

“First year of nation’s return to government of make you talk your own make I talk my own”

Anglicisms versus pidginization in news translations into Nigerian Pidgin *

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As a language which for the greater part of its history was used only for simple everyday interactions and which lacks any kind of standardization, Nigerian Pidgin (NigP) is not well equipped for the wide range of functions it has to perform in present-day Nigeria. Among educated NigP speakers, borrowing from English is a common strategy, but broadcasters who translate news from English into NigP have to produce a form of the language that will be intelligible to a target audience whose command of English is limited.

The paper offers a discussion of this problem based on a corpus of spoken NigP comprising news and several other text categories. Text samples from the news texts are analysed, and corpus data illustrating Anglicisms and pidginization on the lexical, grammatical and discourse levels are discussed. In addition, the results of an elicitation experiment in which Nigerian informants were asked to evaluate extracts from the corpus by means of a questionnaire are reported. The news texts were found to be less satisfactory than others, and it is argued that this is due not only to Anglicisms but in some cases also to an overuse of pidginization strategies. However, there are also examples of successful adaptation of an English script, and it is argued that even with only a moderate degree of language engineering, one could build on such achievements to make NigP a more viable medium of news broadcasting.

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1. Introduction

The quotation in the title of this paper is taken from the news in NigP that was broadcast in Lagos on 27th May 2000. The introduction of such broadcasts has been hailed by scholars working on NigP as a sign of the expanding status of the language (cf. e.g. Elugbe 1995:294), but although it has been shown that this expansion¹ has important linguistic consequences, especially the anglicization observable in the speech of educated speakers and the various types of writing now produced in the language (Agheyisi 1984; Jibril 1995; Omamor 1997), a detailed analysis of the NigP used in news broadcasts has so far not been undertaken, and what we find in the linguistic literature is restricted to a few text samples and some isolated remarks.²

News broadcasts in NigP were first introduced in the 1980s. Radio and television stations in the Niger Delta area (where NigP is particularly widespread and creolization has been documented, cf. Shnukal and Marchese 1983) — specifically Radio Rivers and Bendel Television — have been mentioned as the pioneers in the effort (Agheyisi 1988:240; Elugbe and Omamor 1991:151). The NigP news for Lagos is broadcast by Radio Nigeria 3, a federal government-owned station that was set up in 1987 to complement the mainly English-medium stations Radio Nigeria 1 and 2 with broadcasts exclusively in Yoruba, NigP, Hausa and Igbo. Yoruba is the major indigenous language in the south-western region where Lagos is situated. NigP as a vital lingua franca was chosen in order to do justice to the heterogeneous character of the metropolis, which attracts migrants from all over the country. Hausa and Igbo are in Nigeria's two other major indigenous languages, besides Yoruba.

Radio Nigeria 3 broadcasts news in all four of its languages. The texts are always translated from English. Some of the difficulties involved in such translations have been described by Simpson (1985), who concludes with regard to the Yoruba news he studied that “in spite of the differences in world-view

1. For an overview of the status and functions of the language in present-day Nigeria, cf. Mann (1993).

2. Agheyisi (1988:240) comments in a note on the “rather poor results” that were experienced when news broadcasts in NigP were first introduced. In Elugbe and Omamor (1991) we find a transcription of a news broadcast (168–70), which, however, the authors do not analyse at all in this work (Elugbe refers back to the text in his 1995 article, commenting on plural formation (289–90)). Jibril (1995) has a text sample (241–2), and he cites two examples from news texts in his observations on lexical usage (237).

and the state of technological development of the two cultures, most terms are adequately rendered into Yoruba” (141–2). The NigP newscasters arguably face an even more difficult task than their colleagues working in Yoruba, Hausa or Igbo. These languages have been used in the new cultural domains introduced by the Europeans since colonial times, and this has been accompanied by linguistic study and codification. By contrast, it is only in the last few decades that NigP has started to move beyond its original role as an auxiliary medium of communication, and it still lacks support through language planning. Educated speakers of NigP very often resort to borrowing from English in order to fill lexical gaps (cf. also Agheyisi 1984: 218–9), but since news translations are intended for those who cannot follow the English version, newscasters have to restrict their use of this strategy. In a selection of NigP news I have analysed, it is evident that the newscasters are indeed often torn between their propensity to borrow from English and the need to communicate effectively in NigP. The quotation in the title is a particularly striking illustration of these conflicting tendencies: while *first year of nation’s return* sounds like an expression that has been taken over wholesale from English, *government of make you talk your own make I talk my own* ‘government of let you say what you think let me say what I think’ must be understood as an attempt to render the term *democracy* in NigP.

2. Data and methodology

The news texts I analysed are part of a corpus which I have compiled to study the nature and extent of English influences in NigP as spoken by educated speakers. The corpus comprises radio broadcasts as well as non-broadcast speech, i.e. recordings of face-to-face communication. The recordings were all made in Lagos, most of them during a six-month field trip in 2000.³ A few samples date from a previous field trip in 1997. The broadcasts also include archive material from the period 1995–2000.

The criterion for classifying a speaker as educated was completion of at least

3. I am grateful to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for financial support during that period. I would also like to thank Prof. Abiodun Adetugbo, then Head of the English Department, University of Lagos, as well as other members of the Department for their help in organising the field trip. Special thanks are due to all those who acted as informants and/or research assistants, and I would like to mention in particular Mr. Patrick Oloko from the English Department, University of Lagos, whose contributions to all stages of the project have been invaluable.

a secondary education. Educational background has been identified by Agheyisi (1984) as one of two principal factors in social variation in NigP. The second factor identified by Agheyisi is the degree of fluency in the language. She distinguishes between “Pidgin-proper” and “interlanguage” NigP, the latter ranging from rudimentary, “broken” NigP to an “advanced interlanguage variety” which is fairly close to “Pidgin-proper”. My aim in the compilation of the corpus was to include the middle and upper range of the competence spectrum, i.e. L2 speakers with a medium to high degree of fluency and L1 speakers, and to exclude speakers with only a rudimentary knowledge of the language. The local research assistants who made the recordings of non-broadcast speech had been instructed to ask all speakers to fill in a background information sheet with questions about their social characteristics and language abilities. Recordings were considered for inclusion in the corpus if the speakers had rated their knowledge of NigP as “very good”, “good” or at least “moderate”, but not “rudimentary”. In addition, in doubtful cases, a competent informant was asked for his/her judgement on the sample.

Those who produce broadcasts in NigP will of course normally be expected to meet the criteria I had set up regarding education and competence in the language, but I nevertheless had background information sheets filled in by all the broadcasters that I was able to contact. The results confirmed that they usually belong to the same category of speakers as those sampled outside the radio context. For example, of the five newscasters working in the Pidgin Section of Radio Nigeria 3 at the time of the research period in 2000, three had a tertiary and a fourth a secondary education (the fifth omitted to indicate his level of education on the background information sheet). Furthermore, two were L1 speakers and another two L2 speakers who claimed a “very good” knowledge of the language and were also described by their colleagues as proficient. A third L2 speaker ticked the answer “moderate” in the section about knowledge of NigP of the background information sheet.

The corpus has a total size of about 80000 words and is made up of 40 texts of approximately 2000 words. There are twenty texts each in the two major text categories, radio broadcasts and non-broadcast speech. The two major categories are both subdivided into three subcategories (see Table 1).

