



Sociolinguistic analysis of slangy expressions in Nigerian pidgin

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Abstract

This paper undertakes a sociolinguistic analysis of slangy expressions in Nigerian Pidgin. The corpus for this study was gotten systematically through participant observation of conversational discourses in everyday contexts amongst Nigerians living in the Warri-Ughelli-Sapele axes of Delta State. These linguistic data were then recorded and transcribed to aid analysis. The study adopted the Referential theory of Richards and Ogden (1923) in the analysis of data using the descriptive research methodology. These set of data were from conversations in football viewing centres, bukas (roadside food vendors), motor-parks, university campuses, and the market. Slangy expressions as used by presenters on private radio stations and lyrics of popular Nigerian songs were also analysed descriptively. A total of thirty-three (33) slangy expressions were analysed contextually and referentially. The paper ended on the note that every speaker poses a variety of slangy expressions and tends to choose among them in accordance with the social situation that calls for their use and that these expressions are fully intelligible to the speakers. Nigerian pidgin slangy expressions are a product of social force and the creative use of language by Nigerians in order to satisfy their communication needs.

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1. Introduction

As a branch of linguistics, sociolinguistics focuses on language use in relation to the human society. This relationship between language and society features a goal: the goal being a higher understanding of the structure of language and the way languages operate in communication (Wardhaugh 2006). Hudson (1990) sees sociolinguistics as the study of language in reference to society. Otagburuagu (2013) in line with this view asserts that the main thrust of sociolinguistics is to look at language as a mere “linguistic abstraction” in terms of the socio-cultural atmosphere wherever it exists as a communicative device. The moment we delve into the question of why we speak in certain ways, we are in the ambits of sociolinguistics. Demographic variables such as the interlocutors’ sex, gender, social status, age, socio-cultural inclinations/belief, settings, literacy level and how these variables influence his linguistic behaviour lies within the realm of sociolinguistics (Adeyanju, 1998). Brooks (1969) sums up the importance of language to unravelling the human environment/culture when he asserts that: “It is

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through the magic of language that man comes eventually to understand to an impressive degree the environment to which he lives and, still more surprising, gains an insight into his own nature and his own condition". The Nigerian linguistic ecology is multilingual and made up of completely different ethnic groups numbering over four hundred. This linguistic diversity is made manifest in the north where Hausa is majorly spoken, Igbo in the east and Yoruba in the west. These three are the major Nigerian languages with the others as minority languages. The Niger-Delta region of Nigeria is preponderantly occupied by those who speak completely different languages particularly within the Delta-Edo axis. This peculiarity gave prominence to the continuing use of Nigeria Pidgin as a lingua franca.

1.1. Nigerian Pidgin

Nigerian Pidgin arose as an artificial language as a result of contact situations in instances where there was no defined language. It arose diachronically as a fusion of indigenous languages and foreign language (English). In supporting this view, Elugbe and Omamor (1991) in their attempt at defining pidgin assert that it is "some kind of marginal language that arises to fulfil specific communication needs in well-defined circumstances". This definition shows that Nigerian Pidgin is a marginalized language that is employed for communication by those who do not have any language in common so as to bridge communication gap. The current sociolinguistic reality in Nigeria has disclosed that it is not solely utilised in informal setting but also in formal setting. The historical precedent of Nigerian Pidgin is traceable to the contact situations between two parties with no common language. These two parties are the coastal people of Nigeria and the Europeans. Diachronically, Nigerian Pidgin can be traced to trade and colonialism. The initial contact of Nigerians with the visiting Europeans were along the coastal regions in the 14th century and trade was mediated by interpreters. These interpreters in line with Mufwene (2007) learnt nearer approximations of the European lingua franca. Nigerian Pidgin lexicon is preponderantly English based and the reason for this is not far-fetched as the British were the longest staying Europeans in Nigeria. Nigerian Pidgin is currently witnessing a shift in status. As a result of the historical development over the years, it has become an acceptable form of communication of so many Nigerians not only in the Niger-Delta but all over Nigeria. Though it has not fully gained consensus amongst Nigerians, its development is swift and a continual one by undergoing modifications and re-modifications by drawing its rich lexicons from varied Nigerian indigenous as well as English (Balogun, 2013). It has accorded mutual interest, unity and understanding between Nigerians and even foreigners. In a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria with over 180 million people (National Population Commission, 2017) and over 400 indigenous languages (Bamgbose, 1971), Nigerian Pidgin has come forth as the most widely spoken and acceptable medium of communication between inter and intra ethnic groups as it upholds the tenets of unity and trust because when a language is not mutually intelligible, there is bound to be fear, absence of trust and disunity. However, despite fostering national unity, many still see it as an inferior language deprived of substance and pedigree and its speakers marginalized and condemned as illiterates and people who lack formal education and coaching. Whether or not their opinion is well supported or not is matter of intellectual dialogue. This paper addresses slangy expressions in Nigerian Pidgin by analysing these expressions as utilized in formal and informal settings.

