LEXICAL DEVIATIONS AND INTELLIGIBILITY IN POPULAR NIGERIAN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT: *Nigerian English has been recognized as a distinctive variety of world Englishes. However, descriptive analyses and documentation of what constitute standard and non- standard Nigerian English have not been purposefully established. This study undertook to analyze lexical deviations in Popular Nigerian English (PNE) using Adesanoye's (1973) Varieties One and Two exponents. The study assesses the national and international intelligibility of lexical peculiarities in Popular Nigerian English and also determines the factors responsible for the peculiarities. Data were collected from four hundred students and two hundred civil servants who have received formal education in the English language. The subjects were Primary school graduates, Junior Secondary School graduates and Senior secondary school graduates exemplifying Variety One exponents. The Second Year undergraduates and the Civil servants with OND or NCE certificate exemplified Variety Two exponents. The subjects were selected by a Stratified Random Sampling Technique (SRS) and our focus is on Varieties One and Two exponents. These are PNE writers. Four hundred essay scripts and two hundred letters written by the subjects were read. The distinctive PNE forms that have high frequency of occurrence and wide distributions in the corpus were analyzed. A quantitative approach using frequency count and simple percentages was adopted in the analysis of data. The study revealed that Popular Written Nigerian English deviates from SBE at the lexical level. The lexical deviations were found to be widespread and regular. Again, the study revealed that popular written Nigerian English is intelligible both nationally and internationally at the lexical level when examined in contexts. The forms which emerged were as a result of the socio-linguistic realities of the Nigerian environment and culture.*

KEYWORDS: Lexical Deviations, Intelligibility, Nigerian English

INTRODUCTION

The spread of English to British colonies in Africa has given rise to deviations and changes in forms, patterns of usages, styles, as well as meanings in the language. As the range and functions of the language develop, so do the linguistic features change. English developed in Nigeria mainly through the education system and it has since co-existed in Nigeria with her many indigenous languages. Emenanjo(1990) observed that Nigeria has about 450 indigenous languages. The many years of co-existence of the English language with Nigerian indigenous languages and its use for expressing Nigerian experiences and culture, have resulted in English acquiring local colour from the new environment (Udofot, 2011). It has developed distinctive features and generated forms based on its own resources to meet the needs of people in the new linguistic setting. Over a period of time, lexical items, phonological features and syntactic patterns filtered across from one language to the other

and the language that resulted has developed into a vigorous system of communication with its own distinctive features. Thus, English functioning as a second language in Nigeria, has developed features that have identified it as a distinct variety of world Englishes, known as Nigerian English (Ajani, 2007, p.18).Nigerian English (NE) is defined as linguistic forms that impact distinctiveness to English as used in Nigeria (Jowitt,2011, p.6). It is a local-colour- variety of English developed within the Nigerian socio- linguistic environment (Adetugbo, 1979,p.26)

Although NE has long been recognized as a distinct variety of world Englishes, the variety has not been purposively codified. Again, NE is not only distinctive and divergent from the native-speakers variety, but it also has varieties within the variety (Eka ,2005). Udofot (2007,p.18) revealed that there is a cline of proficiency in spoken NE, which ranges from the non-standard variety to the sophisticated variety which approximates the native –speaker's variety. Furthermore, scholars in the field of NE studies have revealed that Nigerianisms, (distinctively Nigerian forms) are found in all sub-varieties of Nigerian English (Bamgbose ,1982; ;Jowitt ,2007 ;Adeniran,1987; Ajani, 2007). This implies that there are distinctive forms that cut across all the sub-varieties of NE, that is,   forms that set NE apart from every other variety.

Numerous investigations have been carried out on the characterization of Nigerian English at both the spoken and written levels (cf.Walsh1967; Banjo,1971;Adesanoye 1973; Bamgbose 1982, 1995; Jowitt 1991, 2007; Odumuh 1986;Okoro ,2004;Udofot 2007 ,2011). These works specified that distinctive forms exist in NE at different clines of proficiency .Adesanoye (1973, p. 53) identified three varieties of Written Nigerian English using occupation as the criterion. Variety one is the form used by Primary School graduates. According to Adesanoye, Variety One exponents exhibit L1- prompted features at the lexical level and syntactic deviations at the level of syntax. Exponents of Variety Two are the Secondary School graduates; many Year One and Two university undergraduates, as well as magistrates and journalists. Variety Three is made up of mostly university graduates, university lecturers, professionals, the superior judges, the editors and feature writers of the better Nigerian journals. Adesanoye suggested that Variety Three NE, should be accepted as the Educated Nigerian English.

