, occupation, class, environment etc. According to Labov (1994; 2006; Labov, Ash, & Boberg, 2006), variations in language use are not necessarily deviations but rather evidence of social developments, differences or changes. In effect, the variations in language use are seen as social markers. So, in the variationist sociolinguistic theory, Labov investigates the relationship between language and the social development of society. On this account, the theory examines the characteristics and differences in language use in order to unveil the social reasons or motivations for the development. So, to account for the characteristics of the variety of language use the theory

investigates individual or group speech or conversation within a particular context. In this study, the theory is used to investigate how indigenous language, age and setting influence the use of Nigerian pidgin in Ilorin among teenagers.

For Labov (1994; 2006; Labov, Ash, & Boberg, 2006), the linguistic variable to be examined should be the one that occurs frequently, frees from deliberate suppression, is considered as part of larger structures and can easily be identified, measured and analysed. So, because phonetic variables easily fit these bases, Labov's investigation focuses much on phonological investigations. This does not mean that Labov does not consider other variables to be important for this kind of study. For this reason, this study extends its areas of investigations of Nigerian Pidgin English to other linguistic variables using Hudson's (2001) four model in order to cover the other aspects of language which includes lexical, morphological, and syntactic descriptions. According to Hudson (2001), sociolinguistic variables or typologies are "the linguistic variables that require a sociolinguistic explanation (p.150). The sociolinguistic explanation as Hudson noted, is not a purely linguistic or grammatical description but rather the explanation that includes the linguistic variations and other social variables like group membership, sex, situations, etc. that account for such variations. Thus, Hudson extends the sociolinguistic description to other levels of language (phonetics, phonology, morphology, lexicon, and syntax).

Methodology/Procedure
This is an ethnographic study which involves the collection of data from the field where language is actually used. In this study, the data was collected through personal observation which is one of the ethnographic instruments for data collection in sociolinguistic studies. The data was collected from teenagers between the ages of 10-20 years in Ilorin at places of football sports. Female teenagers were excluded because football sports in Ilorin are commonly played by male teenagers. Football sports are places of contact for different young Yoruba speakers in Ilorin and as such it is one of the places to elicit linguistic speech for this kind of study. So, the footballers and spectators served as respondents to the researchers who personally collected the data (through passive participant observation) in the fields during the sports periods using written notes. Ten places for football sports in Ilorin were selected purposefully because they are places of contact between the students and indigenous people of Ilorin. The places selected were students' areas: Tanke, Gaa Akanbi, Pipeline, Geri Alimi, Oko Erin, Maraba, Sango, Gambari, Oja Gbooro, Sabo Oke and Mandate. The data was collected, grouped, analyzed and described qualitatively based on Hudson's four (2001) sociolinguistic topology.

Presentation of Data and Analysis of Nigerian Pidgin English Used in Some Selected Places Football Sports in Ilorin

The following texts are excerpts of the data collected and analysed in this study. Most of the pidgin expressions collected were code-switched into Yoruba intermittently.

S/N	Pidgin Expressions	English Translation
1.	Mi a dey kom	I am coming
2.	Gimi di bol!	Give me the ball
3.	Wash yo bak!	Watch your back- watch out!
4.	Mekai ple am fo yu	should I play it to you
5.	Na mi skol di bol na	I was the one who scored the ball
6.	E nefa skol e go	He has never score a goal
7.	Abi yu no sabi	(Or don't you know how to do it
8.	wai yu dey yab di gai na	why are you insulting the guy
9.	Mi a no si am	I did not see him
10.	E go!	It is a goal!
11.	In no sabi	He does not Know
12.	Di gai sabi plei wel wel	The guy plays very well
13.	In no skol	He did not score
14.	A no go gri	I will not agree
15.	Abegi a dey kom	Please, I am coming
16.	Mi abi	I myself
17.	Di refiri no givam di kard	the referee did not give him the card
18.	abio o!	yes!
19.	In sabi plai passam	He plays better than him
20.	Fayaram!	Shoot it
21.	Ple smo smo	play gently
22.	Si am dey do folo folo	look at him following others
23.	Di gai wey yu si	The guy you saw
24.	A si di man wey givam di moni	I saw the man who gave him the money
25.	Abegi liv di bol fo mi	Please leave the ball for me
26.	A fi kacham	I can catch it
27.	In dey plei bol	He is playing ball
28.	Mi du am	I did it
29.	Go bitam!	Attach him
30.	Holam!	Hold it or Attack him
31.	Wetin bi di skol gongon?	what is the exact score?
32.	Oboi, yu fokop!	You guy, you miss it!
33.	Du am shap shap	Do it quickly
34.	Di kochi dey do wuru-wuru	The coach is manipulating the game