1.2. Slangy Expressions

Slangy expressions are codes used while conversing. It is an informal style of speech which may be a single word, a group of words or sentences. Slang is highly informal and used mostly for colloquial speech. Chen (2006) is of the opinion that slangy expressions are part of a language that is usually informal and out of standard usage and may consist of both newly coined words and phrases and of new or extended meanings attached to established terms. According to Hartmann and Stock cited in Olumuyiwa (1989), slang is "a variety of speech characterized by newly coined and rapidly changing

vocabulary used by the young or by social and professional groups for ‘in-group’ communication and thus tending to prevent understanding by the rest of the speech community”. From the above definition, slangy expressions are mostly employed by youths and young adults to suit their communication needs when interacting with their peers. Also, Adeyanju (2007) throwing more light on slangy expressions asserts that they are “substandard but widely understood expressions with or without the attributes of existing expressions employed to facilitate communication in a new sense”. In terms of their production, it would be understood that slang vocabularies are generated through coining of new terms or by attributing fresh meanings to already existing words (Yahaya, 2010). Slangy expressions in Nigerian Pidgin according to Idiagbon-Abdullahi (2010) are “alternative source of words and they are characterized by neologism, clipping, sound symbolism and metaphoric elements”. Slang is linguistic phenomenon ever present and consistently changing among every sub-culture. Slang exists because humans are homo-loquent and must come up with new expressions that can help define their new experiences that have surfaced with time and modernity. Young adults are quite active in creating and using these slangy expressions. They employ them in their conversation to satisfy their needs in a their be diifern their communication needs.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

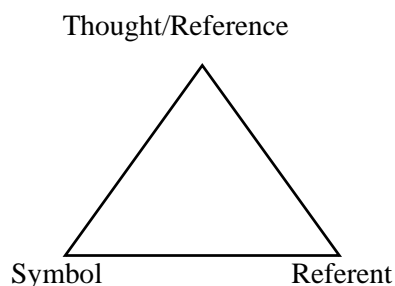
The purpose of this study is to examine slangy expressions in Nigerian Pidgin based on the Warri-Ughelli-Sapele variety. The major objectives of this study are summarized below:

- 1 To identify Nigerian pidgin slangy expressions in sentences as used in the Warri-Sapele-Ughelli axis of Delta State, Nigeria
- 2 To interpret the identified slangy expressions using context as cue
- 3 To identify slangy expressions whose surface meaning correlate with their referents
- 4 To interpret and analyze the identified expressions.

