

**PERCEIVED IMPACT OF PIDGIN ENGLISH ON THE WRITING
SKILLS OF UNDERGRADUATES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY, NIGERIA**

**Precious Nneamaka EMERUO
EDU2001498**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN. BENIN CITY**

FEBRUARY 2025

**PERCEIVED IMPACT OF PIDGIN ENGLISH ON THE WRITING
SKILLS OF UNDERGRADUATES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY, NIGERIA**

**Precious Nneamaka EMERUO
EDU2001498**

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATIONS, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY. IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE AWARD OF B.A. (Ed) DEGREE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

FEBRUARY 2025

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that this work was carried out by **Precious Nneamaka EMERUO** with matriculation number **EDU2001498** in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of B.A. (Ed) in English Language.

DR. (MRS.) P. I. O. AIKA
Project Supervisor

DR. O. I. NYORERE
Project Coordinator

Date: _____

Date: _____

PROF. R.B. DANNER
Head of Department

Date: _____

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God Almighty, the source of my strength throughout this programme.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher would like to extend my sincere and heartfelt thanks towards all those who helped me in making this project, a success. She is also grateful to her project supervisor, Dr. (Mrs.) P. I. O Aika, for her guidance, support and valuable feedback throughout the course of this project. The success of this project work would not have been possible without her efforts and constructive criticisms.

The researcher would also like to acknowledge her Head of Department, Prof. R. B. Danner project coordinator; Dr. O. I. Nyorere, the immediate past Head of Department, Dr. A. E. Osawaru, and her lecturers from both the Faculty of Education, and the Department of English and Literature, Faculty of Arts who has in one way or the other contributed to the success of this journey.

The researcher is very grateful to her mother, Mrs. Emerue Juliana Ebere, who has made sure that she gives what it takes for her to finish her school programme and whose encouragement, sacrifice and support has been her source of strength. Also to her guardians, Mrs. Eucharia Nwaiwu, her husband and family, that boosted her morale and provided valuable guidance and conducive environment for her throughout the process. Also to her aunty and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Ike Chinyere, thanks for your exclusive support. She also wishes to appreciate her siblings, Tochi, Chidiebere, Uchenna, Chigozirim and Isaac, who have been affected in every way possible by this quest.

She is grateful to Oselumese Ehiagwina for his continuous care and support throughout the course of this programme. She is also grateful to Osayande Oghoghosa Happiness (Chef Oggy), and her family, for their unwavering support and kindness towards her during the course of her study in school. The researcher acknowledges the support of her uncles, Mr. Anthanasius Offorkaire and Mr. Kelechi. Her sincere gratitude goes to her friends, Lilian, Chioma and Buba, and also her roommates over the years of her stay in the school hostel; Blessing, Pelumi, Chibuchi, Valentine, Mirabel, Beauty, Amanda, Onyi, Esosa, Increase and Benedicta. Thank you everyone for shaping this project and enhancing my learning experience.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
TITLE	ii
CERTIFICATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
ABSTRACT	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Research Questions	5
Purpose of the Study	6
Significance of the Study	6
Scope and Delimitation of the Study	7
Operational Definition of Terms	7
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	9
Nigerian Pidgin English	9
Attitude towards Nigerian Pidgin English	23
Sphere of Use of Nigerian Pidgin English	28
Impact of Nigerian Pidgin English on Students' Writing	32
Summary of Literature Reviewed	35

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	36
Research Design	36
Population of the Study	37
Sample and Sampling Technique	37
Research Instrument	37
Validity of the Instrument	38
Reliability of the Instrument	38
Method of Data Collection	38
Method of Data Analysis	38
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	39
Presentation of Results	39
Discussion of Findings	45
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	48
Summary	48
Conclusion	49
Recommendations	50
REFERENCES	52
APPENDIX	54

ABSTRACT

The study examined the perceived impact of Pidgin English on the writing skills of undergraduates in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. Three research questions were raised to guide this study.

The research design adopted for the study was the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of seven thousand, eight hundred and fifty six (7,856) students in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City. From the population, a sample size of one hundred and sixty (160) undergraduates was drawn using the simple random sampling technique. A research instrument tagged “Questionnaire on the Impact of Pidgin English on the Writing Skills of Undergraduates” was used to gather responses from students. The data retrieved were analyzed by the use of a computer software statistical tool (SPSS). Results after analysis were presented in tables using Mean and Standard Deviation.

The study revealed that students’ use of Pidgin English is on the rise. It was also found from the study that Pidgin English has significantly affected the formal writing skills of undergraduates in the University of Benin, Benin City. The study therefore recommended that universities and secondary schools alike should incorporate language awareness initiatives into their curriculum to educate students on the difference between formal and informal language use. Also, educational institutions should reinforce English writing courses, with emphasis on grammar, vocabulary, and formal writing skills with emphasis on the common errors influenced by Pidgin English.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Language is the hallmark of creation and human existence; every human activity is built on communication hence the inevitability of language in human relationships. According to Nwala and Obisike (2014), language is a system of producing meaningful and coherent expressions by a speech community for communication purposes. They further explain that if the network of expressions is distinct, such network is a language of its own. Language is an important tool that enhances human communication and interaction. It is a vital instrument in cultural transmission and preservation of a social group.

The value of communication to humans is infinite especially when daily human interaction is concerned. The functions of language consist of an extensive amount of people's historical experience, their belief system, and world view at large. In Nigeria, English language is the official lingua franca. In addition to English however, is a common language which is spoken in many parts of the country. The language is known variously as Pidgin English, Nigerian Pidgin and English-based Nigerian Pidgin.

The term pidgin is used to refer to a language which develops in a situation where speakers of diverse languages have a need to communicate but do not share a common language. Once a pidgin emerges, it is generally learned as a second language and used for communication among people who speak different languages.

Pidgin English started as a contingency language between the White merchants, who later on turned colonial masters with their Black traders. It has now become a general spoken language among the teeming population of Nigerian students, from basic education to tertiary education.

Pidgin English is commonly used among students at common rooms, kiosks, 'gossip' centers, viewing centers, playing ground, rally ground, relaxation spots, movie ground, lecture theatres and even in religious centers. The pidgin English has continued to fill the gap in communication created by Standard English among Nigerians of diverse linguistic and educational backgrounds. It is used by politicians during campaigns because it is the language of the masses; government officials use it to address rural dwellers during advocacy visits; advertisers use it to market products on bill boards and radio/television programmes. Doctors also use it to elicit responses from illiterate patients; pastors use it to preach in churches. That the use of Pidgin

English has spread through every Nigerian linguistic space is to state the obvious. According to Azubuike (2013), Pidgin is commonly used as a lingua franca among educated and illiterate Nigerians, given the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature of the society. This is further re-enforced by the nation's high illiteracy level that varies from one section of the country to another, and even within each section of the society.

