

# Dialect Shifting of Nigerian Pidgin English speakers when talking with Jamaican Creole Speakers

Farida Olaleye

Mentor: Dr. Isabelle Barrière

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## **Big Research Question**

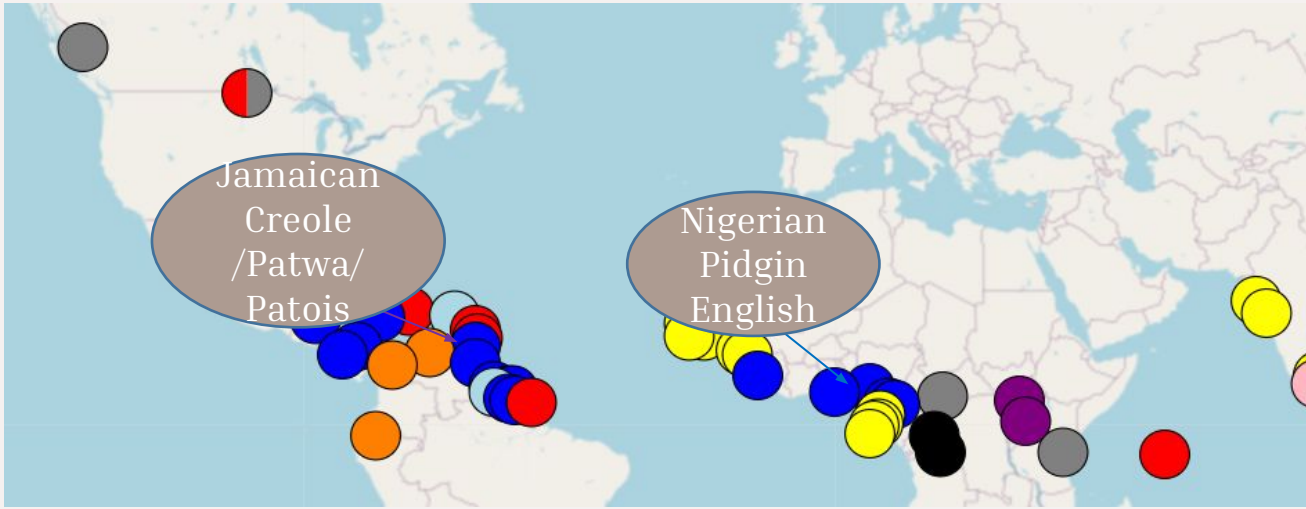
What are the differences between speech utterances produced by speakers of Nigerian Pidgin English speakers when talking to one another vs with speakers of Jamaican Creole?

## **Significance**

Nigerian Pidgin English and Jamaican Creole share a history and similarities in their structures.

( e.g. Odimegwu, 2012)

# Geography of Jamaican Creole and Nigerian Pidgin English



<https://apics-online.info/contributions#2/30.3/10.0>



# Key Concepts

## Nigerian Pidgin English

- With over 75 million speakers, Nigerian Pidgin has become by far the most widely spoken and fastest growing languages in Nigeria.
- Nigerian Pidgin is the first language, or most commonly one of the first languages, learned by tens of millions of people across southern Nigerian and in urban areas throughout the entire country

## Jamaican Creole

- Jamaican Creole, also called Jamaican Patwa/Patois is spoken by majority of Jamaicans 2.7 million inhabitants, in addition to hundreds of thousands of Jamaicans descents in diaspora communities in countries like Canada and the United States of America.
- Jamaican creole by linguistics, is an english-based creole language with West African influences . Developed in the 17th century when enslaved individuals were brought from West and Central Africa.

## “Narrowed” Research Question and hypothesis

### **Research Question:**

Do speakers of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) speak the same way among themselves and with speakers of Jamaican Creole(JC)?

