

**LEXICAL INNOVATION STRATEGIES FOR BODY STRUCTURE IN
NIGERIA YOUTH LANGUAGE**

BY

**JONATHAN ONYEKA
ART1701314**

**DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

NOVEMBER, 2022

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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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CERTIFICATION

I **JONATHAN ONYEKA**, a student in the department of Linguistics Studies, University of Benin, with matriculation number **ART1701314** have completed the requirements for course work and research for the Bachelor of Arts Degree of the University of Benin. The work embodied in this project is original and has not been submitted in part or whole for any other degree or diploma programme of this or any other university or institution.

.....
JONATHAN ONYEKA

.....
DR. M. S. AGBO
Project supervisor

.....
DR. M. S. AGBO
Head of Department

.....
External examiner

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the Almighty God, Father of love, who out of His infinite love and kindness helped make this work a dream come true and also to my lovely Parents Mr. and Mrs. Joseph, my sister: Mrs. Ada Nwakolo for their unending love and support.

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ABSTRACT

This research work scrutinized the Lexical Innovation Strategies in Nigeria Youth Language. This work intends to fill the gap of the Nigerian Youth language and the lexical innovations in the language. The theoretical framework used to carry out this work is 'Linguistic relativity theory of Sapir'. The source of this project is gotten from the texts, books, dictionary and the internet. The findings of the study are the lexical strategies in Nigeria youth language which involves compounding, borrowing and coinage. In conclusion, new words are constantly coined and borrowed to make communication easier and shorter.

CHAPTER ONE

PRELIMINARIES TO THE STUDY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Lexical innovations are words a speaker coins that are not conventional in that speaker's language. This study examines the lexical innovations used to describe body structures or physique of people while sourcing data from English, Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. Also, the meaning of these innovations of body structures and the various parts of the body they describe will be discussed.

English is widely practiced and occupies a prominent function both at the workplace, in the media and as a medium of instruction in schools along with the three crucial indigenous languages as well.

Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo languages are spoken mostly in Nigeria and some other African countries. These three languages are the major ethnic languages in Nigeria and mostl However, studies have shown that Hausa language is spoken by fourteen million people in Nigeria, Niger, and the Sudan, Yoruba by five million people in Nigeria, Dahomey, and Togo, and Igbo, also by five million people but spoken only in Nigeria).

Geographically, the nation is populated by over 150 million people of whom 29 per cent are Hausa speaking nation located in the northern region. 21 per cent is Yoruba who lives in the western region, and 18 percent is Igbo people located in the eastern part of the country of which particular regions speak different languages as indicated upon the map. Historically, the inhabitant of the present-day Nigeria follows various parts of these regions and is made of diverse ethnic groups the majority of which include minority status. However, based on the language spoken in Nigeria. It is appropriate to assume that Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are the three main languages, and each is widely spoken in their various regions.

Hausa belongs to the Chadic sub-group of the Afro-asiatic language family. It is spoken in northern Nigeria, southern Niger and other African countries like Cameroon, Benin and Chad with approximately 150 million speakers. In Nigeria, Hausa has dominance in 11 states: Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kastina, Kebbi, Niger, Taraba, Sokoto and Zamfara.

Igbo is chiefly spoken in south eastern Nigeria while minority speakers can be found in Equitorial Guinea and Cameroon. It belongs to Niger-Congo language family with approximately 30 million speakers. Igbo language has dominance in five states in Nigeria: Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Ebonyi and Abia.

Yoruba is chiefly spoken in south western Nigeria and minority speakers are found in Benin, Cote d' Ivoire, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. Just like Igbo language, Yoruba belongs to Niger-Congo language family and has an approximated number of 50 million speakers. In Nigeria, Yoruba is spoken in Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Ekiti, Kogi and Kwara states.

The motivation for this study was an experience the writer had at a bus park where passengers on a bus described people's body structures using familiar words and expressions which were used outside the conventional context of usage. For instance, a lanky person was called a ruler, a ruler being a straight object without curves. This instance and many more uttered by those passengers left the writer intrigued thus, this research was birthed.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There have been studies on lexical innovations in English, like that of Bamiro (1991;1994) and Adegbija (1969), amongst others. This study provides a detailed scholarly study of lexical innovation of body parts in the Nigerian languages and it discusses these by using the Sapir-Whorf's theory of linguistic relativity. This study further attempts to trace the roots of these lexical items, their original meanings and current usage .This is the gap my work intends to fill.

The study seeks to investigate lexical innovations used to describe body structures in English, Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba languages.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study intends to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the different lexical items that have undergone innovations?
- ii. How are lexical innovations categorized?
- iii. What are the original meanings of these words and their new meaning?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to examine the lexical innovations strategies of the body structure in the Nigerian language. The study seeks to

- i. Identify different lexical items that have undergone innovations.
- ii. Categorize the processes lexical innovations are classified into like coinage and blending.
- iii. Ascertain the meanings given to some lexical items and their rooted original meanings.