In as much as the Nigerian pidgin English has aided Nigerians in communication and interaction, its pervasive use could be a factor affecting students' proficiency in Standard English, particularly in formal writing. Undergraduate students could be seen interacting in class using the pidgin English, and most times, make the mistake of writing in pidgin in examinations. Pidgin English is often less structured and does not adhere to grammatical rules of standard English. As a result, students may struggle to switch between the two, leading to errors in spelling, grammar and syntax. Also, many Nigerian undergraduates are habitual code-switchers, alternating between pidgin English and standard English in speech and perhaps in writing. Also, pidgin English may have a more limited vocabulary compared to standard English. As students become more accustomed to using pidgin English, they may find their vocabulary range in standard English shrinking.

This reduction in vocabulary can limit their ability to express complex ideas effectively in academic writing.

The use of pidgin English in academic writing has received a lot of criticisms by educators who prioritize standard English. For example, the pidgin English lacks grammatical structure and formal syntax of standard English, which can lead students and other academic to develop informal habits in sentence structure and grammar which can on the long run interfere with proper sentence construction and clarity in academic writing. Also, another instance is that pidgin English may tend to simplify vocabulary, which can limit students' English vocabulary and make it difficult for them to express complex ideas in standard English. In addition, the phonetic spelling in Pidgin English can sometimes carry over into formal writing, leading to spelling errors in Standard English. These negative perceptions can lead to lower grades and a diminished academic reputation for students who are unable to effectively transition between the two language forms.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the need to gain mastery of Standard English, many students find it hard to do so. One cause for this may be due to their use of Nigerian Pidgin English. Pidgin English is fast evolving to the point of being a

national and official language. It serves as a lingua franca in the Nigerian society and it is widely used among Nigerian undergraduates.

In spite of its role in everyday interactions, there is growing concern about its influence on the formal writing skills of undergraduate students. Academic writing is crucial for success in higher education, thus the integration of Pidgin English into academic contexts may affect negatively students' proficiency in standard English writing. This research therefore investigated how the use of Nigerian Pidgin English is perceived to impact the writing skills of undergraduates in the University of Benin, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the frequency of use of the Nigerian Pidgin English among undergraduates of the University of Benin, Benin City?
2. To what extent is Nigerian Pidgin English used in informal writing by undergraduates of the University of Benin?
3. What is the perceived impact of Pidgin English on the formal writing skills of undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the perceived impact of Pidgin English on the writing skills of undergraduates in the University of Benin, Benin City. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

- (i) find out the frequency of use of the Nigerian Pidgin English among undergraduates at the University of Benin.
- (ii) find out the extent of use of the Nigerian Pidgin English in informal writing among undergraduates of the University of Benin.
- (iii) identify the perceived impact of Pidgin English on the formal writing skills of undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would be of immense benefit to students, teachers and educational administrators. The research endeavor would help identify whether the use of the Nigerian Pidgin English contributes negatively or positively to students' writing skills. The findings would help to direct appropriate intervention measures to improve students' writing.

Teachers would find the results of the study useful as it would assist them to understand better the impact of Pidgin English on students' writing. This would guide them to develop appropriate ways to assist the students.

Finally, an understanding of students' perceived impact of Nigeria Pidgin English on their writing could help educational administrators to put policies in place to help address the writing challenges of undergraduates.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of the study is on the impact of Pidgin English on the writing skills of undergraduates in the University of Benin, Benin City. It would examine the concept of Nigerian pidgin, the origin and history, as well as the impact of Pidgin English, among others. It is restricted to undergraduates in the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined as used in the study.

Nigerian Pidgin English: is an English-based pidgin language spoken as a lingua franca across Nigeria. It is commonly referred to in most cases as broken English.

Formal Writing Skills: is the ability to effectively communicate ideas, thoughts and information in written form. This includes a range of competencies such as the proper use of grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and sentence structure, as well as the organization of content, clarity of expression and the ability to tailor the writing to a specific audience or purpose.

Perceived Impact: in the context of this research, it refers to the influence or effect that the use of Nigerian Pidgin English is felt to have on the writing skills of undergraduates.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews relevant literature focusing on the impact of Nigerian Pidgin English on students' writing. This discussion is done under the following sub-headings.

- Nigerian Pidgin English
- Attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin English
- Sphere of Use of Nigerian Pidgin English
- Impact of Nigerian Pidgin English on Students' Writing
- Summary of Reviewed Literature

Nigerian Pidgin English

Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) represents a very important aspect of Nigeria's linguistic and cultural identity. It functions not only as a lingua franca, but a bridging to the gap in communication among the country's different ethnic groups, which speak over 500 languages (Onome & Ogunjimi, 2020). Originating during the colonial era as a simplified means of communication between European traders and indigenous populations, the Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) has evolved into a full-fledged language

with its own grammatical structure, vocabulary, and cultural significance. The NPE provides a common ground for communication. It facilitates interaction among individuals who do not share a native language, thereby promoting national unity. NPE is predominantly used in informal settings, including social gatherings, markets, and everyday conversations. Some linguist authors have sought to find a perfect definition for Pidgin. A more perfect definition from Crystal (2008) in Onome & Ogunjimi (2020) viewed pidgin by scholars as a deviant form of standard language in which its structure, vocabulary and syntax have been reduced to a large extent. Pidgin can also be viewed as a concept is a type of simplified language which came into existence as a result of contact between two or more languages in order to find a means of communication, according to (Wikipedia 2023). This situation mostly occurs in trade, plantation, and colonization.

Pidgin is a language system that developed among people that don't have common language to share, it is language of contact situation where there is no common language to use. Todd (1977) defined pidgin as a marginal language which arises to fulfil certain restricted communication needs among people who have no common language'. On the other hand, Hudson (1972), views pidgin as Varieties created for very practical and immediate

purpose of communication between people who otherwise would have no common language whatsoever..."

A common factor necessitates the development of this simplified language, which is usually trade. This brings about reduction of the structure and vocabulary of the distinct native languages occur in order to facilitate shared understanding. People who speak different languages use pidgin after its development to communicate among themselves. Mufwene (2008) maintains that 'as the pidgins' communicative function increased (such as in the cities that emerged from erstwhile trade factories) these 'contact varieties' became structurally more complex, and regularity of use gave them more stability. These additional characteristics changed them into what is known as expanded pidgins like Tokpisin, Nootka Jargon, Eskimo Trade Jargon, Nigerian Pidgin English. It is obvious to say that the contact condition brought pidgin into existence and the purpose of having common language among people that keeping or maintaining its existence.

Obiechina (1984) Elube (1995) and Egbokhare (2001) are unanimous in their opinion that the Nigeria Pidgin English came into Nigeria through the coast. Chinua Achebe (as quoted by Bissong 1995), says, I think that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my Africa experience.

