

## **Language and Business: A Sociolinguistic Study**

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### **Abstract**

Every human interrelationship is surrounded with language. There is no activity of man that is devoid of language. Language and man are inseparable the same way life and fresh air are. Just like in every other aspect of human endeavours, the role of language in business cannot be overestimated. Business transaction is believed to thrive when appropriate language use is applied in its day to day activity. This paper investigated the role language plays in business. This study explored how the appropriate use of language can make a business to blossom. The geographical location for the study was Ilorin Metropolis. The data for the study encompassed the conversation secretly recorded during a business transaction between some Igbo traders and their customers. Adding to the data for the study included the questionnaire distributed to selected Igbo business dealers and some customers at Agaka and Oja Tuntun markets, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. The analysis of the data for the study engaged the Monogenetic or reflexification theory formulated by Hugo Schuchardt in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was popularized in the late 1950s and early 1960s by Taylor (1961). The outcome of the study included that though language as a phenomenon plays vital role in all human existence, yet

application of the appropriate language within the right context, time and place benefits absolutely.

**Key Words: Language, Pidgin, Igbo, Business, Ilorin**

## **Introduction**

Life of man on earth would have made no much difference without language. It is language that pilots the activities of man, in the sense that it is what determines what to do, what to say, how to do/say, and where to go. Without language, life would have been static just like plant on the soil without sense of direction. Humans in all their activities in life employ language in every facet of life. It is used for communication, to instruct, direct, command, to educate, admonish as well as to transact business. In the business world today, the way language is used varies from person to person, group to group, place to place, and for one reason or the other; and such variation emanates as a result of who is involved and where the business transaction is taking place. Variation in language use sometime may not occur when the business dealers are from the same language community where there is mutual intelligibility. However, if the dealers are from different language communities, there may be need for language variation in their communication for the parties to have a good rapport in their business transactions. In our contemporary world, there are many languages in use and such include English language, Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, French, and Nigeria Pidgin English etc. Of all the languages that abound, this paper focuses to illuminate how the use of pidgin as a means of interpersonal interaction could be used to promote the smooth running of business outside one's native language domain, using Igbo business men in Ilorin metropolis as our case study. Ilorin is the largest city and the [state capital](#) of [Kwara](#) State in Western [Nigeria](#). As of 2006 census, it had a population of 777,667, making it the [6th largest city in Nigeria](#)

by population. Ilorin was founded by the Yoruba, one of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, in 1450. Ilorin is blessed with several economic yielding establishments. Among the notable companies include, Global Soap and Detergent Industries Nigeria Limited, the International Tobacco Company, Dangote Flour Mills, Tuyil Pharmaceutical Company, KAMWIL, Golden Confectionate Food Industries, Chellaram Motor-Cycle Assembly plants, and Rajrab Pharmaceuticals. In addition the above mentioned companies are some other business areas and markets located at different directions of the metropolis; such business places encompass Agaka , Baboko, Oja Tuntun, Pata, Oja Oba, Ibrahim Taiwo Road etc.

Decamp (1987:175) quoted by Abdullahi-Idiagbon (2010, p.2), describes pidgin as “an incidental communicative language within a multilingual setting which is the native language of nobody.” Its vocabulary according to Decamp is donated by the socio-politically dominant language in the original contact situation, most especially, with the European imperialists. It is a contact vernacular, normally not the native language of any of its speakers. Pidgin according to Hymes (1971) has been traditionally classified as deviant dialect of a standard language, usually Europe, with English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch the most frequent.

Holm (1988) sees Pidgin as a reduced language that results from extended contact between groups of people with no language in common; it evolves when there is need for means of verbal communication. Pidgin is a simplified version of a language that develops as a means of communication between two or more groups that do not have one language in common. It is most commonly employed in situations such as trade or in any situation requiring communication where both groups speak languages different from the languages of the

environment in which they belong to, that is to say that there is no common language between the groups.

