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A Corpus-Assisted Sociolinguistic Assessment of Preposition Use in Selected Varieties of Nigerian Pidgin Radio Programmes

Damilola Oyeyipo[1]
Department of English,
Redeemers' University, Ede, Nigeria.

Adebola Adebileje [2]
Department of English,
Redeemers' University, Ede, Nigeria.

Abstract

Despite the growing body of research on Nigerian Pidgin, limited studies focus specifically on the prepositional use of Nigerian Pidgin regional varieties, especially in radio broadcasts. Therefore, this study examines the usage of spatial and temporal prepositions which are integral to deriving meanings from sentences and serve as markers that establish relationships among sentential elements. The data isa corpus of 300,000 words built from purposively selected NP regional radio broadcasts in Warri, Lagos, and Edo termed Nigerian Pidgin Radio Broadcast Corpus (NPRBC).Premised on Halliday's SFG's ideational framework, and from a sociolinguistic point of view, a two-fold analysis: qualitative and quantitative methods are employed for the data analysis. While the qualitative approach compares contextual prepositional usage among the NP varieties, the qualitative approach identifies their collocation patterns and frequencies using the Ant Conc corpus tool. Findings reveal that spatial prepositions like *on top*, *for inside*, *near, for*, and temporal prepositions such as *before, since,* and *till* exhibit flexible, context-dependent meanings influenced by substrate languages, such as Urhobo in Warri, Yoruba in Lagos, and Bini in Edo, alongside English. *For* which has the highest frequency (500 concordance hits for Warri; 408 for Edo and 410 for Lagos) serves as a multi-functional marker for location, time, and audience, often transferred from Urhobo *na*, Yoruba *ni* or Bini *ne*. The collocation patterns for *ontop* in Warri NP in five contextual instances varies syntactically such as: N + Prep + Pron; Adv + Prep + N; V + Prep + N; Prep + Prep + N; Adv + Prep + N. These patterns slightly differ from the Edo usage of '*ontop*'V + Prep + Prep; V+ Prep + Pro; V + Prep + Prep + N; N + Prep + NP; N + Prep + NP and for the Lagos variety use of *on top*, there is a syntactic consistency in the pattern such as: N + Prep + N; N + Prep + N; NP/Adv+ Prep + NP; Pron + Prep + N; N + Prep + NP. Thus, NP's syntax contrasts with NE's more specific prepositional choices, depicting local linguistic and socio-cultural factors, including ethnic diversity and language contact. This research emphasises NP's adaptability and regional variation, stressing its role as a dynamic lingua franca in Nigeria's multilingual landscape.

Keywords: Nigerian Pidgin, spatial and temporal prepositions, language contact, substrate influence, systemic functional grammar, regional variation.

[1] oyeyipo16023@run.edu.ng
[2] adebilejea@run.edu.ng

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Introduction

Nigerian Pidgin's (NP) origin can be traced to the coastal trade centres of the Niger Delta, such as Warri, Sapele, Bonny, and Calabar, between the 15th and 17th centuries. It initially developed through contact between Portuguese merchants and indigenous groups like the Itsekiri, Ijaw, Edo, and Igbo. Over time, with the rise of the British colonial rule, the language shifted to an English-based pidgin.[3]Currently, in Nigeria, the status of NP has really evolved from its undesirable terminologies ofa 'bastardized, uncouth, and illiterate language to a language with almost the highest population of speakers and the most used interethnic lingua franca'.[4]NP is now the preferred language for identity purpose in casual talks and other interactional situations among university students in Nigeria, while English is used for lectures and other official events.[5]Also, NP's usage has surged even among high professionals and well-educated people such as lawyers, doctors, professors.[6]Many other linguists believe that the growing use of Nigerian Pidgin spans the media, the entertainment industry, politics, religious and even the forces such as military, police thereby recommending it for the status of a national language.[7],[8],[9]NP is also widely spoken beyond the shores of Nigeria giving it the status of the "largest European-lexifier contact language on the globe."[10],[11]

NP being a significant variety of language that has emerged within Nigeria's multilingual and ethno-linguistic diversity with 500 languages contributes to regional variations in NP often being seriously influenced by such local regional languages and it is fast evolving into a well-defined creole (in some quarters)

[3]Esizimetor, D.O. 2010. Historical development of Naija (Nigeria Pidgin) IFRA Nigeria.
[4]Agbo, O. F. (2022). Language Use and Code-switching among Educated English-Nigerian Pidgin Bilinguals in Nigeria. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Philosophie (Dr. phil.) durch die Philosophische Fakultät der Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf.
[5]Ajibade Y. A., Adeyemi, B.B., and Awopetu, E. O. (2012). Unity in Diversity: The Nigerian Youth, Nigerian pidgin, and the Nigerian Language policy. Journal of Educational and Social Research, 2(3), 289.
[6]Osoba, J. B. (2014). *The use of Nigerian Pidgin in media adverts*. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 4*(2), 26–37. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v4n2p26
[7]Ugwuanyi K. O. and Aboh S. C. (2025). Nigerian English: History, functions and features.*World Englishes.* DOI: 10.1111/weng.. 12732.
[8]Agbo, O. F. (2022). Language Use and Code-switching among Educated English-Nigerian Pidgin Bilinguals in Nigeria. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Philosophie
[9]Elugbe, B. O., &Omamor, A. P. (1991). Nigerian Pidgin: Background and prospects.Heinemann Educational Books.
[10]Agbo, O. F. (2022). Language Use and Code-switching among Educated English-Nigerian Pidgin Bilinguals in Nigeria. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Philosophie
[11]Faraclas, N. G. (2005). Nigerian Pidgin. Taylor and Francis e-library.