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.4.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory of linguistic relativity. This research adopts the theory of Sapir-Whorf's linguistic relativity. It is often said that the reality expressed in spoken words is the same as the reality which is perceived in thought. Perception and expression are frequently understood to be synonymous and it is assumed that our speech is based on our thoughts. Thus, what one says is dependent on how it is encoded and decoded in the mind: language, therefore, influences thought. This is the weak form of Sapir-Whorf's hypothesis. However, there are many that believe that what one perceives is dependent on the spoken word. To these people, thought is dependent on language. This is considered extremely strong. Hence, the term 'strong hypothesis' is often used to describe it. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf are known for their collective theory, known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which holds great significance in the scope of all communication theory (Sapir 1949). Linguistic relativity opens the window to the realisation that all languages do not translate to each other. This implies that contrary to determining thought, language simply exerts influence on how we conceptualise our experiences.

This weak form of linguistic determinism is sometimes described as linguistic relativity. With regard to food items, it was noticed that Nigerians (and

indeed many Africans) talk about soup for instance in a very large number of ways: afang soup, okro soup, egusi soup, ‘draw’ (Ogbono) soup, white soup, edikang ikong soup, uha soup, bitter leaf soup, vegetable soup and sometimes a combination of different types. These different types have been isolated because the languages in Nigeria predispose individuals in the nation to these various ‘soups’. This notion of soup can be contrasted with a similar notion in the Western world in which soup is no more than a in a meal. However, languages in the West also predispose the speakers to such distinctions as onion soup, tomato soup or mushroom soup. The distinction which should not be lost sight of is that soup for the Nigerian is an inseparable part of the main dish, while soup for the Western world generally is a separate matter – an appetizer – preparatory to the main dish (Eka 2000b). The principle of Sapir-Whorf’s linguistic relativity is, therefore, valid in this research because of the notion that language is relative so that the same word can have different meanings for different people.

1.4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research methodology. It consists of the research design and sources of data analysis.

1.4.2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The qualitative and descriptive research designs are adopted for this study as against the quantitative approach. These two approaches use few data for the analysis to be more detailed and rigorous. The qualitative approach is suitable for our analysis because the study is on languages.

1.4.2.2 SOURCES OF DATA

To obtain an authentic and reliable information on the research work, two sources were used. They are

1. Primary data: It is an original data source in which the data are collected firsthand by the researcher for a specific research. The primary data was collected through interview the native speakers of Igbo, Yoruba and through participant observation.
2. Secondary data: It is the data that has already been collected through primary sources and made readily available for the researcher. The secondary data was collected through books, journal and multi lingual dictionary.

1.5 YOUTH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA

Youth language in modern times has drawn some attention to itself because language has served as a means of creating a new identity for youths of the 21st century. They have been able to establish themselves as a distinct class in the

society. Youths, specifically adolescents as implied in the content of this study, are a social institution which undergoes a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. They undergo emotional, psychological and physical transformations that are often given expressions, most times in the form of language. It is therefore, a period when language change is unambiguously visible. Language, thus serves as a powerful tool for the expression of feelings, needs and concepts that are common to youths. Language is not static, for this reason, Entela Kazazi (2015) describes language as a socio-demographic phenomenon in constant evolution. 182 Youths use language that is almost strange, invented and at variance with adult language. This is so because of a compelling desire to create their own identity and redefine their position in the wider society. They therefore use a language that could be described as „secrete“ and customized. In doing this, they have flouted established order and invented their pattern of speech through different means which include; borrowing, linguistic manipulation, non-standard syntax, harsh speech rhythm, extreme semantic changes and lots more. The pidgin which has become popular language of wider communication in most urban centres in Nigeria has also undergone innovations among youths.

1.6 YOUTH LANGUAGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

According to Svendsen and Royneland (2008:80), youth language is a new way of speaking which may be regarded as a new dialect. Kerswill (2013) sees it

as a language that is liable, contingent and transient, subject to fashion, serving as a badge of “nonconformity”. It also constructs for its users a complex identity for deployment as marker of different stance. Clearly, youth language is new, different from adult language and in sharp contrast to the language used by youths in the past. Every day it continues to experience innovations, new vocabularies and styles of expression are daily making an in-way to youth language. Youth language has come to stay as a mark of identity. B. Umokoro & F. Ovweriavwose 183 A close examination of different groups of youths over a period of time reveals that adolescents have various speech styles which could attract different ranges of description. Their scope include, code switching, style shifting, borrowing, college slangs, heavy vernacular use, non-standard vocabulary, vulgarisms, linguistic manipulations, improvisations, pidgin and a host of others. The 21st century in Nigeria has witnessed rapid development of youth language due to a number of reasons. The media and social network play a major role in this regard. Music especially and movie stars have exerted great influence on every segment of youth language.

