

## Abstract

This study examines plural marking in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in light of language change. The plural marking strategies used in NP are the morphological plural -s, postnominal *dem*, zero marking and *reduplication* of adjectives/nouns, double marking, numerals and quantifiers as analyzed in previous studies (Tagliamonte et al 1997, Ogunmodimu 2014). The idea for the language change analysis is that older studies show that *dem* and null marking are the most common plural marking strategies in NP (Faraclas 1989, Mafeni 1971, Agheyisi 1971), while a more recent study (Tagliamonte et al. 1997) shows that the plural marker -s is dominant in the language, while *dem* is disappearing. My study arose from the question of the disappearance of *dem* as a plural marker in NP as obtained from previous research. I believe one explanation for this disappearance could be that there is a change in the language as it relates to the use of plural markers. While the previous study examined some linguistic and social factors that may influence the use of these markers (e.g. -s being sensitive to animacy and nominal reference, possible dominant language influence and degree of exposure to English language (Tagliamonte et al. 1997) it did not consider the variable- *plural marking* as a function of language change. In this study, I investigate *age*, *gender* and *dominant language* as factors that may influence the choice of plural markers used by NP speakers in Winnipeg, Manitoba. To better test for the notion of change in progress, the data of the study is collected through sociolinguistic interviews conducted in NP, with 20 participants divided into two generations (older (all Yoruba speakers as well) and younger) and gender (male and female) evenly distributed. All the speakers are immigrants in Winnipeg, Canada who have spent most of their lives in Nigeria to be able to acquire NP. The results of my study suggest a possible change in progress occurring in plural marking from the older use of zero marking to newer -s marking, as -s is still the dominant plural used in this study, or as a result of greater exposure to standard English. Gender, dominant language and the interaction of age and gender are found to be significant factors in the choice of plural used by the speakers. The result that dominant language is significant supports the hypotheses of previous literature (Tagliamonte et al 1997).

## References

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