However, it will have to be a new English still in full harmony with its ancestral home but altered to fit its new Africa surrounding. The craze for new English necessitates the advent of the Pidgin English. This new English have to account for the total way of life of its speakers. The dynamic and generative capacities of Nigerian Pidgin to create from a limited set of lexical items have continued to foster communicative process and collaboration among Nigerians.

The history of Nigeria Pidgin English is traceable to centuries ago during the exploitation of Africa by the Europeans. According to Illah (2001), Nigeria Pidgin was developed from the negative attitude of the European colonial master who felt they could not allow their colonized people-Nigerians to speak the same language with them.

In other words, Nigerian pidgin was a product of the inferiority attitude the colonizers had towards the colonized. However Gramley (2009) gives account concerning the evolution of this language as "The result of the massive colonial and imperial instruction in West Africa did indeed have linguistic consequences. The people transported to the Caribbean were thrust into a situation where they could make little or no use of their native languages... Since, however, communication was a necessity, a makeshift

type of language emerged in which each side, slave and slaver, used the grammatical structures of his or her native language. In addition, to express content the slaves used vocabulary borrowed from the language of the slave masters, i.e. English, Portuguese, Dutch, or French. In the way, reached, contact languages, so-called pidgin, came into existence ".

This situation led to the birth of Nigeria Pidgin English which is mixture of indigenous language and English. The basic of NPE is traceable to the interface between the coastal inhabits of Nigeria and the Europeans. Egbokhare (2006) opines that the Portuguese made the first contact around 1469.

Elugbe and Omamor (1995) adds that "Nigerian Pidgin arose from the contact between multilingual coastal communities of Nigeria and visiting European explorers/traders – first, the Portuguese, then briefly the Dutch and finally the English". Due to these dealings, there was an abrupt prerequisite to converse in a mutual language. A channel of easy communication had to be devised which a simplified way of speaking English. The simplification led to the emergence of Pidgin.

Jowitt (2000), observation regarding the origin of Nigeria pidgin is: Nigeria Pidgin undoubtedly originated and developed its standard forms

during the period 3000 years that elapsed between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Its vocabulary is drawn from English, with Portuguese probably the source of such common words as dash, palaver and sabby (or sabe).

The European were not concerned about learning the dialect of the inhabitants possibly because they felt theirs was superior or Nigeria speak many different mutual incomprehensible languages. Consequently, the European began interacting with Nigerians in English. This newly developed language flourished to the extent of being the language of business transactions. According to Jowit (2000), Pidgin served as a language of trade for communication between Englishmen and Nigeria living along the Nigerian coast and pidgin was useful because it could be learned easily by both race'. The arrival of the British as trading partners and later as missionaries and colonial administrators further increase the demand for communication in NP which had metamorphosed into Englishmen within the passage of history.

Nigerian Pidgin English is no longer restricted in its use. It is non-negotiable that Nigeria, pidgin is a lingua franca in the country. This is so because it is the most effective means of communication and interaction

among the illiterate and even the literate people of different ethno linguistic backgrounds. According to Jubril (1995), the function of Nigeria pidgin have become more extensive. Apart from expanding its territorial spreads as a lingua franca on ethnically heterogeneous areas... it is now used in radio and television broadcasts and in poetry and drama.

The language does not only evolve but also has its origin from a mixture of other languages. Experience have shown that among the student, Nigerian pidgin English has gained a wider audience in all sectors of the economy, especially the educational sector.

However, today it is often used in ethnically mixed urban areas like Lagos as a common form of communication among people who have not had both formal educations in English and those who do not. The peculiar use of Nigerian Pidgin as a first or second language is common among the people of Rivers, Port Harcourt, Delta and Edo-Benin Parts of Nigeria, where it is predominantly used among the speakers for communication needs. This does not imply that Nigeria Pidgin is spoken in other parts of the country, but the greater number of users is predominant in areas mentioned here above.

The Features of Nigerian Pidgin English as Used by Undergraduates

According to mafeni (1971), 'Nigeria pidgin comprises a base language-English, which has been and continue to be modified by indigenous language. For Mensah (2011), English constitutes the super state source of borrowing for NP, While language like Portuguese, French, Nigerian English, Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba among others are its subtract lexical influence.

The construction of the Pidgin English is either impromptu or by convention by interlocutors within a speech community. According to Wilson, Fasingha and Gomba (2003), The pidgin English may be built from words, sounds or body languages from multiple languages and culture. There are no rules to it usage as long as the parties involved are able to understand each other. Its sound system, word formation strategies and sentence structure are devoid of complexity that could be encounter in learning any Nigeria language. Nigeria pidgin has experience gradual phases and internal innovations through calquing of sub straight pattern and other techniques in response to the expanding human activities and social conditions. In this regard, Nigerian pidgin has taken morphological, phonological and semantic strategies to acquire new words and expressions, thus increasing its vocabulary within the Nigerian sociolinguistic landscape.

Different strategies includes borrowing e.g. 'Dash' which means 'Gift' from Portuguese; Reduplication e.g. 'small small' means 'gently'; affixation e.g. 'Blacky' means 'a dark person'; Metaphorical extension e.g. 'water don pass garri' means 'a bad situation'; Compounding e.g. 'long throat' means 'glutton', Clipping e.g. 'bros' means "brother; Metaphors e.g. 'Up Nepa!' means 'light is restored'; Acronyms/ abbreviations e.g. 'TDB means till day break' etc.

In line with these features, Decamp (1971), Hymes (1974) and Hudson (1990) in Abdulahi-Idiagbon (2014), gave a synopsis of the characteristics of pidgin as follows:

- (i.) Elimination of grammatical devices like inflections, plural, possessives and tenses.
- (ii.) The use of reduplication as intensifiers.
- (iii.) Ability of a word to have semantic extensions i.e. expanded meanings.

One must note that irrespective of the features of pidgin English that can be identified, the language still has problems with codification. Amakiri, Asikiya, Igani, Boma, (2015) summarizes the problem as

- (i.) There is a general negative attitude towards Nigerian pidgin English. It is stigmatized and seen as the language of the lower class.

- (ii.) There is the problem of which orthography to adopt. Is it the etymology or the phonemic? Linguists are not agreed on this, even though a majority of them goes for the phonemic and its variants.
- (iii.) NPE is still largely an oral language. The need to write is still not considered strong enough.
- (iv.) The elites and linguists do not seem honest in their support for writing NPE. They declare support publicly and shield their children from it at home. The fear is usually that it will be a negative influence on English.
- (v.) Linguists and other groups first have to convince government on the need to write NPE. Even if this succeeds, there will be the problem of how it can be accommodated in the language policy and the usual problem of funding the implementation.

