Diglossia in Ghanaian Society and Its Negative Influence on Students' Proficiency in English: A Case Study on Three Town Senior High School Students

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a symbol of identity, civilization, and culture; it is a tool for expressing emotions, feelings, and desires and a mechanism for learning, teaching, and cultural exchange. Moreover, it facilitates communication and understanding among members of the same community and between different societies. Consequently, language acts as an instrument for exercising power, authority, and dominance. A nation progresses with the advancement of its language and regresses with its decline. Language is as old as humanity, enduring as long as humans inhabit the Earth and vanish with their extinction. Given its significance to individuals and society, language has attracted the attention of scholars and researchers, who have discussed numerous related issues and phenomena. One of these issues is diglossia, one of sociolinguistics' most important areas.

Diglossia is a linguistic phenomenon that stems from the presence of two distinct varieties of the same language (formal/standard and colloquial) in one community. As Al-Masry and Abu Hasan (2014) argue, this linguistic phenomenon (diglossia) is not new; it has coexisted with languages since their beginning and persists in various societies today. However, the term "diglossia" was first introduced by

the French linguist William Marcais in 1930 to describe the conflict between written literary language and the spoken vernacular in communities where this phenomenon occurs (Marcais, 1930); (Al-Zaghloul, 1980); (Paulston & Tucker, 2003). The term further gained prominence through American linguist Charles Ferguson who clarified its concept and delineated its characteristics and features in his seminal article "Diglossia", published in 1959 (Ferguson, 1959).

In Ghana, particularly in the Ketu South district, the community experiences this linguistic phenomenon (diglossia). There exists a formal variety of English, considered the standard or educated variety, which is acquired in schools and used in literary works, formal speeches, educational institutions, and religious settings. In contrast, there is also a colloquial variety of English (pidgin English), which is acquired in everyday environments and is widely used by the general populace. This colloquial form is employed in informal conversations among friends or between educated and uneducated individuals. To illustrate this, consider the following examples:

Standard (Formal) Variety	Colloquial Variety (Pidgin English)
What are you doing?	Watin you dey do?
What will you eat today?	Watin you go chop today?
I am not feeling well.	A no dey feel well.
I thought you traveled to Doha	I figa say you travel go Doha

Table 1. Illustrative examples of pidgin English

These examples demonstrate that the formal variety adheres to conventional grammatical rules, while the colloquial variety (pidgin English) often deviates from these rules, although it may follow different grammatical conventions. This indicates that the two varieties differ significantly in terms of structure and function, representing a form of diglossia.

It is worth noting that the colloquial variety (pidgin English) has transcended its traditional boundaries within Ghanaian society, becoming prevalent in many educational and official institutions. This shift prompts an examination of the topic "Diglossia in Ghanaian Society and Its Negative Influence on Students' Proficiency in English Language: A Case Study on Three Town Senior High School Students." The aim is to study this linguistic phenomenon within the broader Ghanaian context and specifically within the targeted community, revealing its influence on students' proficiency in English.

1.1. Research Questions and Significance

The study seeks to address several questions, primarily:

- Is the English language situation in Ghana truly a case of diglossia?

This primary question branches into several sub-questions, including:

- What are the characteristics of diglossia?
- What is the status of diglossia in Ghanaian society, particularly among the THREESEC students?
- To what extent does diglossia affect the academic performance of THREESEC students in English?

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of the phenomenon of diglossia, a critical area of sociolinguistics, in a community that has not been extensively studied in this regard. It aims to understand the impact of this phenomenon on THREESEC students' proficiency in English.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW/BACKGROUND

After research and review, we could not find any studies that specifically address the topic as indicated by the title. However, several studies have dealt with West African Pidgin English (Low Variety of English or Colloquial English) in general and Ghanaian Pidgin English (GPE) in particular. Other studies have attempted to highlight the impact of Ghanaian Pidgin English on students' proficiency in English (High Variety of English) in some Ghanaian communities other than the Ketu South community. As for the impact of Pidgin English on THREESEC students' proficiency in English, we could not find any studies that directly addressed it. The most important of these studies can be discussed as follows:

Regarding the studies on West African Pidgin English (WAPE) in general, there is a study by Christine Ofulue titled "Nigerian Pidgin and West African Pidgins: A Sociolinguistic Perspective," published in 2012. The study examined the similarities and differences between Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) and other West African Pidgin English (WAPE) in terms of current domains of use, functions, and attitudes that have shaped their current status in the context of their socio-historical interrelatedness. The study concluded that although the WAPE variations varied in status, they were comparable in their sociolinguistic and demographic contexts. It also noticed that NPE was developing and expanding more quickly.

In terms of the studies on Ghanaian Pidgin English (GPE), there are many studies, the most notable being a study by Joe Amoako in 1992 titled "Ghanaian Pidgin English: In Search of Diachronic, Synchronic and Sociolinguistic Evidence," a study by Magnus Huber in 1999 titled "Ghana Pidgin English in Its West African Context: A Sociohistorical and Structural Analysis," and a study by Kari Dako in 2002 titled "[Ghanaian] Students Pidgin (GSP): The Language of the Educated Male Elite." These studies tackled the Ghanaian Pidgin English (GPE), tracing its origins and addressing its types and the factors that contributed to its development and expansion.

