New Yoruba Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions: 
A New Mode of Communicating New Concepts and 
Ideas on Radio

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New idioms and idiomatic expressions, which are modern stock expressions, constitute communicative clogs in Yorùbá routine discourses because of their semantic complexity and deviant nature. Existing studies have established their scope of usage in Yorùbá music but have hardly addressed their communicative adaptability in Yorùbá programmes on radio. This paper investigated issues expressed with these idioms and the context and strategies for using them in various Yorùbá programmes on radio. This is with a view to establishing their communicative and stylistic relevance in Yorùbá discourses. The paper adopted Mukarousky’s theory of Standard Language because of its capacity to explain the “differential specifica” between the language of everyday interaction and literary language. Six Yorùbá programmes were purposively selected for having sufficient usage of new idioms on these radio stations: 105.6 FM, Lagos; 107.5 FM, Lagos; 92.9 FM, Lagos 92.9 FM, Lagos; 99.2 FM, Ìbàdán and 10.55 FM Ìbàdán. Lagos and Ìbàdán were chosen based on the urbanised nature of the two cities and constant usage of new idioms on the programmes. Data were subjected to pragmatic and stylistic analyses. In all these, certain unique issues were expressed: globalization, politics corruption and entertainment. Globalization, which peculiar to the electronic media, occurred in the context of mobile phoning/internet while politics, corruption and entertainment also appeared in electronic media revealing the contexts of political sloganeering, advertisement, information and fraud respectively. Nominalisation, composition and phonoeasthetic coinages were the linguistic strategies employed for the formation of new idioms in this paper. Nominalization occurred in one station in the contexts of cheating/corruption/choice of item (àgémáwọ/ge ̣́ranmáwọ).
composition occurred virtually in all the stations and was contextualised in advertisement/political sloganeering (jeun sôkè), entertainment/information (GSM lômò) and (já si i). Phonoesthetic coinages occurred in one station and was contextualised in fraud and information (yâúyâúù). New idioms and idiomatic expressions used to express socioeconomic issues in Yorùbá routine communication occurred in mediated and non-mediated contexts on radio and were conveyed through nominalization, compounding and phonoesthetic coinages. These idioms reflect dynamism and modernity-constrained stylistic choices in Yorùbá.

Key words: New idioms, Yorùbá programmes, radio, globalization, linguistic strategies

Introduction

This paper is motivated by the saying ‘the world is a global village’ (globalization), which imposes new global communicative challenges on the Yorùbá people especially the radio presenters who have a task to inform and enlighten people about the latest developments that are not only alien to our culture but also difficult to present and express using the existing expressions in the lexicon. The evolution of new idioms and idiomatic expressions thus becomes a coping strategy to meet the new communicative challenges. Globalisation is a phenomenon that filters into all domains of human experience – linguistic, social, cultural, political and economic. As a result of this, the Yorùbá, like any other people in the Third World countries, are faced with the challenge of how to express their ideas and experiences emanating from globalization which is alien to our culture and difficult to get appropriate lexical items and terms for the expression of their ideas. Radio presenters have a duty to inform, enlighten and educate the people about the latest developments brought about by the wind of change blowing across the globe. At a time that Nigeria is experiencing innovations in telecommunication which is also useful in sustaining her virgin democratic system of government, the radio presenters cannot afford to be aloof to these global developments.
Another motivation for this paper is the impact it would have on those who think that Yorùbá like other indigenous languages, is restricted to certain domains of usage. For instance, Fákoỳà (2008) and Sunday Sun in its editorial comments of March 28, 2004 are of the opinion that fresh ideas and concepts emanating from globalization can hardly be captured by the lexis and structure of Nigerian indigenous languages. Their views are based on the dominant nature of the English language over Yorùbá and the indiscriminate attitude of the users of the Yorùbá language towards borrowing from the English language. For instance, Fakoya (2008), is of the view that in spite of the availability and reliability of metalanguage and by extension, new idiom, the youth always result to code-mix and code-switch. A paper of this nature would not only debunk such scholarly views, but also put the record straight, that even in the process of pedagogy and presentation of programmes on radio, new words are coined to solve linguistic challenges in a way similar to the theory of Ifé Six propounded by the late Professor Babátùndé Fáfúnwá, where it was established that indigenous languages, like Yorùbá are capable of teaching mathematics even better than the English language. The main objective of the Ife Six was to develop a coherent primary education that would use the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Some primary school pupils were divided into experimental and control group. Yoruba language was used as mode of instruction in all subjects including mathematics and other science subjects while English was used for the other group. At the end of their primary six year, pupils in the experimental group were subjected to the same external examinations with their counterpart in the control group, it was found that those in the experimental group performed significantly better than those in the control group in all school subjects including mathematics and English.