There is also rapid urbanization occasioned by the influx of people of different social groups to the cities. This has caused cities to experience multilingualism. In many cities, institutions of higher learning have been established and adolescents, the most innovative social and language group with

diverse ethnic background are brought together. This group constitutes the highest percentage of the population in such academic environment and the growth of youth language in this peculiar environment is fostered and rapid. Among the youths of different ethnic and social background, there could be observed different attitudes ranging from being timid and conservative to being sophisticated and this to a large extent affects language of youths. But attitude is also subject to change due to exposure. Individual youth can strive to attain a new level of recognition and choose a new way of speaking in order to create for his or her self a new identity, one that is common to youth knowing fully well that one's speech pattern has a lot to reveal about oneself (Paul kerswill, 2010). A youth from a rural setting will be influenced by another in the urban area who has attained a level of sophistication. The former youth dumps the indigenous language for either the English language or pidgin in a bid to attain and maintain the same level of sophistication with the later youth. Where there are a number of adolescents of the same ethnic and language background, they manage to speak their local dialect, but it is done amidst shifting and borrowing from the language of wider communication. In this way, the indigenous language is adulterated. Language interrelatedness and interdependence is very common among youths. It is obviously an in-group mark which also adds to the user's complex identities of non-conformity. Kazazi, S. Entela (2015) opines that youth language in the 21st

century is a way to express the concepts, feelings and needs of young people in line with their stage of development which is often characterized by sensational psychic, emotional and moral crisis. He sees youth language as a means for adolescents to break away from the world of adults and not being understood by them. The goal according to him is to leave off the world of the adult and create for themselves a kind of independence and individuality. Adolescents have successfully created for themselves an identity through language use and their language has come to stay even as it continues to undergo changes daily. Its vocabularies continue to expand through adaptation, invention and innovation.

Innovation occurs in different ways in youth language. Sometimes, words are employed in an entirely different context to suggest meanings different from their normal usages, this is very common among youths or adolescents. At times, new words are coined and meaning created for such words in the new context of usage and most times words are borrowed from the indigenous language and are adapted to English context where their meanings can easily be deduced. The following conversation occurred between a male and female student as they leisurely walked out of the college premises and it illustrates the various levels of innovations in youth language.

A1: Where are you going now?

B1: To the hostel of course

A2: You have food?

A3: You will organize something for me now, let me come with you.

B2: Nothing O

B3: No way, just going to crash first men, „cos I am very tired now.

A4: Men, am dead hungry, I've got to arrange something for my tummy first. I no fit die.

B4: Later then

A&B: Cash you, bye.

The conversation reveals different ranges of language pattern among youths. „A1“ is an interrogative statement that observes the conventions of English. The statement is introduced with the interrogative pronoun „where“ followed by auxiliary verb, „are“ and a pronoun „you“ before the verb, „going“ and an adverb „now“. B2 tends to flout the conventions of English by omitting „I“ the subject and „am going“ the verb elements. This is common in youth language. This is ellipsis which could be linked with youths“ desires to be quick at everything, even their speech. The same situation is observed in A2, you have food? Which ought to be an interrogative statement with the introduction of „Do“ (auxiliary verb). But the verb Do is omitted at the beginning. The word „organize“ as used in „A3“ suggests

cook as against its original meaning of arranging and putting things in order. The same pattern is used in B3 where the word „crash“ is used to suggest „sleep“ or „rest“ instead of its original meaning of to hit somewhere/something as in vehicle accident. „Dead“ in A4 is used as an adjective to qualify hungry showing how serious the hunger is and it deviates from its real meaning of not being alive.

Another pattern of speech seen in this conversation is the quick switch from the regular English to pidgin as seen in A4 „I no fit die“. This is what we regularly find in youth language code switching/mixing. Youth language abounds with various speech patterns or styles with different descriptions which include the following: B. Umokoro & F. Ovweriavwose 185 Improvisation: This pattern of speech among youths occurs when strange words are formed, adopted and meaning is assigned to them according to how they are used. According to Idiagben Abdullahi (2011), improvisation is rampant among youths and it allows for enormous creative possibilities. The expression „wack“ (eat) „gbege“ (problem), „yawa“ (trouble) are examples of such strange words (strange because of not having English origin and not easily linked with any vernacular language) which are employed by youths. Surprisingly, these words have not only made an in-way to the youth language, they have gained popularity among adolescents of different ethnic backgrounds.

Borrowing: By borrowing, youths deploy words of vernacular origin into their speech while using English language. This also occurs while using their indigenous languages or pidgin, they borrow words of English origin. Borrowing during conversation helps to establish the informal nature of the conversation so it serves for private issues of friendship and domestic needs. It is observed that a reasonable number of Yoruba and a few other indigenous Nigeria language words have found their way into youth language through this method of borrowing. This to an extent could be attributed to the influence of the media or press in popularization. Schools namely, institutions of higher learning are a micro-society which draws or bring together people (youths) from different parts of the larger society. The result of borrowing is code mixing which is the insertion of vernacular/English words into the English or pidgin/vernacular used by adolescents. This of course is a very common feature of youth language. Instances of such words are:

Word Meaning Origin „wahala“ trouble Pidgin Yanga show off Pidgin Chineke God Ibo Ose Father (older man) Urhobo Ekpa fool Urho Oya get started Yoruba Iyawo mi my wife Yoruba Orobo big/fat Yoruba Ashawo Harlot Yoruba Yeye make jest Yoruba Omo/babe child/girl Yoruba/English Slang: According to Dozie, P. and Madu, L. (2012), slang which is a facet of youth language is an evidence of their creativity because slang is metaphorical, it presents a colourful

image of a word in use. They also claim that it is limited to a group that is the adolescent group and it differentiates them from any other social group. They maintain that the use of slang is different from one speech environment to another. employed by adolescents but a few of them are examined below to gain an insight to their usage and meaning.