Regarding the effects of Ghanaian Pidgin English (GPE) on Ghanaian students' proficiency in English, there are some studies, the most notable being a study by Gabriel Kwame Ankrah in 2018 titled "Effects of Pidgin English on The Teaching of English Language in Some Senior High Schools in The Ejura District of Ghana" and a study by Persis Adu-Boahen in 2020 titled "The Effects of Pidgin English on Students' Academic Performance in English Language: The Case of Adventist Senior High School, Bantama-Kumasi." These studies examined the effects of Ghanaian Pidgin English (GPE) on students' proficiency in English in some of the Ashanti Region Senior High Schools. They concluded that Pidgin English has some negative effects on the targeted students' performance in English, especially in writing and speaking.

While previous studies tackled Pidgin English in Ghanaian society and focused on its impact on students' proficiency in English in some of the Ashanti Region Senior High Schools, no study addressed the situation of Pidgin English in Ketu South district generally, and among the THREESEC students particularly. This study aims to fill the gap by providing a descriptive analysis of the situation of Pidgin English in the Ketu South district. It also seeks to provide a quantitative analysis of the negative effects of Pidgin English on THREESEC students' academic performance in English.

3. STUDY DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of the study and attain the answers to the research questions, the study employs a descriptive-analytical approach to describe and analyze the phenomenon of diglossia in Ghanaian society generally and within the THREESEC students specifically. Additionally, it utilizes a quantitative approach to examine the results obtained through a set of questionnaires, which were designed to include the following important factors:

- Sociodemographic characteristics of participants.
- Usage of Pidgin English (Low Variety of English).
- The Extent of Usage of Pidgin English (Low Variety of English).
- Factors that determine Pidgin English Usage (Low Variety of English).
- The Extent of Harm by Pidgin English (Low Variety of English) in Writing and Speaking

The study is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter discusses the concept of diglossia, and how it differs from bilingualism and linguistic variation. The second chapter outlines the necessary conditions for diglossia to exist in a community and summarizes its defining features or characteristics. The third chapter focuses on the situation of diglossia in Ghana, particularly in the Ketu South district, and its negative impact on THREESEC students' proficiency in English.

4. Concept of Diglossia, and the Distinction between Diglossia, Bilingualism and Linguistic Variation
4.1. Concept of Diglossia

Diglossia refers to a linguistic situation where two distinct varieties of the same language coexist within a community. However, the definition of "diglossia" has been a subject of debate, largely because linguists have struggled to provide a consistent definition due to the widespread confusion with the closely related term "bilingualism," which refers to the coexistence of two different languages within a community. Some linguists define diglossia as the coexistence of two varieties of a single language, typically a formal or standard variety, used in official contexts, and an informal or colloquial variety, used in everyday life. For example, this can be seen in the relationship between modern standard Arabic and its dialects, between standard Italian and regional dialects, or between English and pidgin English in some English-speaking societies.

On the contrary, other linguists use the term to describe situations involving two entirely different languages, which may be either native to the community or one native and the other foreign. Examples include the interaction between Akan and English in Ghana, Arabic and French in Algeria, and English and French in Switzerland or Canada. This distinction highlights the differing functions assigned to each language within the community. The following definitions of diglossia by various linguists illustrate this divergence:

- Dubois (n.d.) describes diglossia (as cited in 'Otoom, 2017) as a situation where speakers use two different languages depending on social context and linguistic circumstances.
- Fishman (1967) describes diglossia as a situation that involves two different languages in a community, each serving specific functions.
- Ferguson (1959; 1997) defines diglossia as a situation where a community may have two or more different varieties of the same language, where one is the standard form and the other is a regional dialect, each serving distinct functions.

From these definitions, it is evident that Dubois and Fishman view diglossia in terms of two entirely different languages, while Ferguson emphasizes two varieties of the same language.

It is important to note that the term diglossia is more appropriately applied to two varieties of the same language, as the term "diglossia" derives from the Greek word for "two tongues" (Rasheed, 2021, p. 251), indicating two forms from a common origin. Thus, this study will adopt Ferguson's definition to explore the phenomenon of diglossia in Ghanaian society.

4.2. Differences Between Diglossia, Bilingualism, and Linguistic Variation

The fundamental difference between diglossia and bilingualism (or multilingualism) and linguistic variation can be summarized as follows:

Diglossia involves two varieties of the same language, such as the standard and colloquial varieties of Arabic, Italian, or Persian (Ferguson, 1959), while bilingualism (or multilingualism) refers to the coexistence of two or more different languages (Fishman, 1965); (Heller, 2007); (Badees & Husni, 2014), such as Ewe, Twi, Fante, and English in Ghana, or Arabic, French, and Berber (Amazigh) in Algeria. On the other hand, linguistic variation pertains to variations within a single language, regardless of its form, standard or colloquial, (Labov, 1963); (Walters, 1996); (Hazen, 2007); (Matsumoto, 2019); (Kroom & Bin Shatooh, 2021), such as dialectal differences in Arabic or variations in British, American, and Australian English. This variation often arises from social, historical, or geographical factors, manifesting in accents, vocabulary, or grammatical structures.

5. Conditions and Characteristics of Diglossia
5.1. Conditions of Diglossia

Several conditions must be met for diglossia to manifest in a community. Ferguson (1959) outlines three essential criteria:

Firstly, there must be a substantial body of literary material in a language closely related to the community's natural language (e.g., divine revelation), reflecting the society's core values. Secondly, literacy levels must be significantly low within the community, with only a small elite being literate. Lastly, a suitable period must elapse after the first two conditions are met (p. 338).