Apart from the news, the broadcasts comprise radio talks aimed at public enlightenment (“advice”) and educative drama. NigP broadcasts of these types have the less educated sections of the population as their prime target audience, whereas in the non-broadcast texts educated speakers communicate among themselves. A further difference is that the broadcasts are scripted, while the

Table 1. The corpus

Text categories	Number of texts
Radio broadcasts	20:
News (N)	5
Advice (A)	5
Drama (R)	10
Non-broadcast speech	20:
Interviews (V)	5
Discussions (D)	5
Conversations (C)	10

non-broadcast texts are samples of spontaneous speech. However, the three subcategories in the non-broadcast section were designed so as to have some similarities with the radio subcategories in terms of discourse format and topics: The interviews, in which a single speaker was asked to give his/her opinion on a number of current issues, are in large part monologues with thematic parallels to the news. The discussions, like the advice texts, centre on problems of daily living. Although not monologues, they are oriented more towards the exposition of problems and ideas and less towards dialogue than the conversations, which parallel the drama format.

My first step in the analysis of the corpus was the elicitation of reactions of speakers of NigP to extracts from the texts by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to elicit a general evaluation as well as examples of items considered English influences, for which the informants were also asked to suggest NigP equivalents. The examples form the basis of my own subsequent quantitative and qualitative analyses of the corpus. Some of the results of these analyses are reported in Sections 4 and 5 of this article. These data are supplemented by the results of the informants' general evaluation of the extracts (Section 6). In addition, I will draw on the insights I gained into the production of news broadcasts in NigP in the course of an internship in the Pidgin Section of Radio Nigeria 3 (May–August 2000).⁴

4. I would like to thank Mr. Isa Edime, Deputy Director of Radio Nigeria 3, for making the internship possible and for granting me permission to reproduce the texts I obtained from the station. I am also grateful to the members of staff of the Pidgin Section for their kind collaboration.

3. Transcription conventions

As NigP does not have a standardized orthography, one of the most difficult questions I faced in designing the corpus was that of which type of spelling system to use in transcribing the texts. A phonetic transcription was out of the question, the corpus being designed for research on lexis, grammar and discourse phenomena. A phonemic spelling system of the type proposed and used by some linguists (e.g. Elugbe and Omamor 1991; Faraclas 1996) might have been a satisfactory solution in some respects, but practical factors militated against it: since such a system has so far been employed only by specialists, I could not expect my research assistants and informants to be able to use it in transcribing and evaluating the large amount of data. In the end, I had to settle for an English-based spelling system of the kind used in non-scholarly writing in NigP, such as newspaper columns and literary texts. Of course, this decision was not without its problems, either. As there are no fixed conventions, writers have generally been rather inconsistent in their spelling (cf. Agheyisi 1988:234–6), but I needed a consistent transcription and therefore had to devise a system that would be maximally close to the spelling my informants were familiar with from popular usage and at the same time maximally systematic. This is not the place for a detailed account of the spelling system used in the corpus, but the following are some of the principal strategies I have employed:

- a. For common NigP words, I have adopted what appeared to be the most frequent variant in current NigP writing, e.g. *dey* for the non-completive aspect marker and *wey* for the relative clause introducer.
- b. Those words which obviously correspond to English ones have for the most part been spelled as in English, although I have generalized the very common tendency in writing in NigP to replace ⟨th⟩ by ⟨d⟩ where it represents the voiced interdental fricative in English. (Where English has a voiceless interdental fricative, some writers replace ⟨th⟩ by ⟨t⟩, but this is done much less consistently, and I have retained ⟨th⟩.)
- c. Idiosyncratic adaptations of individual words have been avoided.

The proponents of a phonemic orthography for NigP may not like this transcription system. However, it fulfills all my immediate practical purposes, and I make no further claims than that.

Unless stated otherwise, the texts and examples in the following sections are cited as they are transcribed in the corpus. In addition to the spelling conventions outlined above, I have introduced a number of transcription symbols, of

which four appear in the texts cited here. These are: # for a truncated word, () for a false start, [~] for a long pause (ordinary pauses are not marked) and [++] for non-NigP speech. Marking as non-NigP speech (in English or an indigenous language) is reserved for quotations and longer stretches of speech identified as code-switches.

4. News translations into Nigerian Pidgin and the problem of Anglicisms versus pidginization: A text-based overview

The Radio Nigeria 3 news texts consist of four to six news items, usually a mixture of national and local news. The first version that is produced is a typewritten English script, which is then given out to the different sections of the station for translation and reading. In the Pidgin Section, a common practice is that the newscaster whose turn it is to read the news will produce a handwritten translation before reading. The same practice has been observed by Simpson (1985: 139) and Bamgbose (1992:2) with regard to Yoruba news translations. However, I also observed in the Pidgin Section of Radio Nigeria 3 that due to lack of time and other constraints, the newscasters sometimes go to the studio with the English script and translate it orally. This is of course likely to negatively affect the quality of the broadcasts, as the delivery will be less fluent and the speaker will be more prone to take over English expressions. When a script is produced, each of the newscasters uses his/her own version of an English-based spelling. An illustration is provided in Text sample 1, where I have reproduced the first page of the newscaster's handwritten script for the NigP news that was broadcast on 17th May 2000 (the full text, as transcribed from the broadcast, is part of the corpus). The use of ⟨e⟩ and ⟨o⟩ with a subscript diacritic to mark an open pronunciation in some words in a text which otherwise adheres to an English-based spelling is a peculiarity of this newscaster. Apart from this, the extract is a typical example of a NigP news script. Note the consistent use of the conventions *dey* and *wey* and the differentiation in the treatment of English ⟨th⟩ (e.g. *dis* [l. 19], *anoda* [l. 26], *dat* [l. 28] vs. *with* [l. 15], *mouth* [l. 17], *things* [l. 29]), as in the transcription system used in the corpus. There are also a few unsystematic adaptations of the type I have avoided, e.g. *follo* (l. 5) or *bodi* (l. 36). As it was unfortunately not possible for me to take a copy of the original English script with me as well, I have added a re-translation into English. The same has been done for the other sample texts in this section.

Text sample 1. News script

[original version]	[translation]
1. Dẹn dọn retire some pipo for petroleum ministry.	1. The Petroleum Ministry has retired some of its staff.
2. One ogbonge oga wọn look for money to repair F.R.C.N. & N.T.A.	2. A top government official is going to seek funds to overhaul F.R.C.N. [Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria] and N.T.A. [National Television Authority].
3. De dọn set task force wey go follo put eye for dọty mata for Lagos Mainland Local Govt.	3. A task force has been set up to help supervise waste disposal in Lagos Mainland Local Government.
4. Igbo pipo wọn celebrate Igbo day for on 29th of May Y2K.	4. The Igbo will celebrate Igbo Day on 29th May 2000.
10 Na feda wey nọ good, E go dey pluck trowey-o. Naim make di department of petroleum resources wey bi pipo wey tanda ontọp petroleum mata, dọn retire some pipo	If a feather is bad, it will be shed. In the same way, the Department of Petroleum Resources has retired some of its staff in order to increase efficiency. The
15 wey dey work with dẹm. Dẹn retire dẹm to make di department dey kampe pass as b/4. Na di mouth of di special adviser ontọp petroleum and energy mata dis order fall ọmọt. E say, dis retirement go	step was made public by the Special Adviser on Petroleum and Energy. He added that there will be further reductions in the workforce until the petroleum sector will have become more economically viable.
20 continue until dẹm see say, petroleum dọn dey contribute dẹm own part well well for our economic mata. I nọ bellefull, naim make Oliver Twist ask for more.	
25 Di oga ontọp ofofo and tọk-tọk mata Prof Jerry Gana say, E go soon write anoda give me money paper go give National Assembly so dat dẹm fit bring money wey Ein go take buy things and repair Federal Radio	Oliver Twist didn't have enough, that's why he asked for more. The Minister of Information, Professor Jerry Gana, has announced that he will make a request to the National Assembly for more funds for the purchase and repair of equipment at the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria and N.T.A. He
30 Corporation of Nigeria and N.T.A. property dẹm. Di oga tọk dis word by di time wey Ein carry waka come look di working property wey dey for F.R.C.N. compound for Lagos here. By di time wey	announced this intention during an inspection of the F.R.C.N. station here in Lagos. In an interview with our reporter Chika Emerenwah, the minister said he
35 our newtorey man Chika Emerenwah dey take question dey jam di oga bodi, E say, Ein go change all di F.R.C.N. equipment dẹm to chabẹ wey dẹm dey use nowadays.	intends to have all the F.R.C.N. equipment replaced with the latest type.

