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# Communicative and Stylistic Potential of New Yoruba Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions on The Label of Alcoholic Drinks

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## A B S T R A C T

This paper investigated issues expressed with these idioms as well as the strategy for using them for various modern alcoholic drinks in Yoruba land. The paper adopted Mukarovsky's theory of Standard Language based on its ability to explain the deviant nature of the new Yoruba idioms as well as explaining 'differencia specifica' between the language of everyday conversation and Literary Language. Data were collected from different beer joints in Lagos State and Ògùn State respectively as States where most of these drinks are produced. Eventually, data were subjected to stylistic analysis. In all, sex is the only issue that was expressed. Sex, which was peculiar to all the alcoholic drinks, occurred in the context of 'eroticism', 'vulgarity', 'sexual style', and 'sexual positioning'. Only the metaphorisation linguistic strategy was employed for the coining of the idioms and was differentially derived from nominalizations, phonaesthetic coinages, and compositions. Nominalisations, compositions, and phonaesthetic coinages occurred in almost all the labels, and they were contextualized in eroticism ('Òṣomo', 'Alomo', 'Ògidigà' and 'Órìjìn (ọ rí i jìn?)'); sexual style (Kòbókò, Kerewa, Pakurumo) while Dadubule revealed sexual positioning. New Yorùbá idioms, used to express socio economic and emotive issues in routine communication, occurred in mediated and non-mediated contexts and were conveyed through metaphorisations. These idioms rethe flect dynamism and modernity-constrained stylistic choices in Yorùbá discourses.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This paper projects certain vital aspect of Language that is either not taking very serious

or misconstrued to be ghetto Language by some purists in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Whereas, outside the borders of what is the called language of everyday usage in every

conversation and other domains, are other useful forms of expressions. For instance, there are special instances of jargon of various trades, sports and occupations; there are also the veritable vocabularies of imprecations and of ribaldry and the new idioms under discussion, all of which are full of vitality, interest and far reaching area of study.

This paper is however, motivated based on the fact that new idioms and idiomatic expressions are tools in the hand of the users who are always anxious to educate their people about new development in every area of human endeavours. Users of language cannot but be faced with certain linguistic challenges imposed on them by their language, specifically difficulty in getting the right lexical items and terminologies to express new ideas. The way out of these linguistic constraints according to Babalola (1972), Awóbùlúyì (1992: 26), Olátéjú (2005, 2008, 2012, 2016) and Akanmu (2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014) lies in the use of new idioms and idiomatic expressions derived by coining new words or new idioms and by giving new meanings to those that have been in existence.

New Yorùbá idioms and idiomatic expressions are modern stock expressions, formed in response to the needs of the moment arising based on the linguistic constraints of the users which consequently necessitates creation of new words and expressions. New Yorùbá idioms and idiomatic expressions are called not only because of their complexity which necessitates the overlapping tendencies of their semantic realizations, but also because of their distinctive difference from the old traditional idioms. Indeed, they straddle metaphor and euphemism and also serve as replication of the established Yorùbá idioms, both in form and meaning. They are in spoken and written forms, and mainly operate at the lexical and phrasal levels. They are also multi-functional because of their semantic unity. They may equally function as nouns, verbs and adjectives.

New Yorùbá idioms and idiomatic expressions are created by members of the society or language community either through coining (creating or recreating of new words and expressions) or by investing old words and expressions with new meanings. New Yorùbá idioms are new, strange, fresh and creative by nature and structure. They are not vague expressions and their origins are also familiar to the users who are always dazzled whenever they come across them in any context and, they hardly disappear after creeping into the language as new idioms. New Yorùbá idioms are used in literary discourse and in daily conversation by a sizeable number of people, especially youths, and by extension, elderly ones who always hear them on radio, television, home video and in buses.

