

Lexicalization in Nigerian Pidgin*

Eyo Offiong Mensah
University of Calabar

Nigerian Pidgin (henceforth NP) is indisputably the most efficient means of inter-ethnic communication among the densely culturally and linguistically heterogeneous people of Nigeria, given its greater degree of linguistic simplicity which has attracted enormous grassroots appeal. The language is currently undergoing a process of social expansion as a result of its dynamic socio-cultural relevance and increased communicative demands, thus, consistently expanding its lexicon and widening the range of application of the meanings of its lexical items. This paper investigates word formation strategies in NP as a means of enriching its vocabulary and expanding its internal resourcefulness and functionality, from the theoretical standpoint of lexical semantics, which is concerned with the identification and representation of the meaning of lexical items (Baldwin 2007). The paper notes that English constitutes the superstrate source of borrowing for NP, while languages like Portuguese, French, Nigerian English, Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba among others are its substrate lexical influences. The study discovers that the meaning of lexical items in NP may be achieved through creativity or expressiveness and may be independent of the original meaning in the source language. The paper joins the agitation for the standardization of NP to enhance its propagation of knowledge and maximize its communicative potentials as a language of wider communication in Nigeria.

Keywords: lexicalization, Nigerian Pidgin, English, contact linguistics, lexical semantics

1. Introduction

Much fruitful research has emerged in the literature on NP. Works such as Mafeni (1971), Agheyisi (1984), Elugbe and Omamor (1991), Faraclas (1996) and many others have discussed the state of the art in NP research. These studies have surveyed the origin, structure, ethnolinguistic and sociolinguistic relevance of NP. Many stimulating research projects in NP are ongoing. In all these a few gaps still exist as no previous or current study has addressed the concept of lexicalization in NP from a theory driven perspective, hence, the present endeavour. A workshop on NP held recently at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria adopted among other things a change in nomenclature from NP to “Naija” for this language “...because it has creolised in some part of the country, its functions have surpassed the functions of a pidgin and the term ‘pidgin’ has helped to encourage derogatory connotations associated with it”

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(Ofule 2010:2). We strongly agree that NP is increasingly expanding its scope of functions and adding features which account for its uniqueness within the passage of history, that is from the era of slave trade with limited vocabulary to the dispensation of globalization with expanded and technical vocabulary, which has extensively enlarged its usage and applicability. We do not, however, agree that NP has fully creolised in any part of Nigeria though we must admit that the language is currently undergoing a shift towards creolization. There is no speaker of NP in Nigeria without a distinct mother tongue. NP merely serves as L2 to speakers without western education and L3 to speakers with such privileges.

The issue of change in nomenclature is irrelevant and inconsequential since the vitality of any language does not rest in its name. Moreso, the so-called reformed name, is ambiguous and there's no conscious effort to publicise it among the users and researchers of NP. "Naija" is a term that is used to refer to "Nigeria" as a country by all speakers of NP and the reference to NP itself among its speakers is *Wafi, Broken (English), Una or Special English*. The change of name by the Ibadan Conference was hinged on the need to erase the negative perception and attitude people have towards the word "pidgin" but we argue that adopting a new name for NP would not in any way change these prejudices. NP as a language has developed from being a limited language of trade and business along the coastal regions of Nigeria to a full-fledged language in its own rights as a result of acquisition of new vocabulary items to meet the expanded communication challenges of its speakers. This new status has helped to tremendously improve the people's attitude and solidarity towards NP.

For the purpose of this study, our working definition of lexicalization is the process whereby a lexical item formed by a word-formation process is stored permanently in the mental lexicon (Plag 2003, Anderson 1992, Ogechi 2005) and that a particular interpretation of a word has become part of the lexical norm of the language community involved (Booij 2005). In this paper, I intend to discuss the principle of word formation in NP, and how meaning is mapped onto these words. The buildup to these discussions would be a critical examination of the methodologies and the theoretical assumptions that informed the study.

2. Methodology and theoretical framework

Data for this study were obtained primarily through "naturally occurring casual speech" of the speakers of NP (Kadenge and Mavunga 2010). We recorded the discourse of speakers of mainly Calabar and Ikom varieties in Calabar Municipality and Four Corners in Ikom. This assignment took us to bus stations, university campuses, post offices, cyber cafes and markets especially the Watt market in Calabar,

where the use of NP is quite prevalent. We also recorded programmes anchored in NP on the Cross River Broadcasting Corporation, radio and television stations. The population of our consultants was about a hundred, whose age ranges within the bracket of 15-70 years and whose occupations, religious and educational backgrounds vary. We mainly employed participant observation. We initiated discussions on topical issues in the Nigerian political scene like the ongoing registration of voters, the democratization process, the passage of the Freedom of Information Bill by the National Assembly and the planned strike by the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) over government nonchallant attitude towards the implementation of the minimum wage for workers among others. We also conducted some flexible interviews for some of my consultants. We sought to investigate certain linguistic peculiarities of NP, especially those involving word-formation processes. The author's intuition as a speaker of NP also helped to orientate the work.

The theoretical assumption that underpins this work is the concept of lexical semantics, which is concerned primarily with word meaning. Baldwin (2007:1) defines lexical semantics as "the study of what individual lexical item mean, why they mean what they do, how we represent all of this, and where the combined interpretation for an utterance comes from". The word is one of the few concepts in linguistics for which an adequate definition is yet to be reached. According to Katamba (1993), the difficulties in classifying the nature of the word are largely due to the fact that the term "word" is used in a variety of senses, which usually are not clearly distinguished.

Bloomfield (1933) and Meillet (1912) were some of the earliest attempts to point out the indeterminacies about the notion of the word. A word could be "a minimal free form" or "a unit of meaning", which may comprise elements that are smaller (eg. morphemes) or larger than the word (eg. phrases or idioms), whose meaning may not be apparent from the constituent words.

Given the above discrepancies, linguists use the term "lexeme" or "lexical item" to denote an item of vocabulary with a single referent whether it consists of one or more than one word. Katamba (1993:17) refers to the "word" in this sense of abstract vocabulary item using the term "lexeme". For example the forms *show*, *shows*, *showed*, *shown*, *showing* are different realizations (or manifestations or representations) of the lexeme SHOW. They all share a core element of meaning although they are spelled and pronounced differently (Finch 2000). Poole (1999) argues that the term "lexeme" allows for greater precision in that its different manifestations can be considered to be different forms of the one lexeme. These lexemes are vocabulary items listed in the dictionary. The lexeme which one can equate to the form that one would look up in a dictionary encompasses the set of

forms that may be used to realise the lexeme in various environments.

