

# Investigating the use and perception of West African Pidgin English among West African university students in Northern Cyprus

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**Abstract:** This study sought to establish the usage of Pidgin English among University students from three West African countries studying in Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus. A sample of 129 students from Nigeria, Cameroon, and Ghana was selected and surveyed to determine the use, importance, perception and attitude towards Pidgin English. Findings show that most respondents watch Pidgin English comedy video clips. They speak Pidgin English while conversing on mobile phones and they chat with Pidgin English. In addition, respondents' perception of Pidgin English was generally positive and a slew of respondents accedes that Pidgin English is important because it is a language with less grammatical rules and it connects West African students together abroad. Furthermore, we found that majority of them agreed that the language is underrated but easy to learn and it is worthy of international recognition.

**Keywords:** West Africa, West African Pidgin English, West African international students, North Cyprus

## 1. Introduction

West African Pidgin English has become a phenomenon over the years among different categories of West Africans (literate, non-literate, semi-literate). In addition, it has become a very important medium of communication and it has helped blur the multilingual and multiethnic lines among West African communities in and out of the geographical area. Meanwhile, West African students travel all over the world for educational purposes and the use of Pidgin English is irrefutable but how they use the language and their perception towards it remains something that requires explanation.

Over the years, studies across West Africa have tried to investigate the use, influence, function, perception and the attitudes of students towards Pidgin English especially in institutions of higher learning; (Abdullahi-Idiagbon 2010; Akande & Salami 2010; Amao 2012) in Nigeria, (Rupp 2013) in Ghana and (Neba et al. 2006) in Cameroon. All contributors to the use of Pidgin English among students in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, Cameroon and Ghana have emphasized the strength of the language especially for social interaction. Considering the aforesaid, it is ultimately important to make a collective investigation on a broader scale on the use of Pidgin English among West African students schooling abroad.

Report shows that there has been a massive influx of African students to universities abroad over the years. Only in UK, 66,000 African students (mostly West Africans) enrolled in various higher institution of learning in 2002 (Umar et al. 2013). Reports also show that one out of every 15 international students in the UK comes from Africa (Maringe & Carter 2007). In addition, it was also reported that aside China and Japan, the second largest continent (Africa) has more students schooling abroad at the undergraduate and post graduate level more than any other region (Dzvimbo 2003).

The main goal of the current study is to closely examine the use of West African Pidgin English<sup>1</sup> among West African students studying in North Cyprus. This study emanated from the observation that Pidgin English is spoken among West African students; mostly Nigerians and Cameroonians in North Cyprus. The author thinks that it is important to empirically investigate the use and perception of the language because in a multilingual milieu like North Cyprus where they find themselves, English and Turkish language dominates. However, a couple of reasons can be

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1 West African Pidgin English is the combination of the varieties of Pidgin English language spoken in different regions in West Africa (Nigerian Pidgin English, Cameroonian Pidgin English, Ghanaian Pidgin English).

traced to why West African students speak Pidgin English. Like Alzayed has rightly said while discussing the preservation of student's native language in a multilingual society, he accedes that the language we speak in our home country is our identity therefore, people are generally appreciative of where they come from and they want to be seen different from others. What defines them are their ideas, traditions and practices. So, while they want to learn new ways of life, they also want to keep the original (Alzayed 2015).

This study is ultimately important because it is the first to investigate the use and perception of Pidgin English among West Africans Abroad. In this regard, this study will help stimulate and open up new discussions and generate significant scholarly attention to the use of the language abroad. Central to this study is the concentration on three countries; Nigeria, Ghana and Cameroon. Peter & Wolf (2007) asserts that; "Pidgin English is not spoken by a sizeable portion of the population in any other West African country except those three" (Peter & Wolf 2007: 4). But most importantly, the three countries were chosen because of the context of the study. The study was conducted at Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus and as at the time it was conducted; international students from Nigeria, Cameroon and Ghana were more than other West African countries who are Pidgin English speakers. The main thrust and motivation of this study is the entirety of Amao's study on the use of Pidgin English among Osun State University Students and also what he highlighted about the strength of Pidgin English which is the ability to have all speakers of different languages communicate with a common language aside the lingua franca (Amao 2012).

The present study seeks to investigate and answer four research questions:

- RQ1: In respect to everyday activities in North Cyprus, how do West African students use Pidgin English language?
- RQ2: How important is Pidgin English to West African students studying in North Cyprus?
- RQ3: What are the perceptions of West African students studying in North Cyprus towards Pidgin English?
- RQ4: What are the attitudes of West African students studying in North Cyprus towards Pidgin English?

