



WWJMRD 2018; 4(6): 1-12
www.wwjmr.com
International Journal
Peer Reviewed Journal
Refereed Journal
Indexed Journal
Impact Factor MJIF: 4.25
E-ISSN: 2454-6615

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Effects of Pidgin English on The Teaching of English Language in Some Senior High Schools in The Ejura District of Ghana

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to assess Pidgin interference errors of students in selected English language in Senior High School in Ghana. The study area was Ejura Anglican Senior High, Ejura Islamic Senior High and Sekyeredumase Senior High in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. In all, 206 respondents comprising 196 students and 10 teachers were used for the study. Questionnaire was the main data collection instruments. Descriptive statistics analysis, were utilized to examine and analyze the data. From the study, it was concluded that the impact of pidgin is more negative than positive. At beginner level students have problems about identifying and understanding the different structures of English so, they use the pidgin structure while writing in English. The study identified that the pidgin interference error committed in the writing of English were transliteration, Pidgin induced spelling errors, omission errors, wrong pronoun use, and wrong word use. The study also identified that the most frequently committed interference error was transliterated, followed by omission errors, spelling errors wrong pronoun use and wrong word use in that order. The study recommends that English language teachers should create a classroom environment which will motivate learners to practice new skills and structures learned. Such classroom environment should be devoid of intimidation so that students can take risks and test hypothesis of structures learned.

Keywords: Effects, Pidgin English, Writing, Senior High Senior Schools, Ghan

1.1 Background of the Study

The importance of English language in Ghana cannot be under estimated since it is the official language of communication, administration and commerce. In recognition of this importance, the government of Ghana had made it a mandatory subject in our schools. It forms the stepping-stone for proficiency in other subjects taught in schools hence its knowledge is very important both for educational, economical and national development. In Ghana, it's not uncommon to see people measuring one's level of intelligence, by his or her fluency in English language (Pipkins, 2004). It seems the main function of education in Ghana is for people to be able to read and write in English and also communicate in it. This is because the average educated Ghanaian is expected to read and write well in English language and also to communicate in it well enough. So regardless of the individual's level of intelligence in other fields, failure to speak good English is a big issue in Ghana, especially in the formal sector (Rupp, 2013).

In the process to attain proficiency in the subject, certain conditions can enhance the learning process, whereas certain factors may rather impede its learning, for which we must strive to address. One of such factors is the issue of pidgin in the Ghanaian culture. The teaching and learning of a language especially English becomes cumbersome when learners find the use of that same language easy but in a funny way (Benjamin, 2010). Learners of English who like to speak pidgin almost in all their interactions definitely find it a problem to efficiently do so. Pidgin English was originally a trade language jargon developed in the 19th century, but now commonly and loosely used to mean any kind of 'broken' or 'native' version of the English language. Randolph Quirk et al (1985 cited by Benjamin, 2010) said pidgin is essentially a second language used to replace a native language for restricted public purposes. In this study.

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Pidgin refers to the non-standard use of English language by students to communicate with their peers. Usually a pidgin language is a rough blend of the vocabulary of one dominant language with the syntax or grammar of one or more other dependent groups (Salifu-Asuro, 2015).

There have therefore been arguments and discussions as regards the impact of the use of Pidgin English by students of senior High Schools in Ghana. One school of thought holds that Pidgin English negatively affects the performance of students in examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), but another school of thought holds a contrary opinion (Rupp, 2013). In this context, the question to consider is what underlies this behavior? This has been the subject of recurrent debate. Educational authorities typically feel that Student Pidgin reflects the fact that the standard of English in Ghanaian senior secondary schools and universities has fallen. There is the need therefore to interrogate the effect pidgin possess on the teaching and learning of Standard English in Ghanaian schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Most of the time, difficulties on foreign language acquisition or learning are strongly related to native language interference. On April 2010, the International Final Awards and Examiners Appointment Committee of WAEC emphasised that the mass failure of candidates in English, Mathematics and Science does not augur well for national development, which calls for immediate steps to reverse the trend. The committee, therefore, called for a look at among other factors to raise students' level of proficiency in English usage and their ability to communicate with other users of English.

Per the provisional results released by WAEC for this year's WASSCE, the performance at A1-C6 in English Language recorded 53.19% (WAEC, 2017). It was therefore not surprising when the Former Director General of the Ghana Education Service (GES), Michael Nsowah says he is disappointed in the performance of candidates that sat for the 2016 West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations. Additionally, the Ghana Association of Teachers of English (GATE) has attributed the decline in the standard of education to students' poor understanding of the English language hence an improvement in English Language would automatically reflect in other subject areas.

According to Ziegler (2014), language is best learnt by using it, hence the researchers' intention to look at the difficulties that stem from English Proficiency in terms of speaking Pidgin. Various studies have express different feelings about the contribution of pidgin to students' performance in English. Dako (2002) and Pipkins (2004) suggest that it is an easier form of communication between speakers as it is used by speakers to escape the pressure of speaking grammatically correct Standard English. Pipkins (2004) argues that Pidgin English still serves as a form of resistance to Standard English. Dako (2000) to suggest that speaking Student Pidgin is a way to avoid performance pressure to speak good English. Student Pidgin is said to be easier than Standard English to the extent that the latter allows less room for error. Other studies such as Rupp

(2013) in her work asserted that we cannot merely attribute Student Pidgin to fallen English standards in Ghana. She stated that Student Pidgin is more of a social perspective than a linguistic perspective. Forson's (2000 cited in Pipkins, 2004) that Student Pidgin is an in-group language. Within the context of a larger group, subgroups may use a language that reinforces a sense of identity or solidarity and this is independent of the standard of English.