Generally speaking, apart from the few scholars who have turned their attention on new Yorùbá idioms and idiomatic expressions which include Olátéjú (2005) and Àkànmú (2014; 2015), only a considerable amount of effort seemed to have been devoted to the old or traditional Yorùbá idioms even though in passing, as no direct or specific study of the Yorùbá traditional idioms has been carried out in Yorùbá studies. However, some scholars have described idioms as expressions or words whose meanings cannot be established or predicted from the individual elements in them (Àkànmú 2014; Olátéjú 2005; Babalola 1972).

In this discussion of idioms and coinages, Babalola (1972) asserts that neologism is used for expressing new items and ideas brought into Yorùbá culture by foreigners. His assertion bears direct relevance to this paper because neologism is one of the linguistic strategies employed in the formation of new idioms. Olátéjú (2005) and Àkànmú (2014; 2015) are remarkable contributions on new Yorùbá idioms, issues expressed with them, their formation and interpretation. These scholars examined idioms and idiomatic expressions from both

the linguistic and literary points of view. Olátéjú (2005) adopted Chomskyan Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) while Àkànmú (2014) and (2015) employed Mukarovsky Theory of Standard Language. Both scholars embraced stylistic and some sociolinguistic variables to bring out aesthetic and communicative ability of the new idioms and idiomatic expressions.

This paper is predominantly concerned with the task of analyzing and interpreting idioms and idiomatic expressions found on the labels of the bottle of alcoholic drinks purposively selected for analysis. This analysis is to facilitate illumination into communicative and stylistic relevance of the idioms. Based on the fact that new idioms and idiomatic expressions are ambiguous and their meaning realized through their individual lexical constituents, this quintessential phenomenon is better studied and analyzed holistically from a stylistic perspective with a view to determining their communicative and stylistic effects even, on the labels of alcoholic drinks. These idioms are becoming popular. Yorùbá speakers in such a way that they are getting attenuated into the routine utterances of both the sellers and consumers of alcoholic drinks among the Yorùbá at a significant rate. This is made possible because of the impact of globalisation which eventually broadened the creative ingenuity of the manufacturers of some of the alcoholic drinks under study. Finally, this paper is preoccupied with the effort of subjecting new idioms on the labels of some selected alcoholic drinks to critical analysis in order to determine the stylistic and communicative relevance of the new idioms and idiomatic expressions.

## II. METHODS

Data for this paper were collected from different joints or bars of alcoholic drinks in Lagos State and Ògùn State respectively being the two States where most of these alcoholic drinks are produced. These alcoholic drinks whose labels exemplified glaring use of new idioms and idiomatic expressions include '*Òṣomọ*, *Alomọ*,

*Ògidigà*, *'kerewà*', *'kòbókò*', *'Pakurumọ*', *'Dadùbùlẹ*' and *'Órìjìn*'. In all of these, only the issue of sex was expressed and contextualized in '*sexual style*', '*sexual positioning*', '*eroticism*' and '*vulgarity*'. The new idioms and idiomatic expressions were analysed contextually, mainly at the stylistic levels using stylistic apparatus.

As said earlier, this paper adopted Mukarovsky's theory of Standard Language formulated in 1970. Its consideration is based on the fact that it is capable of giving adequate explanation on the 'differences specific' between the language of ordinary usage and literary expressions as well as using it to explain and interpret the deviant and inventive nature of the new idioms and idiomatic expressions.

According to Mukarovsky (1970), Standard Language (SL) is the language of everyday discourse. Its purpose is to understand the speaker and the audience with the aim of enhancing effective communication (Crystal 1997: 68). Language of everyday conversation or ordinary discourse is casual and devoid of ornamentation. It is unexamined and uncritical; it does not draw attention to itself or open up provocative questions to the nature of its coding. It is often used in schools, on radio, during political campaigns and preaching. Its primary function is effective communication which calls for employment of words and phrases that can be fully comprehended. Therefore, to enhance undistorted communication in Standard Language (SL), language must conform to the entire linguistic norms.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As discussed earlier, eight different types of alcoholic drinks that were purposively selected for having new Yorùbá idioms and idiomatic expressions are *Òṣomọ*, *Kerewà*, *Pakurumọ*, *Dadùbùlẹ*, *Ògidigaz*, *Órìjìn*, *Kòbókò* and *Alomọ* all of which are analysed using stylistic apparatus.

