

A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Nigerianisms in selected Editorials of The Punch Newspapers

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Abstract

This work provides an overview of the use of English in newspaper editorials. This research is conducted to explore Nigerianism in the selected editorials of The Punch Newspapers, one of Nigeria's prominent print media outlets. Nigerianism in this context refers to the linguistic features, expressions, and idiomatic phrases that are peculiar to Nigerian English usage, reflecting the country's cultural, historical, and social contexts. The language variation theory is used as an instrument to analyze the 10 Punch Newspaper editorials which constitute the primary data for the study. The methodology employed include both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The paper affirms that Nigerianism should not be seen as evidence of weak proficiency in English language rather, it should be viewed as indices of acculturation and creative tendencies that are associated with other varieties of English across the world.

Keywords: Nigerianism, Semantic Nuances, Acculturation and Quantitative Analysis.

1.0 Introduction

Language is the means by which people from the same and related communities interact and express their thoughts and feelings to one another. This is one way of explaining the term

language. There is another way of explaining this phenomenon. A classic explication is that of Sapir (1921, p.18) “which explains language as a purely human and non instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols”.

Another definition of language was given by Hall in his Essay on Language in which language is defined as “the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of communication (Hall 1968, p.158). Edem (2015, p.226) posits that “language is one of the most important attributes of mankind because it is the medium of communication. There is no country without a language. We all live in a world of many languages”. This justifies the importance of language and humans are inseparable (see Awoniyi (1974), Edem (2005), Edem (2015) and Edem (2020).

It is perhaps for this reason that Edem 2016, p.84) observes that “English language is a non-native language in Nigeria, but it has come to stay in Nigeria. This is possible as a result of official government policy which adopted the speaking and writing of English along with other Nigerian languages as means of communication in both formal and informal situations”. The source further adds:

In Nigeria for instance, the variety of English spoken and written has been known to possess the features which qualified it as a variety of English referred to as Nigerian English. It is a variety that is typically known to have varieties within a variety. Scholars have identified these other varieties to include: Sophisticated Nigerian English, Educated Nigerian English, Basic Nigerian English and non-Nigerian English (Edem 2016, p.85).

An examination of these explanations by reveals that language is normally organized into patterns – Phonoc graphic and has specific characteristics which may be summarized thus:

... it is difficult to give a comprehensive definition of language. Any attempt that captures its essential characteristics: namely that it is a system made up of phonic or graphic symbols which are arbitrarily chosen or agreed upon by convention and are usually learned and used by a speech community for the purpose

of communication can serve as a reasonable explication (Eka and Udofot 1996, p.5).

A necessary implication of the use of language for the purpose of communication is that information expressed by language has to be meaningful to the hearer otherwise communication or interaction does not take place. This idea is stressed by Gimson's (1980, pp.4-5) description of language as

a system of conventional signals used for communication by a whole community. This pattern of conventions covers a system of significant sound units, the inflection and arrangement of words and the association meaning with words.

Language is seen as a communicating tool, particularly, when used intentionally and purposefully. It can be used in different ways in order to influence message. The primary function of language as an instrument for communication may be compromised since meaning can be changed merely by the addition or omission of even just a little element in a grammatical structure (Edem, 2022 and Edem 2023) The refinement or furtherance of a language largely depends on the proficient and careful enactment of its rules of grammar (Edem 2005, Edem, 2015). By this, one understands little else than the extensive teaching of its according to equivalence and the general convention of the most precise writers (Agu, 2008) and (Edem, 2018).

Language is one of the most important vehicles for the exchange of ideas. This work is primarily concerned with a linguist-stylistic analysis of the language of the media text. By insinuation, what it entails is that there are certain linguistic peculiarities that make the style of media text unique (Edem, 2015).

As noted earlier, the study of style also involves an examination of the writer's use of figurative language and other related devices such as idioms and imagery. This aspect of language, according to Agu (2008) and Edem, (2018). agreed that language is used to give a written work

verbal beauty, economy of words and structure and thematic depth. What it all adds up to is that we have to examine very briefly what constitutes the language of the media, especially as it affects the language of newspaper stories (Edem, 2022).

