

CROSS-CURRENTS

in
Language,
iterature &
LTranslation

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Prof. J. P. A. Ukoyen



Editors

D. D. Kuupole

Isaiah Bariki

Robert Yennah

Appendix 1

A LEXICO-SEMANTIC STUDY OF NIGERIANISMS IN

OLA ROTIMI'S *KURUNMI* AND *OUR HUSBAND*

HAS GONE MAD AGAIN

(A) As someone who had recited 'The Pledge' often, is the only response to the following questions. Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You don't need to write your name. Please give a honest and sincere response.

Mahfouz A. Adedimeji

Department of English,

University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Email: madedimeji@unilorin.edu.ng

Email: mahfouzade2@yahoo.com)

+234 (0) 805 581 2420

Jeleel O. Ojuade

Department of the Performing Arts,

University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Email: jeleelo@yahoo.co.uk)

+234 (0) 803 553 1901

Introduction

The question of whether English language is a blessing or curse to Nigeria vis-à-vis its successful domination, if not trampling, of Nigerian languages is a debate that has not been fully resolved. Yet, one reality of the Nigerian linguistic ecology is that the English language, a lasting legacy of the colonial past, has inexorably become a key component of the Nigerian destiny and the nineteenth-century Wales slogan that "if you want to get ahead, get an English head" (Williams 1986 cited in Bamgbose 1991:20) is a compelling truism to the twenty-first century Nigeria. Today, English dominates all strata of the Nigerian life, from politics to commerce, from industry to sports, from entertainment to education, from communication to inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relations. So pervasive has been the role of English in Nigeria that scholars have claimed that English has effectively become a Nigerian language (Akindele and Adegbite 1999).

Despite the predominance of English in Nigeria, however, the fact that it has been transplanted into a different context has engendered variation, or even deviation, in its use at all levels of linguistic analysis. The most prominent of these levels appears to be lexico-semantics as Nigerians, and all language users in general, have a natural predilection for injecting aspects of their culture into their English usage (Hasman 2000), as required to bear "the burden of experiencing and of experiences; be such experiences formulated or not in the conceptual idioms of the language" (Soyinka 1988:126). Indeed, the attitude of

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the Nigerian users of English to what has been characterised as Nigerian English is that those lexico-semantic forms and patterns "more adequately express the Nigerian mentality, psyche and experience than any native English gloss one might succeed in providing for them" (Adebija 1989:175).

This mind-set explains why Nigerian literary works in English are often laced with the linguistic aura and cultural idioms that typify them as Nigerian, in a way symptomatic of old wine in a new bottle, which is operationally construed to mean the expression of the Nigerian linguistic and cultural experience or Nigerianisms in the façade of the English language. Among writers who have successfully deployed this strategy in their literary artistry, Ola Rotimi towers high. Being a product of cultural diversity or variation by nature and by nurture (he was born to a Yoruba father and an Izon mother and was trained in Port-Harcourt and Lagos in Nigeria and Boston and Connecticut in the United States), Ola Rotimi seems to have acquired a natural proficiency in articulating Nigerian mores, ethos and linguistic norms in English, giving his works a distinctive stylistic flavour. Aspects of these lexico-semantic variations as used in his plays, *Kurunmi*, a historical tragedy, and *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*, a political satire, are examined in this paper.

The English Language in Nigeria

The earliest contact Nigerians had with Europe was in 1472 when the Portuguese merchants came to the West African coasts and interacted with natives in places like Calabar, Warri, Brass, etc. many years before the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. As traders, their main preoccupation was commerce, which they thought would be further enhanced if they could speak the native languages of their African customers. The quest for mutual linguistic intelligibility between them and the natives resulted in the birth of "Pidgin", originally a hybrid of Portuguese and Nigerian languages. The efforts of the Portuguese in entrenching their presence by establishing mission schools in the Oba of Benin's palace were not successful but the language contact had made them to contribute words like "palaver", "wrapper", "Lagos" (from the Portuguese "Lago" or "lagoon"), "bokos", "pikin", etc. which have become part of the Nigerian linguistic lexicon (Ogu 1992:66).

