Syntactic Analysis of Nigerian Pidgin Used in BBC News Coverage of the February 25th, 2023 Presidential Election

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Abstract

Pidgin English is used by different ethnic regions in the world to perform different communicative roles. The world is in the age of Pidgin, such that notable personalities like Emmanuel Macron, the President of France, and the British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Paul Arkwright, and Bill Gates, an American philanthropist, have used it at some point in their interviews with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The BBC, among other functions, uses Pidgin to spread information to expand its reach not only to the old but also to the young, educated or otherwise. It is a language that is spoken all over the world, with its many varieties, yet understood by many. This study investigates the type of sentences used in the Pidgin used by the BBC to report the February 25, 2023, Presidential election in Nigeria in terms of their unique features and syntactic structures. This study is significant in several ways. It contributes to the understanding of Nigerian Pidgin syntax in media discourse, shedding light on its linguistic features and structures. The study highlights the increasing recognition and acceptance of Nigerian Pidgin in formal contexts, such as news reporting by prominent media organizations like the BBC. By examining the syntactic patterns and code-switching practices, the research contributes to the broader understanding of language dynamics and sociolinguistic aspects in Nigeria. Overall, the findings have implications for language policy, emphasizing the potential of Nigerian Pidgin as a national language that promotes inclusivity and unity among Nigerians. Quirk et al.'s (1985) concept of syntactic analysis is adopted to describe the types of sentences used. The study concludes that BBC Pidgin has clause structures similar to Standard English with minor differences. In addition, BBC Pidgin has unique syntactic features that differ from those of Standard English. The study further reveals that BBC Pidgin has the same simple and multiple sentences as Standard English.

Keywords: Nigerian Pidgin, Syntactic structure, BBC News, Presidential Election

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1. Introduction

Nigerian Pidgin is a Creole language that emerged from the interactions between the indigenous languages of Nigeria and the English language during the colonial period. It is widely spoken in Nigeria, particularly in urban areas, and has gained recognition as a national language. Nigerian Pidgin has its own unique syntax, which differs from that of Standard English.

It has become so pervasive that the original belief that it is an on-the-spot language created between people with no common language is gradually fading. Trask and Stockwell (2007) assert that Pidgin is a language developed by people with no common language. Although it is hardly spoken as a first language, it is increasing as a means of communication in virtually all spheres of life. In education, businesses, social services, politics, religious gatherings, etc., Pidgin is adopted in addition to English to perform different communicative roles.

Its importance in the 21st century cannot be ignored because it has become a language that the old and young find exciting and use, thus spreading and growing. Pidgin has been assumed to be limited in function and, therefore, does not last very long. Nigerian Pidgin is reported to be gaining global recognition daily basis. It is noted as one of the most widely spoken languages across West Africa, even though it is not officially recognized.

Its development and pervasiveness have brought about its continuous use. Many African countries with several ethnic groups adopt it as a lingua franca when the need arises. According to BBC News, it is widely spoken in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, and Cameroon. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is a leading news media organization that provides coverage of events around the world, including in Nigeria. In its coverage of the February 25th presidential election in Nigeria, the BBC used Nigerian Pidgin alongside Standard English to provide a wider audience with a better understanding of the events.

The use of Nigerian Pidgin in the news media, particularly by the BBC, has generated interest in the language's syntax and how it compares to that of Standard English. Given its use by the BBC, there is a need to investigate the types of sentences used in the news reportage. This paper thus seeks to contribute to the understanding of Nigerian Pidgin syntax by exploring its use in BBC News coverage of the February 25th presidential election and comparing it with Standard English syntax.

Despite the growing recognition and use of Nigerian Pidgin in media discourse, there is a lack of comprehensive research on the syntax of Nigerian Pidgin as utilized by BBC News in reporting specific events, such as the February 25th presidential election. While previous studies have explored the syntax of Nigerian Pidgin in general, there is a need to investigate the specific syntactic structures employed by BBC News in reporting this significant political event. Understanding the types of sentences used and their syntactic structures will provide valuable insights into the linguistic features employed by BBC News in their coverage of the election in Nigerian Pidgin. By addressing this research gap, the study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge of the syntax of Nigerian Pidgin in media discourse and shed light on the specific syntactic patterns and features used by BBC News in their reporting of important political events.

The paper draws on Quirk et al.'s (1985) concept of syntactic analysis to examine the sentence structures, word order, and grammatical features of Nigerian Pidgin used in news coverage. The study will involve a qualitative analysis of selected news reports to identify the vital syntactic features of Nigerian Pidgin and compare them with those of Standard English. The study will also highlight the similarities and differences between the two syntactic systems, emphasizing the unique features that make Nigerian Pidgin a distinct language. This study holds significant value as it explores the syntactic analysis of Nigerian Pidgin as used in BBC News coverage of the February 25th, 2023 presidential election. By examining the linguistic features and structures of Nigerian Pidgin in the context of media discourse, the research enhances our understanding of this language variety. Moreover, it sheds light on the growing recognition and acceptance of Nigerian Pidgin in formal settings like news reporting by reputable media organizations such as the BBC. Through the analysis of syntactic patterns and codeswitching practices, the study contributes to our broader knowledge of language dynamics and sociolinguistic phenomena in Nigeria. Ultimately, the findings carry implications for language policy and emphasize the potential of Nigerian Pidgin as a national language that fosters inclusivity and unity among Nigerians. These objectives emerge from the study's significance and aim to address specific areas of investigation.

   i. To identify the unique syntactic features of Nigerian BBC Pidgin News coverage of the February 25th presidential election.
  ii. To identify the types of sentences used in BBC News captions for reportage.