1.4. Literature Review and Theoretical Background

Several scholars have written extensively on Nigerian Pidgin. Idiagbon-Abdullahi (2010) explores the sociolinguistics of Nigerian Pidgin English on selected university campuses in Nigeria. The result of the analysis revealed that the Nigerian Pidgin spoken by undergraduates varies and each variant is characterized by slangy expressions and/or is code-mixed with lexical items from the indigenous languages. Also, Osoba (2015) investigates the conversational discourse structure or patterns of discourse structure or patterns of Nigerian Pidgin in relation to those found in its superstrate and substrate languages. The corpus for the study were analyzed using a synthesis of methods, principles and approaches proposed, employed and adopted by Munby (1986), Melrose (1995), Fairclough (2001) and Collins and Hollo (2010). The findings of the study tend to buttress the fact that Nigerian Pidgin is the main lingua franca for the Nigerian masses or the grassroots. Yanchun and Yanhong (2013) explore the sociolinguistic of American slang from the following perspectives- features of American slang, individual factors influencing American slang, social factors influencing American slang as well as the social functions of American slang. Balogun (2013) undertakes an empirical study in the defense of Nigerian Pidgin as used in formal and informal settings. The paper concluded suggestively on the note that given the crucial inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic communicative functions of Nigerian Pidgin in various social strata of the people’s life, Nigerian Pidgin should be accorded official recognition. Abdulwahab Muhammad (2016) undertakes a classificatory analysis of students’ slang as used by students in the University of Maiduguri. He adopted the referential theory of Ogden and Richards (1923) in his analysis of data. From his analysis of data, he revealed that sexuality slang expressions have the highest frequency of occurrence while salutation slang expressions have the least occurrence.

The theoretical background adopted for this study is the Referential Theory of Ogden and Richards published in their book *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923). The theory focuses on the relationship between linguistic items and what they symbolize in the actual world (referents). They developed a triangle (semantic triangle) to show this relationship:



The above triangle describes a simplified form of relationship between the speaker as subject, a concept as object or referent, and its designation (sign). It is a theory that analyses human communication focussing on the fact that humans do not make linguistic pronouncements in abstraction: the symbol represents the word (linguistic item), the thought describes the symbol and the image we create in our minds is the referent. This theory is relevant to this study because Nigerian Pidgin slangy expressions connote something concrete in the actual human world.

2. Method

2.1. Sample / Data collection Procedure

Actual linguistic data for this study were collected systematically from conversational situations in every day contexts both from formal and informal settings. Formal settings include university campuses, radio stations and informal settings include Otovwodo market in Ughelli, Igbudu market in Warri, football viewing centres, bukas (roadside food vendors), internet (Facebook), motor parks and private homes. These set of participants were observed at different times with their conversational exchanges tape-recorded and then transcribed afterwards to aid analysis. No form of permission was received nor taken from the participants as the researcher wanted a real and natural flow of conversation as seeking permission may hinder originality of conversational exchange(s).

2.2. Data analysis and Result

The gathered data would be analyzed from two perspectives- contextually and referentially as this is in consonance with the major objectives of this study.

2.2.1. Contextual analysis

Data 1: Bros, why u dey fall my hand sef! U no go come klub wen dey win trofis evri time?

Interpretation: This slang means “disappointed” and was uttered at a football viewing centre when an argument ensued between fans/supporters of Juventus and Real Madrid. This occurred on June 3rd which was the UEFA Champions league finals between these clubs. The Madrid fan was trying to convince the Juventus supporter to do away with that club and move to a club (Real Madrid) that has won the trophy more than twice. Juventus supporter would not agree and was adamant to remain in his club. Hence, the Madrid supporter told him “Bros, why u dey fall my hand” as a sign of disappointment.

Data 2: Tuale to you, yor teeth complete! U get d ansa.

Interpretation: This slang was uttered by Stella Maris, A.K.A The Honourable, a presenter on Quest F.M 93.1 Ogor, Delta State. She presents programmes on radio using Nigerian Pidgin. On this particular occasion (which was a call-in programme), she was asking for listeners interpretation of a Nigerian Pidgin proverb- “handshake wen don pass d hand dey move to d elbow na wetin e mean?” A listener called in giving the correct interpretation of the proverb after so many attempts by different listeners. Stella Maris exclaimed “Tuale to you, your teeth complete” as a way of telling the caller that he got the answer and that he was a brilliant student.

Data 3: Use dis music take hold yor conscience till I come bak.

