LINGUISTIC INVENTIVENESS AND LEXICOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ENGLISH CORPORA IN THE POLITICS OF GRAMMAR NEWSPAPER COLUMNS

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Abstract

From the first published English Dictionary till today, words formation and inclusion into the dictionary subsequently follows a pattern that new words has to be socially accepted within a system and its meaning cut across significant numbers of users. Apart from native English speakers, English words also emanate from second Language speaking countries like the America and Nigeria. This study examines to what extent are words invented from Nigeria get acceptable into the English lexicon and global English linguistic copra as it's happens to American invented words. Using The Politics of Grammar column in Daily Trust newspaper in Nigeria, the study found that there are newly invented words by Nigerians which expand the semantic boundaries of conventional and phone communication in Nigeria. As newly invented words like *unfriend, sexting, funemployed deleb* found their ways into the American linguistic copra, so also Nigerians expects words like *flash, sequeal, co-wife or co-wives, naming ceremony, chewing stick, pounded yam disvirgin* to be added to lexicon of English copra as a result of their general acceptability and long usage over time. With the orthodox nature of native English reservation which leads to the invention of second language English Dictionary in America, Nigerian English coinage, blend and neologism can only be documented if they are accepted as conventional to us. The study recommends the need for Nigerian English Dictionary for documentation of words invented in this part of the world.

Keywords: Linguistics, words invention, neologism

Introduction

As a result of new inventions and changes, every language is in a constant need of new words borrowed, derived or otherwise formed, because new things need new words. The language community is steadily growing and developing, just as the tool with which people communicate: Language. When new inventions and changes enter human community, people are in the need of naming them and of course to communicate about them. Language, according to Naghmeh (2014), is dynamic, it changes constantly. The

key here is usage: If a new word is used by many speakers of a language, it will probably survive and it can happen that one day, becomes an everyday word and enters our dictionaries.

In the last centuries, many word creations have been spread among the language community. For instance, if you take a look at the amount of new inventions of the 20th and 21st century, it is obvious that the words we knew before were not enough to cover all these things. And of course there are language trends that come and go as time passes, for example, youth language (Finegan, 2007:321). There are old words with new meanings, like *surf*, *bug* and *web*, whose meanings have broadened since the new technological inventions, but there are many other ways in which new words are created. If there is a new thing and the language community has no word for it, there are several options to create a new one.

In the past and the present, people used and still use, a variety of methods to create new words as observed by Wagner (2010), these methods are; compounding, derivation, coinage, or blending. This article attempt to examine words invention from all ramifications with the intention to interrogate why words are invented from developing countries (Nigeria) are not getting into any recognized English Dictionary, using a specific column in Daily Trust Newspaper in Nigeria titled "the Politics of Grammar."

Review of Literature

Adding new words to the English Dictionary according to Vogel (2017) is recently becoming more and more common. The internet, television, commerce, new industrial products or services have provided a fertile soil for coming up with vast amount of new lexical items. It will not be daring to state that the English language is unbelievably fast in adjusting to the changing world. New expressions from everyday life representing the latest changes and evolutions are conventionalized daily.

Hundreds of new lexical items are coined or borrowed every year and number of them has been added into the *Oxford Dictionary* (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/), however a great amount have not been included into any dictionary yet especially those coined from developing countries. The semantic definition of word states that a word expresses a unified semantic concept. Although this may be true for most words, it is not sufficient in order to differentiate between words and non-words. The simple reason is that not every unified semantic concept corresponds to one word in a given language. Words are usually considered to be syntactic atoms, i.e. the smallest elements in a sentence.

Words belong to certain syntactic classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions etc.), which are called **parts of speech, word classes** or **syntactic categories**. The position in which a given word may occur in a sentence is determined by the syntactic rules of a language. These rules make reference to words and the class they belong to.

Words formation according to Ingo (2002: 11), has to do with putting together smaller elements to form larger words with more complex meanings. We can say that we are dealing with morphologically **complex words**. For instance, *employee* can be analyzed as being composed of the verb *employ* and the ending *-ee*, the adjective *unhappy* can be analyzed as being derived from the adjective *happy* by the attachment of the element *un-*, and *decolonialization* can be segmented into the smallest parts *de-, colony, -al, -ize,* and *-ation*. We can thus decompose complex words into their smallest meaningful units. These units are called **morphemes**. Also there are words that are formed without being decomposed into smaller meaningful units, they consist of only one morpheme, and they are monomorphemic. *Neighbor,* for instance, is not composed of *neighb-* and *-or*, although the word looks rather similar to a word such as *inventor*. *Inventor* ('someone who invents something') is decomposable into

two morphemes, because both *invent-* and *-or* are meaningful elements, whereas neither *neighb-* nor *-or* carry any meaning in *neighbor* (a neighbor is not someone who neighbs, whatever that may be...). Some morphemes can occur only if attached to some other morpheme(s). Such morphemes are called **bound morphemes**, in contrast to **free morphemes**, which do occur on their own. Some bound morphemes, for example *un-*, must always be attached before the central meaningful element of the word, the so-called **root**, **stem** or **base**, whereas other bound morphemes, such as *-ity*, *-ness,* or *-less*, must follow the root.