Research Questions
1. What are the unique syntactic features of Nigerian BBC Pidgin News coverage of the February 25th presidential election?
2. What types of sentences are used in BBC News captions for reportage?

2. Literature Review

Language is a multifaceted and varied means of communication, encompassing a wide range of mutually comprehensible variations. It is a storehouse of a community's cultural and historical heritage, with distinct regional, professional, and social interpretations. Pidgin has been variously defined by different scholars. For instance, Ojoo (2022) defines it as a language that lacks native speakers and does not belong to any specific group but rather functions as a contact language. It emerges in multilingual contexts where individuals need to communicate and therefore create a simplified language system to facilitate understanding. Often, this arises in situations where there is an unequal power dynamic among languages, with speakers of one language exerting economic or social dominance over speakers of another language. However, Bob and Obiukwu (2022) view Pidgins as minimal and makeshift languages which are the results of language contact, developed for the purpose of communication, particularly in multilingual

societies. Being spoken in many countries of the world, it is recognized as a contingency language in the absence of a central communicative code. (pp.173)

According to Yule (2007), a Pidgin is a language variety that emerges when individuals who do not share a common linguistic background come into regular contact, often for the purpose to conduct business transactions. In such situations, a simplified form of communication, combining elements from different languages, develops as a means of facilitating basic understanding and communication among the diverse group of speakers. This definition of a Pidgin aligns with the commonly accepted understanding of the term. However, Hudson's (2001) perspective on pidgin languages emphasizes their role as communication tools for groups of people who lack a common language. In this view, pidgin languages serve as a means of communication among individuals with no mutually intelligible language for interaction. The members of these communities acquire and use pidgin languages as the primary medium of communication within their specific social and linguistic context. Pidgin languages, in this sense, are seen as a practical solution for overcoming language barriers and facilitating communication among diverse groups.

Nonetheless, Nigerian Pidgin has evolved into a primary language for certain minority groups in Nigeria, as observed by Igboanusi (2008). Unlike English, which is formally taught and adheres to standardized orthography, Nigerian Pidgin is informally acquired and lacks a standardized writing system. Agbo and Plag (2020) claim that Nigerian Pidgin is not officially recognized but is another widely used lingua franca. Nigerian Pidgin is an English-based contact language that emerged due to European contact with West African languages. Despite not being officially recognized and historically associated with individuals without formal education, Nigerian Pidgin has gained significance over time. Agantiem and Alagbe (2023) corroborate that Nigerian Pidgin English, which initially developed for trade purposes during the first British-Nigerian contacts in the fifteenth century, has expanded its usage beyond trade and is now prevalent in various domains such as homes, neighborhoods, churches, music, media, and schools. Research indicates that Nigerian Pidgin now boasts the highest number of users and is even considered a first language among certain minority groups in Nigeria (Faraclas, 2008; Jibril, 1995; Igboanusi, 2008). Notably, Nigerian Pidgin has also become prevalent in tertiary institutions nationwide. Given the languages' coexistence, prolonged contact, and respective statuses, it is expected that they influence and undergo changes due to contact-induced effects (Sankoff, 2004; Thomason, 2001). Elugbe (1995) notes that the written form of Nigerian Pidgin also demonstrates adherence to a structure that closely resembles SNE.

The views expressed by linguists and language scholars regarding Pidgin English vary, reflecting the ongoing debates and diverse perspectives in the field. Some linguists, such as Hymes (1971) and Labov (1990), have criticized Pidgin English, considering it a language with deviant forms and limited complexity. They argue that Pidgins arise to fulfill restricted communication needs among people who lack a common language. Ndimele (2011) notes that the perception of pidgin languages is often nuanced, with some considering them degraded or corrupted versions of standard languages. Historically, educated Nigerians, in particular, have regarded Nigerian Pidgin as inferior to Standard English, discouraging its use among their

children, as highlighted by Elugbe and Omamor (1991). Deuber (2006) examines the variation in spoken Nigerian Pidgin among educated speakers and concludes there is no evidence of a dialect continuum between Nigerian Pidgin and English. It was historically associated with low prestige in Nigeria and was primarily used by individuals with limited education. Nigerian Pidgin has often been negatively stigmatized as a "bad" form of English (Igboanusi, 2001). Nonetheless, Ojoo (2022) emphasizes caution on the use of Pidgin as it may harm proficiency in Standard English. Ojoo examines the nature of Pidgin expressions by both male and female users, taking into account sociolinguistic perspectives on language choices in multilingual settings and the influence of gender on language use. One of the key recommendations is to limit the use of Nigerian Pidgin on campus to achieve language standards.

On the other hand, scholars like Bickerton (2010) argue that Pidgin English can be considered a language with unique characteristics, such as easy word order and syntax. They suggest that its construction may be unstructured or influenced by unintelligible languages. Moreover, Nigerian Pidgin possesses unique grammar rules that distinguish it from Standard English, underscoring its distinct nature as a separate language with its own set of rules and structures. Adebayo (2022) affirms that although Nigerian Pidgin shares syntactic similarities with Standard Nigerian English (SNE), it has its distinct characteristics. These include the absence of inflection for tense, the use of appropriate synonyms for verbs, adjectives, and complements, the presence of serial verbs, nominalization, verbalization, and more. Egbokhare (2001) asserts that the ability to communicate in Nigerian Pidgin effectively is becoming increasingly indispensable in Nigeria.