Interpretation: Stella Maris of Quest F.M also used this slang. She was going for a short musical break before continuing with the programme she was anchoring “The Highlife Show”. She decided to tell the listeners to “use dis music hold ur conscience till I come bak” as way of saying “enjoy yourself with this music”. “Hold ur conscience” in this context simply means “enjoy yourself”.

Data 4: Evri day no bi krismas o!

Interpretation: This slang was uttered at the motor-park by a loader in Warri around the Delta Steel Company (popularly called D.S.C) round-about where the researcher boarded a bus on her way to Ughelli, Delta State. Loaders of buses are people who help drivers in arranging luggage in buses and they are usually given a token of say ₦100 to ₦ 200 depending on what the passengers paid for their luggage. One of the loaders after arranging the luggage told the driver to pay for the job he did but the driver refused. He became angry and uttered this slang because according to him “dis man don dey do dis tin sins but I just dey leave but I no go gree today becos evri day no b krismas”. The bus driver has been exploiting him but he decided not to let go of this particular one as he was fed up.

Data 5: Leave her, she don see moni and her hed don dey plait dada! She go see orba lata

Interpretation: This was uttered by a man to his friend as way of consoling him because his girlfriend jilted him all because of money. In the Nigerian sociolinguistic society, a woman’s head plaits dreadlock “dada” when something triggers it (especially money) and most times it results in regret. He said this to restore the dignity and joyful state of his friend who is moody because of this rejection. The slang “orba” means “regret” that is to say she will regret her actions later after she must have gone through hell in her present relationship, which often than not is the case.

Data 6: Dem dey use soft wok on u?

Interpretation: “Soft work” is a title of one of the musical tracks of Falz the Bahd Guy, a popular Nigerian musician/comedian which has found its way into the vocabulary of most Nigerians. This song was released in 2015. When used by Nigerians, it simply means “bewitchment”. In this particular scenario, a man went to a buka (a popular Nigerian eatery found at the road-side in most towns and cities and less expensive) to eat, only to discover to his chagrin that the food was not as sweet as the one he ate the previous day. This prompted him to ask the cook “dem dey use soft wok on u?” This invariably means if she has been bewitched by someone that has made her food less tasty.

Data 7: Dis ur tori na super-story o!

Interpretation: Super-story is a popular Nigerian soap opera aired on WAP TV on Star-times and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). The soap is produced by Wale Adenuga (MFR). The soap presents different and everyday stories about Nigerians and Nigeria. When someone says “ur tori na super-story”, he is simply saying that the story is unbelievable and cannot happen in real life situation.

Data 8: See as he dey demor for here o!

Interpretation: In this utterance, “demor” simply means the act of showing off, taking pride in one’s action’. A student in one of the university campuses in Delta State made this utterance to another student

who is his friend. The friend came and was parading himself because he won a new pair of shoe. He made this utterance just to tell him to stop showing off because of his new pair of shoe.

Data 9: I go control you later.

Interpretation: “Control” as Nigerian Pidgin slang means “call”. When a Nigerian says “I go control you later”, he is simply saying “I will call you later”. This slang is a very common one amongst the youths in Nigeria especially in the Warri-Sapele area of Delta State.

Data 10: Abeg all join!

Interpretation: “All join” simply means ‘everything is included’. Most people use this slang when they have other options especially to do certain things. This slang was said by a student to his roommate who refused to sweep the floor in the afternoon. His roommate confronted him about it and he simply said, “I swip am for mornin e don cova d aftanun o, abeg all join”.

Data 11: Abeg wetin bi d koko of today’s klas?

Interpretation: “Koko” as Nigerian slang in this context means “the main issue, topic, and news”. A student who did not attend a lecture for one or two reasons which is best known to him, may ask his course-mates the main discussion during the course of the lecture by using this slang.

Data 12: Bros abeg pak wel, u no know wetin we dey tok!