<p>Na for dry season, ant dey gada dem food 40 for inside hole-o.</p> <p>Naim make di Govt of Benue State don bring out fifty-nine million naira to buy fertilizer to divide for di farmers wey dey dem state for dis farming season. Na di 45 oga madam ontop agriculture mata for B/State Mrs Elizabeth Shuluwa tell our new-torey pipo for Makurdi say, den go use new style to dey divide fertilizer give farmers for di state as from now, so dat 50 den go make sure say fertilizer reach many farmers hand.</p>	<p>In the dry season, ants gather food and store it in holes.</p> <p>Similarly, the government of Benue State has made fifty-nine million naira available for the distribution of fertilizer to farmers in the state during this farming season.</p> <p>The Benue State Commissioner for Agri- culture, Mrs. Elizabeth Shuluwa, told our reporters in Makurdi that a new strategy would be adopted in the distribution of the fertilizer to ensure that it would reach a large number of farmers.</p>
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As the script shows, the news begins with the main headlines. The detailed reports follow. A noteworthy feature are the proverbs that introduce each news item. Such proverbs are not part of the original English scripts but are added by the NigP newscasters. When reading, the newscasters also add introductory and closing formulae and a few other announcements. This can be seen in Text sample 2, which is the beginning of the news broadcast based on the script in Text sample 1.

Text samples 1 and 2 can also serve as a first illustration of the translation problems that are the primary concern of this paper.

One obvious problem is how to refer to government and other institutions and government posts, the official designations for which are in English. In Text sample 1 the newscaster has taken a mixed approach. *National Assembly* (l. 27f.) and *Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria* (l. 29f.) are retained. The newscaster also takes over *department of petroleum resources* (l. 12f.) but adds an explanation in NigP (*wey bi pipo wey tanda ontop petroleum mata* ‘which is the people who stand at the top of [i.e. the people who are in charge of] petroleum matters’). The terms for government posts show various degrees of pidginization. *Oga ontop ofofo and tok-tok mata* ‘Minister of Information’ (l. 25) is a case of full translation.⁵ In *oga madam ontop agriculture mata* ‘Commissioner for Agriculture’ (l. 45) the term for the post is translated, again by the Yoruba loanword *oga* (‘superior, chief’) — here in combination with *madam* — but the term for the department is only superficially pidginized by the addition of *mata* to the Anglicism

5. *Ofofo* is a word of Yoruba origin which Adetugbo (2001:21) glosses as ‘tale-bearer, gossip’.

Text sample 2. Beginning of news broadcast

	[original version]	[translation]
	Check your time dere you go see na five minutes e take dodge two o'clock, e don reach di time for our Pidgin news for today wey be number seventeen day for di	Check your time, you'll see it's five minutes past two, time for our Pidgin news for today, the seventeenth of May two thousand. But before I enter into the news
5	month of May wey be number five month for di year two thousand. But before I go chook leg for di news proper, I go tell una di ones wey carry kanda for inside.[~] Dem don retire some people for Petro-	proper, I'll give you the headlines. The Petroleum Ministry has retired some of its staff. A top government official is going to seek funds to overhaul F.R.C.N. and N.T.A. A task force has been set up to help supervise waste disposal in Lagos
10	leum Ministry. One ogbonge oga wan look for money to repair F.R.C.N. and N.T.A. Dem don set task force o wey go follow put eye for dirty matter for Lagos Mainland Local Government. Igbo people	Mainland Local Government. The Igbo will celebrate Igbo Day on the twenty-ninth of May two thousand. My name is God'swill Adheke Joseph. You'll now hear the news in detail.
15	wan celebrate Igbo Day for on di twenty-ninth of May for di year two thousand. My name na God'swill Adheke Joseph. Make una listen to how di news e berekete reach. (N04 1–12)*	

* References to the corpus consist of the text code, which is composed of a category label (see table 1) and a number, and the line number(s).

agriculture. In *special adviser ontop petroleum and energy mata* 'Special Adviser on Petroleum and Energy' (l. 17f.), the preposition *on* is replaced by *ontop* and, again, *mata* is added, but otherwise the term remains as in English.

A mixed approach is also evident in the handling of the general vocabulary. Among examples of translation are *dorty mata* 'waste disposal' (l. 6) and *new(-)torey man/pipo* 'reporter(s)' (l. 35/47). What must have been *economy* or a derivative thereof in the original English script is superficially pidginized as *economic mata* (l. 22). In the third news item the newscaster seems confident that the key word *fertilizer* will be understood, as he makes no attempt to translate or explain it.

In Text sample 2, it is noteworthy how the newscaster carefully renders the time and date in NigP in the opening announcements, using the NigP system of ordinal numerals (*number* plus cardinal numeral). In the headlines, however, we find the English form *twenty-ninth* (l. 15f.). In translating the term *headlines* the newscaster is rather creative: *di ones wey carry kanda for inside* 'the ones that have skin among [the news]', i.e. the ones which are "thick" or important (l. 8).

For further illustration, I will use two extracts from a different text, recorded

Text sample 3. News item

[original version]	[translation]
<p>One committee o don tando for Shomolu Local Government Area inside Lagos State and di committee o we hear say get plan to help all di poor students wey dey for di local government for di money wey dem go take read all di bookuru dem wan read. When di oga kpatokpata for di council wey be Prince Sesan Olanrewaju dey stando di committee for last Thursday, di oga o come talk say de start dat kind scholarship award to help all di poor people wey dey for dat local government get better education. E come dey talk o say im council put eye well well as e concern education tabi bookuru matter, because e dey important mkpa to help all di students plus di people wey dey dere to know wetin government dey talk about democracy. Prince Olanrewaju o dey say na better challenge e be for di five people wey dey inside di committee, especially dem oga wey be Dr. Idowu Sobowale, to make sure say de do di work well well as e go sweet people for belle. Di committee o we hear say de set am up to join hand for many many activity wey de dey do to remember say Prince Olanrewaju don dey one hundred days for dat office.[~] Dis newstory dey come to you from Radio Nigeria Three, Ikoyi, Lagos. (N01 38–56)</p>	<p>A committee has been set up in Shomolu Local Government Area in Lagos State. The committee, we're told, has plans for giving poor students in the local government the necessary financial assistance to enable them to get the education they desire. During the inaugural session of the committee last Thursday, the council chairman Prince Sesan Olanrewaju said that this scholarship was introduced in order to help poor people in the local government to get a good education. He further explained that his council placed great value on education because of its key role in the effort to make students as well as the population at large aware of the government's pronouncements concerning democracy. Prince Olanrewaju said that it was a great challenge for the five members of the committee and especially the chairman, Dr. Idowu Sobowale, to ensure that they perform their duties as they are expected to. The committee, we're told, was set up as part of a number of activities to mark Prince Olanrewaju's first one hundred days in office. This news is broadcast by Radio Nigeria 3, Ikoyi, Lagos.</p>

in July 1997. Text sample 3 is the third of five news items in this text. Text sample 4 consists of the last news item and the closing segment.