Like sentences, words have internal structures. While sentences are built up from concatenation of individual words, words are constructed from morphemes, the “minimal meaning bearing unit” (O’Grady et al. 1989:92) which enter into lexical and constructional relations with one another depending on context sensitivity or sense specificity. The starting point of the theory of lexical semantics is decomposing lexical meaning in terms of semantic primitives, entailment relations and truth conditional, etc. by providing specific complete meaning for individual words. How these words are understood first before their meaning could be analysed. In this study, we adopt the assumption that lexemes are words (in spite of the claim that they do not correspond exactly to words) with recognizable lexical meaning.

3. The social profile of NP

Historical accounts of the origin and evolution of NP point towards Calabar, the first administrative capital of Nigeria, where first contact with Portuguese trading merchants brought about a Portuguese-based Pidgin language known as “Negro Portuguese” in the 15th century. The arrival of the British as trading partners and later as missionaries and colonial administrators further increase the demand for communication in NP which had metamorphosed into Englished-based within the passage of history. Emananjo (1985) recognises NP as one of the four commonly spoken languages in Nigeria, competing with the country’s so-called national languages — Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. The language witnessed series of transformations given the degree of contact with its superstrate and substrate sources. During the pre- and post- independence era in Nigeria, the attitude towards NP was overwhelmingly negative and degrading. It was regarded as “broken English”, “unruly jargon”, “vulgar” and “corrupt” form of expression. It was outlawed in schools and within government circles. The language was mainly associated with the peasants, uneducated, artisans and the general low-income population. In this way, the status of NP was mainly determined by identity of its speakers. Even within the global linguistic circle, Pidgin languages received little scholarly attention has been paid to their studies. This is why Holm (2000:5) argues that:

It is only comparatively recently that linguists have realised that Pidgins and Creoles are not wrong versions of other languages but rather new languages... shaped by the same linguistic forces that shaped English and other “proper” languages.

In spite of the antagonism against NP, it still holds sway, growing in prominence and utility unlike the New Zealand Pidgin of the Maori people which was replaced with Standard English through mass education, or the Chinese Pidgin English which died out in China as a result of being forbidden by the Chinese authorities. Every movement targeted at eliminating NP or reducing its spread and influence in Nigeria has always naturally fizzled out of reckoning. A case in point was the proposed WAZOBIA project which called for the artificial creation of Nigeria's national language based on input from the resources of the three so-called major languages in Nigeria. The concept is derived from the word meaning "come" in these languages. *Wa* (Yoruba), *zo* (Hausa) and *bia* (Igbo). The project was a way of whittling down the influence of NP but the entire conception died on arrival. NP has come to stay with Nigerians and is acquiring new roles in every facet of the country's economic and socio-political life. It is no longer seen as the restricted mode of interlingual communication with limited lexicon but as a language with its own vitality and essence. Mufwene (2008:7) maintains that:

... as the pidgins' communicative functions increased (such as in the cities that emerged from erstwhile trade factories) these "contact varieties" became structurally more complex, and regularity of use gave them more stability. These additional characteristics changed them into what is known as expanded pidgins like Tok Pisin and Nigerian Pidgin English.

NP is predominantly a spoken language (though various unsuccessful attempts have been made to commit it into writing by devising a standard orthography for it), which is very versatile and dynamic. The social conditions of the Nigerian environment has placed greater demands on its use and functions. Many linguists (Essien 1993, Egbokhare 2003, Emenanjo 1985, etc.) have called for the adoption of NP as the national language in Nigeria while others (Marchese and Schnukal 1982) have called for its recognition as an indigenous Nigerian language as a result of its popularity, simplicity and neutrality. The rivalry among the three dominant languages places NP at an advantage as a better alternative and indispensable favourite in the quest for a lingua franca of Nigeria. It is politically, socially and ethnically detached and has greater acceptability than any precolonially existing Nigerian language. Its simplicity also enhances learnability, given its reduced and contracted form.

Its sound system, word formation strategies and sentence structure are devoid of complexities that could be encountered in learning any Nigerian language. The renewed role of NP in the electronic media such as in news translation, drama, public enlightenment, mass mobilization and education promotes its sustenance as a

language that can bridge ethnic gaps and foster a new badge of identity. The Wazobia radio station and the Naija FM radio station in Abuja, Lagos and Rivers State exclusively anchor all their programmes, from news to public sensitization and entertainment in NP. These are commendably sustained efforts at keeping NP relevant as a language of the media and national discourse. In the Nigerian music scene, particularly with the emerging Naija pop culture, NP is a predominant language of expression and a form of solidarity or a mark of identity among the various multi-ethnic youth groups who crave to create their respective urban culture given their group dynamics and social orientation.

Within the religious arena, NP is prominent in church sermons, songs, testimonies, and a medium of prayer. In both print and electronic media advertizing, NP has been used creatively and stylistically to manipulate social values and attitude in shaping consumers' taste. There is an ongoing project to translate the Bible into NP, an initiative of the Nigerian Pidgin Language Bible Translation (NPLBT) in conjunction with Literacy International (Ofule 2010). In the academic domain, though NP is not a medium of instruction in Nigerian schools, it is often used as a medium of expression among students, especially those in higher institutions of learning during non-official hours. A number of literary genres such as drama, poem and prose have been published in NP. Many aspects of its linguistic structure and form have been described and analysed. When the social situations in which NP was hitherto used undergo expansion, the lexicon has to expand as well for greater need of communication to be fulfilled. This paper sets out to investigate the word formation strategies in NP and how these lexical items come to acquire meanings which are socially constructed. Before delving into these concerns, it is pertinent to clarify the distinction between NP and Pidgin English (PE) which have been used interchangeably in the literature even among linguists in Nigeria and beyond.