Basically, Pidgin is simplified means of linguistic communication, as it is constructed impromptu, or by convention. Pidgin may be built from words, sound or body language from multiple other languages and cultures. It allows people who have no common language to communicate with each other.

### **Pidgin Development**

Reference to the existence of pidgin can be dated back to the middle age and the earliest studies in pidgin and creole can be traced to the 15<sup>th</sup> century BC according to Todd (1992, p.1). Decamp (1971, p.31) recognized Schuchardt as the greatest of the early scholars and the founding father of the field. According to Romain (1988, p. 4), Schuchardt is more generally known for his contribution in the field of pidgin and creole in a series of paper entitled Krolische Studien published in the 1880s.

The initial development of a Pidgin typically involves a continued and consistent contact between the different languages as well as having a need to communicate between the native speakers of these diverse languages. More so, absence of widespread proficiency in widespread accessible inter-language could usher in pidgin (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>).

When two languages come in contact, pidgin does not evolve suddenly to live forever, rather, it develops gradually. Todd (1992, p. 51) informs that there are essentially four phases to the development of a Pidgin to Creole among which two that are relevant to this study would be discussed. The two phases include:

- (i) Phase 1 – Marginal Contact
- (ii) Phase 2 – Period of Nativization

### **PHASE 1 – Marginal Contact**

“Pidgin language can be found at all levels and all kinds of situation as long as communication is needed” Todd (1992, p. 51). For instance, guides on tourism often simplify their language when showing foreign visitors around; Hostellers simplify their language when dealing with other Hostellers whose command of English is limited. Todd (1992) accounts that English speaking sailors, traders and adventurers who first went to Africa, Asia, America or Australia must have used simplified and limited form of English in order to communicate.

Marginal phase of a Pidgin is only adequate for rudimentary forms of communication. It is largely supplemented by gesture. Discussion is limited to tangible objects especially those in the immediate vicinity. Marginal contact of a Pidgin has limited value as it is temporarily used. Todd (1992, p. 57) said “It is likely that since the sixteenth century, several English Pidgins have come into existence and died out.” There are only two options for marginal Pidgin, it either disappear or expand (become more useful by the expansion of its resources).

### **PHASE 2 – Period of Nativization**

When a Pidgin survives to expand it is said to have moved to be nativized. That is some groups have accepted it as their primary language. It usually happens in a multilingual nation like Nigeria. Todd(1992, p. 52) suggests that the expansion of Pidgin is facilitated by its development in a multilingual region and its use is not so much in non-native to

native contact as in contacts between native inhabitants speaking mutually unintelligible languages.

At first, Pidgin was inadequate for the expression of a very wide range of human experience. As it became more widely used, its vocabulary increased, and as its vocabulary increased it became more useful. In other to express ideas, people who have insufficient competence in a language tend to import some morphological processes in the lexicon of the pidginized language. Example includes Republication and item borrowing.

Reduplication occurs in all English Pidgins. In Nigeria Pidgin for example, reduplication is usually total. For instance,

Word	Pidgin Reduplication	Gloss
Fast	Fast fast	Very fast
Play	Play play	To be very playful
Sick	Siki siki	To appear sickly always
Talk	Tòkì tòkì	Persistent chatter or a prattler
Walk	Waka waka	To always be out and about
Lie	Lie lie	Liar
Now	Now now	Immediately
So	Na so so	That is how
Quick	Quick quick	Quickly

Item borrowing from indigenous languages is not limited to Pidgin, it occurs even in developed languages like French and English etc. Some words tend to find their way into Pidgin, usually by native speakers substituting them with lexical

items from their native languages. Examples of such words include:

Word	Gloss	Source Language
Oga	Boss	Yoruba
Oyinbo	White-man	Yoruba
Akara	Beans cake	Yoruba
Biko	Please	Igbo

