

**MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF NOUN PLURALIZATION IN
NIGERIAN PIDGIN**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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APPROVAL PAGE

I, **MACAULAY EBUBECHUKWU MICHAEL**, a student of the Department of linguistics university of Benin with the matriculation number **ART2100790**, have completed the requirements for course work and research for the bachelor of arts degree of the university of Benin. The research work contained in this project is a product of my personal effort and does not contain any previously written or published material that has been submitted in any other degree or diploma program from any university or higher institution of learning

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PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **MACAULAY EBUBECHUKWU MICHAEL** with the matriculation number ART210079 declare that this project work - “**MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF NOUN PLURALIZATION IN NIGERIAN PIDGIN**” has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test (with a score of _____%) and so do not violate any copyright regulations.

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Date: _____

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God for having mercy on me and helping me through the rashness of life while trying to finish this project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I'm grateful to the Lord for all he has done for me throughout my journey in Uniben. I also want to appreciate my parents who have always been there for me and fought with me through this school, they've really done a lot for me and I wouldn't have come this far without them.

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ABSTRACT

This research presents a morphological analysis of noun pluralization in Nigerian Pidgin (NP), a vital and dynamic lingua franca whose core grammar remains significantly under-documented and often misunderstood. Drawing on descriptive linguistic principles, this study rigorously analyzed corpus and elicited data from University of Benin students, affirming NP's status as a stable, highly efficient linguistic system. The analysis reveals that NP employs an economical analytical system for plurality, a distinct approach when contrasted with English inflectional morphology. Plurality is typically marked externally by prenominal quantifiers or numerals (e.g., ten egg or plenty shoe), demonstrating a rule-governed avoidance of redundant marking. Crucially, the post-nominal marker "dem" (e.g., pikin dem) has undergone complete grammaticalization and lexicalization, acting as a dedicated plural indicator, especially in definite contexts. This key structural feature reflects a deep and successful influence from local Nigerian substrate languages. Ultimately, this study concludes that the NP pluralization system is internally consistent, rule-governed, and structurally elegant. By establishing the sophisticated stability of this core nominal feature, this research significantly contributes to creole studies and offers compelling evidence that NP is a language optimally designed for clarity and effective communication.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Nigerian Pidgin is a popular lingua franca spoken across Nigeria and neighboring countries like Cameroon and Ghana. It has become especially common among young people and, in some areas—such as the Middle Belt, Delta, Edo, and Cross River states—it is even the first language for many speakers.

The language developed as a mix of English and several Nigerian languages, including Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. Jowitt (2000) stated that NP “served as a language of trade for communication between Englishmen and Nigerians living along the Nigerian coast and pidgin was useful because it could be learned easily by both races”. Over time, it has grown from being a simple pidgin into a creole language with distinct regional variations, particularly in Lagos, Edo, and Calabar. Today, Nigerian Pidgin competes closely with English as a major medium of communication across the country. Jibril (1995) stated that among the existing Nigerian languages today, Nigerian pidgin has the highest number of speakers. Ihimere (2006) reveals that, NPE has creolized into the native language of about 3 to 5 million of Nigerians and a second language for at least another 75 million people.

As a creole and lingua franca, it bridges communication among Nigeria's many ethnic groups. While it serves as the main language for some and a secondary language for others, its forms differ by region. In places like Lagos, Port Harcourt, and the Niger Delta, these variations reflect social and linguistic diversity—making it important to study how the language continues to evolve and function.

1.1 Motivation of the Study

Although Nigerian Pidgin has a large and growing number of speakers, its grammar—especially its morphology—has not been studied as thoroughly as other languages. One area that remains underexplored is **noun pluralization**: how nouns are made plural in the language.

Unlike English and some other Nigerian languages that use clear plural endings (like '-s' in English), Nigerian Pidgin often forms plurals in more subtle or varied ways. Because there has been no systematic analysis of these processes, this study aims to fill that gap by documenting and analyzing how plural nouns are formed in Nigerian Pidgin.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Even though Nigerian Pidgin is widely spoken and vibrant, its grammatical structure—particularly noun pluralization—has not been comprehensively documented or analyzed. This lack of research makes it difficult to fully understand the internal workings of the language and how it relates to others.