The researchers are of the believe that, to be able to select or create effective speaking skills, it is important to investigate into the causes of proficiency difficulty during the speaking of English. Provided that we know what and how they affect speaking, adequate measures can then be taken. To this purpose the researchers see this study as very vital to identifying how the use of pidgin contributes to this mass failure of students in Ghana.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What are the common pidgin interference errors that occur among students of Senior High Schools in the Ejura District of Ghana?
2. What implication does this pidgin interference has on the learning of English Language?
3. What can teachers do in order to help students with English problems

2.0. Literature Review

2.1.1 Definition and Origin of Pidgin

The oxford advance learner's dictionary defines pidgin as any of several languages resulting from contact European traders and local people, for example, in West Africa and the far east, containing elements of the local language(s) and French or Dutch, still used for internal communication. Yule (1996. 223-234) is of the view that it is a variety of a language which was developed for some practical purposes, such as trading among groups of people who had a lot of contact, but who do not know each other's language.

According to Opara (1999.52), some Pidgin English originated as a trade language that is made up of foreign language and the local language. It also originated as a result of the need for communication among people living in towns and cities from different ethnic groups who have no common language. It is the most effective means if interaction among the illiterate servants of the learned masters, the market women, and several other groups of people. Apart from using Pidgin English for advertisements on radio and television, some bill boards disseminate their information using the Pidgin English to communicate to their readers.

As generally understood, a pidgin is a hybrid 'makeshift language' used by and among traders, on plantations (especially with and among slaves of various backgrounds), and between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Americas, especially during the heyday of European expansion (17–20c). Because the word has often been used and discussed pejoratively, it carries such connotations as 'childish', 'corrupt', 'lazy', 'inferior', 'oversimplified', and 'simple-minded'. Formed from numerous languages and influences, Pidgin is a wide term covering a range of regional hybrids, which evolved through historical events such as the spread of Empires, settlement, migration and international trade. Taking more of a 'baby-speak' approach, Pidgins can seem to imitate

toddler speech or phrasing (having no tones, simple vowels etc) - and in effect are used for the same purpose - to get what you want quickly, using whatever communication and terms of reference you can. A few well placed words and gestures were all that was originally needed, and the language evolved from there. According to Adegbija (1994), the emergence of Pidgins and Creoles is one of the sociolinguistically significant outcomes of European contact in Africa. Briney (2012) opines that although, the first lingua franca that developed during the Middle Ages was first considered a Pidgin, the term developed originally out of contact between Europeans and people in the countries they visited in association with trade, plantation agriculture and mining. Mufwene (2002) asserts that some Pidgins have expanded into regular languages, especially in urban settings, and are called 'expanded Pidgins'.

In the view of Mufwene (2001), Creoles and Pidgins developed in separate places in which Europeans and non-Europeans interacted differently, i.e. sporadically in trade colonies which produced Pidgins, but regularly in the initial stages of settlement colonies where Creoles developed. The term 'Pidgin' was coined in 1807, about two years after the term 'Creole' was used in reference to a language variety (Akhimien, 2004). Creole was originally coined in Iberian colonies, apparently in the 16th century, in reference to non-indigenous people born in the American colonies. It was adopted in metropolitan Spanish, then in French and later in English by the early 17th century. By the second half of the same century, it was generalized to descendants of African or Europeans born in Romance colonies (Ihimere, 2006). This, perhaps, accounts for the description of Creole as nativised Pidgin which descendants of Pidgin speakers have as first language. Among the various theories put forth on the origin of Pidgin are the following: (1) The baby – talk theory which discussed the China coast Pidgin English as having many similarities with the speech of children such as the following features: (a) high percentage of content words with a corresponding low number of function words; (b) little morphological marking; (c) word classes more flexible than in adult language (free conversion); (d) contrasts in area of pronouns greatly reduced; (e) number of inflections minimised. However, Bloomfield (1933) maintains that the characteristics of Pidgins result from incompetence in English mastery by imperfect learning methods. (2) Independent parallel development theory which emphasized that similarities between world's Pidgin and creoles arose from independent and parallel lines due to the fact that they all derived from languages of Indo-European stock. (3) Nautical paragon theory which spotted the possible influence of nautical jargons on Pidgins, resulting from voyages of the developing world's discovery. Many nationalities were often represented among the crews of the ships. (3) Monogenetic/relexification theory which stressed that a single proto-Pidgin of the 15th century Portuguese Pidgin probably relics of the medieval lingua franca, which was also known as 'Sabir' from the Portuguese word 'know'. Sabir was the common means of communication among the crusaders and traders in the Mediterranean area. (4) Universalist theory which maintained that the origin of Pidgins has elements in common with the other theories. The distinguishing mark of this theory is that it sees the 58 similarities as due to universal tendencies among humans to create languages of a similar type, i.e. an analytic language

with simple phonology, an SVO syntax with little or no subordination or other sentence complexities, and with a lexicon which makes maximum use of polysemy, and devices such as reduplication, operating from a limited core vocabulary.

2.1.2 Common Pidgin Interference Errors Pronunciation

From the foregoing so far, the importance of speaking a particular language in the learning of English cannot be overemphasized. Language is said to be universal so these issues are not peculiar in Ghana, it is therefore necessary to tackle the issue of interference to bring a free flow of English.

