

THE IMPACT OF NIGERIAN PIDGIN ENGLISH ON BUSINESS ADVANCEMENT IN EKE AWKA MARKET, AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

Language is central to commercial activity because buying and selling depend on effective communication, price negotiation, customer attraction, interpersonal relationships, and agreement. In Nigeria's multilingual environment, Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE), also known as Nigerian Pidgin, serves as an important medium of interethnic communication. This paper examines the impact of Nigerian Pidgin English on business advancement in Eke Awka Market, Awka, Anambra State. The paper adopts a qualitative, documentary, and analytical approach, drawing on scholarship on Nigerian Pidgin, empirical studies of language use in Nigerian markets, and available information on Eke Awka Market. The paper also adopts Communication Accommodation Theory and the data were gotten from the market through observation method. Observation and findings were made on the roles of Nigerian Pidgin in facilitating communication, reducing linguistic barriers, negotiating prices, attracting customers, establishing solidarity, promoting trust, accommodating linguistically diverse customers, and supporting code-switching. This paper argues that Nigerian Pidgin contributes to business advancement primarily through communicative efficiency and interpersonal accommodation rather than direct economic production. By making transactions more accessible and reducing communication difficulties, it can facilitate commercial opportunities. However, its effectiveness depends on context and may operate alongside Igbo, English, Nigerian English, and other languages. This paper recommends greater recognition of multilingual competence as a commercial resource.

Keywords: Nigerian Pidgin English, business advancement, Eke Awka Market, language.

1. Introduction

Language plays a fundamental role in commercial activities because transactions depend on effective communication among sellers, buyers, suppliers and other participants. Prices must be stated and negotiated, products described, quantities determined, and relationships maintained. Consequently, language choice in the marketplace can influence the accessibility, efficiency and social character of commercial interaction.

This relationship between language and commerce is particularly important in Nigeria, a highly multilingual society where English serves important official functions alongside numerous indigenous languages. Within this linguistic environment, Nigerian Pidgin has developed as an important contact variety. Agheyisi (1984) discusses its growing sociolinguistic significance, while Elugbe and Omamor (1991) examine its historical development, structure and prospects. Faraclas (1996) further demonstrates that Nigerian Pidgin possesses systematic linguistic structures rather than being merely an imperfect form of English.

Nigerian Pidgin is particularly significant in interactions involving speakers from different linguistic backgrounds. It can function as a lingua franca because users do not necessarily need to share the same indigenous language. Mann (1993) highlights its role in interethnic communication, while Egbokhare (2001) situates it within Nigeria's changing linguistic ecology.

The marketplace provides an important setting for examining this relationship between language and commerce. Markets bring together people from diverse ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Nigerian Pidgin may therefore be selected because of its accessibility, informality and usefulness in negotiation. Speakers may also alternate between Nigerian Pidgin, Igbo and English depending on the interlocutor, topic and communicative purpose.

The present study focuses on Eke Awka Market, a major commercial centre in Awka, Anambra State. Eyisi et al. (2022), in a study involving 154 traders in the market, reported that 64.4% had tertiary education, 30.1% secondary education, 4.3% primary education and 1.2% no formal education. Although their study concerned family planning rather than language, these figures indicate considerable educational diversity among traders. The market also participates in the circulation of goods from different parts of Nigeria, suggesting a commercial environment in which communication may extend beyond local linguistic boundaries.

Despite the importance of Eke Awka Market, limited published research has specifically examined the relationship between Nigerian Pidgin and business advancement in the market. This study therefore addresses this gap by examining how Nigerian Pidgin facilitates commercial communication and how its use may contribute to business advancement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Commercial interaction requires effective communication. Where buyer and seller do not share the same language, difficulties may arise in negotiating price, describing products, establishing trust and completing transactions. Such difficulties can become more pronounced in multilingual markets where traders and customers originate from different linguistic backgrounds.

Eke Awka Market is situated within a predominantly Igbo-speaking environment, but its commercial activities are not necessarily restricted to speakers of Igbo. Markets attract customers, suppliers and traders from different parts of Nigeria. English and Igbo can fulfil important communicative functions, but Nigerian Pidgin may provide an additional contact code through which participants can interact across linguistic boundaries.