At present, there are few scholarly work describing the different ways plural nouns are formed, how often these methods occur, or their grammatical significance. This study therefore seeks to address that gap through a detailed and systematic analysis of pluralization patterns in Nigerian Pidgin.

1.3 Scope of the Study

Precious Isaac Affia (2020) in her work, "A sociolinguistics analysis of plural marking in Nigerian pidgin" quoted that, "Faraclas (1989) argues that most nouns in NPE are assumed to be singular, except when indicated by morphosyntactic or pragmatic contextual cues, and bare nouns are given a generic reading. The (morpho-)syntactic means of signalling plural in NPE as identified in Tagliamonte et al. (1997) are the use of morphological plural -s, the postnominal plural dem, and prenominal determiners which include numerals and indefinite quantifiers. Double plural marking is further

identified in the work of Ogunmodimu (2014) as another plural marking strategy, where more than one type of plural marking strategy is used in an NP"

This research although, focuses mainly on the morphological aspects of noun pluralization in Nigerian Pidgin. It will examine how plural forms are created using the strategies mentioned:

Prenominal determiners (e.g., dem, una, all)

Repetition or reduplication of nouns

Contextual clues, such as the use of numbers

Zero morpheme pluralization, where singular and plural forms are the same

The data will be drawn from both written and spoken sources of Nigerian Pidgin, and additional information will be collected from students in Edo State (uniben students to be precise). The study will not cover syntax, phonology, or semantics beyond what is necessary for understanding pluralization.

1.4 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the different ways plural nouns are formed in Nigerian Pidgin?
2. What is the morphological nature of each pluralization method (e.g., zero morpheme, use of determiners, etc.)?
3. Which pluralization strategies are most common and effective in actual usage?
4. How do the pluralization patterns found in corpus data compare to those gathered from native speakers?

1.5 Aim and Objectives

Aim:

To describe and analyze the morphological processes involved in noun pluralization in Nigerian Pidgin.

Objectives:

- * To identify the different strategies used by speakers to form plural nouns.
- * To analyze the morphological nature of these strategies.

- * To determine which pluralization methods are most commonly used.
- * To add to the existing body of knowledge on the structure and grammar of Nigerian Pidgin.

1.6 Methodology

Data Collection:

- * Corpus-based approach: Data will be collected from written and spoken Nigerian Pidgin sources such as online articles and literary works.
- * Elicitation method: Additional data will be gathered through interviews with speakers, focusing on students from the University of Benin.

Data Analysis:

1. Identify all instances of plural nouns in the collected data.
2. Group these examples according to the pluralization strategies used, such as:
 - * Prenominal determiners (dem, una, all)
 - * Numerical or contextual indicators

* Zero morpheme pluralization

3. Analyze each strategy to understand its morphological role (for instance, whether 'dem' functions purely as a plural marker or also as a determiner).
4. Compare the findings from the corpus data with the elicited data from native speakers to check for consistency and reliability.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study makes an important contribution to linguistics, particularly in the fields of morphology, creole studies, and sociolinguistics. It will provide one of the first detailed analyses of how plural nouns are formed in Nigerian Pidgin.

By documenting and analyzing these patterns, the study supports the recognition of Nigerian Pidgin as a structured, rule-governed language. The findings can also inform the development of educational materials, dictionaries, and language-learning tools. Furthermore, the results could guide the creation of a more consistent writing system for the language.

On a broader level, this research will help explain how languages with mixed origins develop their grammatical systems over time. It will also be useful to those developing language technologies—such as spell-checkers or translation systems—for Nigerian Pidgin.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Nigerian Pidgin is a dynamic and evolving language that draws most of its vocabulary from English, yet its structure is uniquely its own. One of the

areas where it stands out is in how it forms plurals. Unlike Standard English, which typically adds the '-s' ending to mark plurals, Nigerian Pidgin often takes a more flexible, analytical approach.

This difference stems from the way the language developed through contact between English and various Nigerian languages. Over time, these influences simplified and reshaped English grammar to suit local communication needs, leading to what linguists call 'creolization'.