Slang expressions in Nigerian Youth Language Meaning We get runs this weekend we have an engagement this weekend

1. Download the babe's data -get the girl's information
2. Hunger dey waya -me I am hungry
3. Lets wack -let us eat
4. Please raise me with few fibre- please lend me some money (little amount of money)
5. Control me please when it is time- call me when it is time
6. Maintain I beg -behave well please
7. How runs? -How is work?
8. Lets yarn- Let us talk
9. Yawa don gas

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the range of lexical innovation patterns that are found in English. It serves to introduce basic concepts and terminology necessary in the study of lexical innovation. Changes in the lexicon normally cover changes in meaning and in lexical inventory. They can be grouped into: word coining, semantic change, word-building, and borrowings. These will all be illustrated in this chapter.

2.1 LEXICAL GROWTH

The lexicon of a language is in continuous development. Whereas in artificial or dead languages the lexicon can be considered as a closed class, in living languages vocabulary is constantly changing through the addition of new words, dying out of certain words, and modification of the meanings of existing words. Taking into consideration the relationship between a word and its source we can distinguish the following factors accounting for its origin: whether a word is based on earlier words or existing patterns, whether the source is from English or other languages, and whether it undergoes any morphosyntactic modifications. As a consequence the processes involved in expanding the lexicon can be ascribed to

one of four categories (for a detailed slightly different taxonomy of word origins sees also Algeo 1978, 1980, 1998):

Word coining: creating words not based on other words or patterns.

Borrowing: words based on other existing words in languages other than English

Semantic change: words based on existing words, which do not undergo any morphosyntactic modifications.

Word-building: covers both structural and functional modifications, that is, formation of new words using patterns and processes available in a language, and ‘function shifting’, which does not require any structural modifications. The following sections will present a discussion of these four groups.

New words are evidently and constantly entering the lexicon to describe new concepts and technologies and what they mean to us. Conversely, older words become more archaic and continually fall out of use as they decrease in cultural significance.

2.2 WORD COINAGE – ROOT CREATION

When words are created that is, without morphological motivation, we talk about ‘coinage’, ‘root creation’ or ‘deliberate invention’ (cf. Bauer 1983: 239, Baugh and Cable 2002, Brinton and Closs Traugott 2005). Coinage may also cover

cases of partly motivated words, as in the case of our example hot legs. Quark first appeared in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939) and in 1964 was applied by U.S. physicist Murray Gell-Mann to refer to any of a group of sub-atomic particles (originally three in number) conceived of as having a fractional electric charge and making up in different combinations the hadrons, but not detected in the free state” (the OED Online). Hobbit was coined in 1937 in the fantasy tales of J.R.R. Tolkien. As explained by Tolkien in *The Return of the King* (1955: 416) Hobbit is an invention. In the Westron the word used, when this people was referred to at all, was *banakil* ‘halfling’. But at this date the folk of the Shire and of Bree used the word *kuduk*, which was not found elsewhere. Meriadoc, however, actually records that the King of Rohan used the word *kûd-dûkan* ‘hole-dweller’. Since, as has been noted, the Hobbits had once spoken a language closely related to that of the Rohirrim, it seems likely that *kuduk* was a worn-down form of *kûd-dûkan*. The latter I have translated, for reasons explained, by *holbytla*; and *hobbit* provides a word that might well be a worn-down form of *holbytla*, if the name had occurred in our own ancient language. Word coinage is a rare process. Algeo (1998) argues that it is not only extremely rare, but doubts if words coined *ex nihilo* exist at all. He believes that words commonly classified as coinages are in fact motivated but “words that seem to be of that type are usually words about whose history we merely have insufficient information” (Algeo 1998: 66). Word coinage is typically applied in

commercial settings for brand names. Stockwell and Minkova (2001: 5) observe that “[i]n the world of marketing, such creations generally are the result of massive commercial research efforts to find a combination of sounds that does not suggest something they do not want to suggest, words that have a pleasant ring to them and that are easy to pronounce.” These brand names may, with time, become more general terms, as happened with kleenex used now for any cleansing tissue or pyrex used for any glassware resistant to heat. Coinage for some commercial products is, to a large extent, arbitrary, although in some cases the technical origin can be traced

2.3 BORROWING

Borrowing is a word formation that involves taking words from a language without any changes. Nordquist (2019) defines borrowing as “a process by which a word from one language is adapted for use in another”. Words that are borrowed from a language are called loan words. English language has borrowed from languages like French, Latin, Arabic, Italian etc.

New lexical items can be created by borrowing, that is taking over words from other languages, either in their lexical form as foreign words, called “loan words”, or as a translation but not a word-form itself, “loanshifts” also frequently called “calques”, and “loan translations” (Katamba 2005: 137). Borrowing may

also take the form of structural borrowing. For example, morphological patterns such as derivational and inflectional affixes can be borrowed. Borrowing is by far the quickest way of increasing the word stock of a language. The most common motivation for lexical borrowing is the naming need. Speakers borrow words for concepts or objects which do not have names in their own language. This is confirmed by Crystal (2006: 62), who observes that “the majority of a language’s loan words do not replace anything. Rather, they gently elbow their way in, nudging aside already existing words and adding an extra sense or nuance to what was there before.” For example, the word *sputnik* was borrowed from Russian in October 1957 when the Russians launched the world’s first artificial satellite. *Sputnik* filled the lexical gap and at the time successfully competed with native, more descriptive terms like *man-made earth satellite*, *artificial moon*, and *artificial earth satellite* (Metcalf 2002: 4ff.). When the new object is borrowed alongside the new lexical term, the borrowing process gets reinforced by “cultural borrowing”.

