Linguistic Creativity: A Study of Reduplication in Nigerian Pidgin

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Abstract
Nigerian Pidgin is a fledgling linguistic solution in a multilingual and heterogenous society with a growing mutual resistance to others but loyalty for one's own language. Nigerian Pidgin, apart from its growing communicative deployment than all the indigenous (majority or minority) and exoglossic languages spoken within the border of the geographic space called Nigeria, reflects interesting and diverse linguistic peculiarities that require serious scholarship. It is for this reason that this study investigates the reduplication tendency (an aspect of linguistic creativity) in Nigerian Pidgin. In sourcing the data for the study, participant observation in different spontaneous communicative events in a nearly pidgin dominated medium was adopted though surreptitiously while the analytical framework is Bloor and Bloor's Text Analysis. From the analysis, the study revealed that in spite of the differences in the substrate linguistic backgrounds (of the source – indigenous languages), the research subjects and the differing communicative events from where the data were sourced, there appeared to be a uniform pattern of realisation of reduplication in Nigerian Pidgin. The paper concludes that the Nigerian Pidgin has almost assumed a form that it is becoming impossible for the present generation of its speakers to understand the etymological lineage of most of the words that are adapted from particular Nigerian languages.

Introduction
Every language has a peculiar way of expressing shades of meanings by its speaker that might not be universal. For example, the English language is said to be the richest in synonyms because of the member of the foreign lexical items (or loan-words) that have entered it (Eckersley and Eckersley, 1960, p. 432; Pei, 1965, p. 300 and Onah, 2014, p.38). Idoma is famous for its tonal realization; a feat that has increased the word stock of the language, and Nigerian Pidgin has a matchless reduplication tendency than any known living or artificial language. When a fluent speaker of these languages deploys these characteristic facilities, the communicative events and intended illocutionary attempt do not always suffer any failure or ambiguity.

Among the Nigerian multilingual mobile population, Nigerian Pidgin is a resource for understanding diverse socio-relational services; whether business, conversational, political, etc. One of the overriding roles of Nigerian Pidgin is its service as a bridge or accommodative link between people from contrasting social classes without prejudice. With the growing mutual suspicion, ethnic rivalry and the unwillingness of Nigerian elites to break their linguistic loyalty to their mother tongues, the Nigerian nation without Nigerian Pidgin is inconceivable. The theoretical notion of Linguistic Creativity holds that users of a language do not inherit a fixed set of patterns to use it, instead they possess "the ability to manipulate and create with a

language, in order to express their perceptions" (Yule, 1996, p. 248). In this work, the term linguistic creativity is used to describe a dimension of language users' ability to modify words loaned from English into Nigerian Pidgin, coin phrases from existing lexicons of any of the indigenous Nigerian languages that serve as the substrata to express a new shade of meaning without giving their interlocutor(s) reasons for misunderstanding and/or ambiguity or total exclusion from the discourse event. Yule (1996, p.23) profoundly opines that language users manipulate their linguistic resources to produce new expressions and new sentences.

Conceptual Explication
There are slight differences in the historical narratives about the origin of pidgins, nevertheless one thing is central in all the various accounts by linguists; i.e. pidgin is an emergent language among a population of speakers without a common language to fulfil their urgent communicative needs. According to LePage (1977, p.222), pidgins are formed when speakers of one language engage in trade with speakers of another, or work on plantations managed by speakers of another, and neither knows the other's language. Akindele and Adegbite (1999, p.53) argue that the origin of pidgin could also be traced to the business transaction between the people on the west coast of Africa and the Europeans, namely the Spanish, Portuguese and English. And because the contact situations became seemingly prolonged and somewhat successful, the output is pidgin; a blend of indigenous languages of the West African coast and those of the foreign traders. According to Hall (1966, p.xii), "Two or more people use language in a variety whose grammar and vocabulary are very much reduced in extend and which is native to neither side. Such a language is a "pidgin".