## **2. Overview of West African Pidgin English**

West African Pidgin English emerged from the fusion of various African and European languages (English, French, German, and Portuguese) and it has presented itself as a unique language because it has mutually merged languages from two extremes (Bandia 1994; Dada 2007). Pidgin English originated during the West African Atlantic trade with Britain as one of the major players. Prior to that, as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, British traders had already visited different parts of West Africa and in 17<sup>th</sup> century, African slaves were moved to the American and Caribbean coasts from West Africa to be used in the rum and sugarcane trades. Pidgin English was therein initiated because there was need for the hundreds of languages (African and European languages) to find a common ground for the exchange of information with a shared meaning. Consequently, West African countries such as Nigeria, Cameroon, Gambia and Ghana later adopted English language as their lingua franca (Vicente 2007).

The emergence of Pidgin English may have some other narratives but the dominant narrative, point of contact and the beginning of West African Pidgin English for many is the Atlantic slave trade in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. West African Scholars from each of the countries studied (Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana), have explicitly shared their point of contact. For Nigeria, the Nigerian Pidgin is believed to be the combination of a larger part of English and Nigerian local languages. The language is said to have emerged from the trade contact between the Portuguese and Nigerian

natives; hence the earlier version of the language contained some Portuguese words. The contemporary version of the Pidgin language is a fusion of the standard Nigerian English and other indigenous Nigerian languages (Chiluwa 2013; Abdullahi-Idiagbon 2010). In a recent study, Mensah asserts that there are two forms of Pidgin English in Nigeria; the Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and Pidgin English (PE). According to him, the Nigerian Pidgin has developed and overtime and it has undergone some linguistics refinement. Some of them are those spoken in Warri, Ajegunle, Ikom, Calabar, Port-Harcourt and Onitsha among others while Pidgin English is the kind spoken by Nigerians who can't read or write. It is mostly an attempt to manipulate the standard English language (Mensah 2011).

Ghanaian Pidgin English is considered to have emerged from the coming of immigrants from Nigeria (AbongoBrofo [Barracks Pidgin]), Liberia (Km Brofo [Km English]) and the people of the water (Nsumfo). The dominant narrative of the point of contact with Pidgin English for the Ghana people is the Nigerian trade that lasted up until 1969 in Ghana. Most of these traders were from the seaside particularly the Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo area. Another major contact with Pidgin English was in 1982 when millions of Ghanaians who were forced to leave Nigeria (Dako 2002). Huber posits that contrary to what scholars like Amaoko and Dako have said about the Ghanaian origin of Pidgin English (the Nigerian contact) which is dated around 1980's, the Ghanaian contact with Pidgin dates back to 1920's (Huber 1999).

Cameroon Pidgin English is believed to be traceable to 1472 when the riverine people of Cameroon had a close interaction with Europeans who were exploring West Africa at the time, the Portuguese came to Cameroon and they established a base in the riverine area. Thereafter, there was need for a common language between Cameroonians and the Portuguese settlers. Hence, the first Pidgin (Portuguese-based Pidgin) emerged in Cameroon as acclaimed by (Chumbow & Simo-Bobda 1995). Neba et al further expatiated on this, they said;

This pidginisation [sic] process continued with the coming of the Germans in 1884. The interaction of the Germans with the local population in the large plantations, coupled with the constant visits of British nationals, who were the main trade partners of the Germans, gradually led to the birth of Pidgin English (Neba, Chibaka, & Atindogbe 2006: 48-49).

Pidgin English in Cameroon became stable because as at the time Pidgin English emerged, the British were already in Nigeria and obviously the two countries share land borders. At the time, Germans employed a lot of British people to work in the plantations with Africans and this rapidly caused the reduction of Portuguese oriented Pidgin to an English-German oriented Pidgin. The Germans left Cameroon after the First World War and it led to the full development of English-based Pidgin. Pidgin English became readily stable because the only language spoken by foremen in the plantations was English. At the other end, Pidgin English was the only way natives could closely interact with their British masters. Today, Pidgin English has become remarkably diverse in major cities in the North, South and West regions of Cameroon (Neba et al. 2006; Abongdia 2014).