The problem, therefore, is not simply whether Nigerian Pidgin is spoken in the market. The more significant question concerns what it does for business communication. Does it facilitate bargaining? Does it make communication easier for people from different linguistic backgrounds? Does it help sellers establish rapport with customers? Can it reduce misunderstandings? Does it support customer retention and commercial relationships? And to what extent can these communicative functions be interpreted as contributing to business advancement?

Existing Nigerian market studies suggest that Pidgin can facilitate commercial interaction. However, findings from Masaka, Igbudu, Zaria and other markets cannot automatically be generalized to Eke Awka because language practices are influenced by local linguistic ecology. The present study consequently treats findings from other markets as comparative evidence rather than direct measurements of Eke Awka.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of Nigerian Pidgin English on business advancement in Eke Awka Market. The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the communicative functions of Nigerian Pidgin English in commercial interactions;
2. investigate how Nigerian Pidgin can facilitate communication between buyers and sellers from different linguistic backgrounds;
3. examine the role of Nigerian Pidgin in bargaining and price negotiation;
4. determine how Nigerian Pidgin contributes to customer-seller rapport and relationship building;
5. examine the relationship between Nigerian Pidgin, code-switching and business communication;
6. identify possible advantages and limitations associated with the use of Nigerian Pidgin in commercial transactions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Nigerian Pidgin English

Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE), commonly referred to as Nigerian Pidgin or, in some contexts, *Naija*, is an English-lexified contact language that has developed within Nigeria's highly multilingual environment. Its emergence and development are closely associated with prolonged contact between English and Nigerian languages. Over time, however, Nigerian Pidgin has extended beyond its historical contact functions and become an important medium of communication across different social and linguistic groups in Nigeria (Agheysi, 1984; Elugbe & Omamor, 1991).

It is important not to conceptualize Nigerian Pidgin simply as "bad English" or an incorrect form of Standard English. Such a perception overlooks its systematic linguistic structure and sociolinguistic functions. Faraclas (1996) provides a comprehensive description of Nigerian Pidgin, demonstrating its systematic organization in areas such as phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon. Similarly, Elugbe and Omamor (1991) examine its historical development, structure and prospects as a distinct contact language.

One of the important characteristics of Nigerian Pidgin is its capacity to facilitate communication among speakers from different linguistic backgrounds. In a multilingual country such as Nigeria, speakers may not always share the same indigenous language. Nigerian Pidgin can consequently provide a relatively accessible contact code through which individuals from different ethnic and linguistic communities communicate. Ekpenyong and Sunday argue that its widespread acceptability and relatively non-ethnic character contribute to its potential as a lingua franca.

For this study, Nigerian Pidgin is therefore understood not merely as an informal variety of English but as a significant linguistic resource within Nigeria's multilingual repertoire. Its relevance to business communication lies particularly in its ability to facilitate interaction among participants who may have different linguistic backgrounds.

2.2 Business Advancement

Business advancement refers in this study to the processes through which commercial activities become more effective, accessible, sustainable and capable of attracting and retaining customers. Although business advancement may ultimately be reflected in financial outcomes such as increased sales or profit, it is not restricted to economic returns alone. Communication is one of the social mechanisms through which commercial relationships are established and maintained.

Within this study, business advancement encompasses:

- a. effective communication between buyers and sellers;
- b. customer attraction and accessibility;
- c. customer retention and repeat patronage;
- d. successful bargaining and price negotiation;
- e. reduction of communication barriers;
- f. establishment of trust, familiarity and rapport;
- g. expansion of customer networks; and
- h. successful completion of commercial transactions.

Language can contribute to these outcomes indirectly by creating the communicative conditions necessary for successful economic exchange. For example, where a seller and buyer can communicate efficiently, they can negotiate prices, discuss product characteristics, resolve misunderstandings and complete transactions more effectively. Nigerian Pidgin may therefore contribute to business advancement through its communicative and interpersonal functions, particularly within multilingual market environments.

2.3 Nigerian Pidgin and the Nigerian Linguistic Ecology

Nigeria's linguistic ecology provides a favourable environment for the development and use of contact varieties. The country is characterized by extensive multilingualism involving English, Nigerian Pidgin and numerous indigenous languages. Within this environment, Nigerian Pidgin has developed from its historical contact origins and expanded into a wide range of social and communicative domains.

Agheyisi (1984) documents the changing sociolinguistic role of Nigerian Pidgin and highlights its increasing importance within Nigerian society. Elugbe and Omamor (1991) provide a historical and structural account of the language, while Faraclas (1996) offers a detailed grammatical description of Nigerian Pidgin. Together, these studies demonstrate that the language should be examined as a structured linguistic system functioning within a complex multilingual environment.

