

Linguistic Features of Pidgin in Stand-Up Comedy in Nigeria

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Received: August 7, 2018

Accepted: August 15, 2018

Online Published: August 23, 2018

doi:10.5430/wjel.v8n2p1

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v8n2p1>

Abstract

This study is aimed at looking at how comedians are able to create humour through the use of Pidgin in stand-up comedies. It has been observed Pidgin creates a kind of relaxed environment when it is being used in a social setting because of its informal and non-restrictive nature. This study was carried out by identifying and categorizing the features of Pidgin in selected Nigerian comedy shows, interpreting the contents expressed by the features, and by relating the contents to the humorous opinions as expressed in the comedy shows. The data (five Nigerian stand-up comedy videos where Pidgin was adopted) for this research were downloaded on YouTube channel on the Internet and analysed using Halliday's Systemic Functional linguistics (particularly the interpersonal metafunction). This was done to reveal how language reflects social relationship between the comedian and his audience and how this language expresses humour. The analysis revealed that pidgin is an informal language, and so its informality creates an equal social relationship in an informal setting which aids laughter. Comedians are able to express humour in Pidgin because it is a no man's native language, and as such, they could use it creatively to achieve their aim - humour. The unserious and informal nature of the language and its method of presentation make their stories humorous. In conclusion, this study offers sociolinguists and discourse analysts an insight into a field that has not been maximally explored.

Keywords: Pidgin, Language, Stand-Up Comedy, Humour, Systemic Functional linguistics

1. Background to the Study

Language can be described as a dynamic, social and interactive phenomenon - whether between the speaker and the listener, or writer and the reader (Crystal, 1987). According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, language is the system of communication in speech or writing that is used by people of a particular country or area. Furthermore, Ayoola (2007) and Jegede (2015a) opine that the creative nature of language lies in its ability to be used to exaggerate, to create imaginary stories, to tell a lie, to hypothesize and to express the imagination of their heart. Thus, language serves different functions. Language is used with an intention. It could be to inform, to request information or an action, and to command. It is this functionality of language that Systemic Functional grammar emphasizes (Jegede, 2015b).

However, Pidgin allows for more creativity because it is not a natural language, but rather a formed language that arises when two or more languages come into contact (Adetuyi, 2015). Comedians creatively use Pidgin to express joke as it is flexible and dynamic. The dynamic and functional features of language discussed above will be explored and discussed in this research work as it concerns the topic of research.

2. Statement of Research Problem

Various linguists and scholars have explored Pidgin in diverse contexts through their researches. For instance, while Agheyisi (1971) looks at the simplification and simplicity of Pidgin in all aspects of life, Wilkinson (1986) examines the use of Pidgin in Nigerian comedy plays. Both Romaine (1999) and Meyerhoff (2004) have also explored certain ideologies about Pidgin or Hawaii Creole (English) through surveys and questionnaires. Romaine (1999) conducted an informal survey on attitudes towards the use of Pidgin in education, and Meyerhoff (2004) examines attitudes to Pidgin use through respondents' evaluations of the terms *moke* and *tita* (*moke* and *tita* are social categories that prototypically denote Pidgin-speaking locals of Polynesian descent). Meyerhoff's study revealed that the negative attitude towards Pidgin in Hawai'i English do not have a linguistic base; they are socially constructed.

In the same vein, Inoue (2007) examines covert ideologies in Pidgin, paying special attention to the humour in its translation. Similarly, Akande (2008) examines the verbs in Nigerian pidgin in comparison with standard Nigerian English. Akande & Salami (2010) also investigates the use of Pidgin and the attitudes of Nigerian University students to it. Balogun (2012) carries out an empirical study on the perception, use and attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin in formal and informal settings, based on spontaneous speeches collected from formal and informal settings. These are few out of the many perspectives through which scholars have explored Pidgin.

While many studies have examined Pidgin from different perspectives, there is limited study in the area of humour, especially in comedy shows. In order to fill this gap, this study intends to examine Pidgin as a language that creates humour in comedy shows in Nigeria.