4. Nigerian Pidgin (NP) vs. Pidgin English (PE)

There have been a lot of misconceptions about the status of NP and PE. Most references in the literature (Agheyisi 1984, Mafeni 1971, Mufwene 2007, Orisawayi 2007, etc.) combine the two varieties and refer generally to them as Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE). In Nigeria, where the two forms of pidgin are spoken, there is discrete distinction between the two genres. NP has been identified as a language with its unique linguistic structure and identity. It evolved within a known and specified time frame and undergoes stages of growth to attain some levels of linguistic refinement. Some of the known varieties of NP include Ikom, Calabar, Warri, Port-Harcourt, Onitsha, and Ajegunle among others (The Warri variety is fast expanding towards

creolization). In these varieties, there is conventionalization of their lexical items. PE on the other hand, is “...a substandard attempt by a large proportion of ill-equipped, illiterate Nigerians to manipulate the English language” (Elugbe and Omamor 1991:66). A case in point is the language of Chief Zebrudaya of the New Masquarade fame, who deliberately invents language for comic effects. In one of his electronic advert for a detergent, we recorded the following abridged monologue:

Aa u aa, de new improved Elephant Blue detergent aa washing white whiter and penetration deep down... even if na de dowty of baby napkin or de dowty of mechanic uniform...

The English version of the same advert would be:

Hello, the new improved Elephant Blue detergent washes cleaner and brighter... even if it's the mess in babies' nappies or the dirt of mechanic uniforms...

The choice of expressions like *washing white whiter* and *penetration deep down* are personal innovations or expressions of creativity of the speaker. It is not every speaker of PE that would be able to make sense out of these expressions, except with recourse to pragmatic competence. Discourse-pragmatics is therefore imperative to understanding both lexical and structural borrowing in PE. While NP is a descriptively adequate grammar, PE is grammatically aberrant and defective; no established rules, and principle for word order, sound system, vocabulary, sentence structure and meaning. Morphologically, while NP lacks inflection markers on nouns, verbs, and adjectives, PE can conjecture such markers as we can see above. *Washing white whiter* would translate in NP as *e dey wash clean well well*. In this case, the progressive marker *dey* is used to represent the inflectional form of the verb and a reduplicative strategy is used to handle the comparative form of the adjective in NP. *Penetration deep down* in PE can be translated in NP as *e dey shine waa*. The form *penetration* would be assumed to be “grammar” (high sounding English word) in the context of NP. This is why it has to be simplified to a less complicated form.

Elugbe and Omamor (1991) also commented that Zebrudaya's speech includes expressions and words that may not exist in either English or NP, but are designed to achieve maximum comic effect. The study of PE as a distinct genre has not attracted significant research interest from linguists in Nigeria or elsewhere. This lacklustre attitude is the reason Holm (2000:5) remarks that “...broken English was of little interest to linguists as a broken diamond would be to geniologists”. It is as a result of this distinction that a few scholars prefer the appellation NP instead of NPE, which

connotes the features of both NP and PE, which is often very misleading and at times, outright confusing. The language of *Wakabout of the Lagos Weekend Newspaper* is also a form of PE, though in written form. Elugbe and Omamor (1991) equally allude that in spite of the differences between them, the two forms undoubtedly represent two distinct linguistic systems. In summary, I refer to PE as a language that looks like a pidgin but does not have the full-fledged character of Pidgin. NP is a complete language in its own right with its 'soul' and vitality. The two varieties, I must admit have some fundamental attributes which they share in common, but what majority of Nigerians speak is NP, which is the focus of this study.

5. Pidginization and the lexicon

NP as a language of wider communication has undergone progressive cycles of internal innovation through calquing of substrate pattern and other techniques in response to the expanding human activities and social conditions. In this regard, NP has adopted morphological, phonological and semantic strategies to acquire new words and expressions, thus increasing its lexicon within the Nigerian sociolinguistic landscape. In the ensuing discussion, we examine some of the word formation phenomena in NP:

5.1 Borrowing

English constitutes the superstrate source of borrowing for NP while languages like Portuguese, French, Nigerian English, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba among others are the substrate sources as shown in Table 1. Chimhundu (1983) remarks that major characteristics of borrowing include the adoption and adaptation of terms through integrating them firmly in the linguistic structure of the receiving language. Loanword adaptation implies that speakers will show faithfulness to the source word and at the same time try to make the loanwords conform to their native segmental inventory, phonotactic constraints and morphological system (Kenstowicz and Suchato 2006):

Table 1. Superstrate and substrate influences on NP

Lexical source	NP lexical item	NP meaning
English	pálè ¹ veks maintain obstacle remote control	pal/friend vex be calm meat witchcraft
Portuguese	palava pickin dash sabi brusai	problem/trouble child gift know flirt
French	bókû kámpé pantalun rundevu	plenty fine/durable bogus pair of trousers reckless spending
Nigerian English	go slow machine watchnight houseboy upstair	hold up motorcycle/new car night watch man male servant storey building
Igbo	ókóró ínyángá ògógóró ogbánjé bíkó	an Igbo man show off locally brewed gin reincarnated birth please
Hausa	ádámú wáláhí námá ábóki káyá	a foolish person believe me/I swear meat friend luggage

¹ All precolonial indigenous languages in Nigeria that are sources of lexical enrichment of NP are tonal languages. Hence, there is the assignment of tones to some NP lexical items. In this study, we identify the basic tones as high tone (/) and low tone (\). A combination of these basic tones results in falling tone (^) and rising tone (ˇ). The adoption of tones in NP is in fact one of the Bantu features that NP has assimilated.

Yoruba	tókúmbò ibéji ábí kílódé ásháwó	a fairly used item twins Isn't it what's the matter prostitute
Warri slang	tómáshánkó yáwá càsàlè múmú kóló	locally brewed gin problem trouble a foolish person mentally deranged

Since there is no generally accepted orthography for NP, the spelling of these words are either retained in the source language or reduced to assimilate with the simplified phonology of NP (depending on each writer's preference). In this study, however, we do not intend to adopt any phonetic convention for NP spelling. The degree of borrowing reflects the profound extent of contact NP has had with its source languages. An examination of the data in Table 1. reveals that the noun is the lexical category that is most affected by the phenomenon of borrowing. This is because meaning-wise, nouns are the freest category (Barker 2002). Other lexical items like verbs (V) and adjectives (A) may be borrowed only from the superstrate or lexifier language. These content words carry most of the descriptive payload of the sentence or the 'meat' of the message we want to send (Barker 2002, Harley 2003):

(1)	<u>V</u>		<u>A</u>
	fly	'fly'	smal
	wákká	'walk'	bétá
	tándá	'stand'	long
	báf	'bathe'	tof
	ráit	'write'	wait
			'small'
			'better'
			'long'
			'tough'
			'white'

From the data in Table 1, it is observed that a lexical item from a source language may or may not retain its original meaning in NP, and can also be realised as an expression larger than the word, example, a phrase or a sentence. The contribution of slang into the lexicon of NP comes from the various varieties of NP, for instance, in the Calabar variety, which the author is most conversant, the following slang in the form of address terms are attested:

(2)	óbóñ ówò	‘an elderly person’
	chairman	‘a boss’
	bros	‘(clipped form of) brother (not necessarily biological)’
	ñdìtò	‘children (used to refer to Agaba boys)’
	bábá	‘an amiable person (usually a man)’
	bâbá/mámà	‘an elderly man/woman’
	ébóí	‘a wayward child’

These forms may or may not readily make sense to speakers of other varieties of NP. Input from slang may come from one variety but gradually gain currency among others. In other words, NP slang are contributory and may be characteristically short-lived within certain sociolinguistic space.