The study of news reports in the press is one of the major tasks of discourse-analytical media research.

Most linguists analyse how language can indicate underlying philosophies. Articles in newspapers as well as the information given to the public by renowned people in the society can be inferred and remodeled in different ways, especially the tribute read by the late Vice President Amissah Arthur's wife as observed by (Nordlund, 2003,). thus“ They can be summed up, abridged, polarized, exaggerated and personified. A transformation of the original account of the event in question is presented to the reader in such a way that it may affect his/her view of the world” (Nordlund, 2003, p.8) and (Edem, 2015).

Text is a structured unit consisting of smaller units. It is “a stretch of language which makes coherent sense in the context of its units. It may be spoken or written; it may be as long as a book or as short as a cry for help.” (Quirk et al. 1990,p.434). To achieve the unity, continuity and fluency of the text, “English sentence scan be linked in various ways, among which repetition of an element and back reference by means of pronouns are among the more important.” (Halliday and Hasan 1976, in Vestergaard and Schroder 1985,p.18). Other techniques are also used to join sentences together, for example, we use synonymy, place and time relaters, determiners, preforms (pronouns, pro-verbs, and other pro-forms), ellipsis, enumeration, parallelism (repetition of sentence structure), conjunctions and various transitions. All these ‘sentence signals’ refer back or forward to neighboring sentences.

Several studies have examined the use Nigerianisms or Nigerian English from different perspectives. Ogunyemi (2015), Urujzian (2018) and Edem, E. (2018) examined the use of Nigerianisms in the Punch Newspaper editorials. The study discovers that Nigerianisms were used extensively in the editorials, and they were used to express the Nigerian identity and culture. The study used language variation theory to determine the factors that influence the use of Nigerianisms in the Newspaper, the present study is different as it adopts both the qualitative and quantitative techniques to determine how the use of Nigerianisms in the Punch Newspaper Editorials coupled with socio-cultural and shared situational knowledge help to connect with the

readership and reflect the Nigerian situation. The study provides an opportunity to delve into the unique linguistic features, expressions, and cultural nuances inherent in Nigerian English (Edem, 2018) (Urujzian, 2018).

Josiah and Essien (2012) and Edem (2022) undertook a historical survey of Nigerian spoken English and its implications for outer circle Englishes. Based on the survey, the paper concludes that the spoken English in Nigeria has not made the language resemble the native speaker's variety and may never assume the posture. It proposes that since the spoken English in Nigeria has so far remained non-native in outlook, the same situation should be expected in outer circle Englishes, the world over (Edem, 2015). This work is related with the present study because it addresses the diversification of Nigerian English that since it serves the communicative needs of the speech community and does not outrightly compromise international intelligibility, it should be encouraged (Edem, 2018 and Edem 2022).

Aremu (2015) and Edem (2015) did a pragmatic analysis of Nigerianisms in the English usage in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*. The authors while discussing the use of Nigerianisms in English usage in the text, reveal that Nigerianisms in the play are employed in the contexts of language transfer, lexical borrowing, proverbs, metaphors, pidgin, symbolism, shared situational knowledge (SSK) and shared cultural knowledge (SCK) to pass the message in the manner intended.

Edem (2018) examines Nativisation of English Language in a multilingual and cultural setting: The Nigerian experience. The paper shares the fond memories of the introduction of English language into the shores of Nigeria by the native speakers. The paper explores the processes of acquisition of the language and the nativisation in Nigerian English as well as the attitudes of the people to the nativised variety in the Nigerian environment. The paper concludes by debunking the erroneous conception that the nativised variety is an inferior variety because it breaks metropolitan norms in an attempt to adapt to a new environment (Edem, 2018, Edem 2020 and Edem, 2022). This norm breaking and norm setting process according to the source are seen as evidence of cultural and linguistic identity.