Word compounding is also attested in the Nigeria Pidgin. It is the combination of two words to form

or derive a new word, especially nouns. For example:

Mammy + Water = mammy water

Goddess + Water = Water goddess

Bush + man = bushman

An uncivilized person

Big + man = bigman

A rich man

Dead + body = deadbody

A corpse

### **Characteristics of Pidgin**

Since pidgin is fundamentally a simple form of communication, the grammar and phonology are usually as simple as possible. Decamp (1971), Hymes (1971) and Hudson (1990) summarized the characteristics of pidgins as follows:

- i. Elimination of grammatical devices like inflections, plural markers and tenses.

ii. Ability of a word to have semantic extension i.e. expanded meanings.

Similarly, pidgin can also possess the following features:

- (1) Uncomplicated clausal structure (e.g. no embedded clauses) e.g, “I wan chop”, meaning “I want to eat”
- (2) Reduction of consonant clusters or breaking them with epenthesis e.g., sick - siki, carry - cari, work-wok.
- (3) Basic vowels such as (a, e, i, o, u) that is without including features like long vowels and diphthongs.
- (4) No tones, such as those found in West African and Asian languages.
- (5) Use of reduplication to represent plural, superlative, and other parts of speech that represent the concepts being increased. E.g, “na Ebuka chop pass” meaning “It is Ebuka that ate most”, “the girl get plenty plenty jewelries” meaning “the girl has too many jewelries”.
- (6) Lack of morphophonemic variation. Unlike English language that has morphophonemic variation for past tense marker (e.g, die + d = died, stop + ed = stopped, expand + ed = expanded), pidgin does not. Examples, “I don **cook** since morning” meaning “I have **cooked** since”; “I don de sick since last month’ meaning “I have been sick since last month”.; I bin de wait for you” meaning “have been waiting for you”.

### **Historical Background of the Nigeria Pidgin English**

The industrial revolution of 1884 – 1885 in Europe led to the search for raw material and the incursion of the Europeans into West Africa. This led to the colonization of most African countries and the importation of English language into them. (Isiak 2007).

Since language and culture are interwoven and cannot be separated, most West African languages came in contact with the European language (English). In order to overcome the



problem of language barrier, there came a need to communicate between the speakers of the two languages making contact. The then sailors, traders, officials and other whites had to simplify their language. Because Nigerian for instance as one of their colonies could not gain enough competence in English language due to lack of formal exposure in the language, they simply came up with their own version of English language. E.g., “I don port” meaning “I have arrived” (Isiak 2007, p. 12-13).

The Europeans along the line engaged into slave trade business with some Africans, therefore exposing them to more of Europeans language. The captives that were able to return came with another version of English language. All these versions coming together became the Nigeria Pidgin English and because it has been maximally accepted and transferred from one generation to another, it could be said to some extent to have been creolized, especially in the Eastern region of Nigeria (like Port-Harcourt and Delta), where most kids now acquire Nigeria English pidgin as their first language. “Research has it that around 3 – 5 million Nigerians out of over 143million acquire Pidgin English as their first language” (Abdulahi-Idiagbon 2010, p. 50). It can be argued that Nigerians are highly acculturative in nature and as such, they have so much acculturated the Europeans’ culture and language to the extent that most Nigerian kids today cannot even speak their native language.

### **The Nigeria Pidgin English**

Nigeria Pidgin English is a version of English and Nigeria language spoken as a kind of lingual Franca across Nigeria and is referred to simply as “Pidgin”, “Broken English” or “Broken”. It is estimated that Nigeria Pidgin English is the native language of approximately 3 to 5 million people and is

a second language for at least another 75million. Abdullahi-Idiagbon (2010, p. 52) citing Ihemere (2006, p.296).