This is often the case with fauna, flora, culture, and technology. For centuries English has been adding foreign words “ready made from the people from whom the idea or the thing designated has been obtained” Baugh and Cable (2002: 303). Selected cultural borrowings into English are listed after Crystal (1997) and Baugh and Cable (2002: 303) in (1). It is important to stress that socially perceived prestige is also a powerful motivation for borrowings. In the

above discussed contact situations, the language or group of people that trigger prestigious connotations tend to influence the other language more profoundly. Lexical borrowing may take the form of ‘adoption’ or ‘adaptation’. We talk about adoption when the borrowed word retains its original form. Adaptation refers to the various degrees of nativisation of the loan, such as phonological and morphological modifications. Borrowings, in general, rely on language contact. Lexical borrowings, however, do not necessarily require the source and target languages to be exposed to each other for a long time, that is, their contact need not be intense. Structural borrowings, on the other hand, can only appear in intense language contact situations. With more adstratal contact language situations, when two or more languages co-exist hand-in-hand, the structural borrowing especially might become more prominent. Multilingual societies where both native and non-native English speakers use English as the language of communication can therefore actively influence (at least lexical) language development. Foreign borrowings have contributed profoundly to the English vocabulary. According to Crystal, English is an “insatiable borrower” (1997: 126) and “a vacuum-cleaner of a language” (2006: 59). Hughes (2000: 9) calls English a “fascinatingly hybrid conglomeration” with “almost omnivorous capacity to absorb words from exotic and alien sources” (2000: 362). Crystal (2006) mentions over 350 source languages for lexical borrowing into English. Bromberg and Gale Chapter 2 14 (1998: 56)

claim that approximately seventy-five percent of English words are borrowed.

Baugh and Cable (2002: 11) add that more than half of the English vocabulary has its roots in Latin. Algeo (1991: 4) argues, however, that although a large proportion of the English vocabulary is in some way composed of borrowed words or word elements a large proportion of such words have actually been formed in English, and therefore the high percentage of borrowing reported for English is not justified. Inally, the origin of the words classified as borrowings was traced. Bauer's findings show a steady decrease of new words created through borrowing as compared with other word-building processes.

Lexical innovations are words which are not fully recognized to be part of the vocabulary of a language however are used in daily interactions in various settings. Oxford Dictionary of English (2003:1179) defines lexical innovation as "a newly coined word or expression that may be in the process of entering common use but has not yet been accepted into mainstream language"

Also, lexical innovations are newly-formed words or expressions, or a new meaning of existing words or expressions that are in the process of entering mainstream usage (Cambridge English Dictionary online). Neologisms represent the dynamic nature of language, as people evolve new ideas, inventions, developments in science, technology, politics, globalization and other such innovations. Neologisms therefore are candidates for critical study as they give

clues to the level of development in a particular sphere of human interaction. Needless to say, neologisms are especially useful in denominating inventions, new phenomena, or old ideas that have taken on a new cultural context. In the present research one should adhere to this definition, as it seems to include all the main characteristic features of neologisms. The new political dispensation in Nigeria seems to be saddled with new words credited to apex ethnic leaders that seem to smack of ethnic divisions and rancour. As Bonfiglio (2006) would have it, ethnicity tends to make people see themselves from kinship perspectives excluding others who apparently do not share this blood bond. Yule (2010: 53) had argued that, rather than the feeling that new lexical entries in language are debasing, “we might prefer to view the constant evolution of new words and new uses of old words as a reassuring sign of vitality and creativeness in the way a language is shaped by the need of its users”. However, this work argues that, in addition to contributing to this vitality and creativeness, the observed neologisms in this work are products of ethnic exclusionism, hate, nepotism and balkanization of the corporate existence of the Nigerian nation state. In the formation of neologisms, Crystal, (2007: 315) talks about what he calls “nonce expressions”, a term for a linguistic form which a speaker consciously invents, or accidentally uses to express a thought or idea on just one single occasion, but which may never get into mainstream usage. Nonce words or formations (forms used for just once) usually

drop out of use but, on some occasions, they may be adopted by the speech community as stable neologisms. For a nuanced discussion of neologisms, a detailed conceptual review of the different word formation processes in language is pertinent. A number of them are listed in Yule (2010), Finegan (2004), Quirk and Greenbaum (1973, 2000) and others and will be discussed shortly. Concepts like ethnicity and ethnic identity discourse especially as they relate to how neologisms contribute to or complicate these social constructions are germane to these discussions. Change as a constant feature of human negotiation with the conscious and unconscious worlds of existence should be a sought for position as people relate with one another for communal good. Finally, a link will be established between these concepts and media discourse as champion of public interest.