The perception and attitudes of people towards West African Pidgin English is one of the major points of interest of this study. On a global scale, Holm mentioned that Pidgin English was called broken English, nigger French, bastard Portuguese, Iskula (colic language) and Kombuistaaltje (cookhouse lingo) by the early generations because it was viewed as an adulteration of the original European languages. Holm further mentioned that in recent times, it has been revised by linguists that Pidgin English and creole languages are not the debased version of any international language but a new language that is formed by taking a larger part of an older language (Holm 2000). Holm's idea best explains Balogun's (2007) assertion in defense of Nigerian Pidgin English. Balogun states that overtime, Nigerian Pidgin English has been labeled irrelevant and it is has heightened the negative perception of the language by people. In his words, he posits that

[s]uch perceptions have culminated in a string of derogatory definition of Nigerian pidgin [sic] as a mark of bastardization of English. Nigerian pidgin [sic] has come to be understood as: ‘adulterated language’, ‘an inferior language’, ‘substandard and lesser language’, ‘a deviated language form’, ‘a marginal language’, ‘a bad language’, ‘a language with no history and no native’, among others (Balogun 2013: 91).

Akande & Salami (2010) also added that Pidgin English in Nigeria used to be seen as a language of the uneducated people but newer studies show that there is a growing population of speakers of Pidgin English among university students (Akande & Salami 2010). Nigerian Pidgin English exists among other over 500 languages in Nigeria and it is exceptionally widely received and used by a large number of Nigerian. The language is commonly used in higher institutions of learning mostly outside serious academic environment like classes, laboratory etc. It is however mostly used in the common room, kiosks, relaxation and gossips centers (Abdullahi-Idiagbon 2010).

Nigerian Pidgin English has gained more prominence and has been thoroughly studied more than any other West African Pidgin English language. To buttress this assertion, Faraclas (2004) accedes that Pidgin English is spoken fluently by half of the population. He added that with the increase among younger generations, there is every possibility that the speaking proportion would rise up to 70% to 80% among younger Nigerians when they become adults. On a larger scale, Faraclas also claims that there is no creole that has so many speakers like Nigerian Pidgin English in the whole wide world (Faraclas 2004).

In Ghana, perception and attitudes towards Pidgin English is quite different from that of Nigeria. Ghanaian Pidgin English has been rated low and has been relegated to an outer edge because it has been associated with illiterates and the less privileged. It exists in the midst of the 250 languages and dialects that are spoken in Ghana and in recent times, Twi is believed to be taking the place of Ghanaian lingua franca. In terms of widespread, Ghanaian Pidgin English is not as substantial as the Nigerian and Cameroonian Pidgin English. It has also been less studied unlike the others and its first comprehensive study was conducted by Huber Magnus in 1999 (Dako 2002).

Ghanaian Pidgin English has been categorized into two parts by Huber based on the social, economic and educational status of speakers. The two categories are uneducated Ghanaian Pidgin English or basilectal and educated/student Ghanaian Pidgin English or mesolectal/acrolectal (Huber 1995). The uneducated Ghanaian Pidgin English is mostly spoken among the uneducated and the student Pidgin English is spoken among students in secondary schools and higher institutions of learning where Standard English, Twi and Ga are also shared among them.

Student Pidgin English can be traced down to 1960’s and 1970’s particularly among students in multiethnic male secondary schools. The language emerged through the resistance of the prevalent nature of English language in the Ghanaian school system. The trend moved from secondary schools to universities (Stoller 1979). Ghanaian Student Pidgin English have been labeled a manly/masculine language or the language of the educated male elite because as earlier mentioned, it started in coastal male secondary schools where most of the students were from the upper middle class. It emerged at the time where Ghana was under the military rule and soldiers acted audaciously and in a hostile manner by speaking Pidgin English (Dako 2002). Interestingly, nothing much has changed after many years because according to Mahama & Adika in their recent study on Ghanaian English, Pidgin English is still being spoken by many young school leavers (Mahama 2012; Adika 2012).

Cameroon Pidgin English happens to exist among other 280 languages with two official languages (French and English). It is influential and it is believed to be a general language among people of different social classes, beliefs system, tribes and background. It is mostly spoken in social gatherings such as churches, marketplaces, railway stations, motor parks and streets. The language is active and present in everyday lives of the Cameroonian people and contrary to the

perception of Pidgin English in other West African countries, Cameroon Pidgin English is not labeled as a language of the uneducated. It is spoken and perceived to be the language of everyone, both the literates and non-literates (Abongdia 2014; Echu 2004; Mbangwana 1983).

### 2.1. West African Pidgin English and its derivations

As aforementioned, West African Pidgin English emerged from the fusion of African and European languages as attested to by many scholars (Özüorçun 2014; Bandia 1994; Vicente 2007; Rickford 2011). Languages like English, dialectic English language, French, Portuguese, West African languages (Twi, Yoruba, Itsekiri etc), Cariban chigoe are major players in West African Pidgin English. A good number of West African Pidgin English derivations have been labeled with a lot of uncertainties. According to Huber, the likeliest source for the word “*enty*” (negative question particle) is English; “*aint it?*” which may be used in asking questions (Huber 1999). The table below shows the historical origins of 10 West African Pidgin English words or phrase. They are used in at least two of the countries studied, e.g. *bra* (brother), a word used in Cameroon and Ghana for a male with the same parents as someone or a close friend.