5.2. Characteristics of Diglossia

Diglossia is characterized by several features, summarized by Ferguson (1959, p. 329-336)

as follows:

A. **Function:** Each variety of language (standard and colloquial) serves specific functions within the community, with contexts designated for each. Ferguson provides examples of various contexts, and the corresponding language variety used, which can be summarized in a table format:

Context	Assigned Variety
Religious speeches (Sermons) in mosques and churches	Standard Variety (High Variety)
Instructions to servants and ordinary workers	Colloquial Variety (Low Variety)
Official or personal letters	Standard Variety (High Variety)
Parliamentary and political speeches	Standard Variety (High Variety)
University lectures	Standard Variety (High Variety)
Interactions with family, friends and colleagues	Colloquial Variety (Low Variety)
News broadcasting	Standard Variety (High Variety)
Literary works (poetry or novel)	Standard Variety (High Variety)
Radio series "soap opera"	Colloquial Variety (Low Variety)
Caption on political cartoon/Folk literature	Colloquial Variety (Low Variety)

Table 2. Contexts of standard variety and colloquial variety

B. **Prestige:** One key characteristic of diglossia is the varying prestige associated with the two linguistic varieties across different social domains. The standard variety typically enjoys higher prestige than the colloquial variety. Individuals who master the standard variety often feel a sense of pride and superiority over those who are only familiar with the colloquial form. This distinction in prestige is reflected in the terminology used to describe the two varieties: the standard variety is often referred to as "high variety." In contrast, the colloquial variety is labeled as "low variety."

C. **Literary Heritage:** Another characteristic of diglossia is the presence of a literary heritage in the standard variety that is highly valued by native speakers. The community often regards contemporary literary works as extensions or adaptations of these inherited texts. For instance, pre-Islamic literature, including poetry and prose, is considered part of the literary heritage of the standard Arabic language.

D. **Acquisition:** In diglossic contexts or societies, the colloquial variety is typically acquired at home and in informal settings, making it the primary language used by adults when communicating with children and among peers. In contrast, the standard variety is usually learned in educational institutions.

E. **Standardization:** This characteristic indicates that the standard variety adheres to established and stable rules, supported by dictionaries and various works that aid in understanding its styles and pronunciation. Contrary, the colloquial variety often lacks stable rules and has received less scholarly attention.

F. **Stability:** Diglossia is characterized by a degree of stability within society, often persisting for centuries.

G. **Grammar, Lexicon, and Phonology**: The grammatical structures of the standard and colloquial varieties differ significantly. The standard variety contains grammatical categories that may not exist in the colloquial form and follows a specific morphological system for nouns and verbs, which is often simplified or absent in the colloquial variety. While both varieties generally share vocabulary, the colloquial variety may include some popular expressions and terms that lack equivalents in the standard variety. Phonological differences can range from minor to substantial, depending on the specific language.

After examining the characteristics of diglossia, it is evident that the situation of the English language in Ghanaian society exemplifies diglossia. The contexts in which the high variety (standard English) is used differ significantly from those in which the low variety (pidgin English) is employed. Each variety serves distinct functions within Ghanaian society. The prestige of the standard variety is notably higher than that of the colloquial variety (pidgin English), leading to literary works being predominantly composed in the standard variety. Furthermore, the standard variety is primarily acquired from schools, whereas the colloquial variety is acquired from the surrounding environment. In terms of standardization, stability, grammar, lexicon, and phonology, the standard variety in Ghana adheres to established rules, in contrast to the colloquial variety (pidgin English), especially the colloquial variety of uneducated (uneducated pidgin English), which shows more variation. This diglossic situation is characterized by stability and consistency, as it is not a recent development. Consequently, the grammatical, lexical, and phonological structures of the standard variety differ from those of the colloquial variety, reflecting their distinct roles and origins in Ghanaian society.

6. **Diglossia in Ghanaian Society:** Its Origin, Development, and Negative Influences on Students' Proficiency in English

6.1. Origin of Diglossia in Ghanaian Society

The emergence of diglossia in Ghanaian society is closely linked to the beginning of British colonization, which began in 1631. During this period, British colonizers established control over

various regions of the African continent, including Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, and Nigeria, constructing forts to facilitate the slave trade. The first fort built in this context was the "Cormantine Fort" in central Ghana (Amoako, 1992).

The colloquial variety of English, known as Ghanaian Pidgin English (GPE), began to emerge among a small group of uneducated Ghanaians who worked under British colonizers or educated Ghanaians, serving in various capacities. This variety of English developed as these individuals attempted to imitate the standard English words and phrases they heard from their masters (Amoako, 1992). The initial spread of this English variety included words and phrases that expressed power dynamics between different social classes. Amoako (1992, p. 43) provides several examples, such as:

Pidgin English/Colloquial Variety	Formal English/Standard Variety
Yea, sa, masa	Yes, sir, master
Masa day?	Is your master present?
I/E dey	He is present
I/E no dey	He isn't present

Table 3. Examples of GPE

This English variety (Pidgin English), which was once limited to the servants of British colonizers, has begun to spread widely among the Ghanaian community. Various groups have started acquiring and using it in different fields and social spaces. Amoako (1992) identifies some of these groups, the most significant being the police corporals, watchmen, laborers, and domestic staff.