It was in 1553 that the actual contact with the English language began. This was when a group of British sailors among whom were Thomas Windham and Nicholas Lambert arrived in Benin as trade merchants. The British eventually upstaged the Portuguese in trade and surpassed them later as the net exporter of slaves from Benin, Lagos, Bonny,

Calabar and Warri (Musaka 2003:92). English became the main coastal trade language and its influence began to take roots.

This infamous Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade soon began and the English dominated the trade. The white man became a symbol of fear and admiration by the oppressed and the local oppressors respectively as several Africans were forcefully rounded up and banished to the miserable journey to, and the terrible life of, slavery. After the slave trade ran its full course and was stopped, a few Africans were returned to Liberia, Sierra Leone and other parts of Africa. These returnees who had been exposed to the Western language and culture would later serve as models for Africans who were fascinated by the civilisation and development of the white man (Adedimeji 2010).

When colonialism and imperialism became the dominant motive of the British, the freed slaves from Sierra Leone and Liberia, beginning from 1787 became handy for the British. Indeed, journals and documents written in English had been found in Calabar as far back as 1767 and the freed slaves were only needed to consolidate a fledgling linguistic ascension (Ajayi, quoted in Ogu 1992:65). The "Saros", as they were called, contributed to the development of English in Nigeria as they served as interpreters or bridge between Europeans/British and Africans/Nigerians.

Prior to the Saro's resettlement in Africa from England, Jamaica, America and Nova Scotia after the abolition of slave trade, the English language had been construed as an exclusive preserve of the white man. The arrival of the Saros and their relative economic prosperity and higher standard of living was a morale booster to the quest to learn the English language. This made parents to enthusiastically encourage "their children to learn and use English, the language of commerce, civilization and Christianity" (Adeniyi 2006:18).

According to Adegbija (2004:13-14), ten factors are critical to the advent and survival of English in Nigeria. Some of these include European contact, Christian missionary activities, the administrative and educational policies of different governments over the years, the establishment of educational institutions and language-related professional bodies and agencies, the establishment of literacy projects and the making of language-related legal and constitutional provisions. To Fafunwa (1974:74), three B's that account for the pre-eminence of English in Nigeria are Bible, Business and Bullet or the alternating C's of Christianity, Commerce and Colonialism. English is also entrenched through schools, which were first started by the missionaries and which have continued to

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grow in promoting English till there were until recently 95 universities (27 federal, 34 state and 34 private), 115 polytechnics/monotechnics (53 federal, 46 state and 16 private) as well as 83 approved Colleges of Education/Institutes (23 federal, 43 state and 17 private) in Nigeria (Okojie 2009) with several thousands of primary and secondary schools and over one million students jostling for university education, delivered through the medium of English annually.

The totality of these factors accounts for the functional relevance of English in Nigeria, including in literature, where a Nigerian, Wole Soyinka, had won a Nobel prize, giving verve to the oft-cited Bamgbose's (1971:35) submission:

Of all the heritage left behind in Nigeria by the British at the end of the colonial administration, probably none is more important than the English language. This is now the language of government, business and commerce, education, the mass media, literature, and much internal as well as external communication.

Lexico-semantic Variation and the Nigerian English

As Alo (2004:77) observes, "language is perhaps the most important factor which directly influences variations in usage and meaning". This variation, a sociolinguistic desideratum, occurs when language shifts from its natural habitat to operate within a new cultural milieu. The submission of Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, (popularly known as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis) is thus validated that the words of language act as a mirror to the life of the community using the language... the vocabulary more or less faithfully reflects the culture whose purpose it serves..." (Sapir, cited in Alo 2004:78). This is why Banjo (1970:51) frankly submits that "the English language has to adapt itself to the Nigerian environment. In fact there is nothing anybody can do about the matter". Indigenisation, domestication, nativisation, localisation, decolonisation are terms that scholars have used to describe the inevitable phenomenon known as Nigerian English, which Akindele and Adegbite (1999) conceive as:

...that variety of English that has developed in the Nigerian non-native English situation. This is as a result of colonial imposition of the language as well as the native English culture on the country. The variety thus

developed is not wholly native English type and not totally Nigerian. It is a blend of the two situations.