A number of scholars have identified different word formation processes that allow new lexical entries into the language (Yule, 2010, Quirk & Greenbaum 1973). Such processes have been listed as those involving affixation, conversion, compounding, reduplication, coinages, borrowing, blending, acronym, clipping backformation, and some that involve multiple processes (Yule, 2010: 52-61). Although these processes may not all be discussed in turns in this paper, our data implicate some of them as responsible in the formation of the neologisms used in ethnic politics in the print and online media. Languages have inherent and external mechanisms of extending their vocabularies in order to accommodate new ideas

and inventions. There are different ways words enter into a language. Finegan (2004: 52) categorizes these into three broad domains: forming new words from existing words and word parts, “borrowing” words from another language and “coining” new words, that is, making them up, “creating” them from the scratch.

The first domain constitutes the most powerful and the most diverse word formation processes and languages do this through affixation, conversion or functional shift, compounding, reduplication, hypocorisms, clippings/shortenings, acronyms, blends and backformations. Borrowing from other languages (such as in the case of the word *resume* borrowed from French to mean *curriculum vitae* in English) constitute the second major means of lexical creation in language but may not be relevant to this paper because most of the observed words that motivated this paper do not have foreign etymology. The third, coinages, is another means of lexical entry in languages which according to Finegan (2004), it is not very productive. But for this paper, coinages seem to pervade observed neologisms as different print and online media come up with newly coined expressions that seem to sustain ethnic separatist identity construction. .

2.4 BLENDING

Blending is a word formation process that involves parts of words combined to form a new word. Blends are usually formed by combining the beginning of a word and the ending of another word

2.5 AFFIXATION

In affixation, new words are formed by the addition of morphemes to existing words. New meanings are assigned to the new words formed. There are different types of affixation: prefix, suffix, circumfixes.

Prefixes are morphemes added at the beginning of a word. Examples include: in-, un-, non-, dis-. These prefixes are used to show negativity.

2.6 REVIEW OF PREVIOUS LITERATURES

Ezeifeka (2018) discusses the influx of ethnically coined nonce expressions in Nigerian media especially since the ‘change’ administration. The study finds that those neologisms are formed along ethnic divisions and pose a threat to national unity in Nigeria. Conclusively, the study dissuades the use of these neologisms as they fan the embers of nepotism and other vices instead, efforts should be made to promote equity, justice and fairness in Nigeria. This research is relevant to the present study as it discusses neologisms in some of the selected languages used in the present study.

Rets (2016) examines the emergence of new words in English vocabulary and the need to integrate those words into the language materials prepared for English learners. It surveys how conversant learners of English are with neologisms and their opinion on the integration of neologistic expressions into

English language. This study goes on to review current perspectives and theories on neologisms. Research findings have it that only 5% of the sample could explain 90% of the neologisms in the survey material. The study is relevant to the present study because it discusses neologisms in English vocabulary same as the present study.

Behera & Mishra (2013) discusses the usage of neologisms in contemporary English. The study explores the various domains in which neologisms are used like science, technology, pop-culture, politics and so on. Furthermore, different processes through which neologisms are formed were analyzed, processes such as abbreviations, new coinages, collocations etc. This research is relevant to the present study as it discusses ideas which are germane to the present study.

Onyedum (2012) notes that the meaning of some words in English language have expanded to accommodate new meanings of these words and the emergence of new words in English language can occur as a result of social networking. Attribution of new meanings to old words such as ‘apple’ and ‘blackberry’ going on to mean electronic terms as against the conventional meaning, ‘fruit’ is a good example of what this study addresses. Data for this study were gathered from social networking platforms and published literary works. Analysis of data was done in line with research objectives and questions. Graphs, tables and pie-charts

were used in the analysis of data. This study finds that noun is the commonest word class which new words are formed through blending.. This study is relevant to the present study because it discusses various domains in which lexical innovations are used while present study discusses just a domain- body parts.

Ishola, M.K (2019) discusses “the practical ways by which language users make use of lexical innovations in order to find expressions for the day to day usages of common terms, which are found in other languages like English, Arabic and Hausa and so on” This study examines how media personnel in Nigeria are compelled to make use of neologisms in local languages to capture their intentions and “express their what goes on in the world around them”. The data for this study were derived from Yoruba language using the observation method. Research findings have it that most lexical innovations in Yoruba language are formed through processes such as Onomatopoeic, eponym, Loanwords, Phono-semantic matching etc.

This study is relevant to the present study because it discusses neologisms in Yoruba which is part of the scope of the present study.

2.7 PRESENT STUDY

Change is said to be the only constant thing in life. Languages experience changes which result in formation of new words, laying off of old words, broadening of the meaning/scope of usage of existing words and so on.

Amujo-Fajemila (2019) asserts that “a defining characteristic that language possesses is its ability to create and recreate new words from existing ones in its lexicon” Olateju et al (2005) notes that “... the general characteristics of language is creativity which concerns the fact that all languages continually get new words and have a variety of ways to do this. New ideas, new tools, concepts and product and memorable happenings occur frequently and all human languages cope richly and readily with them by having several ways of creating new words to express them”

Neologisms have been defined as words and expressions which are not fully recognized as part of the lexicon of a language however are used in daily interactions in various settings. Finegan (2004:52) opines that there are essentially three domains of word formation:

- i. New words from existing words and word parts.
- ii. Borrowing words from another language.
- iii. Coining - forming new words from scratch.