By and large, in this paper, attempt is made to address the issues expressed with new idioms and idiomatic expressions in Yorùbá programmes on radio, contexts and strategies for using them with a view to establishing their communicative and stylistic potential in Yorùbá discourses.

**New Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions**

New idioms and idiomatic expressions are quintessentially modern stock...
expressions, formed in response to the needs of the moment arising as a result of the linguistic constraints of the users which consequently necessitates creation of new words and expressions. They are so called not only because of their complexity which requires the overlapping tendencies of their semantic realizations, but also because of their distinctive difference from old, traditional idioms. As a matter of fact, 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. Unlike the traditional idioms, New idioms and idiomatic expressions are created either through coining, (creating and recreating of new words and expressions) or by investing old words and expressions with new meanings. New idioms are creative, new, strange and fresh by nature. They are not vague expressions and their origins are also known to the users who are always dazzled whenever they come across them in any context.

Existing Studies on New Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions

Few scholars have turned their attention on the study of new idioms and idiomatic expressions in Yoruba. These scholars include Àkànmú (2003; 2014) and Ọlátejú (2005). Some scholars have described idioms as terms referring to words whose meanings cannot be predicted from the individual elements in them (Babalọlá 1972; Bámgbósé 1975; Owólabí 1976; Awóbülyí 1992 and Yusuf 2002). These studies have not directly dealt with some issues raised in this paper but they serve as the springboard for this paper.

While discussing idioms and coinages, Babalọlá (1972) states that neologism is used for expressing new items and ideas brought into Yorùbá culture by foreigners. His view bears direct relevance to this study in that, neologism is one of the linguistic strategies employed in the formation of new idioms.

Bámgbósé (1975) identifies vocabulary coining strategies to include nominalization, explication, semantic extension, and loan words, among
others. Through this, the Yorùbá lexicon is being expanded. Àkàn mú’s (2003) is not specifically on new idioms but it has some semblance of new idioms in the discussion and examples cited. He employed a sociolinguistic analytical method of for the interpretation of the work which he referred to as coded language used by certain groups of the Yorùbá society. He cites numerous examples of such expressions that are used in different contexts and discusses their functions in daily activities of the users, even though many of the examples cited as slang are not slang but new idioms. It should be stressed here that the formation of slang is borne out of the desire of the users to be linguistically different in their interactions whereas, new idioms are used in literary discourse and in daily conversation by a sizable number of people, especially youths, and by extension, elderly ones who always hear them on radio, television, home video and in buses. Akanmu (2014) is predominantly new idioms where issues on different areas of human endeavors, their contexts and linguistic strategies responsible for their formation are expressed using pragmatic and stylistic approach.

Ọlá tẹ́jù’s (2005) work is a remarkable contribution on new idioms, their formation and interpretation. He examines new idioms and idiomatic expressions from both the linguistic and literary points of view. He adopted Chomskyian Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) while stylistic and some sociolinguistic variables were used to bring out aesthetic and communicative potential of the new idioms and idiomatic expressions.

**Method of Data Collection**

Six Yorùbá programmes on 105.6 FM, 107.5, 92.9 FM, 92.9FM, 99.2 FM and 10.55 FM radio stations in Lagos and İbàdàn were purposively selected for having sufficient usage of new idioms and idiomatic expressions. In order to strike a balance, three Yorùbá programmes were selected from different radio stations in Lagos: “Lórí Oqó Yẹn” on Fáájí 105.6 FM, “Ọmọ Ilé Olórin” on 107.5 FM and “Lórí Qdan” on 92.9 FM. Three were also selected from İbàdàn: “Kókó Inú Ìwé Ìròyìn” on 99.2 FM, “Tifuntèdò Ìròyìn” on 105.5 FM and “Ajà ló Lẹrù” on 99.2 FM respectively. Lagos and İbàdàn were chosen based on the urbanised nature of the two cities and the constant usage of new idioms on the programmes. Data were subjected to
pragmatic and stylistic analysis.

Theory of Standard Language

The theory of Standard Language was formulated in 1970 by Jan Mukarousky to solve the problem of relationship between Standard Language (SL) and Literary Language (LL). The suitability of this model lies in the fact that it can be used to explain the *differential specifica between* the language of ordinary usage and literary expressions as well as using it to explain and interpret the deviant and inventive nature of new idioms and idiomatic expressions.