While Adeniyi (2006:26) considers "Nigerian English" as "the variety of English spoken and used by Nigerians", it is crucial to define variety itself as "one of many general and complete language systems, each used by a substantial number of people and each possessing characteristics that distinguish it from other systems without requiring it to be classified as a different language" (Jowitt 1991). Variety is important because, as submitted by Siegal (1996:357), "to speak any language appropriately, language use must change according to the context."

Scholarly interest in differentiating the varieties of Nigerian English or the use of English among Nigerians began in 1958 with the publication of L.F. Brosnahan's article, "English in Southern Nigeria", where he identified four levels of English usage based on education. Since then, a body of literature has emerged on the conceptualisation, characterisation and delimitation of Nigerian English such that scholars are pitted into the two camps of those who believe that Nigerian English exists and those who think that the term is an aberration, with the former school appearing to be the majority (Babatunde 2001a; Adedimeji 2007).

Studies in Nigerian English have often focused on educational and general linguistic descriptions. In his study of the Nigerians' spoken English, Banjo (1971) contributed the variables of "social acceptability" and "international intelligibility" as he identified the four varieties of use as:

Those marked by the wholesale transfer of MT (Mother Tongue) features to English; close to SBE (Standard British English) in syntax but with strongly marked phonological and lexical characteristics; close to SBE in syntax and semantics, similar in phonology, different in phonetic features and with some lexical peculiarities; and identical to SBE in syntax, semantics, phonology and phonetics.

Each of the above varieties differs in their social acceptability and international intelligibility test. While Variety I has neither social acceptability nor international intelligibility, Variety II is social acceptability compliant but international intelligibility

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deficient. Variety III has been agreed to be Standard Nigerian English as it has both social acceptability and international intelligibility while Variety IV, exclusive to those who have been exposed to Britain (or America), pejoratively referred to as "been to", has no social acceptability but has international intelligibility.

Adebija (1989) however devotes his study to the "lexico-semantic variation in Nigerian English", in which he attributes six factors to the variation in the Nigerian lexical patterns, which are:

- The pragmatic aspects of the dynamics of a multilingual context
- The predominantly formal medium of acquisition of English
- Socio-cultural differences between the English and Nigerian people.
- The pervasive, omnipresent and indomitable influence of the media
- The exigencies of varying discourse constraints and modes in English and indigenous languages and the standardization of idiosyncrasies and errors.

He also identifies five typologies which are transfer, analogy, acronyms, semantic shift or extension, and coinages and neologisms. These are briefly discussed thus:

Transfer: This occurs when a meaning foreign to English is directly translated into English (Babatunde 2001b). Adebija's (1989:171) classification of transfer is that there are *transfer of meaning* (bush meat, outing, not on seat, etc.), *transfer of culture* (bride price, introduction, our wife, new yam festival, etc.), *transfer of context* (sorry, toast) and *transfer of Pidgin features* (kola, dash, mammy water). Other examples of transfer are "branch", "house-head", "outing ceremony", "chewing stick", etc.

Analogy: This is the process of forming new words on the basis of partial likeness or agreement with the existing words in either a source language or English. Examples of analogical creation in Nigerian English are Awoism, Zikism (from Awo, a clip of Awolowo and Azikwe respectively), "counselee", "invitee", "arrangee", "decampee", "assignee" (on the basis of address/addressee), "equipments", "furnitures", "informations", "burstied", "roasted" (based on generalisation). Other forms in this category are "head-tie", "battery-charger" (a human being), "lesson teacher", "akara ball", "gossiper", etc.