In Text sample 3, the speaker seems unsure how to handle one of the key words, *education*. *Get ... education* is rendered as *read ... bookuru* in l. 6, whereas in l. 13 the newscaster uses the English expression; in l. 15, the English and NigP expressions are combined: *education tabi bookuru matter* (*tabi* is from Yoruba and means 'or'). The second key word, *committee*, is treated as a borrowing which requires no translation or explanation (cf. l. 1, 9, 21, 24), like *fertilizer* in Text sample 1. Interestingly, this newscaster also uses the term

democracy (l. 19), which her colleague quoted in the title explains so elaborately. *Activity* (l. 26) seems to be an unnecessary Anglicism. Since *wey de dey do* ‘which they do’ is added, the general word *thing* would have sufficed.

In Text sample 4, an example of social news, the key word *triplets* does not pose a problem for the newscaster. *Gave birth to triplets* is translated as *come*

Text sample 4. Final news item and closing segment

[original version]	[translation]
<p>One better church song wey dey talk say o “[+Your miracle is on the way, don’t give up+]”, na im be say serious miracle (r#) dey for road for you, no lose hope, (e be) 5 e get (ma#) serious meaning for many many people now. One husband and wife o wey dey live for Ikotun Egbe, wey don marry come do “I do I do” since thirteen years ago, wey dey cry better cry say no 10 pikin wan land deir doormouth, God don wipe all di tear tear wey dey deir face now. We hear say only last week o, di wife of di man come born three pikin for di same time and na two boys plus one girl dey 15 inside. Di woman come born am for Ikeja General Hospital, Ikeja. Di mama o of dis three in one pikin come dey praise God dey raise her hand well well dey salute God Almighty say E don do am better, E 20 don hear all im prayer. E come dey give advice to all di woman dem wey dey for dis kind situation say make dem no lose hope kpatakpata, God dey and God go open deir belle make pikin enter am. She 25 talk o say im know well well say to give all dese pikin dem food e be serious trouble, but dat God wey give am di pikin e dey hope say God go give am anoder thing wey go make im family dey move gberere. 30 And na so we go see am reach on top di first Pidgin news for dis morning. Join Amechi Anenyeonu for afternoon for di second Pidgin news. I throwway salute. (N01 71–91)</p>	<p>The religious song “your miracle is on the way, don’t give up” is very meaningful for many people these days. A couple in Ikotun Egbe have suffered greatly because they haven’t had a child in thirteen years of marriage, but God has now freed them from their sorrow. According to reports, the woman gave birth to triplets last week, two boys and one girl. The woman was delivered of the children at Ikeja General Hospital, Ikeja. The mother of the triplets thanked God for answering her prayers and advised all women who are faced with this kind of situation not to lose hope completely, because God is there and God would open their womb so that they would get pregnant. She said that she knew it would be difficult to provide for the children, but hoped that God who gave her the children would also help her to take care of her family. This is the end of the morning edition of the Pidgin news. Tune in to the second edition in the afternoon with Amechi Anenyeonu. Goodbye.</p>

born three pikin for di same time ‘gave birth to three children at the same time’ (l. 13f.), and in another instance the newscaster coins the expression *three in one pikin* ‘three in one child’ (l. 17). Lexis seems, on the whole, to be less of a problem in this extract than in the examples of political news, but there is some vacillation between English and NigP grammatical forms. For example, in l. 20 the newscaster refers to the woman who gave birth to the triplets by the NigP gender-neutral third person singular pronoun *e*, but in l. 24 she uses *she*. There is also variation in the corresponding possessive pronouns (*im* [l. 20]/*her* [l. 18]). One may further note the English *s*-plural in *years* (l. 9) and *boys* (l. 14). In the case of *woman* the newscaster opts for the NigP plural marker, post-nominal *dem* (l. 21), instead of the English irregular plural.

The transcription also reveals features of spoken language which would not have appeared if the text had been copied from a script, such as the repeated false starts in l. 3ff. A striking feature is the frequent use of the NigP particle *o* (l. 1, 7, 12, 16, 25).

In this final news item, the newscaster is apparently trying to be creative in her use of language. For example, she adds *come do* ‘*I do I do*’ (in allusion to the marriage ceremony) to the verb *marry* (l. 8). In the same sentence the problem the couple had is described as *no pikin wan land deir doormouth* ‘no child would arrive at their door’ (l. 9f.). There is even a third rather colourful expression in this sentence: *God don wipe all di tear tear wey dey deir face now* ‘God has now wiped all the tears from their faces’ (l. 10f.).

The closing segment is brief and in a plain style. The newscaster announces that there will be a second news broadcast in NigP in the afternoon and ends with the greeting *I throwway salute*.

5. Analyses of corpus data

The issues that have been raised in Section 4 will be further discussed in this section on the basis of examples from the news texts and some quantitative data from the whole corpus. Three aspects — lexis, grammar and discourse features — will be dealt with. As a comprehensive analysis is beyond the scope of the present paper, I will focus on a number of selected phenomena. The discussion of lexical and grammatical phenomena will be confined to the noun phrase, because the new terms that have to be rendered in the language are most often nouns and the noun phrase also exhibits more grammatical variation in the corpus than the verb phrase, for example.

5.1 Lexis

The news texts show evidence of several strategies to coin NigP equivalents for English lexical items. In the case of nouns, some frequently used strategies are reduplication, compounding and circumlocution. I will describe these strategies and discuss their use in relation to the alternative, the use of an Anglicism.

5.1.1 *Reduplication and compounding*

Reduplication can be used in NigP to derive nouns from verbs (cf. Faraclas 1996: 243), as in *suffer-suffer* ‘suffering’ (N01 61), *gader-gader* ‘gathering’ (N03 95) and *call-call* ‘appeal’ (N03 103). Compounds are, according to Faraclas (1996: 243), often formed with generic nouns like *place* or *person*. There are no *place* compounds in the news texts but several examples with nouns semantically related to *person*. These include the already cited *new(s)tory man/people* (N01/N03/N04, 13 occurrences),⁶ *motor people* ‘motorists’ (N01/02, 9 occurrences) and *country people* ‘citizens’ (N03 27). The two items mentioned by Faraclas and the related words from the news texts yield concrete compound nouns. The news texts show in addition that abstract nouns, which are particularly scarce in NigP, can be formed by using *work* or *matter*. Examples are *farm work* ‘agriculture’ (N01 138, 139) and *house matter* ‘housing’ in *minister for works and house matter* ‘Minister of Works and Housing’ (N05 9f.).

Reduplication and compounding work well in the examples cited so far, but the results appear less felicitous when these word formation processes are applied to words which can hardly be considered NigP, as is the case in *launch-launch* ‘launch’ (n.)/‘launching’ (N05 81) and *aviation matter* ‘aviation’ (N03 121, 126). Of course, the distinction between compounds and phrases in which two nouns occur in an “associative/possessive construction” (cf. Faraclas 1996: 67–8) is not clear-cut (see also Faraclas 1996: 252) and for combinations with *matter* one may favour the latter interpretation, but the fact remains that pidginization is very superficial in an expression like *minister of aviation matter* (N03 121) and some of the *matter* expressions cited in Section 4.