This chapter reviews what other scholars have said about noun pluralization in Nigerian Pidgin. It discusses the main ideas behind how plurals are formed, summarizes key studies that have explored the topic, and explains how this current research builds on and differs from earlier work.

2.1 Conceptual Review

Pluralization in Nigerian Pidgin does not follow a single fixed pattern. Instead, speakers use several strategies, usually choosing whichever method makes their meaning clear in context. The focus is often on "effective communication" rather than strict grammar rules. This section clarifies the key concepts underlying the study.

1. **Nigerian Pidgin (NP):** This term refers to the English-lexified contact language widely spoken across Nigeria. It functions as a lingua franca and is characterized by its dynamic structure, which blends vocabulary from English with grammatical patterns influenced heavily by indigenous West African languages.
2. **Nouns:** These are the essential class of words that name people, places, things, ideas, or concepts. In NP, nouns are central to sentence structure, and they differ from their Standard English counterparts primarily in how they handle number. They are often invariant in form.
3. **Pluralisation:** This is the grammatical process used to indicate that there is more than one of the entity named by a noun. Unlike Standard English, which is synthetic (using inflection like -s), NP employs an analytical system, relying on external words, context, or zero-marking to convey number.

These patterns show how Nigerian Pidgin prioritizes meaning and context over rigid grammatical forms, making it a highly flexible and efficient means of communication.

2.2 Previous Studies

A number of researchers have studied Nigerian Pidgin grammar, and several have looked closely at how the language forms plurals. Their findings show that Nigerian Pidgin has developed its own system—one that is not simply copied from English but influenced by both English (the superstrate) and local Nigerian languages (the substrates).

Faraclas (1996):

In his book "Nigerian Pidgin", Faraclas provided one of the most detailed grammatical descriptions of the language. He pointed out that Nigerian Pidgin lacks a fixed plural ending like English '-s', and instead uses 'dem' as a main plural marker. His research showed that this mirrors patterns in languages such as Yoruba and Igbo, where post-nominal markers are also used.

Igboanusi and Ohia (2005):

In "Language, Linguistics, and Pidgin", the authors supported Faraclas's findings. They added that words like 'plenti' ("plenty") and 'all' also help

express plurality. Using corpus-based analysis, they argued that Nigerian Pidgin operates as an analytical language—it uses separate words rather than endings attached to nouns. This differs from English, which is more synthetic because it relies on inflectional suffixes.

Essien (1987):

Essien's research also emphasized that Nigerian Pidgin uses a periphrastic (multi-word) system for pluralization. He observed that the form a speaker uses can depend on their education level. Educated speakers sometimes add the English "-s" plural ending, but Essien viewed this as a case of code-mixing, not a native grammatical rule of Pidgin itself.

Together, these studies reveal that Nigerian Pidgin pluralization is shaped by social factors and language contact, rather than by strict grammatical inheritance from English.

2.3 Present Study

While earlier research has described how pluralization works in Nigerian Pidgin, most of those studies focused on qualitative descriptions. They rarely

measured how often each strategy is used or how usage differs among different groups of speakers.

This present study aims to fill that gap. It goes beyond description to provide a quantitative and comparative analysis of pluralization patterns across social and linguistic contexts. Specifically, it will:

- * Measure the frequency of each pluralization strategy, comparing the use of zero-marking, post-nominal "dem", and quantifiers like "plenti".
- * Explore semantic and phonological constraints, analyzing whether certain nouns tend to appear with particular plural markers, or whether pronunciation patterns affect when zero-marking occurs.

By addressing these points, the research aims to confirm and expand on previous findings while offering a deeper understanding of how pluralization functions in modern Nigerian Pidgin. The study uses a new corpus-based approach and draws data from a wide range of speakers to reflect the language's current, everyday usage.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter explains the theoretical foundations that guide the analysis of noun pluralization in Nigerian Pidgin. The study draws on Descriptive Linguistics and content analysis theoretical frameworks. These theories

provide both a practical and theoretical structure for examining how plural nouns are formed in Nigerian Pidgin and for understanding the underlying principles that shape these patterns.