Acronyms: These are typical Nigerian words formed from the combination of the initial letters of a group of words. Acronyms include WAI (War Against Indiscipline), NUC (National Universities Commission), MAMSER (Mass Mobilisation for Social and Economic Recovery), NEPA (National Electric Power Authority) and SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme) among others.

Semantic Shift and Extension: This occurs when the semantic range of words is restricted or narrowed, shifted or moved, extended or generalised in Nigerian English. Narrowed words in Nigerian English are: vendor (newspaper vendor only), mechanic (auto mechanic only), panel beater (car panel beater only), etc. Shift in meaning occurs in words like "chase", "toast" (to woo a lady), "escort" (to see a guest off), "stay" (to live somewhere) "globe" (electric bulb), "corner" (a bend in the road), etc. whereas generalisation/extension underlines such words as brother, sister (an acquaintance) mother (non-biological) uncle (non-related), friend (including a total stranger), etc.

Coinages or Neologism: These constitute the invention of totally new forms. The three main bases of lexical innovation under this category, according to Adegbija, are (a) the existing stock in English (half current, yellow fever, bean cake, barb one's hair, go slow, etc.) (b) the existing lexical stock in mother tongues (e.g. agbada, tuwo, babanriga, egunje, tokunbo, etc.) and (c) a hybrid of the lexical stock of indigenous languages and English [e.g. "akara balls" (beans cake), kiakia bus (a one-stop commercial bus), tokunbo car (imported used car), ashewo woman (prostitute), agba man (elder), etc].

Adegbija (1989:175) is positively disposed to the Nigerian English phenomenon, characterising it as being imaginatively fresh and that the typologies "more adequately express the Nigerian mentality, psyche and experience than any native English gloss one might succeed in providing for them".

Following Adegbija, Bamiro (1994) also studies the lexico-semantic variation in Nigerian English using three works by three Nigerian writers across the tripartite linguistic divides Chukwuemeka Ike, Kole Omotosho and Zaynab Alikali as a case study. He attributes the five causes of lexico-semantic variation to: (1) Translating directly from Nigerian languages; (2) Revealing inadequate exposure to English; (3) Displaying in hyper-correct behaviour towards the norms and codes of native Speakers of English; (4) Obeying the principles of least effort and economy of expression; and (5) Subjecting English language forms and norms to socio-cultural logic and imperative of the Nigerian environment.

He then proceeds to identify and illustrate ten categories of lexico-semantic variation under the headings of (1) loanshift (2) semantic under-differentiation (3) lexico-semantic duplication and redundancy (4) ellipsis (5) conversion (6) clipping (7) acronyms/alphabetism (8) translation equivalents (9) analogical creation and (10) coinages, a brief discussion of which is as follows:

- (1.) Loanshift: This is a situation in which the meaning of a word or a phrase from the target language is extended to cover a new concept. Examples here include "expo" (leaked examination questions), "stick" (cigarette), "chopped money" (embezzled), etc. Other examples here include "settle" (bribe) "see" (bribe), among others.
- (2.) Semantic under-differentiation: This arises when the emotive distinctions in the meaning of words are neutralised or under-differentiated: "little" and "small", "big" and "huge", "few" and "a few."
- (3.) Lexico-semantic duplication and redundancy: This is the use of superfluous elements that eventually results in tautology. Examples here include: "to fun-fool around" (to fool around), "invited dignitaries have arrived" (dignitaries -being who they are - would not have attended occasions without being invited). Other examples here include: reverse back, repeat again, comprise of, discuss about, etc. in which the second elements are redundant.
- (4.) Ellipsis: This is the omission of words that are required to make meaning complete. Examples are: "I have bought a television" (instead of a television set), "her uncle has got a new video" (instead of a new video player), "they are having their summer in Las Vegas" (instead of summer vacation).
- (5.) Conversion: This is the arbitrary change of word class. For example, "go and paste right now" (go and brush your teeth with tooth paste), "she will flit the room later" (she will spray the room with the flit brand of insecticide).
- (6.) Clipping: This is the shortening of words in such a way that the clips retain the original meanings of such words. This is different from abbreviation. Examples are my "my uncle is a perm sec" (Permanent Secretary); "switch on the air con" (air conditioner); "he has got a good expo" (exposition).
- (7.) Acronyms/ alphabetisms: These are words formed from the combination of the initial letters of phrases as exemplified earlier.
- (8.) Translation equivalents: These are manifestations of mother tongue interference by which lexical terms are substituted literally from Nigerian languages to English. Examples are: "turn on the fire" (switch on the light), "Have you washed your mouth?" (Have you brushed your teeth?"), "Don't enter any big man's car" (Don't accept a ride offered by a rich/influential person), etc.
- (9.) Analogical creation: This is the formation of new words based on their similarity or likeness in form or in meaning with either English or Nigerian existing words. For many

Nigerians, gate keepers are *gatemen*, housekeepers are *houseboys*, etc.

(10) Coinages: Just as explained under Adegbija's classification, coinages include "sure banker" (what is certain to occur/happen), "car wash" (a place where vehicles are commercially washed/ cleaned of dirt)."

It is obvious that Bamiro's classification is only an extension of Adegbija's, which provides the basic typology as there are overlaps in the former's classification. For instance, there is no difference between analogical creation and coinages as both can be conveniently merged. Nevertheless, Bamiro's classification provides a comprehensive taxonomy into which lexical items can be neatly categorised.

In a comprehensive study of the Nigerian English phenomenon where he lists and defines some 500 Nigerian English lexical items, Jowitt (1991) contends that differentiating speakers' varieties is difficult because a speaker of the near-native variety may use what he calls "Popular Nigerian English" by which he opines that "the usage of every Nigerian user is a mixture of standard forms and popular Nigerian English forms which are in turn composed of errors and variants" (p.47). To Jowitt, all "Nigerian users of English must be regarded as learners of English" just as the case is in interlanguage situations with their users improving with more educational attainment and general exposure.

Jowitt presents a cline that situates three varieties within that of extreme deviation from the standard British English (V1), those with many Nigerian English (NE) forms (V2) and those that are close, though still marked by NE "indexical features", to standard British English, all "subsumed under the umbrella term 'PNE'" (p.49). In the opinion of Jowitt thus, Nigerian users of English are perpetually on the interlanguage theory of language acquisition, they speak popular Nigerian English which is deviant at its extreme, variant in the use of standard forms and is gradually moving towards standard which it never reaches. The implications of this, according to Babatunde (2001a:132) are that: the learner with the opportunities he has for development continues to move towards a standard, or TI (Target Language) norm; or on the other hand, where such opportunities are not provided, the language gets fossilized. And since most learners of English today are influenced by the widespread 'inter-language' norms' in the society, "the PNE indexical features" are not only prevalent but also continually reinforced.

Alabi's (2000) contention is that "certain occupational lexical items have not been attended to" in previous studies. She therefore identifies shift, generalisation, narrowing, re-assignment and analogy as aspects of occupational variation used in Nigerian English.

Whereas Babatunde (2001b:81-85) agrees with Adebija and goes ahead to identify such categories as transfer, analogy, acronyms, semantic extension and generalisation, narrowing, coinages and idioms.