Egbokhare (2001) further situates Nigerian Pidgin within Nigeria's broader linguistic ecology, emphasizing the changing profiles and functions of the language. This perspective is particularly relevant to the present study because Nigerian Pidgin does not operate independently of other languages. Its use is shaped by its relationship with indigenous languages, English and other varieties within the linguistic environment.

Nigerian Pidgin is therefore best understood as part of a multilingual repertoire. A trader may use Igbo when communicating with an Igbo-speaking customer, Nigerian Pidgin when interacting with a customer whose indigenous language is unknown or different, and English or Nigerian English when a more formal interaction is required. Language choice is consequently situational and strategic rather than necessarily exclusive.

For Eke Awka Market, this multilingual perspective is important because the dominance of Igbo in the surrounding environment does not necessarily mean that all traders and customers use Igbo exclusively. Nigerian Pidgin may provide an additional communicative resource for interactions involving speakers from different linguistic backgrounds.

2.4 Nigerian Pidgin as a Lingua Franca

The lingua-franca function of Nigerian Pidgin is central to understanding its potential commercial significance. A lingua franca provides a means of communication among individuals who do not share the same first language. In a multilingual society, such a language can facilitate interaction across ethnic and linguistic boundaries.

The importance of this function becomes particularly apparent in market environments. Markets are socially heterogeneous spaces in which traders, customers, suppliers and intermediaries may come from different communities and regions. Traders may also interact with customers whose knowledge of the dominant local language is limited. A shared contact variety can therefore make commercial communication more accessible.

Mann (1993) observes that Nigerian Pidgin has played an important role in interethnic communication and has expanded beyond narrowly defined contact situations. Its use as a lingua franca provides speakers with a means of overcoming some of the linguistic barriers associated with Nigeria's multilingual environment.

From a business perspective, this function has practical significance. Where participants do not share sufficient proficiency in Igbo or another indigenous language, Nigerian Pidgin may provide a communicative bridge. In Eke Awka Market, therefore, Nigerian Pidgin may supplement Igbo by enabling traders to communicate with customers and business associates from other linguistic communities.

However, the lingua-franca function should not be interpreted as meaning that Nigerian Pidgin is necessarily the dominant language of every market interaction. Rather, its potential value lies in providing an additional communicative option within a multilingual environment.

2.5 Nigerian Pidgin and Market Interaction

Market communication is characterized by immediacy, informality, negotiation and frequent interpersonal contact. Buyers and sellers must exchange information quickly, negotiate prices, persuade one another and establish sufficient rapport to complete transactions. Consequently, the linguistic resources used in market interaction tend to be flexible and context-dependent.

Uwaechia (2016), in a study of Nigerian Pidgin use in Zaria markets, examined its interaction with Hausa and varieties of English in buying-and-selling situations. The study demonstrates the importance of understanding Nigerian Pidgin as part of a broader multilingual repertoire rather than examining it as an isolated language. Its use in market interaction reflects the linguistic diversity of the participants and the communicative demands of commercial exchange.

More directly, Tanimu and Suleiman (2023) investigated code-switching among Nigerian Pidgin speakers in Masaka Market, Nasarawa State. Their study found that buyers and sellers used Nigerian Pidgin across different demographic groups and that code-switching served both commercial and social purposes. The authors associate Nigerian Pidgin with effective communication, reduction of language barriers and facilitation of business interaction.

The findings are significant for the present study because they demonstrate how language choice can become part of commercial strategy. When a trader shifts from one language to Nigerian Pidgin, the shift may enable the trader to accommodate a customer's linguistic background, create familiarity, facilitate bargaining or simply make the interaction easier.

However, findings from Masaka Market and Zaria markets cannot automatically be generalized to Eke Awka Market. Differences in local linguistic ecology, customer composition, trading activities and language attitudes may produce different patterns of language use. Nevertheless, these studies provide a useful comparative foundation for examining Nigerian Pidgin in Eke Awka.

The available literature therefore suggests that Nigerian Pidgin can perform several commercially relevant functions: it can reduce linguistic barriers, facilitate interpersonal interaction, support bargaining and provide a common communicative code among linguistically diverse participants. The extent to which these functions contribute specifically to business advancement in Eke Awka Market, however, remains insufficiently documented. This gap provides the justification for the present study.