Abdullahi-Idiagbon (2010, p. 52) citing Obiechina (1984) gives the following variants of the Nigeria Pidgin as:

1. Bendel Variant: Spoken in places such as Abraka, Wari, Isoko, Sapele, Agbor, Itsekiri, Ewu, Effurun, Urohobo, Agbaraha-Oto.
2. Calabar Variant: Spoken in Calabar, Cross river, Akwa-Ibom, Kalabari regions.
3. Kano/Maiduguri Variant: Spoken in North-East, North-North, North-South, and North-West.
4. Lagos Variant: Spoken in South-West, Eastern part, Southern-Central
5. Port-Harcourt variant: Spoken in Port-Harcourt, River, and Regional suburbs.

A variant is characterized by a preponderant influence of its substrate language on the form and usage of that variant, including their pronunciation, spelling, usage and meaning beyond the territory of the original speakers.

Abdullahi-Idiagbon (2010, p. 54) states that the Nigeria Pidgin can be classified into three and they include:

- i. Ordinary Nigeria Pidgin English spoken by the vast majority of Nigeria people. For example,
  - (a) Abeg give me sugar = please give me sugar
  - (b) I wan buy fish = I want to buy fish
  - (c) Who dey for here? = Who is here?
  - (d) Who you be? = Who are you?
  - (e) Wetin time dey talk? = What is the time?

- (i) **Wafe-Rank** which is a special variety popular among the Nigerian students. Research shows that this category of pidgin evolved at Ajegunle, a suburb of Lagos city, mostly inhabited by low-income earners including young musicians who perform at clubs

where the majority of those in attendance are students and socialites of low or average status. Abdullahi-Idiagbon further states that, Wafy as being referred to has spread beyond its originators to virtually all nooks and crannies of students' settlement. Musicians like Daddy Showkey, African China, Lagbaja and Charlie Boy and many more are examples of the apostles of Wafe Ranky. Examples of such pidgin encompass:

- (a) Unto the next one = Lets move to the next
- (b) Pass me the rozay = Give me the rozay (alcohol)
- (c) Yawa don gas = There is trouble
- (d) Oya scatter the place = cause trouble
- (e) Ginger your swagger = Display your style

(ii) **Hooligan's version popularly associates with the touts, "area boys" or "hoodlums"**. It is basically full of street slangs. For example,

- (a) I don hear your tape = I have heard about you
- (b) The babe na milk temple = The lady is big breasted
- (c) You don cast = You are exposed
- (d) If I light your face = If I slap you
- (e) Give me five vibe = Give me five Indian-helms

### **Theoretical Framework**

Charles Leland's (1892) theory of baby-talk posits that pidgin is similar to the early effort of children language. He noticed that pidgin speakers and children often only approximate to the standard pronunciation; they both use a high proportion of content words and relatively few function words, that is, in the speech both morphological change was rare if not altogether absent; that word classes were much less rigidly

established and that pronominal contract were frequently reduced.

Bloomfield (1933, p. 472) cited by Todd (1992, p. 27) said “Speakers of a lower language may make so little progress in learning the dominant speech that the masters use in communicating with them and resort to baby-talk”. To Bloomfield ‘baby-talk’ is the master of imitation of the subjects ‘incorrect speech’

Furthermore, the independent parallel development theory largely propagated by Robert A. Hall Jr. (1966) believes that pidgin and creole arose independently and developed along parallel line. Robert was among the first scholars to recognize the pervading similarities in the world’s pidgin and creole. He and his supporters believe that the history of pidgin and creole can be traced back to Indo-European Atlantic and West African substratum (Todd 1992). Though the validity of some aspects of this theory cannot be underestimated, it has two limitations; firstly, structure and lexis of Atlantic and Pacific Pidgin English have common features which do not occur in Standard English and secondly, African slaves came from widely separated areas of West Africa and to overstress the similarity of their linguistic background is to oversimplify.