### **Hypothesis**

Given the similarities across many structures across NP and JC, speakers of NP may use similar structures when talking to individual speakers of NP and JC

# Examples of similar structures

Nigerian Pidgin English	Jamaican Creole
Mi <u>na</u> big <u>w</u> uman	Mi <u>a</u> big <u>u</u> man
PRON-1 <sup>st</sup> Person Singular Subject BE-Copula Adjective Noun <i>I am a big woman</i>	
Dem mek <u>Ket</u> di lida	Dem mek <u>Kieti</u> di liida
PRON-3 <sup>rd</sup> Person Plural CAUSATIVE Proper Name Definite Determiner Noun <i>They made Kate the leader</i>	

***Odimegwu, 2012, page 59***

# Examples of different structures

Nigerian Pidgin English	Jamaican Creole
A <u>go</u> go dia	Mi <u>wi</u> go de
1 <sup>st</sup> Person Singular Pronoun <b>FUTURE TENSE MARKER</b> go-VERB de-there <i>I will go there</i>	

*Odimegwu, 2012, page 59*



# Methodology

## 4 Participants

- 2 Nigerian Pidgin English Speakers
- 2 Jamaican Creole Speakers

1

Participants were  
between the ages of  
40-60

2

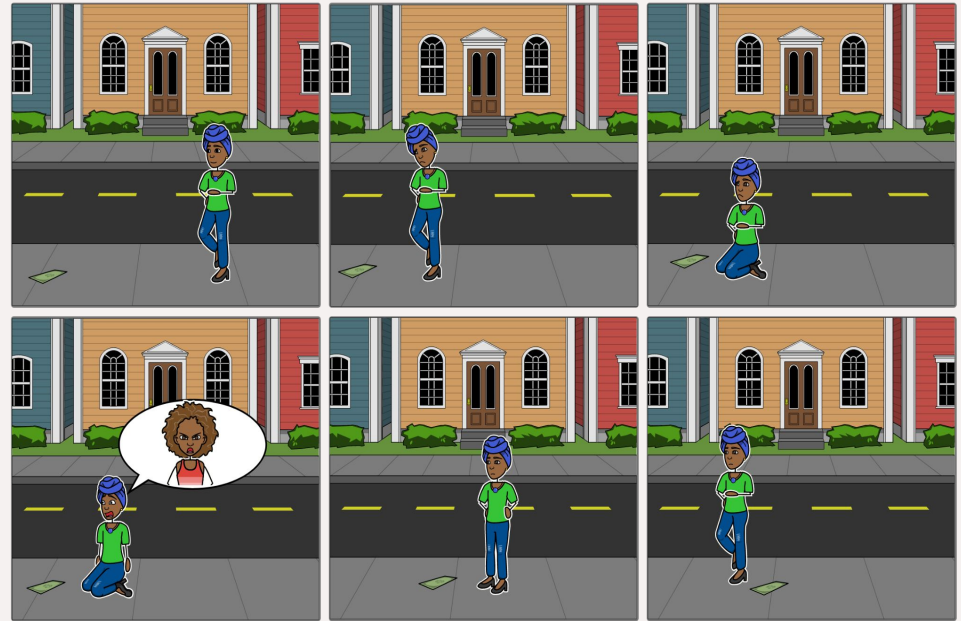
Participants  
currently reside in  
New York

3

Participants are  
fluent speakers of  
Nigerian Pidgin or  
native speakers  
Jamaican Creole