Errors may occur due the fact that some of the English sounds are pronounced in a funny way in pidgin. It has rightly been observed that in the English language learning, the learner is highly motivated and is surrounded by a conducive linguistics environment, where he/she learns (Onuigbo, 1984 cited in Aladeyomi & Adetunde, 2007).

Bhelda (1999) opined that in as much as English language learning environment encompasses everything the language learner hears and sees, the learner's goal is the mastery of the target language. The learner begins the learning task of learning a English language from point zero (or close to it) and, through the steady accumulation of the mastered entities of the target language, eventually amasses them in quantities sufficient to constitute a particular level of proficiency. Interference when speaking or writing in a English language is generally a lifelong experience which needs continues attention, sometimes even up to adulthood the lexical stress patterns of their Pidgin in the language (English) oral production, are not shaken off in spite of years of teaching and listening.

Transliteration Errors

Transliteration according to Crystal (2003) is the conversion of one writing system into another. Crystal adds that each item in the source language is given an equivalent item in the target language. It involves the process of converting a word to its phonetic (similar sound) equivalent in another language.

Spelling Errors

The way learners of a target language pronounce words to a large extent influence how the words are spelt or written (Hassan, 2014). There is considerable effect of phonetics on writing. English language learners who are expose to pidgin have difficulty producing certain sounds, especially when those sounds do not exist in the pidgin language.

Wrong Word Use

Some of the learner errors in this category are apparently derived from pidgin flow. That is, students may literally translate some words from pidgin directly to English, which looks odd to native speakers of English. This is a word-level error. This is what Prator refers to as 'split' error (Level 5 on the hierarchy of difficulty). Lennon (1991) refers to such error as substitution.

2.1.3 Effect of Pidgin on Teaching and Learning of English

Backed by and fueled on by such negative attitudes toward pidgin, important members of the Ghanaian society

routinely blame pidgin (also called “Broken English”) for the poor performances of students in secondary and tertiary institutions in the country. For example, in a report by Huber (2014) on the use of pidgins and creoles in education in four West African countries, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia, he mentions that some Ghanaian educationists see pidgin as a dangerous creature. A case in point is Egblewogbe (1992) who asserted that the indiscriminate use of pidgin is leading the nation to illiteracy. The same report noted that in 1985 the Faculty of Pharmacy of the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, formally proscribed the use of pidgin in its confines. In the same vein, Professor Asenso Okyere, an ex-Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana, cautioned the 2002/2003 fresh students against the use of pidgin noting that it would be harmful to their academic performance (Rupp, 2013). This kind of academic interest in pidgin is not unlike what obtains in Cameroon. In 2006, the University of Buea, Cameroon, mounted a campaign against pidgin and erected sign boards around its campus banning the use of pidgin (Eta, 2006).

Indeed, each year, chief examiners of West African Senior High School certificate examinations on ‘Core English’ issue damning reports pointing to poor and deteriorating performances in the examinations. For example, in summarizing candidates’ weakness in the English language, the Chief Examiners’ reports of the May/ June 2013 examination state:

Most of the candidates have... not grasped the basic workings of the language; hence, their structures are faulty. They are on the whole, not observing the various rules of agreement, i.e. subject with the attendant verbs, pronouns, number and gender (2013 May/June WASSCE, 3 page 9). Students themselves hold divergent views about SPE. By the time they arrive at the university or the polytechnic, many of them have become convinced that SPE is indeed a problem language variety as far as their academic careers are concerned. At the University of Ghana, Dzameshie (2001) interviewed some students about why they do not use SPE. Many expressed the fear that it would ruin their English, their character and their personality. Some even noted that pidgin is unrefined, deviant, uncivilized and should not be encouraged. About ten years after Dzameshie’s paper, Dako (2013b) also observed that even now that it seems that people’s attitude toward SPE is changing (i.e. becoming more positive), a woman who speaks SPE may still raise doubts about her morality.

Onike (2009) posited that interference is a psycholinguistic concept which is a reality in language learning. Errors in language learning are partly attributable to interference.

Theorists of interference believe that acquisition of the language usually affects performance in subsequent language acquired. Interference as a linguistic problem is common in communities where second languages (usually the lingua franca) must be learnt. In other words, interference is a term which refers to a situation whereby two different languages overlap.

The use of the child’s first language in education has been shown to enhance the academic, linguistic, and cognitive achievement of learners (Baker, 2001). The issue of underachievement/low academic performance, especially in English language in Ghanaian schools needs to be investigated. It depends on an effective and well planned

program in which proficiency in the first language is developed and attained.

However, Dzameshie’s (2001) study also provides details of the positive attitude that ‘lovers’ of SPE have for this variety of language. In his interviews, SPE-speaking students, who were mostly male, explained that they use pidgin because it is more expressive than Standard English; that it creates a sense of belonging; that it is a means of in-group acceptance and that it is fun. Dzameshie deduces from the responses of his male subjects that they have a positive attitude towards pidgin because the code is associated with being tough men; and they entertain no fear that the code is detrimental to academic performance in English.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Behaviorist Theory: Thorndike’s Identical Elements

Edward Thorndike cited in Ormrod (1990) proposed a theory of transfer that emphasized specific transfer: transfer occurs only to the extent that the original and transfer tasks have identical elements.