According to Urujian, (2018) “by analyzing the Punch Newspaper editorials, participants can gain a deeper understanding of Nigerianisms and their impact on effective communication”. The Punch Newspaper is one of Nigeria's most prominent and widely read newspapers. Its editorials reflect the opinions, perspectives, and concerns of most Nigerians. Studying Nigerianisms in these editorials give room for a better understanding of Nigerian culture, values, and societal issues. Language Evolution: Nigerian English has evolved over time, incorporating local languages, expressions, and idioms (Udofot 2003; Edem 2015 and Edem, 2016).

The study helps participants to explore how Nigerianisms have shaped the English language in Nigeria, contributing to its textual quality, distinctiveness and uniqueness. The Punch Newspaper editorials have undoubtedly played a significant influence on public opinion and discourse in Nigeria. Understanding Nigerianisms in these editorials can shed more light on how language choices impact the perception and reception of news, as well as the role of media in shaping language use (Edem, 2022). Finally, the study provides an opportunity for linguistic researchers to study Nigerianisms in a specific context. This research can contribute to the field of sociolinguistics, language variation and language contact, furthering our understanding of language evolution and cultural identity (Urujian, V. (2018).

The above works by the different scholars have described Nigerianisms in some contexts like creating sense of identity, the need to assert Nigeria’s independence but did not address the grammatical and linguistic aspects. Therefore, this current study is set to bring out those aspects of grammar, cultural, linguistic and economic aspects as well as address how Nigerianisms help create a social and cultural identity for Nigerians (Edem, 2022).

Theoretical Framework: Language Variation

This approach was inspired by Labov’s (1963) pioneering work “The Social Motivation of a Sound Change” and "The Social Stratification of English" in New York City (Labov 1966), both of which reconsidered the linguistic system in a fundamentally different way from prior models. This new approach was then formulated in a seminar work entitled “Empirical Foundations for a Theory of Language. By contrast, Language Variation research has demonstrated that variation is a universal characteristic of human language. Variation in language is not random. It is highly structured in the speech of individuals and in the speech of communities.

It is also structured in the language itself. This is encapsulated in the notion of “orderly heterogeneity” and “orderly differentiation” (Weinreich, Labov and Herzog 1968, pp.100– 101). This stresses that linguistic variation may, at first glance, appear to be chaotic; however, variation is found to be structured by speakers’ social characteristics in their complex real communities, by the characteristics of their addressees and by the structural characteristics of the language that they are speaking.

The term Language Variation (or simply variation) refers to regional, social, or contextual differences in the ways that a particular language is used. Variation between languages, dialects, and speakers is known as inter-speaker variation. Variation within the language of a single speaker is called intra-speaker variation (Edem, 2015). All aspects of language (including phonemes, morphemes, syntactic structures, and meanings) are subject to variation. Variation in language use among speakers or groups of speakers is a notable criterion or change that may occur in pronunciation (accent), word choice (lexicon), or even preferences for particular grammatical patterns. Variation is a principal concern in sociolinguistics. It has been discovered that variation is typically the vehicle of language change. Variation, according to Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (1968, p.188),

inevitably accompanies any process of language change. A change from an archaic form A to an innovating form B, regardless of whether they are continuous or discrete, always involves an intermediate stage where A and B coexist in the speech of individuals, in the speech of communities and in the structure of the language. In other words, all changes entail variability and heterogeneity, but not all variation entails change.

According to Edem (2016) and Urujzian (2018), “variation is functionally and socially meaningful”. In other words, there are good reasons why there is variation in language. For instance, variation is, consciously or unconsciously, manipulated by speakers who wish to express particular allegiances, identities or social meanings. It is because variation is functionally and socially meaningful, the competing forms in the process of language change may be used by certain groups to differentiate themselves from other groups (Edem, 2015).

This in turn can lead to the acceleration or deceleration of change. This approach of such shows the linguistic difference and distribution that exist geographically. It also attempts to relate that distribution to the historical development of the language, both internally, i.e., linguistically, and externally, i.e., politically, socially, and culturally (Edem, 2018), (Enang, 2023b) and (Edem, 2016).