Ayandele's (1966, p.3) view on the historical narratives about Pidgin English in Nigeria appears to be the most convincing. According to him "…except in the old Calabar the result of 400 years of European contact (with Nigeria) was the evolution of bastardized "Pidgin" English which became the language of business". Nigerian Pidgin has no defined standard orthographic representation, grammar or model (Onah, 2016, p.10; Akindele and Adegbite, 1999, p.54). Onah in the same breath argued lucidly for the divergent grapho-phonemic representation of the Nigerian Pidgin because the seemingly laissez-faire tradition has continued to render reading and writing in the language almost difficult due to absence of a norm on which individual's perception must be judged or should conform to. According to Akindele and Adegbite (1999, p.54), "In Edo, Delta and Rivers state for instance, pidgin can be considered as lingua franca. However, in Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa speech communities, pidgin is considered as a trade language". Hall (1962, p.408) "…the surface characteristics of the various Pidgins are indeed non-English, and differ from one pidgin to the next; but all varieties of Pidgin English have an underlying identity of structure with English, and their basic pattern shows that they are outgrowths of English, no matter how much they may have changed and have been brusquely restructured nearer the surface." This in a way means, there is no doubt about the universal outlook of pidgin just as the structural elements and lexicalization reflect similar genetic orientation.

Nigerian Pidgin and the Sociolinguistic Space
Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and pluri-lingual nation (Jowitt, 2012, p.9; Matemilola, 1999, p.97). And with the about five hundred (500) indigenous languages whose speakers are driven by ethnolinguistic loyalty, coupled with the fact that over 70% of the entire population are either totally illiterate or averagely illiterate and a few other factors, there is no way that a hybrid language will not assume prominent place in the society.

In contemporary Nigerian sociolinguistic setting, it is easier to count monolinguals than bilinguals; if indeed monolinguals still exist. This is because most Nigerians now can speak two or more languages to fulfill their communicative needs. For example, due to growing needs for inter-personal relation and socio-economic activities, people have to acquire more than just one language instead of relying exclusively on the goodwill of their fellow community members as interpreters in meeting some urgent communicative needs. Consequently, an individual may have, in addition to his first language, one of the major Nigerian languages and Nigerian Pidgin. But for those who have the advantage of attending a conventional (formal) academic institution, English is an automatic extra communication means to such category mentioned earlier; that is, almost every Nigerian enjoys bilingual rights or access.

According to Onah (2004, p.59), "of all the linguistic options that are available to Nigerians, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) appears to be the most popular". This is because the ethnolinguistic restriction and/or chauvinistic attitude that cripple the readiness of Nigerians from different geo-political regions and linguistic backgrounds to learn any of the indigenous languages do not affect their love for the Nigerian Pidgin.

The neutrality of Nigerian Pidgin negates the misconceptions or myths about bilingualisms. For example, there is a belief that bilingual speakers cannot keep their two languages independent of each other. The actual linguistic performance by both literate and illiterate Nigerians who are Pidgin-English bilinguals has proved that apart from a willful sociolinguistic grafting of two languages by a speaker in form of code-switching or code-mixing, the myth is void. Secondly, the misconception that points to the negative perception that bilingualism has some detrimental effects does not apply to most Nigerian Pidgin-English bilinguals. This is because even the highly educated Nigerian now use pidgin without any sense of inferiority neither do other members of the society feel ethnolinguistically disloyal to their mother-tongues or first language.

This author acknowledges that there are varieties of Nigerian Pidgin e.g. Waffi (Warri Pidgin, Lagos Pidgin, etc); but references shall not be made to any particular one. This is because virtually all the words and phrases presented as data did not reflect any regional features specifically; though at the level of analysis a brief etymological reference is made for some of the words. A great deal of grounds has been covered in the description of the Nigerian Pidgin. For example, Elugbe and Omamor (1991), Mafemi (1971), Omamor (1982), Gani-Ikilama

(2005). Adetugbo (1991) observed that Yoruba sound system is patterned not after the English sound inventory but after traditionalists.

The verbal performance of two native but illiterate speakers of a language is most likely to reflect similar phonological and graphological features much more than when the output of one illiterate and literate, and/or two non-native speakers of a language are sampled and transcribed. This is because every user of a language acts on the medium or brings to bear upon the language his inherent social variables; and where the traits are not a shared experience, individual outputs will reflect obvious differences. Another reason why Pidgin will keep reflecting divergence spelling is because of the linguistic heterogeneity that defines the backgrounds of those who speak it, besides, they are not literate in the language on which the pidgin is based. For instance, if the British English and its American variety can manifest differing phonological and graphological representations of the same word, then no analyst of Nigerian Pidgin should expect anything less. For example:

a. attitude   BrE /ˈætitjuːd/
        AmE /ˈætituːd/
b. tomato   BrE /təˈmaːtəu/
        AmE /təˈmeɪtou/
c. psychology   BrE /saɪˈkɔlədʒɪ/
        AmE /saɪkaːlədʒɪ/
d. deposit   BrE /dɪˈpɔzɪt/
        AmE /dɪˈpaːzɪt/
e. coffee   BrE /kɔfɪ/
        AmeE /kaːfɪ/