It is worth noting that several factors have contributed to the spread of this English variety in Ghanaian society, the most importantly being the following factors:

- **Wars**: Wars, particularly World War II, played a significant role in disseminating the pidgin English among Ghanaians. Ghanaian soldiers who fought alongside British colonizers during World War II (1939-1945) were not, according to Amoako, educated or literate. They only mastered this English variety (pidgin English) during the war, as they attempted to communicate with the British. After the war, many returned to Ghana, some joining the Ghanaian armed forces while others retired to live with their families. This led to the spread of this English variety among the military and the general population. In this context, there is a story of a laborer who predicted the victory of German leader Hitler in World War II and was summoned to the colonial court. In his defense, he stated in pidgin English: "If I talk say Hitler go win the war, na my mouth be gun?"[1] (1992, p. 43-44).
- **Migration Factor**: The interaction of the Ghanaian community with other English-speaking communities in West Africa (such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria, where pidgin English is widely used) accelerated its spread in Ghana. Ghanaians, for instance, undertook migrations to Nigeria in pursuit of employment opportunities, and upon returning to Ghana during holidays, they introduced and disseminated this English variety. Similarly, Liberians who migrated to Ghana also propagated this English variety. (Amoako, 1992); (Ofulue, 2012); (Gyimah, 2018). This mutual migration between these communities continues till today. The pidgin English influence among these communities is evident in some of the vocabulary used; many terms in Ghanaian pidgin English (GPE) are borrowed from Nigerian local languages.

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[1] In the standard English it means: "If I say that Hitler will win the war, is my mouth a gun?

For example, the word "Abi" is commonly used in Ghanaian Pidgin English and is believed to be borrowed from Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE), originating from the Yoruba language. It has seeped into Nigerian Pidgin English and then into Ghanaian Pidgin English. Originally meaning "Isn't it?", it has gained additional meanings in Ghanaian Pidgin English depending on the context, such as "I hope," "I guess," "I suppose," or "Right?". (Norden, 2016). The following examples illustrate these meanings:

Pidgin English	Standard English
Abi you dey bab.	I *hope* that you understand.
Abi e grow e fo go school?	He is grown; he should go to school, *right*?
Abi they no arrange the story so.	I *suppose* they didn't arrange the story, so...
Abi e no go bab, *abi* e sock booze so e no go bab.	I *suppose* he won't understand, he drank booze, *right*, so he won't understand.
E fini dey talk in story then in kiddy go walk *abi* e [no] see.	He finishes telling his story, and then he and his kid go for a walk, *I guess* he hasn't seen.
e bi pen, *abi*?	It is a pen, *isn't it?*

Table 4. The meanings of the word "abi" in different contexts

In the previous examples, we observe that the word "Abi" has different meanings depending on the context: in the first example, it means "I hope." In the second example and the second part of the fourth example, it means "right?" as a request for confirmation. In the third example and the first part of the fourth example, it means "I suppose." In the fifth example, it means "I guess." In the final example, it means "isn't it?". Another term that has transitioned from Nigerian Pidgin English to Ghanaian Pidgin English is "pikin," which means "child/kid" in Standard English (Dako, 2002).

- **Media Influence**: The established Ghanaian media has significantly contributed to the spread of Pidgin English within Ghanaian society. Since the colonial era, some television channels have been dedicated to broadcasting news and comedic series in this variety of English. Additionally, radio stations have focused on delivering news and humor in this variety of English, aiming to disseminate information among all societal members, including educated individuals and those who only understand pidgin English (Amoako, 1992).

- **Military Regime**: Ghana's experience with military rule for many years has also played a role in the proliferation of pidgin English in society. The military government deployed numerous soldiers throughout the community for state protection, most of whom were only proficient in this variety of English. Consequently, civilians were influenced by these soldiers, leading to the widespread adoption of pidgin English (Amoako, 1992).

6.2. Development of Pidgin English in Ghanaian Society

The Ghanaian Pidgin English has evolved significantly since its inception, diversifying into three types:

- **Classical Pidgin English**: Classical pidgin (also known as illiterates' pidgin or uneducated pidgin) is the first variety of pidgin English that branched from standard English in Ghanaian society. It is named so because it was initially associated with the uneducated, such as laborers, watchmen, and houseboys. It is used in non-educational contexts and is quite varied from standard English compared to the other two varieties (Amoako, 1992); (Huber, 2008).

- **Modern Pidgin English:** Modern pidgin (also known as educated pidgin, students' pidgin, or intellectuals' pidgin) is associated with educated individuals, including secondary and university students. It differs from uneducated pidgin English (classical pidgin English) in certain phonetics, vocabulary, and accent. It emerged as secondary school students attempted to reproduce the uneducated pidgin English they heard in society, particularly from soldiers (Amoako, 1992); (Dako, 2002); (Huber, 2008). Its emergence can be traced back to the period between 1960 and 1970. While it was initially limited to male secondary students, it rapidly gained popularity among university students and eventually made its way to households (Huber, 2008). Huber (2008) notes that this variety of pidgin English spreads more rapidly and widely, becoming used in various contexts, with some students preferring it over standard English. It is worth noting that this variety of pidgin English, according to Amoako (1992), is considered closer to standard English compared to the previous classical pidgin English. It is also useful to highlight some differences between classical pidgin English and modern pidgin English, which include:

- **Vocabulary:** Modern pidgin English differs from classical pidgin English in some of its vocabulary. For instance, in modern pidgin English, the term "kiddy" is used to refer to "kid/child," while classical pidgin English uses "pikin" for the same meaning (Dako, 2002). The following examples illustrate this distinction:

Standard English	Classical Pidgin English	Modern Pidgin English
Kid/child:	**Pikin:**	**Kiddy:**
(I have two *kids*/*children*)	I ge two *pikin*	(I get two *kiddy*)
Know/intentionally:	**Sabe:**	**Sheda:**
(I *intentionally* do it to him)	(I *sabe* do give am)	(I *sheda* do give am)
(I don't *know* him/her)	(I no *sabe* am)	(I no *sheda* am)

Table 5. Examples of Vocabulary differences in classical pidgin English and modern Pidgin English

A. **Grammatical structures**: Modern pidgin English differs from classical pidgin English in several grammatical constructions. The most significant differences are summarized by Huber (1999, p. 276) as follows:

B. **Possessive forms for first- and third-person plural**: in modern pidgin English (educated pidgin English), the word "wana" is used to indicate the possessive form for the first-person plural, while "dema" signifies the possessive form for the third person plural. In contrast, classical pidgin English (uneducated pidgin English) employs "wi" to indicate the possessive form for the first-person plural and "dem" to indicate the possessive form for the third-person plural. Here are some examples to illustrate:

Standard English	Classical Pidgin English	Modern Pidgin English
Possessive form for 1st person plural	Possessive form for 1st person plural	Possessive form for 1st person plural
(*Our* sleeping room is air-Conditioned)	(*Wi* beding room e bi e ekon)	(*Wana* beding room e bi ekon)
Possessive form for 3rd person plural	Possessive form for 3rd person plural	Possessive form for 3rd person plural
(*Their* sleeping room is air-conditioned)	(*Dem* beding room e bi ekon)	(*Dema* beding room e bi ekon)

Table 6. Examples of possessive forms for first- and third-person plural in classical pidgin & modern pidgin

C. **Genitive Relationship**: The articles "in", "im", or "i", which correspond to the possessive "s" in standard English, are used in modern pidgin English (educated pidgin English) to connect one noun to another to indicate a genitive relationship between people or to indicate a possessive form for third person singular, while in the classical pidgin English (uneducated pidgin English), the first noun is directly connected to the second without relying on any article for the same purposes. The following examples illustrate this distinction:

Standard Pidgin English	Classical Pidgin English	Modern Pidgin English
Rania's brother	*Rania brother*	Rania *in* brother
Ibrahim's book	*Ibrahim book*	Ibrahim *im* book
Rania's mother is a nice person	*Rania mumi* bi nice person	Rania *im* (*i*) mumi e bi nice person

Table 7. Examples of genitive relationship differences in classical pidgin & modern pidgin

D. **Negative-Completive function**: in modern pidgin English (educated pidgin English), the word "neva" is used to completely negate an event. However, there is no equivalent in classical pidgin English (uneducated pidgin English) to serve the same purpose. Therefore, the classical pidgin English speakers depend on the word "no" to negate an event, either partially or completely. The following examples illustrate this distinction:

Standard English	Classical Pidgin English	Modern Pidgin English
I *will not* forget	A *no* go forget	A *no* go forget
He/she is *definitely* not his/her child	E *no* bi im pikin	E *neva* bi im kiddy

Table 8. Examples of negative-completive function differences in classical pidgin & modern pidgin

E. **Conjunctions**: in modern pidgin English (educated pidgin English), the article "den" is used to connect words, phrases, clauses, or sentences, while in classical pidgin English (uneducated pidgin English), the article "plus" is used to perform the same function. The following examples illustrate this distinction:

Standard Pidgin English	Classical Pidgin English	Modern Pidgin English
Musa, Baba, *and* Issa	Musa *plus* Baba *plus* Issa	Musa *den* Baba *den* Issa
I saw her *and* she told me she is going to call me…	***	I see am *den* e tell me se e go belle me.
Rania is my sister *and* my friend	Rania e bi ma sister *plus* ma friend	Rania e bi ma sister *den* ma friend.

Table 9. Examples of conjunctional differences in classical pidgin & modern pidgin

- **Contemporary Pidgin English**: Contemporary pidgin English (also known as Ghanaian Pidgin English) has emerged as a result of merging or integrating classical pidgin English (uneducated pidgin English) and modern pidgin English (educated pidgin English) into one variety. Amoako (1992) attributed the emergence of this variety of pidgin English to the decrease in illiteracy rates in Ghanaian society due to the free education policy that was introduced in the country in 1950. This led to a decrease or elimination of classical pidgin English speakers in Ghanaian society. It is worth noting that this variety of pidgin English has been called "Ghanaian Pidgin English" because it is prevalent in the society; it is spoken by many people regardless of their educational level, including police officers, military personnel, security men, and other Ghanaians (Amoako, 1992); (Huber, 2008). It is also closer to standard English than the classical pidgin English.

6.3. The Effects of Pidgin English on THREESEC Students' Proficiency in English

This section focuses on the effects of pidgin English on THREESEC students' proficiency in English. Additionally, it examines the results obtained through a set of questionnaires, designed to include the following important factors:

- Sociodemographic characteristics of participants.
- Usage of Pidgin English
- The Extent of Usage of Pidgin English
- Factors that Determine Pidgin English Usage
- The Extent of Harm by Pidgin English in Writing and Speaking
- Some Examples of Pidgin English and Their Meaning in Standard English.

It is important to note that the sample for this study consists of 42 students, including (male and female), from all three grades (1st, 2nd, and 3rd), and 8 teachers. They were selected randomly from Three Town Senior High School.