### 1. Òṣòmọ

The above is a new Yorùbá idiom used as inscription of a heavily concentrated herbal and alcoholic content produced and marketed by Yem-Kem International Igando, LASU Ojo road, Lagos, Nigeria. 'Òṣòmọ', which literally means '*producer or manufacturer of child*' is formed through nominalisation - 'ò + ṣe + ọmọ' (*pre + v + n*) and can be interpreted idiomatically as '*a flirt*', '*humanizer*' or '*a philanderer*' respectively. Òṣòmọ, according to some of the consumers, is a libido booster, especially man's libido in a manner that the man in question cannot get tired of having sex to the full satisfaction of any woman.

Based on this, it can be said that 'Òṣòmọ' expresses *sex* even in the context of *eroticism*. Apart from the fact that 'Òṣòmọ' can be found in virtually every beer joint in Nigeria, its use as idiom is not limited to alcoholic drink alone, it is also used by other members of the society to mean '*a flirt*', *sex freak*, *humanizer* or '*libido booster*' as the case may be. It should be added here that 'ọmọ' (child), in 'Òṣòmọ' is not 'Child' in the real sense of its contemporary meaning among the Yorùbá; it is simply interpreted as '*a beautiful lady*' irrespective of age.

### 2. Kerewà

The above is also used as an inscription on the label of the alcoholic herbal drink produced by the Timberland Nigeria Limited, 21 Old Road, Jèbú-Igbó, Ogun State, Nigeria. Kerewà is a phonaesthetic coinage derived from the sound, gesture and description of a farmer weeding the grass or making ridges in an up and down movement in the farm. It is used to portray '*sexual style*' or '*love making*' depending on the context of usage.

In this context, the use of semantic transfer is involved, especially in view of the sound (kerewa) and the observed gesture (up and down movement of the body) displayed by the farmer in the course of weeding the grass or making ridges in the farm. This *up and down movement* connotes *sexual style* in the act of

love making. Most sellers and consumers of '*kerewà*' are of the views that idiom of this nature, being stylistically created, markets their products in a way that i- arouses curiosity as teconsumers will want to know why it is so called '*kerewà*' and having discovered that the name '*kerewà*' corroborates its potency as libido booster or a gin with sexual innuendo, it becomes a routine option for sexual purposes even at the expense of other types of beer or alcoholic drinks.

### 3. Pakurumọ

The above is an existing expression in the language whi thech literally means '*aggressive effort at doing something*' now used as inscription on the label of alcoholic herbal drink produced at No. 24 Oshinowo Crescent, Ijebu Ode, Ògùn State, Nigeria for enhancement of one's libido. This expression expresses '*sex*' in the act of love making, especially when the woman is being touched in the sensitive places of the inner sexual region; it prompts her to reinforce and put more effort. In other words, it can also be simply interpreted as '*rigorous love making*'. 'Pakurumọ', as believed by some consumers also helps in making one to '*get closely knitted*' to one's girl friend or wife (sexual style) in the act of love making. This expression has gone beyond its usage as an inscription on the label of alcoholic drinks, it is also used as title of Hip up songs, films and even, in Yorùbá programmes on radio and television for different meanings like '*be serious*' and '*let's get serious*'.

### 4. Dadùbùlẹ̀

Dadùbùlẹ̀ is another instance of an inscription on the label of alcoholic herbal gin which expresses sex. It is produced and marketed by Chubby-Zion Industrial Limited, No. 62, Shagamu Road, Ogun State, Nigeria. The idiom, '*Dadùbùlẹ̀*', which can be interpreted literally as '*lay her down*' is also an existing word in the Yorùbá language used connotatively to mean '*sexual positioning*' or '*make love with her*' respectively. '*Dadùbùlẹ̀*'

is a product-of expression coined through "composition (sentence) - dá (verb), -a (third person singular pronoun), -dùbúlè (verb phrase), meaning 'dá a dùbúlè' 'lay-her-down'. In the act of love making, when a man lays down his lover, it is believed that '*sexual positioning*' is achieved.