35.	In no skol	He did not score
36.	A no go gri	I will not agree
37.	bringam fo mi	bring it for me
38.	Di refiri no givam di kad	The referee did not give him the card
39.	A suwe a fi du am	I swear, I can do it
40.	Dey sabi ple mash o	They know how to play match or they can play ball
41.	A dey go di oda said	I am going to the other side
42.	A don si am	I have seen it
43.	Wi go go tumoro	We shall go tomorrow
44.	Comot dia /komodia/	go away or leave there
45.	A fit du am /æfiduam/	I can do it
46.	sit don /sidon/	sit down
47.	Dey wan du os wuru-wuru	The want to manipulate us
48.	Wi don finish di mash	we have finished the match
49.	Yeye boi	Nonsense boy!
50.	wi go sho dem pepe	We will beat them
51.	Di gai ne ma padi	The guy is my pal
52.	Tro am	Throw it
53.	Abi a no tel yu se a dey kom?	Did I not tell you I am coming?
54	Abegi a dey kom	I am coming
55.	Wi go go tumoro	We shall go tomorrow

The descriptions of the analysis are presented below:

xi. Phonological variables

The phonological variables are concerned with the behaviour of sound patterns as used by a speaker or speakers. The data show that the speakers change the following sounds as part of the simplification or reduction process:

xii.   /i:/ changes to /i/ as in: liv (leave /li:v /); mi (me /mi:/)

xiii.   /eə/ changes to /ia/ as in: dia (there / ðeə/); wia (where/weə/)

xiv.   / ð / changes to /d/ as in: dia (there/ðeə/); oda (other/ ʌðƏ/); di (the /ðeə/)

xv.   /Ɵ/ changes to /t/ as in: tro (throw/ Ɵrəu); tin (thing/ Ɵin)

xvi.   /tʃ / changes to /s/ as in: mash (match/mætʃ)

xvii.   /v/ changes to /f/ as in: only noticeable in nefa instead of never/nevə/ in English.

The phonological features observed are that of sound changes(substitutions), addition and dropping. There are some cases of vowel addition which go with Yoruba tone which reflects the tonal nature of the language: Pasi (pass); padi (pal); abegi (I beg you). Besides, t-dropping occurs in inter-alveolar position: Comot dia /komodia/ (go away or leave there); fit du am /fiduam/ (I can do it); sit don /sidon/ (sit down).

The phonological changes that occur in the speakers' pidgin can be attributed, in this context, to the absence of long vowel sounds, diphthongs dental and voiced labial dental fricative sounds in Yoruba language (phonetics) which the speakers mostly speak as the first language (Adegbija, 1989; Lamidi, 2012). But these are substituted with the nearest sounds to the absent ones. Likewise, the addition of the vowel /i/ in certain words is peculiar with young Yoruba youth as an expression of slang for friendship or cordiality.

xii. Morphological Variables

The morphological variables are concerned with the internal structures of words and word formation or derivations. Hence, it looks at the issues of inflexion markers, tense markers, negation markers, verb form markers, and plural markers. In the data, it was observed that inflectional markers were absent in all the linguistic items but some are accounted for by word addition. For instance, the word 'dey' and 'don' are used at pre-verbal positions to indicate the continuous and perfect tenses respectively, e.g.:

a.   A dey go di oda said (I am going to the other side) -for continuous tense.
b.   Wi don finish di mash (we have finished the match) – for perfect tense.
c.   A don si am (I have seen it) -for perfect tense. Whereas, "go" with time marker is used to expressed future tense: Wi go go tumoro (We shall go tomorrow)

The absence of inflectional markers in the speaker's pidgin is a common feature of Yoruba language speakers which can be seen to be extended to pidgin as part of the reduction process. As such, it is not peculiar to young Yoruba speakers of pidgin English. Nevertheless, the meanings of the inflectional markers in English are compensated by the use of word markers such as 'dey' for 'ing' (continuous tense marker) and 'don' for 'ed' or 'en' in English for perfect or participle. Likewise, in the case of pluralization which is also indicated by number markers: tu, tri, fo, etc.