Interpretation: ‘Pak wel’ as a slangy expression in Nigerian Pidgin in this context simply means ‘respect/ behave oneself’. A listener called into a programme ‘Make we think am’ on Quest FM and gave a wrong answer to a question that the presenter (Stella Maris) asked because he did not get the question. The presenter said this as a way of saying ‘he needs to comport himself next time by listening to the question before he calls into a radio station’.

Data 13: You know book, notin do u!

Interpretation: When someone tells you ‘Notin do u’ in this context, it simply means ‘you are on track because you did the right thing’. This expression was uttered in a football viewing centre in Sapele. An argument ensued between two football fanatics who were arguing about the highest paid footballer in the world. One said it was Neymar Jnr. of Paris Saint Germaine, the other said it was Ronaldo of Real Madrid. It took the intervention of another fanatic who went online, browsed and found out that Ronaldo is the highest paid footballer and Neymar Jnr. is the second highest paid. The fanatic who said Ronaldo was actually the highest paid, said this as a way of saying ‘You are smart and thank you for doing a good job’.

Data 14: Wetin dey do u sef? U fish!

Interpretation: ‘Fish’ is a more recent slangy expression that has found its way into the lexicon of Nigerian Pidgin. A conductor at the Warri motor-park in Ughelli actually uttered this slang. In this context of use, it simply means ‘Are you okay?’ The conductor actually made an announcement that those without lower denomination of the naira should not enter the vehicle (the fare is ₦200 from Ughelli to Warri). A passenger got to his destination and brought out ₦1000 to pay and the conductor said ‘Wetin dey do u sef? U fish!’ He said this because he wanted to find out his rationale for behaving in such a manner because was in the vehicle when he made the announcement.

Data 15: Guy no forget to use raincoat o!

Interpretation: Ordinarily ‘raincoat’ is a protective piece of clothing worn in the rain. In this context, it means ‘a condom’. A male student in one of the universities in Delta State said this to his friend as a warning to avoid unforeseen circumstances such as sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy. ‘Raincoat’ in this context is therefore a device for preventing sperm crossing from the man to the woman.

Data 16: The man don broke.

Interpretation: In this context, 'broke' means 'not financially buoyant'. Two female friends were discussing outside their apartments. Then one of them asked after their neighbour whom she has not seen for a while now. The other told her that the man has left the compound because he is not financially buoyant- 'The man don broke'.

Data 17: Guy u dey see dis v-boot so, abi na only me dey see am?

Interpretation: 'V-boot' in this scenario means 'buttocks'. Two male friends were at a buka eating when a lady walks in. Out of astonishment at the size of her backside, one of them used the slang 'v-boot'. V-boot is the name of a car in Nigeria in the late 90s known for its size.

Data 18: Kasala don burst o!

Interpretation: 'Kasala' is slang in Nigerian Pidgin meaning 'Trouble'. In one of the hostels outside the campus in a university in Delta State, two female students fought because of a man. The fight was so serious that one was stabbed with a bottle. The onlookers started shouting 'kasala don burst' at the sight of the blood and scurried to safety to avoid being arrested by police officers.

Data 19: You jus dey rock yor new jeans!

Interpretation: 'Rock' contextually means 'to wear and parade oneself in a piece of clothing that was newly bought'. The addressee who is a room-mate to the addresser wore a pair of jeans she bought newly and her room-mate saw her and made this comment as a way of complimenting her.

Data 20: Guy u don take twenty- four hours today?

Interpretation: 'Twenty-four hours' as a slangy expression in Nigerian Pidgin means 'Garri', a locally prepared cassava flour used in eating variety of soups. A student in one of the university campuses asked a course-mate of his because he was behaving sluggishly. Garri is synonymous with strength and vigour.

Data 21: Dat girl na public toilet, abeg no go der

Interpretation: Two undergraduate male students were discussing about a lady. When one of them mentioned the lady's name, the other was astonished and simply advised his friend not to woo her because she is known for her promiscuity and flirtatious personality.

Data 22: Abeg shift make I faint!

Interpretation: This expression is common on social media platforms especially on Facebook. Nigerians usually comment using this slang when one posts/uploads a witty comment/video. This slang means the video is very funny.