2.6. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), originally developed by Giles and colleagues, as its principal theoretical framework. Communication Accommodation Theory explains how speakers modify their communicative behaviour in response to their interlocutors. Such accommodation may involve convergence, divergence or maintenance of linguistic patterns.

Convergence occurs when speakers make their language more like that of their interlocutors. In a Nigerian market, a seller who shifts from formal English or Igbo into Nigerian Pidgin when interacting with a customer who uses Pidgin can be interpreted as engaging in linguistic convergence. The relevance of CAT to market interaction is particularly strong because commercial communication is inherently interpersonal. Sellers want

customers to understand them and, in many cases, to feel comfortable interacting with them. Customers similarly adapt their speech to obtain information, negotiate prices and establish favourable relationships.

A study of language choices in Nigerian business places found that participants use accommodation strategies, including code-switching and code-mixing, alongside greetings, humour, cajoling, flattery and pleading. The study argues that buyers and sellers accommodate one another linguistically in pursuit of commercial advantage. Thus, CAT provides a useful explanation for why a trader at Eke Awka might shift from Igbo or English to Nigerian Pidgin when the communicative situation requires it.

3. Methodology

The paper adopts a qualitative field-based, documentary and analytical research design. Data were obtained through the researcher's direct visit to Eke Awka Market, Awka, Anambra State, where observations were made of actual commercial interactions between traders and customers. Attention was given to the use of Nigerian Pidgin in bargaining, price negotiation, product enquiries, customer engagement, persuasion and other business-related interactions. Instances of code-switching between Nigerian Pidgin, Igbo and English were also noted where relevant.

The field observations and documentary materials were analyzed qualitatively, focusing on the communicative and commercial functions of Nigerian Pidgin, including reducing language barriers, facilitating bargaining, establishing rapport, attracting customers, promoting transaction efficiency and supporting interethnic communication. Business advancement is understood broadly in this study to include effective communication, customer relations, accessibility and successful commercial interaction, rather than increased profit alone.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, the data are presented and discussed in accordance with their classifications, functions, and various factors. For instance, Nigerian pidgin as a bridge across linguistic barriers, Nigerian pidgin and bargaining, Nigerian pidgin and customer-seller rapport, Nigerian pidgin as a bridge across linguistic barriers, Nigerian pidgin and customer attraction, Nigerian pidgin and trust, amongst others.

4.1 Nigerian pidgin as a bridge across linguistic barriers

One of the most important potential contributions of Nigerian Pidgin to business advancement is its capacity to bridge linguistic differences. We have instances of the interactions observed in the market.

1. **Buyer:** How much be this one?

Seller: Na ₦5,000.

Buyer: Abeg, reduce am for me.

Seller: Oya, carry am ₦4,500.

The importance of this exchange is not its grammatical simplicity but its communicative efficiency. The buyer and seller immediately establish a shared code and proceed to negotiation.

In a multilingual market, such communication may prevent a potential transaction from failing because of language differences. Tanimu and Suleiman's (2023) findings from Masaka Market support this interpretation: their study found Nigerian Pidgin to be useful for communication among participants from different ethnic backgrounds and associated it with breaking language barriers. For Eke Awka Market, this function is potentially significant because traders and customers may not all possess the same level of proficiency in Igbo, English or Nigerian English.

4.2 Nigerian Pidgin and Bargaining

Bargaining is a central feature of many Nigerian market transactions. Language is not simply used to state the price; it is employed to persuade, plead, cajole, flatter and establish interpersonal relationships.

For example:

2. **Buyer:** Abeg, last price na?

Seller: Na ₦6,000 I fit sell am.

Buyer: Hmmm, abegi make I give you ₦4,500.

Seller: E no reach, my dear.

Buyer: Oya make I do am ₦5,000 so we go become customer

Seller: Okay nah, carry am

Such expressions may create an informal atmosphere in which bargaining is socially acceptable.