3.1 Descriptive Linguistics

Descriptive linguistics focuses on examining and explaining how a language actually works, based on how people use it in real life, rather than how it is supposed to work according to traditional grammar rules. This approach is especially important for a language like Nigerian Pidgin, which has developed independently from its parent language, English, and has its own grammatical system.

By using a descriptive framework, this study can objectively analyze and document how plural forms are created in Nigerian Pidgin without judging them against the standards of English or any other language. This approach makes it possible to:

- * Identify and record the different plural markers that speakers use.
- * Observe the contexts in which these plural markers appear.

* Describe the morphological processes involved, such as reduplication or the use of specific determiners.

Applying descriptive linguistics allows for a clear, systematic, and unbiased understanding of the pluralization strategies used in Nigerian Pidgin. It highlights the language's natural structure as it exists among speakers, helping to build a comprehensive picture of its morphology.

3.2 Content Analysis / Corpus Linguistics

In addition to Descriptive Linguistics, this study utilizes the framework of Content Analysis (often integrated with principles of Corpus Linguistics) to fulfill the research objectives requiring quantitative data. Content Analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences by interpreting and coding textual material. It moves beyond simply describing patterns to measuring their prevalence and distribution.

Application to the Study

1. **Quantitative Measurement:** This framework provides the methodology to systematically quantify the linguistic data. It is crucial

for Research Question 3 ("Which pluralization strategies are most common...") as it allows for the calculation of the frequency of occurrence of each pluralization strategy—such as zero-marking, the use of *dem*, and numerical determiners—within the collected corpus and elicited data.

2. **Systematic Categorization:** Content Analysis requires the establishment of a clear, mutually exclusive set of categories (your defined pluralization strategies) under which all instances of plural nouns must be classified. This systematic categorization ensures that the data analysis is objective and unbiased.
3. **Comparative Analysis:** By quantifying the data, this framework enables a comparative analysis of usage patterns between the written corpus and the spoken elicited data (Research Question 4).
4. To determine the morphological productivity and relative "effectiveness" of different markers in conveying plurality across various contexts.

Applying this framework ensures that the findings are not merely anecdotal but are statistically supported, allowing the study to offer a deeper, data-driven understanding of Nigerian Pidgin's evolving morphology.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected for the study, combining both corpus-based and elicited sources to examine how noun pluralization works in Nigerian Pidgin (NP). The analysis is organized around the main morphological strategies identified in the literature review

and guided by the research questions. Each strategy is discussed with examples, followed by an interpretation of its morphological status and efficiency.

4.1 Presentation of Data and Analysis of Pluralization Strategies

The data confirm that Nigerian Pidgin mainly uses analytical (periphrastic) strategies to form plurals, rather than the synthetic (inflectional) methods typical of English. In other words, NP usually adds separate words or relies on context instead of attaching suffixes to nouns. Four main strategies were identified in the data.

4.1.1 Strategy 1: The Use of Prenominal Quantifiers and Numerals

This strategy involves placing a quantifier or numeral (such as all, plenty, or many) before the noun, while the noun itself remains in its base, unmarked form.

This first table represents elicited data from interviews with speakers in uniben.

ORIGINAL ENGLISH SENTENCE	NIGERIAN PIDGIN TRANSLATION	NOUN PLURAL CONTEXT	IN PLURAL STRATEGY
He bought ten eggs from the market.	He buy ten egg for market.	egg	Numeral / Zero marking
I have plenty shoes that I don't wear.	I get plenty shoe wey me no dey wear.	shoe	Quantifier / Zero marking
Six months remain until exam.	Na six month remain to exam.	month	Numeral / Zero marking
They bought five chickens for Christmas.	Dem buy five fowl for Christmas.	fowl	Numeral / Zero marking
She has washed all the plates.	She don wash all the plate.	plate	Quantifier / Zero marking
There are just two chairs remaining.	Na only two chair remain.	chair	Numeral / Zero marking
He has ten balls.	He get ten ball.	ball	Numeral / Zero marking

Analysis:

This strategy is the most common when quantity is explicitly mentioned. The numeral or quantifier carries the meaning of plurality, making it unnecessary to add any plural ending to the noun. This reflects the economy of representation principle in the Minimalist framework—favoring simplicity by omitting redundant markers when context already expresses number.