3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine Pidgin as a language of humour in selected Nigerian stand-up comedy shows. The objectives of the study are to:

- a) identify and categorize the features of Pidgin in selected Nigerian comedy shows,
- b) interpret the contents expressed by the features, and
- c) relate the contents to the humorous opinions as expressed in the comedy shows.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Pidgin

“A Pidgin language is generally understood to be a simplified language, but whose grammar is very different. Pidgins are formed when speakers of one language engage in trade with speakers of another, and neither knows the other’s language” (Le page 1977). This definition views Pidgin as a simplified language serving a commercial purpose-trading. In the same vein, Yule (2007:233) describes Pidgin as a “variety of a language (e.g. English) which developed for some practical purpose, such as trading, among groups of people who had a lot of contact, but who did not know each other’s languages”. Supporting this view is Akindele & Adegbite (2005) who sees Pidgin as a language that is formed when speakers of one language engage in trade with speakers of another.

There are considered to be between six and twelve million people still using Pidgin languages and between ten and seventeen million using descendants of Pidgin called creoles (Yule 2007). This shows that Pidgin is a language widely in use serving several functions such as commercial purpose, social purpose and the purpose of bringing people together in a multilingual society.

4.2 Features of Pidgin

Hymes (1971) observes that Pidgin has some unique features. These features are summed up thus:

- a) Uncomplicated clausal structure
- b) Reduction or elimination of syllable codas
- c) Reduction of consonant clusters or breaking them with epenthesis
- d) Basic vowels, such as [a,e, i, o, u]
- e) Absence of tones, such as those found in West African and Asian languages
- f) Use of separate words to indicate tense, usually preceding the verb
- g) Use of reduplication to represent plurals, superlatives, and other parts of speech that represent the concept being increased.
- h) A lack of morphemic variation

However, Akindele & Adegbite (2005) adds other features:

- a) No defined standard grammar or model
- b) Absence of noun-verb agreement endings
- c) Pronunciations tend towards a pattern of consonant followed by vowel clusters

Faniran, Adetuyi and Adeniran (2016) also present other features of Pidgin as:

- a) Simple structure in phonology, morphology and grammar which makes it easy to learn
- b) No tense markings and inflections

- c) No rigid sentence form
- d) Use of invariable pronouns
- e) Absence of inflectional and derivational morphemes
- f) Absence of articles

4.3 Pidgin as a Language of Humour and Comedy

Humour is the tendency of particular cognitive experiences to provoke laughter or provide amusement. The term derives from humoral medicine of the ancient Greeks, which taught that the balance of fluids in the human body, known as humours, controlled human health and emotion. People of all ages and cultures respond to humour. Most people are able to experience humour-i.e., to be amused, to smile or laugh at something funny- and thus are considered to have a sense of humour. The hypothetical person lacking a sense of humour would likely find the behavior induced by humour to be inexplicable, strange, or even irrational. Though ultimately decided by personal taste, the extent to which someone finds something humorous depends on a host of variables, including geographical location, culture, maturity, level of education, intelligence and context.

Humour is essentially amusing and generates laughter. The language of humour therefore has to be amusing, freely expressed with little or no formalities and capable of appealing to the audience's emotion in order to generate laughter (Faniran, Adetuyi and Adeniran, 2016). Longo (2010:124) describes humour as "a multi-functional communication strategy that can be used across diverse contexts. It can be employed to regulate and maintain the status quo; to interrogate received knowledge(s); to negotiate and establish counter-discourses; to resist or take power; to elucidate anomalies and inconsistencies in the taken-for- granted life world".

Wilkinson (1986) asserts that the Nigeria Pidgin is the language of realism and relaxation; the vehicle of expressing emotion, disorder and for discussing sex; and particularly, the language comedy and satire. She also observes that the comic effect of Pidgin is due to something a little more complex than the normal flattering of the ego that derives from watching the ridiculous antics of a being who is different from the self. Within the past or present experience of at least part of the public is the constant and often oppressive effort to speak correct English and to inhibit the urge to use either the mother tongue or Pidgin. The vicarious adoption of Pidgin made possible through the presence of Pidgin speaking characters on stage represents a considerable release of tension.

Inoue (2007:85) observed that "In Pidgin-English translation jokes, a Pidgin and an English text are juxtaposed. While the core meaning of the texts is kept roughly the same, the inter-textual gap is manipulated for comic effect". The study examines how the two voices are linguistically constructed in translation humor; and also investigates how the portrayals of Pidgin speakers and English speakers in translation humour are interpreted by people from Hawaii and by people from the mainland.