5.2 Reduplication

Spencer (1991:13) considers reduplication “...an affixation process in which some part of a base is repeated either to the left or to the right or occasionally in the middle.” In NP, reduplication is an important device in forming adverbs, adjectives and nouns as we can see in (3a), (3b) and (3c) respectively, in which case, the base of a word is repeated:

(3)	a.	small small	‘gently’
		wélu wélu	‘very well’
		kúlú kúlú	‘calmly’
		sharp sharp	‘fastly’
		kwík kwík	‘urgently’
	b.	mágo mágo	‘deceitful’
		wúrú wúrú	‘unfaithful/deceitful’
		jágá jágá	‘confusable’
		yámá yámá	‘disgusting’
		kóró kóró	‘visible’
	c.	chá chá	‘gambling’
		kái kái	‘local gin’
		kátá kátá	‘confusion’
		léké léké	‘cattle egret’
		kábú kábú	‘(unregistered) taxi’

The only category of reduplication found in NP is complete or total reduplication.

While the examples in (3a) are basically products of derivation, (3b) and (3c) are frozen reduplication, which are basically non-derived reduplication. In other words, each of the reduplicative constituents does not have a meaning in isolation, but a meaning is obtained from their combination. The reduplicated process in (3a) may signal increase in size, frequency and intensity. Here, it is evident that reduplication is partly predictable, regular and productive. It mainly has expressive and aesthetic effects.

Reduplication in NP may perform grammatical functions like indicating the progressive form of the verb:

- (4) Person wey cry cry still dey see road.
 person who cry PROG still PROG see road
 ‘A person who is crying is still seeing.’

The first verb in the series within the predicate phrase is reduplicated to mark the progressive or continuous action while the progressive marker *dey* performs the same function on the second verb.

Reduplication can also be used for emphasis, usually with pragmatic relevance. This feature can also be found in the indigenous languages, example, Efik (Mensah 2004). A combination of verbs to derive adjectives is the major configuration in NP:

- (5) talk talk ‘quarrelsome’
 play play ‘lively/funny’
 chóp chóp ‘gluttonous’
 láf láf ‘absurd/comical’
 wáká wáká ‘roamy’

Reduplication functions here to introduce a personal, friendly or affectionate touch into a situation. Pragmatically, it is assumed that the speaker in (5) already has background information about the habitual attribute of the addressee, hence, the speaker’s resort to the use of the reduplicative form. In this sense of the use of reduplication, it denotes duration or length of the action described by the verb. In addition to this, it carries the speaker’s own involvement or reaction (and at times irritation) in what he says. In other words, it expresses modal actions.

5.3 Affixation

Apart from reduplication, the suffix *-y* may often be attached to adjectives to derive nouns which bring out contrastive meaning that are emphatic:

- | | | | |
|--------|-------|--------|------------------------|
| (6) a. | short | shorty | ‘a short person’ |
| | black | blacky | ‘a dark person’ |
| | left | lefty | ‘a left-handed person’ |
| | sweet | sweety | ‘a dear one’ |
| | long | longy | ‘a tall person’ |

There are cases where there are clear use of prefixes in NP:

- | | | | | |
|--------|------|-----|---------|--|
| (6) b. | yarn | vs. | misyarn | ‘communicate/miscommunicate’ |
| | fire | vs. | misfire | ‘talk aggressively/say something stupid or irrelevant’ |

The adjectives in (6a), though have animate and inanimate semantic connotations are all used to refer to animate nouns in NP. The expression of intensity with this suffix and the use of the prefix in (6b) to express contradiction are further evidence of the evolution of NP towards creolization since Pidgin languages the world over lack morphological alternations or what Holm (2000:11) calls “unnecessary complications”. It is, however, noted that while *misyarn* is an innovation in NP, *misfire* is derived from standard English when applied to a gun.

5.4 Metaphorical extension

Another productive word formation process in NP is metaphorical extension of the meaning of lexical items borrowed from a source language in which case, “the correspondence of meaning of two or more words is used and understood in a related and recognised way” (Robins 1989:345). Here are a few instances of metaphorical extension in NP:

(7) water don pass gari	‘a bad situation’
tókúmbò	‘a fairly used good’
yaradua	‘prolonged absence’
pancake	‘make up’
yellow fever	‘a traffic warden’
grammar	‘long sounding English word/unachievable feat’
home and abroad	‘(last pint of) cash’

Metaphors are used to extend the meaning of words and forms as single symbolic formation. In *water don pass gari*, for instance, *gari* represent a stable source of carbohydrate for most Nigerians and when preparing it, a lot of care and caution is required for water not to submerge it. If accidentally this is allowed to happen, the food becomes too sticky and unpalatable. In NP, this expression depicts a hopeless and helpless situation that has defied every practicable solution or redemption.

Tókúmbò is a Yoruba personal name which is given to a child of either sex whose father is in the diaspora as at the time of his/her birth. The concept is metonymically linked to any good item ranging from electronics, cars, clothes, shoes and bags, etc. that is imported fairly used into the country or what is popularly called “second-hand goods”.

The form *yaradua* is the name of the immediate past President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and is taken to mean ‘prolonged absence’. It was introduced into the lexicon of NP in the wake of the political crisis that engulfed the country occasioned by the absence of the President from the seat of government for over six months without handing over the reins of power to his vice. The entire country was thrown into pandemonium and a state of uncertainty while the controversy lasted until the President eventually passed on. Therefore, *yaradua* is connected metaphorically to a state of unwarranted silence which subjects a greater majority to untold hardship and discomfort. *Pancake* in NP is a kind of make-up usually associated with high-profiled society’s women. What the make-up does is to tone the complexion of their faces and it is applied to both sides of the face just like the thin flour cake (pancake) that is fried on both sides.