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known as "Naijá" recommending it for the status of a national language.[12],[13]For instance, the Pidgin spoken in Lagos differs significantly from that in Warri, and both varieties are distinct from the version spoken in Port Harcourt, demonstrating that urban centres, in particular, exhibit distinct speech patterns.[14]In Warri, a major multilingual hub in Delta State, Nigeria, NP has creolised, serving as a first language for many residents among the Itsekiri, Urhobo, and Ijaw ethnic groups. This creolisation reflects Warri's historical role as a trading centre necessitating a shared language for diverse communities.[15]Hence, NP facilitates communication across tribal lines, embodying Warri's culture of adaptability and ethnic neutrality.[16] Warri's linguistic diversity includes three primary indigenous languages: Itsekiri, Urhobo, and Ijaw.[17] This study focuses on the Urhobo variety due to its significant demographic and historical prominence in Warri.[18]

In Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, NP thrives as a unifying lingua franca in markets, media, and urban settings, reflecting the city's multicultural and entrepreneurial spirit. Influenced by Yoruba, the dominant indigenous language, and the diverse population, including Niger Delta migrants, NP fosters social cohesion in areas like Ajegunle, bridging Nigeria's over 500 ethnic groups.[19] For this study, the Yoruba-influenced variety of NP is analysed to explore its impact on preposition usage in Lagos's cosmopolitan context.

In Edo State, particularly Benin City, NP is shaped by the Bini language, resulting in a distinct variety known as Benin Pidgin, often regarded as a standard form of NP.[20] The melodic quality of Benin Pidgin, influenced by Edo's tonal structure, mirrors the region's rich cultural heritage as a historical centre of art and trade.[21] Among Edo State's twelve major indigenous languages, Bini is the most widely spoken due to the demographic dominance and historical

[12]Okere E. C. and Ajileye M.O. (2024). Variety Differentiation in Nigerian Pidgin: A Sociolinguistic Study. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies* 12(4):*65-69DOI*:10.24940/theijhss/2024/v12/i4/HS2404-012.
[13]Eberhard, D. M., Simons, G. F., & Fennig, C. D. (Eds.). (2021). Ethnologue: Languages of the World (24th ed.). SILInternational.
[14]Okere E. C. and Ajileye M.O. (2024). Variety Differentiation in Nigerian Pidgin: A Sociolinguistic Study. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies* 12(4):*65-69DOI*:10.24940/theijhss/2024/v12/i4/HS2404-012.
[15]Oloruntoba, C. I. (1992). Sociocultural dimensions of Nigerian Pidgin usage (Western Niger Delta of Nigeria) (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Indiana University.
[16]Faraclas, N. (1996). Nigerian Pidgin. Routledge.
[17]Udoh, I. (2013). *The languages of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323972709_The_Languages_of_the_Niger_Delta_Region_of_Nigeria
[18]Ikime, O. (1969). Niger Delta Rivalry: Itsekiri-Urhobo Relations and the European Presence, 1884-1936. Ibadan History Series. Longman.
[19]Deuber, D. (2005). Nigerian Pidgin in Lagos: Language contact, variation and change in an African urban setting. Battlebridge.
[20]Elugbe, B. O. (1995). Nigerian Pidgin: Problems and prospects. In A. Bamgbose, A. Banjo, & A. Thomas (Eds.), *New Englishes: A West African perspective* (pp. 284–299). Ibadan: Mosuro.
[21]Igboanusi, H. (2008). Empowering Nigerian Pidgin: A challenge for status planning? International *Journal of the Sociology of Language,* 2008(191), 5–27. https://doi.org/10.1515/IJSL.2008.005

influence of the Benin Kingdom.[22] For this analysis, the Bini-influenced variety of NP is examined to assess its effect on preposition structures, aligning with Benin City's identity as a culturally proud and inclusive region.

Literature Review

Although NP is often described as linguistically simple, neutral, and impartial, contributing to its widespread popularity and strong grassroots appeal which has made many Nigerians favour NP in commodified spaces and broader contexts.[23]It has gained wide scholarly traction among linguists who study it from various perspectives and for different reasons.

Isah, Adamu & Olatunde[24] observe and describe the linguistic features of the pidgin used among teenagers in Ilorin, Nigeria from a sociolinguistic approach. Using Labov's (2015) variationist sociolinguistic theory and Hudson's (2001) fourth model of linguistic description, they reveal teenagers' frequent use 'of' in place of 'to', 'at' and 'in' across different word formations, reduplication, borrowing, blending, compounding, and distinct maker forms for pronouns; many semantic borrowing, extension and shift; and simple clausal structures and few relative clauses with 'wey' as a marker. They adduce this to sociolinguistic factors such as bilingualism, interference, code switching and code-mixing.

Omenogor and Akpojisheri[25] investigate the nature and causes of difficulties in the prepositions use of ESL students in Delta state, Nigeria whose mother tongue is the Nigerian Pidgin. Their study shows that students get confused with the multiple functions and uses of English prepositions which contradict their mother tongues (NP) usage. In a study of English and Nigerian Pidgin bilinguals in Manchester, United Kingdom, Jalaludeen[26]discovers that bilinguals use the pidgin preposition 'fo' for multiple functions and adduces the cause to the fact that while NP derives its vocabulary from English (superstrate),its sound system is derived from the syntax of the local languages (substrate). He identifies various contexts of 'fo' to include: as a possessive marker, as spatial and temporal preposition, where "foinside" (spatial) overtly indicates the relationship between direct and indirect objects; "fo" functioning as "on" (spatial locative (positional and temporal); "fo" functioning as "of" to indicate a point of reference; lastly, "fo" being used as "by" (preposition of agent). However, in these contexts, he states that interpretation depends on listeners'

[22]Elugbe, B. O. (1989). A comparative Edoid phonology. University of Port Harcourt Press.
[23]Ndimele, O. M. (2016). *African linguistics on the prairie: Selected papers from the 45th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*. Berlin: Language Science Press.
[24]Isah, A. L.; Adamu, I.; and Olatunde O. A. (2023). A Sociolinguistic Study of the Use of Nigerian Pidgin English by Teenagers in Selected Places of Football Sports in Ilorin. The Noun Scholar. Vol. 3 N os. 1.
[25]Omenogor, H. D. & Akpojisheri, M. O. (2024). The Difficulties Encountered in the Use of English Prepositions by English as Second Language (ESL) students: A Study of University of Delta, Agbor, Nigeria Students. Journal of Humanities and Social Policy. Vol 10. No.1 www.iiardjournals.org
[26]Jalaludeen, I. (2016). Nigerian Pidgin English: Multi-Prepositional Functionality of "Fo" Among Nigerian Staff of Ces in Manchester.