6.3.1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Figure (1) demonstrates the rates of the respondents based on their genders, professions, levels, and ages. It is noted that the number of males constitutes the majority, 68%, compared to the number of females, 32%, and that the age group (20-25) constitutes the majority, 46%, compared to the other age groups, followed by the age group (less than 20), 38%, and the number of students constitutes the majority with 84% compared to the number of teachers, 16%. Furthermore, the SHS 2 students constitute the majority with 40% compared to the students of the other two levels, followed by the SHS 3 students with 36%.
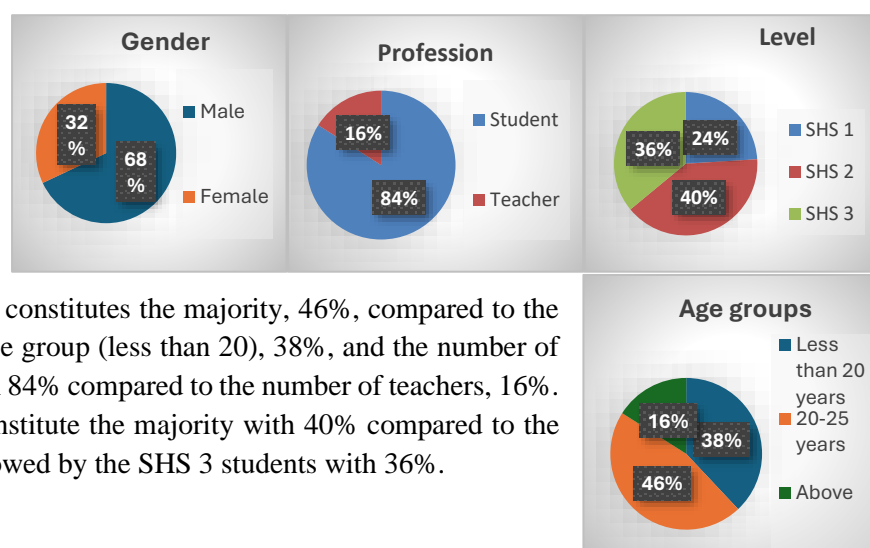
Figure (1)

6.3.2.   Usage of Pidgin English

Figure (2) illustrates the rates of the students/teachers who speak Pidgin English in comparison with those who do not speak it. It is evident that the rate of those who speak pidgin English is significantly higher, 76% than the rate of those who do not speak it, 24%. This suggests that pidgin English is widely prevalent among students on the one hand and between students and teachers on the other hand.

Do you speak pidgin English?

29%... Yes 76% No 24%

Figure (2)

6.3.3.   The Extent of Usage of Pidgin English

I use pidgin English with my classmates
Yes 71% No 29%

I use pidgin English with some of my teachers
Yes 42% No 58%

I use Pidgin English during class activities
Yes 44% No 56%

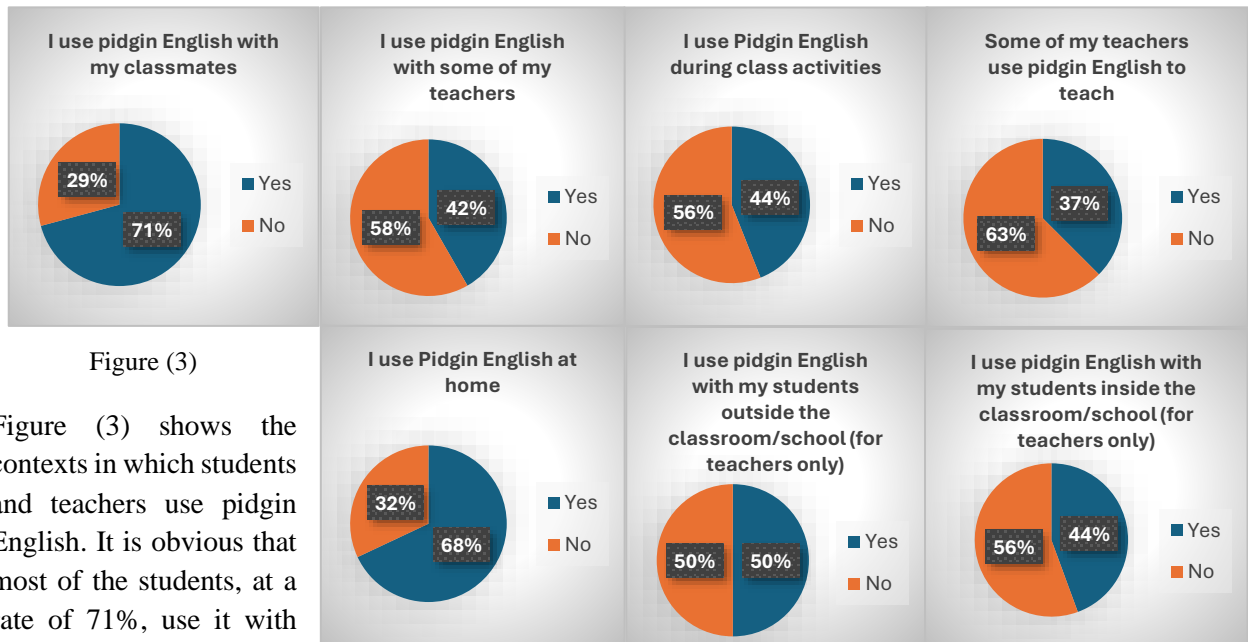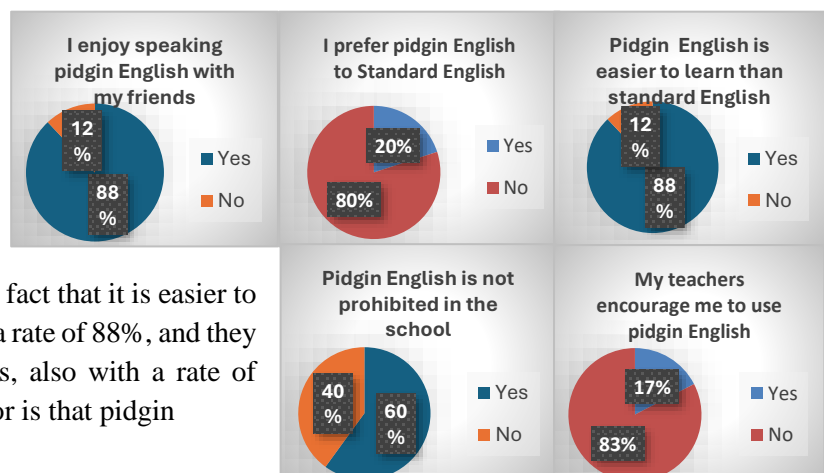Some of my teachers use pidgin English to teach
Yes 37% No 63%

