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1. Nigerian Pidgin: Introduction

“Nigeria is one of many countries which has adopted English as their main language. But with so many other, substrate languages influencing the development of an English-speaking country, one major pidgin language developed: Nigerian Pidgin.

The majority of the English based Creole and Pidgin languages both at the Atlantic coast and the South Sea waive marking plurality on nouns or rather use it very optionally. Thus, the same applies to Nigerian Pidgin.” (Burg, 2006)

"[Pidgin English], it can be argued, has had a much more important function than English in Nigeria, at least in the southern provinces, since about 1860. The number of its speakers, the frequency of its uses and the range of its functions have been expanding ever since its first formation from local jargons of Antera Duke's type when the need for an **interethnic lingua franca** arose. Increasing social and geographical mobility have continuously added to this expansion. Whether the estimate of 30% pidgin speakers in Nigeria is a realistic figure is impossible to say." (Görlach, 1998)

Origins:

“West African Pidgin English, also called Guinea Coast Creole English, was a language of commerce spoken along the coast during the Atlantic slave trade in the late 17th and 18th Centuries.

This allowed British slave merchants and local African traders to conduct business.

It later spread to other parts of the West African colonies, becoming a useful trade language among local ethnic groups who spoke different languages.” (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38000387>)

2. Progressive and future markers

(1)

As prisons *dey* over full, you think say *dis kain tin*
As prisons PROG over full, 2SG think say this kind thing
go fit work for your kontri?
IRR (future) can work for your country?

As prisons are getting too full, do you think this will work out for your country?

Progressive marker: ***dey***

Future marker: *go* (< engl. 'to go')

Introduction for indirect speech: verb say. Serial Verb Construction: *think - say*

(2)

Wetin dey happen?
What PROG happen

What's going on?/What's happening?

wetin < 'what' & 'thing'

Progressive marker: *dey*

Source: Lola (Akinmade) Åkerström, 2010 on matadornetwork.com

3. Semantic shifts

(3)

Your *bodi* go rest òò, *dadi* tel *pikin*.

Your body IRR (future) rest EMPH father tell child.

Your body is going to die, said the father to the child

Verb without TAM-marker: Past Tense

semantic shift/idiomatic expression: *bodi rest* – ‘to die’

Emphasizing particle for the whole sentence.

Source: Song – ‘Ja Ara E’, Artist: Burna Boy ft. Beyoncé

4. Use of copula verbs

(4)

a. *Im* *bi* *man*.

3Sg COP man

He is a man.

b. *Di wuman* *na* *sista*.

The woman COP sister

The woman is a sister.

Two different Copulas are being used. (*bi* < engl. ‘to be’)

No particle on the noun expresses indefiniteness.

Source: Agbo/Plag (2018)

5. Negation

(5)

A *no* *si* *di* *ticha* *dem.*

1Sg NEG see the teacher PL.

I did not see the teachers.

Definiteness of plural nouns is expressed by using the article *di* and the particle *dem*, following the noun. (*dem* < 3. Person Plural)

Source: Aziza (2015)

6. Tonal change

(6)

a. *Yoù* *dèy* *kràì.*

2Sg PROG cry

You are crying.

b. *Yoù* *dèy* *kràí?*

2Sg PROG cry

Are you crying?

No grammatical differences or change of word order between statements and questions, only tonal change.

Source: Aziza (2015)

7. Intensifier/Reduplication/Pronouns

(7)

Listen well well!

listen well INTENSIFIER

Pay attention!

Reduplication is used as Intensifier

Source: Lola (Akinmade) Åkerström, 2010 on matadornetwork.com

(8)

Mi, a no dey go.

INTENSIFIER 1Sg NEG PROGgo

As for me, I'm not going to go.

Personal pronoun / reflective pronoun used as intensifier

8. Serial verb construction

(9)

A go tek di got dem go maket.

1Sg IRR take the goat PL go market

I will take the goats to the market.

Serial Verb Construction: *tek* - *go*

9. Prepositions

(10)

a. *A dey fò maket*
1Sg PROG PREP market

I am at the market.

b. *I dey fò okada*
3Sg PROG PREP motorcycle

He/She is on the motorcycle.

c. *Di moni dey fò bag.*
The money PROG PREP bag

The money is in the bag.

The preposition *fò* (< engl. 'for') has different semantic meanings ('on', 'at', 'in'...)

Source: O. Olajumoke (2017): 66, University of Bayreuth

3. Sources

Akerström, Lola Akinmade (2010): *How to speak Nigerian Pidgin*. On <https://matadornetwork.com/abroad/beginners-guide-to-nigerian-pidgin-english/> [last access: 16.12.2019]

Agbo, Ogechi / Plag, Ingo (2018): The relationship of Nigerian Pidgin English and Standard English in Nigeria: Evidence from copula constructions. On <http://www.anglistik.hhu.de> [last access 16.12.2019]

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Olajumoke, Ojede (2017: 66): Eine Analyse der schriftlichen Fehler nigerianischer Yoruba-Sprecher beim Deutscherwerb, University of Bayreuth (PhD) On <https://epub.uni-bayreuth.de/3300/1/Doktorarbeit%20zur%20Publikation-Oyede-1.pdf> [last access 16.12.2019]

4. Additional useful sources

- <http://www.ngex.com/personalities/babawilly/dictionary/default.htm>
- <http://www.naijalingo.com/>
- https://data.mongabay.com/indigenous_ethnicities/languages/languages/Pidgin-English.html
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbxDGJ-Zg70> (Nigerian best Pidgin proverbs)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqKWiWX-7Zc> (Nigerian Pidgin made easy)
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-40975399> (BBC Pidgin service launched in Nigeria)
- <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/topics/c2dwqd1zr92t> (BBC Pidgin service launched in Nigeria)
- <https://apics-online.info/surveys/17> (The atlas of The Atlas of Pidgin and Creole language structures online)