The expression *yellow fever* was first coined by the Late Fela Antikolapo Kuti, a music icon and human rights activist, as a name for bleaching cream and then, that mocking extension was further applied to the Nigerian Police (Traffic Division) uniform. This derogatory name stuck as a result of the unruly attitude of these law enforcement officers to motorists and the general resentment towards the police. In NP, the word *grammar* is understood as the ability to impress people with high sounding English words but without the ability to solve simple practical problems.

The perception of grammar is that of abstraction and theorizing which may not translate into any tangible output. The notion of *home and abroad* is used to depict one's financial position where s/he is left with limited resources to achieve just a particular task. The expression takes its root from the idea of children who reside abroad and send money home to their parents. This practice is prevalent in Nigeria. When there is no money at home and no expectation from abroad, the situation becomes very gloomy. The observation here is that there is no direct semantic link that holds between the form and the resultant meaning. The individual meaning of the words does not sum up to the overall meaning of the sentence in any way.

5.5 Compounding

The following endocentric and exocentric compound structures are found in NP, which may have lexical, metaphorical or idiomatic meanings:

(8) a. A+N

long throat	'glutton'
bad belle	'jealousy/envy'
busybody	'prying person'
sharp mouth	'loquaciousness'
strong head	'stubbornness'

b. N+N

God pikin	'christian'
house boy	'male servant'
baby girl/boy	'girl/boy friend'
country people	'the masses'
country man/woman	'a citizen'

(9) a. N+N

basket mouth	'a talkative'
sai monkey	'a thief'
fire electric	'electricity'
yarnsh man	'homosexual'
woman wrapper	'weakling (of a man)'
coconut head	'a dunce'
bush meat	'a village girl'
pure water	'cheap/mass produced goods'

b. N+V

heart cut	‘shock’
liver melt	‘surprise’
wound injure	‘injury’
head scatter	‘confuse/disorganise’

c. V+N

make mouth	‘boast’
make eye	‘wink’
hear word	‘listen’
tear race	‘run’
fear face	‘respect’

d. V+V

sidon look	‘indifferent’
komot stand	‘outstand’
fly wákká	‘disappear’
carry go	‘suit oneself’
chop go	‘escape’

There is no generally agreed principle of representing compound words orthographically in NP. There are either written as separate words, single words or separated by hyphens in the literature. Most of these lexical items are calqued from English and Nigerian languages. For instance, *houseboy*, *busybody* and *countryman* are standard English, *strong head* is derived from Igbo’s *ísí ike*, *coconut head* is *ibuot ísíp-mmàkárá* in Efik, and so on. The adjective-noun and noun-noun compounds in (8) are endocentric in nature. This implies that they have heads, which are the dominant constituents and constitute the primary element of meaning. Katamba (1993) maintains that in terms of meaning relation, an endocentric compound indicates a sub-grouping within the class of entities that the head denotes. Endocentric compound words have transparent meanings and may be analysed in terms of argument structure (Urua 2001). The non-head element is the modifier, which attributes certain properties to the head.

All the configurations of compounds in (9) except (9c) and (9d) are exocentric and have unexpressed semantic heads. They are often seen as being idiomatic or metaphorical and lack semantic compositionality. In other words, the meaning of the whole cannot be predicted from the meaning of the parts. For instance, in the noun-noun compounds in (9a), the modifiers do not predict anything about the second constituents and they do not modify their meanings (Rosario and Hearst 2001). All the phrasal verbs in (9c) and (9d) are endocentric. They are headed by verbs, but are

idiomatic expressions.

5.6 Clipping

Clipping or truncation is another morphological process that is visible in NP. Some of the lexical items borrowed from the superstrate language are shortened but still retain their full lexical content and meaning. Marchand (1969) argues that clipping are not coined as words belonging to the standard vocabulary of a language as they are terms for special groups. However, in NP, these clipped forms are essential constituents of the lexicon and not primarily used as slang as claimed above. They have met the well-formedness condition of NP and do not exist as separate component of its grammar. The part of the word most affected by this process is either initial or final:

(10)	pámy	‘palm wine’
	demo	‘show off or use style on someone’
	cáf	‘cafeteria’
	náijá	‘Nigeria’
	acada	‘academic’
	mómó	‘morning’
	bros	‘brother’
	wan	‘want’
	tóri	‘story’
	gree	‘agree’
	ókriks	‘okrika (fairly used cloths, shoes, bags etc)’
	ugh	‘ugly’

There is no standard principle or order of clipping. The practice is arbitrary. In some cases, an entire word in a compound structure may be clipped off (complex clipping), while in others, only a part of the word is affected. The beginning (back clipping) or the final (fore clipping) part of the word may be retained. The important factor here is that they are institutionalized, which implies that they are created by productive morphological process and put into general use in a speech community (Bauer 1988).

5.7 Metaphor

The lexical items from the superstrate source denote entirely different meanings from those conveyed in NP in an analogical sense. The new meaning acquired by NP

is socially constructed:

- | | | |
|------|-------------|---------------------|
| (11) | obstacle | ‘meat’ |
| | download | ‘defecate’ |
| | breaklight | ‘shadow’ |
| | (one) yarsh | ‘a seat (in a bus)’ |
| | tank | ‘to drink’ |

These forms started off as slang and gradually gained currency into the lexicon of NP through regularity of use. The Warri variety is usually the source of these socially invented meanings from where they spread to other varieties of NP. For instance, words like *yawa*, *gas*, *casale*, *kanja*, etc. were Warri slang and subsequently began to be used as NP lexical items. Marchese and Schnukal (1982:218) remark that in Warri, NP “...has become the recognised lingua franca and the primary language of a great number of children, if not the majority”. This is why it is considered to be the most versatile and dynamic of all the varieties of NP in Nigeria. Closely related to this is the assignment of meaning to referents based on social, economic and political circumstances. This is because words have meaning potentials and have their specific meaning determined by the current context (Allwood 1999, 2003):

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (12) | <i>I beta pass my nebor</i> | ‘a portable generating set’ |
| | <i>up nepa</i> | ‘light is restored’ |
| | <i>babangida</i> | ‘(type of) ulcerated disease’ |
| | <i>abdulmutallab</i> | ‘misplaced opportunity’ |
| | <i>pure water</i> | ‘cheap (of goods)’ |

I beta pass my nebor is one of the new expressions that has been invented in NP as a result of the incessant power outage in Nigeria. Having a generating set, therefore, becomes a necessity as an alternative source of power supply for every home. The smallest size of the generating set is so-called not just as a mark of poverty alleviation but as a status symbol, implying that it is not every neighbourhood that can afford it. *Up nepa* on the other hand is a popular expression of ecstasy whenever power failure is restored. NEPA (National Electric Power Authority) was the government agency that was responsible for the generation and distribution of power (electricity) in Nigeria. Most times, the expression, *up nepa* is used to bemoan the failure of this agency at supplying regular power to Nigerians. Its failure at service delivery led to its proscription and the subsequent establishment of Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). The continuous failure of the new company to provide electricity has made

Nigerians to refer to it as *problem has changed name* (PHCN) based on its acronym.