Standard Language vs Literary Language

According to Mukarovsky (1970), Standard Language (SL) is the language of everyday conversation. Its purpose is the understanding between the speaker and the audience with the aim of enhancing effective communication (Crystal, 1997:68). Language of 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 priority 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. Concepts crucial to the Standard Language are ‘backgrounding’ and authomatization illustrated by the example below:

*Làkàsóro*  
Literal meaning: corrupt coinage from La casera drink  
Idiomatic: No story/end of discussion

The above expression is a phonological corruption and creation from the name of a non-alcoholic drink in circulation all over the country. It is created to achieve a satirical effect through manipulation of syllables which share same phonological similarities. Here, the last two syllables *sè/*
rà in the word làkàsérà is being manipulated to yield só/rô in làkàsórò. The expression ‘làkàsórò’ (la casera) is the standard form that has been foregrounded or de-automatized as ‘làkàsórò’. In other words, it is the artistic form of ‘la casera’. There is no expression like ‘làkàsórò’ in the Yoruba lexicon. ‘Làkàsérà’ is automatized and serves as the background from which ‘làkàsórò’ is created and used as an idiom. ‘Làkàsórò’ which can be interpreted as ‘no story/end of discussion’ is made new, thereby becoming element of surprise.

Although, foregrounding is logically prohibited in Standard Language, this is not to say that it is not visible in Standard Language as Mukarovsky indicates its possibility in journalistic language where it can be used as subordinate to communication in order to draw the readers’ attention more closely to the issue at hand or the item of information articulated. This must have justified the use of new idioms and idiomatic expressions in routine communicative situation discussed in this paper.

**Linguistic Strategies Involves in the Formation of New Idioms**

According to Bámgbósé (1975), word formation is a universal linguistic concept that is concerned with the study of the patterns on which a language forms new lexical item. As far as formation of new idioms and idiomatic expressions are concerned in this paper, the linguistic strategies involved in their formation include the following:

**i) Nominalisation**

Nominalisation is universally known as one of the veritable tools for generating new words in virtually every language. Ruvet (1973: 172) views it as the derivation of a noun phrase from an underlying clause or sentence; or the process of forming a noun from other word classes. Below are some examples of new idioms and idiomatic expressions created from the linguistic process of nominalization.
Idioms | Literal meaning | Idiomatic meaning
--- | --- | ---
oní + àsà + kí + àsà (owner-of-bad-culture) | aláṣákàṣá (owner of bad culture) | Onísòkùsọ (vulgar person/user of nonsensical language)
oní + ebólò (owner-of-ebólò) | Elébólò (seller of ebólò vegetable) | A prostitute
má + fo + gótà (do-not-jump-over-the gutter) | mini skirt | indecent dressing

### ii) Compounding

Scholars like Ògùnbówálé (1967), Rowland (1969) and Owólabí (1976), have revealed that compounding is a very productive word-formation strategy which entails the combination of two or more independent words to form another word with an entirely different meaning. In other words, two separate words are joined together to produce a single word. New idioms and idiomatic expressions formed through compounding are mostly in form of verb and noun structure – (Vb + N/Nominal) or (N₁ + N₂):

\[(Vb + N)\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vb + N</th>
<th>Literal meaning</th>
<th>Idiomatic meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gbé + imú (carry + nose)</td>
<td>Gbémú (carry nose)</td>
<td>Yari (complain/grumble)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wà + àwọn (drive + them)</td>
<td>wà wọn (drive them)</td>
<td>parò fún wọn (lie to them)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N₁ + N₂</th>
<th>Literal meaning</th>
<th>Idiomatic meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>àtíkè + ọlá (powder of wealth)</td>
<td>Àtíkèọlà (powder of wealth)</td>
<td>an illicit drug like cocain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oùnjẹ + ọmọ (child + food)</td>
<td>Child/infant food formular</td>
<td>big boobs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### iii) Phonoeasthetic Coinages

Idioms in this category are called phonoeasthetic idioms because they
New Yoruba Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions

New Yoruba Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions evolve from phonoeasthetic coinages. Idioms of this nature, according to Ọlátéjú (1989 132), refer to words or expressions which by virtue of their sound composition imitate or suggest their meaning. By nature, they are idiophonic or onomatopoeic and they exhibit close relationship between the sound component of the word and its meaning: and they are mostly one word. The following are examples of such coinages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idioms</th>
<th>Literal meaning</th>
<th>Idiomatic meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gòòbe Pálasà</td>
<td>A Hausa expression for tomorrow coined phonoeasthetically to denote a very light and made-in China products e.g. mobile phones. These are expressions whose sounds suggest their meanings.</td>
<td>confusion/chaos fake /inferior/ substantial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis of New Yoruba Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions used in communicating New Concepts and Ideas on Radio**

There are instances where new idioms and idiomatic expressions are employed to express new ideas and concepts that are alien to the Yoruba society, especially innovations in tele communication technology which produced the Global System of MobileCommunication (GSM), infrastructure and a new experience called globalisation. For instance:

(i) *'GSM Lọmọ*  
Literal meaning: The child is GSM  
Idiomatic: A sophisticated/active child

The above expression is one of the expressions commonly used among the youths and is used widely in communicating messages, especially in routine communication. For instance, *GSM lọmọ* is used on a programme called *Lori owo yen* (on that hand) anchored by Bàṣírù Àdísá and Dr Ṣomide on Fàájì 105.6 FM Lagos where Bàṣírù Àdísá expresses himself using the above new idiom to prove to his friend, Somide who is of the view that he is no longer getting younger that he is indeed sexually active:
Má sọ béè mọ. Lówò yíí, GSM lọmọ àti pé network mi ó kùnà rì làyọn ọmọ fi ´ńkó mi je rush rush
Never say that again, at present, the child is GSM, and my network has never failed; that is why young ladies are patronizing me.

Literally, the expression ‘GSM lọmọ’ which literally means ‘the child is GSM/mobile phone, is deviant and unacceptable in Standard Language, not because it is not well formed but because of its semantic oddity. A child which is animate and human cannot be GSM/mobile phone which is inanimate. On the other hand, the expression can be said to have been in order going by Crystal (1997:72) which illuminates the curious stance of some people over the use of such expression even for news reportage on radio and television by contemporary reporters who are also conscious of the fact that their professional responsibilities go beyond mere reporting but also include entertainment. However, the fact that the presenter predicate himself as GSM suggests that he has the following attributes which the GSM has: efficiency, functionality and being ever ready. Here, the point is that the child is being qualified with the aforesaid attributes. The expression, GSM lọmọ as used in the above can be interpreted to mean ‘the child is very active sexually’

(ii) -’Yàúyàúù’    Literal meaning: Loan word (yahoo) for a site where information is sent and retrieved
Idiomatic: Internet fraudster/user of yahoo

The above word was used by Òláwálé Babalọlá, the presenter of a programme called ‘Ọmọ Ilé Olórin’ (a child from the house of a musician) on 107.5 FM (Radio Lagos). He narrated his experience about some ‘area boys’ (social miscreants) who beg for money at a wedding reception. He said:

Èyin yàtọ sàwọn ọmọ yàúyàúù
Tò ń ya bèbà lóní yanya
You are different from the yahoo boys
(Internet fraudsters) who spend extravagantly

In the above, ‘yàúyàúù’ or ‘yàwú-yàwúù’ is loaned from ‘yahoo’, a site for sending and retrieving information on the Internet. It is an idiom because it has been recreated through full reduplication ‘yahoo’ (yàúyàúù) to mean ‘an Internet fraudster’. The word ‘yàúù’ is similar in sound with its English equivalent ‘yahoo’. It also refers to a company or an organization that gives access to people to send and retrieve information from another person. These definitions are attributive of some Internet fraudsters and gamblers, whose appearance look so rough, noisy and rude. Yàúù or Internet fraud is alien to Yorùbá culture. It came with the new invention called ‘Internet’. To show that new idioms can be adaptable to things that are alien to Yorùbá culture, expressions such as ‘yàúyàúù’/’yàwúyàwúù’ as featured in the above excerpt, was coined. Today, the expression ‘Internet fraud’ has no other name in Yorùbá society than yàúyàúù. This assertion is corroborated by the researcher’s experience during a conversation between a taxi driver and a passenger at Agbowó in Ìbàdán, Oyo State, Nigeria. The taxi driver exhibited his knowledge of the term ‘Internet fraud’. He remarked

...gbogbo ònà ló ti bàjé tán, àwọn ọmọ tó jáde unifásitì kò ríṣé ñe. Gbogbo wọn ló di yàhú-yàhúù. Kín ló n jé yàhúyàhúù gan an? Ònà ijamilólè lóri kọ́npútà...