# Methodology

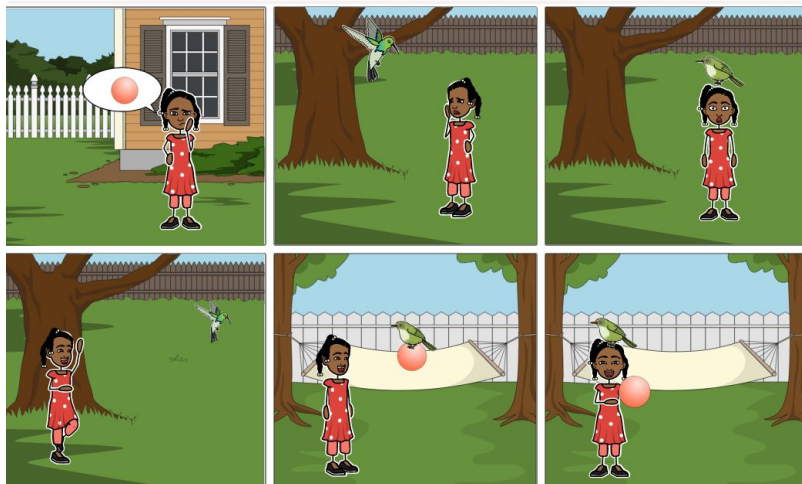
- Use of storyboards developed for this study to elicit different constructions.
- All storyboards were created by me using the website “Storyboard That”
- Participants were asked to describe the selected storyboard to a speaker of the same spoken language, then will be asked to describe the to a speaker of the opposite language.
- Each storyboard was designed different.



Create your own at Storyboard That

Example of a storyboard created by me.

# Methodology



Step 1: NP Speaker 2 described this storyboard to NP Speaker 1, who did not see the storyboard

Step 2: NP Speaker 1 retold me the story in American English.

Step 3: The same procedure was repeated, but with NP speaker 1 describing a different story to NP speaker 2



Step 1: NP Speaker 1 described this storyboard to JP Speaker 1, who did not see the storyboard

Step 2: JC Speaker 1 retold the story to me in American English

Step 3: The same procedure was repeated, but with JC Speaker 1 describing a different story to NP Speaker 1

# Analyses

Transcription of zoom recordings

Analyses focused on:

1.1 Use of structures similar in NP and JC

1.2 Use of structures that differ across NP and JC

1.3 Switch to Americanized English

2. Mutual intelligibility among NP and JC

## Results 1.1 : Use of similar structures

<b>NPE Speaker 2</b>	<b>JC Speaker 1</b>
The bird con land <u>pon</u> the head,	The bird sit down <u>pon</u> mi head
Place Prepositions: “Pon” Used by both NPE Speakers and JC Speakers in the same context.	
The bird lands on her head	

## Results 1.2: Use of different Structures

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NP Speaker 2</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The bird <b>comot</b> for the girl head</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>JC Speaker 1</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Oh, the birdie <b>fly</b> away</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">NP Speaker “Comot”(verb) - to leave, to depart</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JC Speaker “Fly”(verb) - “move”, “left”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The bird flew of her her head</p>	

## Results 1.3: Switch to Americanized English

In the study, the NP speakers made more transitions to Americanized English when speaking to the JC Speaker, vs when speaking to another NP speaker

When describing the storyboards, the Nigerian Pidgin Speaker was more descriptive when asked to describe the storyboard to another Nigerian Pidgin Speaker vs when asked to describe the storyboard to a Jamaican Creole Speaker.

The Nigerian Pidgin speaker used third person point of view, compared to the Jamaican Creole speaker, who used first person point of view.

## Results 2: Mutual intelligibility among across NP and JP

Overall, while conducting this study, both NP and JC Speakers understood each other extremely well. With minimal speakers asking for repetition of the story and clarifying questions.

When asked to repeat the story to me in America English, Both Nigerian Pidgin Speakers and Jamaican Creole speaker, repeated the story very well, in regard to the sequence of actions and the actions that were depicted in the storyboard.



# Summary

## Hypothesis:

Given the similarities across many structures across NP and JC, speakers of NP may use similar structures when talking to individual speakers of NP and JC

Overall, the Nigerian Pidgin Speakers did use similar structures when speaking to individuals of Nigerian Pidgin and Jamaican Creole.

While my data did support my hypothesis, my sample pool was still small. More research still needs to be conducted.

## Key Reference

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