However, Trask and Stockwell (2007) present a contrasting view, claiming that Pidgin is not a natural language and lacks ornate grammar. They emphasize its functional role in fulfilling simple communication objectives and argue that Pidgin is a language developed by people with no common language. It is observed that although it is hardly spoken as a first language, it is increasing as a means of communication in virtually all spheres of life. In education, businesses, social services, politics, religious gatherings, etc., Pidgin is adopted in addition to English to perform different communicative roles. The study conducted by Adebayo (2022) suggests that Nigerian Pidgin English is leaning towards the Creole continuum. It is likely due to the increasing use of Nigerian Pidgin by educated individuals in various language domains. The research reveals a significant transfer or importation of English vocabulary into the variety of Pidgin being used. The analysis of sentences indicates that Nigerian Pidgin has seven dominant structure types, with the SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) structure being the most commonly used. It suggests that Nigerian Pidgin is becoming more similar to English in its spoken form.

In Nigeria, Nigerian Pidgin is widely spoken, and its usage extends beyond specific contexts of trading activities. Nigerian Pidgin has many speakers in Nigeria, with millions of native speakers and even more Second Language (L2) users (Faraclas, 1996; Egbokhare, 2001). It is widely spoken as a lingua franca across varied geographical settings, gender, age, educational attainment, and socioeconomic positions (Aziza, 2015). It is expressed in cities, urban centers, campuses of tertiary institutions, and various communities, including slums and stranger communities (Osoba, 2015). Nigerian Pidgin has several regional and social varieties,

with the common array found in the Niger Delta region, particularly among the natives of Warri, Port-Harcourt, Ijaw, Benin, and Sapele (Egbokhare, 2001; Faraclas, 1996; Idegbekwe, 2020; Osoba, 2015).

Adegbija (2001) classifies Nigerian Pidgin as an indo-exogenous language because it serves as a link between English and several indigenous languages in Nigeria. While its vocabulary is primarily influenced by English, its function and structure are similar to those of indigenous languages. The existence of different varieties of Nigerian Pidgin, such as Warri, Sapele, Ajegunle, and Port Harcourt, indicates the linguistic diversity and regional variations within the language (Jowitt, 1991; Marchese & Schnukal, 1982; Mensah, 2012). Muhlhausler (1981) suggests that Nigerian Pidgin can serve as a lingua franca due to its simplicity, and in certain areas and communities, it can even be considered a mother tongue. Aziza's (2015) research highlights the syntactic features of modern Nigerian English used by young people in Warri and the Niger Delta region, suggesting a creolization process taking place.

Overall, the views presented by different scholars reflect the complexity and varied perspectives on Pidgin English, particularly Nigerian Pidgin, its usage, linguistic features, and sociolinguistic significance in Nigeria. Despite the existing studies on Nigerian Pidgin syntax, there is still a gap in the literature on the syntax of Nigerian Pidgin as used in the news media, particularly by the BBC. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the syntax of Nigerian Pidgin used in BBC News coverage of the February 25th presidential election and comparing it with Standard English syntax. This study will contribute to the existing literature by providing insights into the syntactic structures of Nigerian Pidgin used in news media and how they differ from or are similar to Standard English syntax. Furthermore, this study will help shed light on the linguistic features of Nigerian Pidgin as used in formal contexts, such as the news media, which has implications for language policy and planning in Nigeria.

3. Methodology

The study is qualitative. The study collected data via the BBC page on Facebook. Captions from the Presidential election of February 25th, 2023, were randomly picked for the analysis of the types of sentences used in the news reportage. Twenty-one (21) captions were analyzed for different types of sentences. Descriptive statistics were used for the analysis. From observation, BBC Pidgin does not use phrases for their captions, hence the investigation of the types of sentences present. The data analyzed can give a clue to the kind of structures in BBC Pidgin. It will reveal the nearness or otherwise of the BBC Pidgin syntax to that of Standard English.

Conceptual Framework

The study utilizes Quirk et al.'s (1985) syntactic analysis concept, which emphasizes the importance of the form and function distinction in the clause structure of a sentence. Quirk et al. (1985) emphasize that a simple sentence is the most fundamental aspect of grammar, and it expresses a single main idea or independent thought. An example is provided in Table One. Multiple sentences are classified as complex and compound sentences. They comprise more than one clause. Quirk's structure of compound sentences is demonstrated in Figure One below. The grammatical categorization can be recognized through constituent elements of the clause

structure, including the fixed positions of the subject; verb, and object in English, according to Quirk et al. (1985).

Table 1. *Clause types for simple sentences; according to Quirk et al. 1985*

	S(ubject)	V(erb)	O(bjects)	C(omplement)	A(dverbial)
Type SV	Lizzy	is singing.			
Type SVO	The man	stole	a goat.		
Type SVC	The baby	is		cute.	
Type SVA	The girl	has been			outside the house.
Type SVOO	John	gave	his teacher a bunch of bananas.		
Type SVOC	A lot of people	considered	the man	wicked.	
Type SVOA	You	can pack	all the plates		on the table.