With such classifications, the notion of standardisation, a comprehensive description or reduction of particular language varieties to orthography or graphicisation of typical lects, in terms of grammar and other forms and structure (Kujore 1990), has emerged. Most scholars of Nigerian English usage believe that Standard Nigerian English is the model closest to the native speakers, mostly used by the elite, and fulfils the criteria of social acceptability and international intelligibility that characterise Banjo's Variety Three. Thus, Standard Nigerian English, according to Adejare (cited in Adeniyi 2006:38-39) essentially fulfils the three conditions of grammaticality (adherence to the form and structure of Standard English), intelligibility (a phonological parameter that makes spoken Standard Nigerian English possess sufficient features that make it close to standard English, understandable to speakers of other standard spoken varieties, with some differences that unavoidably make it Nigerian) and acceptability (primarily concerned with meaning and secondarily deriving from grammar and phonology), "the domain where standard Nigerian English will show a greater degree of variation from other standard varieties of English because it is governed by the semiotics of Nigerian languages" (p.40). Ola Rotimi's works are written in Standard Nigerian English though instances of non-standard usages are also prominent in some of his works, *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*, for instance, mainly to depict characterisation (illiterate characters) and stylistic constraints.

Database and Methodology

The data for this study are obtained from the two works, *Kurunmi* and *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*. They are made up of the Nigerianisms, the English expressions conveying the Nigerian norms, worldview, linguistic habits and creative usage. Based on the review of literature, ten categories are identified and adopted from all classifications, mainly Adebija and Bamiro's classifications. These are semantic shift and extension, analogy, coinages, loan words, translation equivalents, lexico-semantic duplication and redundancy, ellipsis, conversion, idioms and Nigerian Pidgin expression. Eight of these categories are represented in *Kurunmi* while all are featured in *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*. Having defined the concepts, the examples are presented under each category and definitions of such expressions are given in some instances deemed necessary.

The Lexico-semantics of Kurunmi

Kurunmi is a historical tragedy that recreates the conflicts and antagonisms that precipitated a major war in Yoruba history on account of succession to the throne of the King. The eponymous tragic hero, Kurunmi, eventually dies in his defence of tradition which is set aside for political expediency (Adedimeji 2009). In projecting the theme and subject matter of the play, Ola Rotimi resorts to the use of Nigerianisms, foregrounding the variation of English and giving the literary work its distinctive African taste. Categories of lexico-semantic choices used are indicated as follows:

Semantic shift and extension

Examples here are: our Lord, your head-ache, my fathers, my brother, our brother, etc.

Analogy

Examples in the work are: Demander, landed property, single-breasted vandals.

Loan words.

The loan words are from Yoruba language and such include *agbo'le* (compound), *Ogun* (god of iron in Yoruba pantheon), *dundun* (a type of drum), *yakata* (badly, an adverb associated mainly with falling down), *Bale* (village head), *Ta ni l'awa o ni baba* (who says we have no father/elder), *gbere* (farewell), etc.

Translation equivalents

Translated expressions from the Yoruba source include *...it's children take its habit; they sope the word of the corrupt in the face of truth, imagine me for a moment; may the very ground burst open; take heart; the armies of Ibadan we hear; your fight is our fight; when age is tired of us; I will put medicine on your wound, etc.*

Lexico-semantic Duplication and Redundancy

Examples here, mainly of redundant lexical items, include: *a single eye of your own; am I in the wrong in this war? I have heard you; may we rise up? Prostrate yourselves to them, etc.*

Ellipsis

Identified instances under this category are: *some disaster coming fast; lead the way to battle.*

Conversion

Some examples here are: *rest us in your womb*; *ready the men*; *ready yourselves*, etc.

Idioms

Examples of metaphorical expressions that are idiomatic in this category are: *Hurry on* (be fast); *stain his honour* (disgrace); *put fire on my head* (put me under pressure); *the only big cotton-tree in our way* (the only obstacle against our success), *as one climbs the ladder of age* (as one grows old), etc.