6. If an item that is cited occurs more than three times in the corpus, only the text(s) and the number of occurrences are indicated.

5.1.2 *Circumlocution*

The circumlocutions found in the texts are of two types, which one could describe as “neutral” and “imaginative”.⁷ Examples of the first type include *money to put inside di business make e dey grow well well* ‘money to put into the business so that it will prosper’, i.e. money for investments (N01 13), and *people wey dey do dirty carry carry work* ‘people who do the work of carrying waste away’, i.e. waste disposal companies (N04 54). Sometimes an English word is cited and a circumlocution is added as an explanation: *di things wey oyibo people dey call “radars” wey dem take dey look how aeroplane dey fly for our air* ‘the things that the white people call “radars”, which are used to watch how aeroplanes fly in our air’ (N03 119). Examples of imaginative circumlocutions are *you-no-like-me you-no-like-me katakata* ‘you-are-not-like-me you-are-not-like-me trouble’, i.e. ethnic strife (N05 86) and of course *government of make you talk your own make I talk my own* (N02 142).

5.1.3 *Use of pidginization strategies vs. anglicisms*

The only way to render an English expression in NigP is in many cases a circumlocution. However, as these are long and often imprecise, it may sometimes appear preferable to use the English word — which is of course what is very often done. To cite just a few of the many examples from the news texts quoted in the questionnaires: *brewery industry* (N01 4, 19), *laboratory* (N03 29), *minimum wage* (N01/05, 5 occurrences). In these cases, the only alternative would indeed have been a circumlocution, for example *people wey dey make beer* ‘people who produce beer’ for *brewery industry*. One informant who cited *minimum wage* as an Anglicism in an interview extract also noted the following:

Being a burning issue, extract’s technical terms (*minimum wage*, especially) appear through popular usage, to have passed into the Pidgin vocabulary.

In such cases, where an Anglicism does not have a straightforward NigP equivalent and is widespread, its use seems justified. However, there are also examples of the use of Anglicisms in the news texts where a straightforward NigP equivalent would have been available: *teaching profession* (N02 84f.) — *teacher work*, *authorities* (N02 103) — *oga dem*, *electricity* (N01•62) — *light*. Sometimes a NigP equivalent is provided in the broadcasts themselves. While Bamgbose (1992:3) reports a high degree of consistency in the handling of

7. These two types correspond to the translation strategies referred to by Bamgbose (1992) as “explication” and “idiomatization”, respectively.

specific concepts in Yoruba news, the NigP news texts in the corpus are characterized by a great deal of lexical variation. For example, we find *conference* as well as *talk-talk* (N01 133; N03 132/N01 119; N03 95, 109), *vice president* and *di number two oga kpatakpata for our country* ‘the second highest chief in our country’ (N02 5; N05 77, 80/N04 40), and *oga on top ofofa and talk-talk matter* as well as *minister wey dey in charge of newstory* for ‘Minister of Information’ (N04 20f., 67f.; cf. also Text sample 1 above/N02 13, 19, 46).

5.2 Interplay between lexis and grammar: The case of the preposition *of*

Particularly problematic cases of Anglicisms are nouns denoting activities like *construction* in *construction work go start* ‘construction work will start’ (N05 52f.) — the informant who filled in the questionnaire suggested *dem go start dey build* ‘they will start to build’ as a more appropriate expression in NigP —, or *harassment* in *harassment of motor people* (N02 92) — in “proper” NigP *wahala wey dem dey give motor people* ‘trouble that they give motorists’ —, and also *return* in *first year of nation’s return to* in the title quotation, which might have been translated into NigP as *one year wey our country don dey (for)* ‘(the) one year which our country has been in’. In contrast to the explanatory circumlocutions cited in 5.1.2, the verbal constructions that are often preferred in NigP to such nouns are not usually clumsy, and they are much more idiomatic because the nouns may also introduce problematic complementation structures such as prepositional phrases with *of*. The preposition *of* is not a core element of NigP although it is quite common among educated speakers.⁸ I found it to be more frequent in the news than in any other text category in the corpus: After I had divided the frequencies in the categories drama and conversations, which have twice as many texts as the other categories, by two in order to make the frequencies comparable, the numbers (rounded, if necessary) in the five other categories ranged from 44 (conversations) to 87 (discussions), as compared to 127 occurrences of *of* in the news texts. Excluded from the count were, apart from passages marked as non-NigP speech, proper names such as names of institutions (e.g. *House of Assembly*, *Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria*), which would have inflated the frequency of the preposition in the news texts.

8. According to Faraclas (1996:61), *of* is a feature of “acrolectal speech”.

5.3 Grammar

The title quotation and the observations made in Section 4 on plural forms in Text sample 4 point to the use in NigP of the two regular English noun inflections, the *s*-genitive and the *s*-plural. In this section, their use in the corpus will be examined in detail.

5.3.1 *The s-genitive*

Table 2 makes it clear that examples like *nation's return* are the exception in contexts where English would require or favour the *s*-genitive and that the NigP associative/possessive construction without or (rarely) with a possessive pronoun is the norm in the corpus.

Table 2. Genitive constructions in the corpus (noun phrases allowing -'s in English)

Construction	Example	N
<i>s</i> -genitive	<i>nation's return</i> (N02 142)	16 ^a
Associative/possessive construction		127:
Without possessive pronoun	<i>anoder man house</i> 'another man's house' (V02 12f.)	115
With possessive pronoun	<i>Asabe im dog</i> 'Asabe's dog' (R03 46f.)	4
Ambiguous	<i>taxpayer dem money</i> ^b 'taxpayers' money' (N03 162f.)	8

^a Of these, 10 occur in proper names/fixed expressions: There are four occurrences each of *Children's Day* and *master's (degree)* and one each of *Lord's Prayer* and *Lady's Queen of Nigeria* (name of a cathedral).

^b Examples of this type are structurally ambiguous between an associative/possessive construction without possessive pronoun, in which case *dem* would function as a plural marker, and a construction with *dem* as third person plural possessive pronoun.

The fact that the *s*-genitive in the title quotation is one of only six in the corpus outside proper names and fixed expressions confirms the suspicion that the phrase has been taken over wholesale from English, perhaps in the course of an oral translation of an English script.

5.3.2 *The s-plural*

In contrast to the *s*-genitive, the *s*-plural is frequent in the corpus.