Jowitt (1991) introduced the concept of PNE and stressed that rather than single out a sub-variety as the sole custodian of standard Nigerian English, there is the need to catalogue the distinctive Nigerian forms, that is, widespread Nigerianisms that regularly occur in the English usage of Nigerians at the three sub-varieties. As linguists are concerned about global mutual intelligibility, diverging tendencies in varieties of World Englishes need to be researched into, checked and awareness of them created to avoid communication breakdown. This study examines the distinctive lexical features of PNE, at the written level, that is, distinctive features that are widespread and regularly occur in Popular written Nigerian English but are different, rare, or not found in Standard British English.

Definition of Terms
Intelligibility is seen in this study as the extent to which a linguistic data is judged by the native speaker to be easily understood (Crystal, 1997,p.7)

Popular Nigerian English   PNE is the set of forms that are stable and regularly occur in the usage of Nigerians though not in uniform regularity (Jowitt1991, p.57). PNE are distinctive forms that grow through nourishment from Nigerian roots. They are the usage of Nigerians, in general, particularly at variety One and Two levels. The term 'popular' is not a derogatory term, rather it implies widespread usage. In this study PNE is defined as distinct Nigerian forms that are widespread and inevitably coloured by Nigerian socio- linguistic peculiarities, experiences and culture. These are features that instill distinctiveness in NE.

Deviation Deviation is a term in linguistic analysis used to indicate forms that are slightly different from native speakers' variety of English (Crystal,1975;p.7 Malmkjaer, 1991;p.34). Adeniran (2005,p;5) described deviations as usages that do not do any communicatively disenabling violence to the grammar of English, as used worldwide. In this study, lexical deviations are seen as lexical features that reflect the social values shared by Nigerians, that is, features that are socio- linguistically motivated.

Theoretical framework: The theoretical framework adopted in this study is Halliday's Systemic Functional Theory. The model studies language contextually. The Systemic Functional Theory is basically designed to account for how language functions to convey meaning that language users want to communicate in a given society. The model seeks to interpret how different contexts and cultures lead speakers to choose differently from the repertoire of the language they have at their disposal. Language evolves in response to the specific demands of the society in which it is used, and the primary essence of language is communication. Language use is dependent on context of use and context of culture (cf Halliday and Mathuessen,2004,p.78)

The Systemic Functional Theory sees language as   a system for making meanings. A system is a set of things of which one must be chosen (Halliday, 1973, p.6). When we use language, we make a choice from a set of available choice(s) and the choice is functionally determined. This implies that functions influence forms, contexts and interpretation.

In Halliday (1985) scheme, meaning comes from the function of language. Halliday asserts that language involves three generalized functions or Meta functions (the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions). The ideational metafunction, according to Halliday, is concerned with the grammatical resources for construing our experiences of the world around us and outside us. The interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the interaction between speaker and addressee, the grammatical resources for enacting social roles in general. In the textual metafunction, language is used to build up sequences of discourse and how to organize thoughts into comprehensive flow of meaning. Textual metafunction weaves together the other two functions to create a text. As Systemic Functional Theory approaches language analysis contextually it therefore provides the framework for the description and explanation of the lexical peculiarities in PNE. It provides the tool for analyzing the peculiar lexical items in Popular Nigerian English.

METHODOLOGY

The subjects were selected from two Federal Government Secondary Schools and two Federal Universities in Imo and Rivers states. Our subjects included: Primary School graduates, Junior Secondary School graduates (JS3). Senior Secondary School graduates (SS3), Second Year undergraduates and Junior civil servants with Ordinary National Diploma certificate (OND) or National Certificate (NCE) working in the institutions. Variety one

exponents comprise Primary School graduates, JS3 graduates and SS3 graduates while Variety Two exponents were Second Year undergraduates and workers with OND or NCE certificates. The subjects were selected by a Stratified Random Sampling (SRS) technique and the yardstick for stratification was the level of exposure to the use of the English language. Our subjects consist of four hundred students and two hundred civil servants. Each group comprised One hundred subjects. The subjects' essay scripts and letters were read. The subjects were grouped as follows: subjects who have been exposed to formal learning of English language for a period of 6-9 years were in Group A, JS3 students who had been exposed to formal English learning for 12 years were in Group B, students who had been exposed to formal learning of English for the period of 14 years, SS3 students were in Group C. The undergraduates were in Group D, while the Junior civil servants with OND or NCE certificates were in group E and F respectively. The subjects in these group (group D, E and F) had studied English for 15 years .