Data Presentation

The following examples form the sentences used by the BBC for Pidgin News.

Simple Sentence Structure in Nigerian Pidgin and Standard English

1. INEC oga say collation centre go officially open around 12 noon on Sunday.

2. Official announcement of final results go start tomorrow.

3. Buhari tok why e show im ballot paper after voting.

4. Out of 300 registered voters for di party unit, na only 44 pipo vote.

5. Juwah Chidera Stella wey be 22 years old dey vote for di first time.

6. Some pipo for Amuwo Odofin, Lagos South West of Nigeria dey protest as both materials and electoral officials neva arrive as at 12:30 pm.

7. Peter Obi win im polling unit as APC, PDP get zero votes.

8. Voters jollificate as INEC officials finally land dia polling unit for Dowen College polling unitin Lekki area of Lagoa State, at 5:58 pm.

9. E no dey clear wetin Make dem late but voters don siddon wait for dem to show face.

10. Voting don close officially for 2: 30 pm according to di INEC rules.11. Voters complain about how thugs scatter dia polling unit for Igbokusa, Lekki, Lagos State.

12. Di pipo don dey wait since morning to vote.

13. Immediately their voting material arrive, dem happy well-well.

14. E be like say dem collect trophy.

15. Pipo happy well-well as election officials finally arrive one polling unit for Lagos.

16. While PDP and APC get zero votes for di units APGA and NNPP get same votes.

17. Dem steal the INEC official phone and take the ballot boxes, now elections don scatter.

18.Di BBC see thumb printed ballot papers and broken polling booths for ground all around di unit, and some of pipo wey dey dia to vote get minor injuries and bruises.

19. Dis na wia you go dey get di result as dem dey show.

20 For Igokusu, near Lekki area of Lagos, hoodlums scatter voting process and destroy ballot box plus ballot papers.

21. Sunny Njoku wey don land the area to vote, tell di BBC say one group of boys bin arrive di venue holding bottles and machetes and dem also chase pipo away.

Summary of the types of syntactic structures present in the BBC news caption reportage

The following simple sentence structures are represented in number and percentages in Table Two.

Table 2: *Types and number of uses and percentages in multiple sentences*

Pidgin Type:	SVO	SVA	SVOA	ASV	SCVA	SVAA	ASVA	ASVO
SE Type:	SVO	SVA	SVOA	SVA	SCVA	SVAA SVCA	ASCV	ASVO
Pidgin No:	2	1	4	1	1	5	1	1
%	10	4.7	19	4.7	4.7	24	4.7	4.7

The following multiple sentence structures are represented in number and percentages in Table Three.

Table 3: *Types and number of uses and percentages in multiple sentences*

BBC: Type:	SVCO/SVOA	SVO/VO/ASV	SVOA/SVO	AASVO/VO	SVOO/SVOA
SE Type:	SVCO/SVOA	SVO/VO/ASV	SVOA/SVO	AASVO/VO	SVOO/VOA
Number	1	1	1	1	1
%	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7
Total percentage:	100%				

4. Findings

The different patterns observed in the analysis are highlighted. The 'a' sentences are BBC's Pidgin, while the 'b' sentences are SE.

1a. INEC oga say collation centre go officially open around 12 noon on Sunday.
       S   V   O   A   SVOA
1b. The INEC boss said that the collation centre would officially open noon on Sunday.
        S   V   O   A   SVOA

This sentence follows an SVOA word order. The subject is "INEC oga," followed by the verb "say," and then the direct object "collation centre," and the adverbial phrase "go officially open around noon on Sunday." Compared to Standard English, the sentence has the same syntactic structure as BBC Pidgin English. It is seen in sentence 1 above.

2a. Official announcement of final results go start tomorrow.
                   S   V   A   SVA
 2b. The official announcement of the final results will begin tomorrow.
                   S   V   A   SVA

This sentence follows an SVA word order. The subject is "Official announcement of final results," followed by the auxiliary verb "go," the main verb start," and the adverbial phrase "tomorrow." Standard English has the same sentence order, "SVA."

3a. Buhari tok why e show im ballot paper after voting.
    S   V   O   SVO
3b. Buhari explained why he showed his ballot paper after voting.
    S   V   O   SVO

This sentence follows an SVO word order. Buhari is the subject, "tok" is the verb, and the clause "why e show im ballot paper after voting", is the object. The sentence contains several features of Nigerian Pidgin English, including the use of the word "tok" to mean "explained" and the use of the pronoun "e" instead of "he." The sentence structure is not different from Standard English, which has a SVO order.

4a. <u>Out of 300 registered voters for di party unit</u>, <u>na only 44 pipo</u> <u>vote</u>.   ASV
                    A   S   V

4b.<u>Only 44 people</u> <u>voted</u> <u>out of the 300 registered voters for the party unit.</u>
        S   V   A   SVA

The sentence has an ASV word order, while its English counterpart has an SVA. In Pidgin, the adverbial phrase comes before the Subject. It can also occur in English. For instance, this sentence uses the words "di" instead of "the" and "pipo" instead of "people," both of which are standard features of Nigerian Pidgin English. The sentence structure is similar to Standard English.