The Lexico-semantics of *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*

Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again is a satire of the intricate connection between money, politics, women and the military intrusion into the Nigerian politics. The language of the writer dazzles with a peculiar vitality that is especially nourishing to the African or Africanised audience who are able to "connect" easily with him. Such a distinctive piquancy or freshness allows the nativisation of English that engenders the creative profundity of the work. The playwright projects the subtleties of Nigerianisms and variation from the title of the play itself, the semantic trappings of which reveal absurdity (in the native speaker context, "our husband" is an anomaly as it is not part of the English culture, and language is a component of culture, to share a husband with another woman) interference (that a person *goes mad* or *has gone mad* rather than *is mad* constitutes part of the English as a Second Language phenomenon, smacking of negative transfer and redundancy) and implicature (that a polygamous family is a mad house where husbands become repeatedly crazy on account of the associated problems).

The ten lexico-semantic categories in the play (i.e. semantic shift and extension, analogical creation, coinages, loans words, translation equivalents, lexico-semantic duplication and redundancy, ellipsis, conversion, idioms and Nigerian Pidgin) are exemplified thus:

Semantic Shift and Extension

This category is manifested in such words as "brothers", "mate", "my lord", "emergency" (in "her marriage is for emergency"), "woman", "sisters", "man", "miser", "my friend", "gentleman", "dash", the meanings of which have either shifted from their original semantic scope or have just been extended to cover a wider semantic range.

Analogical Creation

This is manifested in few instances like "the briefer, the better" (from "the shorter, the better") "book head" (from "egg head") and "rudeness-like" (from the basis of such a word as "Christ-like").

Coinages

The examples here are legion. They include *making mouths*, *native land*, *party boys*, *water pot*, *party men*, *noisy throat*, *small crab*, *baby monkey*, *white man's machine*, *goodluck snake*, *African ways*, *chicken house*, *house wives*, *street woman*, *night-club whistle*, *big trade*, *national chin-chin*, *care taker*, *sister-in-marriage*, *senior place*, *sisters-in-marriage*, *chair lady*, *egg treatment*, *joke-make*, *dash*, etc.

Loan words

These are borrowed lexical items from Yoruba and Arabic sources. Examples include *jagajaga* (confused; confusion), *oga* (boss), *buba* (shirt), *sokoto* (trousers), *agbada* (a big embroidered gown), *iyawo*, (wife) *o ya*, (it's time; it's now), *ase* (amen), *o ma se o* (it's a pity), *sisi* (lady), (all from Yoruba); and *laa illa nlai lai* (there is no God but Allah), *laa kuli ju lai lu* (exclamation), *sallallahu alyyhi was sallam* (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), *amin ya rabbi* (amen, my Lord), *barakallah lana wa lakum* (May Allah bless us and you), *arham ni ya Allah* (Bless me o Allah), (all sourced from Arabic).

Translation equivalents

There are several examples of this category for several reasons such as depicting character, stylistic purpose, imaginative freshness and sheer humour. At least fifty two of these are identified in the whole data gathered for this study. They are direct translations from the Yoruba linguistic stock. Examples include: *fatness has begun to "monkey" with my body*; *what is your trouble? Come look! Come look!!; unless you have no shame; you ought to have shame; your baby didn't come out to see the world, here is trouble; what the eyes see in Lagos, the mouth can't describe; yam is on fire; breeze blows into it (i.e. the room); do not let anger turn your head inside out; come and get salt and pepper in your stomach; collecting degrees in medicine; if I tell you my trouble, you will cry blood for me; I'm coming; chicken's price climbs up; don't wish death on me; let your feet take you to your room; make yourself at home; I do not see eye to eye anymore*, etc.

Lexico-semantic Duplication and Redundancy

Examples here include: *hot, hot temper*; *see Mama Rashida well well*; *double double headache*; *small small boys*; *strong strong heart*; *low low bottom of moral mind*; *tight-tight*

trousers; hot hot struggle for power; studied book; talk big talk, etc.

Ellipsis

This category has such examples as: *two beers* (two bottles of beer); *go to airport* (go to the airport); *you mistake* (you are mistaken/ you are making a mistake); *I bought in village* (I bought this in the village); *sell in city market* (sell in the city market); *how much you want for more wine?* (how much of more wine do you want?); *go prepare food* (go and prepare my food).