Similarly, the speakers expressed modality of ability by the use of "fi(t)" and "sabi", as putative addition, e.g: A suwe a fi du am (I swear, I can do it); Dey sabi ple mash o (They know how to play match or they can play ball). They form the plural forms by the use of number maker, e.g: won go (one goal); tu go (two goal); tri go (three goal).

In all instances, the speakers used 'no' at pre- verbal position to express negation, e.g.: in no play (he did not play); in no sabi (He does not know); in no skol (He did not score); a no go gri (I will not agree); di refiri no givam di kad (the referee did not give him the card).

Another important morphological variable observed is the words formation patterns which include the followings:

    v.   Compounding, as in: atol (at +all); fokop (fuck + up-meaning no sense!); sidon (sit + down); oboi (one + boy).

    vi.   Reduplications, as in: smo smo (gradually); folo folo (run after); ple ple (just or jokely) wel wel (very well); wuru wuru (manipulation); shap shap (fast or quickly); gongon (exactly). The reduplications were mostly used to indicate and express emphasis and manners except in the case of "wuru wuru" which is used as a noun (manipulation) and "gongon" which is used to express an adjective.

    vii.   Borrowing, as in: wayo, wuru-wuru (trick, manipulation-from Hausa); pepe (pepper-from English); mumu (a fool-from Yoruba); oga (master-from Yoruba); Jere (just-from Yoruba); bros (brothers-from English); moto (motor-from English).

    viii.   Blending, as in: focop (fuck +up); gimi (give me); comot (come +out); holam (hold +it (or -am in Nigerian Pidgin English); oboi! (one boy) now means, my friend.

    ix.   Clipping, as in: gri (from English verb agree): yu gri (you agree)

    x.   Coinage, as in: yeye (bad or naughty); yab (insult, ridicule)

    xi.   Sentence reduction: Abegi! (originally: I beg you) meaning, I am sorry or please; Abi! (originally: I be you) as a complete reduction of the sentence: I am with you. This now means, yes in responses to a question in the form of an exclamation. The speakers use the word formation above to add to the small lexicon of their pidgin.

On affixations, the speakers used bound suffix morpheme "-am" to indicate transitivity as in: pasam (pass it); kacham (catch it); bringam (bring it); fayaram (shut it); tellam (tell him); troam (throw it), etc. Lastly, on the morphological variables, it was clearly observed that the speakers used distinct pronoun forms for each of the cases and numbers:

a.   Personal pronouns: a (I), wi (we), i or in (he) am (him), mi (me), os (us), dey (they), dem (them), yu (you)

b.   Possessive Pronouns: yo or una (your)

c.   Relative Pronouns: wey (which, who, where); wen (when)

d.   Interrogative Pronouns: wia (where), hau (how)

The morphological features such as the absence of inflexion, lack of preposition differentiation, reduplications, etc. are a reflection of the Yoruba indigenous language.

iii. Lexical Variables

Lexis refers to the study of words in terms of choice and combination in usage (Adegbija, 1989; Lamidi, 2012). It is also concerned with the semantic meaning of words, extensions, shifts and coinage (Folakemi, 2011). Basically, the speakers draw their lexical items from English as the superstrate and others from the indigenous languages. Some words used were borrowed from English and the meanings were narrowed or extended literarily or metaphorically. In the sentence, wi go sho dem pepe (We will beat them), the meaning of the word, 'pepe' is borrowed from the English word, pepper, but the meaning is metaphorically transferred to mean 'beat'. Likewise, the word, 'fit' in the sentence, a fi du am (I can do it) has an extension of meaning from its English sense of suitability or appropriateness to mean ability or capability as it is used in the sentence. The sentence, oboi kom hia (My friend come here) has the word 'oboi' which is borrowed from English words 'one' and 'boy' that is 'one boy' as in a boy, and now narrowed to mean 'my friend'. Similarly, the word, bros was originally taken from the English word, 'brothers' but now reduced to bros to mean my brother or my friend. There is also the use of reduplications which were also used to express descriptive adjectives and manners for actions and some nouns such as 'wel wel', 'gongon', 'shap shap', 'folo folo', 'wuru wuru', etc.