Data 23: Bros, yor moni na sky!

Interpretation: 'Sky' as a pidgin slang means '₦50' (fifty naira). A motorcyclist, popularly called an okada rider, dropped off his passenger at the park. The passenger then asked of his bill and the cyclist replied by saying his bill is sky which invariably means ₦50. Sky is synonymous with ₦50 because they have the same colour- sky blue.

Data 24: E bi like say dat our nebor na Papa Okey

Interpretation: A man who loves frolicking with women is referred to as 'Papa Okey' in Nigerian pidgin. Two neighbours were discussing about their neighbour who loves flirting with different ladies.

Data 25: See as she dey do shakara for me, I go soon nak her.

Interpretation: 'Nak' is a slangy expression in Nigerian pidgin which means 'to have sexual intercourse'. A male student told his friend of a lady he has been wooing for long and who he has not been able to convince. Despite the wait, he is still convinced he would have her and this is the major reason for using this slang in this context.

Data 26: D man too like bobby!

Interpretation: ‘Bobby’ means ‘breast’ in Nigerian pidgin slang. Two neighbours were having a conversation about their male neighbour. At a point one of them made an exclamatory sentence when he said ‘d man too like bobby’. This invariably means the man is a womanizer because of his love for the mammalian gland of females.

Data 27: Nigerian don become mathematics!

Interpretation: ‘Mathematics’ means difficult contextually and as a subject it connotes difficulty because of its formulas. Commuters in a public transport vehicle were discussing about the present state of the nation when one of them said ‘Nigeria don become mathematics’. This is because of the hike in the price of goods and the hardship in the land according to him.

Data 28: We need to re-swagger Nigeria.

Interpretation: ‘Swagger’ in Nigerian pidgin when referring to an entity means the entity in question ‘has an inspiring effect on you’. In this context, the speaker has lost hope in the country as it does not inspire him anymore and he believes the only way things can become normal again is if the leaders go back to the drawing board to redress prevailing issues. This is a postscript to the slang in data 26.

Data 29: If e pain u well well go hug transformer.

Interpretation: ‘Hug transformer’ as a slangy expression means ‘to commit suicide’. When one says ‘hug transformer’, he is indirectly telling you to commit suicide if what caused your anger is what you cannot forgive nor forget. Two ladies had a quarrel and one of them told the other to ‘hug transformer’ if what she did is unforgiveable.

Data 30: Maga don fall!

Interpretation: ‘Maga’ as a slangy expression in Nigerian pidgin means ‘a gullible person’. A lady called her friend on phone while leaving a hotel in town telling her that the ‘maga don fall’. This means that she met a gullible man whose money she took or possibly stole and she was happy for the victory.

Data 31: Babe see as u package.

Interpretation: ‘Package’ is a slangy expression which means ‘well dressed’. A friend who had a date wore an outfit and presented herself to her room-mate to comment before she left for the date. The room-mate on seeing her exclaimed ‘babe see as u package’, that is to say she was well dressed.

Data 32: Dem tanda well!

Interpretation: ‘Tanda’ as a slang means ‘fine/hale and hearty/healthy’. Two friends met themselves at the park in Warri and one asked after the family of the other. The other replied that his family were hale and hearty: ‘dem tanda well’.

Data 33: My moni don enta voicemail

Interpretation: ‘Voicemail’ as a slangy expression in Nigerian pidgin means ‘lost’. In this context, it means the money is lost. A man misplaced his money on his way from work and he went back looking for it but could not find it. When asked what transpired, he simply narrated his ordeal and ended by saying ‘my moni don enta voicemail’ with a long face.