Conversion

Examples in this category include *don't lawyer me* (don't argue with me) and *beyond compare* (beyond comparison).

Idioms

Idiomatic expressions peculiar to the Nigerian context also form part of the lexico-semantic variation. Some of the examples are: *I have kicked her out of my house*; *shake her* (or a person's hand) *like a man*; *she is boiling inside*; *never mind her ice water calm*; *let me show you music*; *give the floor to...*; *start bumping into another woman*; *women are taking over the world* (take over), etc.

Nigerian Pidgin

There are so many Nigerian Pidgin expressions in the work that listing them all will take many pages. Samples include: *you want to chop life?* (do you want to enjoy life?); *na politics so*, (it is politics/ poltics is like that); *man-u way go chop-u frog, make he kuku chopu di frog way get egg for belle!* (a man who wants to eat a frog should eat the one that has eggs inside); *no be so?* (is it not so?); *one taxi done come* (a taxi is here); *I no know* (I don't know); *Sikira dem dey inside parlour* (Sikira was inside the parlour), etc.

Discussion and Conclusion

As demonstrated in the two works of Ola Rotimi studied here, a natural corollary of language contact is variation. There are many varieties such as educational, functional, social, occupational and regional varieties. The variation of English in Nigeria is regional as it is a manifestation of the diffusion of English from its inner to outer and expanding circles

(Kachru 1985). It is two hundred years since English actually started to take roots in Nigeria and from the tendency to speak Queen's English that was the fad in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the general attitude now appears to have a predilection for decolonising the language, domesticating or nativising it to express the Nigerian norms, culture and linguistic habits. In other words, as rightly observed by Awonusi (2004), the Received Pronunciation or Queen's English of the past has lost much of its prestige and Nigerians, and Africans in general, and speakers of regional accents are no longer ashamed of their accents.

This study has revealed that the Africanization of English (Bokamba 1982) and its Nigerianisation is a sociolinguistic reality that will continue to thrive. This is because African writers realise the double tragedy of aping the Western standard after the tragedy threatening the survival of their indigenous languages through their writing in, and promotion of, the English language. What most writers have opted for as a mid-way, therefore, is a variety that will connect them to their African roots and audience through the nativization of the language, English, which according to Bamgbose (2004:612), takes the forms of linguistic nativisation (borrowings), pragmatic nativisation (making use of context of situation to reflect worldview, rhetoric) and creative nativisation (coinages and idiomaticity) all of which are employed and deployed by Ola Rotimi.

While English language will undoubtedly continue to ascend in the global linguistic competition with its closest rival still trailing far behind it (in South Korea for instance, learning English is a 3-billion dollar a year industry and in China, children are made to go through the surgical operation called "frenectomy" or the removal of the tissue under the tongue called "frenulum" with the thinking that such would make the tongue flexible for the Chinese and Koreans to pronounce English words more correctly as reported by Jeyifo 2006:12), the emergence and standardisation of varieties will become more common. One of the manifestations of this in Nigeria is that more people will become more comfortable with the writings of the Soyinkas, Achebes, Rotimis, Osofisans and other writers who lace their literary artistry with Nigerianisms rather than those who set the standard British model for themselves.

This study has undertaken a lexico-semantic investigation of two plays of Ola Rotimi and found that the two works are distinctive in the use of English language especially in a second language context. The most striking features of this distinctiveness is the authorial commitment to the adoption of Nigerianisms or lexico-semantic variant forms

that typify English use in Nigeria. Ten categories of variation are identified in the study based on the classifications of Adebija (1989), Bamiro (1994) and Babatunde (2001b). The study has ultimately foregrounded the dynamic use of English in Nigeria, the creative profundity of Nigerians and a gradual entrenchment of the Nigerian English phenomenon as a qualified candidate for the notable world varieties of English language.

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