In the context of Nigerian English, the term Language Variation can be seen as English that is nativised or domesticated to reflect Nigerian experiences as observed by Bamgbose (1995, p.26). “English language has undergone alterations which birthed other variants such pidginized, nativized, acculturated and twisted varieties to accommodate concepts and modes of interactions peculiar to Nigeria”. (Eka and Udofot, 1996; Edem, 2016 and Enang and Edem 2022) also agree to this assertion.

2.0 Research Methodology

The editorials selected from Punch newspapers serve as the primary source for the data. The purposive sampling method was used to select words and features considered relevant for the analysis. What informed this method was that not all the words or features in a text can be selected and analyzed. This is in conformity with Edem (2020) and Edem, 2022), who agree with what Adejare (1992) describes as ‘notion projection’ which he observes as useful because:

...in any text, the linguistic structures conveying the message projected at the different levels would be evenly distributed throughout the text and thus enable the analyst to select the proper examples from the data (Adejare, 1992, p. 14).

2.1 Data Presentation and Discussion

This section deals with the data collected. The analysis was based on the sociolinguistic aspects of Nigerianisms in the English Usage in The Punch Newspaper editorials. The emphasis was on the use of Nigerianisms, its lexical features, borrowed words, idiomatic expressions, syntactic features, spellings and pronunciation amongst others.

Table 1: Morphological Features (hyphenation) and Idiomatic and Figurative Expressions

Released Dates	Number of Hyphenated Words and Expressions	Expressions
Tuesday, October 10, 2023	17	Non-state, decades-long, illegal, North-West, South-East, North-Central, South-South, Geneva-based, Bokoharam-linked, Auditor-General, Ak-47, Babajide-Sanwo-Olu Lagos-Badagry, bus-stops, ill-repute half-hearted, anti-streets, developers-streets
Wednesday, October 11, 2023	11	deep-rooted, root-branch reforms, market-led, Private Sector-dominated, single-minded, Johannesburg-based, one-third, merit-based, Girl-child, out-of-school, non-profits.
Thursday, October 12, 2023	9	Middle-East, Isreal-hamas, Far-right, non-Arab, two-state, consensus-based maitama-kubwa, died-whether, Inspector-general
Friday, October 13, 2023	12	Inspect-general, off-cycle, Election-related, War-ravaged, Sit-at-home, then-governor, war-ravaged, Election related violence, Pre-Empt, emiola-gacal Idi-Aba Two-year old power blackout.
Monday, October 16, 2023	7	Market-driven, reality-denying, free-market, Cherry-picks, Corruption-free privatization ill-advised, dollar-starved
Tuesday, October 17, 2023	10	State-Sanction, fifty-five, State-Sanctioned Execution, ill-Structured Tunji-ojo's recent, Russia-Ukraine ill-health, Sub-national, Self-inflicted, cash-grant
Wednesday, October 18, 2023	5	Low-and-middle income, WELL-Equipped, over-bureaucratisation Director-general Over-Sized

Thursday, October 19, 2023	8	N-power, poultry-allevaton, multi-dimensionall, ill-golten State-drawn Uk-based re-professionalized skill-competency
Friday, October, 20, 2023	7	Anti-corruption agencies, over-stretched, Dussin-ma, Production-sharing, next-deep, in-house well-fund
Monday, October 23, 2023	9	Eighty-year old, State-run, knowledge-driven, scatter-shot, anti-corruption, rubber-stamped, lower-level, attorneys-general well-timed.