Table 1. A tabular representation of slangy expressions and their contextual meanings

S/N	Slangy expression	Contextual meaning
1.	Fall my mind	Disappointed
2.	Yor teeth complete	Congratulations for a job well done
3.	Hold yor conscience	Enjoy yourself
4.	Evri day no bi krismas Orba	There is time for everything
5.	Soft wok	Suffering
6.	Super story	Bewitchment
7.	Demor	An unbelievable account of an event
8.	Control	To show off, taking pride in one's action
9.	All join	Call
10.	Koko	Everything is included
11.	Pak wel	The main issue, topic or news
12.	Notin do u	Respect/behave oneself
13.	Fish	You are on track because you did the right thing
14.	Raincoat	Are you okay?
15.	Broke	Condom
16.	V-boot	Not financially buoyant
17.	Kasala	A woman's buttocks
18.	Rock	Trouble
19.	Twenty-four hours	To wear and parade oneself in a piece of clothing
20.	Public toilet	Garri
21.	Shift make I faint	Promiscuous lady
22.	Sky	Said after a humorous post on social media
23.	Papa Okey	Fifty naira (₦50)
24.	Nak	A womanizer
25.	Bobby	To have sexual intercourse
26.	Mathematics	A woman's breast
27.	Re-swagger	Difficult
28.	Hug transformer	Redress by going back to the drawing board
29.	Maga	To commit suicide
30.	Package	A gullible person (man)
31.	Tanda	Well-dressed
32.	Voicemail	Fine/hale and hearty/healthy
33.		Lost

2.2.2. Referential analysis

The word *voicemail* is a service that lets callers leave a voice message for you if you are unable to answer your mobile phones. In Nigerian Pidgin, *voicemail* denotes something/someone whose location is unknown. Both terms are related to each other as it denotes an entity which is missing/absent. *Packaging* is the act of enclosing and protecting a product for easy distribution. In Nigerian Pidgin slang, *package* simply means well dressed. There is a close affinity between both meanings because when something is well-packaged, it will be handled with greater care. So also is it in Nigerian pidgin, if you are well-dressed, you will be treated in high esteem and with respect. The word *sky* refers to the firmament of heaven which has the colour of blue. In Nigerian Pidgin, it refers to a denomination of the naira- ₦50. This is because they both have the same colour. A *public toilet* is used by all and sundry to pass out human waste and mostly found in public places and rural residential areas. As slang in Nigerian Pidgin, it means promiscuity and used often to refer to females who have different sex partners. The two

meanings are related in the areas of easy accessibility and free passage. *Twenty-four hours* denotes a full day and when used as slang in Nigerian pidgin refers to garri- a staple Nigerian food derived from processed cassava. Garri assumes this trait because of its cheapness and ability to provide sufficient energy for the day's task. A lady's buttock is referential to as *v-boot* because it shares a similar characteristic (size) with a car. *Broke* as a slangy expression in Nigerian pidgin refers to when one is not financially buoyant. *Broke* is the past tense of break and when something breaks, it stops functioning. Referentially, they both denote a state of dormancy and inactiveness. *Raincoat* literally is a protective device that shields one from drenching in the rain. In Nigerian pidgin, it refers to a condom- a material that acts as a blockage of sperm. Referentially, they both denote a protective device. *Crash* as slangy expression in Nigerian pidgin means to sleep. Literally, when an object crashes it goes into a state of rest and stops functioning. Referentially, crash as a pidgin slang denotes a state of rest and inability to function. *Sort* means bribe in Nigerian pidgin. Literally, it means to arrange in order. The meaning it assumes as a slangy expression is co-referential to its literal meaning because it involves putting something, probably a score or payment made at a check-point to police officers, in order to gain undue advantage over others. *Fabu* is Nigerian pidgin slang for lie. It is a clipped word derived from 'fabricate'. Fabricate means to cook-up untrue stories about someone. *Fabu* is therefore co-referential to fabricate because they are synonymous. *Floss* as a slangy expression means a luxurious life-style. Literally, it means a type of dental thread used for cleaning the teeth. What connects the surface meaning of floss to its underlying meaning in both cases is that it provides comfort and cleanliness to the persons involved. *Olokpa* refers to a uniformed police-man in Nigerian pidgin slang. It is a slang borrowed from the Urhobo language which has the same spelling and meaning. *Jones* is ironically a slangy expression in Nigerian pidgin for anyone who is not smart and should not be mistaken for a proper noun. *Baff up* is a slangy expression for 'dress up nicely'. Literally, it is the act of taking one's bath in order to look refreshed. Referentially, it has an underlying meaning of a state of being refreshed and what connects the surface meaning with its underlying representation is that, in both cases, the idea of neatness is inherent. *Shit for church* is a slangy expression which means 'mess up', a situation in which a person commits a heinous crime. Literally, when one defecates in a church he has committed a sacrilegious offence. The surface meaning of this slangy expression is hidden in its underlying meaning which can be rightly captured if one envisages such a scene.