Inoue (2007) also observed, in the translations, that English makes use of euphemism to express some terms which pidgin expresses in a raw form, such as ass, butt, death, etc. The study demonstrates how translation humor can be explored as a fruitful site for the examination of language ideologies. In the light of this, Pidgin can be said to be a dysphemistic language and the rawness in its expression accounts for its ability to express jokes and humour better than the English language which is highly euphemistic.

5. Research Methodology

To carry out this research, videos of Nigerian comedy shows were downloaded from YouTube channels on the Internet. Five of these videos were randomly selected to cut across various comedians who make use of Pidgin in their shows or videos. The selected videos will be transcribed. Thereafter, the features of Pidgin will be identified and then discussed in line with opinions expressed through humour in the videos. The linguistic expressions used to generate humour and laughter in the Stand –up comedy will be analysed in line with M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics approach. This is because context and function plays a vital role in the linguistic choices employed by a speaker. A comedian chooses certain linguistic expressions which would suit the purpose of creating humour, thereby achieving the purpose of the Stand-up comedy- entertainment through laughter,

6. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research is the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL): an approach to linguistics that considers language as a system. It was developed by Michael Halliday. Halliday (1985) incorporates two central dimensions of language: system and function. Halliday (1985) notes that the term *systemic* refers to the view that language is "a network of systems or interrelated sets of options for making meaning". This foregrounds Saussure's paradigmatic axis which views language as choice. The term *functional* refers to Halliday's view that language is as it is

because of what it is set out to do (Eggins, 2004). In other words, SFL is the study of the relationship between language and its functions in social settings. Systemic Functional Linguistics treats grammar as a meaning-making resource and insists on the interrelation of form and meaning.

Chapelle (1998) observes that Systemic Functional Linguistics is a study of functions and semantics which is claimed to be the basis of human language and communicative activity, As opposed to structural approaches that focus primarily on syntax, SFL-oriented linguists begin with an exploration into social contexts and move on from there to look at how language acts upon, and is constrained or influenced by this social context. Halliday (2003) also describes grammar as systems and not as rules on the basis that every grammatical structure involves a choice from a describable set of options. Language is thus, a *meaning potential*. Halliday (1994) refers to his functions of language as metafunctions. He proposes three general functions: the *ideational*, the *interpersonal* and the *textual*. Each of the three metafunctions is about a different aspect of the world, and is concerned with a different mode of meaning of clauses.

A. Ideational Metafunction

The ideational metafunction is about the natural world in the broadest sense, including our own consciousness, and is concerned with clauses as *representations* (Eggins, 2004, Halliday, 1994). The ideational metafunction is the function for construing human experience. It is the means by which we make sense of "reality". Halliday (1994) divides the ideational function into two functions: the logical and the experiential metafunctions. The logical metafunction refers to the grammatical resources for building up grammatical units into complexes, for instance, for combining two or more clauses into a clause complex. The experiential function refers to the grammatical resources involved in construing the flux of experience through the unit of the clause. This study is focusing on the experiential function alone as presented by Eggins (2004).

B. Interpersonal Metafunction

The interpersonal metafunction is about the social world, especially the relationship between speaker and hearer, and is concerned with clauses as *exchanges* (Eggins, 2004, Halliday, 1994). The speaker/writer persona concerns the stance, personalization and standing of the speaker or writer. This involves looking at whether the writer or speaker has a neutral attitude, which can be seen through the use of positive or negative language. Social distance means how close the speakers are, e.g. how the use of nicknames shows the degree to which they are intimate. Relative social status asks whether they are equal in terms of power and knowledge on a subject, for example, the relationship between a mother and child would be considered unequal. Focuses here are on speech acts (e.g. whether one person tends to ask questions and the other speaker tends to answer), who chooses the topic, turn management, and how capable both speakers are, of evaluating the subject.

C. Textual Metafunction

The textual metafunction relates to *mode*; the internal organisation and communicative nature of a text (Eggins, 2004, Halliday, 1994). This comprises textual interactivity, spontaneity and communicative distance. Textual interactivity is examined with reference to disfluencies such as hesitations, pauses and repetitions. Spontaneity is determined through a focus on lexical density, grammatical complexity, coordination (how clauses are linked together) and the use of nominal groups. The study of communicative distance involves looking at a text's cohesion—that is, how it hangs together, as well as any abstract language it uses.