Today, the expression is he tso pervasive and well embraced by the youtto the extent that it features as title of films, songs and different programmes on radio an ad television, especially where issues of pornography or sex are presented using euphemism. The context or usage like this makes interpretation comprehensible even without mentioning the word sex.

### 5. Ògidigà

Ògidigà is another alcoholic herbal drink produced in Kuku Avenue, Ìjèbú-Òde, Ògùn State, Nigeria by Òkúfúnwá Yèádé Nigeria Limited. 'Ògidigà' is a phonaesthetic coinage created through the use of heavy consonants like 'g' and 'd' as seen in 'gidi' and 'gà' as components which formed the expression calà'. The implication of the heavy consonants such as 'g' and 'd' in, ògidigà is that it portrays 'turgidity' or something 'hard' and 'solid'. This, however is suggestive of the male genital which becoan mes naturally '*strong*' '*solid*' and '*elastic*' after taking the herbal drink for it to have impact and meet the expectation of the female partner during love making except the man involved is having health issues.

Stylistically speaking, 'Ògidigà' also expresses *sex* in the context of *eroticism* going by the use of '*elasticity*', '*turgidity*' and '*erectness*' of the male genital al in love making. Instead of calling the male genital its real name, Ògidigà is used as euphemism.

### 6. Alọmọ

The above is equally in the class of Òşomọ in term of the linguistic strategy for its formation. a 'Alọmọ' which is produced at Kilometer 8, Nkruma Way, Accra, Ghana by

Kasapreko Company has huge market for its sales in Nigeria, especially among the Yorùbá. 'Alomo', a Ghanaian expression is however domesticated in Yorùbá language as 'Alọmọ', the coinage of which is a linguistic co-incidence made possible through nominalisation- A + LO + OMO (prefix + v + n). 'Alọmọ' li,terally means '*user of child*' can be interpreted connotatively to mean '*a flirt*', '*a philanderer*' and '*humanizer*'. Going by the function of this alcoholic drink, which is *enhancement of libido* and *rejuvenating of malethe genital organ* for sexual activities, it can be said that 'Alomo' also expresses *sex* as it helps user to consummate lovers/ladies sexually at a time without getting tired. *Eroticism* is equal aly at play here. It should be stressed here that, 'omọ' (child) in A-lo-omọ is not referred to a tdat but '*a beautiful lady*' in this context.

### 7. Orijin

Orijin is another alcoholic herbal drinks which expresses *sex* in the context of *eroticism*. It is produced and marketed by the Guinness Nigeria PLC. Ikeja Industrial Estate, in order to survive stringent competition and challenges from all other local producers of alcoholic herbal drinks. It is observed that 'Alomo', 'Òşomọ', 'Kerewà' and other local alcoholic herbal drinks have drastically changen irconsumer's pattern of consumption of beer in such a way that Guinness products are jettisoned completely for the local herbal drinks by some consumers who are fon of taking many bottles before, but now reduced it to little or nothing, because it is believed that, it is of no economic use or personal satisfaction to buy many beers at the expense of mixing the local alcoholic herbal drinks with little content of beer which is cheaper Tnd at the same time g enough satisfaction. This invariably challenged t-e Nigeria Guinness plc. to come up with their own alcoholic herbal drink called 'Orijin' in a better refined form.

Stylistically speaking, 'Orijin' is not an English expression but it has similar phonological sound with the English word

'Origin' (source) and the Yorùbá expression '*O rí i jìn*', coined through 'composition' (sentence), literally mean "*were you able to punch/press/consummate her?*" if a question tag is added. 'O' is used as Oyo dialect in replacement of 'O' which is the standard form while the second vowel 'i' is an extension of the verb 'ri' (i) as 'a third person pronoun' representing the receiver of the action performed in the expression. The receiver is no other person than 'the female counterpart' in the act of love making. Finally, the expression '*Orijin*' (*O rí i jìn?*) can be interpreted connotatively as '*were you able to have sex with her?*'. Eroticism is absolutely at play here and that is what *Orijin* does.