Table 1: West African Pidgin English and its derivations\*

SN	West African Pidgin English	Meaning	Derivation
1	Fufu	Starch food; boiled and pounded	West African languages, Twi, Yoruba et.c
2	Chigger	Chigoe	Cariban chigoe
3	Dash	Gratuity, to present	Portuguese
4	Chop	Eat; food	West African
5	Bubby-	Breast	Dialectic English language
6	Bra-	Brother; term of respect for elder male	Dialectic English language
7	Bobo	little boy	Vai
8	Boku	abundant/many	French (beaucoup)
9	Enty	Negative question particle	English (aint it?)
10	Chuck	Sharp, piece, thorn	Dialectic English language

\*Adapted from (Huber 1999)

### 3. Data and methodology

This research focuses on the use of Pidgin English among West African students studying in Northern Cyprus. A university milieu was preferred because earlier studies have highlighted the prevalent use of Pidgin English among students in higher institutions of learning (Akande & Salami 2010; Stoller 1979; Amao 2012). Furthermore, this study was conducted in Eastern Mediterranean University, the biggest university in Northern Cyprus. It was deemed appropriate for this study because it has the highest number of international students among the ten other universities in North Cyprus. In 2015/2016 session, it had 20000 students from 106 different countries.

#### 3.1. Participants and sample

For the present study, 129 West African students enrolled in Eastern Mediterranean University, participated in the study. For the careful selection of the sample, disproportionate stratification was employed because the sampling fractions of Nigerian and Cameroonian students were far more than the number of Ghanaian students chosen based on the availability in the institution. The sample is almost equally distributed between the sexes: 49.6% (64 men) and 50.4% (65 female). For

participants age group, 39.5% are between age group 20-24, 33.3% are between 25-29, 12.4% are between 15-19, 10.9% are between age group 30-34 and 3.9% are 35 and above. For respondents' nationality, 54.3% are Nigerians (70 students), 38.8% are Cameroonians (50 students) and 7.0% are Ghanaians (9 students). The summary of the demographic profile of study respondents shows that male and females were equally distributed, participants between the age group 20-24 were the highest and Nigerian participants were more than students of other nationalities.

### 3.2. *Data collection instrument*

The data collection instrument for the study was a 45 questions in-house questionnaire that was organized into six different categories to answer the four research questions. The first part of the questionnaire contained the demographic characteristics (sex, age and nationality). The second group of questions consists of background information on the use of West African Pidgin English. The third part of the questionnaire contained questions on the use of West African Pidgin English. The items in this section was based on personal usage of Pidgin English, traditional media inclined usage of Pidgin English and computer mediated communication inclined use of West African Pidgin English. All 15 statements were measured with five point Likert scale. The fourth part of the questionnaire contained questions on the importance of Pidgin English to West African students studying in North Cyprus. All five items were presented in five point Likert scale.

The fifth part of the questionnaire measured the perception of West African students towards Pidgin and all nine items were presented in five point Likert scale. Final part of the questionnaire contained questions on the attitudes of West African students towards Pidgin English. All nine items were also presented on five point Likert scale.

### 3.3. *Research Procedure*

Based on the data obtained from the survey of 129 West African students studying in Eastern Mediterranean university. Data was presented through a descriptive design. Frequencies and percentages was presented for the first and second section of the analysis. The third and fourth sections were presented in mean and standard deviation and finally, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there are any significant differences in respect to participants' perception and attitude towards Pidgin English between three groups (participants' nationality). All statistical analysis was carried out on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software 18.00.

## 4. **Findings**

A total of 129 West African students took part in this study. Table 2 shows the use of West African Pidgin English in everyday activities in North Cyprus.

Findings shown in Table 3 indicate three categories: personal Pidgin English usage, traditional media inclined usage and computer mediated communication inclined usage of West African Pidgin English. Likert scale was used at two point scales (Yes, No). Findings show that in the first category, 58.1% of respondents agree that they speak Pidgin English excellently. For the second category, 60.5% of the respondents agree that they watch Pidgin English Films. For the third category, respondents who watch Pidgin English comedy video clips were 74.4%. Those who speak Pidgin English when they converse on mobile phones were 66.7%. Respondents that read social media posts that are written in Pidgin English were 80.6% and finally, 65.9%. of the respondents' chat with Pidgin English on social media.