Cohesion is analysed in the context of lexical and grammatical as well as intonational aspects with reference to lexical chains and, in the speech register, tonality, tonicity, and tone. The lexical aspect focuses on sense relations and lexical repetitions, while the grammatical aspect looks at repetition of meaning shown through reference, substitution and ellipsis, as well as the role of linking adverbials.

7. Data Analysis and Findings

7.1 Linguistic Features of Pidgin in the Data

The features identified in the data are discussed below:

A. Inflections and Grammatical Words

Inflections are morphemes (such as -s, -es, -ed, -ing) which when added to a word, changes the grammatical function of that word. Grammatical words, on the other hand, refer to words such as articles, prepositions, etc. Usually when people do not use or wrongly use inflections and grammatical words in their speech, it shows that such person is not proficient enough in that language. In a society like Nigeria, grammatical errors often make people laugh, to ridicule the speaker. However, comedians, deliberately omit both inflections and grammatical words in order to make people laugh at their jokes.

Extract 1

I go market, **buy** blackberry, **buy** torchlight... (Data 1)

Extract 2

And she **say** blackberry torch . (Data 1)

Extract 3

If somebody **call** your girlfriend for your front (Data 2)

Extract 4

The guy **look** me, he **say** what! (Data 4)

Extract 5

I **begin** watch British movies, oh my God... (Data 4)

Extract 6

When pastor **see** the new carton (Data 5)

Extract 7

Monday morning, my pastor **wake** me, hello (Data 5)

Extract 8

The first problem I **notice** (Data 5)

Extract 9

Two months later, "Bovi, I want blackberry torch"

Extract 10

I just buy curve, give am, gladly

Extract 11

I say no dey shout for me, mek we go market,

Extract 12

You can imagine that kind situation (Data 5)

In the extracts from the data provided above, all the verbs in the sentences are in their bare form without inflections. For example, in extract 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8, the comedian is talking about the past, and as such, should use the past tense form of the verbs. Also, in extracts 3 and 4, the plural form of the verbs, which is in the bare form, is used with a singular noun which does not agree with each other. Again, in extracts 5, there is the omission of the preposition, 'to'; and in extracts 9, 10 and 11, articles such as 'a' to qualify the *blackberry phone*, 'the' to identify a particular *curve* model being referred to and 'the' which should accompany the noun 'market' are also omitted. There is also the omission of the preposition 'of' in extract 12. All these omissions occur because of the informal nature of the language and the informal occasion for which it is being used.

Furthermore, in stand-up comedy, the focus is not on the correctness of the grammar. Infact, the audience does not expect that the language of the comedian be perfect, but rather, the focus is on how they can make them laugh through their language. The incorrect grammar also creates an informal atmosphere where humour seems to thrive better. Parts of the audience who only understand little English would not also fall out of place as they can still relate better with simpler forms of words.

B. Borrowings

Nigerian Pidgin derives its vocabulary by borrowing from the English language and the indigenous languages. Comedians borrow words from the indigenous language to create an informal environment by making the language less formal. Some words also sound funnier when expressed in the audience's mother tongue.

Extract 13

As soon as you see Mr. Ibu, you have seen the **mumu** of the family (Data 3)

Extract 14

I say I'm ready, **eh** (Data 4)

Extract 15

"I'm okay **joo**" (Data 2)

Extract 16

They say **baba**, YAMAHAM na the new product of YAMAHA

For instance, the Yoruba word 'mumu' in extract 13 sounds funnier than its English interpretation (a fool), 'eh' in extract 14 is a funny exclamation as used in the comedy which cannot be expressed verbally in the English language. Also, 'joo' (extract 15) is another borrowed word from Yoruba which shows the mood of the speaker which means *please*. It shows that the speaker is not straight forward in her answer. It therefore, serves the function of giving additional information to the audience. 'Baba' (extract 17), a Yoruba word which means father is used here as a slang common to young males to refer to fellow males. The choice of this word reflects the kind of individual being portrayed probably as a tout.