notional semantic instinct as well as the type of nominal element with which 'fo' occurs. (Jalaludeen).[27]

Agbo[28] investigates mutual influence between English and NP among educated bilinguals in actual language use in Nigeria. The study identifies levels and patterns of variation, and the factors that motivate switching between both languages within this social group. In a similar study, Abidoye and Wolf[29] investigate verb patterning and acculturation in Nigerian English to portray a subtle emergence of language variation in the Nigerian multilingual landscape that has the tendency of developing habits of coinages and varying collocational patterns. They discover that this process culminates into unique collocation patterns of verbs showing an evolving ongoing acculturation process in Nigerian English. The result is an evolving process of 'lexicalised and specific-confined, rigid word combinations, new phraseological or fixed multi-word units' (Abidoye and Wolf).[30]

Exploring the usage of NP in regions such as Warri, Lagos, and Edo therefore can reveal how factors like migration, ethnicity, and local lingua franca interactions influence the development of grammatical features such as prepositions. It also underscores the variational potential of the NP language. Okitikpi and Obobolo[31]in corroboration note that variation is a defining characteristic of Nigeria's English/ Pidgin lexified languages rather than an anomaly.

Prepositions are integral to sentence structure. They serve as markers that establish relationships between different elements in a sentence. They are essential in marking spatial, temporal, and logical relationships.[32]Moreover, examining their use provides great insights into how a language structures meaning. In semantics and cognition, spatial prepositions like 'in,' 'on,' 'at,' and 'under' represent fundamental concepts; for example, the term 'inside' conveys a more specific form of containment than the more general 'in' (Ofulue, 2020).[33]Additionally, languages frequently employ spatial prepositions metaphorically to express concepts of time (such as 'in 2025' or 'at noon') and cause (such as 'because of rain' or 'for lack of evidence). However, the use of prepositions in NP is far more complex as a result of regional influences, indigenous languages, and the evolving nature of Pidgin which culminates in

[27] Ibid.
[28]Agbo, O. F. (2022). Language Use and Code-switching among Educated English-Nigerian Pidgin Bilinguals in Nigeria. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Philosophie
[29]Abidoye, M.I. and Wolf, Hans-Georf (2025). Verb patterning and acculturation in Nigerian English. World Englishes. Online Open Access.
[30] Ibid.
[31]Okitikpi, M., &Obobolo, V. (2025). Influence of social variation (age) in the use of Nigerian Pidgin (NP): A survey of selected cities (Warri and Port Harcourt) in Nigeria. *Direct Research Journal of Social Science and Educational Studies,* 13(1), 60–69.
[32]Kemmerer, D. (2005). The spatial and temporal meanings of English prepositions can be independently impaired. *Neuropsychologia*, 43(5), 797-806.DOI (10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2004.06.025).
[33]Ofulue, C. I. (2020). Nigerian Pidgin English: A cultural and linguistic bridge. *Journal of African Cultural Studies,* 32(3), 235–250. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2019.1690920.

significant variability in prepositional usage (Faraclas, 1996).[34] For instance, the preposition 'fo' in NP might express multiple meanings, such as location, direction, or purpose, depending on the context and the region (Akande, 2008). Therefore, this paper analyses the usage of spatial and temporal prepositions in selected regional NP to reveal underlying patterns of meaning-making and the influence of language contact where prepositions often display notable innovations or simplifications. Focusing on Lagos, Warri, and Edo allows us to observe national and local patterns to see whether or not NP simplifies or reuses NE structures (or vice versa), and how local substrate languages mediate such processes. The study addresses a novel niche: the intersection of prepositional semantics, language contact, and regional variation in Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives

Specifically, this study aims to comparatively examine how spatial and temporal prepositions are used in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) across Warri, Lagos, and Edo regions, using a compiled corpus as data and analysing through a sociolinguistic approach assisted by a corpus tool. The following specific objectives guide the study:

i. to identify patterns of similarity and differences in the contextual usage of spatial and temporal prepositions across NP regions (Warri, Lagos, Edo).
ii. to describe the frequencies and collocation patterns of spatial and temporal prepositions across the NP regional varieties using the AntConc tool.
iii. to explore the linguistic and socio-cultural factors that account for variations in the use of prepositions across the NP varieties and regions.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The study adapts Halliday's 1960 Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) which focuses on how language is utilised to achieve communicative purposes in different contexts. This approach is employed because it emphasises the functionality of language which serves to make meaning rather than simply following grammatical rules. It describes language as a system of choices, where speakers and writers make selections based on the functions they wish to perform.[35] According to Halliday (2014)[36], language operates at three main levels: Ideational, Interpersonal and Textual metafunctions. At the ideational metafunction level, language is used to represent experiences, ideas, and the world around us. It explains the 'what's happening?' questions. The ideational meaning represents our experience of the world through processes, participants, and circumstances. Therefore, this study adapts the ideational metafunction level as the framework for the analysis of data.

[34]Faraclas, N. (1996). Nigerian Pidgin. Routledge.
[35]Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar (4th ed.). Routledge.
[36]Halliday, M.A.K (2014). Introduction to Functional Grammar.4th Edition. Routledge

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Research Design

This study adopts a comparative descriptive design through the sociolinguistic approach using aqualitative analysis method to examine prepositional usage in NP across three major urban centres: Warri, Lagos, and Edo; and a quantitative approach using the AntConc tool to identify frequencies and collocation patterns in the different regions' usage of spatial and temporal prepositions. The goal is to identify patterns, variations, and underlying factors influencing the use of spatial and temporal prepositions in these language varieties.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

The population for the study entails all the users of Nigerian Pidgin across the diverse ethnolinguistic landscape of Nigeria. The sample consists of three NP varieties of Warri, Edo and Lagos purposively selected because they represent Nigeria's diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Warri and Edo, for example, are areas where NP has historically been more widespread and widely accepted as a lingua franca. Also, according to Deuber (2005[37]), Warri in the Niger Delta is the place of birth of NP, where it has acquired native speakers. At the same time, Lagos is a cosmopolitan hub with significant Yoruba influence and higher exposure to Standard English norms. These selected areas also encompass various ethnic groups, such as the Yoruba in Lagos, the Urhobo, Isoko, Ijaw, and Itsekiri in Warri, and in Edo, where Bini is a major substrate language, influencing NP usage. Furthermore, each region has local media channels that reflect language preferences and styles.