5a. <u>Juwah Chidera Stella</u> <u>wey be 22 years old</u> <u>dey vote</u> <u>for di first time.</u>
            S   C   V   A   SCVA

5b. <u>Juwah Chidera Stella</u>, <u>who is 22 years old</u>, <u>is voting</u> <u>for the first time.</u>
            S   C   V   A   SCVA

This sentence follows an SCVA word order. The subject is "Juwah Chidera Stella," followed by the relative clause "wey be 22 years old," and then the verb "dey vote" and the adverbial phrase "for di first time." This sentence uses the word "wey" to mean "who" or "that," which is a standard feature of Nigerian Pidgin English. The use of "dey" to indicate the present continuous tense is also a pidginised feature. The sentence structure is generally similar to Standard English.

6a. <u>Some pipo for Amuwo Odofin, Lagos South West of Nigeria</u> <u>dey protest</u> <u>as both materials</u>
                        S   V   A
<u>and electoral officials neva arrive</u> <u>as at 12:30 pm.</u>
                                        A   SVAA

6b.<u>Some people in Amuwo Odofin, Lagos South West of Nigeria</u> <u>are protesting</u> <u>as both</u>
                        S   V   A
<u>materials and electoral officials have not arrived</u> <u>as of 12:30 pm.</u>
                                                        A   SVAA

This sentence follows an SVAA word order. The subject is "some pipo for Amuwo Odofin, Lagos South West of Nigeria," and then the verb "dey protest," and the adverbial phrase "as both materials and electoral officials neva arrive, and as at 12:30 pm." The English version has the same clause structure as exemplified in the sentence above.

7a. <u>Peter Obi</u> <u>win</u> <u>im polling unit</u> <u>as APC, PDP get zero votes</u>.
            S   V   O   A   SVOA

7b. Peter Obi won his polling unit as APC and PDP got zero votes.
     S   V   O   A

SVOAThis sentence follows an SVOA word order. The subject is "Peter Obi," followed by the verb "win," then the object " im polling unit," and the adverbial clause, "as APC, PDP get zero votes," indicating how Peter Obi won. The English counterpart also displays the same word order.

8a. Voters jollificate as INEC officials finally land dia polling unit for Dowen College polling
      S   V   A
unit in Lekki area of Lagos State, at 5:58 pm.
                                    A   SVAA

8b. The Voters celebrated as INEC officials finally arrived at their polling unit at Dowen College
      S   V   A
pooling unit in the Lekki area of Lagos State, at 5:58 pm.
                                    A   SVAA
This sentence follows an SVAA word order. The subject is "voters," followed by the verb "jollificate," and then the adverbial "as INEC officials finally land dia polling unit for Dowen College polling unit in Lekki area of Lagos State, indicating the reason the voters were happy, and another adverbial, "at 5:58 pm," indicating when it happened. The English version also has the SVAA word order.

9a. E no dey clear wet in make dem late but voters don siddon wait for dem to show face.
   S   V   C   O   S   V   O   A
                                                                      SVCO/SVOA
9b. It is not clear why they are late, but the voters are waiting for them to show up.
   S   V   C   O   S   V   O   A
                                                                      SVCO/SVOA
The sentence follows an SVCO and SVOA word order. In other words, it is a compound sentence. In the first sentence, the subject is "E," followed by the verb "no dey" meaning "is", and an adjective "clear," serving as a complement, and then the direct object "wet in make dem late." The second sentence is introduced by "but," which indicates that the voters are waiting for them to show up. The English version also has the same word order.

10a. Voting don close officially for 2: 30 pm according to di INEC rules.
     S   V   A   A   SVAA
10b. Voting has officially closed at 2:30 pm according to the INEC rules.
     S   V   A   A   SVAA

The sentence follows an SVAA word order. The subject is "voting," followed by the verb "don close" (has closed), and then the adverbials, "officially for 2:30 pm" according to the INEC rules. The English sentence has the same clause structure as the Pidgin sentence. The English version also has the same clause structure.

11a. <u>Voters</u> <u>complain</u> <u>about how thugs scatter dia polling unit</u> <u>for Igbokusa, Lekki, Lagos State.</u>
        S   V   O   A

                                                                                                    SVOA
11b. <u>Voters</u> <u>complained</u> <u>about how thugs disrupted their polling unit</u> <u>in Igbokusa, Lekki, Lagos</u>
        S   V   O   A
<u>State</u>.   SVOA
The sentence follows an SVOA word order. The subject is "Voters," followed by the verb "complain," then the direct object "about how thugs scatter dia polling unit," and then the adverbial, "for Igbokusa, Lekki, Lagos State." The English version has the same clause structure.

12a. <u>Di pipo don dey wait</u> <u>since morning</u> <u>to vote.</u>
          S   V   A   A   SVAA

12b. <u>The people</u> <u>have been waiting</u> <u>since morning,</u> <u>to vote.</u>
            S   V   A   A   SVAA
This sentence follows an SVAA word order. The subject is "Di pipo," followed by the verb "don dey wait," and then the adverbial phrase of time "since morning," indicating "when" and the infinitive phrase "to vote" serves as an adverbial phrase of reason. The English version has the same clause structure.