Four essay topics were given to the subjects to write on one. The questions were based on the subjects, level of education. The subjects were asked to answer one question in not more than 300 words. For a valid response, the tests were administered when the subjects sat for their mock examinations or continuous assessment tests. Two hundred letters written by OND or NCE certificate holders were also read. Different cadres of junior workers were examined so as to ensure that the features documented were widespread and regular. The cadres included: the departmental secretaries, typists, security men and technical officers . Different types of letters were read. These were: petitions for promotion or increment in salary, answers to queries and applications for leave. These contexts equally call for the creative use of the language.

The four essay topics were: Should evil men be killed? My favourite Christmas memories. What I want to be in future. How I spend my weekends. There were approximately 300 words per page and about 400 essay scripts were read, giving a total of 120,000words. Two hundred letters comprising about 60,000 words were equally read. From the scripts the distinctive lexical features of PNE were identified, categorized and analyzed. The forms isolated as PNE lexis were those that had high frequency of occurrence and wide distributions. The distributions of the lexical features were accounted for using frequency count and simple percentages. Quantitative analyses of the Groups were done to determine the degree of deviations. The data were further subjected to intelligibility test. To determine the level of intelligibility of PNE lexis, two native speaker assessors and two-non-native speaker assessors were engaged to examine the peculiar lexical items drawn from the data. This was established by taking the frequency count of the lexical items understood by both native and non-native speakers.

Presentation of Data

Our major observation in this paper is that PNE lexical features slightly differ from SBE norms. There are peculiar lexical features that are widespread in the data. The features reflect the cultural values shared in the linguistic environment. The deviations are therefore for a purpose. Lexical peculiarities in PNE are classified into the following categories:

Lexical Items with Semantic Shifts and Extensions

The most common lexical features in Popular Written Nigerian English are the semantic shifts and extensions in meaning of SBE lexemes. Words are used in new and often

expanded references. Some words in British English acquired additional meaning in Nigerian contexts. The additional meaning is either rare or not found in SBE. The subjects extend the meanings to adapt to specific needs or contexts. Examples are in Table I .

Table 1 Lexical Items with Semantic Shifts and Expansions

Lexical Items with Semantic Restrictions

	LEXICAL ITEMS	SBE	PNE
1	Sorry	Expresses only apology	Used to indicate apology, as well as concern for misfortune. For example; They came to tell me sorry about the death of my dad.
2	Customer	Person or organization that buys something from a shop or store .	Extended to include prostitutes who hang out at night looking for men, example, I inquired from my friend after the girls standing by the road side at night and he said that they are customers.
3	Sister, brother, mother, father	Members of the nuclear family.	Extended to include both nuclear and extended family adult members of the society; members of same church or a total stranger whom one does not know his / her name, found in ones state or the country.
4	Bush	Wooded or an unclear land in British colonies, which implies untamed or un cultivated	Rustic; a person who lacks conventional social grace associated with European culture, e.g. My sister married a bush man.
5	Flasher	One, particularly a man with a compulsive desire to expose the genitals in public .	One who flashes momentary call to someone cell phone, a subtle way of saying 'call me back'. For example; My mum is a great flasher..
6	Flashing	Blinking or irregular	Momentary call to one's cell phone.
7	Barb	A pointed part of a type of wire	To have a haircut, e.g., We barb our hair every Saturday.
8	Pursue	To continue trying to achieve something, pursue a matter ,or to chase someone.	To drive away, example; I won't forget how my friend pursued my sister out of her husband's house.
9	Go slow	A form of industrial action where workers instead of going on and out of work deliberately slow down work to win their demand from their employer.	Traffic- jam, example; There is always a strange go- slow in my campus on Saturdays.
10	Family	Unit of father, mother and children,	The central meaning in Nigerian context is a group of people that descended from a common ancestor, kindred and village.

In this context, the meaning of a word is restricted to only a limited area within its Standard British English semantic field. Examples are in Table 2 below.