Also, six NP-based radio stations are purposively selected from the three regions, meaning two (2) radio stations from each region, and they are:Kpoko FM 100.5 (Warri); Crown FM 89.9 (Warri); Wazobia FM 95.1 (Lagos);Naija FM 102.7(Lagos); Inform me, Radio 107.1 (Edo State);and Good news FM Radio 100.5 (Edo State). These radio stations were selected on the criteria that they must broadcast predominantly in NP, and be widely listened to in their respective regions. This was done to ensure that they capture the prevalent usage of NP.

Data Collection

Data are drawn from a larger corpus of 300,000 words which was compiled from the radio broadcasts of the selected radio stations comprising approximately 12 hours of broadcasts (2 hours per station)over a one-month period. These recordings capture spontaneous speech in diverse contexts, including news, advertisements, and listener interactions, ideal for studying prepositional usage. The recordings are transcribed and further translated into NE to facilitate comparative analysis of spatial and temporal prepositions (e.g., "on top," "for inside," "near," "for," "before," "since," "till"). From this corpus, 10 excerpts each of spatial and temporal prepositions are randomly selected for analysis.

[37]Deuber, D. (2005). Nigerian Pidgin in Lagos: Language contact, variation and change in an African urban setting. Battlebridge.

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Radio broadcasts are chosen for their unfiltered, real-time language, which reflects natural prepositional patterns in NP and NE. Additionally, according to Evans(2004)[38], spatial and temporal prepositions are integral to grammatical studies due to their multifunctional roles in linking clauses and conveying complex semantic relationships in discourse, and because they are the most commonly used in language expressions.

Data Analysis Procedure

The study employs the qualitative and quantitative methods for its data analyses which are in two parts. Part 1 presents the analysis of the contexts in which spatial and temporal prepositions are used in the three regional NP using SFG Ideational metafunction through a descriptive comparative sociolinguistic approach. Part 2 is the quantitative analysis where the AntConc tool is used to identify the frequency and collocation patterns of the spatial and temporal prepositions across the three regional NP variations.

Presentation of Findings and Discussions: Part 1

Table 1: Excerpts of spatial preposition (on top)in the three NP varieties

TYPE	WARRI	LAGOS	EDO	SNE
Spatial	And last but not the least **on top** the world of sport.	I go continue **on top** of market runs.	Make we put mouth **on top** the matter	a. And last but not least,**in** the world of sports. (Warri) b. I will continue **on** market runs. (Lagos) c. Let us contribute **to** the matter.

Contextual Descriptions of 'on top' in the three NP varieties

Table 1presents the usage of "on top" in the three NP varieties which goes beyond the literal space; its exact meaning depends on context, reflecting its built-in polysemy. Corroborating this, Mann (1992) provides a broader analysis of prepositional polysemy in Atlantic pidgins, including NP. He argues that pidgin prepositions carry an "inherent, stipulative polysemy" and that "the appropriate meaning is evoked in the right context.

[38]Evans, V. (2004). The Structure of Time: Language, Meaning and Temporal Cognition. John Benjamins Publishing.

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Table 2: Excerpts of spatial preposition (for inside)in the three NP varieties

TYPE	WARRI	LAGOS	EDO	NE
SPATIAL	This kain story **for inside** this our Nigeria enh.	5 minutes don waka pass 8 0 clock **for inside** the studio	Imagine all the better betterweydeydey**for inside** estate	a. This kind of story **in** our Nigeria, eh? (Warri) b. 5 minutes have passed 8 o'clock **in** the studio. (Lagos) **c.** Imagine all the good things that are **in** the estate. (Edo)

ContextualDescriptions of 'for inside' in the three NP varieties

In Table 2, across Warri, Lagos, and Edo varieties, NP doubles up "for" + "inside" to pinpoint location with absolute clarity.NE, by contrast, relies on a single locative preposition.In each case, NP speakers use both prepositions to leave no room for doubt about where something happens. This is not an error but a deliberate, expressive strategy rooted in local language practices, and it makes the location "crystal clear". Ihemere(2016)[39] also affirms this in his study.

Table 3: Excerpts of spatial preposition (near) in the three NP varieties/NE

TYPE	WARRI	LAGOS	EDO	NE
Spatial	You dey **near** your radio	E get work for **near** Ikotun side	e **near** school, e **near** market,	a. You are near to your radio (Warri) b. He has a job near the Ikotun area. (Lagos). c. It's close to the school, it's close to the market. (Edo).

Contextual Descriptions of 'near' in the three NP varieties

[39]Ihemere, K. U. (2016). Codeswitching in Igbo-English Bilingualism. Bloomsbury Academic.

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In Table 3 across the three varieties, NP streamlines locative expressions by dropping extra markers and leaning on context. In all cases, NP's flexible use of 'near' and 'for,' influenced by local languages, makes statements direct and unambiguous. NE, by contrast, requires extra words ("are," "to," or "in/at") to convey the same meanings.

Table 4: Excerpts of spatial preposition (for) in the three NP varieties

TYPE	WARRI	LAGOS	EDO	NE
SPATIAL	HKG copper aluminum carry chair siddon **for**Ipokiti.	because once una close **for** school	Oga, quick tell us and people **for** house	a. HKG copper aluminum is located **at** Ipokiti. (Warri) b. Because once you close **from** school. (Lagos). **c.** Boss, quickly tell us and the people **at** home (Edo)

Contextual Descriptions of 'for' in the three NP varieties

In Table 4, across Warri, Lagos, and Edo varieties 'for' marks both concrete and abstract "locations":In each case, NP stretches 'for' to cover both physical sites and broader contexts, whereas NE uses separate prepositions ("in," "at," or from) for those roles.