It is of interest to note that if there is any language to be suggested for adoption as a lingua franca or national language for Nigeria, the current popularity of the Nigerian pidgin has made it the only one. However the Europeans denied, disallowed and rejected the Nigerian pidgin as official and proper English language especially within the realms of education, administration and politics. Ilah (2001), concluded that it was the inferiority

presuppositions of the Europeans towards their colonized that made them not accept the pidgin of the colonized.

Nigerian pidgin has not been assigned any official recognition in the language policy of the country, but even the various federating units of the Nigerian states inadvertently recognizes it. Dauber (2005) notes this in his remark that: "Although, a major lingua franca, it has no official recognition, even without any policy statements, it performs a growing range of functions, including being a medium of public broadcasting, but no efforts has been to develop it in order for it to be able to cope with these functions as has been done for the major and to some extent also for minor indigenous languages"

Whatever the situation, Nigerian Pidgin English is generally becoming prominent in written discourse, despite its low social rating and lack of social standard orthography. For instance, Fatunde has initiated the writing of full-length plays in Nigerian pidgin, with only a pinch of Standard English to depict particular characters.

The bare fact about Nigerian pidgin is that no other language in Nigeria can compete with pidgin for having the largest speakers. Pidgin is the most widely spoken and its understanding has no boundary among Nigerians at both urban and rural settlements. According to Giwa, "it is surprising that no

language is widely and better used than pidgin, yet, no official ground, it does not exist". NPE has assumed a significant role in communication in Nigeria, especially between and among ethnic groups that do not share a common language. It has also acquired some status that emanates from the roles that it plays in the Nigerian society.

Furthermore, it could be argued that NPE has enhanced the propagation of national ideas, socio-cultural, linguistic and political developments as well as peace and unity in the country, since it is the only language that both the educated and uneducated, irrespective of their ethnic affinities it is identify with. Akande (2008), notes "there is a sense in which NPE could be regarded as a marker of identity and solidarity. It is an inter-ethnic code available to Nigerians who do not have a common language."

Nigerian pidgin English could be seen as a language that in a sense reflects national identity. Thus, many linguists and scholars have called repeatedly for the official recognition of the Nigerian pidgin English. Elugbe and Omamor (1991), and Egbokhare (2003), suggests that NPE be given the status of an official or national language while Igboanusi (2008), calls for its use as a medium of instruction in the early stage of primary school education, especially for NPE-speaking children. One major argument in

support of NPE as a national language, is that it is a neutral code as it has no ethnic base.

Igboanusi (2008), examines how NPE could be empowered in Nigeria and remarks that "education is the most important institution through which to raise the value of NPE. However, Igboanusi's (2008) study shows that there is no consensus among his subjects as to whether NPE should be given any official or national status as some of them believe, among other things, that NPE has no economic value.

Recently, the government has come to recognize the vital role that NPE plays in getting close to the masses. Jingles, posters, stickers and government campaigns for national awareness and mutual co-existence are now prepared in NPE and broadcast in the same language.

Having discussed Nigerian Pidgin English in context of its concept, origin and spread, features and status, is good to know its creolization aspect. By definition, creolization is the process of a pidgin rapidly expanding its vocabulary and grammatical rules, ultimately becoming a creole. According to Gramley (2009), "a creole is a native language like any other, but one with a special history, usually rooted in pidgin." When pidgin language becomes a variety which is learnt as a first language or mother tongue, it

becomes a Creole or it is said to have been creolized. In such a situation, the language expands to fulfil the roles of a native language. Its vocabulary increases greatly, it develops its own rules of grammatical construction and it is used for day-to-day activities. It is now used to express more complex ideas; it is no longer linguistically restricted like ordinary pidgin. A Creole therefore, is a language on its own right. Cristal (1998), argues that English based Creole is a major variety of modern linguistics with its own linguistic complexities and not a substandard or inferior version of the English language. Creoles give its speakers their linguistic identity as an ethnic group.

The present profile of NPE is that of a lingua franca, building linguistic and communicative bridges among the 400 ethnic groups in Nigeria. Starting from the coastal regions, it has metamorphosed into a lingua, penetrating inland to the nooks and crannies of Nigeria. Some of the known varieties of Nigerian Pidgin English include Ikom, Calabar, Warri, Port-Harcourt, Onitsha, and Ajegunle among others (the Warri variety is fast expanding towards creolization).

According to Ofuele (2010), Nigeria adopted among other things a change in nomenclature from NPE to "Naija" for this language "... because it

has creolized in some of the country, its functions have surpassed the functions of a pidgin and the term "pidgin" has helped to encourage derogatory connotations associated with it". On the other hand, Mensah (2011) asserts that We strongly agree that NPE is increasingly expanding its scope of functions and adding features which account for its uniqueness within the passage of history, that is from the area of slave trade with limited vocabulary to the dispensation of globalization with expanded and technical vocabulary, which has extensively enlarged its usage and applicability. We do not however agree that NP has fully creolized in any part of Nigeria though we must agree that the language is currently undergoing a shift towards creolization. There is no speaker of NP in Nigeria without a distinct mother tongue. NP merely serves as L2 to speakers without western education and L3 to speakers with such privileges. Consequently, pidgin English is still undergoing the process of creolization in Nigeria.

Attitude towards Nigerian Pidgin in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Nigerian pidgin has been an enduring phenomenon in the country right from its first use in the late 16th and early 17th century till date, as reputed by various scholars. Over the years, the terms "bad, improper, broken, slothful, lazy, faulty, ungrammatical, sloppy" language has been ascribed to pidgin.

Although theoretically speaking, no language is linguistically minor or major, legitimate or bastardised, people tend to perceive NPE as corrupt, bastardized or lesser language Igboanusi (2008), Mann (1996). As pointed out by Elugbe and Omamor (1991), attitudes towards NPE are not determined by any objective criteria. In spite of the fact that NPE is used by more than two thirds of the total population of Nigeria today Faraclas (2014), Igboanusi (2008) and despite its use by people from different walks of life including graduates and professionals Akande (2008), the general attitude of the majority of Nigerians NPE are still not encouraging. Nadine wrote that "words spoken correctly and pleasingly pronounced are jewels, but grammatical errors and pidgin are ugly" this misconception of Nigerian pidgin as trying to be English and failing ought to be corrected because Nigerian pidgin is a language with its own vocabulary and structure just like standard English is.

According to Mensah (2011), some of the explanation put toward in support of pidgin English as being a sort of distortion of standard English, is that discourse-pragmatics is an imperative factor in understanding both the structural and lexical borrowings that characterize usages in pidgin English,

and that Nigerian pidgin is replete with adequate descriptive, prescriptive and grammatical forms.