Figure 1 shows that in the non-broadcast section of the corpus, the *s*-suffix

is in fact the preferred plural marker (the proportion of *s*-plurals in the three non-broadcast subcategories taken together is 61%). The remainder of nouns with plural reference are almost without exception unmarked. The NigP plural marker, postnominal *dem*,⁹ is virtually not used in these texts. These results correspond to those of Tagliamonte, Poplack and Eze (1997), who in a corpus-based study of NigP as spoken by educated speakers resident in Canada found that almost 60% of nouns with plural reference had the *s*-suffix. Zero marking accounts for nearly 40% of their data, while *dem* and *-s dem* have percentages below 1. Findings like these are particularly interesting in the light of Faraclas' statement (1996: 169) that if plurality is marked in NigP, the preferred form is postnominal *dem*. It has to be added that Faraclas does mention the use of *-s* in "acrolectal varieties" (1996: 171) and that these varieties are not the focus of his study. Still, the fact that *-s* is used to the near exclusion of *dem* both in the non-broadcast section of my corpus and the corpus of Tagliamonte, Poplack and Eze is striking. It appears that the *dem*-plural is a very conservative form. If my corpus was composed entirely of non-broadcast speech, the conclusion would have been that it has all but disappeared from the speech of educated speakers. However, as can also be seen in Figure 1, there are two text categories in the broadcast section of the corpus in which substantial proportions of *dem*-plurals are found, namely the categories advice and news.¹⁰ As the texts in the former category are also conservative lexically, the *dem*-plural fits in well. Typical plural noun phrases in these texts are *di motor dem* 'the cars' (A01 89), *all una house dem* 'all your (pl.) houses' (A01 47), *our pikin dem* 'our children' (A04, 5 occurrences). However, a conservative NigP grammatical marker may appear incongruous when it is combined with a blatant Anglicism, as in the following examples from the news texts: *Federal Information Centre dem* (N02 17), *pension and gratuity dem* (N03 140), *cooperative organisation dem* (N01 136). In double plural marking, which accounts for 9% of the data in the category news, the use of *dem* is particularly striking: *cultural troupes dem* (N03 51), *traditional rulers*

9. Where NOUN *dem* is in subject position and not followed by any postmodification such as a prepositional phrase or a relative clause, the plural construction is distinguished from left dislocation only by intonation. Such cases have been checked against the recording.

10. For the broadcast section of the corpus, no comparable corpus-based data are available in the literature. Elugbe (1995: 289–90) observes that pluralization is always by means of *-s* in the Bendel Television NigP news transcribed in Elugbe and Omamor (1991), which he criticizes as a violation of the NigP plural formation "rule", i.e. zero or postnominal *dem* as plural marker, but this observation is based on only one text.

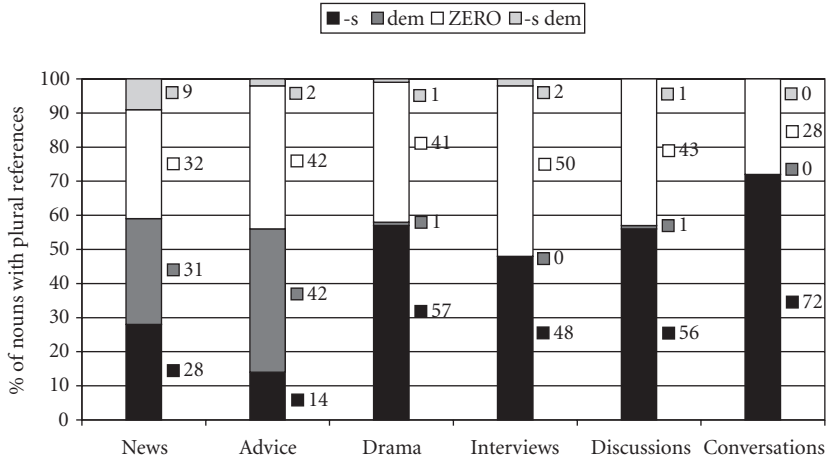


Figure 1.^a Distribution of plural markers on nouns in the corpus (excluding irregular nouns).^b

^a Percentages in this and subsequent figures may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

^b Apart from nouns with irregular plurals and passages marked as non-NigP speech, there are a number of other cases that had to be excluded from the analysis, either because they are ambiguous or because they belong to certain categories in which plural marking is strongly favoured or disfavoured. These include: (a) cases where the presence or absence of a plural marker cannot be determined from the recording because of the phonetic environment (neutralization contexts), e.g. *some student[s?] self* (C03 216); (b) proper names, e.g. names of organisations like *United Nations*; (c) fixed expressions, e.g. *at times* (categorically marked) or *join hand* ‘cooperate’ (categorically unmarked); (d) nouns which in English occur only in the plural (in a given sense), e.g. *goods, arms*. In addition to nouns, regular plural marking also concerns *one* and *oder* in their pronominal uses. These cases are included in the count.

dem (N02 34), *board of trustees dem* (N02 84). What is the motivation for this type of “hyper-pidginization”? One may think of accommodation to a target audience which (actually or supposedly) uses such forms, but there seems to be an additional factor, namely that these forms are regarded as the correct or “standard” ones appropriate to the formal context of news broadcasting. This point was driven home to me personally the first time I took part in a news translation in the course of my internship: The very first rule that the newscaster I was working with advised me to follow was that *s*-plurals should be rendered by *dem*. When I objected that I had heard people using *s*-plurals when speaking NigP, I was told that this may well be the case, but that it was not correct, and that the correct form was *dem*.

5.4 Discourse features

In this section I have grouped together two rather disparate phenomena on the discourse level which the text analyses in Section 4 have shown to be relevant, namely the use of the particle *o* and proverbs.

5.4.1 *The particle o*

O has a range of pragmatic functions, such as emphasis, and is often added to imperatives and vocatives (see Faraclas 1996:25–7, 116); typical examples (from the conversations in the corpus) are *wahala dey o* ‘there’s real trouble’ (C09 144) and *wait o wait o* ‘Wait, wait!’ (C10 49). With these functions, one would expect *o* to be most frequent in the dialogic or persuasive text categories in the corpus — conversations, drama and advice. However, Figure 2 reveals that while these categories do have higher frequencies of the particle than the interviews and discussions, it is in the news texts that *o* is used most often (the frequencies in the categories drama and conversations have again been divided by two to make them comparable to those in the other text categories).

Furthermore, the normal position of *o* is clause-final, but in the news broadcasts, it often appears after or even within a (non-final) noun phrase, as in *state government o say* ‘the state government said’ (N05 41), *di oga kpatakpata o of VON* ‘the director of VON [Voice of Nigeria]’ (N04 153) or even *Universal Basic Education o Programme* (N02 107).

5.4.2 *Proverbs*

The frequent insertion of the particle *o* does not seem to contribute much to giving a news text a NigP character, but the case of the proverbs is quite different.

Nwachukwu-Agbada (1990:38) describes proverbs as a “common speech strategy among Nigerians”. He gives examples of their role in various speech situations in Yoruba and Igbo culture and goes on to explain:

The examples of the Yoruba and the Igbo can be extended to all other ethnic groups in Nigeria. Speech making in Nigerian cultures is usually an effort at reaching out, at painting a picture, at shocking, at inviting the imagination and at clinching a point. This could be the case in other cultures too, but in Nigeria the use of proverbs in oral contexts is a tribute to one’s native land, a clear evidence of one who had had a rich traditional education before adulthood. (*ibid.*)

According to Nwachukwu-Agbada (1990:37), in the urban context where the indigenous languages can no longer fulfil all communicative needs, the traditional

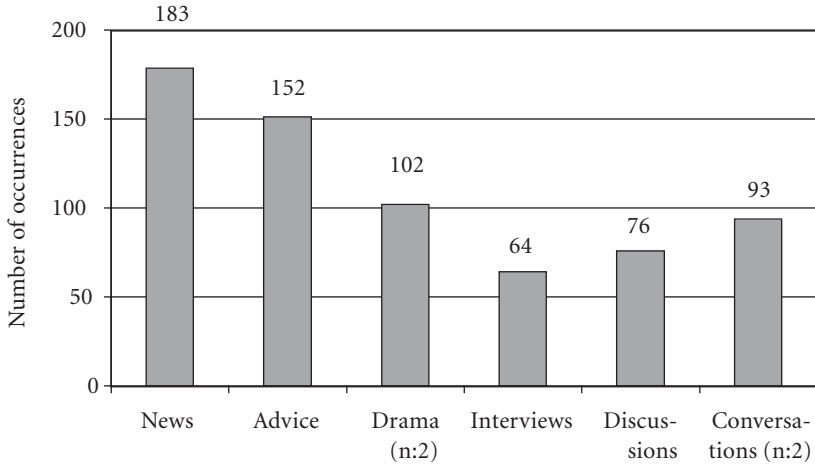


Figure 2. Frequency of the particle *o* in the corpus.

speech strategy of the proverb has been carried over into the popular lingua franca, NigP. The distinguishing feature of the NigP stock of proverbs is that it draws on the traditions of different ethnic groups and also includes new proverbs which reflect the modern urban setting (Nwachukwu-Agbada 1991: 128).