Table 5: Excerpts of temporal preposition (for) in the three NP varieties

TYPE	WARRI	LAGOS	EDO	NE
Temporal	how you dey **for** this make sense evening.	Morning to 120'clock **for** afternoon.	tenant dey always deycomot **for** night.	a. How are you this fine evening? (Warri) b. From morning till 12 o'clock **in** the afternoon. (Lagos) c. The tenant is always going out **at** night.

Contextual Descriptions of 'for' in the three NP varieties

In table 5, NP uses 'for' to mark time periods across the three varieties where NE would use words like "during," "in," or "at". In each case, NP keeps it simple by relying on 'for' for time just as it does for place, while NE switches among more specific prepositions.

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Table 6: Excerpts of Temporal preposition (before) in the three NP varieties

TYPE	WARRI	LAGOS	EDO	NE
Temporal	the matter be say since **before** you go	the real truth weydey behind am **before** we chook eye on top am	Make una sit down **before** program end	a.The issue is that it has been like this since **before** you left. b.The real truth behind it **before** we look into it. c. Please sitdown **before** the programme ends.

Contextual Descriptions of 'before' in the three NP varieties/NE

In Table 6, across all three varieties, NP uses "before" just like NE to mark one event occurring prior to another, but in a more streamlined way. In each case, "before" situates one action relative to another on a timeline. NP's difference lies in its compact syntax (no tense endings or extra auxiliaries), not in its temporal role.

Table 7: Excerpts of Temporalpreposition (since) in the three NP varieties

TYPE	WARRI	LAGOS	EDO	NE
Temporal	word wey be say e full our mouth **since** today	I give my landlord 200k **since** 4 months ago	as we dey talk **since** morni	What we've been talking about all day. (Warri) I gave my landlord ₦200,000 four months ago. (Lagos) As we have been talking **since** this morning. (Edo)

Contextual Descriptions of 'since' in the three NP varieties

All the three NP varieties in Table 8 flexibly use "since" to mark when an action began and often pair it with simple or progressive verbs, unlike NE, which insists on perfect aspects and precise time phrases. In all cases, NP emphasises clarity through broader, even redundant, use of "since", pairing it with simple or progressive verbs and varied time expressions, whereas NE restricts "since" to perfect constructions and precise time markers.

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Table 8: Excerpts of Temporal preposition usage(till) in the three NP varieties

TYPE	WARRI	LAGOS	EDO	NE
Temporal	Wey be say **till** tomorrow dem still dey control part of their government.	That statement stay with me **till** today.	Since when I start my own work **till** now, I no get another business wey I dey do.	Which means that till tomorrow, they are still in control of part of their government. (Warri) That statement has stayed with me till today. (Lagos) Since I started my own work **till** now, I haven't had any other business I'm doing. (Edo)

Contextual Descriptions of 'till' in the three NP varieties

In Table 8, across all three varieties, NP consistently uses 'till' just like NE's 'until' to mark how long something lasts, but in a more straightforward way. In each variety, "till" serves as a temporal circumstantial adjunct, showing the endpoint of a state or action, without needing extra auxiliaries or formal tense markers. NE uses until and perfect constructions, whereas NP keeps it brief and clear while conveying the same temporal meaning.

Socio-cultural Factors responsible for variations in prepositional usage in the NP varieties

The analysis of spatial ('on top, 'for inside, ''near, 'for') and temporal ('for,''before,''since,''till') prepositions inNP radio broadcasts across Warri, Lagos, and Edo reveals a versatile prepositional system shaped by substrate languages, language contact, and the pragmatic demands of live media discourse. Across all regions, NP prepositions exhibit polysemy, serving multiple functions: locative, temporal, and discourse-marking, unlike NE, which employs more specific prepositions (Mann, 1992)[40]. For instance, 'on top' signals topic shifts or engagement (e.g., 'on top the world of sport' in Warri), mirroring Urhobo's *kpaiyen,* Yoruba's *lori,* (Deuber, 2005)[41], and Bini's *vb'ughe* (Egbokhare, 2001)[42]. Similarly, 'for inside' emphasises precise location (e.g., 'for

[40]Mann, C. D. (1992). Polysemic functionality of Prepositions in Pidgins and Creoles. In A. R. C. Creissels (Ed.), Atlantic meets Pacific: *Studies in contact linguistics* (pp. 57–72). John Benjamins.ISBN (9789027252326).
[41]Deuber, D. (2005). Nigerian Pidgin in Lagos: Language contact, variation and change in an African urban setting. Battlebridge.
[42]Egbokhare, F. O. (2001). The Nigerian linguistic ecology and the changing profiles of Nigerian Pidgin. In I. F. Egbokhare& C. O. Kolawole (Eds.), *Language and literature in education* (pp. 93–103). University of Ibadan Press.

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inside this our Nigeria' in Warri), paralleling Urhobo's *evun re* (Ekiugbo & Anomuotor, 2020)[43], Yoruba's *niinu*, and Bini's *ghẹmwen*. This multifunctional usage aligns with systemic functional grammar's ideational framework, where prepositions encode experiential relationships in context-dependent ways (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014)[44].

NP's prepositional system simplifies English structures, as seen in 'for' and 'near,' which cover broad locative and temporal roles (e.g., '*siddon for Ipokiti*' in Warri, means 'you dey near your radio' in Warri) compared to NE's 'in,''at,' or 'close to.' This simplification, influenced by Urhobo's '*na*' (Ekiugbo & Anomuotor, 2020)[45], Yoruba's *ni* (Deuber, 2005)[46], and Bini's *vbe* (Egbokhare, 2001)[47], reflects NP's creolised nature, prioritising clarity and brevity in radio's fast-paced environment (Faraclas, 1996)[48]. Temporal prepositions such as' before, ''since,' and 'till' show similar streamlining, with 'before' marking precedence (e.g., 'before programme end' in Edo) akin to Urhobo's '*kwevwe*,' Ekiugbo & Anomuotor (2020)[49]. Yoruba's '*ki a to*,' and Bini's temporal markers. 'Since' and 'till' denote duration (e.g., 'since today' in Warri, 'till now' in Edo), influenced by Urhobo's *r'havwe* (Aziza, 2007)[50], Yoruba's '*lati*,' and Bini's'*yáre*' (Omoniyi, 2008)[51], contrasting with NE's perfect constructions (e.g., 'have been' for 'since').