Table 2

Released Dates	Frequency	Expressions
Friday, October 13 2023	1	Off-cycle governorship election
Money, October 16, 2023.	1	Cherry-picks
Friday, October 18, 2023.	1	Root-and-branches Reformation
Thursday, October 19, 2023	1	Ghost beneficiary
Monday, October 23, 2023	1	Scatter-short measures

From the data above in table 1, there were many words and expressions which were gotten through the process of hyphenation. For instance, the expression, the eight years ago restrictions of Monday, October 23, 2023 editorial "far-right Jewish" "non-Aralo", "Maitamakubwa-highway" "Inspector-General" of Thursday, October 12, 2023 editorial "neck-deeper" in-house investigation" of Friday October 20, 2023 editorial. This process of conjoining linguistic items to give a cultural meaning is a peculiar style adopted by some Nigerians as seen in the punch

newspaper editorials in table 2 above. Through this pattern, Nigerian English used in their newspapers and other news media become distinctive as they do this perhaps to shorten sentences. This shortening which results from hyphenation is perhaps done to have a long speech delivered and written in a short space of paper as well as reducing cost of expenses on materials used. Most of the hyphenated expressions are not originally written with hyphens but Nigerians tend to use them. For instance, "ill-repute" "rubber-stamped" "anti-corruption" "anti-street Hawking" and "re-professionalized". The data shows that some hyphenated words and expressions are purposively deployed by Nigerians and it serves to mark or identify their unique English usage.

Table 2 above demonstrates that only five editorials contain some figurative expressions. For instance, the expression "Root and Branches Reformation" signifies a comprehensive reform of the Nigerian economic system, addressing both its fundamental principles (the root) and its various components (the branch) "Off- cycle governorship election" used in Friday, October 13, 2023 editorial signifies the period of election which is not part of the regular or typical angle or the election conducted differently from the scheduled time by the electoral body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

This expression is best understood in the Nigerian context since it reflects the intent and or purpose of the Nigerian electoral activity. "Shatter-shot measures" Friday, October 23, 2023 and "ghost beneficiary" Thursday, October 19, 2023, the editorials suggest a haphazard or random approach to taking action or implementing a solution. It implies that the measures taken are not well-planned or targeted, rather scattered and ineffective and "ghost beneficiary" suggests to Nigerians the system or habit where certain group of persons sit and take undue advantage of the situation or resources from the comfort of their homes when the rest are left to wallow in poverty and the ruling class comfortably enjoys indirectly. "Cherrys pick" in the Monday, October 16, 2023 edition suggests a similar situation where the most desirable items gained advantage of, by a set of persons who perhaps do not often earn it but assumes responsibility of deciding the fate of majority of Nigerians who are faced with challenges, poverty and uncertainty (Edem, 2015, and Edem, 2023a).

The use of this figurative expression helps clarify meaning which is peculiar to the Nigerian situation. They are also used in deepening meaning of the expressions. They are deliberately used to give necessary or vivid details and useful description which enable readers to understand the

people and the environment where they appear. They are also used to create a sense of originality, rhythmic and textual quality in the text. This shows that it is only the people of the immediate environment who have shared knowledge, and are familiar with these expressions that can conveniently associate with these contexts and probably fully grasp their meanings. These explanations hardly qualify as language variation analysis (Enang, 2023a and Edem, 2023b).

2.2 Grammatical Nigerianisms

Nigerian English exhibits some distinctive grammatical features. The punch newspaper editorials frequently employ Nigerianisms in sentence structure to improve textuality of the work. For instance, we have a frequent pluralization of abbreviations and the conversion of common nouns to gerundive nouns. The table below demonstrates some of such grammatical expressions:

Table 3: Grammatical Expressions

Released Dates	Expressions
Friday, October 20, 2023	All policy is local
Tuesday, October 10, 2023	Lack of state and L.G's policy

Table 4 demonstrates the pluralization of abbreviations in the editorials:

Released Dates	Frequency	Expressions
Monday, October 23, 2023	1	The PEPs are walking free
Monday, October 16, 2023	1	And other will kill SMEs

Tuesday, October 10, 2023	3	LGs and state government over 10,000 SALWs from non-state actors. People died in RTCs across the 36 states
Friday, October 13, 2023	4	LG HQs, LGs, NCOS, MSME.

The expressions above recorded in the Friday, October 20, 2023 editorial shows a distinctive way of Nigerian English usage. For instance, the word "police" which is a common noun is converted to a gerund "policy". This is intentionally done for a purpose as well as identifying the Nigerian linguistic style (Edem, 2015 and Edem 2016) and (Enang, 2023a).