Table 2.Lexical Items with Semantic Restrictions

S/N	WORDS	SBE	MEANINGS IN PNE
11	Beverages	Include tea coffee liquor beer, milk, juice, or soft drink	Refer particularly to items for tea.
12	Wedding	A marriage ceremony and a meal or party that follows	Restricted to marriage ceremony in the church according to European customs.
13	Mum	One's mother	Restricted to young and enlightened mothers.
14	Cab		Flashy cars used for special services. It is used to differentiate between the flashy cars and ramshackle taxes

			commonly, used in cities.
15	Guy		A tough man, who gives the impression of being fearless or one admired for defying authority .The meaning is usually reinforced with tough. Example; The kidnapers are tough guys.
16	Chemist-man		Untrained pharmacist
17	Chemist store		Store which stocks manly drugs.
18	Minerals		Refers particularly to fizzy soft drinks.
19	Pure water		Water packaged in nylon bags
20	Mate		Refers primarily in Nigerian contexts to a woman marrying the same man with another woman. Where some other meaning is intended it is specifically indicated ,for example, classmate, playmate, office mate etc.
21	Gutter		Restricted to channels at the sides of street roads in Nigerian contexts, rarely refers to troughs for channeling rain water from the roofs

Lexical Items with Semantic Transfer

These are peculiar words that are used completely outside their normal SBE semantic field. Most of these lexical items capture Nigerian socio-linguistic contexts. Examples are shown in Table 3 .

Table 3 Lexical Items with Semantic Transfer

S/N	Lexical Items	SBE	PNE
22	Grass	-	Indian hemp
23	Hunters	-	Night guards, e.g, Some hunters in our societies are armed robbers themselves.
24	Spaghetti blouse	-	Skimpy blouses with tiny stripes worn by ladies, e.g; I didn't know that one can wear spaghetti blouse on campus.
25	Small – room	-	Toilet
26	National cake	-	Natural resources in the country

Semantic Reduplication

There are also cases of semantic redundancy in PNE. We observed that some reduplications stem from the influence from Nigerian languages and Pidgin. For instance, in Igbo expression 'loghachie –azu' translates 'return- back'. Distinctive reduplications observed in the data are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Semantic Reduplications in PNE

	Corpus	Expression
27	Reverse-back	Immediately they alerted us that armed robbers were operating we reversed –back.
28	Return-back	I was tempted to ask the lecture to return- back my money when I failed his subjects.
29	Repeat again	Dad insisted that I repeat primary six again
30	Withdraw-back	The principal asked her to withdraw –back her statement in my presence.
31	Bending-corner	The accident happened in a bending –corner.
32	Recall back	When I recall back all that my step mother did to me, tears filled my eyes.
33		
34	Remain behind	The Headmaster asked my son to remain behind after school and he gave him twelve strokes of cane.
35	Stay back	You directed me to stay- back on that day sir, that was the reason for my absence.
36	Full detail	The full details of my activities are stated in my report.
37	Short nicker	We are only allowed to wear short-nicker on Saturdays.
38	Flash torch	The matron seized my flash torch

Semantic Reassignment

In this context, a lexical item is replaced by related but semantically distinct words. The choice of the lexical items is usually influenced by the contexts. See Table 5.

Table 5 Semantic Reassignment

S/N	PNE	BSE
39	House	Home
40	Drive	Ride
41	Persons	People
42	Sign	Gesture
43	Complete	Whole
44	Sorry	Pity
45	Arm	Hand
46	My woman	My Wife
47	Fine	Beautiful
48	Follow	Accompany

Coinages

Coinages constitute the invention of new forms in a language. The study observed creative coinages in the data. When the existing semantic resources of the English language are incapable of serving local communicative needs, the subjects are forced to invent new words. They encode existing English lexemes with meanings that are absent in the English words. Such innovations encapsulate their distinctive socio –linguistic experiences and culture. Examples are in Table 6.