Since Thorndike’s work, behaviorist views of transfer have focused on how transfer is affected by stimulus and response characteristics in the original and transfer situations. In general, principles of transfer which have emerged from behaviorist literature (Osgood, cited in Ormrod, 1990) include the following:

- When stimuli and responses are similar in the two situations, maximal positive transfer will occur.
- When stimuli are different and responses are similar, some positive transfer will occur.
- When stimuli are similar and responses are different, negative transfer will occur.

2.2.1.1 Factors Affecting Transfer

A number of variables are related to the occurrence of transfer. Two situations are described below:

- The more thoroughly something is learned, the more likely it is to be transferred to a new situation: there is often a trade-off between instructional time and transfer; the more quickly a topic is covered, the less likely it is to be transferred (Cormier 1987; Ellis, 1999; Gick & Holyoak, 1987). The implications of this finding for educational practice are clear: students should demonstrate thorough mastery of material if they will be expected to apply that information in future situations.
- The more similar two situations are, the more likely it is that what is learned in one situation will be applied to the other situation: behaviorists have argued that similarity of either stimuli or responses is necessary for transfer to occur.
- Cognitivists have proposed instead that because transfer depends on retrieval of relevant information at the appropriate time, the perceived similarity rather than actual similarity of the two situations is important (Gick & Holyoak, 1987). Either way, one thing is clear: similarity between two situations affects transfer.

Briefly, transfer is the process of applying what has been acquired or learned in one situation to one’s learning or performance in another situation. Two theories of transfer have been proposed. Cognitivists argued that transfer

depends on retrieval of relevant information. However, Behaviorists argued, that for transfer to occur it needs to have a stimuli or response.

With these different opinions about transfer and how it occurs the question is: “what is the impact of pidgin and stimuli/response in English?” and “what are the problems that students face with the interference of pidgin into English?” These challenges will be highlighted after the study by being carried out.

2.3 Empirical Reviews

Omari (2010) conducted a research to determine the impact of the use of pidgin on students’ use of English Language. The research is considered as part of an on-going search to find the correlation between the speaking of Pidgin English and performance in examinations especially the WASSCE. Apart from the link that may be established between performance in examinations and the speaking of non-standard English or Pidgin English, problems may be rife in the secondary schools where most students do not perform well in examinations, more especially in English language papers. There is the need therefore to find the factors that cause students in Ghanaian secondary schools not to perform well in examinations. For the study, five hundred students, one hundred and eighty teachers, and two hundred parents were selected, using the random sampling technique by which respondents were selected without any format, that is, they were picked at random. The research findings did not clearly establish a link between performance in examinations and the speaking of non-standard English or Pidgin English.

Rupp (2014) also looked at the function of student pidgin in Ghana. The data upon which the study is built come from research conducted at the University of Cape Coast (UCC) in Ghana between August 2011 and November 2012. The research consisted of a quantitative analysis of a questionnaire that was distributed to 191 UCC students: 106 male students and 85 female students. The empirical analysis of the questionnaire was followed up by a focus group interview with 17 students and supported by qualitative ethnographic data involving diary entries and short recordings made by three students.

Omoniyi (2015) also examined pidgin as a national language in some African countries. The paper aimed at lending more weight to the efforts of the Pidgin positivists. The study reflected on the language situation in Africa, revisited the concepts of lingua franca, Pidgin and Creole, and paid attention to the use of Pidgin in Nigeria and Ghana as models of its briefs. The study further reviewed some hurdles peddled against the adoption of Pidgin, such as, the issues of stigmatization, attitudes, cultural base, indigenous status and low-level development in terms of corpus and status planning. However, this article contends

that with the widespread use of Pidgin at the grassroots level, the increasing functions and domains of its use in many sectors of the society, the gradual and positive attitude being garnered, especially among the literate populations, all the hurdles are surmountable. The paper concluded by calling upon national governments in the respective African countries to officially recognize Pidgin and plan for its corpus and status development in order to enhance its official use. It also called upon all the positivists and other stake holders to mount up aggressive awareness, conferences and programmes in all the concerned African nations for the purpose of sensitising governments and the literate populations on the need to develop Pidgin.

Furthermore, Amuzu and Asinyor (2016), errors on Ghanaian students’ written English. The paper highlights the situation in Ghana (and most likely also in Cameroon) where English is learned and used as a second (and official) language alongside varieties of an English-related pidgin and where the speaking of the pidgin is routinely blamed for errors that learners of English, especially those in secondary and tertiary institutions, commit in their speech and writing. Specifically, the paper investigates the justification for attributing errors that educated Ghanaians commit in their written English to the School Pidgin English (SPE) some of them speak. A case study was carried out in a diploma awarding institution. Two groups of students, students identified as speakers of SPE and students identified as non-speakers of SPE, were asked to write an essay on a given topic and the grammatical and spelling errors they committed were identified and scrutinized. It emerged that none of the types of errors identified was exclusively committed by the SPE speakers, a finding which suggests that there is hardly a definite causative relationship between speaking SPE and committing the errors. Rather, it is found that the errors are more directly related to some grammatical features of the students’ mother tongues and to certain writing systems they use on electronic media platforms. The logical conclusion drawn is that the learning of English in Ghana (and most likely also in Cameroon) may improve if teachers are guided by these more plausible causes of their students’ problems when they try to help them.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Population

Since this research aims to discover the effect of Pidgin English on the teaching and learning of English Language, the available population or target for the study comprised, teachers who are teaching English Teachers (10 in number) and students (2695); both male and female. Table 1 depicts the target population for each school.