Table 2: Use of West African Pidgin English in North Cyprus

Statements	Frequency	%	Statements	Frequency	%
I always speak Pidgin English	55	42.6	I watch Pidgin English comedy video clips online	96	<b>74.4</b>
	74	57.4		33	25.6
I express myself better with Pidgin English	34	26.4	I stream Pidgin English based Television programs	33	25.6
	95	73.6		96	<b>74.4</b>
I speak Pidgin English excellently	75	<b>58.1</b>	I speak Pidgin English when I make phone calls	86	<b>66.7</b>
	54	41.9		43	33.3
I take notes in class with Pidgin English	13	10.1	I post on social media with Pidgin English	49	38.0
	116	89.9		80	62.0
I read online newspapers in Pidgin English	16	12.4	I read social media posts that are written in Pidgin English	104	<b>80.6</b>
	113	87.6		25	19.4
I read books online in Pidgin English	14	10.9	I chat with Pidgin English on social media e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram etc.	85	<b>65.9</b>
	115	89.1		44	34.1
I listen to online radio programs in Pidgin English	58	45.0	I read Pidgin English oriented websites	30	23.3
	71	55.0		99	76.7
I watch Pidgin English Films online	78	<b>60.5</b>			
	51	39.5			

n=129

Table 3: Importance of Pidgin English to West African students in North Cyprus

Statements	Frequency	%	Statements	Frequency	%
Pidgin English is very important to me because it helps me to communicate with other West Africans with another language other than English language	28	21.7	I prefer to speak Pidgin English at social gatherings instead of other sharable languages like standard English language, French or Turkish language.	21	16.3
	48	<b>37.2</b>		25	19.4
	21	16.3		28	21.7
	21	16.3		36	27.9
	11	8.5		19	14.7
Pidgin English is of extreme importance to me because it connects the hundreds of West African ethnic groups together	24	18.6	Pidgin English is of extreme importance to me because I can easily code switch to another language	19	14.7
	48	<b>37.2</b>		47	<b>36.4</b>
	29	22.5		31	24.0
	19	14.7		24	18.6
Pidgin English is of extreme importance to me because of less grammatical rules	9	7.0		8	6.2
	20	15.5			
	45	<b>34.9</b>			
	28	21.7			
	24	18.6			
	12	9.3			

n=129

Findings in Table 3 above indicate the importance of Pidgin English as language of social interaction among respondents. Likert was used at five-point scales ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Findings show that 37.2% agreed that Pidgin English is very important to them because it helps to communicate with other West Africans with another language other than English language. Respondents who agreed that Pidgin English is of extreme importance to them because it connects the hundreds of West African ethnic groups together were 37.2%. Those respondents agreed that Pidgin English is of extreme importance to them because of less grammatical rules were 34.9% and finally 36.4% of the respondents agreed that Pidgin English is of extreme importance to them because they can easily code switch to another language. The result shows that the responses that comes to the fore in respect to the importance of the language are because the language connects West African students together, it has less grammatical rules and it allows for easy code switching.

#### 4.1. Respondents attitude and perception of West African Pidgin English

Perception and attitudes are two interconnected concepts apropos human behavior. However, there is a substantial difference between them. Perception is knowledge gained based on the formation of a concept while attitude which is an offshoot of perception, is basically a person's feelings, beliefs and bias to act in a certain way towards an issue or person. Considering the aforesaid, perception is measured in this study, based on respondents' viewpoint of Pidgin English while attitude is operationalized to measure respondents take on the adoption of more Pidgin English in their everyday lives.

Table 4: Perception of West African students studying in North Cyprus towards Pidgin English

Statements	Mean	Attitudes	Statements	Mean	Attitudes
Pidgin English is underrated	2.41	A	There are some persons that one shouldn't speak Pidgin English to	2.10	A
Pidgin English is easy to learn	2.21	A	Pidgin English makes my standard English bad	2.30	A
West African Pidgin English is worth to be recognized internationally	2.62	A	I feel offended when people speak to me at formal gatherings e.g. classroom	2.94	U
Pidgin English is a good language and it should be incorporated into the curriculum of pre-college schools in my country	3.29	U	Pidgin English is the language of the non-literates	3.26	U

n=129

Results shown in Table 4 indicate the means and attitudes of participants' perception of West African Pidgin English. Likert was used at five-point scales ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" to ascertain perception of respondents towards Pidgin English. Balci (2004) posits that values scale division is: 1=strongly agree, (1-1.79 SD) 2=agree, (1.80-2.59 D) 3=undecided, (2.60-3.39 U) 4=disagree (3.40-4.19 A) and 5= strongly disagree (4.20-5 SA) (Balci 2004). Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents agree that Pidgin English is easy to learn, it is underrated and the language is worth to be recognized internationally. They also agreed that Pidgin English makes their standard English weak and that there are some persons one should not speak Pidgin English to. In respect to respondents score on average, respondents who agreed that West African Pidgin English is worth to be recognized internationally scored higher than those who said Pidgin English is underrated. Participants who agreed that Pidgin English makes their standard English bad scored higher than those who agreed that the language is easy to learn and those who agreed that there are some persons that one shouldn't speak Pidgin English to.