As early as 1938, John Reinecks noted the possible influence of a nautical jargon on the development of many pidgins, such a view postulates that the then colonial sailor’s lingua franca was passed on to Africans, Asians, Polynesians or whatever people the sailors came into contact with. The nautical jargon would thus have provided a nucleus for the pidgin, which would then have been expanded according to the model of the learner’s mother tongue. Such an explanation helps to account for the similarities and dissimilarities that exist in the pidgin Englishes of the world; and this is as a result of the influences exerted by different mother tongues.

The nautical jargon theory is an attractive one, but it also fails to explain the many structural affinities that exist between Pidgin Englishes and their French, Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch counterparts. It is its ability to do that which is the main attraction of the monogenetic or reflexification theory. According to this theory, all European-language base pidgins are derived from fifteenth century Portuguese Pidgin.

The monogenetic theory formulated by Hugo Schuchardt in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and popularized in late 1960s by Taylor (1961) and Thompson (1961) envisages a Portuguese pidgin deriving ultimately from Sabir. Portuguese as the originator of both Atlantic and Pacific pidgins through a process of reflexification, has many attractions, most notably its comprehensiveness. Its comprehensiveness is the chief merit of the monogenetic theory, even though it may not be regarded as being totally comprehensive, since there are other pidgins that exist in the world that are not based on European languages and which yet share some of the characteristics of all Portuguese based Pidgin. In Africa we have for example Hausa, Zulu, Bemba, and Swahili (Todd 1992, p. 31-36).

### **The Chosen Framework**

The Monogenetic or reflexification theory formulated by Hugo Schuchardt in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and popularized in the late 1950s and early 1960s by Taylor (1961). Thompson (1961) believes that all European language based pidgins and creoles are derived from the fifteenth century Portuguese pidgins and that the European languages were largely transported through the colonial sailors. The monogenetic or reflexification theory is also the base for the Nigeria Pidgin English. The Nigeria Pidgin English has its base from the European world English language and colonial slave trade, thereby making it a reflection of the Portuguese pidgin. Since all European languages based pidgins are derived from the

fifteenth century Portuguese pidgins and creoles, monogenetic or reflexification theory is the most suitable theory for the Nigeria Pidgin English that is used in all aspects of human communication in Nigeria.

### **The Use of Pidgin in Business**

There are several dimensions by which pidgin can be employed in our everyday interpersonal interaction. It can be used during conversation between friends, between informal social groups. Abdullahi (2010) in his investigation on the uses of pidgin as one of the means of communication submitted four common things the Nigeria Pidgin English can be used for by the students on campus. They included:

- (a) To herald musical concert of interest within or outside campus
- (b) To womanize or talk about ladies, or ladies discussing their male friends
- (c) To express basic domestic needs like eating and clothing
- (d) For interpersonal/private discussions

Similarly, pidgin could be beneficial in business transactions. Business according to Hornby (2000, p. 151), "Is the activity of making, buying, selling or supplying for money."

The use of pidgin in business serves the purpose of

- (i) Bridging the gap of communication barrier among partners in business
- (ii) Uniting people from diverse tribe and tongue to achieve a set goal in business
- (iii) Enhancing business turnover
- (iv) Sourcing and spreading useful information on business among the groups involved.

Globalization and quest for survival has caused many people to leave their land of birth to another place. Some settle in a new place to educate, to work or to do business. Taking

Igbo people for example, many of them (male and female) are found in different nooks and crannies of the world which Ilorin is not left out, to thrive. Igbo people known for their business enterprises are found in great number in such areas like Agaka, Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Tanke, Offa Garage Road, Oja Tuntun, Pata market and basically everywhere in Ilorin Metropolis, engaging in one business or the other. Good to know that the brain behind business is to render services to others and make money out of it. As a result of this, many Igbo people have found themselves face to face with people of different languages whom they definitely would want to sell their wares to. In order to achieve this, Nigerians including Igbo businessmen and women from all walks of life have established great and power liking in the use of pidgin to have their desires accomplished.