Substrate influences from Urhobo, Yoruba, and Bini are central to these variations, rooted in Nigeria's multilingual landscape.[52] In Warri, Urhobo's prepositional system shapes NP's direct, context-driven expressions, reflecting the region's trading history and ethnic diversity.[53] In Lagos, Yoruba's influence enhances NP's role in fostering social cohesion in a cosmopolitan hub, where prepositions like 'for' and 'on top' adapt to urban communication need.[54] In Edo, Bini's tonal and syntactic structures enrich Benin Pidgin's expressivity, with

[43]Ekiugbo, P. O., &Anomuotor, E. (2020). Aspects of Urhobo syntax and its influence on Nigerian Pidgin. Journal of West African Languages, 47(2), 105–118.
[44]Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar (4th ed.). Routledge.
[45]Ekiugbo, P. O., &Anomuotor, E. (2020). Aspects of Urhobo syntax and its influence on Nigerian Pidgin. Journal of West African Languages, 47(2), 105–118.
[46]Deuber, D. (2005). Nigerian Pidgin in Lagos: Language contact, variation and change in an African urban setting. Battlebridge.
[4747]Egbokhare, F. O. (2001). The Nigerian linguistic ecology and the changing profiles of Nigerian Pidgin. In I. F. Egbokhare& C. O. Kolawole (Eds.), *Language and literature in education* (pp. 93–103). University of Ibadan Press.
[48]Faraclas, N. (1996). Nigerian Pidgin. Routledge.
[49]Ekiugbo, P. O., &Anomuotor, E. (2020). Aspects of Urhobo syntax and its influence on Nigerian Pidgin. Journal of West African Languages, 47(2), 105–118.
[50]Aziza, R. O. (2007). Urhobo syntax. In Ọ. Yusuf (Ed.), *Basic linguistics for Nigerian languages teachers* (pp. 45–60). Linguistics Association of Nigeria.
[51]Omoniyi, T. (2008). Nigerian Pidgin English in Lagos: Patterns of use and attitudes. *World Englishes, 27*(1), 113–126. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2008.00539.x
[52]Eberhard, D. M., Simons, G. F., & Fennig, C. D. (Eds.). (2021). Ethnologue: Languages of the World (24th ed.). SIL International.
[53]Oloruntoba, C. I. (1992). Sociocultural dimensions of Nigerian Pidgin usage (Western Niger Delta of Nigeria) (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Indiana University.
[54]Deuber, D. (2005). Nigerian Pidgin in Lagos: Language contact, variation and change in an African urban setting. Battlebridge.

prepositions like 'for inside' and 'till' mirroring cultural metaphors for containment and duration.[55] These findings corroborate Faraclas (2005, 2021)[56],[57] who highlight NP's adaptability in repurposing English prepositions for local pragmatic functions, such as topic shifts, audience engagement, and temporal anchoring in radio discourse.

The sociolinguistic role of NP as a lingua franca is evident in its inclusive, listener-friendly style on radio, where prepositions facilitate clear communication across ethnic groups.[58] For example, 'for' addresses diverse audiences (e.g., 'people for house' in Edo), while 'till' and 'since' anchor narratives in relatable timelines, depicting NP's grassroots appeal.[59] This adaptability underscores NP's status as a creole in regions like Warri, where it serves as a first language,[60] and a contact language in Lagos and Edo, bridging over 500 ethnic groups.[61] Compared to NE, NP's prepositional system is less constrained by formal rules, allowing broadcasters to convey complex relationships with minimal linguistic resources, a hallmark of pidgin efficiency.[62]

This study contributes to creole linguistics by demonstrating how substrate languages shape NP's prepositional morphosyntax, offering a better understanding of language contact and variation. The findings stress NP's regional diversity, challenging the notion of a uniform pidgin.[63] Practically, the results inform multilingual education and media communication, where NP's prepositional patterns could enhance language teaching or broadcasting strategies in Nigeria's diverse contexts.

However, the study's limitations include the focus on radio discourse, which may not fully represent NP's prepositional usage in other domains (e.g., written NP, rural settings). Future research could explore additional prepositions (e.g.,

[55]Igboanusi, H. (2008). Empowering Nigerian Pidgin: A challenge for status planning? International *Journal of the Sociology of Language,* 2008(191), 5–27. https://doi.org/10.1515/IJSL.2008.005.
[56]Faraclas, N. G. (2005). Nigerian Pidgin. Taylor and Francis e-library.
[57]Faraclas, N. G. (2021). Naija: A language of the future. In A. T. Akande & O. Salami (Eds.), Current trends in Nigerian Pidgin English: A sociolinguistic perspective (pp. 9–37). Mouton de Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501513541-002degruyterbrill.com
[58]Ofulue, C. I. (2020). Nigerian Pidgin English: A cultural and linguistic bridge. *Journal of African Cultural Studies,* 32(3), 235–250. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2019.1690920
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[62]Elugbe, B. O., &Omamor, A. P. (1991). Nigerian Pidgin: Background and prospects.Heinemann Educational Books.
[63]Okitikpi, M., &Obobolo, V. (2025). Influence of social variation (age) in the use of Nigerian Pidgin (NP): A survey of selected cities (Warri and Port Harcourt) in Nigeria. *Direct Research Journal of Social Science and Educational Studies,* 13(1), 60–69.

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'under,''behind') or compare NP with other English-lexifier pidgins to further elucidate substrate influences and creole universals.