...all the roads are in bad state, the university graduates are unemployed. They have all become yàhú-yàhúù (Internet fraud) What is the exact meaning of yàhú-yàhúù? An act of defrauding on the computer...

The use of the expression ‘yàúyàúù’ in contexts such as the above makes interpretation very easy. This is because, it is through the context that we are able to comprehend the meaning of ‘yàúyàúù’ as a condemnable act in society which many of the unemployed graduates see as the last option and solution to unemployment. It is also understood by virtually every member of society, both the literates and the illiterates, looking at it from the perspective of a taxi driver who was believed to have known nothing about
the operation of the Internet. He was able to express himself in a context such as the above. ‘Yahoo/yahoo-yahoo’ is also used in another contexts to mean different things in routine communication. For example, on 92.9 FM, Ìkòyí, Babalọlá, a presenter of a programme called ‘Lórí Òdân’ informed his audience thus:

...Yàùù nikan ni ẹ lè lọ ọtẹ̀ lọ̀wọ́rọ̀ lóri èrọ ayélujára. Kí ètò yìí tó parí a o fun yín ní àdàrẹ́sì yàùù wa.

...It is only Yahoo that you can use to communicate with us on the Internet. Before the end of this programme we shall give you our Yahoo address.

In the excerpt above, ‘yàùù’, which is a phonoeasthetic coinage is used as channel of communication on the Internet. The presenters’ use of ‘only yahoo…’, suggests that there are other channels or means of communication on the Internet where user can send and retrieve information. Contexts such as the above facilitate easy and clear comprehension of the expression Yahoo to mean a channel for sending and retrieving information on the net. It should be stressed here also, that the above is a loaned and used to portray what it really mean in the native tongue. Apart from those that are used in the context of globalization or mobile phoning, there are many other new idiomatic expressions used for different purposes. For instance, consider the examples below where new idioms are used for both communication and entertainment:

(iii) - Òẹ̀ṣẹ̀ fún pàpà́  
Literal meaning: (Eat into the pocket)
Idiomatic: (Enrich your pocket/move on)

This expression was used for political sloganeering/advertisement on a programme called ‘Kókó Inú Ìwé Ìròyín’ on 92.9 FM thus:

Òkè ni A.C.N. wà nínú ìwé ìdibò yẹn
Òkè ni kí èjì ìẹ̀ẹ̀n sì
The A.C.N. is located at the uppermost position in the ballot paper, eat into the upper stomach.

The excerpt is credited to the incumbent governor of Lagos State, Babátùnde Rájí Fáṣọlá during one of the political rallies of his party (Action Congress of Nigeria) held on the 5th of March 2011 at the Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos State. The underlined expression is idiomatic and requires socio-political information as reflected in the context such as the above for a meaningful interpretation. It is abnormal to eat into the upper stomach (jeun sókè). Eat into the stomach (jeun si kùn) is the normal way of saying it. However, in the context, the expression is embedded with the socio-political meaning of ‘cast your vote for the A.C.N.’ whose logo and name appeared on the upper part of the ballot paper. The sloganeering/advert was used to educate the electorates on where to cast their votes, that is, the position of the party logo on the ballot paper,

(iv) - ‘Ja si’  
Literal meaning: Derived from ‘Don Jazzy’, name of a record company owner/’ja si pe’, an existing expression in the language

Idiomatic: To inform/educate/alert/instruction/in line/on the track

The above expression, ‘já si’ is one of the commonly used new expressions in everyday communication in different contexts. The electronic media in Yoruba are not left out in the use of the expression for entertainment. For instance, when reviewing the entertainment column on ‘Tífuntèdọ̀ Ìròyìn’ on 10.55 FM, Adébáyò Fálékè remarks:

Ṣé eyin náà ti gbó àbí ìrò lùùsì Dádì rẹ. Sóří, Bábá è ti kú. Mo ti já a yín sí i niyen.

Have you also heard, or you have not, that the boy, Itú Bábá Ìta, the husband of Ráfá Kútọnu, bóyá ọkọ Mọládún dẹ ló n jé ti lűụsì Dádì rẹ. Sóří, Bábá è ti kú. Mo ti já a yín sí i niyen.
dady. Sorry, I mean, his father is dead, so, I have informed you.