Ayoola (2009) demonstrates that Nigerian market haggling involves a range of discourse strategies, including humour, flattery, cajoling, euphemism and other interpersonal resources. Other instances that were extracted in the context of bargaining include:

3. "make you no go enter the hands of these wicked ọsọ afia people"

4. "market go vex for us ooo"
5. "Person wey never stay for line no fit know better goods"
6. "Tomorrow price fit change because dollar don rise again"

clearly show the widespread use of Pidgin English within the market environment. Nigerian Pidgin serves as an effective lingua franca among traders and customers from different linguistic and educational backgrounds. Since the market attracts people from various parts of Nigeria and neighboring African countries, Pidgin English provides a flexible and accessible medium of communication that reduces linguistic barriers. Nigerian Pidgin can therefore be viewed as a resource for negotiation management. Its contribution to business advancement is not necessarily that it directly determines the final price but that it provides a communicative environment within which negotiation can proceed smoothly.

4.3 Nigerian Pidgin and Customer-Seller Rapport

Business transactions are not exclusively economic exchanges. They are also social interactions.

A seller who addresses a customer with an expression such as:

7. Abeg, come see this one, my friend.

may create a more informal relationship than a highly formal English expression would.

Similarly:

8. My brother, I go give you better price.

can construct solidarity between seller and buyer.

Such expressions should not be interpreted literally in every case. Terms such as *brother*, *sister*, *my friend* and related forms can function pragmatically as markers of familiarity and social closeness. This aspect of Nigerian Pidgin is consistent with the broader sociolinguistic literature that treats the language as a resource for interpersonal interaction. This aligns with Egbohkhare's (2001) opinion that states that the language can reduce social distance and create a sense of shared Nigerian identity, particularly among speakers who do not share an indigenous language.

4.4 Nigerian Pidgin and Customer Attraction

A major business challenge is attracting potential customers. Communication is one of the resources sellers use in accomplishing this task.

In market environments, sellers often call attention to their goods using short, direct and socially engaging expressions. Nigerian Pidgin is particularly suitable for such interaction because it is often associated with informal, spontaneous communication.

For example:

9. Madam, come see this shoe. E fine well well.
10. Oga, check this sandal. Na original one.
11. This one na final price
12. You no fit see am cheaper anywhere

Such expressions can function simultaneously as information, invitation and persuasion. The effectiveness of this strategy depends on the customer. A customer who identifies comfortably with Nigerian Pidgin may respond positively, while another may prefer Igbo or English. Thus, the business advantage lies not in replacing other languages but in expanding the seller's communicative repertoire.

4.5 Nigerian Pidgin and Trust

Trust is important in commercial transactions, especially where buyers are required to make decisions concerning product quality, price and payment. Language can contribute to trust indirectly by creating interpersonal familiarity. A seller who adjusts speech to match the customer's preferred language may communicate:

- i. accessibility;
- ii. friendliness;
- iii. solidarity;
- iv. willingness to negotiate;
- v. social familiarity.

Communication Accommodation Theory provides a useful explanation here. Linguistic convergence may reduce social distance between interactants and create a more favourable communicative environment. There are instances of such:

13. "This pomade na good product. E no dey spoil quick like all these fake fake things for market"
14. "My customer, no fear. If this cream spoil within three months, bring am back"
15. "Customer, make we do business with trust. Once trust enter, market go dey move smoothly"

However, language should not be treated as a guarantee of trustworthiness. A speaker's use of Nigerian Pidgin does not necessarily mean that the person is trustworthy or that a transaction will be successful. Rather, it provides one of several interpersonal resources through which trust may be negotiated.

4.6 Nigerian Pidgin and Code-Switching

A multilingual trader does not necessarily select one language and use it throughout an entire interaction. Instead, speakers may alternate between Nigerian Pidgin, Igbo and English.

Consider:

16. Seller: Nne, this one bu ezigbo quality. The price na ₦8,000, but I fit reduce am.

This example illustrates a mixture of Igbo, English and Nigerian Pidgin. Such alternation may occur because different codes perform different functions.

17. Seller: "I have given you enough discount maka na o bu gi na-agba m aka afia today."

Igbo may express cultural intimacy whereas Nigerian pidgin may facilitate bargaining and informality. English may introduce product terminology or business-specific vocabulary. Research in Nigerian markets confirms that code-switching and code-mixing can function as communicative and commercial strategies. Tanimu and Suleiman (2023) specifically identify code-switching as part of the communicative practices through which Nigerian Pidgin speakers achieve business and social objectives.

4.7 Positive Impacts of Nigerian Pidgin on Business Advancement

4.7.1 Reduction of Language Barriers

Nigerian Pidgin can provide a shared communicative code where participants do not have a common indigenous language. In a multilingual market such as Eke Awka Market, traders and customers may come from different linguistic backgrounds. Nigerian Pidgin can therefore facilitate interaction between people who may not be sufficiently proficient in Igbo or English. By reducing linguistic barriers, it can make it easier for buyers to enquire about products and for sellers to explain prices, quality, quantity and other relevant information.