Figure (3)

Figure (3) shows the contexts in which students and teachers use pidgin English. It is obvious that most of the students, at a rate of 71%, use it with their friends and

I use Pidgin English at home
Yes 68% No 32%

I use pidgin English with my students outside the classroom/school (for teachers only)
Yes 50% No 50%

I use pidgin English with my students inside the classroom/school (for teachers only)
Yes 44% No 56%

colleagues compared to those who use it with their teachers, 42%. Additionally, most of them, at a rate of 56%, deny using it to carry out classroom activities. Furthermore, most of the teachers, at a rate of 56% & 63%, do not use it inside the classroom or school premises with students, although half of them, 50%, admit to using it outside the classroom or school premises with them. As for the use of pidgin English in homes, many of them, at a rate of 68%, acknowledge using it in their homes compared to the rate of others who do not use it, 32%.

6.3.4.   Factors that determine pidgin English usage

Figure (4)

Figure (4) displays the primary factors leading students to adopt pidgin English. It is clear that various factors have contributed to students' adoption of pidgin

I enjoy speaking pidgin English with my friends
12% Yes 88% No

I prefer pidgin English to Standard English
20% Yes 80% No

Pidgin English is easier to learn than standard English
12% Yes 88% No

English, most importantly being the fact that it is easier to acquire than standard English, with a rate of 88%, and they enjoy speaking it with their friends, also with a rate of 88%. Following these, another factor is that pidgin

Pidgin English is not prohibited in the school
40% Yes 60% No

My teachers encourage me to use pidgin English
17% Yes 83% No

English is not prohibited in school, with 60%. However, these factors have not made pidgin English acceptable within the school environment. In other words, it does not become a common dialect or lingua franca among

Students should be discouraged from speaking pidgin English (for teachers only) — 25% No, 75% Yes

Students should be made to pay fine for speaking pidgin English in Classrooms (for teacher only) — 41% No, 59% Yes

Pidgin should be accepted as lingua franca among students (for teachers only) — 53% No, 47% Yes

students in school; the majority of students, 83%, acknowledge that their teachers do not encourage them to use it, and 80% of them prefer standard English over it. Furthermore, the majority of teachers, 53%, oppose the idea of adopting it as a common language among students, and 75% of them believe it is necessary to discourage students from using it. Additionally, 59% of teachers support the idea of punishing students for using it.
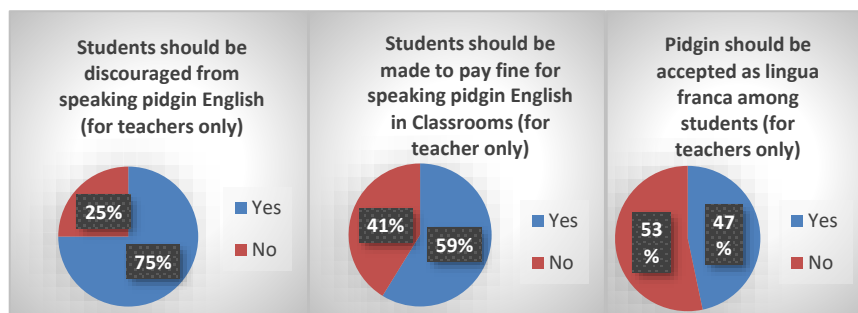
It is also important to note that the main reason for students' strong attachment to this variety of English, as Suglo (2015) (cited in Boahen, 2020) suggests, is that it reflects their educational identity, cultural affiliation, and social status. The pidgin English they use among themselves differs from the variety commonly spoken in Ghanaian society, thus holding a higher status.