The above expression is from two sources. First, it is from the existing words in Yoruba ‘já sí (pé)’ which can be interpreted as ‘equal to/that is’ or from the word ‘Ajánánsí’ (someone who inserts little information in between a song or sermon delivered by the main speaker/musician). In this case, we can say ‘ó já a sí i’ (he inserted it there). The second source is from the name ‘Don Jazzy’, the owner of a record company ‘Mo-Hits’ that produces Nigerian Hip-hop artists like ‘D Banj’, the Prince and Wande Cole. The expression is loaned through sound imitation of the name ‘Jazzy’ where the first syllable imitates ‘já’ in ‘Jazzy’ and the other syllable ‘sí i’ in ‘zzy’, the outcome of which is the expression ‘já sí i’. The expression is semantically recreated to mean ‘inform/tell/educate/enlighten. The term ‘já sí i’ manifests in some other routine communication situations among the youths with a connotative meaning that is different from the one we have just analysed. For instance, the hypothetical example like ‘o ti ja si i’ can be interpreted as ‘you are on the track’, ‘you have got it’ or ‘you know it’ depending on the context of usage. Only the context of usage can make this expression to be appreciable and meaningful.

VI) - ‘Gérannáwọ’/àgémáwọ  Literal meaning: Cut meat with skin  Idiomatic: Cheating/choice of meat

The use of the expression ‘gérannáwọ’ which literally means ‘cut meat with skin’ in the context such as the above, can be interpreted connotatively as a preferred meat/choice of meat (àgémáwọ) Whenever such a request is made, the meat seller (butcher) knows he has to supply the combination of meat and skin. In another context, ‘gérannáwọ’ is used by Táiwò Fákóredé of Amúlúúdún FM 99.2 radio station Ìbàdàn, on his regular Friday’s programme called ‘Ájàlólẹrù’, admonishing the entire civil servants in Oyo State, especially those who are planning to leave their respective offices before the closing hour thus:

Ẹ jòwó gbogbo ẹyin ọsìṣẹ ijọba tó fẹ rinrin àjò lójó Jímọ tòní, ẹ má gérannáwọ fún ijọba, ẹ dúró ki àkókọ àtilọ sílé
tó kí ṣe tó gbéra sọ.

Please, all government workers planning to embark on a journey this Friday, do not cut meat with skin for government before you take off.

Unlike the previous example, the expression ‘géránmáwọ’ (cut the meat with its skin) as used in the above context has nothing to do with the issue of ‘preferred choice’ where there is a possibility of getting a meat cut with its skin as a matter of choice in any market where meat is sold. Here, it can be interpreted to mean ‘cheating/deceit/insincerity’ on the part of those workers who are of the habit of living their offices before closing time, as there is no justification for doing so because the money for the period they have been absent will not be deducted from their salaries.

Findings

In this paper, we discovered that new idioms and idiomatic expressions were found to be used to express new concepts. These new concepts and ideas were peculiar to the electronic media especially, radio and was in the context of mobile phoning/Internet and other form of new experiences or technological sophistication. Examples of unique issues that were expressed include ‘yàúyàúù’ (yahoo) for internet fraud, ‘GSM lọmọ’ (the child is GSM) for ‘a sexually active person/sophisticated person’, ‘jeun sókè’ (eat into the upper stomach) for ‘move on/enrich your pocket’, ‘já sí i’ (insert it there) for ‘be on the track/educate/inform/tell/enlighten’ and ‘géránmáwọ’ (cut the meat with its skin) for ‘choice of meat’ and ‘cheating’ respectively. Nominalisation, composition and phonoeasthetic coinages were the linguistic strategies employed for the formation of new idioms and idiomatic expressions in this paper. Nominalisation occurred in one station in the contexts of cheating/corruption/choice of item (à-gé-má-wọ/gé-érán-mó-awọ), composition occurred in virtually all the stations and was contextualised in advertisement/political sloganeering (jeun-sí-òkè), entertainment/information (GSM-ní-ọmọ) and (já sí i). Phonoeasthetic coinages occurred in the contexts of fraud and information (yàúyàúù).
Conclusion

New idioms and idiomatic expressions are quintessentially unique expressions, mostly used in a special and peculiar way when viewed from communicative and stylistic perspective. We therefore, conclude that contrary to the opinions expressed in the editorial comments of the Sunday Sun of March 28, 2004 that new words, concepts and ideas emanating from science and technology can hardly be captured by the lexis and structure of our indigenous languages, this paper has proved that such opinions are baseless and have been debunked. From the foregoing, especially the linguistic strategies involved in the formation of the new idioms and idiomatic expressions, it is clear that the Yorùbá language has the mechanism to cope with such communicative exigencies.

Reference


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