Results shown in Table 5 below indicate the attitudes of the respondents towards Pidgin English. According to descriptive statistics, the last four items on the table shows the statements with the highest scores. This demonstrates that most of the participants accedes that they will like Pidgin English to be adopted as an official language in their respective countries (M= 3.23, SD=1.30). Participants who would like to read more Pidgin English-oriented websites were next, (M= 3.13, SD= 1.14). Those who would like to see more online newspapers in Pidgin English followed with (M= 2.99, SD=1.26) and finally those who would like to see more online books in Pidgin English with (M=3.05, SD= 1.18). Therefore, these four items come to the fore of



respondents' attitude to West African Pidgin English. Furthermore, participants who would like Pidgin English to be adopted as an official language in their country scored better on average than those who would like to read more Pidgin English oriented websites. Those who would like to see more online books in Pidgin English scored higher on average than those who would like to see more online newspapers in Pidgin English.

Table 5: Attitudes of West African students studying in North Cyprus towards Pidgin English

Statement	M	Std. Dev	Statement	M	Std. Dev.
I will like to see more Pidgin English Comedy Video clips	2.17	1.05	I will use Pidgin English based Facebook if launched	2.91	1.19
I will like to see more Pidgin English Films	2.60	1.11	I will like to see more online newspapers in Pidgin English	<b>2.99</b>	1.26
I will like more radio programs in Pidgin English	2.65	1.21	I will like to see more online books in Pidgin English	<b>3.05</b>	1.18
I will like to see more online television programs in Pidgin English	2.74	1.18	I will like to read more Pidgin English oriented websites	<b>3.13</b>	1.14
I think the quality of Pidgin English is bad compared to other languages e.g. English, French, Twi	2.81	1.19	I will like Pidgin English to be adopted as an official language in my country	<b>3.23</b>	1.30

n=129

#### 4.2. Differentiations of respondents perception and attitude towards Pidgin English

One-way ANOVA was employed to assess the nationality differentiation of respondents perception of Pidgin English (see Table 6).

Table 6 shows the degrees of freedom, mean square, f value and most importantly the p value. The p value is typically proven to be significant if the colown sig. is less than or equal to 0.05. Result shows that "Pidgin English is the language of the non-literates" was found to be significant,  $p = .021$ . To determine the actual difference in the mean scores between the groups, mean graph was plotted and Ghanaian students recorded the lowest as Cameroonian students recorded the highest. This shows that the mean values were assessed higher for Cameroonian students more than others in respect to the viewpoint that Pidgin English is the language of the non-literates.

One-way ANOVA was also conducted to determine the nationality differentiation of respondents attitude towards Pidgin English. The table shows degrees of freedom, mean square, f value and most importantly the p value and the goal is to established as significant if the colown sig. is less than or equal to 0.05. Results shows that "I will like Pidgin English to be adopted as an official language in my country" was found to be significant,  $p = .021$ . To compare the mean scores for the different groups, means graph was plotted and result shows that Ghanaian students recorded the lowest as Cameroonian students recorded the highest. This proves that mean values were assessed higher for Cameroonian students more than others in respect to the adoption of Pidgin English as an official language in their different countries.

Table 6: One-way ANOVA for the differentiation of respondents perception of Pidgin English

	df	Mean square	f	p
Pidgin English is underrated	2	1.425	1.377	.256
	126	1.035		
	128			
Pidgin English is easy to learn	2	.143	.142	.868
	126	1.008		
	128			
West African pidgin is worth to be recognized internationally	2	1.730	1.407	.249
	126	1.230		
	128			
Pidgin English is a good language and it should be incorporated into the curriculum of pre college schools in my country	2	3.950	2.580	.080
	126	1.531		
	128			
There are some persons that one shouldnt speak Pidgin English to	2	.285	.244	.784
	126	1.168		
	128			
Pidgin English makes my standard English bad	2	.231	.150	.861
	126	1.546		
	128			
I feel offended when people speak to me at formal gatherings e.g classroom	2	2.521	1.569	.212
	126	1.607		
	128			
Pidgin English is the language of the non-literates	2	6.402	3.998	<b>.021</b>
	126	1.601		
	128			
The quality of pidgin English is bad when compared to other languages e.g English, French, Twi	2	.947	.669	.514
	126	1.415		
	128			