7.	Wetin bi di skol gongon? (What is the exact score?)
8.	Du am shap shap (Do it quickly).
9.	Dey wan du os wuru-wuru (They want to manipulate us)
10.	 Di kochi dey do wuru-wuru (The coach is manipulating the game)
11.	 Di gai sabi ple wel wel (The guy plays very well)
12.	 Si am dey do folo folo (look at him following others)

Lastly, it can also be observed that the speakers used exclamation markers that are mostly derived from indigenous languages such as: Jere! (just-from Yoruba); Kai! (Hello-from Hausa); O ya! (let's start, do, or go-from Yoruba); E! (Ah! -from Yoruba); Abi! (yes! -from English: a reduction from I am with you) and Abegi! (please! - English: a reduction of I beg you). In the case of 'Abi', the meaning is extended to mean alternative marker 'or' in yes or no question, as in:

a.	Abi i no sabi? (Or does he not know?)
b.	Abi a no tel yu se a dey kom? (Did I not tell you I am coming?)

Similarly, the word 'Abegi!' which originally meant, I beg you, now extended to mean 'please', 'I am sorry' or excuse me, as in:

a.	 Abegi liv di bol fo mi (please leave the ball for me)
b.	Abegi a dey kom (I am coming)

All these add to the natural flavour of the indigenous language of the Nigerian pidgin English. The lexical variables show the kind of language which is usually associated

with young language speakers. The expressions such as bros! 'oga', 'abegi', 'folo folo', 'oboi', 'pepe', 'yeye', 'mumu' etc. sound very cordial or like slang which is a variety of language attributed to young language users. That is a variety without polite usage-vulgarity kind or peer's language. So, the semantic shift and extension try to accommodate the creativity of young language speakers to exercise their linguistic talent.

iv. Syntactic variables

The syntactic variables are concerned with word arrangement or order. A number of variables are considered here as observed in the study. They can be classified as follows:

1. Preposition: Apart from the complete zero use of prepositions in many cases, 'for' is often used as a substitution for many prepositions, e.g.: Mekai ple am fo yu (should I play it to you)

2. Emphasis: This was noted at the end of some sentences which end with na, ne, o, fa, ko e.g.: Na mi sikol di bol na (I was the one who scored the ball); Abi yu no sabi (Or don't you know how to do it); wai yu dey yab di gai na (why are you insulting the guy); abio o! (yes!). Besides, some speakers used the accusative 'mi' at the beginning of a sentence to express emphasis too. E.g.: Mi a dey kom (I am coming); mi a no si am (I did not see him); mi abi (I myself), etc.

3. Negation: The negation was clearly expressed with 'no' marker which is placed at the preverbal position. E.g. in no sabi (He does not Know); in no sikol (He did not score); a no go gri (I will not agree); di refiri no givam di kard (the referee did not give him the card).

4. Question: Questions were expressed with many of the English w/h question makers and with the putative 'abi' for tag questions and yes or no questions: wey wota? (Where is the water?); wetin na? (What is it?); wu go ask yu egen? (who will ask you again?) How fa? (How are you?); wai yu dey yab di gai na? (Why are you insulting the guy?).

5. Coordination: The use of comparative correlative construction with sabi…pass is also noted, e.g.: in sabi ple passam (He plays better than him).

6. Relative clause: There is also the use of generic relative marker-wey for relative clauses, eg:
   a. Di gai wey yu si (The guy you saw)
   b. A si di man wey givam di moni (I saw the man who gave him the money)

7. Sentence construction. Most of the sentences observed follow the same simple sentence patterns SVO:
   a. A fi kacham (I can catch it: SVO)
   b. In dey ple bol (He is playing ball: SVO)
   c. Mi du am (I did it: SVO)

d. Go bitam! (Attach him: ØVO)

e. Fayaram! (Shoot it: ØVO)
f. Holam! (Hold it or Attack him: øVO))
g.   Gimi di bol! (Give me the ball: øVOO)
h. Wash yo bak! (Watch your back- watch out! øVO)

From the syntactic description above, two sentence types are noted by the speakers within this setting. In the pitch, the players frequently use imperative sentences such as: go bitam! fayaram! Pasi mi! Gimi di bol! Wash yo bak! Folo am! etc. This is necessitated by the nature of the game activity which requires short imperative sentences for direct and quick information exchange. However, outside the pitch, different sentences are used. The use of sentence finals such as na, fa, ko, etc are indicators of the informality between the speakers. This is the case with the spirit of football sports where formality doesn't play any significant role in terms of politeness and respect.