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis of data tends to authenticate or undermine the usefulness of pidgin in business transaction in Ilorin Metropolis. Total number of (30) questionnaires were circulated to the two parties involved in business transaction (sellers and buyers), out of which 25 were returned. Nevertheless, (5) copies were void thus (20) copies of returned questionnaires were used for this paper. This represents 67% of the total number of questionnaires distributed.

### **Data Analysis 1:**

Below is an observed documented discussion from an Igbo dealer on Spare Parts at Agaka market with his non-Igbo language speaking customer.

Customer:       Oga well done  
                      [Sir well done)  
                      (Well done sir)

Igbo Trader: Thank you jọọ. How family?  
[Thank you please. How family?]  
(Thank you. How is your family?)

Customer: Them de. How market de go?  
[They are.] How market is go?  
(They are fine. How is market?)

Igbo Trader: We de push am small small. You wan buy something?  
[We is push it small. You want buy something?]  
(We are doing it gradually. Do you want to buy something?)

Customer: You get gear box?  
[You have gear box?]  
(Do you have gear box?)

Igbo Trader: I de.  
[It is]  
(I have it.)

Customer: Wee am? Oya bring am make I see.  
[Where it? Ok bring it let me see]  
(Where is it? Bring it for me to see)

Igbo Trader: Come inside shop. See am here.  
[Come inside shop. See it here]  
(Come into the shop. See it here.)

Customer: Na how much i bi?  
[Is how much it is?]  
(How much is it?)



Igbo Trader: Na small money, make you bring Twenty-five thousand naira.

[Is small money let you bring Twenty-five thousand naira.]

(The price is not much; bring twenty-five thousand naira).

Customer: Haba! i too cost.

[Ha! It too cost.]

(Ha! It is too costly.)

Igbo Trader: E ee, things don too cost for market, you no say na change we de. Oya, how much you go pay?

Yes, things has too cost for market, you know that is change we is. Ok, how much you will pay?]

(Yes things are too costly in the market; you know that we are in the era of change. Ok. How much will you pay?)

Customer: I go give you Twelve thousand five.

[I will give you Twelve thousand five]

(I will pay Twelve thousand five hundred naira)

Igbo Trader: Ha! Oga no do like dat. I no even reach how much we buy am. This one na original no be fake, talk better now.

[Ha! Sir not do like that. It not even reach how much we buy it. This one is original not is fake, talk better now]

(Ha! Sir don't price it like that. It is not even up to what it was bought. This one is original and not fake. Price it very well.)

Customer:       Wetin you wan make I price?  
                      [What you want do I price?]  
                      (How much do you want me to price it?)

Igbo Trader:     Oya add money, wetin you talk na old price  
                      [Let add money, what you talk is old price].  
                      (Ok, add some amount to it, what you priced was the old price for it.)

Customer:       Ok. Make I pay Eighteen thousand naira?  
                      [Ok. Let I pay Eighteen thousand naira?]  
                      (Ok. Should I pay Eighteen Thousand

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Igbo Trader:     Oga wetin you de price no buy am at all at all.  
                      Last price na Twenty two Thousand Five Hundred.  
                      [Sir what you is price not buy it at all. Last price is Twenty two thousand five hundred naira]  
                      (Sir your price is not up to the cost price. The last price is Twenty-two Thousand five hundred naira.)

Customer:       Ok make I go check another place.

[Ok let I go check another place]  
(Ok, let me check at another place)

Igbo Trader: No wahala. But if price na de same come buy for my hand, you no say na original I de sell.  
[No problem. But if price is is same come buy for my hand, you know that is original I is sell.]  
(No problem. But if the price is the same, come and buy from me; you know I sell original products.)

### **Data Analysis 2:**

This is another discussion between an Igbo woman selling food items at Oja Tuntun market and one of her non-Igbo speaking customer.

Customer: Madam I de greet.  
[Madam I is greet.]  
( Madam well done.)