C. Conversion

Conversion refers to a word formation process whereby the grammatical function of a word is changed to another grammatical function.

Extract 17

So, everybody don on gen (Data 5)

Extract 18

Don't worry, we will **off** it" (Data 5)

In extracts 17 and 18, 'on' and 'off', which are completives of the verb 'switch' are used main verb. This is another form of simplified language which is common with Pidgin. It also makes the sentence, short, brief and direct which is common to the language of humour.

D. Collocation Clash

In sentence formation, certain word can be combined with some particular set of words to form a meaningful sentence. An exception to this norm is called collocation clash i.e. usage of a word with another word which, in a normal sense, should not co-occur. For example, the verb 'come' selects an animate object, but it is used with an inanimate object 'model' as though it is capable of moving from one place to the other in extract 19. Also, the word '**shift**' is used for inanimate object, but it is used to refer to a human being (the comedian) in extract 20.

Extract 19

Different **modeldeycome** out. (Data 1)

Extract 20

Shift closer (referring to a human being) (Data 4)

Extract 21

My brain never still click say this one na the uncle of that one. (Data 1)

Similarly, in extract 21, the comedian refers to the new model of the blackberry phone as the 'uncle' of the former one. This leaves one with the question of how can a phone be an uncle. But, in this case, it is been used to refer to the phone as a superior one as an uncle is always an elderly or a superior person. The use of 'uncle' to make this comparison is therefore humorous. This is because collocation clash, when viewed on the surface seems like an absurdity and absurdity is a phenomenon that generates humour; people need to hear what is new in order to laugh.

E. Clipping and Blending

Clipping is a word formation process whereby a word is reduced to a short form. Examples of clipped words in the data are 'holi' (extract 22) and 'gen' (extract 23), highlighted overleaf. 'Holi' is the short form of holiday; 'gen' is the short form of generator. These two clipped words are less formal and therefore fit into the context in which it is used, making it sound humorous. Similarly, 'cause' is clipped from the word 'because'. It reflects an informal setting and

use.

Extract 22

He said I know now, commot for where she deymek I tell you wetindey happen

Extract 23

Guy now how far, how **holi**? (Data 4)

Extract 24

We get **gen**weydey charge small gen, all kinds of **gen**. (Data 5)

Extract 25

My guy, you no fit catch am **cause** when she picks up that call

Blending on the other hand is another word-formation process which involves two words; parts of the two words come together to form a blend. 'Commot' (extract 24) is a blend of 'come' and 'out'. Clipping and blending help to shorten words to make it more direct and briefer which is common to the language of humour. The use of clipping and blending in humour can also be related to the nature of the Nigerian society, where almost every word is shortened, especially in informal environment. Full forms of words, therefore, become boring in an informal environment.

F. Code switching

Code switching is a language contact phenomena and Pidgin arises from language contact. Code switching is the use of two or more different languages in a discourse, for example, the use of Yoruba word together with English in an expression. Code switching is common in a Pidgin dominated discourse. Comedians code switch a lot because of the need to switch between characters which they imitate. Code switching occurs more frequently in the data because of the need for the comedian to imitate a character in his story. This is demonstrated in the extracts highlighted below.

Extract 26

I go market, buy blackberry, buy torchlight, come present the two, give am

"What's wrong with you? I said blackberry torch; the latest blackberry"

I say no dey shout for me, mek we go market,

"Is it not blackberry?" my brain never still click say this one na the uncle of that one (Data 1)

Extract 27

If somebody call your girlfriend for your front, you tell am say *baby put it on speaker, I wanna hear*. My guy, you no fit catch am 'cause when she picks up that call, there are lines she go just use ear what you and this your friend are always talking about, I wanna hear it (Data 2)

Extract 28

As soon as you see ChiomaChukwuka, you have seen the Virgin Mary of the movie.