6.3.5. The Extent of harm by pidgin English in Writing and Speaking
Figure (5)

Figure (5) elucidates the effects of pidgin English on students' proficiency in writing and speaking. It is evident that the majority of students agree that pidgin English does not negatively affect their academic

I sometimes use pidgin English in writing my assignments — 12% Yes, 88% No

I cannot write a full page in essay or letter writing without using pidgin English — 12% Yes, 88% No

My spelling skills have been affected by pidgin English — 21% Yes, 79% No

Pidgin English has affected my spoken English such that I cannot end a conversation... — 56% Yes, 44% No

I use Pidgin English in Examination unknowingly — 33% Yes, 67% No

performance in standard English (except for speaking skills). 88% of students deny using it to complete their assignments or write essays, and 79% agree that their spelling skills have not been affected by it. Additionally, 67% refute using it unconsciously in exams. However, regarding speaking skills, 56% of students acknowledge the impact of pidgin English on their oral performance, as they cannot speak at the standard level without mixing it with pidgin English.
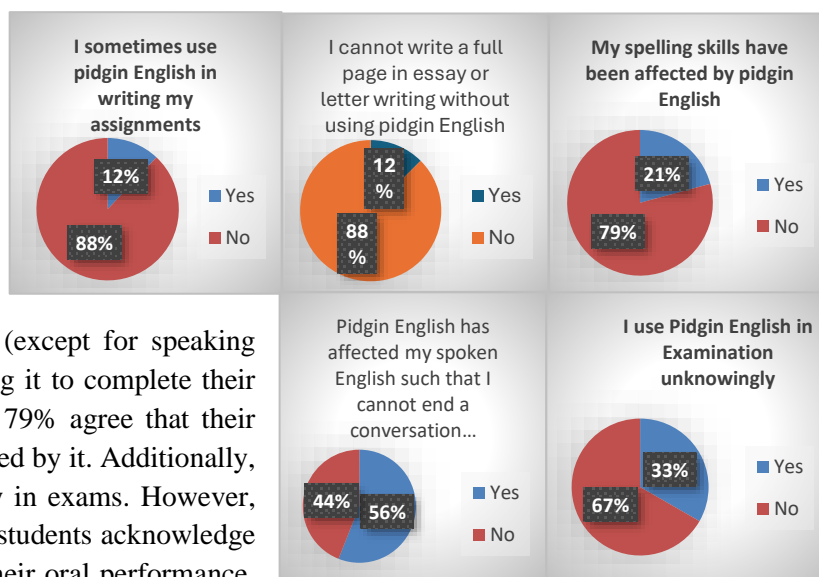
6.3.6. Some examples of pidgin English and their meaning in standard English

Pidgin English	Standard English
I dey go de hood inside	I am going home
You figa say Abi Jon?	Do you think I'm a fool?
Wetin dey go on?	What is going on?
I figa say you travel go Doha	I thought you travelled to Doha
Comot for der	Leave there

I dey der before dem talk them say make dem do the assignment	I was there before they told them to do the assignment
I dey go school	I am going to school.
I no bab what you dey talk	I don't understand what you're saying
Cecof	Because
I dey	I am around
You dey?	Are you there?
I dey go house	I am going to the house
Some thieves bow the shada	Some thieves steal the dress
I sheda do give am	I intentionally did it to him
Make we galley small	Let's walk a bit
Ei keep I see you	It's been a while since I saw you
I go hit (or bell) you up	I will call you
Make we go	Let's go
He Dey bed	He's sleeping
My old boy	My father
He sheda (or sabi) drive	He can drive
I lef um for there	I left him there
I go drop soon	I will be back soon
You for dey pet	You must be respectful
He dey road Dey come	He's on his way coming

Table 10. Examples of students' pidgin English and their meaning in standard English

7. CONCLUSIONS (FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS)

Diglossia is one of the most significant areas of sociolinguistics, which focuses on the study of language within its social contexts and examining social realities through language. It emerged as a linguistic term in 1930, introduced by the French linguist William Marcais, but its characteristics were more clearly defined by the American linguist Charles Ferguson in 1959. The situation of English diglossia in Ghana arose under colonial circumstances, closely linked to the onset of British colonialism.

The spread of pidgin English in Ghana can be attributed to several factors, including wars, interactions with other English-speaking communities, military governance, and media influences. This variety of English has evolved into three distinct varieties: classical pidgin English (also known as uneducated pidgin English), modern pidgin English (also known as educated pidgin English), and contemporary pidgin English (also known as Ghanaian pidgin English).

Following this brief study on diglossia in Ghanaian society, the key conclusions drawn can be summarized as follows, accompanied by some recommendations:

- Ghanaian military personnel played a crucial role in disseminating pidgin English within the community.
- The pidgin English associated with educated individuals or students is closer to standard English than the pidgin English spoken by the public in Ghana.
- THREESEC students tend to use their variety of pidgin English more in non-educational contexts than in educational ones.
- The primary reason for students' strong connection to their variety of pidgin English is that it reflects their educational identity, cultural affiliation, and social status; it is perceived as superior to the pidgin English used by the broader Ghanaian community.

- The majority of THREESEC students acknowledge that pidgin English does not impact their academic performance, except in speaking skills, where most, 56%, admit it has an effect.
- There is a negative correlation between the use of pidgin English and the academic performance of THREESEC students in the English language. Questionnaire results indicate that a minority of students recognize that they use this variety of English in tests unconsciously, struggle to write letters or essays without it, and have been affected in their spelling skills. This suggests that continued use of pidgin English in schools could significantly impact students' performance in the English language in the future. Therefore, we recommend that relevant stakeholders in Ghanaian society, particularly in the Ketu South community and school officials, take necessary and stringent measures to limit the spread of this variety of English and prevent students from using it in educational institutions before it becomes too pervasive.

It is also important to note that the following factors make this study limited for further investigation in the future:

- The study is restricted to the Three Town Senior High School students alone; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other schools in the Ketu South community.
- The study was conducted with a small sample of participants of forty-four students and eight teachers.
- Only two methods of data collection sources were used in the study: questionnaires and interviews.

Therefore, future studies involving several senior high schools in the Ketu South community, a large sample size, and diverse data collection sources might produce more accurate and significant findings.

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