Table 1: Population for the Study

School	Students Population	English Teachers
Ejura Anglican Senior High	999	4
Ejura Islamic Senior High	296	2
Sekyeredumase Senior High	1400	4
Total	2695	10

3.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Best & Kahn (1998) stated that the sample size depends on the nature of the population, the kind of data to be elicited,

the nature of the analysis be carried out and the availability of funds for the study. The research covered teachers and students of Ejura Anglican Senior High, Ejura Islamic

Senior High and Sekyeredumase Senior High in the Ejura District of the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

For the sampling procedure, the researchers adopted the non-probability sampling technique of qualitative research approach in selecting the sample for the study. According to Given (2008), participants in this technique of sampling are selected because they meet pre-established criteria. The

purposive sampling of non-probability sampling technique was used in the selection process. The purposive sampling technique ensured that teachers recruited comprised of those who teaching English Language and students who are found of speaking Pidgin. In all, 196 students and 10 teachers were selected for the study. Table 2 depicts the sample size selected from each school.

Table 2: Sample Size

School	Students Sample selected	Teachers sample selected
Ejura Anglican Senior High	50	3
Ejura Islamic Senior High	48	3
Sekyeredumase Senior High	98	4
Total	196	10

3.3 Data collection

Data for this research was collected using a well-designed and structured questionnaire. According to Kotler and Keller (2006) a questionnaire can be defined as a set of questions presented to respondents. It is commonly used to gather data and also very flexible because it could be administered in person, by phone or online. To ensure correctness of data and high recovery rate, the researchers will administer the questionnaires personally.

3.4.1 Types of Data

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in this study.

3.4.2 Sources of Data

This study relied primary data sourced from questionnaire and test. The reason for this was to be able to provide adequate discussion for the readers that helped them understand more about the issue and the different variables that are involved. Primary data is original data collected directly for the research work. The study settled on using questionnaires for teachers and test for students. The questionnaires are to solicit for teachers' responses on the impact of pidgin interferences to the study and learning of English Language and proffer measures to deal with those factors that militate against students' language competence in English. The test for the students is to identify common pidgin interference errors of students in learning.

3.5 Instruments for Data Collection

Data for this research was collected using questionnaire and test. Questionnaires were given to teachers whereas students were given test. The questionnaire of the study was made up of both close ended and open ended questions. Close ended questions constituted the basis of the structured questions. The open ended questions were generally inserted to provide a more complete picture of the respondents. The students were however required to write a composition to ascertain how pidgin interferes with their learning.

3.5.1 Instrument Validity

To ensure that the language of the questionnaire was unmistakably clear in soliciting factual / reliable information, the questionnaire was subjected to close scrutiny. The researchers discussed the final questionnaire with a number of experts in the field who gave suggestions to enhance the outcome of results. This was an attempt to find out whether the questionnaire drawn was adequately prepared, clearly understandable and would measure appropriately the set objectives of the research. In addition,

a pilot testing was conducted at the schools. The researchers supplied three teachers and five students of the selected schools with the draft copy of the questionnaire. Time was made by the researchers and the respondents to discuss any ambiguity, doubt and incoherencies that the respondents may face with any aspect of the draft. Respondents thereafter, were given time to complete and return the questionnaire to the researchers. These views were collated and studied closely by the researchers. The pilot study helped to remove ambiguous statements. Notwithstanding, minor lapses were corrected before the final questionnaire was administered. The questions were designed to satisfy research objectives and to address the need for the objectives.

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

An introductory letter was taken from the Department of English at the Valley View University – Techiman Campus, stating the aims and purpose of the study and the need for the participants to give their consent and co-operation. This was sent to the various headmasters for the necessary assistance.

For teachers to do their best to give realistic response to each question, they were assured confidentiality as the researchers articulated the purpose of the research for purely academic exercise. According to Kelley, Clark, Brown & Sitzia (2003), these are the most important ethical issues to adhere to when conducting a survey. Also, they were assured that all information obtained would be used for the intended purpose. The researchers were present to explain how to answer the questionnaire. With open ended questions, respondents were required to indicate opinions.

3.7 Method of Analysing Data

The statistical techniques employed in analysing data collected in this study will be descriptive statistics, mainly frequency distribution and percentages were used to ensure easy understanding of the analyses. Tables effectively order and summarize the quantitative data. They are used to arrange facts and figures in columns and rows. These facts and figures can be systematically examined (Ojo 2003). In addition, percentages were used to show the distribution of respondents according to their responses by translating frequency counts into percentage. The collected data were accumulated, categorized and analysed keeping in mind the objectives of the study. The analysis was done with the aid of statistical tools like Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22, MS Excel etc. and interpretations of data are based on statistical generalization

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the quantitative description of the sample and how it relates to the population under study. It is made up of three sections. The first section takes into account general information on the sample (demographic characteristics). The second section presents the data presentation and analysis and the third section presents the discussion of the research findings. It seeks to assess the impact of Pidgin interference in the study of English

4.1.0 General Information on Sample Respondents

This describes the distribution of respondents; both students and teachers used for the study.

4.1.1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

The table below presents the data of the respondents by gender. The data was presented as a frequency as shown in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents by Gender

Category	Frequency	Percent
Male	115	55.8
Female	91	44.2
Total	206	100.0

(Field Data, 2018).