Language can be viewed as a means of creating meaning. Yakasai (2013, p.475) shares this view too when he asserts that meaning does not exist as a universe located outside the language but within a given language and only to the extent that language codes it through some formal means.

Reduplication process is said to be in use when there is repetition of sound or syllable in a word. In most cases a sound is substituted and reduplicated to replace others in a sequence (Bloom and Lahey, 1978); and depending on the word and individual child, the process could be full or partial (Yusuf, 1984, p.83). Yakasai (2013, p.409) discussed reduplication from two angles, the first he calls "full reduplication" a situation where in "the reduplicant is identified as the whole base, the scond he calls "partial reduplication", where the reduplicative morpheme constitutes a syllable added to the base or at least one base consonant that is copied. The beauty of linguistic study is the degree of subjectivity that theorists enjoy in discussing any subject matter. Newman (2000, p.508) on the other hand categorized reduplication into "Active" and "Frozen". According to him, "active reduplication refers to word formations rules in which reduplication functions as synchronically recognizable derivational or inflectional process". Frozen

reduplication, on the other hand, "are words that phonologically have a reduplicated structure, but which from a synchronic point of view…constitute essentially unanalysable simple lexical stems" (p. 509).

"Reduplication may be analysed at phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic levels. Nevertheless, the focus of this work is limited to reduplication as a restricted linguistic class called morphological deviants. According to Smith (1973, p.165), the process is a special case of vowel-consonant harmony.

Methodological Issues

This study aims at investigating the reduplication tendency (an aspect of linguistic creativity) in the Nigerian Pidgin. The data was sourced surreptitiously via participant observation at different spontaneous communicative events in a nearly Pidgin dominated medium. A total of 38 lexical items (phrasal elements inclusive) were gathered and presented for analysis. The researcher's intuition as a fluent speaker of Nigerian Pidgin was an added advantage in handling the data; sorting and eliminating incidents of repetition of some of the items obtained from different communicative events or situations. The presentation of the data was followed by the Bloor and Bloor's (2013, p.8) Text Analysis as the analytical framework; the outline of which are the data got from originally produced language within a communicative event using fixed written forms and their meanings negotiated in real time by the readers (or listeners) because they reserve the right to mentally question the string because they have expectations about how the text should proceed since they share a working knowledge of the language. The choice of the model found justification in their argument that holds: "A text is any stretch of language, regardless of length, that is spoken or written for the purpose of communication by real people in actual circumstance." From this premise, the analysis was done after the recorded items were transcribed in what Onah (2016, p.10) describes as a grapho-phonemic script of the Nigerian Pidgin.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data for this study were derived from no particular homogenous group(s) but from Nigerians of all ages who use the Nigeria Pidgin proficiently as a medium of communication. And because of the peculiarity of the interest being investigated, the data were extracted from a stream of spontaneous verbal discourses and presented as though they are isolated items. Altogether, a total of 40 items were obtained and presented in four tables of a three-column tabular form for analysis; serial number for ease of analytical reference, the data and the meanings or approximate descriptive terms of the reduplicated word(s). The presentation of the data is followed immediately by analytical comments.

Table 1: Loan Adaptation from the Superstrate Language (English)

S/N	Data	Meanings/approximate descriptive terms.
1.	"fiye-fiye"	coward, weakling derived from "fear"
2.	"we-we"	we are the same i.e. an expression of unity or oneness in purpose
3.	"shapally-shapally"	sharply (a loan adaptation of the English word "sharp" but rendered as an adverb of manner)
4.	"tori-tori"	story-story (loan adaptation with modification)
5.	Ben-ben	crooked, or not straight realised from imperfect perceptual issues of the English source of the word reduplication "Bend"
6.	boro-boro	perpetual or habitual borrower (sourced from English "borrow").
7.	folo-folo	unsolicited escort i.e. expressing a lack of personal idea sourced from the English word "follow"
8.	fri-fri	one who is fond of frying virtual all his meals
9.	gai-gai	Nigerian pidgin variant for 'guy'
10.	je-je	slowly, gently
11.	lai-lai	Liar
12.	sofri-sofri	carefully, softly.
13.	tay-tay	since or long ago, derived from the English word "stay" or "delay"
14.	waka-waka	a derogative term for an unstable person walking around