Part II: Corpus Analysis of Data

Warri variety: Concordance
'ontop' has 31 hits (spatial)
'For inside' has 17 hits (spatial)
'Near' has 1 hit (spatial)
'For' has 408 hits (spatial)
'Since' has 7 hits(temporal)
'till' has 2 hits (temporal)
(i) The following are the emerging collocation patterns of the spatial preposition (ontop) in Warri

a. N + Prep + Pro
b. Adv + Prep + N
c. V + Prep + N
d. Prep + Prep + N
e. Adv + Prep + N

The following are the emerging collocation patterns from the spatial preposition (for inside) in Warri.

a. N+Prep +N
b. V + Prep + NP
c. V + Prep + N
d. V + Prep + NP
e. N+Prep +NP

There is just one pattern from 'near' as it appears just once throughout the Warri excerpt

a. N+Prep +N

The following are the emerging patterns from the spatial preposition (for) in Warri

a. N + Prep + N
b. N + Prep + Prep + N
c. V + Prep + N
d. Pron + Prep + N
e. Adv + Prep + N

Emerging Patterns of Temporal Preposition (before) in Warri

a. V + Prep + Prep
b. Pro+ Prep + Prep + NP
c. Adv + Prep + NP.
d. V + Prep + Pro
e. Pro + Prep + Prep + N

Emerging Patterns of Temporal Preposition (since) in Warri

a. Adv + Prep + CL
b. V + Prep + CL
c. V + Prep
d. N + Prep + N
e. Comp + Prep + Prep + Pron

Emerging Patterns of Temporal Preposition (till) in Warri

a. Comp + Prep + N
b. N+ Prep+ Pron

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The Warri data show that both spatial and temporal prepositions follow regular patterns but differ in scope and flexibility.

For spatial prepositions, 'ontop' occurs with nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adverbs (N + PREP + PRO; V + PREP + N; ADV + PREP + N; PREP + PREP + N). This range shows its adaptability in marking surface relations and emphasis. 'For inside' also appears in both nominal and verbal frames (N + PREP + N/NP; V + PREP + N/NP), reinforcing the sense of containment. 'Near' is more restricted, appearing only once as N + PREP + N, marking proximity in a straightforward way. 'For' emerges as the most versatile spatial marker, showing up in varied environments (N + PREP + N; V + PREP + N; PRO + PREP + N; ADV + PREP + N; N + PREP + PREP + N). Its frequent doubling (N + PREP + PREP + N) shows the Warri preference for prepositional reinforcement, similar to Edo.

For temporal prepositions,' before' demonstrates flexibility. It appears with particles, pronouns, verbs, and adverbs (V + PREP + PRT; PRO + PREP + PREP + NP; ADV + PREP + NP; V + PREP + PRO; PRO + PREP + PREP + N), marking clear sequencing between actions or events. Since is tied to adverbs and verbs (ADV + PREP + CL; V + PREP), but also links to nouns (N + PREP + N) and occurs with complementisers (COMP + PREP + PREP + PRO). This shows its role in introducing time points to actions or clauses. 'Till' is narrower, with just two patterns examined (COMP + PREP + N; N + PREP + PRO), typically indicating the endpoint of a situation.

In summary, Warri NP data reveal that 'ontop' and 'for' dominate spatial marking, with 'for' functioning as the all-purpose preposition, while 'before' is the most structurally versatile temporal marker. 'Since' works mainly with clauses, and 'till' is the most specialised. Like in Edo, the most common frame is Verb/Noun/Pronoun + Preposition + Noun/Clause, but Warri shows a particular preference for stacking and doubling prepositions to reinforce meaning.

(ii) The following are the emerging patterns from the spatial preposition (ontop) in Edo NP

a. V + Prep + Prep
b. V + Prep + Pron
c. V + Prep + Prep + N
d. N + Prep + NP
e. N + Prep + NP

The following are the emerging patterns from the spatial preposition (for inside) in Edo

a. N + Prep + NP
b. N + Prep + INTJ
c. V + Prep + N
d. V + Prep + NP
e. N + Prep + NP

The following are the emerging patterns from the spatial preposition (near) in Edo

a. V + Prep + N
b. V + Prep + Adv

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The following are the emerging patterns from the spatial preposition (for) in Edo

a. V + Prep + NP
b. V + Prep + N
c. V + Prep + N
d. N + Prep + N
e. Pron + Prep + N

The following are the emerging patterns from the temporal preposition (before) in Edo

a. N + PREP + CL.
b. VP + Prep + Pron
c. NP + Prep +V
d. V + Prep + Pron
e. V + Prep + Pron

Emerging patterns from the temporal preposition (since) in Edo

a. V + Prep+ N
b. V + Prep

Emerging patterns from the temporal preposition (till) in Edo

a. N + Prep + Adv
b. V + Prep + Pron

The Edo data show that speakers use a small set of prepositions in flexible ways.For spatial meaning, 'ontop' appears in different slots: it can join with verbs, pronouns, and nouns, and sometimes even double up (V + Prep + Prep + N). This doubling makes the meaning stronger, stressing the position "on top" of something. For inside also uses doubling (for + inside) to mark something clearly as being "inside," and it works with both nouns and verbs. 'Near' is more limited, mostly showing up with nouns (near your house) or adverbs (near here), while 'for' is the most general and appears almost everywhere, with verbs, nouns, and pronouns. This makes for the "default" preposition in Edo NP. For temporal expressions, 'before' is the most flexible. It can connect whole clauses (N + PREP + CL), verbs, or pronouns, showing order between actions. 'Since' is narrower, usually linking verbs to nouns (since morning) or standing alone when the complement is clear from context. 'Till' marks an endpoint and pairs with adverbs (till tomorrow) or pronouns (till him).

In short, most patterns follow a simple frame: Verb/Noun + Preposition + Noun/Pronoun. What stands out is how Edo NP reuses a few prepositions for many different roles, especially for, 'ontop,' and 'for inside.' This shows a system that values flexibility and clarity, even if it uses fewer distinct forms than Nigerian English.