The first domain subsumes most word formation processes like affixation, conversion, reduplication, clipping/shortenings, acronyms, blends etc.

2.8 MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES

The most initial process in creation of neologisms in any language is the one observed through a study of morphology. There are certain mechanisms used to produce neologisms. These processes are around in English, Igbo and Yoruba . For instance, lexical innovations may have been created through some morphological processes such as derivation, back-formation, compounding, conversion, borrowing, abbreviations, clippings, acronyms and onomatopoeia. It is to be pointed out that morphological processes may alter stems to derive new words. They may change the word's meaning or grammatical function of a word. In addition, there are various types of processes, not all of which are present in all languages .

2.8.1 REDUPLICATION

Reduplication is a process of a grammatically functional repetition of a radical element or a part of it occurring usually at the beginning of a word and often accompanied by change of the radical vowel. Sometimes, there is the entire morpheme repeated, but quite often there are some consonant or vowel changes in the repeated element (Lieber 2009: 81).

2.8.2 AFFIXATION

Affix is understood as a grammatical element that is combined with a word, stem, or phrase to produce derived or inflected forms. There are three main types of affixes: prefixes, infixes, and suffixes. To define these briefly, a prefix (such as anti-, dis-, hyper-, homo-, re-, tri-, uni-, under-, mis-) occurs at the beginning of a word or stem (pre-determine, un-willing, dis-connect, hyper-tension, under-cooked, mis-understand), a suffix (such as -able, -acy, -er, -en, -ment, -ful, -ance, -ly) occurs at the end (wonderful, depend-ent, act-ion, wonderfully, plentiful, excitement, importance), whereas an infix occurs in the middle (English has no true infixes, but they are mostly found in American Indian languages, Greek, Tagalog, and elsewhere) (Lieber 2009: 35).

2.8.3 CONVERSION

Conversion involves pairs or sets of word forms which share both their phonological (and orthographic) form as well as some elements of meaning, but which seem to belong to different word classes. In addition, it is extremely productive and contributes to the word formation in the English lexicon as it proves to be an easy way to create new words from the existing ones. Thus, the meaning is perfectly and easily comprehensible and the speaker can quickly fill a meaningful gap in their language or use fewer words (Lieber 2009: 49). For

instance, there are a few new morphemic statuses of the following words, which means that they have changed their word class, but maintained their original form.

2.8.4 ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation represents the word formation process in which a word or phrase is shortened ('PMS' = premenstrual syndrome; 'VIP' = very important person; 'A.M.' = ante meridiem i.e., in the morning). Initialisms are the most common type of abbreviation formed by the initial letters of a word or phrase. Although abbreviation is largely a convention of written language, sometimes abbreviations carry over into spoken language (Lieber 2009: 51). On the other hand, Acronyms are words formed from the initial letters of other words and pronounced as they are spelled, not as separate letters. For example, 'AIDS' - acquired immune deficiency syndrome; 'NATO' - North Atlantic Treaty Organization; 'UNESCO' - United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; 'SIM' (card) - subscriber identification module (Lieber 2009: 51).

2.8.5 CLIPPING

Clipping is the word formation process in which a word is reduced or shortened without the change in the meaning of the word (Lieber 2009: 52).

CHAPTER THREE

DATA PRESENTATION

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the data gathered during the research work.

3.1 LEXICAL INNOVATION STRATEGIES

These strategies are classified into coinage, clipping, compounding, conversion and acronyms.

3.1.1. COMPOUNDING

S/N	WORDS	LITERAL MEANING	NEW MEANING
1.	Coke bottle	A beverage bottle	A person with a slim waist and large hips.
2.	Yam legs	Yam is a tuber	Fat calves
3.	6 packs	Packaged as six items	A well chiseled torso

4.	Hour glass	A timing device	A person with a slim waist and well-rounded hips.
5.	Improper fraction	A fraction where the numerator is greater than the denominator	A person with big breasts and small buttocks.
6.	Apunanwu	A lady who does not stand the sun.	A pretty lady.
7	Akpobi	Strong heart	A man with a chiseled torso.
8.	Ahia oma	Good market	An attractive person.
9.	Mba Ji	A tuber of yam	Large calves
10.	Onu uwa	Mouth of the world	Big lips
11.	Nti eleke	Ears of a rabbit	A person with large ears

12.	Akpa osikapa	Bag of rice	A fat person
13.	Akpa ibu	Bag of load	A fat person
14.	Mami wota	Fairytale creature with a human torso and a fish tail	A beautiful but arrogant lady
15.	Oju ara	Early morning dew	A very beautiful and fair lady.