### 8. *Kòbókò*

*Kòbókò* is also another alcoholic herbal drink produced in 13, Ogijo Road, Ìkòròdú, Lagos State by XTY2 Nigeria Enterprise. '*Kòbókò*' is a Hausa expression loaned into the Yorùbá Language, literally mean 'whip'. It is made of the animal skin. It stands straight, tall and very hard no matter the extent of usage. All these attributes are transferred (semantic shift) into the '*Kòbókò*' herbal drink' as a drink that has the potency for making male genital straight, tall and very hard from the beginning of love making to the end without getting tired. The implication of this is that, when used, the male genital can navigate anywhere and anyhow until his female counterpart gets whipped. By and large, navigation of this nature is manifestation of '*sexual style*' which '*Kòbókò*' portrays.

It should be stressed from the foregoing, that new Yorùbá idioms in this paper expressed sexual issues using euphemism without being puritanical. Some of these idioms undergo a sifting process being stylistically created and not meant to define a thing but to say something funny about it, keep as a rule their idiomatic attitude, while those among the standard terms, which are genuine and useful definitions, lose little by little their vulgar associations.

It can also be mentioned here that, those new idioms that are situated in their social contexts are gaining entrance into the lexicon of the language in an appreciable quantity owing to their frequent use in literary and informal communication. Sex or sexually related issues are seen as part of human life and human beings, by nature are pornographic (Mackinnon, 1996: 220). Therefore, the explicit sexual issues expressed with the use of new idioms on the labels of the alcoholic herbal drinks in this paper only serves as a reinforcement to the sellers, consumers and users of the language to carry them along to the fact that the society, especially the youths, are willing to embrace anything that discusses sex and those that are exhaustive with the new Yoruba idioms on sex such as the foregoing.

In this paper, it has been established that the new Yorùbá idioms and idiomatic expressions were used as inscriptions on the label of the alcoholic herbal drinks for both stylistic and communicative effects. The new idioms and idiomatic expressions analysed in this paper were found to be used to express sex and sexually related issues and were differentially contextualized in *eroticism*, *sexual style* and *sexual positioning*. The paper equally revealed the various linguistic techniques involved in the creation of new Yorùbá idioms and idiomatic expressions used by the consumers, the youths and manufacturers of all the alcoholic herbal drinks analysed. These include neologism through prefixation and nominalization, borrowing, compounding and phonaesthetic coinages. Some of which were conveyed through metaphorisation.

The paper also revealed that the new Yorùbá idioms were not in any way puritanical or dangerous to the moral values of the society because some of them undergone a sifting process. They were not meant to define thing but to say something funning about it, keep as a rule their idiomatic attitude, while those among the standard terms, which are genuine and useful definitions, lose little by little their vulgar associations. It was finally established that utilization of new Yorùbá

idioms and idiomatic expressions in this paper invar paper has established communicative and stylistic potentialities of the new Yorùbá idioms and idiomatic expressions used as inscriptions on the label of alcoholic herbal drinks indiffers th west Nigeria and by extension in Nigeria. The issues expressed with them, structure, linguistic strategies for their formation, and vheirocal opretation were critically executed. For thmplpaper, e, tStandard Language (SL) model known for its ability to explain deviant and inventive nature of the new Yoruba idioms and idiomatic expressions, and the 'esting paia specifica' between the language of everyday conversation and language of littrhe souwas

adopted. As said earlier, this paper has shown that Yorùbá language has the necessary mechanism to cope with the linguistic constraints necessitated by the global communicative economy. The coping strategies were discovered in the word-formation capacity of the Yorùbátinguishabin which the new Yorùbá Idioms are inclusive. Finally, students, teachers, and other userared the to other are implored to key into the potentialities of the Yorùbá language as manifested in this paper for future execution in other areas of endeavors. nguage diversity among speakers. Besides, it may also help us identify to which part of group the speakers belong to.

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