From Table 4.1 above, 55.8% of the total number of respondents were males while 44.2% of the total number were females. This clearly shows that there were more male participants than females in this survey.

4.1.2 Distribution of Teachers by Working Experience

The study took into account, the working experience of the teachers with the school. Table 4.2 contains the analyses of the teachers with respect to their working experiences.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Teachers by Working Experience

Category	Frequency	Percent
Below 5 years	8	80.0
6-10 years	1	10.0
11 – 15 years	1	10.0
16 – 20 years	0	0.0
21 years and above	0	0.0
Total	10	100

Field Data (2018).

Examining table 4.2 indicates that, majority of the teachers (80%) have taught for less than 5 years. 10% of the teachers have taught for 6 – 10 years while another 10% have taught for 11 – 15 years.

4.1.3 Distribution of Teachers by Educational Level

The educational level of teachers were captured in the questionnaire. This was to provide an overview of the teacher's in terms of their educational level. This data is represented in table 4.3 below

Table 4.3: Distribution of Teachers by Educational Level

Category	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	2	20.0
Under Graduate	7	70.0
Post Graduate	1	10.0
Total	10	100.0

Field Data (2018).

Reviewing table 4.3 reveals that 70% of the working population in the school are Undergraduates. 10% of the teachers had a post graduate degree while 20% are Diploma holders. This shows that there is little incentives for teachers who are Postgraduates and hence it does not motivate them to further their education.

4.1.4 Distribution of Students by Age

The age of respondents were captured in the questionnaire. This was to provide an overview of the students in terms of their age. This data is represented in table 4.4 below

Table 4.4: Distribution of Students by Age

Category	Frequency	Percent
Below 15 years	0	0.0
15 – 20 years	140	71.4
21 years and above	56	28.6
Total	196	100.0

Field Data (2018).

The age profile of students is given in Table 4.4 above. The table shows that 71.4% of the students were between the ages of 15-20 years while 28.6% had obtained 21 years and above. None of the students were below 15 years. The result shows that majority of the respondents are very young and falls between 15-20 years.

4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

4.2.1 Objective one: To identify common Pidgin interference errors of students

Table 4.2: Pidgin interference errors identified

Error	Frequency	Percentage
Transliteration	230	35.9
Omission	186	30.6
Spelling	134	20.9
Wrong pronoun use	42	6.6
Wrong word use	38	6.0

Field Data (2018)

These errors are fully discussed with examples in the ensuing sections. Knowing the frequency of the type of pidgin interference errors in English writing of students is crucial because it makes the English teacher aware of where attention should be paid to in the teaching process. The data collected portrayed the following: In all, there were 640 errors identified; 230 (35.9%) transliteration errors, 186 (30.6%) omission errors, 134 (20.9%) spelling errors, 42 (6.6%) pronoun use errors and 38 (6.0%) wrong word use errors.

Transliteration Errors

Transliteration according to Crystal (2003) is the conversion of one writing system into another. Crystal adds that each item in the source language is given an equivalent item in the target language. For example, some students wrote "My puppy sicknesses come". Other examples are "I dey home", "the woman go born for hospital yestee", "I no dey cash for my pocket". These examples though ungrammatical in English, when spoken in pidgin are grammatically acceptable so it is possible to conclude that these errors are as a result of pidgin interference.

Omission Errors

Omission errors in this study involve the use of the determiner/article and "to" – infinitive. In English, the determiner/article "a/an, the, that, this, etc." co-occur with the noun, especially when the noun is in isolation e.g. a book, an antelope. In the same instance, "to"-infinitive most often occurs with verbs e.g. to dance, to eat. This was lacking in most of what the students wrote. Theoretically speaking, pidgin is less marked with reference to "a/an" and "to" infinitive. As a result, it is argued in this paper that students who speak pidgin are likely to disregard the use of "a/an" and "to" in their written production. For example, the study revealed some students writing "I went farm (omission of to)". Other examples recorded were "I have big head, instead of I have a big head, I am very handsome boy (instead of I am a very handsome boy), and He is very hard working man instead of He is a very hard working man.

Pidgin-Induced Spelling Errors

The way learners of a target language pronounce words to a large extent influence how the words are spelt or written

This question sought to find out the various errors committed in the English by students who speak pidgin in the selected Senior High Schools. Analysis of the pidgin interference errors recorded from the test were grouped under the following: errors of literal translation/transliteration, omission of article/determiner and to-infinitive, wrong pronoun use, spelling errors and wrong word use. Below is the frequency of the pidgin interference errors identified in the English writing of students used in the study:

(Hassan, 2014). There is considerable effect of phonetics on writing. Pidgin speakers learning a second language are found of producing certain sounds in the English, especially when those sounds do not exist in the native language. The study identified that these sounds were replaced with some words. Words such as "dey" instead of "am", "dem" instead of "them", "puppy" instead of "father" which are pidgin induced because of how the words are pronounced.

Wrong Word Use

Some of the learner errors in this category are apparently derived from pidgin thinking flow. That is, students may literally translate some words from pidgin directly to English, which looks odd to native speakers of English. This is a word-level error. Such an error occurs because one word (item) in pidgin becomes two or more in English. This requires that learners make a new distinction in their use but this is not always the case. This is what Prator refers to as 'split' error (Level 5 on the hierarchy of difficulty). Lennon (1991) refers to such error as substitution. For instance, these sentences were recorded.

I won go town come.

Me won go visit puppy.