From the fore going, we have seen that words can be composed of smaller meaningful elements, and we have detected these elements largely by following our intuition. While people's intuition works nicely with rather unproblematic complex words like *unhappy,* complex words follows different rule of words formation in English. For example, if a speaker knows the words *unhappy, unkind, unfaithful, untrue, uncommon*, and *analyzable*, he or she can easily identify the meaning of *unanalyzable*, even if he has never seen that word before.

There must be some kind of system in the speakers' minds that is responsible for that. Also the behaviour of words has a lot to do with word formation in that a verb changes differently with how nouns changes, (Ingo, 2002). In order to be applied correctly, the rule must at least contain information about the phonology of the affix, what kind of affix it is (prefix or suffix), its semantics, and possible base morphemes.

Generally, forming new words involves combining bases and suffixes or prefixes in a special way while one item ends where another one begins. On the other hand, blending means joining two words by conjoining (fixing) them together in a way that ends one item sooner that the other one starts. For this reason this type of word formation resembles more melting the words together than combining them. In many cases we can recognize one base and the rest is a meaningless part of another base. For example *jeggings* formed out of jeans and leggins, or *mankini* (man and bikini). By blending the form and contents are perfectly integrated into one word like in jeggins which describe the piece of clothes that has the qualities of both jeans and leggins at the same time. Other notable examples may be *brunch* (breakfast-lunch), *smog* (smoke-fog) and *mopol* (mobile police).

English writers are the first to play with words in their stories and naturally coined new expressions as soon as in the 19th century. Lewis Carol and his Jabberwocky were known for forming words such as *slithy* (lithe and slimy) or *galumph* (gallop and triumph).

Other examples are:

advertisement + entertainment advertainment, biographical + picture biopic, chuckle + snort   chortle, guess + estimate   guesstimate, hazardous + material   hazmat, motor + hotel   motel, prim + sissy   prissy, simultaneous + broadcast simulcast, smoke + fog   smog, Spanish + English   Spanglish and etc.

Word invention

Words invention has been analyzed in a variety of studies. They have focused on its nature, formation, types and other aspects. In this research, some of the related studies about it are presented by some authors:

For George (2006), words invention or formation focuses on morphology, the process of word formation as well as free and bound morphemes making a word. Free morphemes such as: lexical and functional and bound morphemes including: deviational and inflectional. Moreover, he explains about allomorphs and their formations. Still on the morphological point of view **Susan (2006)** explains about other kinds of word formation including clipping and its sub-types: fore-clipping, back-clipping (which is most common) and lexemes which have been both fore-and back-clipped.

Using the linguistic structure, words can be invented through compounding, clipping, blending as well as their functions and forms. This was captured in the research work of (Thomas and John, 2005). For **Wagner (2010) words invention or** formation processes include: derivation compounding, blending, acronym, borrowing, neologism or coinage.

Words classification by field of use

With the advent of the internet, people began using it for fast chatting, emailing, and commenting. Therefore, notable amount of freshly created expressions have come into everyday usage. Some have been derived from new technology, equipment, programme or even an online game. This technology revolution has affected our private lives, working conditions, socializing hence everyday life. No wonder brand new expressions have been developed over the last twenty or more years. Therefore, social networking is a new area that is offering a fertile soil to new lexical elements. For example 404 is someone who is clueless. From the World Wide Web error message "404 Not Found," meaning that the requested document could not be located. Undoubtedly, this is an interesting new word because actually it is not a word but a number. The association of 404 with an error gave rise to this labelling someone obviously unintelligent. However, it is really arguable as for identifying the word formation process. It could be assumed 404 is a coinage. 404 actually reminds me of 420 which has been added to the Oxford dictionary recently and stands for marijuana.

Other newly arrived words in the English Dictionary worthy of analyzing here are *unfriend, selfie, like, wall and tweet. Unfriend* as the opposite of friend but in connection with any social network where people have lists of contacts – friends who they have added gradually. EOLD briefly defines *unfriend* as a verb "to remove (someone) form a list of friends or contacts in a social networking site". When examining the way of formation *unfriend it*

is a derivation from noun to verb affixed with the negative prefix *un-*.

Selfie is an informal term, noun referring to "a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a Smartphone or webcam and shared via social media." To explain the way it was formed the noun *self* has taken a suffix – ie. Therefore, it can be labelled as derivation.

Apart from their original meaning, words such as *like, wall and tweet* has beginning to be used as something completely different in the contemporary era. According to the

EOLD for instance, *tweet* can also be used as a verb in the same sense. It is obvious that *wall, like, troll and tweet* are all social networking metaphors.

Methodology

This study employed exploratory-quantitative-interpretative. Newly invented words have been explored and investigated as appeared in the column "the Politics of Grammar." The data collected is primarily quantitative, and the analysis is interpretative. Data collection included arbitrary content analysis and extensive internet research. Newly invented words have been divided into three categories whose different word formations have been elaborated along with their examples.