From the table above are hybridized forms of loan words adapted from the superstrate language (English) on which Nigerian Pidgin was based; some of the items were derived from the orthographic level while others from either the semantic appeals or the phonological perspective, all revealing the imperfect learning tendency of a Second Language user(s). For example:

a. **Phonological appeals**

tori-tori   (story)
boro-boro   (borrow)
folo-folo   (follow)
fri-fri   (fry)

b. **Improper morphological realization**

ben-ben   (bend)
gai-gai   (guy) Even some highly educated Nigerians pronounce the word /gai/ after the phonemic transcription
waka-waka   (walk)

c. **Semantic appeals**

shapally-shapally	(sharp)
sofri-sofri	(sofly)
tay-tay	(stay)

We can also argue that the above presentation corroborates Romaine's (1988, p. 224) definition of pidgin as "a language which has been stripped of everything but the bare essentials necessary for communication".

Table 2: Elements from the Substrate Languages (Indigenous)

S/N	Data	Meanings/approximate descriptive terms.
1.	"kia-kia"	quickly or "quick quick" from Yoruba
2.	"koro-koro"	right in your full view (Yoruba)
3.	jedi-jedi	Diarhoea. (Sourced from Yoruba)
4.	kata-kata	trouble or problem (Igbo)
5.	kiri-kiri	Nigerian maximum-security prison (Yoruba)
6.	moi-moi	bean pudding (Igbo and Yoruba)
7.	"mu-mu"	fool or foolish
8.	shi-shi	A Nigerian monetary unit that is less than one penny in the immediate post political independence era after the order of the British Pounds, Shillings and Pence.
9.	wa-wa	fool (borrowed from Hausa); and not a reduplication of the Yoruba sense of inviting or calling somebody "come"
10.	ye-ye	Fool (Yoruba)

Nigeria is a multilingual society and just as the English language in Nigeria has been imparted by the phonological coloration of the different indigenous languages, the Nigerian Pidgin has equally been influenced lexically. The net implication is the growing word list of the Nigerian Pidgin sourced mainly from the majority and the regionally major Nigerian languages (e.g. items numbers 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 10). Gani-Ikilama's (2005, p.23) is a fundamental insight for explaining the phenomenon in the table above when she writes: "it is noteworthy that structures are found in pidgins which do not exist either in the substrate or in the superstrate language". This position is valid in that neither English nor the Nigerian languages manifest the kind of structure we see outside the Nigerian Pidgin context where the elements are infused.

Table 3: Sense Representation (Manner and Onomatopoeia)

S/N	Data	Meanings/approximate descriptive terms.
1	"gara-gara"	the habit of provoking attention of the public without necessarily satisfying it by ones performance
2.	chin-chin	a special baked snach from flour, also called "chop one chop-two"
3.	fiam-fiam	fast i.e. expressing the speed by which a task is accomplished
4.	jaga-jaga	unorganised, disorderly
5.	jim-jim	full of vigour, strength, sounding energetic
6.	kpam-kpam	knock-knock i.e. who is there?
7.	kpom-kpomfu	doughnut
8.	piom-piom-piom	denoting instability and social risk

One striking characteristic of human language is its versatility; the unlimited range of possibility of expressing different shades of meanings. This feat is achieveable from the different levels of semantic and figurative representations of senses conceived by a fluent user of any language; and the Nigerian Pidgin is not an exception. The Nigerian Pidgin has grown its words-stock from such sense representation derived particularly from the manner in which something is done and/or the sense of sound denoted by an action involved; examples include items number 1, 3, 4, 6, and 8 and in the table above.