13a. <u>Immediately their voting materials arrive</u>, <u>dem</u> <u>happy</u> <u>well-well.</u>
                            A   S   V   A   ASVA
13b. <u>As soon as their voting materials arrived,</u> <u>they</u> <u>were</u> <u>very happy</u>
                            A   S   V   C   ASVC
This sentence follows an ASVA word order. "Immediately their voting material arrive," indicates the adverbial clause of time. This structure also occurs in Standard English, where the adverbial clause (subordinate clause) occurs before the independent clause. The subject is "dem," followed by the verb "happy," and another adverbial "well-well" In Standard English, the word "happy" functions as an adjective, but in the context of BBC Pidgin, it functions as a verb.

14a. <u>E</u> <u>be like say</u> <u>dem collect trophy.</u>   SVO
        S   V   O
14b. <u>It</u> <u>seems like</u> <u>they have won a trophy</u>.   SVO
        S   V   O

This sentence follows an SVO word order. The subject is "E," the verb phrase is "seems like say," and the object is the clause, "they have won a trophy." The phrase "E be like say" is a common expression in Nigerian Pidgin that translates to "It seems like." The English version has the same clause structure.

15a. <u>Pipo</u> <u>happy</u> <u>well-well</u> <u>as election officials finally arrive one polling unit for Lagos.</u>
     S   V   A   A   SVAA

15b <u>People</u> <u>are</u> <u>very happy</u> <u>as election officials have finally arrived at one polling unit in Lagos.</u>
     S   V   C   A   SVCA

This sentence follows an SVAA word order. The subject is "Pipo," the verb is "happy" in the Pidgin context, and the adverbial phrase "well-well" is used to intensify the meaning. The conjunction "as" introduces the dependent clause "election officials finally arrive one polling unit for Lagos," which serves as an adverbial clause of reason. The English version has the same clause structure.

16a. <u>While PDP and APC get zero votes for di units</u> <u>APGA and NNPP</u> <u>get</u> <u>same votes.</u>
                            A   S   V   O   ASVO

16b. <u>While the PDP and APC received zero votes in the units,</u> <u>the APGA and NNPP</u> <u>received</u>
                            A   S   V

<u>the same number of votes.</u>
     O   ASVO

This sentence follows an ASVO word order. The subject is "APGA and NNPP," while the verb is "get," and the object is "same votes." The subordinate clause "while the PDP and APC received zero votes in the units represents the adverbial clause of time. Standard English has the same clause structure as Pidgin and performs the same functions as Pidgin.

17a. <u>Dem</u> <u>steal</u> <u>the INEC official phone</u> and <u>take</u> <u>the ballot boxes,</u> <u>now</u> <u>elections</u> <u>don scatter.</u>
     S   V   O   V   O   A   S   V
                                                       SVO/VO/ASV

17b. <u>They</u> <u>stole</u> <u>the INEC official's phone</u> and <u>took</u> <u>the ballot boxes,</u> <u>now</u> <u>the elections</u> have
       S   V   O   V   O   A   S

<u>been disrupted.</u>
   V   SVO/VO/ASV

This sentence follows an SVO/VO/SV word order. In the first clause, the subject is "Dem," the verb is "steal," and the object is "the INEC official phone." In the second clause, the structure has an underlying SVO word order, hence the VO structure. The embedded subject is "Dem," the verb is "take," and the object is "the ballot boxes." The conjunction "and" is used to connect the two sentences. In the third clause, "and now the elections don scatter," the subject is "now

elections," and the verb phrase is "don scatter." It is a complex compound sentence, and has the same structure as Standard English.

18a. Di BBC see thumb printed ballot papers and broken polling booths for ground all around di
    S   V   O   A
unit, and some of pipo wey dey dia to vote get minor injuries and bruises.
                 S   V   O   SVOA/SVO

18b. The BBC saw thumb-printed ballot papers and broken polling booths on the ground all
    S   V   O   A
around the unit, and some people there to vote received minor injuries and bruises.
                    S   V   O   SVOA/SVO

19a. Dis na wia you go dey get di result as dem dey show.
    S   V   O   A   SVOA
19b. This is where you will get the result as they are showing it.
S   V   O   A   SVOA
This sentence follows an SVOA word order. The subject is "Dis," followed by the copula verb "na," the object is "wia you go dey get di result," and the adverbial, "as dem dey show." Standard English shares the same clause structure as the Pidgin expression.

20a. For Igokusu, near Lekki area of Lagos, hoodlums scatter voting process and destroy ballot
      A   A   S   V   O   V
 box plus ballot papers.
      O   AASVO/VO
20b. In Igokusu, near the Lekki area of Lagos, hoodlums disrupted the voting process and
       A   A   S   V   O
destroyed the ballot box and ballot papers.
   V   O   AASVO/VO
This statement has two sentences, thus constituting a compound sentence. The first sentence follows an AASVO word order. The second sentence is linked with the first sentence with the conjunction "and." The sentence begins with the prepositional phrase "For Igokusu, near Lekki area of Lagos," which function as adverbials. They are followed by the subject "hoodlums," the verb "scatter," and the object "voting process." In the second sentence, the verb "destroy" occurs first, followed by the object. The two clause structures share the same subject indirectly, which is the "hoodlums."