It seems that in the proverb the newscasters in the Pidgin Section of Radio Nigeria 3 have found an ideal strategy for relating the news to folk culture. The two L1 speakers among the section's staff make a point of using proverbs regularly and often show considerable ingenuity in finding an appropriate one to introduce each news item. The L2 speakers also use proverbs, although to a lesser extent. Here are some examples: A news item reporting that the Nigerian President had not received his salary since assuming office begins *our people talk say dem no dey take empty belle dey blow fire o, but one person don do am* 'our people say that you can't blow a fire with an empty stomach, but one person has done it' (N03 128f.). Another news item, which is about a schoolteacher who was sacked when it was discovered that he had been using the same lesson notes for fourteen years, is introduced by *every day be for di thief o, but one special day na im be for di oga wey get house* 'every day is for the thief but one special day is for the owner of the house' (N03 24ff.). The news item about the task force that was set up to help a local government in supervising waste disposal (cf. Text sample 1) starts with the following proverb: *One hand no dey carry heavy load put for head o* 'you can't lift a heavy load onto your head with only one hand' (N04 51f.). Another example is *if fire never spread well well, na im dem fit dey quench am o* 'a fire must be put out before it can spread' (N04 39f.); this is the

beginning of a news item about an appeal by Nigeria's Vice President to the international community to help solve the conflict in Sierra Leone in order to stabilize the region and prevent further outbreaks of war in West Africa. A news item about the construction of low-cost housing for the poor ends with a reference to folk wisdom: *Our people talk say because of house problem na im make snail and tortoise dey carry e own dey waka* 'our people say because of housing problems the snail and the tortoise walk about with their house' (N05 26f.).

6. Evaluation of corpus extracts by Nigerian informants

For the elicitation test mentioned in Section 2, the 40 texts in the corpus were split up into 320 shorter extracts (8 per text), which were distributed among 22 informants with a questionnaire to fill in for each. Most of the informants were students or members of staff of the University of Lagos. Competence in NigP was obviously a prerequisite for participation; some of the informants were L1 speakers, but as NigP is still mostly spoken as L2, persons with good L2 knowledge were included as well. Since in addition they needed to possess some basic linguistic knowledge and had to be willing to take part in a rather time-consuming experiment, their number is of necessity rather limited.

In the first section of the questionnaire, the informants were asked to assess the frequency of what they considered English lexical and, separately, grammatical elements in the extract in question on a four-point scale ranging from "very frequently" to "not at all". It was in this section that the informants were also asked to give the examples of Anglicisms and possible NigP equivalents that I have repeatedly referred to. In the second section the informants were asked for an overall assessment of the language used in the extract with regard to two criteria (see Figure 3, Sections 2.1 and 2.2), also on a scale. In addition, there was space for comments. (The participants also had the chance to elaborate on their comments in a final discussion.) The results of the evaluation of the extracts are displayed in Figure 3.

Sections 1.1 and 1.2 in Figure 3 show that the informants found English influence to be quite noticeable in the lexis, while the grammar is, in their view, more stable, but as can be seen in Sections 2.1 and 2.2, the language of over 90% of the extracts was still rated as a fully or fairly satisfactory form of NigP for the informant personally, and was also assumed to be fully or fairly intelligible to a speaker of NigP with little or no formal education. However, a comparison of results across text categories (Figures 4 and 5) reveals some

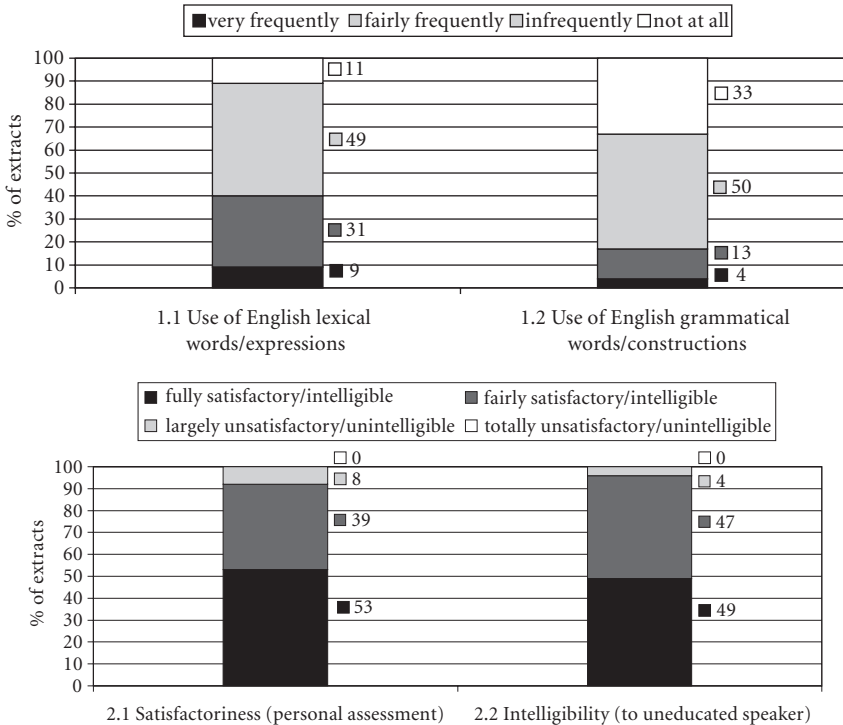


Figure 3. Evaluation of corpus extracts, whole corpus.

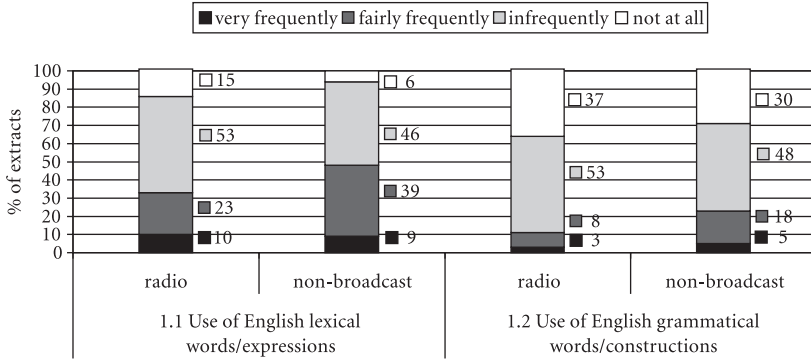
significant differences.¹¹

Figure 4 shows that there are significant differences between the two major text categories: use of English lexical as well as grammatical elements was found to be less frequent in the radio texts than in non-broadcast speech, and if a distinction is made between “fully satisfactory” or “fully intelligible” and the other possible answers, the radio texts also have better ratings in the overall evaluation. I think this result is no coincidence but reflects stylistic differences in educated speakers’ use of NigP which are probably due to two main factors, namely the target audience of the radio broadcasts and efforts to adhere to what are perceived as norms of correctness in the broadcasting context.