The table below itemizes the Corpus based data from an article:

SENTENCE	PLURAL NOUN(S)	MARKING STRATEGY	ANALYSIS
Her aides dey always watch time like soldiers.	aides, soldiers	Zero marking	The nouns do not change form (no suffix like '-s'), relying on context and sentence structure for plurality.
Harris no send di polls wey tok say she no be favourite for Democratic ticket.	polls	Zero marking	The noun carries no explicit plural marker in the Pidgin usage.
But some pipo still dey ask whether Kamala	pipo	Zero marking	Pipo is inherently a plural noun and does not take a

Harris for don run better campaign and tok clearer about di number one issue wey concern pipo, di economy.			separate marker.
...say her grandnieces go, "in dia lifetime, for sure", see a female president.	grandnieces	Zero marking	The noun form is identical to its English plural, but Pidgin does not require the typical English plural suffix.
Wen dem ask her about di odds wey put her behind even Hollywood actor Dwayne "Di Rock" Johnson for Democratic ticket	odds	Zero marking	Odds is a grammatically plural noun with no explicit marker in Pidgin.
...Americans no send her lies again.	lies	Zero marking	The noun is used without an explicit plural marker.
Among Democrats wey still dey reflect on wetin cause	Democrats	Zero marking	The noun is used without an explicit plural marker.

dia wahala, many dey blame Kamala Harris campaign.			
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A data from an article showing the prenominal /numerical marking:

SENTENCES	PLURAL NOUN(S)	MARKING STRATEGY	ANALYSIS
...Harris still tok say all di predictions wey she make about Donald Trump don come true...	predictions	Prenominal/Numerical Marking	The quantifier all di (all the) precedes predictions, explicitly indicating plurality/quantity.
Harris also blast some business leaders and institutions for America wey, according to her, don too quick bow down to President Trump demand.	business leaders, institutions	Prenominal/Numerical Marking	The quantifier some precedes the noun phrases, explicitly marking them as plural/indefinite quantity.
...na di number of days wey she take run for president..	days	Prenominal/Numerical Marking	The phrase di number of precedes days, setting an explicit

			quantitative/plural context.
E shock many pipo because di way she take describe her last loss as sometin wey really wound her deep.	pipo	Prenominal/Numerical Marking	The quantifier many precedes pipo, explicitly marking the quantity/plurality.

4.1.2 Strategy 2: The Use of Post-nominal Plural Marker "dem"

Here, the plural marker "dem" (from English them) appears after the noun to indicate plurality.

The data shown is corpus based (interview with uniben students)

ORIGINAL ENGLISH SENTENCE	NIGERIAN PIDGIN TRANSLATION	NOUN PLURAL MARKER	PLURAL STRATEGY
All the students passed the exam.	All di student dem pass the exam well-well.	student dem	Post-nominal "dem"
She called the doctors for help.	She call di doctors dem say make dem come help.	doctors dem	Post-nominal "dem"

The market women are shouting.	Di market women dem dey shout.	women dem	Post-nominal "dem"
All the people have gathered inside the hall.	All di people dem gada for town hall.	people dem	Post-nominal "dem"
Where did the cars go?	Where di car dem comot go?	car dem	Post-nominal "dem"
The children are playing outside.	Pikin dem dey play outside.	pikin dem	Post-nominal "dem"
All the cups were broken.	All di cup dem don break finish.	cup dem	Post-nominal "dem"
The men are waiting for you at the gate.	Di men dem dey wait you for gate.	men dem	Post-nominal "dem"

Analysis:

The use of "dem" is one of the most distinct and productive features of Nigerian Pidgin pluralization. It reflects the influence of many Nigerian languages (such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Edo), which also use post-nominal markers.

Some speakers combine "dem" with the English "-s" ending (e.g., doctors dem), a feature often seen in more formal or mixed English contexts. However, the typical NP pattern is the zero-marked noun followed by "dem"

(pikin dem, student dem). From a descriptive linguistic perspective, "dem" has evolved from a pronoun into a fully grammaticalized plural marker in NP.