Table 2. represents some metaphors in NP:

Table 2: Productive use of metaphors in different domains in NP

NP term related to	Literal meaning	Metaphorical meaning
bus station	shake body one yarsh rolam in put head máshàm shadow dánfó	shift to create space for someone. one more chance (for a passenger). bring a passenger into a bus go ahead drop a passenger overtake a vehicle (Cf. Aziza 2003). passengers' bus
money	bénjí hámà/hit son of mary wad áfù nai pepper táchéré	money make money unexpectedly bundle of notes lots of money worthless amount of money cashless naira notes a paltry sum of money
prostitution	ásháwó donatus distributor money for hand cash and carry pay as you go	a commercial sex worker a woman/girl with many sex partners. a woman/girl who is a source of STD commercialised sex a prostitute a prostitute
bribery/corruption and fraud	back hand kólà brown envelope ten percent kick back man no man égúnjé yahooze bottom power long leg wet ground	bribe bribe symbol of bribe value of bribe bribe corruption and nepotism bribe internet fraud sexual might (of women) for favouritism undue influence for favour gratification

violence/drug	yáwá kàsàlà pálávà kpémé gbèghè twáng tumble grass coke combine	problem commotion problem die trouble police cell (to) fight marijuana/hemp cocaine gin and indian hemp taken together
general	wash áwuf jack gbédú déngé óróbó lékpá kóp nó mí bone	celebrate surplus (money/food/drink) study/read dance show off a fat person a thin person (usually a female) a love portion (lit. listen to me) look serious/mean

These metaphors elicit more cognitive interpretations than the literary terms. They are basically conceptual and result in deeper level of meaning (MacInns et al. 1991). The conceptual metaphors penetrate our understanding of ourselves and the world around us in ways that no other mode of thought can (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff and Turner 1989). According to the conceptual theory of metaphor, domain A or source domain (abstract reality) is understood in the context of domain B or target domain (concrete entity), where each domain is conceptual and correlates with another. For instance, in referring to corruption, *a brown envelop* is the source domain while *bribe* is the target domain. *A brown envelop* vividly captures the instrument of conveying *bribe* from the giver to the receiver, hence depicts a clear transition from the source to the target domain. In this way, the notion of *brown envelop* has been reconceptualised and made to carry a new information content.

5.8 Acronyms/abbreviations

This is a word formation process that involves using the initial constituents of words to represent a whole word or phrase or part of it.

(13)	OK	‘okrika (fairly used items like cloths, shoes, bags etc)’
	IOU	‘I owe you’
	TDB	‘till day break’
	K	‘a thousand (e.g 5k means five thousand) naira’
	247	‘twenty four hours a day and seven days a week’
	1-0-1(one-zero-one)	‘regularity or otherwise of daily meals (where 1 indicates the presence and 0 the absence of a meal).’
	JJC	‘(Jonny just come) a novice’
	IYC	‘(International Year of the Child) childish behaviour/tendency/attitude put up by an adult’

An interesting feature of the use of acronyms in NP is that they may also involve the use of cardinal numerals. The abbreviations are formed from the initial components of a word in series of words. It is interesting to note that some of these forms like *IOU* and *K* for thousand are derived from standard English. The acronyms/abbreviations are in active use for the creation of new vocabulary. They are less self-conscious, and are concentrated in areas where the demand for new noun vocabulary is the greatest (Carstairs-McCarthy 2002). The semantic process here is known as disposition, which involves the expression of lexical meaning in terms of simpler concepts.

5.9 Creation of additional syllable

Some lexical items in NP are formed by syllable extension of the original lexifier source:

(14)	tándá	‘stand’
	wákká	‘walk (away)’
	dókità	‘doctor’

Generally, loanwords are usually adapted in a way that makes them closer to forms belonging to the recipient rather than the donor language (Morandini 2007). The creation of extra coda syllables here is in response to some phonotactic constraints as the case may be in most natural language. Here, it mainly helps to facilitate pronunciation while at the same time showing faithfulness to the English source. In *tándá*, the initial consonant sound is deleted and in *wákká*, the lateral consonant is deleted while the final consonant becomes geminated as a consequence of having the extra syllable. In *dókità*, there is adaptation with a medial epenthetic vowel which has created a penultimate syllable. It can be concluded that the creation of additional

syllable as a word-formation strategy in NP is arbitrary and not predictable. It is also not a productive process.

5.10 Ideophones

The use of ideophones is another word-formation process in NP. This happens when the meaning of an object is derived directly from the sound it is regularly or naturally associated with. They may describe emotions, sight, smells, sensation, or movements, and they usually do this in the most economical and vivid way (Essien 1998). In NP, there are few descriptive ideophones as follows:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------|--------------------|
| (15) | (shine) wáá | ‘brighter’ |
| | (dey) brêkété | ‘plenty’ |
| | (get) nyáfú nyáfú | ‘in abundance’ |
| | (talk) óh há | ‘bluntly/openly’ |
| | (dey) kákráká | ‘very strong’ |
| | (dey) bámbám | ‘very comfortable’ |
| | (finish) pátápátá | ‘completely’ |

These are sense-intensifying descriptive ideophones. Some of them are formed by either repeating the entire form or sequence of vowels and consonants to bring about possible meaning relation. The meanings of these words are understood in the context of the sound correspondence of the sensation or the intensity they trigger. We agree with Nadarajan (2010:45), who asserts that this kind of ideophone “...attempts to direct imitation of natural occurring sounds or natural occurrence between sound and sense and the echoic forms appear in contexts that are culture specific.” In *waa*, for instance, the description carries certain intensity which is onomatopoeic, and is used to emphasize the duration of an action. It is achieved by lengthening the final vowel sound of the base. This strategy is most aptly used to define adjectives.