3.1.2 BORROWING

S/N	WORDS	ORIGINAL WORD	MEANING
1.	Bulleti	Bullet	A very fat person
2.	Kristiyan moda	Christian mother	A big arm often with a drooping fold.
3.	Jiraf	Giraffe	An abnormally long neck.
4.	Timba an kaliba	Timber and Caliber	A very big waist
5.	Amoibe	Amoeba	A shapeless person

COINAGE

S/N	WORDS	MEANING
1.	Atinga	A very short and thin person.
2.	Opi	A human head with an enlarged rear side.
3.	Biggie	Name of a person who is fat

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter employs the analysis of data gathered and collected.

4.1 ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL INNOVATION STRATEGIES

COMPOUNDING

A compound word is a union of two or more words. Compounding is also called composition which involves the combination of two words together to form a new word. Compounding is the morphological operation that, generally speaking, puts together two or more free morphemes and gives rise to a new word. The importance of compounding stems from the fact that there are probably no languages without having this process recognized. It is the major source of new word formation. From the examples above we see examples of compound words that have two words coming together to make a new one.

1. Coke+ bottle = coke bottle

2. Yam+ legs = yam legs

3.Hour + glass= hour glass

4. 6+ packs = 6 packs

5. Improper+ fraction = improper fraction

6. Akpo (strong) +Obi (heart) = Akpo Obi (strong heart)

7. Ahia (market) + Oma (good) = Ahia Oma meaning good market

8.. Mba(tuber) +Ji (yam) meaning tuber of yam

9. Akpa (bag) + osikapa (rice) meaning bag of rice

10. Akpa (bag) +Ibu (load) meaning bag of load

11. Mami+ wota =mami wota

12. Akpu (lady)anwu(sun) meaning lady sun or a lady that doesn't stand sun.

In compounding, words are categorized into those that can stand alone without a hyphen and those that appear with a hyphen .

Words Stading Alone Without Hyphen

a) Izaga

b) Udele

c) Elili

d) Gun

e) Kelebe

f) Ewa

g) Tobi

h) Gbe

i) Chinese

j) British

k) Curvy

l) Skeleton

m) Lion

BORROWING

Borrowing is a word formation that involves taking words from a language without any changes. Nordquist (2019) defines borrowing as “a process by which a word from one language is adapted for use in another”. Words that are borrowed from a language are called loan words.

Words that are adopted from another language is called borrowing hence the reason some of examples ;

Bulleti –bullet (n) referring to a fat person

Kristtiyan moda- Christain mother (n) referring to a big arm with dropping folds

Jiraf (Giraffe) a noun referring to an abnormal long neck

Timba an Kaliba (Timber and Caliber) an adjective to describe how big a waist is.

COINAGE

This is inventing a new word or a phrase. When words are created that is, without morphological motivation, we talk about ‘coinage’, ‘root creation’ or ‘deliberate invention’ (cf. Bauer 1983: 239, Baugh and Cable 2002, Brinton and Closs Traugott 2005). Coinage may also cover cases of partly motivated words, as in the case of our example hot legs.

1. Hot+leg= hot legs which involves joining of two words to make a word both are noun hot (n) legs(n) which refers to a person whose legs look good or appealing to the eyes
2. Atinga-A very short and thin person.
3. Opi- A human head with an enlarged rear side.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails the summary, conclusion and findings of this study.

5.1 SUMMARY

This work achieved its objectives as stated below

- ii. Identify different lexical items that have undergone innovations.
- ii. Categorize the processes lexical innovations are classified into like coinage and blending.
- iii. Ascertain the meanings given to some lexical items and their rooted original meanings. This research summarizes the lexical innovation strategies in Naija youth language.

Chapter one discusses the introduction to lexical innovation, the statement of the problem, research questions and objectives. The theoretical framework Linguistic relativity is also used, the research methodology, sources of data collection are also in this chapter.

Chapter two discusses the past works done by scholars on this research work as it relates to the present study. Previous works include; lexical innovations in

morphology but my work focuses on the innovation of Naija youth language. hence the gap my work fills.

Chapter three presents fully a detailed data of this research work .

Chapter four analyzes fully this data and categorizes them into their different lexical innovation examples.

Chapter five discusses findings as a result of the research undergone the summary, conclusion and recommendation of the work.

5.2 FINDINGS

New words are created on a daily basis as there exists the inevitable need for fast communication. Needless to say, this study has also some limits since not all types of neologisms were taken for the corpus or analyzed as well. On a positive note, the results provide readers with an overall insight into lexical innovation strategies in the Nigerian youth language. Results happen to be that mostly compound words and borrowed words, with a bit of coinage examples are focused in this study.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This study which is based on Lexical Innovation Strategies in Naija youth language sought to highlight new words and the context in which they are used, the coining of the words how they are borrowed.

The examples of these languages are extremely important as speakers can express many concepts in the shortest way possible. Thus, there are many examples of lexical innovation strategies like clip words, compounding. Due to their significant use, lexical innovations are proven to be widely and quickly accepted in communication between speakers, fostering relationships and making business ventures possible all over the world. These lexical innovations created by different morphological processes are mostly used in communication, especially blend words, clip words, abbreviations and acronyms.

Further research on lexical innovations is desirable and highly necessary for linguists, sociolinguists and lexicographers to ensure that new words in English are systematically recorded and tracked.

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APPENDIX

COMPOUNDING

S/N	WORDS	LITERAL MEANING	NEW MEANING
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