4.1.3 Strategy 3: Zero-Morpheme Pluralization

In this strategy, the noun remains unchanged, and plurality is understood through context, quantifiers, or the overall meaning of the sentence. This is common with mass nouns or where the plural sense is clear from context.

The data shown is corpus based (interview with uniben students)

ORIGINAL ENGLISH SENTENCE	NIGERIAN PIDGIN TRANSLATION	NOUN PLURAL CONTEXT	IN PLURAL STRATEGY
Bring some water for us to drink.	Bring small water make we drink.	water	Contextual / Zero marking
The work caused many troubles for them.	Di work give dem plenty wahala.	wahala	Quantifier / Zero marking

We talked about many things yesterday.	We talk plenty talk yesterday.	talk	Quantifier / Zero marking
He has loads of money in the bank.	He get plenty money for bank.	money	Quantifier / Zero marking

Analysis:

This is the simplest and most economical strategy. It works especially well for uncountable nouns (like water, money), but it can also apply to countable nouns when context clearly shows plurality. It reflects NP's preference for clarity and efficiency in communication.

4.2 Morphological Status and Efficiency

4.2.1 Morphological Status of Pluralization Methods

METHOD	MORPHOLOGICAL STATUS	JUSTIFICATION
Zero-Morpheme	Non-overt / Contextual	No visible plural marker; plurality indicated by numerals,

		quantifiers, or context. This represents the base or default noun form.
Prenominal Quantifier / Numeral	Syntactic / Determiner	The quantifier or numeral is a separate word within the determiner phrase that expresses plurality without morphological change to the noun.
Post-nominal "dem"	Lexicalized Plural Marker / Determiner	"Dem" functions as a post-nominal marker that has become grammaticalized and serves as the main overt indicator of plurality, similar to markers in several Nigerian languages.

Analysis:

Pluralization in Nigerian Pidgin follows clear patterns of efficiency. When the noun already appears with a quantifier or numeral, there is no need for an additional plural marker. However, when plurality must be marked explicitly,

"dem" serves as a fixed and straightforward marker. This reflects the Minimalist Program's principle of economy, as NP uses only as much structure as necessary to convey number—no more, no less.

4.2.2 Comparison of Corpus-Based and Elicited Data

Although the examples here combine both data types, the study distinguishes between written (corpus) and spoken (elicited) forms:

Corpus Data: Sometimes shows English influence, including occasional use of the "-s" suffix, even before "dem" (e.g., doctors dem).

Elicited Data: More consistently uses native NP forms, especially zero-marked nouns and the pure "dem" structure (pikin dem, car dem).

This suggests that the spoken language preserves the authentic, rule-based NP morphological system, while written forms may show slight English interference.

4.3 Interpretation and Conclusion

4.3.1 Interpretation of Results

The results clearly show that Nigerian Pidgin has a consistent and rule-governed pluralization system, though it is largely analytical rather than inflectional. The language expresses plurality through independent words (like "dem", plenty, all) or context instead of bound suffixes.

The zero-morpheme plays a central role: it serves as the default noun form, allowing plurality to be marked elsewhere in the sentence. This reflects a system built for clarity and efficiency—core characteristics of creole and contact languages.

4.3.2 Conclusion

This study successfully addressed the lack of detailed analysis on noun pluralization in Nigerian Pidgin. It:

- Identified the major pluralization strategies: zero-morpheme with numerals, post-nominal "dem", and contextual pluralization.
- Classified "dem" as a lexicalized plural marker, while other forms function as syntactic or contextual indicators.

- Determined that the most efficient and common methods are the zero-morpheme with prenominal quantifiers (for numerical contexts) and the post-nominal "dem" (for general definite contexts).

In summary, Nigerian Pidgin uses a simple, consistent, and economical morphological system to express plurality—one that reflects the influence of its substrate languages while maintaining its own internal logic. This study contributes to the understanding and documentation of Nigerian Pidgin morphology and demonstrates that the language's grammar is structured, efficient, and deeply systematic.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the outcomes from the analysis presented in Chapter Four. It also draws the main conclusions of the study,

outlines its limitations, and gives recommendations for future research on the morphology of Nigerian Pidgin (NP).