3. Discussion of findings

Against the backdrop of the reviewed literature, the researcher found out that scholars focused largely on a framework which is quite distinct from the referential theory. This framework dwells largely on multilingualism (code-mixing, code-switching, and language development). However, Abdulwahab Muhammad (2016) adopted the referential theory in his analysis of Nigerian pidgin slangy expressions as realized from conversational exchanges at the University of Maiduguri, Borno State. He, however; classified data into different strata and this is where this work is unique as it generalizes Nigerian pidgin without grouping them. In addition, a major finding of this study is that slangy expressions in Nigerian pidgin is a product of neologism and borrowing which in the case of data presented for this study is Urhobo (a language spoken in Warri-Sapele-Ughelli axes) or the predominant language of where it originates from and English. These expressions also have a direct impact in developing and sustaining the growth of Nigerian Pidgin as it is a unifying language which is mutually exclusive to interlocutors and a speaker may decide to choose from its rich resource whichever fits the situation as communication is achieved because parties involved in the process understand one another.

4. Conclusions

This study was borne out of the need to study the Warri-Sapele-Ughelli variety of the Nigerian pidgin slangy expressions using the referential theory of Richards and Ogden as many researchers focused largely on the multilingual aspect of it. Nigerian pidgin is a unique variety of a language which is evident in its rich lexicon/slangs and should be treated as such. The language is ever growing and in no distant time, it will be acknowledged by all as its codification process has begun.

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Nijerya dilindeki argo ifadelerinin toplumdilbilimsel analizi

Öz

Bu çalışma Nijerya dilindeki argo ifadelerinin toplumdilbilimsel bir analizini üstlenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın korusu, Delta State'in Warri-Ughelli-Sapele eksenlerinde yaşayan Nijeryalılar arasındaki gündelik bağlamlarda konuşma söylemlerinin katılımcı gözlemiyle sistematik bir şekilde oluşturulmuştur. Bu dilsel veriler daha sonra, kaydedilmiş ve analize yardımcı olması için yazıya geçirilmiştir. Çalışma, betimsel araştırma metodolojisini kullanarak, veri analizinde Richards ve Ogden'in (1923) Referans teorisini benimsemiştir. Bu veri seti futbol izleme merkezlerinde, bukas'ta (yol kenarı gıda satıcıları), motor parklarında, üniversite kampüslerinde ve pazardaki konuşmalardan oluşmuştur. Argo ifadeler, sunucular tarafından özel radyo istasyonlarında ve popüler Nijeryalı şarkıların sözlerinde kullanıldığı şekliyle betimleyici bir şekilde analiz edildi. Toplam otuz üç (33) slanjı ifadesi, bağlamsal ve göndergesel olarak analiz edildi. Makalede, her konuşmacının çeşitli ifadeler içerdiği ve bunların kullanımını isteyen sosyal duruma uygun olarak aralarında seçim yapma eğiliminde olduğu ve bu ifadelerin konuşmacılar tarafından tamamen anlaşılabilir olduğuna dikkat çekildi. Nijerya dilindeki argo ifadeler, sosyal kuvvetin bir ürünü ve iletişim ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için Nijeryalıların dili yaratıcı kullanmasıdır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Sosyodilbilim; uluslararası dil; Nijerya dili; argo ifadeler; kullanım bağlamı

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