Table 4: Waffi Creolized Lexical Items

S/N	Data	Meanings/approximate descriptive terms.
1	"wuru-wuru"	cheat or shody deals
2.	"yanfu-yanfu"	plenty, supplous or existing in abundance derived from Yoruba.
3.	bri-bri	to play on one's intelligence
4.	ku-ku	just
5.	mago-mago	fraud
6.	sabi-sabi	a derogative word for someone who claims to know too much.
7.	wo-wo	ugly or ill-manner (cruelty)
8.	yanma-yanma	disgusting or repulsing

Nigerian Pidgin has become too creolised in some places especially in the Niger-Delta region in the country; and the best-known variety is called "Waffi", the Warri Pidgin. Waffi is already a mother-tongue to a population of users who do not have another native language; an off shoot of the English-based pidgin spoken around Nigeria. From the table above, items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8 are typical examples. Though other varieties of pidgins in Nigeria especially the Lagos, Port Harcourt, etc use these lexical items but their true origin is traceable to Waffi.

Discussion of Findings

One thing that is apparent from the data displayed above is that only suffixal reduplication can be seen in virtually all cases manifested as repetition of the same stem resulting in a compounding lexical formation in the Nigerian Pidgin leaving us with no evidence of profixal or infixal morphological reffixations. The Nigerian Pidgin is a truly Nigerian language though it is English based; this is because we can describe it as having elements from multiple substrate and the organic superstrate linguistic sources. And like any true hybrid language, virtually all the majority and the regionally major languages and viable indigenous languages have contributed to the growth of its word-stock.

Without any doubts, one can say that the words of the Nigerian Pidgin are regarded as pidgin words but they came from certain linguistic backgrounds; and we do not have to regard them as universal pidgin or products of some lexicographers but the collective impact of the speakers of the Nigerian Pidgin. In other words, the vocabulary of the Nigerian Pidgin has greatly increased because every speaker is acting upon the language from the perspective of his first language. For example, although we cannot discuss the etymology of these words fully here (because that is not the focus of this study), one can however say with some degree of assurance that Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Idoma, equally have the following words or expressions in their respective word-stock but their meanings are different from each other. For example:

Hausa	wa-wa (an insult that suggests the person addressed is a fool).
Yoruba	wa-wa (come – in its emphatic urgent note to the addressee)
Idoma	wa-wa (come – in its emphatic urgent note to the addressee)

In Igbo, 'wa-wa' This is a derogratory reference of a prarticular group of speakers of a variety (or dialect) of the language (e.g. those from Enugu and Ebonyi states of Nigeria). According to Akindele and Adegbite (1999, p.53), a pidgin language is "generally understood to be a simplified language, but whose grammar is very different." The language has assumed a form that it is almost becoming impossible for the present generation of its speakers to understand that most of the words that are unEnglish came from which particular Nigerian language. In Igbo, 'wa-wa' is a derogatory reference to a particular group of Ibo people. Some of these words are onomatopoeic in nature derived from the indigenous Nigerian languages. Example:

fiam-fiam	=	expressing the sense or manner of speed with which an action is carried out.
kata-kata	=	denoting confusion or suggestive of trouble.
kiti-kiti	=	struggling or scrambling for something

One observable phenomenon about pidgins and particularly the Nigerian Pidgin is the degree of lexical bastardization even at the level of aural perception. For example, "fast" is "fiam", "me" is "mi", "make" is "mek", "come" "kom" The worst case of the four words is "kom"

which neither bears any orthographic resemblance with the phonetic realization of the transcribed word nor a radical departure from the sounds on which they were based.

Conclusion

This work being a Linguistic Study of Reduplication in the Nigerian Pidgin has examined the level of linguistic creativity in the unofficially acclaimed number one majority medium of communication in Nigeria. Nigerian Pidgin has broken down all the social boundaries that marked or defined the elites, educated linguistic advantage, the near-no-knowledge of the Standard Nigerian English, the mutual intolerance for (an)other Nigerian language aside one's mother-tongue. It is under this chauvinistic pose between loyalists of the different linguistic nationalities in the Nigerian multilingual society that the Nigerian Pidgin found ground to grow its lexicon, acceptance and utilitarian spheres.

Consequent to the above, the lexical stock of the language and discourse or pragmatic scope have expanded tremendously such that the degree of creativity (particularly in area of reduplication) in Nigerian Pidgin has become more national and uniformed than imagined of hybridized language. It is hoped that with the multiple advantages Nigerian Pidgin is enjoying, the potential of the language] becoming more viable for constitutional recognition for different purposes in Nigeria is possible.

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