The negative attitude towards Nigerian pidgin English and its use in formal settings is because of the misconception people have about it. Over the years, its simplicity has been misconstrued. It is not such a very simplified language as many people think. Jeff Siegel of the University of New England in Australia investigated the use of pidgin in an article titled "Using a Pidgin Language in Formal Education: Help or Hindrance?" Siegel gave three reasons why pidgin language usage is rare in formal education as follows:

- i.) It is a degenerate language.
- ii.) It is a waste of time to use a pidgin, when the standard language is the key to success in education and employment.
- iii.) The use of a pidgin; will interfere with students subsequent acquisition of the standard language.

Nevertheless, the linguistic standing as well as social acceptability of pidgin as a form of language has changed dramatically over the century.

In Nigeria today, the attitude towards pidgin has improved when compared to what it was some decades ago, even though it's still not

recommended for use in formal settings like school, judiciary and so on. Mensah (2011), states that in spite of the antagonism against NP, it still holds sway, growing in prominence and utility unlike the New Zealand pidgin of the Maori people which was replaced with standard English through mass education, or the Chinese pidgin English which died out in China as a result of being forbidden by the Chinese authorities. Every movement targeted at eliminating NP or reducing its spread and influence in Nigeria has always naturally fizzled out of reckoning. A case in point was the proposed WAZOBIA project which called for the artificial creation of Nigeria's national language based on input from the resources of the three so-called major languages in Nigeria. The concept is derived from the word "come" in these languages Wa (Yoruba), zo (Hausa), bia (Igbo). The project was a way of whittling down the influence of NP but the entire concept died on arrival. NP has come to stay with Nigerians and is acquiring new roles in every facet of the country's economic and socio-political life.

Furthermore, Ajibade, Awopetu, and Adeyemi (2012), examined Nigerian youths perception in relation to Nigerian pidgin. The major question they sought to answer: what do Nigerian youths think or make of pidgin as a linguistic choice available to them in their everyday language-based

interrelationships? "The study investigated the influence of tribe, institution, age, location, sex and social status on the youth's perception of pidgin as a unifying factor, and its consideration as a recognized official language in the Nigerian language policy". In the tertiary institutions, pidgin has become the main informal register in use between students and is often, though not exclusively used even if those communicating share the same mother tongue. Some of the students are of the view that the use of pidgin among their fold is an identity issue, which relates to the shared characteristics of the members of their groups, and which gives security and status of their shared experiences, and offers them a sense of belonging.

An issue which is worth mentioning is that there is no insistence in some institutions on the correct use of English language, coupled with a free willing attitude towards the language. Situations where people who speak impeccable are sometimes labelled 'Ajobota' (over pampered child). Even non language teachers/lecturers push the teaching of correct English to the doorsteps of language teachers/lecturers.

This implies that most are not concerned about their expressions if it is correct or not. This increase growth and the spread of NPE among the younger generation of Nigerians show a high level of democratization of the

language in Nigeria slowly creating inconsistent competition among the contending three principal languages for the status of super-official national language which English has enjoyed for quite a long time. Socially, NPE has taken the regular social medium of communications as many tourists from around the world are rushing to understand a simplified Nigerian English to keep their businesses and stay pretty seriously in a commercial cities like Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Benin city and Warri where a greater part of foreign workers are found.

Historically, Nigeria Pidgin is a reflection of the value. For this reason, various scholars have been advocating it rightful place in the society. This has yielded positive result in a way because the past twenty years, written Pidgin has become a means of composing poems and plays. In addition, Amakiri, Asikia, Igani and Boma (2015) posits that the history of English itself reinforces the need for NPE to be left to grow its own orthography. English did not become a prestigious language in one day. What we call English today is a fusion of the dialects of Germanic tribes of the Angles, Saons and Jutes, following the Germanic invasion in about the year 449 (Baugh and Cable, 1978:46, Barber, 1993:100). The following from Baugh and Cable (1978:42) shows that we are often carried away by English.

Sphere of Use of Nigerian Pidgin English

Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) is regarded as one of the most widely used languages in Nigeria. It originated from the contact between English-speaking Europeans and indigenous Nigerian communities during the colonial era, and has since then evolved from a trade language into a very large linguistic structural language with its use in social, economic, cultural, and political interactions. Today, it functions as a lingua franca, bridging communication gaps across Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups.

The Nigerian Pidgin English occurs in informal settings, where it acts as a bridge between people of different ethnicities who might not share a common indigenous language. In urban centers like Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, it serves as a primary mode of communication in markets, streets, homes, and social gatherings. It also facilitates interpersonal connections, promotes a sense of belonging, and reflects shared cultural experiences. This informality allows speakers to express themselves more freely while propagating solidarity and unity among diverse communities.

In the media, the Nigerian Pidgin English has carved a prominent niche. Radio stations, such as Wazobia FM, broadcast exclusively in Pidgin, attracting vast audiences across social strata. These stations provide news,

music, and entertainment, making information accessible to those who may not be fluent in Standard English. Similarly, television programs, like “Papa Ajasco” and various Nollywood films, incorporate the Nigerian Pidgin English to reflect everyday. Also in the music industry, it is worthy of note to state that the Nigerian Pidgin English plays a central role. Afrobeat, hip-hop, and highlife musicians often integrate Pidgin into their lyrics, creating songs that resonate with both local and international audiences. Artists like Burna Boy, Wizkid and Davido use Pidgin to convey powerful messages about social issues, politics, and identity.

Also in politics, some politicians frequently use the Nigerian Pidgin English during campaigns and public addresses to connect with the masses. Its informal tone and wide reach make it an effective tool for conveying messages to the electorates. By speaking in Pidgin, politicians project an image of accessibility and relatability, thereby building trust among constituents. For instance, during elections, campaign slogans and posters often incorporate Pidgin to ensure that their messages resonate with the broader population.

Moreover, social movements and activism have harnessed the power of the Nigerian Pidgin English to mobilize citizens. During the End SARS

protests against police brutality, Nigerian Pidgin slogans and chants helped to unify diverse ethnic groups and communicate their grievances effectively. This accessibility helped to facilitate broader participation and ensures that important messages reached all segments of the society.

Also in Education, The impact of the Nigerian Pidgin English remains a debate. While it is not formally recognized as a medium of instruction in Nigerian schools, it is often used informally to explain complex concepts and terms to students who struggle with understanding and learning with Standard English. Teachers sometimes switch to Nigerian Pidgin to ensure that students have a full grasp of difficult topics, particularly in multilingual classrooms where many students have limited English proficiency. However, the formal education system in Nigeria has discouraged its use, in that they see it as a potential threat to the learning of Standard English which is one of the basis for schooling.

In addition to the afore-mentioned, the Nigerian Pidgin English dominates economy as a sector, thereby impacting business transactions. Market traders, artisans, and small-scale entrepreneurs rely on it to communicate with customers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Its simplicity and accessibility make it an invaluable tool for negotiation and

customer relations. Additionally, corporate organizations have recognized the marketing potential of Pidgin. Advertisements in Pidgin often target lower and middle-income groups, using humor and relatable language to promote products and services effectively.