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p < 0.05; p < 0.01

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**Table 7: One-way ANOVA for the differentiations of respondents attitudes towards Pidgin English**

	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I will like to see more online newspapers in Pidgin English	2 126 128	3.909 1.438	2.718	.070
I will like to see more online books in Pidgin English	2 126 128	2.165 1.392	1.555	.215
I will like more radio programs in Pidgin English	2 126 128	.798 1.474	.542	.583
I will like to see more online television programs in Pidgin English	2 126 128	1.533 1.381	1.110	.333
I will like to read more Pidgin English oriented websites	2 126 128	1.010 1.307	.772	.464
I will use Pidgin English based Facebook if launched	2 126 128	3.295 1.383	2.382	.097
I will like Pidgin English to be adopted as an official language in my country	2 126 128	6.380 1.605	3.975	<b>.021</b>
I will like to see more Pidgin English Films	2 126 128	.372 1.239	.300	.741
I will like to see more Pidgin English Comedy Video clips	2 126 128	2.560 1.088	2.352	.099

p < 0.05; p < 0.01

## 5. Conclusion and discussion of findings

The present study investigated the use of West African Pidgin English among West African students studying in North Cyprus. West African Pidgin English has a strong connection with student environment and a number of studies have highlighted these connections at different levels (Akande & Salami 2010; Rupp 2013; Neba, Chibaka, & Atindogbe 2006; Amao 2012).

Just as some of the findings of this study have shown, West African students use of Pidgin English in their everyday activities in North Cyprus. Most participants agreed that they speak Pidgin English excellently. In the effort to situate the results of this study to the context of the relevant literature, we found out that some of the findings of this study are consistent with earlier

studies that has inquired into university students use of Pidgin English in West African higher institutions of learning.

According to Amao in a study conducted on the use of Pidgin English as a medium of social discourse in two campuses at Osun State University (College of Science and Engineering Technology, Osogbo Campus and the College of Humanities and Culture, Ikire Campus), findings show that only a few respondents claim that they do not speak Pidgin English at all. He further mentioned that out of the significant population of Nigerian Pidgin English speakers in the university campuses, 28% and 30% respectively don't speak Nigerian Pidgin English fully. 56% and 52% are regular speakers of Nigerian Pidgin in both campuses (Amao 2012).

In the evaluation of the usage of West African Pidgin English, traditional media inclined usage of West African Pidgin English category reveals that most of the respondents watch Pidgin English Films online. For computer mediated communication inclined usage of West African Pidgin, most participants agree that they watch comedy video clips online, they speak Pidgin English when they make phone calls, they read social media posts that are written in Pidgin English and they chat with Pidgin English on social media e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram etc. When all uses of West African Pidgin English was evaluated, result shows that statements related to Internet-based social networking came to the fore of respondents use of Pidgin English. This is however the case because with the intervention of the new media, Internet-based communication has become an integral part of our everyday lives and people want to express themselves with the most suitable language while using these technologies.

West African Pidgin English is ultimately important in blurring the multilingual lines between West African students in North Cyprus. Like Akande puts it, the language plays a slew of significant communicative functions in the social lives of Nigerian students because of the inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic communication it enables (Akande & Salami 2010). Results of the present study shows that majority of participants agree that Pidgin English is important to them because it helps them to communicate with other West African students with another language other than English language. It is important because it connects the hundreds of West African ethnic groups together and because of less grammatical rules. Finally, majority of participants said it is also important because they can easily code switch to another language while speaking Pidgin English.

Considering that West African Pidgin English has always been perceived inferior and has been called a substandard language, the evaluation of the perceptions of West African students in North Cyprus towards Pidgin English shows that respondents gained a viewpoint that was characterized by affirmation towards the language. Most respondents think Pidgin English is underrated, they think it is easy to learn and they think it is worth to be recognized internationally. Although most of them disagreed with incorporating Pidgin English into the curriculum of pre-college schools in their countries. This finding is consistent with the findings of Akande & Salami (2010).