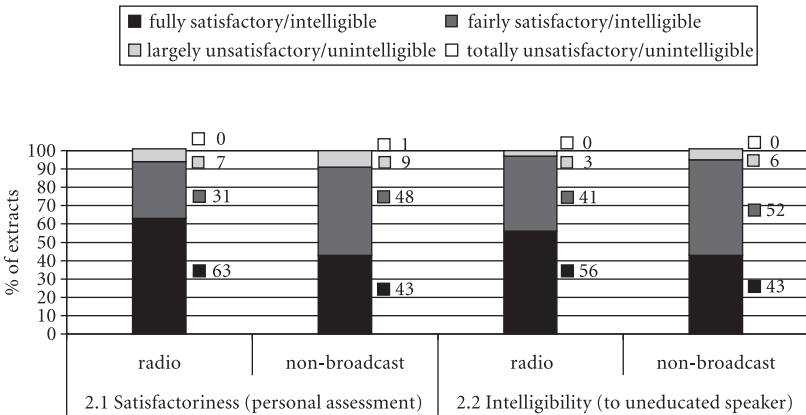
Of particular interest in the present context is the comparison of radio subcategories, which is summarized in Figure 5.

Here, differences in the observed use of English elements are significant

11. Statistical significance was tested by means of chi-square tests on the absolute values.



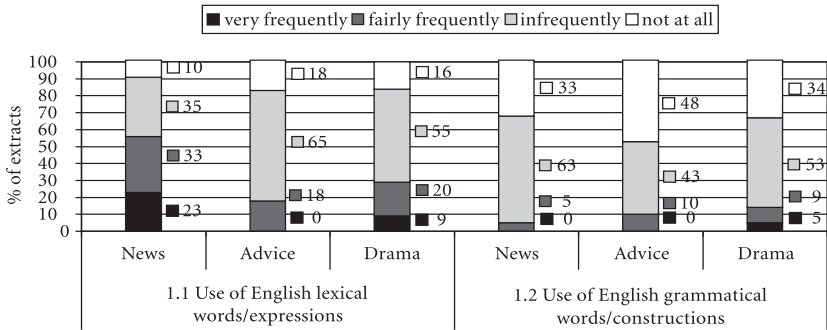
Significance levels (radio vs. non-broadcast; very / fairly frequently vs. infrequently / not at all):
 1.1: $p \leq 0.01$; 1.2: $p \leq 0.01$;



Significance levels (radio vs. non-broadcast; fully satisfactory / intelligible vs. all other answers):
 2.1: $p \leq 0.01$; 2.2: $p \leq 0.05$;

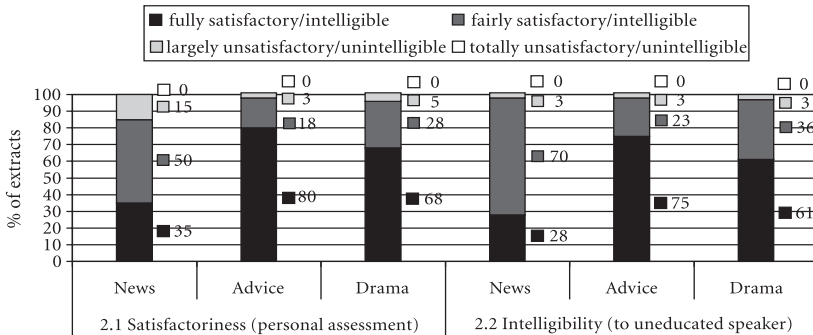
Figure 4. Evaluation of corpus extracts, comparison of major text categories.

only in lexis, but this difference is quite pronounced, with a very or fairly frequent use of English items found in 55% of the news extracts, as compared to only 18% and 29% of the extracts in the categories advice and drama, respectively. It is thus not surprising that the news texts were also rated as significantly less satisfactory and intelligible than the others, even though the difference is only between “fully satisfactory” or “fully intelligible” and the other possible answers. The comments I obtained show, however, that Anglicisms are only one of the factors responsible for this result in the overall evaluation, at least as far as satisfactoriness is concerned. In the comments



Significance levels (news vs. advice / drama; very / fairly frequently vs. infrequently / not at all):

1.1: $p \leq 0.01$; 1.2: -



Significance levels (news vs. advice / drama; fully satisfactory / intelligible vs. all other answers):

2.1: $p \leq 0.01$; 2.2: $p \leq 0.01$

Figure 5. Evaluation of corpus extracts, comparison of radio subcategories.

sections of several questionnaires, the language of news extracts was described as “pretentious” or “artificial”; one informant noticed “a strong desire to impress the listener with Pidgin skills”, while another wrote that, in his view, “the attempt at making a meaning resulted in oversimplification”. One informant observed the following: “The attempt to pidginize made this newscaster resort to much creativity. The end result is Pidgin that can hardly find any basis in reality.” Such comments seem to indicate that pidginization can be equally problematic as the use of Anglicisms if it is taken too far. The examples that some of the informants gave to support their judgements are also quite revealing in this regard. One informant wrote the following in the comments section of a questionnaire in which he evaluated a drama extract:

The Pidgin used in the extracts from the drama presentations seems to reflect standard usage more than that in the news broadcasts. The latter sound

somewhat artificial, especially with the unnecessary addition of *o* at the end of many statements.

The following observation was made in the discussion:

The man [newscaster] at a point was trying to explain *democracy*. Everybody knows that, even mechanics now. You understand that. So the idea of trying to — it makes it too simplistic.

7. Conclusion

It has become clear that news translations into NigP are a relatively problematic text type. Compromises between the inevitable English influence and the need to communicate in NigP are not always very felicitous. In some cases, words or whole phrases are taken over from English although a NigP equivalent would have been available. Sometimes, attempts to pidginize an Anglicism are only superficial. It has also been shown that the newscasters seem to overuse some typical NigP forms, and in some cases a translation is attempted where this may not be necessary. The way specific concepts are handled by the different newscasters is not always consistent. One can also observe vacillation between English and NigP forms within the same text. On the other hand, the basic translation techniques are available, and a number of English terms for which NigP does not have a ready equivalent are well rendered by the use of strategies such as compounding or circumlocution. The proverbs which some of the newscasters use regularly help to give the texts a NigP character.

The results of the general evaluation of corpus extracts that were reported in Section 6 also reflect the fact that the news texts are the most problematic text category among the three types of radio broadcasts included in the corpus. Some of the deficiencies of the news texts are certainly attributable to the production circumstances, i.e. the fact that these texts are translated from English rather than produced independently, like the other types of radio texts, and above all, the fact that they are sometimes translated orally and spontaneously. Interlanguage phenomena may occasionally play a role as well but this applies to all text categories in the corpus. The two main factors are probably that NigP has no equivalents for many of the essential lexical items in the news texts, and that the newscasters apparently feel constrained to use “standard” forms while the language lacks any kind of standardization. Seen in this light, the fact that the majority of the extracts from the corpus texts in the category

news were found to be at least fairly satisfactory or intelligible may even appear quite remarkable, but there is certainly room for improvement. For example, Simpson (1985:145) has suggested that the quality of Yoruba news broadcasts could be further improved if newscasters compiled glossaries of useful equivalent terms. NigP has a long way to go before it will reach the stage of development of a language like Yoruba, but recommendations for newscasters could be a useful first step.

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