Table 6   Popular Nigerian English Coinages

Lexical items		Meanings	Expressions
49	Bunk mate	One who shares a decked - bed with someone	My bunkmate is wicked.
50	Big-man	A wealthy- man	My elder sister married a big-man
	Loaded	Buoyant	Students are usually loaded on Saturdays
51	Old cargo	A wise person particularly ladies , who are advanced in age	My department is filled with old cargoes.
52	Blood money	Money gained through the killing of human beings	Blood money intoxicates these big -men .
53	Ritual – killing	To Kill and sacrifice a human being for rituals: It entails the use of human blood or part of the body.	It is through ritual killing that one wins election without tears.
54	Co- wife	A woman married in the same compound with one, also used in a negative sense, as a rival.	We travelled home to celebrate the arrival of my co-wife. Sandra is my co- wife in this school.
55	Tokumbo	Fairly used items (particularly cars)	On Saturdays the big men display their Tokumbos in our campus for the girls to see.
56	Toronto	Academic dishonesty	He was disqualified because he has Toronto certificate
57	Miracle centre	Exam centers where invigilators are bribed to assist the candidate	One is sure of a straight A in miracle centers
59	Head load	Load belonging to an individual	The drivers charge five hundred naira per head load.
60	Cover cloth	Long cloth usually wrapped round the body while sleeping	My bunk mate stole my cover-cloth

Borrowings   Another common lexical feature in PNE is the use of Nigerian loan words. These are specific words borrowed and used only because SBE has no exact equivalent , if they exist, often the English equivalent is a longer paraphrase. In this case the meanings of the loans were translated in English, systematically by the subjects, in brackets. Examples are in Table 7

Table 7 PNE Borrowings

	Corpus	Meanings	Expressions
	Religion		
61	Amadioha	(god of thunder)	In the good old days Amadioha vindicates people with clean hands.
62	OjukwuDiobu	(god of Justice)	My uncle threatened to invite Ojukwu- Diobu if my father refuses to withdraw the land case.
	Native attires		
63	Agbada		On Saturdays we see different men on well- tailored agbada, picking and dropping our girls
64	Ashoke		I was forced to wear ashoke on my sister's wedding day.
65	Ashoebi-		My mum's friends appeared on their ashoebi on my matriculation party.
66	Usobo-		The men appeared on usobo to grace the occasion.
67	Akwuete-		Mum wore the most expensive akwuete on our visiting- days.
	Ceremonies		
68	Iriji	(new yam festival)	Last year Iriji was the most memorable festival that I have ever attended .
69	Sallah	-(Islamic festival of Id-elFitri)	We all travelled for sallah last year.
	Local institution		
70	Nkwo,Eke ,Afor,Orie	Market days	My grandmother prepares palatable dishes every Nkwo market day for the family.
	. **Food**	-==	
71	Edikang -ikon soup	---	The first time I tasted edikang-ikon soup was during my granny's burial ceremony .

72	Egusi soup	---	The only soup they cook in our school is egusi soup

Non - native Use of Idioms

Idioms in PNE manifest some distinctiveness from Standard English idioms. We observed that SBE idioms were used with slightly different morphological forms. The process of derivation of NE idioms entails more of transfer and adaptation of idioms and meanings from the LI. In most cases, the adaptations often turn out to be more analytical and more literal, thus making meaning more explicit.

In fact, English idioms are nativized and expressed naturally in a way that reflects and suits the socio-cultural norms in the society. The English idiomatic expressions are re-fashioned to

give rise to partially or totally new idioms that are able to bear the weight of Nigerian and African experience. Examples of PNE idioms are shown in Table 7 below:

Table 8 Popular Nigeria English Idioms

S/N	PNE	SBE	
73	To eat one's cake and have it	To have ones cake and eat it	
74	To cut your coat according to your size	To cut your coat according to your cloth	
75	More grease to your elbow	More power to your elbow	
76	To recite off head	To recite off hand	
77	To hold one's body	To have self control or express restraint	
78	A letter bomb	Heart-breaking news	
79	To declare surplus.	To host an extravagant party	
80	To be open handed	To be generous	
81	To bite the finger that fed one	To bite the hand that fed one	
82	From frying pan to fire	Out of frying pan into fire.	
83	A beggar has no choice	Beggars are not choosers	
84	All that glitters is not gold	Not all that glitters is gold.	
85	When you are in Rome do like the Roman	When in Rome do as Roman does	
86	To join the band wagon	Jump, climb or get on the band wagon	
87	To voice out	To voice	
88	To chew a matter	To reflect deeply on something	

Compounding

Compound words are employed as a syntactic mechanism to compress a number of items into one phrase for precision. Often times, the subjects employed compound words to avoid constructing complex structures. Examples are in the following phrases
(89) Human- waste -agents (killers), (90) Cover-cloth (cloth wrapped round the body when sleeping) (91) Pocket – money,(money for personal needs) (92) Flying-boat (speedboat) (93) Cow-meat (Beef) (94) Police –check –point.