According to Akande & Salami (2010) in a study conducted at two universities in one of the two locations with a highest speaking rate of Nigerian Pidgin English (Lagos and Benin), they accede that with respect to student's attitude towards Pidgin English, most of the participants of the two universities studied (University of Lagos and University of Benin) do not have a positive attitude to the teaching of Nigerian Pidgin English. More than 75% of students from each of the two schools disagreed to the teaching of Nigerian Pidgin English language in Nigerian schools (Akande & Salami 2010). This present study reveals that majority of the participants disagreed with the incorporation of Pidgin English into the curriculum of pre-college schools in their respective countries. An in-depth look at the descriptive statistics showing frequency and percentages of this item indicates that the sum of participants who agreed was 31.4%, undecided was 25.3% and sum of those who disagreed was 43.6%.

Results establish that West African Pidgin is widely used by West African students studying in

North Cyprus but there is specificity to what they use the language for and what they think about the language. Result also suggests that respondents are generally positive towards West African Pidgin English.

Since this study is centered on understanding the use and perception of Pidgin English among West African students North Cyprus, further studies should take a step further to investigate and assess the influence of West African Pidgin English in North Cyprus because a careful observation based on this study shows that other students from other countries who have made friends with West Africans are seen to use some of the West African Pidgin English words. The most commonly used phrase is “how far” which means hey, how are you doing, what’s new or what is happening? This investigation could provide interesting results and new insights into the power of West African Pidgin English.

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### Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. Sex a) Male b) Female
2. Age group a) 15-19 b) 20-24 c) 25-29 d) 30-34 e) others (please specify)
3. Nationality a) Nigerian b) Cameroonian c) Ghanaian
4. When did you start speaking Pidgin English?
  - a) Childhood b) primary school c) secondary school d) North Cyprus e) others (please specify)
5. Where do you mostly speak Pidgin English in North Cyprus
  - a) Classroom b) Apartment c) social gathering d) everywhere e) others (please specify)
6. What class of people do you speak Pidgin English with in North Cyprus?
  - a) Friends b) Family c) All West Africans I meet d) All of the above e) Others (please specify)
7. If you are to grade how well you use Pidgin English in North Cyprus, what will you grade it?
  - a) Excellent b) Good c) Fair d) Poor e) Very Poor

**USE OF PIDGIN ENGLISH**

SN		Yes	No
8	I always speak Pidgin English		
9	I express myself better with Pidgin English		
10	I speak Pidgin English excellently		
11	I take notes in class with Pidgin English		
12	I read online newspapers in Pidgin English		
13	I read books online in Pidgin English		
14	I listen to online radio programs in Pidgin English		
15	I watch Pidgin English films online		
16	I watch Pidgin English comedy video clips		
17	I stream Pidgin English based Television programs		
18	I speak Pidgin English when I make phone calls		
19	I post on social media with Pidgin English		
20	I read social media posts that are written in Pidgin English		
21	I chat with Pidgin English on social media e.g. Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram etc		
22	I read Pidgin English oriented websites		

**IMPORTANCE OF PIDGIN ENGLISH**

**Note:** Answer question 24 as it applies to you

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23	Pidgin English is very important to me because it helps me to communicate with other west Africans with another language other than English language					
24	Pidgin English is of extreme importance to me because it connects the hundreds of West African ethnic groups together.					
25	Pidgin English is of extreme importance to me because of less grammatical rules					
26	I prefer to speak Pidgin English at social gatherings instead of other sharable languages like standard English language, French or Turkish language.					
27	Pidgin English is of extreme importance to me because I can easily code switch to another language					

**Note:** Answer question 36 as it applies to you

**PERCEPTION OF WEST AFRICAN STUDENTS TOWARDS PIDGIN ENGLISH**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
28	Pidgin English is underrated					
29	Pidgin English is easy to learn					
30	West African Pidgin English is worth to be formally recognized internationally					
31	Pidgin English is a good language and it should be incorporated into the curriculum of pre-college schools in my country					
32	There are some persons that one shouldn't speak Pidgin					

	English to					
33	Pidgin English makes my standard English bad					
34	I feel offended when people speak Pidgin English to me at formal gatherings e.g. classroom					
35	Pidgin English is a language of the non-literates					
36	The quality of Pidgin English is bad when compared to other languages e.g English, French, Twi					

#### ATTITUDES OF WEST AFRICAN STUDENTS TOWARDS PIDGIN ENGLISH

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37	I will like to see more online newspapers in Pidgin English					
38	I will like to see more online books in Pidgin English					
39	I will like more radio programs in Pidgin English to be available					
40	I will like to see more online television programs in Pidgin English					
41	I will like to read more Pidgin English oriented websites.					
42	I will use Pidgin English based Facebook if launched					
43	I will like Pidgin English to be adopted as an official language in my country					
44	I will like to see more Pidgin English films					
45	I will like to see more Pidgin English comedy video clips					