As soon as you see Aki and Pawapw, you don see the two rats weydey disturb the full community. (Data 3)

Extract 29

Naijana the only country wey go change your destiny on your behalf

When, when I was growing up

"I want to be a pilot"

With time you go dey reduce your dream

"Well I can manage conductor" (Data 4)

Extract 30

E get where light go dey for your area, dey go dey disturb

So, everybody in my country has a gen, some get two, three, four, five

We get gen weydey charge small gen, all kinds of gen

Gen for visitors, gen for weekends, gen for night, gen for afternoon, gen for children, gen for flat screen, gen for small TV, gen for black and white and radio, all kinds of gen,

You can imagine that kind situation (Data 5)

For instance, in extract 26, the comedian who has been speaking in Pidgin suddenly switches to English language to indicate the sophistication in a lady's expression, and switches back to Pidgin again which is the language of the discourse. Similarly, in extract 27, the comedian switches to the English to report the speech of a lady. The idea behind this sophisticated presentation of ladies, perhaps, is to support the perception of many ladies as pretender, especially when they relate with males. This appears to be a satire, and therefore creates humour.

However, in extracts 28, 29 and 30, each comedian switches between the English language and Pidgin to reflect their flexibility and freedom of expression which is common in an informal or social setting.

G. Exaggeration

Exaggeration in comedy is borne out of the need to create humour. People exaggerate to emphasize and to impress, so do comedians who exaggerate both in their words and actions while on stage. It is a creative method of getting the audience to laugh. What comedians do is to first create a common image of day to day life in the minds of the audience, and then exaggerates the image which then becomes funny and ridiculous to the audience.

Extract 31

Only my shadow dey there deywakadey find me since. (Data 1)

Extract 32

Naijana the only country wey go change your destiny on your behalf. (Data 4)

Extract 33

British people, dem like death. In short, they love to die. (Data 4)

Extract 34

Dey reject my life (Data 4)

Extract 35

They rejected me so much; there was no space on my passport to put the reject. (Data 4)

Extract 36

As I reach there, the reject, na my forehead dem put am "Stay house". (Data 4)

Extract 37

The Lord will replace this gen with a transformer. (Data 5)

For instance, in extract 31, one would imagine if a shadow can walk (waka) not to talk of looking (find) a person. The exaggeration of the Nigerian situation as the kind that is capable of changing one's destiny in extract 32 also creates a funny image. In extract 33, the comedian asserts that Britons love to die, whereas, the general belief is that no one loves to die. This assertion then sounds like an absurd.

Similarly, in extracts 34, 35 and 36, the comedians try to emphasize his rejection by the British embassy through exaggeration. Also, in extract 37, the replacement of a generator with a transformer for an individual is quite outrageous. These outrageous, absurdity, ridiculous and funny scenes and images created are what make people laugh.

H. Repetition

Repetition is a feature close to reduplication; it is commonly used in Pidgin. It serves the purpose of emphasis. Repetition enhances humour in the sense that when a joke is repeated, it allows the audience that are lost in laughter and uproar to catch up with the discussion, thus helping the flow of communication.

Extract 38

Now, know one thing, girls, they have codes. They have codes amongst themselves. (Data 2)

Extract 39

“Move, move, move, commot for where she dey. (Data 2)

Extract 40

You’ll know, you’ll always know. (Data 3)

Extract 41

As in, naija accident scenes, accident scenes (Data 3)

Extract 42

You see Jim Iyke, only Jim Iyke, one lonely road in VGC (Data 3)

Extract 43

I see some white white people here. (Data 4)

Extract 44

Oh boy, see rehearsal, if you see rehearsal (Data 4)

Extract 45

Gen for visitors, **gen** for weekends, **gen** for night, **gen** for afternoon, **gen** for children, **gen** for flat screen, **gen** for small TV, **gen** for black and white and radio, all kinds of **gen**. (Data 5)

Extract 46

‘You don’t mess with me, you don’t mess with me, don’t mess with me, don’t mess with me’ (Data 3)

For instance: extract 38, the comedian repeats the clause, ‘they have codes’ to emphasize the degree at which ladies communicate using some expressions that is mutually intelligible amongst them; in extract 39, the repetition of the imperative ‘move’ shows the immediacy with which the speaker wants the action to be carried out. In extract 40, 41 and 42, the repeated words are used to give prominence to the topic of discussion which is the lack of creativity in most Nigerian movies. The clause: ‘you don’t mess with me’ in extract 46 is repeatedly used to emphasize on the piece of information being passed. Also, in extract 43, the word ‘white’ is repeated to depict that the speaker is talking about the white and strictly the white just as some people use the adjective ‘small’ as in *small small people* to classify the people being referred to as little or inferior. The repetition of ‘white’ however is a form of pluralization, indicating different set of white people.