(iii) The following are the emerging Collocation patterns of spatial prepositions (ontop) from Lagos NP.

a. N + Prep + N
b. N + Prep + N
c. NP/Adv + Prep + NP
d. PRO + Prep + N
e. N + Prep + NP

The following are the emerging patterns of spatial prepositions (for inside) from Lagos

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a. N + Prep+ N
b. V + Prep + N
c. Pron + Prep + NP
d. V + Prep + N
e. V + Prep + N

Emerging patterns of spatial prepositions (near) from Lagos
a. Prep + Prep + N
b. V + Prep + NP

Emerging patterns of spatial prepositions (for) from Lagos
a. N + Prep + N
b. N + Prep + N
c. V + Prep + N
d. V + Prep + N
e. V + Prep + N

Emerging patterns of temporal prepositions (before) from Lagos
a. NP + Prep + NP
b. V + Prep + Pron
c. Pron + Prep + Pron
d. V + Prep + Pron
e. N + Prep + Rel Pron

Emerging patterns of temporal prepositions (since) from Lagos
a. V + Prep + N
b. V + Prep + NP

Emerging patterns of temporal prepositions (till) from Lagos
a. V + Prep + Prom
b. V + Prep + N

For spatial prepositions, 'ontop' occurs with nouns, pronouns, and adverbs (N + PREP + N; PRO + PREP + N; NP/ADV + PREP + NP), showing its adaptability in marking surface relations. 'For inside' appears mainly in verbal and nominal frames (V + PREP + N/NP; N + PREP + N; PRO + PREP + NP), supporting its role in expressing containment. 'Near' is more restricted and has 5 concordance hits, but because other varieties (Warri and Edo) examined have 1 and 8 hits respectively in the data, we decided to pick 2 each because of uniformity in data with only two environments (PREP + PREP + N; V + PREP + NP), pointing to its limited but precise use. 'For' is the most versatile, occurring in both noun and verb environments (N + PREP + N; V + PREP + N), emphasising its multifunctional role.

For temporal prepositions, 'before' shows wide flexibility (NP + PREP + NP; V + PREP + PRO; PRO + PREP + PRO; N + PREP + REL), marking clear sequencing between actions or clauses. 'Since' appears in verb-led frames (V + PREP + N/NP), mainly announcing ongoing actions to specific times. 'Till' is narrower, found only after verbs (V + PREP + PRO; V + PREP + N), usually signaling endpoints. Also, just 2 examples were examined to account for uniformity, as it has 2 concordance hits in Warri and 5 in Edo.

In summary, Lagos NP reveals 'for' as the dominant all-purpose spatial preposition, while 'before' is the most structurally versatile temporal marker. The most common frame is Verb/Noun/Pronoun + Preposition + Noun/Clause,

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but Lagos also has piling (for near) and the tight link between prepositions and verbs in serial constructions.

Table 9: Comparative Table of Emerging Collocation Patterns of Prepositions in Warri, Edo, and Lagos varieties of Nigerian Pidgin

Preposition	Warri	Edo	Lagos
Ontop(spatial)	a. N + PREP + PRO b. ADV + PREP + N c. V + PREP + N d. PREP + PREP + N e. ADV + PREP + N	a. V + PREP + PREP b. V + PREP + PRO c. V + PREP + PREP + N d. N + PREP + NP e. N + PREP + NP	a. N + PREP + N b. N + PREP + N c. NP + PREP + NP d. PRO + PREP + N e. N + PREP + NP
Forinside (spatial)	a. N + PREP + N b. V + PREP + NP c. V + PREP + N d. V + PREP + NP e. N + PREP + NP	a. N + PREP + NP b. N + PREP + INTJ c. V + PREP + N d. V + PREP + NP e. N + PREP + NP	a. N + PREP + N b. V + PREP + N c. PRO+PREP + NP d. V + PREP + N e. V + PREP + N
Near (spatial)	a. N + PREP + N	a. V + PREP + N b. V + PREP + ADV	a. PREP+ PREP + N b. V + PREP + NP
For (spatial)	a. N + PREP + N b. N + PREP + PREP + N c. V + PREP + N d. PRO + PREP + N e. ADV + PREP + N	a. N + PREP + NP b. N + PREP + INTJ c. V + PREP + N d. V + PREP + NP e. N + PREP + NP	a. N + PREP + N b. N + PREP + N c. V + PREP + N d. V + PREP + N e. V + PREP + N

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Before (temporal)	a.V + PREP + PRT b. PRO + PREP + PREP + NP c. ADV + PREP + NP d. V + PREP + PRO e. PRO + PREP + PREP + N	a. N + PREP + CL b. VP + PREP + PRO c. NP + PREP + V d. V + PREP + PRO e. V + PREP + PRO	a. NP + PREP + NP b. V + PREP + PRO c.PRO+PREP+PRO d. V + PREP + PRO e. N + PREP + REL
Since (temporal)	a.V+PREP b. N + PREP + N	a. V + PREP + N b. V + PREP	a. V + PREP + N b. V + PREP + NP
Till (temporal)	a. COMP + PREP + N b. N + PREP + PRO	a. N + PREP + ADV b. V + PREP + PRO	a. V + PREP + PRO b. V + PREP + N

Conclusion

This study illuminates the dynamic role of spatial and temporal prepositions in NP radio broadcasts, revealing their polysemy and adaptability across Warri, Lagos, and Edo. Unlike NE, NP's versatile prepositional system mirrors substrate influences and regional diversity, reinforcing its function as a lingua franca in Nigeria's multilingual context.[64],[65]. Through systemic functional grammar's ideational framework, the analysis demonstrates how NP encodes experiential meanings, offering a novel perception into creole morphosyntax and language contact.[66] These findings challenge assumptions of a uniform pidgin, highlighting NP's regional variation and pragmatic flexibility in media discourse. The study contributes to creole linguistics by elucidating substrate-driven grammatical patterns, with implications for multilingual education and broadcasting strategies in Nigeria.[67] Future research could explore NP's prepositional usage in non-media contexts or compare it with other English-lexifier pidgins to deepen understanding of creole universals. The affirmation of NP's role as a cultural and linguistic bridge in this study underscores its

[64]Faraclas, N. G. (2021). Naija: A language of the future. In A. T. Akande & O. Salami (Eds.), Current trends in Nigerian Pidgin English: A sociolinguistic perspective (pp. 9–37). Mouton de Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501513541-002degruyterbrill.com
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significance in fostering inclusive communication across Nigeria's diverse ethnic landscape.

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