4.7.2 Improved Transactional Efficiency

Nigerian Pidgin can contribute to the speed and efficiency of commercial transactions. Its relatively familiar and informal expressions can allow traders and customers to exchange information quickly, particularly in busy market environments. Expressions such as *How much be this?*, *Abeg reduce am*, and *Na last price* can communicate questions and negotiation strategies directly. This communicative efficiency may help transactions proceed with fewer delays and misunderstandings.

4.7.3 Facilitation of Bargaining

Bargaining is an important aspect of market transactions, and Nigerian Pidgin can provide an effective medium for negotiation. Buyers can use it to make requests, plead for reductions, propose counteroffers and express dissatisfaction with prices, while sellers can use it to justify prices or offer concessions. Its informal character may also create a relaxed atmosphere in which bargaining becomes easier. Thus, Nigerian Pidgin can serve as a pragmatic resource for achieving mutually acceptable commercial agreements.

4.7.4 Customer-Seller Solidarity

Nigerian Pidgin can reduce social distance between buyers and sellers and establish an atmosphere of familiarity. Expressions such as *my brother*, *my sister*, *Oga*, *Madam*, and *abeg* may perform interpersonal rather than merely literal functions. Such expressions can create friendliness and solidarity, making customers feel more comfortable interacting with traders. In this sense, the language can contribute to the interpersonal dimension of business relationships.

4.7.5 Wider Customer Reach

A trader who can communicate effectively in Nigerian Pidgin may be able to interact with customers who are not proficient in the local indigenous language. This can be particularly useful when customers come from other parts of Nigeria. Rather than restricting business communication to speakers of Igbo, for example, Nigerian Pidgin can enable a trader to communicate with customers from different linguistic communities and potentially expand the trader's customer base.

4.7.6 Pragmatic Flexibility

Nigerian Pidgin can be combined with Igbo, English and other linguistic resources according to the communicative situation. Traders may switch languages depending on the customer's identity, level of familiarity, subject matter or purpose of interaction. This flexibility enables speakers to select the linguistic resource that best suits a particular communicative need. Consequently, Nigerian Pidgin should be viewed as part of a multilingual repertoire rather than necessarily as a replacement for Igbo or English.

4.7.7 Support for Customer Retention

Successful business relationships often depend not only on the quality and price of products but also on how customers are treated. Where customers associate a seller with accessible, friendly and accommodating communication, the language used may contribute indirectly to customer satisfaction and repeat patronage.

Nigerian Pidgin can create an informal atmosphere that encourages customers to return to sellers with whom they have established communicative familiarity.

4.7.8 Facilitation of Interethnic Commerce

Nigerian Pidgin can provide a communicative bridge between participants from different Nigerian linguistic communities. This is particularly significant in markets where traders, suppliers and customers may have different indigenous languages. By providing a relatively accessible contact variety, Nigerian Pidgin can support commercial relationships that might otherwise be affected by linguistic differences. Its role as a lingua franca therefore has implications for the expansion of interethnic trade.

These potential advantages are broadly consistent with empirical findings from Nigerian markets. In particular, the Masaka Market study by Tanimu and Suleiman (2023) reports that Nigerian Pidgin facilitates effective communication, helps to reduce language barriers and supports business and social interaction. The findings suggest that Pidgin can function as a practical resource for commercial communication in linguistically diverse environments as seen in Eke Markert, Awka.

4.9 Possible Negative Effects and Limitations

It is beyond gainsaying that Nigerian Pidgin is not universally advantageous in every commercial situation. Its usefulness depends on the participants, context, purpose of communication and social attitudes towards the language.

First, some customers may associate Nigerian Pidgin with informality and may prefer Standard English or Nigerian English in formal, professional or high-value commercial contexts. For instance, a customer negotiating a major business contract may consider formal English more appropriate than Pidgin. Consequently, traders need to recognize when Pidgin is suitable and when another linguistic variety may be more effective.

Second, Nigerian Pidgin is not completely uniform across Nigeria. There can be lexical, phonological and pragmatic differences among regional varieties. A particular expression that is easily understood by one speaker may have a different interpretation or may be unfamiliar to another. This variation can occasionally create misunderstanding, particularly among speakers from different regions.