5.11 Euphemisms

Euphemisms are linguistic devices that are used to handle words and expressions forbidden by social conventions. Taboo words, which are considered as vulgar and desecrating, constitutes a part of the linguistic repertoire of speakers of NP. Euphemisms accord the society a sense of decency and improve communication within the social intercourse. It promotes politeness, which constitutes a vital aspect of the norms of linguistic communication crucial to the formation and maintenance of

social relationships (Ugorji 2009). The data below show some taboo forms and their corresponding euphemisms in NP:

(16)	<u>taboo form</u>	<u>euphemism</u>	<u>gloss</u>
	fuck	hámà	sexual intercourse
	ásháwó/donatus	cash and carry	prostitute
	brôkós/prick	aparatus	penis
	tótó	honeycomb	vagina
	piss	titrate	urinate
	shit	download	defecate
	die	kpémé	die/pass on

These taboo forms pertain to expressions which relate to sex, excretion and death, and the restriction placed on their use serves as the conventional expression of respect and etiquette that is significant to the social order. One important way any speech community can protect its members from the embarrassment of taboo forms and expressions is the creation of euphemisms. The use of this device must therefore be cherished to guarantee stern rectitude among members of the society.

5.12 Metonymy

The use of metonymy is an important word formation strategy in NP, where objects or concepts are formed based on their contiguity or close association with other objects or concepts:

(17)	muri/muritala	‘twenty naira note’
	wazobia	‘fifty naira note’
	419	‘fraud/fraudster/fraudulent activities’
	Ghana must go	‘conta iner/content’

Muritala and *wazobia* are derived from the faces on the banknotes. Murtala Muhammed was the third military Head of State in Nigeria and whose face appears in Nigeria’s twenty naira note, hence the name. In the case of the fifty naira note, it depicts people from different ethnic backgrounds in Nigeria and the value of the note is translated into the Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. *Wazobia* is used as a cover term to represent the multi-ethnic groups in Nigeria. *419* also known as advance-fee fraud is derived from the article of the Nigerian Criminal Code. It is an organised crime tradition in which a target is persuaded to advance sums of money in the hope of

realising a significantly larger gain, but which will ultimately end up as a scam. *Ghana must go* functions as both container and content. As a container, it connotes a cheap bag used by refugees and as a content, it represent money which is often interpreted as a bribe. The word came into the lexicon of NP in the early 1980s when over a million Ghanaians were expelled from Nigeria. In their rush to leave the country, they turned cheap bags of woven plastic into makeshift luggages (Estrada 2004).

5.13 The mutability of *for*

In our analysis so far, we have been concerned with the content words, which have storable lexical meanings by virtue of carrying higher information content, in contrast to function words which express grammatical relationships with other words within the sentence. We have identified the preposition *for* as the most productive function word in NP as we can see in the examples below:

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|--|
| (18) | E dey <u>for</u> the table | ‘It’s <u>on</u> the table.’ |
| | I live <u>for</u> school domot | ‘I live <u>at</u> the school compound.’ |
| | No be <u>for</u> mouth | ‘It’s not <u>by</u> boasting.’ |
| | I put am <u>for</u> your bag | ‘I put it <u>in/inside</u> your bag.’ |
| | E good <u>for</u> you | ‘It’s good <u>for</u> you.’ |
| | Hú be gofnor <u>for</u> Lagos? | ‘Who is the governor <u>of</u> Lagos (State)?’ |
| | Wák <u>for</u> legedis. | ‘Walk <u>with</u> your legs.’ |

The preposition *for* has multiplicity of meanings which are not ambiguous in the context of usage. It can stand in for other prepositions like *on*, *at*, *by*, *in/inside*, *for*, *of* and *with*, etc., in the same syntactic environment. It has been noted that the plurifunctionality of *for* in these examples are not original to NP, but comes from the indigenous precolonial languages which have correspondingly vague prepositions (Yoruba *ni* and *si*, Igbo *na*, Efik *ke*, etc.). It can also specify the attitude and mood of the speaker. In this way, it has pragmatic relevance. In addition to functioning as a preposition in a sentence, it can also act as an auxiliary and/or perfective aspect as we can see below:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (19) | I <u>for</u> like come. | ‘I <u>would</u> like to come.’ |
| | You <u>for</u> tell me | ‘You <u>would have</u> told me.’ |

In this way, *for* is undergoing transformation as a morphosyntactic marker in

response to the need for creativity and expressiveness. Grammaticalization in NP is, however, beyond the scope of the present paper.

There are various instances where an entire phrase or sentence may be used as a lexical item. The overall meaning may concatenate from the meaning of the words it is made up of or may be idiomatic or have analogical effect:

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------|--|
| (20) | Come follow me stay | ‘cohabitation’ |
| | face me I face you | ‘a (ghetto) house’ |
| | park one side | ‘steer clear’ |
| | I beta pass my neighbour | ‘(portable) generator’ |
| | Ghana must go | ‘luggage bag (also used to connote bribe)’ |
| | man no die | ‘amulette (protective medicine)’ |

These are mainly imperative and simple declarative constructions. Their meanings are socially constructed and are highly conventionalized in meeting the internal dynamics of NP.

Words in a particular class in NP may represent another in a different class in the same position or environment. For instance, nouns can be made to function as verbs, and generally lose their nominal properties and weaken aspects of their original meaning. In NP, just like in English, the class of words is determined by their syntactic and morphological distribution. Every simple NP sentence has the SVO structure as the constituent structures of the following sentences can reveal:

- (21) a. Yáwá don gas
 problem AUX start
 ‘Problem has started.’
- b. No dey monkey say you sabi me
 NEG PRES pretend COMP 3PL know me
 ‘Do not pretend as if you know me.’
- c. We bin dey grass for bush
 1PL PAST PROG smoke in bush
 ‘We were smoking (Indian hemp) in the bush.’
- d. Di guyman tank tomashanko finish, e put head for road
 DET boy drink gin finish 3SG put head PREP road
 ‘After the boy drank the native gin, he left.’ (Cf: Aziza 2003:127)

Here, *gas* ‘start’, *monkey* ‘pretend’, *grass* ‘smoke’ and *tank* ‘drink’ form the predicate phrases of the respective sentences even though they are traditionally nouns.

In (21a), *yawa* is the subject of the sentence. *Don* is the auxiliary and *gas* is the verb phrase constituent. In (21b), the internal structure of the imperative sentence reveals verb serialization, where *monkey* is the first verb phrase constituent. In (21c), *grass* is the verb phrase constituent of the sentence, which is complemented by the prepositional phrase *for bush*. In the complex sentence in (21d), *tank* is the verb phrase constituent of the sentence within the main clause. This phenomenon is referred to as multifunctionality of lexical items. The study, however, discovers that the device in which other word classes are converted into verbs or nouns is common in indigenous precolonial languages in Nigeria, so NP did not invent this though it did exploit it to coin new nouns.