The data in table 4 demonstrate the addition of "s" to pluralise an abbreviation. For instance, the word "the PEPs are walking free" the reflection of "s" reflects the many members of the body or organization. In the abbreviation "LGs", the addition of the "s" makes it several local governments. This linguistic pattern is seen as peculiar and could be referred to as a Nigerianisms. The word "ex" as a prefix is mostly used in the Nigerian situation to signify or refer to "former". This situation is evident in the Monday, October 23, 2023 editorial where we had such expressions as "many other senators and ministers and ex-governors of the ruling party." The prefix "ex" is peculiarly used to refer to the former governors and is mostly used in the Nigerian situation (Enang, Eshiet and Udoka, 2013).

2.3 Abbreviations

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase. According to Enang (2023a), "it is created by taking each word in the phrase and combining them". Abbreviations are commonly used to save time and space when writing or typing. They are often used in various fields such as medicine, technology, business and politics (Edem, 2015). In this situation, Nigerian abbreviations can be seen as Nigerianisms. In this case, Nigerianisms refer to coinages, words or abbreviations like "NNPC"(Nigerian National Petroleum Company), "IMF"(International Monetary Fund), "TETFUND"(Tertiary Education Trust Fund), and there are more of such examples of Nigerianisms that are commonly used in the Punch Newspaper editorials studied. These abbreviations reflect the Nigerian context and are not commonly used in other varieties of English.

Table 5 shows Nigerian English abbreviations used in the selected Punch Newspaper editorials.

Released Date	Frequency	Abbreviations
Friday, October 13, 2023	4	INEC, USAID, FAAC, CDD,
Tuesday, October 17, 2023	5	NGO, IDR, MSME, UNICEF, CSO
Friday, October 20, 2023	3	SBM, OPEC, NEITI
Monday, October 16, 2023	6	IMF, OPS, CBN, SME, FT, NNPC
Tuesday, October 10, 2023	3	SALW, CMD, UNICEF
Wednesday, October 18, 202	5	RTC, RRSC, NSSEC, UBEC, TETFUND
Monday, October 23, 2023	6	SME, CBN, IMF, EFCC, PEP, NEITI
Wednesday, October 11, 2023	5	NCAA, IATA, OECD, UNESCO, UNICEF
Thursday, October 12, 2023	2	UAE, NMA
Thursday, October 19, 2023	6	N-POWER, CCT, NCR, NBS, MDS, NSPSR

Table 5 above presents the abbreviations which are designed or created in Nigeria for the Nigerian situation. These abbreviations incorporate Nigerian sensibilities or meanings. They define the social, economic and political structure of Nigeria and it is only someone familiar with them mostly Nigerians that can draw any meaning out of them. This can as well bring about what we call local colouration – Nativization (Eka 2000; Edem 2016 and Edem, 2018). As earlier said, these abbreviations are only meaningful in the Nigerian context or situation (Enang, 2023a) and (Urujzian, (2016).

2.4 Semantics and Shades of Meaning

This is the study of meaning in language. It is in agreement with (Enang, Eshiet and Udoka, 2013 and Edem, 2015 that “this encompasses various aspects such as the relationship between words, the interpretation and understanding of sentence, and how meaning is conveyed through different linguistic structures”. In linguistics, semantics focuses on understanding how words and sentences convey meaning, how different words can have multiple meanings, and how context plays a crucial role in interpreting language. Semantics also explores concepts like reference and truth conditions which involve understanding how language relates to their worldview, makes a statement or position true. In this aspect, it is concerned with the shades of meaning.

In the Punch Newspaper editorial of Friday, October 13, 2023, there is an observation of the use of the word “statesman” in the expression. “The recent reminder by an elder statesman, Afe Babalola, of how States’ Governments have *pauperized* the Local Governments by hijacking their allocations, should provoke Nigerians to demand for accountability from their elected officials”. The word “statesman” which is otherwise known as a renowned citizen or “politician” is used in the paper to reflect the English language used by most Nigerians. To most Nigerians, this usage is very acceptable whereas in other places or regions, it would sound derogatory or strange (Edem, 2015 and Edem, 2018).