The advent of social media has further expanded the sphere of the Nigerian Pidgin English. Social platforms like Twitter (Now 'X'), Tiktok, Facebook and Instagram are filled with Pidgin content, ranging from memes to political commentary, and others. This digital presence has helped to boost the level of pidgin domination in Nigeria, and even beyond. Online influencers and comedians, such as Geh Geh, Mr. Macaroni, Broda Shaggi and Lasisi Elenu make use of Pidgin to create content.

Having stated the application of the Nigerian Pidgin English in almost all spheres of the society, it is perfect to state that it is more than just a means of communication, but a symbol of Nigerian identity and resilience. Its widespread use reflects the country's cultural diversity and adaptability. It helps to build a sense of unity and national pride, transcending ethnic and regional diversities. Many Nigerians prefer to make use of Pidgin because they feel it is our own form of English, free from any Western domination and control.

Impact of Nigerian Pidgin English on Students' Writing

In many secondary schools and universities across Nigeria, students frequently use Nigerian Pidgin English both inside and outside the classroom. It serves as a tool for communication among students, often replacing indigenous languages and even Standard English in some contexts. Social media platforms, which are popular among students, further enforce the use of Pidgin through informal conversations, memes, and entertainment contents. The ease and comfort associated with the Nigerian Pidgin mean that students often revert to it when expressing themselves, sometimes unconsciously. This prevalence raises concerns about its impact on students' proficiency in formal writing, where Standard English is the expected medium of communication.

One of the most commonly cited issues is the interference of Pidgin grammar and syntax with Standard English. The Nigerian Pidgin English has its own rules that often differ from the regular English. For example, Pidgin tends to omit some certain verbs and articles, which can lead to errors in sentence construction when students write in Standard English. Phrases like "He go school" (He goes to school) or "I no sabi" (I don't know) shows that they are different in structure. When students take this kind of English into

their academic writing, it results in some sort of errors. The NPE's vocabulary is somewhat a simplified and modified version of the Standard English. Students who are more accustomed to using Pidgin may struggle with finding appropriate words or expressions when writing in formal English. This gap can lead to the use of colloquial or inappropriate language in academic projects, essays, and other writing, which will reduce drastically the quality of their writing. Reliance on pidgin can also affect phonetic spelling which will also be revealed in students' writing. Since Pidgin words are often written as they are pronounced (e.g., "dem" for "them", and "wan" for "want"), students may transfer these habits to Standard English which will later result in spelling errors. This is particularly problematic in examinations and assignments, where accurate spelling is very important. The dominance of Pidgin in social interactions and media means that many students are less exposed to Standard English outside the classroom, or may just choose to make use of Pidgin because of its ease. This can hinder their ability to develop strong writing skills.

Whilst talking about the negative side of the Nigerian Pidgin English, it is good to also state some of the positive impact of the Nigerian Pidgin English on students writing skills. By using Pidgin as an intermediate step in

communication, teachers can explain complex concepts in a language that students understand, gradually moving fully into Standard English. This can enhance comprehension and understanding as well as making learning more accessible. Also, Pidgin being an integral part of Nigerian culture allows students to express their identity and connect with their culture. Students should be encouraged to appreciate and respect Pidgin. Why? Because it can help to promote positive attitude towards language learning which will in turn affect them positively and improve their academic performances. And better their writing skills.

Summary of Literature Reviewed

In summary, in the easy, the nature of the Pidgin English language, its origin, spread, features, status, have been discussed in line with the study on perceived impact of Pidgin English on the writing skills of undergraduates in the University of Benin.

In addition, the society's attitude towards the language, its creolization and popularization have been considered.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methods used in carrying out the study. This chapter is discussed under the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection

- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The reason for the adoption of this design was based on the fact that the phenomenon the study is concerned about had already occurred.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised the total number of seven thousand, eight hundred and fifty-six (7,856) students in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Ugbowo Campus.

Sampling and Sampling Technique

A sample size of one hundred and sixty (160) students were used for this study. Twenty students were picked from each of the eight (8) departments in the Faculty of Education, making it a total of one hundred and sixty (160) students that partook in the study. They were selected using the simple random sampling technique.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used for this study is a structured questionnaire entitled: “the perceived impact of pidgin English on the writing skills of undergraduates in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria”. The instrument is divided into four sections, with Section A covering the personal/demographic data of the respondents, while Section B – D covers the information on the perceived impact of pidgin English on the writing skills of undergraduates in the University of Benin.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by the project supervisor and two experts in the Department of Educational Foundations. Their suggestions and criticisms were effected in the final draft of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, it was administered to twenty (20) students of similar characteristics as those in the study. The result of their responses were correlated and a reliability coefficient of 0.7 was obtained using Cronbach’s Alpha. This result shows the instrument is reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to the students. The respondents were duly guided on how to respond to the questionnaire. Collection was on-the-spot.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for the study was analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents data and discussed result on the impact of pidgin English on the writing skills of undergraduates in the University of Benin, Benin City. The sample size used for this study is a total number of one hundred and sixty (160) students who answered the research questions appropriately. For the purpose of this study, items having a mean value >2.5 is *Agreed*, while items having a mean value of <2.5 is *Disagreed*. The data presented below is a tabular presentation of results gotten from the field.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	90	56.3%
Female	70	43.7%
Total	160	100%

Table 1 above shows the distribution of respondents by gender. A total of one hundred and sixty (160) students were administered the questionnaire, out of which 90 are males representing 56.3% of the samples, and 70 are females, representing 43.7% of the same group.

SECTION B: Response to the Research Items

Research Question One: *What is the frequency of use of Nigerian Pidgin English among undergraduates of the University of Benin, Benin City?*

Table 2: Frequency of Use of Nigerian Pidgin English

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1.	I speak Nigerian Pidgin English frequently on a daily basis.	160	3.12	0.85	Agreed
2.	I use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently when communicating with friends.	160	2.45	0.10	Disagreed
3.	I use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently during casual conversations.	160	2.52	1.06	Agreed

4.	I use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently in academic discussions.	160	2.60	0.90	Agreed
5.	I use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently during online chats.	160	3.13	0.90	Agreed

Table 2 shows responses on the frequency of use of Nigerian Pidgin English among undergraduates of the University of Benin, Benin City. The first item reveals that a good number of undergraduates speak Nigerian Pidgin English frequently on a daily basis. This is because the mean value 3.12 with standard deviation 0.85 surpassed the criterion mean 2.50. Also, the second item on the questionnaire showed that not all undergraduate students use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently when communicating with friends. Therefore, the statement was marked “Disagreed”. This decision was made on the basis that the Mean value of 2.45 is lower in comparison with the criterion mean value. Also, from item 3, respondents agreed collectively with a mean value of 2.52 and standard deviation of 1.064 that they make use of the Nigerian Pidgin English frequently during casual conversations. This is so because the mean value is higher in comparison to the criterion mean. Furthermore, item 4 revealed a mean value of 2.60 of students who agreed that they use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently in academic discussions, with a standard deviation of 0.10. Lastly, item 5 revealed a mean value of 3.13 and

standard deviation of 0.90 showing the number of students who agreed that they use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently during online chats. Therefore, it can be concluded that most students frequently use Nigerian Pidgin English in the University of Benin, Benin City.