I don die finish

I no dey cash for my pocket

Other words used were "yankee" instead of "Europe" and "shank" instead of "toilet".

4.2.2 Objective two: To examine the impact of pidgin interferences to the study and learning of English Language

This objective was answered by analysing the questionnaire based on five major dimensions. The questionnaires were answered based on a two point rating scale ranging from strongly disagree (indicated by 1) and strongly agree (indicated by 2). The researcher adopted the Simple Percentage Method to analyse this part of the questionnaire. It is a method used to summarize the percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed to a particular item. The table below summarizes the effectiveness of the activity based approach.

Table 4.3: Impact of Pidgin Interference

Statements	Agree	Disagree
Pidgin disrupts the smoothness of communication in English	8 (80%)	2 (20%)
Pidgin affects student's performance in spelling	9 (90%)	1 (10%)
Pidgin has a negative effect on English pronunciation	9 (90%)	1 (10%)
Students literally translate some words from pidgin directly to English	10 (100%)	0 (0%)
Students have difficulty producing certain sounds in English	7 (70%)	3 (30%)
Students make errors which are direct rendition from the pidgin to English, sometimes disregarding the rules of the English language	10 (100%)	0 (0%)

Field Data (2018)

From the Table 4.3 above, 80% of the teachers agreed that pidgin language disrupts the smoothness of communication in English while 20% disagreed with this assertion. In terms of whether students' background in Pidgin affects their performance in spelling majority of the teachers (90%) agreed to this statement. The study however had 10% of the teachers disagreeing with the statement. When it come to ascertain whether the Pidgin language interference has a negative effect on English pronunciation in the school, 90% of the teachers agreed that it had a negative impact on students while 10% disagreed. Also the study registered all teachers agreeing that students literally translate some words from Pidgin directly to English hence affecting their studies. In much the same way, all the

teachers also agreed that Students make errors which are direct rendition from the Pidgin to English, sometimes disregarding the rules of the second language. However 70% of the teachers agreed that Students have difficulty producing certain sounds in English with 30% disagreeing to that assertion.

4.2.3 Objective three: To provide measures to deal with those factors that militates against students' language competence in English

This objective was answered by analysing the questionnaire based on five major dimensions. The researcher adopted the Simple Percentage Method to analyse this part of the questionnaire.

Table 4.4: Guidelines and Suggestions

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
Teachers should provide correct models and rules for guidance	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	7 (70%)
Students should be made to edit their own writing to do away with Pidgin interference errors	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)
Teachers should decide in advance to pay attention to certain features/structures in the L2	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)
Students should apply cognitive strategies like repetition with illustrations.	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
They should indicate the location and nature of the Pidgin interference errors and then provide students with the opportunity for self-correction.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)
Teachers should get their students to talk in both Pidgin and L2 in class in a communicative way	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
Teachers should be proficient (oral and written) in English so that students can emulate them as models	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (80%)	2 (20%)

Field Data (2018)

KEY: SD = Strongly Disagree DIS = Disagree NOT CER = Not Certain AG = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

Table 4.4 reveals that all (30% agreed and 70% strongly agreed) the total teachers accepted the fact that teachers should provide correct models and rules for guidance. In terms of Students being made to edit their own writing to do away with Pidgin interference errors, 20% of the teachers disagreed, 20% remained neutral, 50% agreed while 10% strongly agreed. 70% of the teachers also agreed that teachers should decide in advance to pay attention to certain features/structures in the L2. 20% of the respondents remained neutral while 10% strongly confirmed that there is the need for teachers to pay keen interest and attention on certain features in the Pidgin language that causes interference. In addition, 30% of the teachers strongly agreed while 40% agreed that students should apply cognitive strategies like repetition with illustrations in other to solve the problem of Pidgin

interference. All the teachers (40% strongly agreeing while 60% agreeing) confirmed that there is the need for teachers to indicate the location and nature of the Pidgin interference errors and then provide students with the opportunity for self-correction.

In response to the statement that teachers should get their students to talk in both Pidgin and L2 in class in a communicative way 20% each of the teachers strongly disagreed and agreed respectively on this assertion. On the part of agreement, 20% of them were certain to agree while 10 strongly agreed. However, 30% of the teachers remained neutral.

In addition, all teachers (80% agreed and 20% strongly agreed) confirmed that teachers should be proficient (oral and written) in English so that students can emulate them as models.

In conclusion, the researchers realized that

1. English (L2) teacher where possible must have a working knowledge of the pidgin and the English

Language to be able to determine the source of the error and the type. This is likely to present a challenge to most English teachers in Ghana since they have not learned Pidgin to know how the language works, though they might be speakers of the language. Besides, most teachers are teaching in areas where Pidgin is spoken. It is therefore suggested that students learning English should stop the speaking of pidgin.

2. English language teachers should be trained adequately in second language teaching e.g. in error analysis and error correction so that they can deal with Pidgin interference errors effectively.

5.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendation

5.0.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the summary, conclusions of the survey and recommendation as well as limitation and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The main objective of this study was to assess Pidgin interference errors of students in selected English language in Senior High School in Ghana. The study area was Ejura Anglican Senior High, Ejura Islamic Senior High and Sekyeredomase Senior High in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. To achieve these objectives, the researcher used a well-structured questionnaire. In all, 206 respondents comprising 196 students and 10 teachers responded to the questionnaire. Three (3) research questions were formulated to serve as a guide to the study, namely:

1. To identify common pidgin interference errors of students in selected Senior High Schools.
2. To examine the impact of pidgin interferences on the study and learning of English Language.
3. To proffer measures to deal with those factors that militate against students language competence in English.