2.5 Spellings:

The spelling variants of the word “percent” is observed to be spelt “per cent” with a space between the two syllables “per” and “cent”, in all the selected editorials under study. This data presentation and discussion indicate to a large extent that Nigerianisms, especially, in newspapers, tilts a little bit to this spelling variant to “percent”. This makes the Nigerian English variety identifiable and distinctive.

Table 6: The Grammatical Use of Adjectives and Lexical Use of Nigerianisms

Released Dates	Words (expressions)
MondayOctober23, 2023	The flying man (the flying man was so careful to land the plane)

Wednesday, October 18, 2023	Farming states (farming states should be able to provide for the people)
Friday, October 13, 2023	Oiling business (oil business should be taken as important in the country)

Released Dates	Words (expressions)
Monday, October 16, 2023	Atikulate(d)
Tuesday, October 17, 2023	Enomous, akpabiosm
Tuesday, October 10, 2023	Obedience
Wednesday, October 11, 2023	Buka
Thursday, October 12, 2023	Okada rider
Thursday, October 19, 2023	Keke rider

The table above richly reflect some aspects of the domestication of English language, in Nigeria where language is bent to reflect the cultural identities or and experiences of the immediate environment (Edem, 2015 and Edem, 2018). It is observed however, from the data presented in table 6 above that, words which serve as descriptive adjectives in the expressions are intentionally used as a means of reflecting the cultural sensibility of the people (Enang, 2023a, Utin, 2016, Utin 2023) This also adds to local colouration discussed earlier on in this work. For instance, the use of “the flying man” in the expression “the flying man was so careful to land the plane” mirrors the aspect of domestication. “The flying man” here substitutes for “the pilot” which describes a man that flies a plane. In the expression “oiling business”, it is observed that oiling describes the business of oil production. “Oiling” is used instead of “oil business” to create a cultural understanding as Nigeria’s economy depends largely on revenue accruing from oil endowments (Edem, 2015 and Edem, 2020).

From the table above, it could be observed that Nigerian English is known for its rich lexicon, which includes borrowing words or expressions from the indigenous languages, Pidgin English, and other Nigerian languages. The Punch Newspaper editorials often employ Nigerianisms to convey specific meanings or cultural nuances. Table 6 above contains such words which are borrowed and/or coined to give meanings which reflects the country's unique cultural experiences or sensibilities ((Enang, Eshiet and Udoka, 2013). For instance, the word “atikulate” (verb), “atikulated” (adjective) is coined from the 2023 Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Presidential Candidate, Atiku Abubakar to mean “to advocate” for the candidate, the words “okada” and “keke” are signifiers for “commercial” motorcycle riders and tricycle riders, to “ginger” somebody means to motivate or encourage respectively.

Through this pattern of word usage in the Newspapers, we can observe what is linguistically referred to as “local colouration”, where nativization is adopted in language use. By nativization, we mean the act of language changing to fit the user's sensibilities after it has stayed for a considerable length of time in the host community (Edem, 2015) and Edem, 2018) and Edem (2023b).

2.6 A Socio-Economic Implications

In this sense, these selected Punch Newspaper editorials are “a reflection of the social, cultural and economic issues, according to (Enang, Eshiet and Udoka, 2013 and Edem 2018), that are prevalent in the country”. Through the use of language, the newspapers attempt to connect with readers on the social happenings around the nation. The table below presents the headings of the editorials as they reflect some of the major happenings in the nation.

Table 7: A Socio-Economic Implications and Language Evolution

Released Dates	Headings/Themes
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Tuesday, October 10,2023	Alarming influx of illicit firearms persist, Strong Boko Haram, Sanwo-olu enforce ban on street trading.
Tuesday, October17,2023	Top many inmates remain on “death row”, eradicating poverty in Nigeria, an urgent task.
Thursday, October 17,2023	Nigerian’s public service need sweeping reforms.
Friday, October 20,2023	Kidnappers on the rampage, oil thefting, the federal territory: military should flush out collaborators.
Mon, October 16,2023	Forex crises: rethink ban lifted on 43 items, the economy just got more turbulent.
Friday, October 13,2023	Residents, demand explanations from Ogun LG Chairman, sit at home crises.