Third, Nigerian Pidgin may be inappropriate for certain forms of written commercial communication. Formal contracts, official correspondence, invoices, regulatory documents and other institutional materials generally require more standardized varieties of English. Pidgin is therefore more useful for many face-to-face and informal commercial interactions than for formal documentation.

In the same vein, exclusive reliance on Nigerian Pidgin may exclude customers who do not understand it. This is particularly important in a multilingual environment where customers may have different linguistic backgrounds. Consequently, multilingual competence is often more commercially useful than dependence on one language alone. A trader who can move between Igbo, Nigerian Pidgin and English is likely to have greater communicative flexibility.

Furthermore, negative social attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin may influence language choice. Although the language has extensive communicative functions, it has historically encountered issues relating to prestige, social recognition and perceptions of correctness. Mann (1993) notes the sociolinguistic complexity surrounding the status of Nigerian Pidgin. Such attitudes may cause some speakers to avoid Pidgin in particular social or commercial situations.

The appropriate conclusion, therefore, is not that Nigerian Pidgin should replace Igbo or English in Eke Awka Market. Rather, its value lies in its contribution to a multilingual communicative repertoire. Its effectiveness is greatest when traders employ it strategically alongside other languages according to the needs of customers and situations.

4.10 Implications for Business Practice

The discussion of Nigerian Pidgin in commercial communication has several practical implications for traders, market associations and business-development organizations.

4.10.1 Multilingual Competence as a Business Skill

Traders should recognize language flexibility as a commercial asset. The ability to move between Igbo, Nigerian Pidgin and English can increase the range of customers with whom a trader can communicate effectively. Multilingual competence can therefore be regarded as a practical business skill rather than merely a linguistic ability.

4.10.2 Customer-Oriented Language Choice

Sellers should select their language according to customers' communicative preferences and the specific context of interaction. No single language is appropriate for every customer or transaction. A trader may use Igbo with an Igbo-speaking customer, Nigerian Pidgin with a customer from another linguistic background, and English where a more formal register is required. Such flexibility can improve communication and customer experience.

4.10.3 Training in Communication Strategies

Market associations and business-development organizations could provide training in effective customer communication. Such training may include polite bargaining, multilingual accommodation, conflict management, customer relations and appropriate code-switching. The objective would not be to promote one language over another but to improve traders' ability to use available linguistic resources effectively.

4.10.4 Avoidance of Linguistic Stereotyping

Nigerian Pidgin should not automatically be associated with lack of education, low social status or low commercial sophistication. Its use occurs across different social groups and communicative contexts. Treating Pidgin as a legitimate communicative resource can help researchers and business practitioners better understand its practical value in Nigerian commerce.

4.10.5 Recognition of Code-Switching

Switching among Igbo, Nigerian Pidgin and English should not automatically be regarded as linguistic deficiency. In multilingual commercial environments, code-switching can be a deliberate and strategic communicative practice. A trader may switch languages to clarify information, establish solidarity, persuade a customer, negotiate a price or accommodate the customer's linguistic preference. Recognizing this function can provide a more accurate understanding of multilingual business communication in Eke Awka Market.

5. Conclusion

Nigerian Pidgin English occupies an important position within Nigeria's multilingual communicative ecology and has relevance to market interaction. The literature reviewed in this article indicates that Nigerian Pidgin can facilitate communication across linguistic boundaries, support bargaining, create interpersonal rapport, enable linguistic accommodation and contribute to effective commercial interaction.

The evidence from other Nigerian markets provides a strong basis for viewing Nigerian Pidgin as a potentially important commercial resource. Research from Masaka Market demonstrates its role in facilitating business communication, code-switching and interaction among linguistically diverse participants, while research on Nigerian market haggling shows the importance of interpersonal and pragmatic strategies in commercial negotiation.

For Eke Awka Market, however, a crucial distinction has been maintained through the use of Nigerian Pidgin English and its implications for business advancement, which have been discussed adequately in this paper with empirical instances.

In conclusion, Nigerian Pidgin contributes to business advancement in Eke Awka Market through communicative accessibility, accommodation, bargaining, rapport and customer interaction. Nigerian Pidgin should consequently be understood not as a replacement for Igbo or English but as part of a multilingual repertoire through which traders negotiate the linguistic realities of contemporary Nigerian commerce.

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