Igbo Trader: Oo nne, ị bịa! Kedu ihe ị chọrọ?  
[Yes mother, you come? What something you want?]  
(Yes my dear, welcome. What do you want?)

Customer: Ah! Ma, I no hear you o, I no bi Igbo.  
[Ah! Madam, I not hear you, I not is Igbo]  
( Ah! Madam, I do not understand what you are saying. I am not Igbo)

Igbo Trader: Ewu! nwanne m, no vex; I no no. Welicome. Wetin you want?  
[Oh! Sibling I, not angry; I not know. Welcome. What you want?]

(Oh! My dear, don't be angry; I did not know.  
Welcome. What do you want?)

Customer: I wan buy salt, magi, pepper and onion.  
[I want buy salt, magi, pepper and onion.]  
(I want to buy salt, magi, pepper and onion.)

Igbo Trader: Them de. How much own you wan buy?  
[They is. How much one you want buy?]  
(I have them. How for each do you want?)

Customer: I no no how you de sell.  
[I not know how much you is sell]  
(I do not know how much you sell each of  
them.)

Igbo Trader: Salt na forty naira, magi na 2 for ten naira,  
pepper na fifty fifty naira, onion na one for ten  
naira.  
[Salt is forty naira, magi is two for ten naira,  
pepper is fifty naira, onion is one for ten  
naira]  
(Salt is forty naira, magi is two for ten naira,  
pepper is fifty naira, onion is one for ten naira.)

Customer: I wan twenty naira magi, one salt, onion  
twenty naira and pepper hundred naira.  
[I want twenty naira magi, one salt, onion  
twenty naira and pepper hundred naira.]  
(I want twenty naira magi, one salt, twenty  
naira onion and hundred naira pepper)

Igbo Trader: Oya, take I don put am.  
[ Ok, take I is put it.]

(Ok. take I have put them)

Customer: Oya take money.  
[Ok Take money.]  
(Alright take the money)

Igbo Trader: Thank you o. You do well my sister  
[Thank you. You do well my sister]  
(Thank you. I am very grateful)

Customer: I hear ma.  
[I hear madam.]  
(Thank you madam)

Igbo Trader: Come buy for my hand next time. I go do you  
well. You see say I put plenty plenty jara for  
you.  
[Come buy for my hand next time. I will do  
you well. You see that I put plenty extra for  
you]  
(Come and patronize me next time. I will be  
nice to you. Hope you see how much extra I  
put for you.)

Customer: I go come. Bye bye.  
[I will come. Bye.]

Igbo Trader: Helep me greet home.  
[Help me greet home.]  
(Extend my good wishes to your family.)

Customer: Oo. Them go hear.  
[Yes. They will hear]  
(Ok. I will greet them for you.)

### **Data Analysis 3:**

Analysis of the questionnaire distributed to both Igbo and non-Igbo speaking buyers and sellers at Agaka and Oja Tuntun markets at Ilorin Metropolis

**Table 1:**

#### **Distribution of respondents according Age**

Age percentage	Number
15 - 24 15%	3
25 - 34 35%	7
35 - 45 35%	7
46 and Above 15%	3
<b>Total</b> 100	20

The above analysis showed that (15%) of 3 respondents were between the age of 15-24, (35%) of 7 respondents were between 25-34 years, (35%) of 7 were between age of 35-45 and (15%) of 3 respondents were at the age of 46 and above.

**Table 2:**

#### **Distribution of respondents according gender**

Sex	Number
percentage	
Male	13
65%	
Female	7
35%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>
100	

The foregoing distribution indicated that male respondents used for the study were (65%) of 13 whereas the female among them were (35%) of 7 of the respondents.

**Table 3:**

**Distribution of respondents according seller and buyer ratio**

Buyer/Seller Relationship	Number
percentage	
Seller	
16	80%
Buyer	
4	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>
100	

The table above showed that (80%) of 16 respondents are sellers but (20%) of 4 of the respondents were buyers.