Discussion of the Findings
This study investigates the sociolinguistic features of Nigerian pidgin English use among teenagers in selected places of football sports in Ilorin. The qualitative analysis shows cases of phonological variations in terms of vowels and consonant changes, substitutions, deletion and addition; absence of inflectional morphology, plural makers and tense makers, restricted or absence of preposition variations, and presence of different patterns of word formation for morphological variations; semantic extension and narrowing are also observed in the lexical variations; and sentence finals, and short imperative sentence constructions are also noted in the syntactic variations. The results show that these variations are influenced by Yoruba linguistic features. For instance, the absence of diphthongs and long vowels in Yoruba phonology necessitates their substitution with the short vowel sounds. Thus, the diphthong /eə/ in the words there / **ð**eə/ and where/weə/ changes to monophthong /ia/ in the words 'dia' (there) and wia (where) respectively. Likewise, the long vowel /i:/ in the word leave /li:v/ changes to /i/ as in: liv/liv/; and the word me /mi:/changes to mi /mi/. The consonant substitution is also observed in the words, there / **ð**eə/ where the voiced dental fricative is substituted by voiced alveolar plosive /d/ as in: dia (there / **ð**eə/), dey (they/ **ðei/**), dem (them/ **ð**em/); etc. and voiceless dental fricative /Ɵ/ changes to voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ as in: tro (throw/ Ɵrəu), etc.

The analysis of morphological features indicated that the words 'dey' and 'don' are used at pre-verbal position to indicate the continuous and perfect tenses respectively, to complement the absence of inflectional makers for tense as in:
a.   A dey go di oda said (I am going to the other side) -for continuous tense.

b.   Wi don finish di mash (we have finished the match) – for perfect tense.

Lastly, on the morphological variation, it was clearly observed that the respondents used a distinct pronoun forms for each of the cases and number: a (I), wi (we), i or in (he) am (him), mi (me), os (us), dey (they), dem (them), yu (you).

Furthermore, most of the lexical choices reflected the lexis of the English language and some of the indigenous languages. Though some lexical words were borrowed from English with their meanings being narrowed or extended literarily or metaphorically. For example, in the sentence, wi go sho dem pepe (We will beat them), the meaning of the word, 'pepe' is borrowed from the English word, pepper, but the meaning is metaphorically transferred to mean 'beat'. Likewise, the meaning of the word, 'fit' in the sentence, a fi du am (I can do it) is extended to mean ability or capability as it is used in the sentence. Finally, although most of the expressions used were in imperative form because of the nature of football sports that requires imperative structure for easy communication, the syntactic structure of the pidgin used follows the English sentence patterns of SVO:
a.   A fi kacham (I can catch it: SVO)
b.   In dey ple bol (He is playing ball: SVO)

These linguistic features indicate the variety of pidgin use as a variant. On the whole, the results of the analysis show evidence of contact between the Yoruba language and English where the former provides the lexis and the latter provides the structure. This justifies many scholars' position that pidgin is a language of contact (Holm, 2000; Aitchison, 2005; Finegan; 2012; Charles, 2013). These scholars maintain that pidgin is not a native language to any of the speakers who use it. Rather it is a simplified form of language used by speakers for the purpose of communication.

In addition, this study shows that the variety of pidgin is influenced by the setting, age and the English Language. For example, the lexical choices of sports vocabulary such as ple (play), bol (ball), etc.; and imperative syntactic structures such as Fayaram! (Shoot it: ØVO); Holam! (Hold it or Attack him: øVO); Gimi di bol! (Give me the ball: øVOO), etc. reflect the characteristic of informal language use among young people in football sports settings. Hence, these results reveal the social characteristics of the respondents. This reaffirms Labov's (2006; 2015) claims that variations are parts of linguistic features of speech community which could indicate some social characteristics or developments. The study also demonstrates that the variations of Nigerian pidgin English can be examined from different linguistic variables as indicated in Hudson's (2001) sociolinguistic variables or typologies and contexts.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the study, there are noticeable linguistic features that establish the variety of pidgin used in Ilorin as a variant of the Nigerian pidgin English. This is noticeable in the linguistic features of the pidgin used is characterized by the reduced or simplified structure of the English language which is influenced by some Yoruba linguistic features. Although this variety is produced out of the need for social interaction between language speakers who come in contact with each other in places of football sport in selected students' areas in Ilorin, most of the pidgin expressions collected were code-switched into Yoruba intermittently. So, the study noted that the Nigerian English pidgin in Ilorin may likely be subsumed or diffused into the Yoruba language. This may also make it difficult to develop into a creole. Therefore, the Nigerian pidgin English used in Ilorin can be said to be on the verge of dying as the researcher observed that the respondents use more Yoruba than the Nigerian pidgin English. Nevertheless, the Nigerian English pidgin in Ilorin can co-exist as an inter-language between different language speakers in students' areas.

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