6. Any future for NP?

NP has been viewed with contempt as a “bastardized version” of the English language. It has been relegated to the background as the language of the peasants. The reason for this negative attitude stems from its origin as mainly a trade language. This perception brought about wider social distance between speakers of the lexifier language, English, and NP. Over the years NP has developed significantly as a means of wider communication, given the pluralistic nature of the Nigerian linguistic landscape. The language has acquired a number of lexical items that are shared by English and the indigenous languages.

Elugbe and Omamor (1991:148) maintain that “the world community is biased against Pidgins and Creoles. They are often thought of as debased, sparse, and intellectually inferior languages. Nearly half a century of Pidgin and Creoles studies have not quite changed that attitude.” Mufwene (2007:63) maintains that pidgin and creole languages the world over are often regarded as “children out of wedlock”. This perception gives rise to their being regarded as “bastardized languages”. NP has been undergoing self-renewal given its expanding functionality but unfortunately, no recognition is accorded NP by the Nigerian government and its language planners and policy makers. Elugbe and Omamor (1991) argue that if a deliberate framework is not put in place, it may receive no more attention than it is getting today. This official neglect has rendered NP solely as an unwritten language, in this way, the benefits of a written language cannot be derived by it. One of the implications of this is that NP plays no role in the promotion of literacy. Mensah (2002) argues that writing plays an indispensable role in online mediated communication like e-mail, e-banking, e-book, e-commerce and fax among others, in which information is clearly spelt out, processed and transmitted through an electronic system. Since NP largely exists in oral tradition, it cannot facilitate this mode of communication and the properties of the

language cannot be better appreciated and understood. It does not also stimulate a new way of thinking about language and communication. Generally, NP does not have a place in the emerging global communication dynamics or the new information technology. It has, however, been argued that NP is taking over the internet chatrooms and discussion boards. Perhaps the World Wide Web will help tip the balance for this language.

Igboanusi (2008) identifies lack of economic value, perceived effects on local languages and the effect on English language proficiency as the major barriers associated with the promotion of NP in Nigeria. The official neglect renders NP as an unplanned language. The absence of some activities like its use in education forecloses the demand for its standardization and hence the production of educational materials like dictionaries, primers and literature among others which could encourage the teaching and learning of this language at a larger scale. In Nigeria, political and economic factors, and not necessarily linguistic considerations, are given priority in language-in-education planning. For instance, a child has to learn in addition to English, any of the so-called major languages, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. A provision of the National Language policy that is fully implemented in all federal government colleges across the country. This policy only seems to highlight power dynamics and political relation as children who speak other languages outside these three are comparably disadvantaged and denied their linguistic rights. The use of NP in this case would have neutralised such an effect and promoted greater unity among children. This means that in the development of status, NP will contribute to national development as it would not impact negatively on the smaller language communities.

In the light of the afore-mentioned neglect and prospects, the paper argues for the development of NP to the status of an official language in Nigeria given its multi-functional relevance in every facet of the country's socio-economic life as the practice is elsewhere. Holm (2000) maintains that in Papua New Guinea in the South Pacific area, Tok Pisin (an English-based pidgin) is now used in the House of Assembly and in news broadcasts because of its nationwide currency. Similarly, Thomason (1991) also records that Haitian Creole became one of Haiti's official languages in 1987, and Seselwa or Seychellois, (the French-lexifier Creole of Seychelles in the Indian Ocean) had been the country's first official language, with English and French since, 1981. The development, promotion and adoption of NP in the same vein would be a better alternative to the national language question in Nigeria.

7. Conclusion

This paper discusses the phenomenon of lexicalization in NP, a veritable medium of multi-ethnic communication in Nigeria. The need to fulfill the enormous communication demands placed upon NP as a developing language motivates the enrichment of its internal resources through borrowing, reduplication, calquing, metaphor, metaphorical extension, acronyms and so on. The language adopts new terms and concepts in response to the social, economic and political exigencies of the time. We agree with Booji (2005) that pragmatic principles, knowledge of the world and the context in which a word is used, must be invoked to assumed a proper interpretation and use of words. The general principle of semantic compositionality guides the way NP words are formed. It is however noted that some words have idiosyncratic properties which made their meanings unpredictable. This is true of some of the latest entries in the lexicon of NP which are self-evolving, created out of linguistic and socio-historical contexts and not necessarily as a result of contact with English. The study concludes that though NP does not have a rich morphological system, it reveals a dynamic process of linguistic innovation and lexicalization, which in turn has greatly improved its functionality that can sustain it as a language of national consciousness in Nigeria. We also consider the continued relevance of NP as a medium of discourse in Nigeria in the wake of the country's language policy and proffer the implementation of a robust and explicit policy framework to protect and re-energize NP to continually meet its challenges and chart new courses in different multifunctional domains.

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Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies
University of Calabar
Calabar, NIGERIA
Eyo Offiong Mensah: eyomensah@yahoo.co.uk

奈及利亞洋涇濱語的詞彙化

Eyo Offiong Mensah

卡拉巴爾大學

對文化和語言差異密度高的奈及利亞人來說，奈及利亞洋涇濱語無疑是最有效的族群間溝通方式，因為它簡便的語言吸引了很多基層民眾使用。由於它語言內部與社會文化的關聯性及社會對溝通需求的增加，這種語言正經歷著社會擴張的歷程，因此，它一直不斷在擴展詞彙，並加廣詞彙意義可以使用的範圍。本篇文章從詞彙語意學的理論角度出發，欲探究其名詞片語的構詞策略，做為它豐富詞彙及拓展語言內部資源及功能的方式。文章指出，英文是名詞片語借字的主要來源，而葡萄牙文、法文、奈及利亞英文、伊博語、豪薩語、約魯巴語則是次要的字彙來源。本研究發現在名詞片語中，字彙可以透過創意及各種表達方式來傳達意義，因此可能和來源的原意有所不同。本文亦走向名詞片語標準化的風潮，作為奈及利亞廣泛溝通的語言，目的是要加強其知識的傳播，並盡可能達到其溝通的最大可能限度。

關鍵詞：詞彙化、奈及利亞洋涇濱語、英語、語言接觸、詞彙語意學