Again, the repetition of ‘see rehearsal’ is to give the audience a picture of the kind of practice or personal training the comedian went through in order to speak British English. This creates a funny image of how Nigerians strive to master the British pronunciation. In extract 45, the repetition of ‘gen’ which means generator emphasizes the topic of discussion in data 5, which is the epileptic power supply in Nigeria which necessitates the use of generator. The comedian is also trying to show that the generating set is a common item in every household, office or any setting.

I. Sound Imitation

Generally, in stand-up comedy, what comedians do is to tell a story which could be real or imaginative. In the course of telling the story, the comedians often imitate the characters which they have created in the story and also imitate some sounds of actions involved in the story. Sound imitation is a technique used by comedians to make their story seem real and also create humour. This is because, usually, when people imitate or mimic, it makes people laugh.

Extract 47

Them just bring am come gbraa, say four hundred and fifty thousand. (Data 1)

Extract 48

When I vanish, she no know. I just pium. (Data 1)

Extract 49

So, everybody don on gen, na my head gbruuuuuu, gbruuuuuu. (Data 5)

Extract 50

The first problem I notice, the sound change from gbruuururu to tche-tche-tche. (Data 5)

‘Gbraa’ as used in extract 47 is used to represent the sudden action of bringing the phone. The ‘gbraa’ sound

indicates a sound that could frighten or take someone aback. This indicates that the comedian was taking aback by the price of the phone which his girlfriend wants him to buy for her. 'pium' (a sound closed to the sound of a fast moving car) in extract 48 indicates the speed with which the comedian left the market. Also, the sound "gbruuuuuu" is used to represent the sound a generator makes when it is in a good working condition, while 'tchetchetche' denotes the deteriorating condition of the generator.

Again, most of the sounds have plosive sounds as their initial sound. For instance, the [gb] sound in 'gbraa' and 'gbruuuuuu' is a voiced plosive which reflects the explosion with which the action takes place and the explosion associated with a generator. On the other hand, the initial 'p' sound in 'pium' is a voiceless bilabial plosive which emphasizes the forceful speed through which the comedian escapes. Again, the periodical break in the sound indicated by a dash (-) shows the state of instability of the generator as opposed to the smooth-running state indicated by the repetition of the /u/ sound in 'gbruuuuuu', which means that the generator is in a good working state.

8. Research Findings

Having analyzed some Nigeria stand-up comedies, this research work found out that the Pidgin creates an equal social relationship because it is an informal language, and thus, it is very good at generating laughter. It is also discovered that comedians are able to creatively use language to express humour because it is no man's native language and thus, allows for creativity as the art of comedy is also a creative act. Finally, the Pidgin language is not a rigid one, but a flexible one, which makes it suitable for the art of comedy as it is flexible itself.

9. Summary and Conclusion

So far, much has been said about the Pidgin and how it is used to create humour in stand-up comedies. Certain linguistic features such as blending, clipping, sound imitation, exaggeration, code-switching, borrowings, conversion, collocation clash, simple lexical choices, and ellipsis have been examined and discussed in relation to how they are used to create humour.

The use of Pidgin in stand-up comedy shows can also be described as a round peg in a round hole as it is an informal language used for an informal occasion, which makes it fit for such purpose. The Nigerian Pidgin also expresses general phenomenon common to the Nigerian society in its original state, because it allows borrowings from the indigenous language.

The interpersonal function of language was also illustrated through the comedians' creation and maintenance of an informal relationship with the audience. This was exemplified through the use of social deixis which shows the relationship that exists between the comedians and the audience.

Some of the features such as clipping, collocation clash, wrong use of prepositions which leads to conversion, code switching, found in the language of stand-up comedy are features of the Nigerian English. We can therefore conclude that Nigerian Pidgin and the Nigerian English share a lot of characteristics as they also share the same context. Nigerian Pidgin, no doubt, also performs the function of a lingua franca and eases out stress through the expression of humour because of its less-formal nature.

Pidgin, being "a no man's language" is seen as a creative tool, especially by comedians who creatively and judiciously use it to achieve a purpose which is humour. This is because unlike many other languages, Pidgin has little or no rules; it is a language born out of creativity itself.

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