Table 8

Released Dates	Linguistic Items
Thursday, October 19,2023	Altercation, overhaul, starters, enmeshed, nepotism
Tuesday, October 19,2023	Relinquish, interminable
Thursday, October 12,2023	Hardliner, elusive, annihilation
Tuesday, October 10, 2023.	Momentum, porons, eradicate
Friday, October 13, 2023	Statutory, mutilate, disburse
Friday, October 20,2023	Abduct, banditry, rampage, plunge, squiring

From the tables 7 and 8 above, Edem (2022) and Edem (2023b) agrees that there is a reflection of Nigeria’s socio-cultural experiences through the themes or headings used in the

papers. This is possible through the use of language as it captures the social aspects bothering the nation. For instance, in the editorial of Tuesday, October 10, 2023, there is a report that 17 percent of the weapons seized from Boko Haram liked rebels (armed bandits) were diverted from stockpiles in Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. This report reflects the growing insurgency in some parts of North East Nigeria is experiencing from the dangerous group called Boko Haram (Urujzian, 2016)). This social challenge as reflected in the paper is exclusively Nigerian and is understood by her inhabitants. Friday, October, 13, 2023 editorial, features the “sit-at-home” crisis which was nursed by an individual. The heading is completely a reflection of an ugly experience by affected Nigerians. The Newspaper also reports the issue of underdevelopment, hardship and other social malaise facing most Nigerians. Monday, October 16, 2023 has the report on the lifting of bans on certain items as it is one of the issues causing untold economic hardships in the country (Enang, Eshiet and Udoka, 2013).

Language evolution according to Enang, E. (2023b. P.14) and Urujzian, (2016) “is a natural process that occurs overtime as a result of various factors such as social, cultural and technological changes”. In this case of Nigerianisms, language evolution has been influenced by the country’s diverse cultural and linguistic heritage, as well as its colonial history. The English language was introduced to Nigerians during the colonial era and has since evolved to reflect the country’s unique cultural and linguistic identity. Table7shown above demonstrates how English used in the Punch Newspaper editorials adopt language evolution (Urujzian, 2016).

The data presented in table 8 demonstrates or reflect some aspects of Nigerianisms where the Nigerian English variety carefully follows the dynamics of the language (Enang, E. 2023b) and (Edem, 2016) and Edem, 2018). It shows how the speakers display the dynamism of the language and ability to use the language to meet its peculiar needs. In the examples shown in table 8, there is some elements of the linguistic affiliation that Nigeria had with its colonial masters as it also reveals the country’s linguistic identity. For instance, the use of the words altercation (violent argument), nepotism, overhaul starters (staff) and relinquish (give up), interminable (endless), hardliner (militant), elusive (difficult to find) annihilation (complete destruction), eradicate (put an end to), statutory (required), mutilate (inflict a violence), disburse (pay out), adopt (kidnap), plunge (jump), squiring (companionship). These reflect the process of the Nigerian

English evolution, taking place in the West African Country, Nigeria, as a reflection of the linguistic identity in the Country by its colonial masters, the British, who introduced English to Nigerians before independence in 1960 (Edem, 2015), Edem(2018), Edem (2020) and (Enang, 2023a).

3.0 Summary and Conclusion

This work examined some aspects of Nigerian usage of English in some selected Punch Newspaper editorials. It subjects the stories to areas such as: hyphenation (morphological features), figurative expressions, abbreviations and shades of meaning (semantics).

This study revealed, among other things the significance of language variation and cultural context in Nigerian English. Nigerianisms, however, serve as linguistic markers of Nigerian identity reflecting the Country's rich cultural heritage. The use of Nigerianisms in the Newspaper editorials studied not only connect with the readers but also contribute to the ongoing evolution of Nigerian English as a distinct variety of world Englishes.

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