Through purposive sampling, students were selected while all teachers were used for the study. Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using percentages and frequency tables.

On the first objective, various errors committed in the speaking of pidgin students were recorded from the questionnaire. These errors included literal translation/transliteration, omission of article/determiner and to-infinitive, wrong pronoun use, spelling errors and wrong word use. In all, there were 35.9% transliteration errors, 30.6% omission errors 20.9% spelling errors, 6.6% pronoun use errors and 6.0% wrong word use errors.

On the second objective, majority of the teachers agreed that pidgin disrupts the smoothness of communication in English. Teachers also concluded that students' background in Pidgin affects their performance in addition to agreeing that the Pidgin interference has a negative effect on students pronunciation. Also the study registered all teachers agreeing that students literally translate some words from Pidgin directly to English hence affecting their studies. They also agreed that Students make errors which are direct rendition from the Pidgin to English, sometimes disregarding the rules of the English language.

On objective three, all teachers accepted the fact that teachers should provide correct models and rules for guidance and that they should decide in advance to pay

attention to certain features/structures in the English language during teaching. In addition, teachers agreed that students should apply cognitive strategies like repetition with illustrations in other to solve the problem of pidgin interference and that there is the need for teachers to indicate the location and nature of the pidgin interference errors and then provide students with the opportunity for self-correction. In addition, all teachers confirmed that teachers should be proficient (oral and written) in English so that students can emulate them as models.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that the impact of pidgin is more negative than positive. At beginner level students have problems about identifying and understanding the different structures of English so, they use the pidgin structure while writing in English. This happens because it is their first contact with English, and they are confronted with something new.

The study identified that the pidgin interference error committed in the writing of English were transliteration, Pidgin induced spelling errors, omission errors, wrong pronoun use, and wrong word use. The study also identified that the most frequently committed interference error was transliterated, followed by omission errors, spelling errors wrong pronoun use and wrong word use in that order. The implication of this study to English teaching is that English teachers should be conversant and have adequate training in the English teaching strategies. Besides, English teachers should be proficient in the language and use effective teaching strategies that will minimize pidgin interference in writing of their students.

Recommendation

To help students overcome such problems and improve their writing in English, the classroom teacher should adopt teaching and specific learning strategies that will assist students. Teacher intervention in this instance is crucial because it can provide learners with specific information and strategies aimed at overcoming these pidgin interference problems. The researchers suggested the following recommendations:

1. English language teachers should be proficient (oral and written) in English so that learners can emulate them as models. Learners copy the language their teachers use in class; what students use and write in class is a replica of what they hear and see in class.
2. English language teachers should create a classroom environment which will motivate learners to practice new skills and structures learned. Such classroom environment should be devoid of intimidation so that students can take risks and test hypothesis of structures learned.

Suggestions for further studies

This research could be carried out in other regions of the country and among other schools to further validate the results of this study. Also more variables could be considered in future research studies. The current study was limited in scope. This is because the study covered the Ejura District. A replication of this study could be conducted in other Municipalities or Districts areas of the country to find out what the situation is.

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Teachers**Section I Demographic questions****Gender**Male ☐ Female ☐**Teaching experience**Below 5yrs ☐ 6 - 10yrs ☐ 11-15yrs ☐ 16-20yrs. ☐ 21 and above ☐**Educational level**Diploma ☐ First Degree ☐ Mphil ☐**Section II: Identifying common Akan interferences and its impact**

- Pidgin disrupts the smoothness of communication in English
Agree ☐ Disagree ☐
- Pidgin affects student's performance in spelling
Agree ☐ Disagree ☐
- Pidgin has a negative effect on English pronunciation

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

- Students use Pidgin in writing English Language

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

- Students learning English have difficulty producing certain sounds

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

- Students make errors which are direct rendition from the Pidgin to English

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐**Section IV: Guidelines and suggestions to be used**

Please indicate how you agree or disagree with the following strategies to be in guiding students to correct mistakes from Pidgin interference in English? The rating scale consists of five (5) degrees, 1 to 5. Please circle the number for each item that comes closest to reflecting your opinion about it using the choices. *Rating scale* 1 = strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not certain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

S/NO	Item	Rating 1 – 5
1	Teachers should provide correct models and rules for writing and speaking English Language	1 2 3 4 5
2	Students should be made to edit their own writing to do away with Pidgin interference errors.	1 2 3 4 5
3	Teachers should decide in advance to pay attention to certain features of Pidgin and correct them	1 2 3 4 5
4	Students should apply cognitive strategies like repetition with illustrations.	1 2 3 4 5
5	Teachers should indicate the location and nature of the Pidgin interference errors and then provide students with the opportunity for self-correction.	1 2 3 4 5
6	Teachers should be proficient (oral and written) in English so that learners can emulate them as models	1 2 3 4 5
7	The speaking of Pidgin should be abolished in schools	1 2 3 4 5

- What other measures to do think can be instituted to deal with those factors that militate against students' language competence in English?

Appendix B: Test for Students**Section I Demographic questions****Age**Below 15 ☐ 15 – 20 years ☐ 21 years and above ☐**Gender**Male ☐ Female ☐**Section II: Common Pidgin interference errors**

Write a letter to your uncle describing how you spent the last Christmas holidays

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