21a. Sunny Njoku wey don land the area to vote, tell di BBC say one group of boys bin arrive di
                         S   V   O
venue holding bottles and machetes and dem also chase pipo away.
                 O   S   V   O   A   SVOO/SVOA
21b. Sunny Njoku, who had arrived at the voting area, told the BBC that a group of boys had come   to

                                                        S   V   O
the venue holding bottles and machetes and had also chased people away.
                                                        O   V   O   A   SVOO/VOA
This sentence follows an SVOO/SVOA word order. The subject is "Sunny Njoku wey don land the area to vote," followed by the verb "tell," and then the direct object "di BBC" and the indirect object, "say one group of boys bin arrive di venue holding bottles and machetes." This expression is followed by a conjunction, and," which links the second sentence "dem also chase pipo away" to the first sentence. In Standard English, the structure is SVOO/VOA. The subject of the second sentence is the indirect object of the first sentence, "one group of boys." There is still much similarity in the word order between the two language forms.

5. Discussion

In relation to the first objective, BBC Pidgin News displays unique syntactic features for News coverage. From all the sentences analyzed in the data, it is observed that the BBC Pidgin used in the news reportage of the captions on the presidential election of February 25th, 2023, though lacking grammaticality when compared with the Standard English grammar, which is guided by rules, still has similar clause structures as seen in sentences 1–21. Significant differences occur in applying grammatical rules, which Pidgin violates with its unique features. For instance, there is no past tense usage, as seen in sentences 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 21. The verbs in sentences 1, 2, and 4 have the following words in Pidgin: 'say, show, and vote,' and are represented in SE as 'said, showed, and voted, respectively. Where the verbs differ in their base forms, appropriate synonyms are used. For instance, the verb 'start' in BBC Pidgin sentence 1, is represented as 'begin' in SE, and in sentence 11a, the verb 'scatter' is represented in SE as 'disrupted.' Other sentences use the word 'dey' to indicate the following tenses: present tense (is/are known as copula verbs in SE) as seen in examples 5, 6, and 9; present perfect (have been) as in sentence 12; and past tense (were), as seen in sentence 18. In some instances, Pidgin uses 'dey' with the verbs that occur with it to indicate present continuous tense, e.g., the verb phrase 'dey vote' in sentence 5, which is represented in Standard English as 'are voting,' One can then conclude that there is no consistency in the function of the auxiliary verb 'dey' in Pidgin. It has performed different tense roles. Another auxiliary verb used in the Pidgin is 'don,' which indicates the completeness or incompleteness of the action. Examples can be seen in sentences 9, 10, 12, 17, and 21. It represents the following auxiliary verbs in sentences: 'are, has, has been, had, and have.' Also, BBC Pidgin did not use the future tense in expressing futurity; it uses the verb "go" to indicate futurity, as seen in sentences 1, 2, and 19. An example is the phrase in sentence 2, 'go start' in Pidgin, represented as 'will begin' in SE.

It is also observed that BBC Pidgin uses pluralization, as seen in all the sentences except sentences 1, 3, 7, 12, 14, and 19, which do not have countable nouns. In other words, all the nouns qualified as plural nouns are realized as such in the Pidgin used. However, it is noticed

that there is inconsistency in the use of definite articles with some nouns, as seen in sentences 1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21. The analysis reveals three uses of the definite article 'the.' These include the absence of the article, its representation as 'di,' and the sustenance of the standard spelling 'the.' For instance, in sentences 1, 2, 9, 16, 18, and 20, the Pidgin lacks the definite article 'the' with the nouns used, while its counterpart uses it. In sentences 5, 10, 12, 16, 18, and 19, the definite article is represented with 'di,' while in Standard English, it is 'the.' In sentences 17 and 21, Pidgin uses the standard article 'the' to represent the definite article as in Standard English. The plural pronoun 'dem' in Pidgin represents 3rd person plural subjects and objects in Standard English (they/them). This can be seen in sentences 9, 13, 17, 19, and 21. From all indications, there is a display of codeswitching in Pidgin, as the language has a mixture of Pidgin and Standard English. There is now a tilt towards the superstrate language. This, however, explains the similarities displayed in the clause structures of the two varieties.

The two language varieties have displayed similarities in word order. Phrases can serve as subjects and objects of the verbs in Pidgin as in Standard English. This can be seen in sentences 1, 2, 4, 6, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21, which have an infinitival clause. For instance, 'Some pipo for Amuwo Odofin, Lagos, South West Nigeria' is the subject of the verb phrase 'dey protest,' which is represented as 'are protesting' in Standard English. In sentence 21, the infinitival clause 'Sunny Njoku wey don land the area to vote' is used as the subject of the verb 'tell.' These features are more or less found in the Standard English structures, as seen in the sentences highlighted.

As regards the second objective, the research reveals that BBC Pidgin has eight (8) clause types as seen in Table Two. These include SVO, SVA, SVOA, ASV, SCVA, SVAA, ASVA, and ASVO. According to Quirk et al., Standard English has seven main clause types for simple sentences, as seen in Table One. Comparing the two varieties, it is revealed that the BBC Pidgin structure lacks SV, SVC, SVOC, and SVOA, which are present in SBE, as identified by Quirk et al. (1985). Instead of the four absent structures, Pidgin has ASV, SCVA, SVAA, ASVA, and ASVO. Standard English in this study also has eight (8) clause types like the BBC Pidgin but with partially different structures from the ones identified in Table one by Quirk et al. These include: SVO, SVA, SVOA, SCVA, SVAA, SVCA, ASCV, and ASVO. From the analysis, there is a deviation by SE from the clause types identified by Quirk et al. (1985). The new ones added in Standard English are SCVA, SVAA, ASCV, SVCA, and ASVO. The BBC Pidgin structures identified as lacking in SE in this study are ASVA, ASV, and ASCV. So, BBC Pidgin has five (5) structures present in SE. These structures are not accounted for by Quirk et al. (1985). The SVAA structure is dominantly used in the reportage of BBC Pidgin captions, with a total use of 24%. This can be viewed in Table Two. This could be a peculiar feature of BBC Pidgin in news reportage, where verbs are modified with double adverbials. Examples are shown in sentences 6, 8, 10, 12, and 15, respectively. It is worthy of note to mention that in sentence 15a, the clause