Research Question Two: *To what extent is Nigerian Pidgin English used in informal writing by undergraduates of the University of Benin?*

Table 3: Extent of Use of Nigerian Pidgin English in Informal Writing

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
6.	I usually text with Pidgin English.	160	2.20	0.87	Disagreed
7.	I send messages to people I am familiar with in Pidgin English.	160	3.06	0.87	Agreed
8.	I use pidgin English to form my notes in class.	160	2.86	0.91	Agreed
9.	I use Nigerian Pidgin English	160	3.78	0.50	Agreed

for communicating with peers.

10.	I do not use Pidgin English in informal writing.	160	3.58	0.79	Agreed
-----	--	-----	------	------	--------

Table 5 collates data and responses from respondents, who gave their opinions on the extent to which Nigerian Pidgin English is used in informal writing by undergraduates of the University of Benin. Item one provided a mean value of 2.20 and standard deviation of 0.87 indicating students who usually text with Pidgin English. This statement was not accepted because the mean value is less than the criterion mean in comparison. Also, item 7 answering research question two showed a mean value of 3.06 and standard deviation of 0.87 indicating students' response that they send messages to people they are familiar with in Pidgin English. This is accepted because the mean value is greater than the criterion mean. Also, item 8 showed students' response on using Pidgin English to form notes in class. This was accepted because the mean value of 2.86 is greater than the criterion mean. Item 9 also showed the response of students to using Nigerian Pidgin English for communicating with peers. It is accepted because the mean value of 3.77 is greater than the criterion mean value of 2.50. Lastly, item 10 showed that students do not use Pidgin English in informal writing. This is marked acceptable because the mean value of 3.58 is greater than the criterion mean of

2.50. Therefore, it can be concluded that students frequently use Nigerian Pidgin English in informal writing.

Research Question Three: *What is the perceived impact of Pidgin English on the formal writing skills of undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City?*

Table 4: Perceived Impact of Nigerian Pidgin English on Formal Writing Skills

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
11.	Pidgin has affected my writing abilities to the point where I occasionally fail to distinguish between present and past tenses in a phrase.	160	3.58	0.74	Agreed

12.	Expressing myself through writing in school is always difficult because I am always expected to write in English.	160	3.40	0.81	Agreed
13.	I believe frequent use of Nigerian Pidgin English affects my formal writing skills.	160	3.36	0.79	Agreed
14.	I find it challenging to switch from Nigerian Pidgin English to formal English in academic writing.	160	3.28	0.85	Agreed
15.	Since I have been using the Nigerian Pidgin English, it has introduced grammatical errors in my formal writing.	160	3.43	0.71	Agreed

Table 4 revealed the perceived impact of Pidgin English on the formal writing skills of undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City. All responses from items 11 – 15 was accepted at mean values of 3.58, 3.40, 3.36, 3.28 and 3.43 with standard deviation of 0.74, 0.81, 0.79, 0.85 and 0.71 respectively. The response of students to item 11 that pidgin has affected their writing abilities to the point where they occasionally fail to distinguish between present and past tense in a phrase is highly significant. Also, students' response to item 12 that expressing themselves through writing in school is always difficult because they are always expected to write in English, is significant and could be an impediment to them. In addition, students' response to item 13

showed to a high degree that a good number of students believe that frequent use of Nigerian Pidgin English affects their formal writing skills. Some even find it challenging to switch from Nigerian Pidgin English to formal English in academic writing. This is found in item 14. A good number of students also indicated that since they have been using the Nigerian Pidgin English, it has introduced grammatical errors in their formal writing. Therefore, it can be concluded that Pidgin English has affected students' formal writing abilities negatively.

Discussion of Findings

The study focused on the perceived impact of pidgin English on the writing skills of undergraduates in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. From the results presented and analyzed above, discussions of the result are listed below;

Data provided in research items 1 – 5 answered research question one which is on the frequency of use of Nigerian Pidgin English among undergraduates in the University of Benin. It is the Section B of the questionnaire. A good number of respondents agreed to their frequency of use of the Nigerian Pidgin English, except for item 2 having a mean value of 2.450 which is less than the criterion mean. This item sought to know if students use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently when communicating with friends. On the

frequency of use of the Nigerian Pidgin English among students, Ajibade, Awopetu and Adeyemi (2012) confirmed that pidgin has become the main informal register in use between students.

Also, data provided in research items 6 – 10 answered research question two on the extent of use of Nigerian Pidgin English in informal writing. A good number of respondents who provided answers to the research instrument agreed that they send messages to people they are familiar with in Pidgin English. Also, they agreed that they use Pidgin English to form notes in class, as well as using the Nigerian Pidgin English for communicating with peers. But they agreed that they do not use Pidgin English in informal writing. Their response to item 6 was different in that undergraduates disagreed to the statement asking if they usually text with Pidgin English. It is noticed that a good number of undergraduate students are not familiar with texting in Pidgin English, though they speak it to a very large extent.

Findings from Research Question Three was presented in items 11 – 15 of the questionnaire. It sought to know the perceived impact of Nigerian Pidgin English on the formal writing skills of undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City. The finding was valid in that respondents gave a positive response to all the items provided. This means that Pidgin English has affected

significantly their formal writing skills. Therefore, there is the need for students to know how to strike the balance, and know the context to which they are to use Pidgin English. For the researcher, the negative impacts can only be reduced if undergraduate students avoid the use of Pidgin English within the school community. This will help improve their formal writing skills and improve their English vocabularies, especially in Benin City.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study examined the perceived impact of Pidgin English on the writing skills of undergraduates in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. The researcher made use of the descriptive survey method. Three (3) questions were raised to guide the study and are stated as follows:

1. What is the frequency of use of the Nigerian Pidgin English among undergraduates of the University of Benin, Benin City?

2. To what extent is Nigerian Pidgin English used in informal writing by undergraduates of the University of Benin?
3. What is the perceived impact of Pidgin English on the formal writing skills of undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City?

The researcher sampled one hundred and sixty (160) undergraduates in the eight departments in the Faculty of Education. The sampling technique used for selecting respondents for the study is the simple random sampling technique. A research instrument tagged “Questionnaire on the Impact of Pidgin English on the Writing Skills of Undergraduates” was used to gather responses from students. It comprised of Four Sections. Section A was designed to collect demographic data of the students, while Sections B – D answered the research questions of the study. Data gathered from the questionnaire administered to students in the various Departments in Education were analyzed by the use of mean and standard deviation.