The Politics of Grammar Column

The Politics of Grammar is a column by Associate Professor of Journalism and Emerging Media, **Farooq A. Kperogi** first appeared on Thursdays in the print and online editions of the people's daily for more than a year. The columnist later transferred it to Sunday Trust (now called Daily Trust on Sunday, the Sunday edition of Daily Trust, on Monday 1, 2011. Several articles were serialised for two or more weeks on the column. And the columnist repackaged his articles and experience into a book titled "Glocal English: The Changing Face and Forms of Nigerian English in a Global World." Some of the articles were serialized

for some weeks. He is also the writer of the column "Notes from Atlanta."**The analysis**

The analysis

Nigerian coinage, blend and neologism (English)	meaning	British or American equivalent
detribalized	Nigerian adjective for tribal neutral person	A verb in British and America(cultural superior)
Co-wife or co-wives	Female partners in polygamous marriage	Not found in the British and America Dictionary
playmates	Joking partners	No parallel in western cultures
Send-forth parties (adjective)	An organised goodwill for people who are about to leave us for a new place	Send-off (noun)
Chewing stick	Native stick for brushing(adjective)	brush
Pounded yam	Nigerian adjective for yam food	Not found in British and American lexicon
K-legged	Not straight forward	Knock-kneed
Next tomorrow	After two days	The day after tomorrow
Take in	pregnant	To be pregnant
Not on seat	absent	Not in the office
Put to bed	Child birth	To give birth to a child
Disvirgin	Deprive of virginity	Deflower

Source: *obtained from the column and rearranged by the authors March, 2018*
It has become customary for Nigerian to arrange "send-forth parties" as an organized expression of goodwill for people who are about to leave us for a new place or for a new venture. This expression, which seems to have originated as a coinage by Nigerian born-again Christians, would certainly make little or no sense to many Americans and Britons. Its equivalent in standard British and American English is "send-off" (note that it is NOT "send-off party" because "send-off" is a noun, not an adjective) or "farewell celebration" or, rarely, "bon voyage." Americans also call it a "leaving party." The adverb "forth" appears to us to convey a connotation of forward motion, of advancement, while "off" strikes us as suggesting departure with no expectation of return. So we think that to say we send people off creates the impression that we derive perverse pleasure in their departure from us. However, native speakers and linguists would call this reasoning downright ignorant, because the definition of an idiom—which is what this phrase is— is that it is an expression" whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meanings of the individual words that make it up."

The lists of Nigerian coinage, blend and neologism are inexhaustible, but the above were examples of Nigerian linguistic invented words in column analysed. The above expressions are incomprehensible to native speakers of the English language. But there's no reason to stop using them when we communicate with each other here in Nigeria. Therefore, in operationalizing Nigerian English, it goes beyond Nigerian Pidgin English and the English spoken by uneducated and barely educated Nigerians, to mean the variety of English that is broadly spoken and written by Nigeria's literary, intellectual, political, and media elite across the regional and ethnic spectra of Nigeria.

In the light of the above, there is no deny that the existing semantic and syntactic resources of the British and the American English language are insufficient in serving our communicative needs, we are left with only two options: neologism (that is, invention of new words or phrases) and semantic extension (that is, encoding existing English

words and phrases with meanings that are absent in the original, but which encapsulate our unique socio-linguistic experiences).

Conclusion

In as much as this article identified English language usage errors unique to Nigeria, there is no doubt that Nigerian, American, and British English are, in reality, more alike than unlike. There is no reason to stop using those words invented from Nigeria; we only need to be careful not to use those coinage and neologism outside Nigeria because they may be misinterpreted.

Recent voices stressing the importance of investigating word formation in the light of cognitive processes can be interpreted from two general perspectives. First of all, they indicate that a structural approach to the architecture of words and a cognitive view are not incompatible. On the contrary, both perspectives try to work out regularities in language. What sets them apart is the basic vision of how language is encapsulated in the mind and the ensuing choice of terminology in the description of the processes. Cognitive linguistics concedes closely to the self-organizing nature of humans and their language, whereas generative structuralist perspectives represent external boundaries as given in the institutionalized order of human interaction (Onysko & Sascha, 2010). By word formation processes we mean the different devices which are used in English to build new words from existing ones. Each word formation process will result in the production of specific type of word.

As we have seen in this study, there are many ways to create or invent new words: coinage, borrowing from other languages, blending together from several words or deriving from words we already have, converting words from one grammatical category to another, for example from verb to noun or from noun to verb, clippings, with which the word is shortened, or folk etymology, where words from other languages are taken and then, over time, people try to make sense of them are the major sources of newly invented words analysed from Nigerian. So, gradually the word is changed to a more familiar form that usually keeps its original meaning, e.g. the Spanish word cucaracha was borrowed and then gradually transformed to cockroach. Even the creative respelling, where the spelling of words is changed for products (e.g. Kleen, Krunch), is considered to be one of these processes. So finally, if we take a look around, we will see a mass of new words surrounding us, brought to us both consciously by language trends or advertising and unconsciously through language change over time. It is obvious that language is dynamic, because both the grammar and the words are different to ours now. Language changes constantly.

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