**Table 4:**

**Distribution of respondents based on the ability to speak with the customers at business place**

Response	Number
Percentage	
Yes	20
100%	
No	0%
0%	
<b>Total</b>	20
100	

The previous analysis implied that (100%) of 20 respondents use verbal communication to transact business.

**Table 5:**

**Rating of respondents based on the use of language of one's choice to the customers**

Responses	Number
percentage	
Yes	
5	25%
No	
15	75%
<b>Total</b>	20
100	



The distribution of respondents based on using one's language choice to communicate to customers has shown that (25%) of 5 respondents accepted while (75%) of 15 respondents objected to it.

**Table 6:**  
**Allocation of respondents based on the use of common and simple language during business transactions.**

<u>Responses</u> <u>percentage</u>	<u>Number</u>
Yes	17
	85%
No	3
	15%
<b>Total</b>	20
100	

The above table specified that (85%) of 17 respondents accepted that the use of common and simple language during business transaction is better and more beneficial however, (15%) of 3 respondents disapproved of that.

**Table 7:**  
**Distribution of respondents according to language they speak to their customers during business transactions.**

<u>Language in use</u> <u>percentage</u>	<u>Number</u>
Igbo	3
15%	

Yoruba	4	
20%		
Pidgin	11	
55%		
English	2	
10%		
Total	20	100

The table overhead explained that (15%) of 3 respondents indicated that they speak Igbo language to their customers, (20%) of 4 respondents owned up that they use Yoruba to their customers, (55%) of 11 respondents speak Pidgin with their customers, and (10%) of 2 accepted using English language in their daily business transactions with their customers.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has explored the effectiveness of pidgin in the smooth running of business as it pertains to business men and women in Ilorin Metropolis. It has tried to inform that being proficient in diverse means of language use and using the appropriate medium of expression at the right time, place and context does more good than harm.

### **Recommendation**

Notwithstanding the appreciative influence of pidgin towards the smooth running of business enterprise in Ilorin Metropolis, the paper however recommends that every individual needs to make sure that his or her originality is not hampered. This means to say that no matter how one tries to use every available means to achieve one's set goals, one's nativity must not be forgotten and one's mother tongue must not be left to decay.

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## ***Appendix*** **Questionnaire**

**Dear Respondent,**

This is a questionnaire designed to collect information on the language in use for business transaction between Igbo traders and the customers in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Kindly respond to the questions provided below according to how it affects you without bias. I promise that any information supplied will be treated confidentially.

Thanks.

### **Section A (Personal Data)**

**Instruction:** Please tick [ ☐ ] inside the box that corresponds to your choice of answer.

**Age:** (a) 16-20 years [ ☐ ] (b) 21-25years [ ☐ ] (c) 26-30years [ ☐ ] (d) 31 and above [ ☐ ]

Place of birth .....

Second language (L2)

Level of education .....

Regular language .....

## General Information on the Use of Language in Business

1. Do you speak with your customers at business place? YES  
[ ] NO [ ]
2. Do you communicate by talking to your customers? YES  
[ ] NO [ ]
3. Do you understand every language? (a) [ ] (b)  
[ ]
4. Do you think everybody understand every language? (a) [ ]  
(b) [ ]

5. Do you talk to your customers in any language you feel like? YES [    ] NO [    ]
6. . If your answer to question 5 is yes, do they understand you? YES [    ] NO [    ]
7. If your answer to question no. 6 is no, is it because they do not understand you?  
  
(a) [    ]        (b) [    ]
8. Do you think speaking one common and simple language between the buyer and the seller is better and more profiting? (a) [    ]        (b) [    ]
9. Do you think there may be a language you will speak and your customer will understand you? (a) [    ]        (b) [    ]
10. Tick on the language that you and your customer speak and understand (a) Igbo  
(b) Yoruba (c) Pidgin (d) English