Findings from the study revealed that:

1. Most students frequently use Nigerian Pidgin English in the University of Benin, Benin City.
2. Students frequently use Nigerian Pidgin English in informal writing.

3. Nigerian Pidgin English has affected students' formal writing abilities negatively.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) is frequently used among undergraduates, especially in informal conversations and digital communication. The widespread adoption of the Nigerian Pidgin English is made known by its accessibility, ease of expression, and role as a form of language among students from diverse linguistic backgrounds like Igbo, Bini, Hausa, and so on. This high frequency of use as indicated in the findings of the study suggests that the NPE is deeply embedded in student interactions, reinforcing its relevance in both academic and social environments. However, this raises serious concerns about its potential influence on students' formal writing skills.

The extent of NPE usage in informal writing, such as on social media, text messages, and personal notes, further stresses its impact on students' writing skills. Many undergraduates unconsciously make use of Pidgin expressions, spelling and sentence structures into their formal writing, often leading to errors in grammar and punctuations, among others.

The perceived impact of NPE on formal writing skills of students is embedded with challenges in spite of its advantages culturally. One notable challenge is that the NPE can erode students' competence in Standard English writing. Therefore, to mitigate the effects, educators should implement language intervention programmes such as writing workshops, reinforcement of grammar rules, and so on. By doing this, students would be able to retain the cultural significance of Pidgin English while strengthening their mastery of formal writing skills necessary for academic and professional growth.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended;

1. Universities and secondary schools alike should incorporate language awareness initiatives into their curriculum to educate students on the difference between formal and informal language use. Workshops and seminars on this can help students distinguish between Nigerian Pidgin English and Standard English, ensuring their appropriate usage.
2. Educational institutions should reinforce English writing courses, with emphasis on grammar, vocabulary and formal writing skills. Lecturers can focus on common errors influenced by Pidgin English and exercises to help students improve their writing proficiency.

3. With the increase in the influence of informal digital communication, universities should introduce students to professional writing platforms, grammar checking tools and structured writing applications that reinforce formal English usage. This will to a large extent help curb the unintentional inclusion of Pidgin English in academic and official documents.
4. Lecturers should take an active role in correcting students' formal writing. They should try as much as possible to discourage the use of Pidgin English in assignments, while promoting the culture of discipline and accuracy in both spoken and written communication.

REFERENCES

- Ajibade, Y.A., Adeyemi, B.B. & Awopetu, E.O. (2012), "Unity in Diversity: the Nigerian Youth, Nigerian Pidgin English and the Nigerian Language Policy". *Journal of Educational and Social Research*. Vol. 2(3), pp. 289-298.
- Amakiri, Asikiya, Iganbi & Boma (2015). The Effect of Pidgin in the Teaching and Learning of Standard English in Nigeria. *International Journal of English Education*. Vol. 1(4), pp. 120-134.

- Azubuike, I. (2013). Pidgin English: A medium for effective communication? Vanguard. Retrieved on September, 9, 2013 from: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/09/pidgin-english-a-medium-for-effective-communication/>
- Crystal, D. (2003). *The English language in Nigeria*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Egbokhare, F. O. (2003). 'The story of a language: Nigerian Pidgin in spatiotemporal, social and linguistic context'. In Lucko, P., L. Peter and H. Wolf (eds.) 2003. *Studies in African Varieties of English*. Frankfurt: Lang., 21-40.
- Elugbe, B. & Omamor, A. P. (1991). *Nigerian Pidgin: Background and Prospects*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Elugbe, B. (2015). *Nigerian Pidgin: Some Matters Arising*. In I. Kamalu (Ed). *Issues in the Study of Language and Literature: Theory and practice* (pp. 428 – 436). Ibadan: Kraft Books.
- Faraclas, N. (2004). *Nigerian Pidgin English: From Marginalization to Recognition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Jowitt, D. (2000). *Nigerian English Language*. Lagos: Longman Nigeria Plc.
- Jowitt, D. (2009). *English Language and Literature in Historical Context*. Ibadan: Spectrum
- Jowitt, D. (2015). The History of the English Language: A sketch. In I. Kamalu (Ed). *Issues in the study of language and literature: Theory and practice* (pp. 118 – 132). Ibadan: Kraft Books.

- Jubril, M. (1995). *The Elaboration of the Function of Nigeria Pidgin*. In Bang Dose et al. (Ed.) *New Englishes: A West African Perspective*. Ibadan: Mosuno Publishers and Bookseller.
- Mensah, E. O. (2011). *Lexicalization in Nigerian Pidgin*. *Concentric Studies in Linguistics*, 37.
- Nwala, M.A. & Obisike, I.O. (2014). *Aspects of the English Grammar*. Port Harcourt: Obisco.
- Omari, S.B.K (2010). *The Impact of the Use of Pidgin on Students' Use of the English Language: A Case Study of Selected Secondary Schools in Three Districts in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana*. Retrieved from <https://ir.knust.edu.gh/items/5c456138-6355-4bb8-ac3f-c3b828820afd>

APPENDIX A

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS FACULTY OF EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE IMPACT OF PIDGIN ENGLISH ON THE WRITING SKILLS OF UNDERGRADUATES

SECTION A: Demographic Data

INSTRUCTION: Please kindly indicate your answer by ticking (✓) the appropriate box.

Gender: Male () Female ()

SECTION B: Frequency of Use of Nigerian Pidgin English

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(a)	I speak Nigerian Pidgin English frequently on a daily basis.				
(b)	I use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently when communicating with friends.				
(c)	I use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently during casual conversations.				
(d)	I use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently in academic discussions.				
(e)	I use Nigerian Pidgin English frequently during online chats.				

SECTION C: Extent of Use of Nigerian Pidgin English in Informal Writing

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(a)	I usually text with Pidgin English.				
(b)	I send messages to people I am familiar with in Pidgin English.				
(c)	I use pidgin English to form my notes in class.				
(d)	I use Nigerian Pidgin English				

	for communicating with peers.				
(e)	I do not use Pidgin English in informal writing.				

SECTION D: Perceived Impact of Nigerian Pidgin English on Formal Writing Skills

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(a)	Pidgin has affected my writing abilities to the point where I occasionally fail to distinguish between present and past tenses in a phrase.				
(b)	Expressing myself through writing in school is always difficult because I am always expected to write in English.				
(c)	I believe frequent use of Nigerian Pidgin English affects my formal writing skills.				

(d)	I find it challenging to switch from Nigerian Pidgin English to formal English in academic writing.				
(e)	Since I have been using the Nigerian Pidgin English, it has introduced grammatical errors in my formal writing.				