"People are happy well-well..." is represented in SE as "People are very happy..." In this clause, BBC Pidgin represents "well-well" as an adverbial, while SE represents it as a subject complement. Also, the BBC Pidgin in sentence 15a represents the word "happy" as a verb, which is an adjective in SE. This is one of Pidgin's numerous peculiarities as a distinct and growing language.

From this study, it is evident that in addition to the seven fundamental simple clause structures identified by Quirk et al. (1985), there are possibilities for generating additional clause types, as seen in Table Two. Adebayo (2022) confirms this finding by identifying seven (7) simple clause types of the Pidgin spoken by a group of undergraduates, and two of these are not basic to the ones specified by Quirk et al. (1985). In addition, it is revealed that BBC Pidgin and SE can have structures starting with adverbials. Examples are ASV, ASVA, and ASVO, as seen in sentences 4a, 13a & b, and 16a & b, respectively. This implies that BBC Pidgins can have different forms of clause structure depending on the ethnic regions of the speakers. One can thus conclude that the environment in which Pidgin is used may determine its clause structures. Pidgins spoken in different ethnic areas seemingly have other clause structures, which may be simple or multiple. The study also reveals that a lot of BBC Pidgin expressions, as shown in the data, are code-switched and this may be the result of language contacts. This explains the similarities in the clause structures between BBC Pidgin and Standard English. Since languages are always in contact, many linguistic features are transferred from the superstrate language to the substrate language; thus, Pidgin is not an exception. Given the previous, there cannot be uniformity in the way Pidgin is used by different language communities.

Regarding the multiple sentences present in the BBC Pidgin, it is discovered that five (5) types of structures are utilized. These are SVCO/SVOA, SVO/VO/ASV, SVOA/SVO, AASVO/VO, and SVOO/SVOA. These same structures are equally used in SE. From the analysis, the simple sentence structures identified with the BBC Pidgin can serve as a model for multiple clause types. Since there is no difference between the two languages' clause structures, one can then conclude that BBC Pidgin is competing in structure with Standard English. This can be viewed in Table Three. This observation suggests that Pidgin is on the rise and is almost like the superstrate language, which uses simple and multiple sentences. The multiple sentences observed have compound, complex, and compound-complex structures.

6. Conclusion

The study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge of the syntax of Nigerian Pidgin in media discourse and shed light on the specific syntactic patterns and unique features used by BBC News in their reporting of important political events. From the analysis, BBC Pidgin and SE have eight (8) clause types, with minor differences. The research shows that regardless of the similarities of Nigerian BBC Pidgin in terms of clause structures, it still has its unique syntactic features, which set it apart from Standard English. The analysis also revealed that Nigerian Pidgin frequently uses code-switching, where speakers switch between Pidgin and Standard English within the same sentence or conversation. Furthermore, the analysis highlighted several similarities and differences between Nigerian BBC Pidgin and Standard English syntax. For example, both languages use auxiliary verbs to display tense, aspect, and mood. For instance, Nigerian Pidgin often uses aspect markers, such as "don," to indicate completed and incomplete actions, whereas Standard English uses auxiliary verbs, such as "has" and "have." This understanding of the differences can benefit linguists, educators, and anyone interested in the study of language. Additionally, the analysis has provided insights into how language is used to communicate, especially in multi-ethnic and multicultural societies such as Nigeria, where language plays a vital role in facilitating communication and promoting understanding among diverse groups.

Adebayo (2022) corroborates the nearness of Nigerian Pidgin with that of Standard Nigerian English and thus lends a voice to the acceptance of Nigerian Pidgin as a lingua franca. This view has also been supported by some scholars (Elugbe & Omamor, 1991; Aziza, 2015). Jolayemi (2004), in the same vein, argues for several advantages of Nigerian Pidgin, emphasizing its role as a social equalizer. This discovery, in terms of its clause structures and peculiarities, has negated the previous views of some scholars (Elugbe & Omamor, 1991; Deuber, 2006; Igboanusi, 2001) that it is inferior to Standard English. It is spoken by both educated individuals and those who are illiterate, making it a language that bridges social gaps. Furthermore, Bob and Obiukwu (2022) position Nigerian Pidgin as both a promoted language (PL) and a tolerated language (TL) within the framework of language development. Because of the preceding, Nigerian Pidgin could serve as a suitable candidate for a national language in Nigeria precisely because it is not linked to any specific linguistic or tribal group. It possesses the potential to function as a unifying language for the nation because of its widespread use and acceptance across different segments of society. Adopting Nigerian Pidgin as a national language will eliminate associations with any particular ethnic or linguistic group, and promote inclusivity and cohesion among Nigerians.

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