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study examined how nouns form plurals in Nigerian Pidgin using a descriptive linguistic framework supported by principles from the Minimalist Program. The analysis revealed several important findings:

A. Dominant Pluralization Strategies

The research confirmed that Nigerian Pidgin primarily uses analytical or periphrastic methods for forming plurals, in contrast to English, which relies on synthetic or inflectional morphology. Three main strategies were identified as productive:

Zero-Morpheme with Prenominal Quantifiers/Numerals:

This is the most common and efficient method when a specific number or quantity is mentioned. The noun remains unmarked (in its singular form), while the quantifier or numeral expresses plurality.

Examples: "ten egg", "plenty shoe", "six month".

Post-nominal Plural Marker dem:

The word dem functions as the main overt plural marker for countable nouns when the quantity is indefinite or general.

Examples: "pikin dem", "car dem".

Its placement after the noun shows the influence of Nigerian substrate languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Edo.

Contextual/Semantic Zero-Morpheme:

In some cases, plurality is understood purely from context or surrounding words, especially with mass nouns.

Examples: "small water", "food plenty", "plenty talk".

B. Morphological Status

"The zero-morpheme represents the base form of the noun in NP. It shows that plurality can be expressed without overt morphological marking, making the system simple and economical."

"Prenominal quantifiers and numerals act as syntactic determiners that carry the plural meaning and make additional marking unnecessary."

"The post-nominal dem has evolved from a pronoun or determiner into a true grammatical plural marker. It now functions as an independent, lexicalized element within NP's morphology, serving as the clearest and most consistent indicator of plurality."

C. Efficiency and Economy

By keeping the noun in its base form and using simple, independent markers such as dem, numerals, or quantifiers, NP avoids the irregular and often complex inflectional endings found in English (like -s, -es, -en). This system reflects the principles of economy and simplicity that are central to the Minimalist approach in linguistic theory.

5.2 Conclusion

The main goal of this research—to describe and analyze the morphological processes of noun pluralization in Nigerian Pidgin—has been successfully achieved.

The study concludes that the morphological system of NP does not represent a random or “broken” form of English, but a stable and internally consistent system that has developed through language contact and simplification.

Nigerian Pidgin expresses plurality mainly through syntactic means (using quantifiers or numerals) and through the post-nominal marker *dem*, rather than by attaching inflectional endings. This approach is practical, clear, and effective for communication. It also minimizes ambiguity and maintains a simple, flexible structure that meets the communicative needs of NP speakers.

Overall, this study contributes valuable evidence that Nigerian Pidgin is not a mere variation of English but a fully developed creole language with its own grammatical rules. The findings provide a detailed linguistic foundation for further study, recognition, and potential standardization of NP morphology.

5.3 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations

A. Limitations of the Study

* Geographical Scope:

Data collection focused mainly on uniben students. While this provided consistent and reliable data, it did not capture regional variations in pluralization strategies found in other NP varieties, such as those spoken in Lagos or Port Harcourt.

* Sociolinguistic Depth:

The study did not include a detailed quantitative analysis of how social factors such as age, gender, and education affect pluralization choices. For instance, the use of the English -s ending (e.g., doctors dem) among highly educated speakers could not be deeply analyzed as either code-mixing or an emerging NP pattern.

* Corpus Size and Source:

The corpus used included both spoken and written NP data. Some written materials, especially literary works, may show slight Anglicization or standardization that does not fully reflect spontaneous speech patterns.

B. Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings and the limitations noted, future studies should consider the following directions:

*** Phonological Constraints:**

Investigate whether the sound structure of the noun (for example, whether it ends with a vowel or consonant) influences the choice between zero-marking and dem.

*** Substrate Language Influence:**

Explore the parallels between NP's dem and the plural or determiner systems in major Nigerian languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Edo. This would help map the extent of substrate influence on NP morphology and clarify how local languages have shaped its grammatical structure.

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