The use of Mitigators

Mitigators are words used to soften or lessen the importance of an action. The ones that are common in the data were 'just and only'. These words occurred before a verb, to lessen the seriousness of the action. This is another major deviation observed in PNE data. Examples are in these sentences;
 (95) On Fridays we just have a little party.
 (96) I only failed a subject and dad was mad at me.
 (97) My friend just pushed the lecturer and he failed his course.
(98) She reported me to the principal but I only slapped her because I was angry
(99) W e just had one week for Christmas
(100) I only tore a page from her book she became angry .

The Table below reveals the frequency distribution of the deviation types as reflected in the scripts of the exponents.

Table 8 Frequency of Occurrence of PNE Peculiar Lexical Items

S/N	Column A	Group A		Group B		Group C		Group D		Group E		Group F	
	Categories of deviations	Primary school Leavers Freq. %		JS3 Graduates Freq. %		SS3 Graduates Freq. %		Second Year Undergraduates Freq. %		OND Certificate Holders Freq. %		NCE Certificate Holders Freq. %	
1	Lexical items with semantic extension/shift	249	13.83	214	12.17	200	11.85	162	12.63	141	12.88	136	12.93
2	Semantic restriction	182	10.11	196	11.14	186	11.02	138	10.76	129	11.78	112	10.65
3	Lexical items with semantic transfer	172	9.56	172	9.78	172	10.19	158	12.32	111	10.14	104	9.89
4	Reduplications	162	9.00	144	8.19	148	8.77	110	8.57	82	7.49	126	11.98
5	Creative coinages	228	12.67	211	12.00	198	11.73	152	11.85	131	11.96	121	11.50
6	Loans	142	7.89	158	8.98	168	9.95	144	11.22	115	10.50	86	8.18
7	PNE Idioms	178	9.89	194	11.03	194	11.49	126	9.82	123	11.23	102	9.70
8	Semantic reassignment	153	8.50	156	8.87	138	8.18	87	6.78	108	9.86	86	8.18
9	Compounding	130	7.22	150	8.53	146	8.65	98	7.64	60	5.48	97	9.22
10	Mitigators	204	11.33	164	9.32	138	8.18	108	8.42	95	8.68	82	7.80
	Total	1,800	100	1,759	100	1,688	100	1,283	100	1,095	100	1,052	100

Table 9 Summary of the Deviations in V1 and V2 Writings

Subjects	Frequency of occurrences	Percentage
1. Primary Six Graduates(Group A)	1,800	20.7
2. JS3 Graduates (Group B)	1,759	20.2
3. SS3 Graduates (Group C)	1,688	19.5
4 Second Year Undergraduates (Group D)	1283	14.7
5 Civil Servant with OND Certificates (Group E)	1,095	12.6
6 Civil Servants with NCE certificates (Group F)	1,052	12.1
Over all Frequency	8,677	99.8%

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Tables 7 and 8 above present the categories of deviations in PNE lexis as well as the frequency of distributions. Column A: presents the categories of deviations in PNE lexis, while columns B to F   show the frequency of occurrence of the deviation types**.** The columns also show the degree of deviations in the scripts of six different exponents investigated. We observed that some PNE peculiar lexis have wider usage than others. Such forms include: semantic shifts and extensions of SBE lexemes, semantic restrictions, coinages and idioms. In these contexts the lexical items are used in ways that reflect Nigerian experiences and culture without sounding bookish.

Some socio-cultural norms are embedded in PNE lexis. For instance, a Nigerian will not say,' what a pity', when one is bereaved, s/he will feel 'sorry' for the bereaved. Since there is always a gradual movement no matter how slow, Nigerian drivers will not be held permanently in a position. So we have, ' go slow' and not traffic hold up' in Nigeria. In fact, Lexical items were either created, borrowed or shifted to suit the new setting. For instance if Nigerian English speaker wants to impute that another has an undue , corrupt advantage, he speaks of the later having *long leg* not *long arm* in the native speakers context. Because Nigerian speaker know that at the current level of country's technological development a close person to person contact is crucial and this means taking a trip to meet people at strategic positions.   The implication is that there is a relationship between contexts and meaning. Contexts and functions are crucial to the understanding of the NE variants. This observation supports Halliday & Mathuessen , (2004) view that context influences not only lexical choice but also the meaning.

