"*Abeg na*! we write so our comments can be posted!"

Borrowed Nigerian Pidgin pragmatic markers in Nigerian English

Foluke Olayinka Unuabonah[1], Folajimi Oyebola[2] and Ulrike Gut[2]
[1] Redeemer's University | [2] University of Münster

This paper examines three borrowed pragmatic markers from Nigerian Pidgin into Nigerian English, *abeg, sef* and *na*, with a view to exploring their meanings, frequencies, spelling adaptability, syntactic positions, collocational patterns and discourse-pragmatic functions in Nigerian English. The data which were extracted from the International Corpus of English-Nigeria and the Nigerian component of the corpus of Global Web-based English were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, using the theory of pragmatic borrowing. The results indicate that the three pragmatic markers differ distinctly in their frequency across text types, syntactic position, the range of pragmatic meanings, the number of spelling variants and their collocations: *abeg* is used as a mitigation marker which can also function as an emphasis marker, *sef* is an emphasis marker but has additive and dismissive functions, while *na* is used purely as an emphasis pragmatic marker. The study shows the influence of Nigerian Pidgin on Nigerian English.

Keywords: corpus pragmatics, global web-based English, international corpus of English, postcolonial pragmatics, pragmatic borrowing, Nigerian English, Nigerian Pidgin

1. Introduction

One systematic difference between native and English as a Second Language (ESL) speakers appears to be their use of discourse-pragmatic items. Various corpus-based studies have shown that ESL speakers make use of a reduced lexical range in different areas: de Klerk (2005), for instance, found that Xhosa speakers of English use fewer different intensifiers compared to native English speakers

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