Again, the English idiom would say *more power to your elbow* but Nigerians will prefer *more grease to your elbow*. To Nigerians power is not located in the elbow. Power to Nigerians resides in the muscles not elbow and muscles need to be greased. We observed that most PNE lexis reflected values shared by the speech community. This implies that the culture of a given society influences lexical choice in a speech community. This situation relates to ideational functions of the language because the subjects used language to express their views and experiences (cf Halliday 1985, p. 86).

The results presented in Tables 8 and 9 show that Groups A and B had higher frequencies of lexical peculiarities than Groups C,D, E and F. Out of 180,000 words that formed the data, Group A had 1,800 (20.7%) distributions of peculiar lexical items Group B, 1759 (20.2%) Group C,1688 (19.5%),Group D,1283 (14.7%) Group E,1095(12.6%) and Group F, 1052 (12.1%). These observations not only reveal the transitional competence of the language users as they progress toward the standard usage but also imply that Nigerianisms decrease as users become more proficient. The implication is that what is distinctively Nigerian occurs least in the usage of the most proficient.

In general, there were 8677 instances of peculiar lexical features in a corpus extending over 600 pages of 120,000 words (in the essay scripts) 60,000 words (in the letters) . This suggests that the frequency of lexical deviation is low. Based on this observation we establish that Popular Written Nigerian English manifests 5% deviations at the lexical level. This finding supports Farooq's (2007) assertion that Nigerian English and British Standard English are more alike than unlike, and that mutual intelligibility between these varieties of English will continue to increase. The implication of the study becomes more obvious when one considers the occurrence of 8677 lexical deviations in 600 scripts of approximately 180,000 words representing total frequency value of 5%. This indicates that Popular Nigerian English lexis deviates slightly from SBE lexemes.

Table 9 Summary of the Results of PNE Intelligibility Tests

		Native-Speaker Assessors			Non-Native Speakers Assessors		
	A	B1	C	D	B2	C	D
	Deviation Types	No. of Lexical Items	Well understood	Not understood	No. of Lexical Items	Well understood	Not understood
1.	Semantic Extensions/shifts	20	16	4	20	20	-----
2.	Mitigators	20	16	4	20	20	-----
3.	Semantic Restrictions	20	12	8	20	20	-----
4.	Semantic Transfers	20	18	2	20	20	-----
5.	Semantic Redundancy	20	18	2	20	20	-----
6.	Semantic Reassignments	20	16	4	20	20	-----
7.	Borrowings	20	6	14	20	20	-----
8.	C0inages	20	12	8	20	20	-----
9.	Non-native of use idioms	20	14	6	20	20	-----
10	Compounding	20	18	2	20	20	-----
	Total	200	148 (74%)	52 (26%)	200	200 (100%)	

The result presented in Table 9 reveals that PNE lexis is nationally and internationally intelligible. Column A presents the deviation types while B1 and B2 show the number of items used for the evaluation. Columns C and D denote the number of lexical items understood or not understood by the assessors. The grand total was given in the last row of

the table of analysis. The results revealed that out of a total number of 200 PNE lexical items, 148 (74%) were understood when examined in context by the native speaker assessors; while 52 (26%) were not understood. However, we observed that the non-native assessors understood all the lexical items.

The implication is that PNE peculiar lexis does not hinder national and international intelligibility. The words and phrases were used in contexts, hence the assessors were able to understand the meaning from the contexts. We corroborate Halliday's (1978,p.62,) observation in language use, that contexts make the text explicit, they help to predict the meanings. The assessors derived meaning from contexts.

It was also observed that lexical items that are wide-spread and regular were more intelligible than those with low frequencies .The reason, we observed, was because wide distributions of linguistic items enhanced intelligibility. NE loans were equally understood because the subjects systematically interpreted the meaning in brackets. Nigerian loans have higher comprehension than coinages, for the native-speaker assessors, while the non-native assessors understood all the distinctive lexical forms. PNE lexis is 74% intelligible at the international level and 100% intelligible at the national level..

CONCLUSION

In the light of the foregoing, our summary and conclusion about lexical deviations in Popular Nigerian English typified by our subjects include the following: PNE usages slightly differ from SBE lexis, but the slight deviations from and extensions of SBE do not have any communicatively disenabling effect on the grammar of English as used worldwide. The PNE lexis is nationally and internationally intelligible; it does not constitute any serious impediment to mutual intelligibility worldwide. As PNE manifests fewer lexical deviations at the written level, we suggest that distinctive lexical features, which do not distort national and international intelligibility should be documented and accepted as Standard Nigerian English.

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